

North Devon Council's Carbon, Environment and Biodiversity Plan

Third Annual Review, September 2025



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Progress with delivery of the Council's actions to meet its net zero by 2030 target have been assessed as green, amber or red. This is indicated by the coloured stripe at the right hand side of the table.

Green indicates an action has been completed, or significant progress is being made.	
Amber indicates some progress is being made, but this is not happening quickly enough or at scale.	
Red indicates little or no progress is being made.	
White indicates this action is not due yet.	

Progress with delivery of the Council's action to meet the UK and Devon's net zero by 2050 target can be found at the [Devon Climate Emergency](#) website.

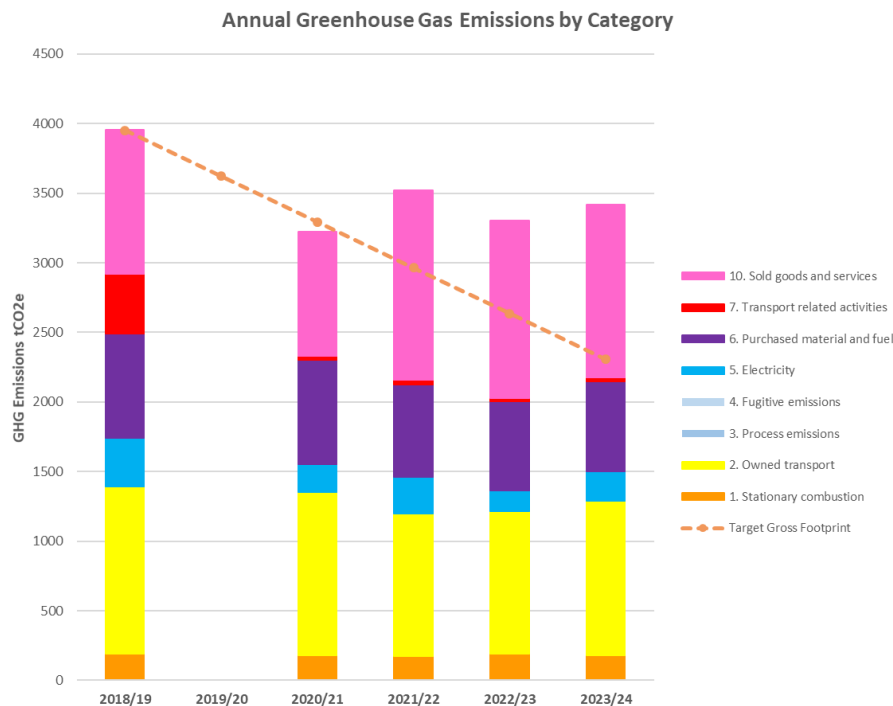
Reducing carbon emissions from Council buildings, vehicles and services

Leading local action on climate change

The Council can play a leadership role on climate issues in North Devon by reducing our own greenhouse gas emissions.

We have set an ambitious target to reduce the Council’s direct emissions from our buildings, our fleet vehicles and services to net zero carbon emissions by 2030. Some parts of the carbon management plan to achieve this are costed and funded, others will need development in the next few years.

Our carbon footprint shows that in 2023/2024 the Council’s operations resulted in 3425 tonnes of greenhouse gases (measured as tonnes carbon dioxide equivalent) being emitted. The graph below shows progress to date in meeting our 2030 carbon neutral target.



Whilst progress has been made towards our Net Zero by 2030 goal, the trajectory shows we will not reach this goal without drastic measures. Councillors have been faced with the reality of the significant expenditure they will need to approve to reduce our carbon footprint.

Notably, our red diesel sales to marine vessels in Ilfracombe Harbour contribute significantly to our carbon footprint. Whilst ceasing sales or offloading this service to another provider would reduce our footprint significantly, it would not improve emissions in our local area, negating the principle of the policy. Councillors therefore acted with integrity and accepted this limitation to our Net Zero journey until a sustainable alternative fuel is developed for marine transport.

Actions to reduce Council emissions to net zero by 2030

Buildings	Update	Next steps	Timescale
1.0 Reduce energy consumption in buildings we own and occupy.	We have costed plans for almost all of the buildings we own, which showed nearly £1M at is needed to reduce energy consumption as far as possible. We have invested £100k to improve some properties but more needs to be done. We secured Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme Funding to install heat pumps at our main office, Brynsworthy to replace an inefficient oil boiler. We are developing an electrical masterplan for Brynsworthy which will identify options for installing renewable energy, electric vehicle charging (including heavy goods vehicles) and other sustainability measures. We are installing heat pumps and solar panels at our flagship Future High Street Fund development in Barnstaple. We are installing solar panels at North Devon Crematorium. We are developing a carbon reduction plan for our harbours at Ilfracombe and Lynmouth.	Develop proposals for decarbonisation of Council buildings. Complete Brynsworthy decarbonisation project. Produce masterplan Complete Future High Street Fund development Complete Crematorium solar project. Produce harbour carbon reduction plan	Progress of actions dependent on subsequent funding and staff resources. March 2027 Autumn 2025 Spring 2026 Q3 2025 Autumn 2025

Buildings	Update	Next steps	Timescale
1.1 Reduce energy in tenanted buildings we own.	We secured £88k Sport England Swimming Pool Support Funding to install solar panels at Ilfracombe swimming pool. We secured Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme Funding to install heat pumps at the Landmark Theatre Ilfracombe. We are working with a number of our tenants to identify and get funding for measures that improve energy efficiency.	Complete Landmark Theatre decarbonisation projects.	March 2027 Target date to be determined but likely to be long-term aspiration.
1.2 'Build green' in our developments and look to maximise sustainability and energy generation opportunities.	Our flagship Future High Street Fund development in Barnstaple incorporates a number of sustainability measures, including bringing a derelict building back into use, active travel links and renewable energy. We provide support and funding to Community Land Trusts, enabling them to develop sustainable, local housing.	Complete Future High Street Fund development.	Spring 2026 Ongoing

Vehicles	Update	Next steps	Timescale
2.0 Reduce emissions from our vehicles.	We have purchased electric vehicles for our Parks team and installed EV charging at our depots in Barnstaple and Ilfracombe. We have mapped how carbon emissions can be reduced in line with our 2030 target through our vehicle replacement schedule. We trialled an electric HGV in our Waste & Recycling fleet in 2024 which confirmed that current electric HGVs are not yet able to service the needs of our Waste & Recycling fleet. Our Policy Development Committee have asked that we look at how vehicle emissions can be offset.	Continue to trial use of small electric vehicles and where these are shown to be effective secure funding for replacement in line with lease schedule. Produce offsetting paper for Policy Development Committee.	Ongoing End 2025
2.1 Investigate the use of alternative, low carbon fuels for our vehicles.	We have currently discounted the use of hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO) to fuel our vehicles due to significant concerns about its sustainability, cost and supply issues. We will review our decision once the findings of the UK Government review of HVO is published.	Review Council policy when new information on sustainability is published.	March 2026
Parks and land	Update	Next steps	Timescale
3.1 Develop tree planting programme on land owned by the Council.	We recognise the benefits of carbon sequestration and the value of tree planting to future offsetting needs. Our community woodland at Yeo Valley has been awarded a green flag for 2025. We have developed a programme for tree planting on our land and are securing funding to deliver this.	Opportunities for additional planting will be considered through our parks and grounds maintenance programme.	Ongoing
3.2 Integrate our climate and biodiversity ambitions with our ground's maintenance operations.	This is ongoing work for the Council. 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).	Deliver target of 20ha of land in meadow management.	2025

Parks and land	Update	Next steps	Timescale	
3.3 Deliver improvements in biodiversity through all relevant Council services.	We are producing a Biodiversity Management Plan that will help everyone understand how we are collectively meeting shared goals to conserve and enhance biodiversity; showcase the action we're taking to improve biodiversity and show other authorities and the general public what they can do for nature recovery and share good practice.	Publish Biodiversity Management Plan.	Jan 2026	
How the Council is run	Update	Next steps	Timescale	
4.0 Produce annual reviews of our carbon footprint and progress in delivering our Carbon, Environment & Biodiversity plan.	This is the third annual review of our plan.	Produce 2024/2025 carbon footprint.	Autumn 2025	
4.1 Deliver more sustainable procurement.	Our new Procurement Strategy, adopted in 2024, has a greater emphasis on sustainable procurement.	Review of sustainable procurement delivery for Climate Action Team.	End 2025	
4.2 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.	Revised project approval process introduced in 2024.	Revise Committee process for assessing environmental impacts of our work.	Summer 2025	

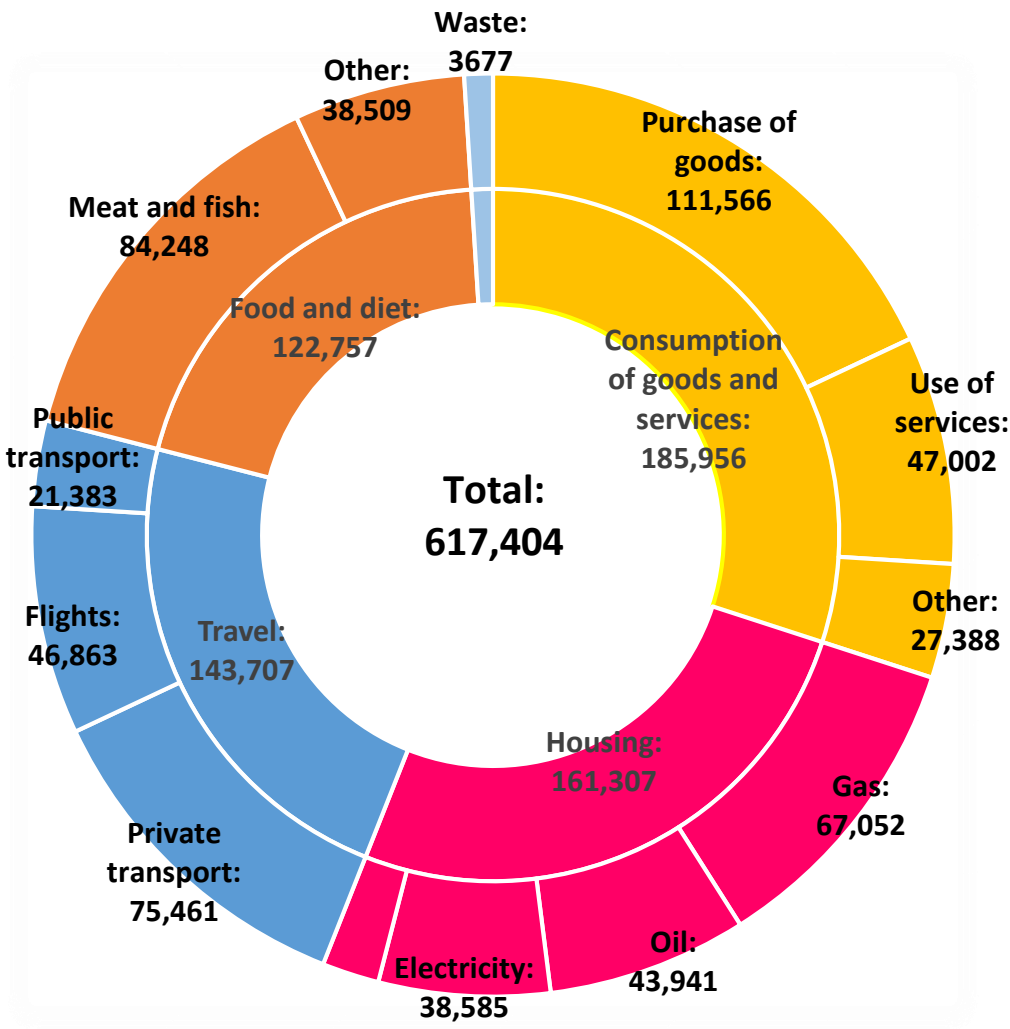
How the Council is run	Update	Next steps	Timescale
4.3 Reduce carbon emissions from staff travel.	NDC have a flexible working policy, and the majority of staff able to work flexibly take advantage of this. We operate a minibuss service for staff to access our main site. A proposal to allow staff to purchase EVs through a salary sacrifice scheme was shelved due to forthcoming Local Government Reorganisation. We have installed a bike rack at our main office, Brynsworthy.		
4.4 Review our treasury management policy and resources to determine feasibility of divestment and including NDC developing ethical investment vehicles within its portfolio.	Our Capital Strategy and our Annual Investment Strategy (AIS) considers Environmental, Social and Corporate Governance investments. We have previously invested in sustainable alternatives such as the Standard Chartered Bank Sustainable Fixed Term deposit. Pensions fall to DCC, and their commitment to a net zero portfolio is given here	Both the Capital Strategy and AIS are reviewed annually.	February 2026
4.5 Deliver climate communications plan.	We have a climate 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. Our website contains information for the public, businesses and Town and Parish Councils who wish to act on climate change etc. We produce a monthly Environment bulletin which is received by over 6000 subscribers. You can sign up to receive this at https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKNORTHDEVON/subscriber/new		Ongoing

How the Council is run	Update	Next steps	Timescale	
4.6 Support members in their role in championing, influencing and implementing positive climate change and biodiversity measures within the Council and the wider communities they represent.	The Member Climate Action Team provides strategic input and oversight into a range of areas and reports their recommendations to our Strategy & Resources Committee. Expert speakers on a range of environmental matters report to various committees. An online climate change training module for members is available, and we have made Carbon Literacy training available to them.		Ongoing	
4.7 Develop an offsetting strategy.	Work on an offsetting strategy has begun, however a lack of credible local offsetting schemes meant we were unable to progress this.	Review offsetting options (see action 2.0 above)	2025	

Reducing carbon emissions across North Devon

The UK has a legally binding target to meet net zero carbon by 2050. North Devon Council can support delivery of this target by working with residents, businesses and visitors to reduce their carbon emissions.

The diagram below shows the annual carbon emissions (measured in tonnes CO₂e) emitted as a result of the different activities that residents within your local authority’s boundary engage in – from heating to eating.



The information in this chart comes from Impact – an online community carbon footprint calculator: <https://impact-tool.org.uk/>.

The Devon Carbon Plan is the roadmap for how Devon will reach net-zero emissions by 2050 at the latest. We report on the actions we are helping to deliver through the Devon Climate Emergency Partnership.

We have identified a number of priority actions for North Devon that are set out in the following table.

Actions to reduce District emissions to net zero by 2050

Energy	Update	Next steps	Timescale	
5.0 Develop a Local Area Energy Plan for Devon.	Development of a spatial and temporal energy plan that enables Devon to understand its pathway to net zero and results in a pipeline of investable projects is being led by Devon County Council. They have received funding from the South West Net Zero Hub to produce an effective stakeholder engagement strategy, energy baseline and forward plan for Devon. We are supporting this process by providing data and information.	Baseline etc completed September 2025.	It is anticipated this work will be progressed through the Devon Combined County Authority.	
<i>This action links to the following Devon Carbon Plan actions: E1</i>				
Transport	Update	Next steps	Timescale	
6.0 Provide EV charging in Council carparks.	EV charging is in 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. Barnstaple Central will have an EV hub with 6 charge points with capability to expand to 'future proof' the site.			

Transport	Update	Next steps	Timescale	
6.1 Support active travel.	Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan published Feb 2023. Devon County Council have secured funding to implement two schemes i) on the Tarka Trail: between Willingcott Holiday Village and Knowle; and ii) Longbridge Junction in Barnstaple.	Planning team to identify S106 funds that could be used towards creating active travel schemes.	Ongoing	
This action links to the following Devon Carbon Plan actions: T6, T7				
6.2 Review our Taxi Licensing Policy and encourage our taxi operators to move to electric and ultra-low vehicles.	Our Taxi Licensing Policy was reviewed 2023; it includes measures to encourage operators to move to cleaner vehicles and to discourage engine idling.	Review Taxi Licensing Policy.	March 2027	
This action links to the following Devon Carbon Plan actions: T36				

Planning	Update	Next steps	Timescale
7.0 Review Local Plan for North Devon and Torridge.	We are working with Councillors to develop the scope of the Local Plan Review, and will formally start plan-making in October 2025. We anticipate the plan will be formally adopted in July 2028. We will explore 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 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, workers and visitors. We will consider the opportunities to support on and offshore wind energy development. Councillors have set up a climate thematic working group with 6 representatives from North Devon and Torridge District Councils.	Scoping. Formal notice of start of plan making.	October 2025
This action links to the following Devon Carbon Plan actions: C6, C7, E1.1, E1.2, E1.3, E4, B12, T12			
Planning	Update	Next steps	Timescale
7.1 Build upon our pioneering work that seeks biodiversity net gain from development.	Requirements for developers to deliver to deliver 10% Biodiversity Net Gain on the majority of developments was introduced in 2024.	Review success of delivery in Council Biodiversity Management Plan.	January 2026
This action links to the following Devon Carbon Plan actions: F14			

Planning	Update	Next steps	Timescale
7.2 Develop local biodiversity off setting schemes to provide choice and assurance to developers obligated through the planning process within North Devon.	Biodiversity Net Gain requires off-site biodiversity units to be available if the required net gain cannot be delivered on-site. Development of such schemes is led by third parties.	This will be determined by third parties applying to register habitat banks with the Council.	
This action links to the following Devon Carbon Plan actions: F17, F18			
7.3 Lobby Government for improved building regulations for energy efficiency and making renewable energy sources compulsory for new builds.	We provided a comprehensive and detailed response to last autumn's consultation on national planning policies. The Council will continue to respond to consultation opportunities as and when they arise.		Ongoing
This action links to the following Devon Carbon Plan actions: E6			
7.4 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.	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. Our Economic Strategy recognises the need for universal and reliable access to full fibre broadband.		Ongoing
This action links to the following Devon Carbon Plan actions: T1			

Nature	Update	Next steps	Timescale
8.0 We will work with the North Devon UNESCO Biosphere Reserve to support delivery of their Nature Recovery Plan.	We regularly report to the Biosphere on progress with delivering relevant actions of their Nature Recovery Plan. We are participating in the review of this plan and will incorporate new actions into our Biodiversity Management Plan.	Biosphere to publish revised Nature Recovery Plan. Publish Council Biodiversity Management Plan.	January 2026
This action links to the following Devon Carbon Plan actions: F14, F18, F23.2			
Waste and Recycling	Update	Next steps	Timescale
9.0 Deliver the Resource and Waste Strategy for Devon and Torbay	This action has been completed.		
This action links to the following Devon Carbon Plan actions: R2, R6, R13, R15			
9.1 Support the circular economy and action to reduce waste.	We have completed a £3.8M project to refit our waste processing facilities at Brynsworthy. This will enable us to sort more waste streams and to produce higher quality recyclates for sale. North Devon has a recycling rate of 45.8%. We have set up a Councillor Waste & Recycling group to identify actions to improve the quantity and quality of recyclates collected.	Comply with 'Simpler Recycling' regulations.	March 2026
This action links to the following Devon Carbon Plan actions: R1, R7, F23.5			
9.2 Work with Earth Action North Devon to support delivery of their Strategy.	Sustainability & Climate Officer works with Earth Action North Devon (formerly Plastic Free North Devon) on relevant issues.		Ongoing
This action links to the following Devon Carbon Plan actions: C4, R1			

Our Communities	Update	Next steps	Timescale
10.0 Support communities in adapting to climate change and delivering sustainability and carbon reduction in community and emergency plans.	Emergency planners from both North Devon and Torridge District Councils attended the Devon Communities Forum on 11 March.	Participate in review of business engagement on severe weather resilience and preparedness. Review NDC Emergency Procedures to ensure they are in line with DEPP guidance.	March 2026
10.1 Provide our towns, parishes and communities with information and support on carbon cutting and biodiversity enhancing projects, funding and opportunities.	We run a series of volunteer events and schools education days at Hillsborough and Fremington Local Nature Reserves and Yeo Valley Community Woodland. We are a partner in the North Devon National Landscape's Finding Nature's Footprints project, a three-year National Lottery Heritage Supported project working with communities to survey, map and take action for the wildlife of the area. We supported the Burton's 'Melting Ice Rising Tides' symposium. Officers attends talks, community events, schools etc as required.	Continue to deliver events at North Devon council sites. Continue to support Finding Nature's Footprints and cultural projects.	March 2026 Ongoing
This action links to the following Devon Carbon Plan actions: C2, C3, R1			

Our Communities	Update	Next steps	Timescale
10.2 Deliver home energy efficiency improvements, particularly to those households experiencing fuel poverty.	We have a statement of intent for Ecoflex and the Great British Insulation Scheme. The Council has an Energy Efficiency grants & loan webpage (updated as appropriate). We have re-commissioned 361 Energy to provide a home energy advice service, prioritising vulnerable and low-income households.		Ongoing
This action links to the following Devon Carbon Plan actions: B2, B6			
10.3 Promote sustainable events through licensing function and North Devon's Safety Advisory Group.	Guidance published 2022.		Ongoing
This action links to the following Devon Carbon Plan actions: C2			
10.4 Seek opportunities to develop a low carbon economy and promote green entrepreneurship and investment through our Economic Strategy.	We have received £100k from the South West Net Zero Hub to develop a green hydrogen roadmap for northern Devon, including an assessment of skills needs. Our Clean Maritime and Green Energy Officer is working with partners to deliver our Economic Strategy and Clean Maritime Growth Vision.	Green hydrogen routemap published.	Autumn 2025
This action links to the following Devon Carbon Plan actions: R3, R22			
10.5 Promote local shopping.	We are delivering this in Barnstaple through our Future High Street Fund project and ongoing town centre management.		Ongoing
This action links to the following Devon Carbon Plan actions: F1, F1.1, F1.2			

Our Communities	Update	Next steps	Timescale
10.6 Support our farmers and the agricultural industry to produce more sustainable food.	Support for farmers and the agricultural industry is delivered through North Devon Plus. This has included 11 agricultural and 9 business projects funded through the Net Zero element of the Rural England Prosperity Fund, as well as a farm diversification grant to allow storage and production of own farm produce. They have also visited 20 farming enterprises in North Devon, reviewing all business and environmental practices and providing information and support to apply for Environmental schemes. We have produced the Planning Advice for Farmers guidance document to assist those in the agriculture industry looking to adapt, expand or diversify their business. It gives advice on when applications are required and what a good planning application looks at with respect to new farm buildings, slurry storage and engineering operations. It also looks at what is required for those looking to diversify their business, including through renewable energy.		
This action links to the following Devon Carbon Plan actions: <i>F9, F19</i>			
10.7 Work with the Devon Climate Emergency Partnership to deliver actions enabling Devon to become net zero carbon by 2050.	We continue to work with the Devon Climate Emergency partnership to deliver the Devon Carbon Plan. We part-fund a communications post at the partnership.	Support development of a Local Area Energy Plan (action 5.0 above)	Ongoing

Our Communities	Update	Next steps	Timescale	
10.8 Work with the Devon Climate Emergency Partnership to deliver actions enabling Devon to adapt to climate change.	We continue to work with the Devon Climate Emergency Partnership to deliver the Devon, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Adaptation Strategy.	Support review of business engagement on severe weather resilience and preparedness (action 10.0 above).	Ongoing	
10.9 We will support our towns, parishes and communities to monitor and improve water quality in the district.	This is a new action for 2025.	Work with partners to understand our role.	March 2026	