

# Carbon Reduction Plan 2026-28

Mid Devon District Council, March 2026

## The Council's Carbon Footprint

Each year the Council commissions a carbon footprint report by the University of Exeter. Emissions are measured as tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO<sub>2</sub>e).

Net emissions for the 2024/25 financial year totalled 18,364 tCO<sub>2</sub>e. This was 2% higher than the previous year.

The chart and table for 'headline alternative categories' provides a useful overview of changes or trends in emissions for these categories, over time. Please refer to Figure 4 (below) from the Results section of the 2024/25 report, available online.<sup>1</sup>

Headlines from the latest changes as follows:

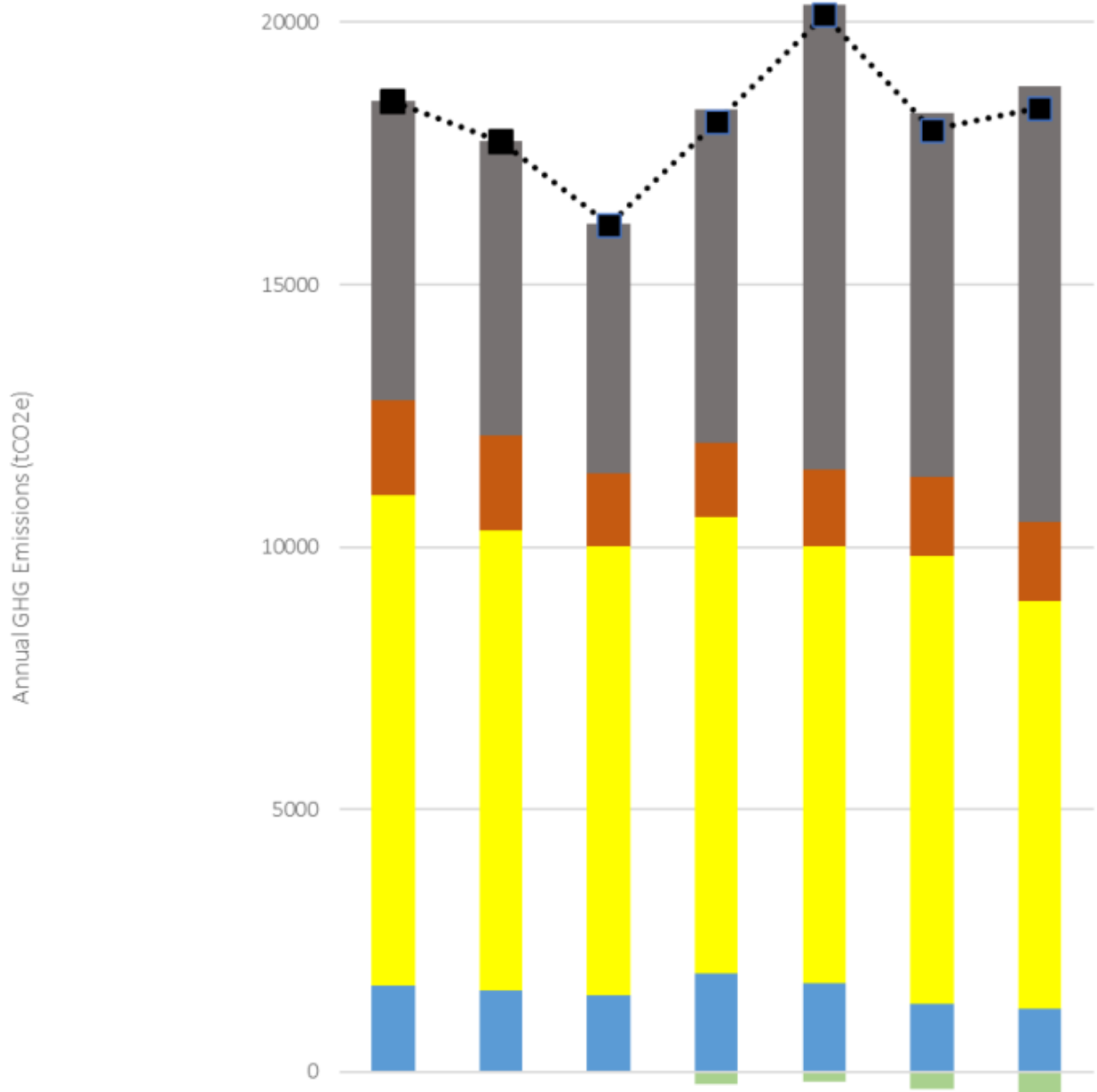
- Estimated emissions from the *Procurement* category **increased** by 1,370 tCO<sub>2</sub>e compared to the previous year, mainly due to increased spend and revised emission factors.
- *Transport*: emissions remained about the same.
- *Social Housing*: the footprint **decreased** by 751 tCO<sub>2</sub>e mainly due to a lower assumed energy consumption per dwelling.
- *Buildings excluding housing*: impact **reduced** by 113 tCO<sub>2</sub>e. Decarbonised leisure centres stopped using gas during 2024/25.
- *Offsets*: improved by 29% - **cutting** an extra 95 tCO<sub>2</sub>e. Decarbonised leisure centres used more electricity, and as the Council buys green power there is a carbon offset. The Council also exports some of its solar power.

Net emissions for elements in the Council's direct control (comprising Council Offices and Facilities; Transport; and Offsets) contributed just under 9% of the 2024/25 overall total footprint. The 1,589 tCO<sub>2</sub>e figure for 2024/25 is circa 35% **lower** than the 2,427 tCO<sub>2</sub>e figure for the 2018/19 baseline year (almost 840 tCO<sub>2</sub>e less).

- Reductions in this emissions subset since 2018/19 came from Council Offices and Facilities (from 1,098 to 705 tCO<sub>2</sub>e); and Offsets (from 0 to -420 tCO<sub>2</sub>e).
- Since 2018/19 fleet impacts had hardly changed, although the Council now serves circa 2,500 more households (up from 35,650 to 38,150).

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<sup>1</sup> <https://sustainablemiddevon.org.uk/our-plan/the-council-s-carbon-footprint/>



	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
5. Offsets	0	-9	-8	-241	-181	-325	-420
4. Procurement	5703	5610	4754	6372	8842	6925	8295
3. Transport	1812	1818	1382	1400	1473	1515	1520
2. Social Housing	9326	8758	8547	8711	8319	8526	7775
1. Buildings (exc. housing)	1654	1554	1469	1865	1694	1307	1194
GRAND TOTAL (net)	18495	17732	16144	18108	20147	17948	18364

Figure 4: Breakdown of emissions by headline alternative categories

## Actions to reduce climate impact (greenhouse gas emissions)

The following table is a summary of planned carbon reduction actions for 2026-2028.

Actions, Activities, Projects	Emissions Cut, tCO <sub>2</sub> e/year
<b>Property Services</b> (buildings excluding housing)	<b>302</b>
Phoenix Lane solar & storage	215
Solar arrays, commercial land	77
New solar arrays, waste depot, 49kWp	10
Phoenix House Building Management System, AHU, upgrades	TBC
Culm Valley, fabric / condition upgrade.	TBC
Exe Valley, fabric / condition upgrade.	TBC
Lords Meadow, fabric / condition upgrade.	TBC
<b>Transport</b>	<b>48</b>
Secure logistics etc., to enable EV for 22 vehicle replacements.	44
Trial of HVO for dustcarts / heavy vehicles.	4
<b>Social Housing</b>	<b>349</b>
HRA Stock upgrades: Solid Fuel appliance removals	128
HRA Stock upgrades: Whole house window replacement	15
HRA Stock upgrades: internal insulation	13
HRA Stock upgrades: Whole roof replacement	7
HRA Stock upgrades: Renewable Heating installations	48
HRA Stock upgrades: LED bathroom lighting	1
Replace poor EPC properties with 'A' rated	TBC
Replace 22 properties with NZ stock	136
<b>Total</b>	<b>699</b>

Actions are grouped into service areas: Property Services; Transport; Social Housing. The right-hand column shows the reduction in annual emissions that we estimate can be achieved for each action (Emissions Cut, tCO<sub>2</sub>e per year). Where a cell shows "TBC" (To Be Confirmed) teams are working to determine a satisfactory estimate. To put the estimated savings into context:

- An annual reduction of 350 tCO<sub>2</sub>e in Property and Transport would equate to circa 14% of the 2,427 tCO<sub>2</sub>e 2018/19 baseline impact for 'direct control' elements.
- An annual reduction of 349 tCO<sub>2</sub>e in Social Housing would equate to circa 3% of the 9,326 tCO<sub>2</sub>e 2018/19 baseline footprint for this component.

### How our actions will make a difference

Fuel and power consumption by the activity areas above - council buildings, transport fleet and housing - are significant sources of greenhouse gas emissions.

Moving away from consuming fossil fuels where possible (Scope 1 emissions) will 'decarbonise' transport and the energy used to heat buildings i.e. at Council facilities, within the Council's rented commercial estate, and in social housing.

Actions to reduce energy demand will cut costs and carbon, such as works to improve insulation and the fabric on buildings e.g. door seals and windows, or changing to more efficient heating and cooling systems, or energy controls and management systems.

The Council will trial HVO (hydrotreated vegetable oil) as fuel for dustcarts / refuse collection trucks. The trial will seek to enable a future decision on fuels, and will demonstrate the realistic potential, costs and logistical considerations.

The climate impact linked to electricity generation (Scope 2 emissions) is expected to gradually decrease as the UK's generation mix continues to decarbonise, and due to future growth of localised generation. This will, in turn, reduce the impact of power used by the council's facilities, rented commercial estate, and in homes rented out by the council.

The Council switched to 100% green power at all its facilities, including offices, leisure centres and the waste depot, in October 2023. This saved over 300 tCO<sub>2</sub>e in 2023/24 and over 400 tCO<sub>2</sub>e in 2024/25.

The Council plans to continue to invest in renewable energy. On-site renewable power is more efficient than grid supply and avoids emissions linked to transmission losses (Scope 3). Direct investment in renewables can save the Council a considerable amount of money over time and the range of benefits are broader than avoiding emissions - such as price resilience, supply resilience, and benefits to the wider community (if we draw less power from the local substation, that capacity is available to others).

Looking ahead to 2028 and setting ambitions beyond that, towards 2030, the Council wishes to set a trajectory of minimising emissions and enabling zero-carbon and low-carbon options. Further reductions will be sought, and teams will submit external funding bids to enable more projects. Funding from central government plays a crucial part in making it possible and affordable for us to achieve and expand our action to address climate change. The Council also works in partnership with others and is a signatory to the Devon Carbon Plan.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to the actions above, the Authority will seek to use its spending power to influence and require its suppliers to reduce the climate impact of the goods and services they provide (Scope 3 emissions). The reach of our influence, such as engaging with tenants, working in partnership, demanding supply side change, and leading by example, has the potential to outweigh and outlast what we can achieve in the short term within our directly managed operations.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://devonclimateemergency.org.uk/devon-carbon-plan>

## Working towards Net Zero

The priority is to cut greenhouse gas emissions, particularly those impacts under direct management control. Components of the 2024/25 carbon footprint under direct control comprised around 9% of total emissions. The Council’s ability to fully decarbonise this part of the footprint is highly constrained. For example, small vehicles can be replaced with electric vehicles (EV) but currently the alternative technology availability and costs are inhibitive for large vehicles such as dustcarts, particularly in a rural district.

However, in theory, net zero for the components under direct corporate control can be achieved by a combination of cutting those emissions and by reducing or removing emissions elsewhere to compensate for the council’s impacts. This is known as offsetting.

Any external offsetting would be secondary to reductions and would need to comply with recognised best practice standards such as the [Oxford Offsetting Principles](#)<sup>3</sup> to ensure carbon credits are additional, measurable, etc. We will also consider nature-based carbon capture, such as through land management and partnership projects.

The Council already offsets hundreds of tonnes of emissions annually, by buying green power, and it exports some of the power created by solar panels on its property (surplus that cannot be used on site is absorbed by the local network).

The table below gives examples of different types of actions that could avoid, reduce or seek to balance out greenhouse gas emissions. Next steps would involve engagement to clarify opportunities, steer ambitions and identify SMART targets for further action.

<b>Scope 1</b> , direct emissions, from fuel combustion	<b>Scope 2</b> , indirect, from purchase of electricity	<b>Scope 3</b> , indirect emissions linked to supply chains
<b>AVOID</b> Less travel.	<b>AVOID</b> Switch off / use less power.	<b>AVOID</b> Buy less.
<b>REDUCE</b> Replace vehicles with more efficient models and low carbon technology e.g. EV. Switch to low-carbon fuels. Staff culture, best practice.	<b>REDUCE</b> Replace plant / equipment with more efficient models and technology. Clean / low carbon power. Staff culture, best practice.	<b>REDUCE</b> Require suppliers to reduce their emissions. Choose products and services with lower emissions. Efficient supply e.g. buy local.
<b>INSET</b> Support / enable / invest in ways to reduce tenant energy use, and decarbonise homes. Run EV on renewable power.	<b>INSET</b> Fund / support / enable / invest in ways to reduce tenant energy use, and to decarbonise tenant energy.	<b>INSET</b> Actions by supply chain. Council supports / invests to enable communities and businesses to reduce impacts.
<b>OFFSET</b> Buy gas from renewable sources, e.g. biogas. Nature-based offset.	<b>OFFSET</b> Export / sell green energy. Purchase green power. Nature-based offset.	<b>OFFSET</b> Buy carbon-neutral products and services. Suppliers subscribe to (certified) offsetting schemes.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.smithschool.ox.ac.uk/research/oxford-offsetting-principles>