

**Report for: Planning, Environment and Sustainability
Policy Development Group (PDG)**

Date of Meeting: 23 September 2025

Subject: Climate and Sustainability Update

Cabinet Member: Cllr Natasha Bradshaw - Cabinet Member for
Environment and Climate Change.

Responsible Officer: Jason Ball - Climate and Sustainability Specialist.

Paul Deal - Head of Finance, Property and Climate
Resilience.

Exempt: None

which are Exempt from publication under paragraph 3,
Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act
1972 (as amended) as it contains information relating to
the financial or business affairs of any particular person
(including the authority holding that information)

Wards Affected: All

Enclosures: (none)

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendation(s)

To receive an update on the Climate and Sustainability Programme.

Recommendation(s):

1. **That the Planning, Environment and Sustainability Policy Development Group (PDG) notes and accepts this report as an update on the Council's Climate and Sustainability Programme, and progress on its response to the Climate Emergency.**

Section 2 – Report

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report emphasises activity and progress updates for brevity.
- 1.2 The Council's environmental sustainability work can be split into: **corporate** activity related to its own assets and operations; and activities to enable and facilitate **community** actions across Mid Devon.
- 1.3 Climate change actions seek to address **mitigation** (reducing greenhouse emissions) and **adaptation** (resilience to climate change risks).
- 1.4 The Council's [Climate Change Strategy](#) 2024/28 aligns with the 2024/28 Corporate Plan (CP). An annual [Climate Action Plan](#) (CAP) aims to deliver corporate Net Zero at the soonest opportunity. Each PDG and team must manage their remit and operations with regard to climate adaptation and mitigation. We also work in partnership with local businesses, organisations, community groups and residents.
- 1.5 The Council participates in the [Devon Climate Emergency partnership](#), is a signatory to the [Devon Climate Emergency Pledge](#) and endorsed the [Devon Carbon Plan](#) goal of net-zero emissions by 2050 at the latest.
- 1.6 The Climate and Sustainability (C&S) Specialist leads the development of the Council's C&S Programme, working with partners, all Councillors and colleagues and particularly with service leads, the Corporate Management Team and the Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change.

2.0 Performance

- 2.1 [Corporate Plan Performance Indicators](#) (PI) are reported to [Cabinet](#) quarterly (Scrutiny Committee every 6 months). Quarterly [Performance Dashboards](#) share data on e.g. emissions avoided by generating solar power. Notes on achievements also [available online](#). (sustainablemiddevon.org.uk/our-plan)
- 2.2 The Council's Carbon Footprint
 - 2.2.1 Annual [carbon footprint](#) (organisational inventory) reports are published on the [Sustainable Mid Devon](#) website. Emissions are measured in tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO₂e). Reports since 2018/19 (baseline year) have been produced by the University of Exeter's Centre for Energy and the Environment (CEE) via the South West Energy and Environment Group (SWEED). Analysis is based on BS EN ISO 14064-1 and the Greenhouse Gas Protocol.
 - 2.2.2 The latest Carbon Footprint report for the 2024/25 financial year has been produced (Appendix 1, enclosed). Please refer to the Management Summary (page ii) and the charts in the Results section (pages 21 to 25 of the report). Notes below must be read in the context of the official report.

2.2.3 Net emissions for the 2024/25 financial year totalled 18,364 tCO₂e. This was 2% higher than the previous year.

2.2.4 The chart and table for 'headline alternative categories' provides a useful overview of changes or trends in emissions for these categories, over time. (Figure 4.) Headlines from the latest changes as follows:

- Estimated emissions from the Procurement category **increased** by 1,370 tCO₂e 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 tCO₂e mainly due to a lower assumed energy consumption per dwelling.
- Buildings excluding housing: impact **reduced** by 113 tCO₂e. Decarbonised leisure centres stopped using gas during 2024/25.
- Offsets: **improved** by 29% - cutting an extra 95 tCO₂e. 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.

2.2.5 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 tCO₂e figure for 2024/25 is circa **35% lower** than the 2,427 tCO₂e figure for the 2018/19 baseline year. (Almost 840 tCO₂e less.)
- Reductions in this emissions subset since 2018/19 came from Council Offices and Facilities (from 1,098 to 705 tCO₂e); and Offsets (from 0 to -420 tCO₂e).
- 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).

2.2.6 Below, Figure 4: Breakdown of emissions by headline alternative categories.

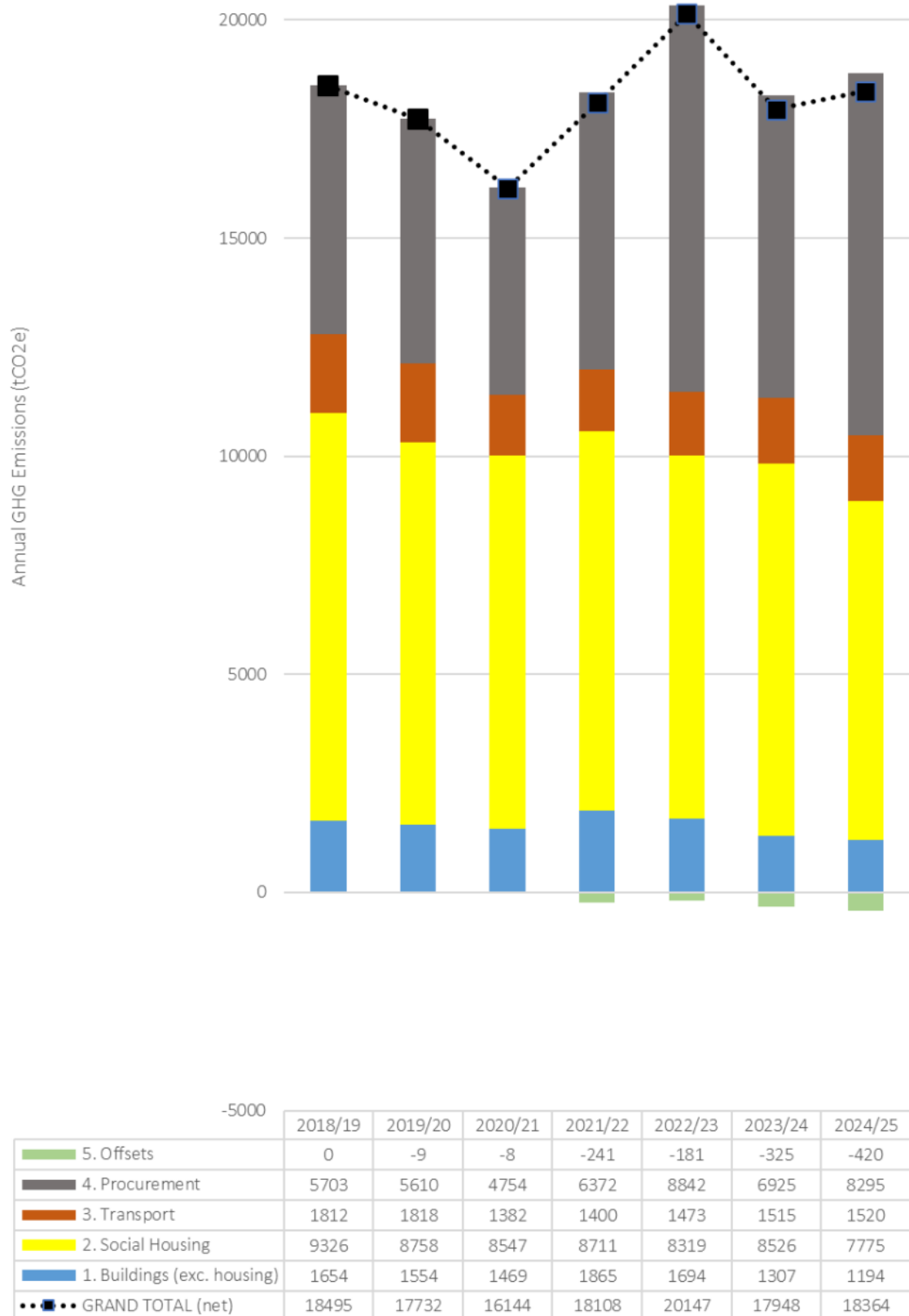


Figure 4: Breakdown of emissions by headline alternative categories

2.3 Table below - positive progress on the CAP at Q1 2025/26.

Actions, Activities, Projects	Emissions Cut, tCO ₂ e/year	Q1 25-26 Status	Progress %
Property Services (subtotal)	218		
Pannier Market LED fixtures and controls.	2	complete	100%
Exe Valley, additional solar car ports. Now battery storage.	37	behind	
Culm Valley, new ASHP, solar.	45	active	
Exe Valley gas CHP 70kW. (combined heat and power)	-50	active	
Solar Car Ports, Phoenix Lane multi storey.	146	emerging	5%
Building Management System project at Phoenix House.	38	emerging	5%
Fleet (subtotal)	7		
Replace 1 van	2	behind	
Replace 4 vans	5	active	
Housing (subtotal)	135		
Solid Fuel appliance removals from HRA Stock	50	active	32%
Whole house UPVC window replacements to HRA stock	15	active	40%
Internal Insulation upgrades, HRA stock	13	active	60%
Whole roof Replacement to HRA stock	7	active	50%
Renewable Heating installs, HRA stock	48	active	10%
LED lighting to Bathrooms in HRA stock	1	active	84%

3.0 Community and partnership activities

3.1 Climate Change Strategy themes:

- Vibrant Landscapes at the Heart of Devon
- Climate Resilient Communities
- Healthy Homes
- Green Growth and Bright Futures
- Sustainable Services and Spending

3.1.1 Recent engagement activities, in brief:

- A first informal Forum was held online for key stakeholders. Presentations included Dart Valley nature recovery (vibrant landscapes theme); 'Connecting the Culm' natural flood management and community engagement around climate adaptation (climate resilient communities theme); ECOE Advice home energy funding and advice (healthy homes theme).
- The Forum also announced that the Council will offer small grants to community groups taking action on climate and sustainability - funded by the

C&S budget - details to be confirmed. (We had also supported stakeholders on a lottery funding bid but this has not been realised.)

- The online forum and themed conversations attracted over 30 key community stakeholders - a broad mix from business owners, farmers, farming advisors, nature conservation volunteers and managers, to community funding enablers, planning policy campaigners, educators and youth workers.
- Meetings also held with community groups and champions to discuss potential: Dart Valley farmers; Sustainable Bradninch; Sustainable Crediton; Sustainable Tiverton; Tidcombe Fen; Uffculme Green Team.
- Community engagement and a presentation of the Climate Change Strategy at the *Connecting the Culm* 2025 Forum; at the Hemyock Parish Council; at the Sustainable Homes tenant event.
- Energy Boost Mid Devon - ECOE Advice at landlord networking event.
- Launched Green Enterprise Grants, handling expressions of interest.

3.1.2 Community engagement continues e.g.:

- Letting agent online workshop 18 September hosted by the Council with ECOE Advice, to cover energy efficiency, retrofit and tenant support.
- A new 'Connecting the Culm' community engagement project.
- Work to support and attend in-person events led by partners - Big Green Fair at Crediton [27 September](#); spring 2026 event TBC.

3.1.3 We continue to share and promote news, activities, projects, resources and funding via social media, the [Let's Talk Mid Devon](#) engagement platform and the [Sustainable Mid Devon](#) website ([resources map](#) updated).

3.2 Vibrant landscapes at the heart of Devon

3.2.1 Cabinet 05 August 2025 gave [approval](#) for Devon's [Local Nature Recovery Strategy](#) (LNRS) to go out to consultation - due in September - following recommendations from this PDG's special meeting 29 July 2025 and a briefing at Planning Policy and Advisory Group (PPAG) 16 June 2025.

3.2.2 Housing team work with residents to enhance biodiversity:

- Wildflower seeds sown in springtime at Townlands in Bradninch.
- Bug boxes to be installed at Townlands and Bray's Close.
- We will be planting a wildlife area in Sunningbrook Road and planting fruit trees at St Georges Court in the coming months.

3.3 Climate Resilient Communities

3.3.1 The Council will work in partnership with Blackdown Hills National Landscape to support a new 'Connecting the Culm' community engagement project around climate adaptation.

3.4 Healthy Homes

- 3.4.1 [Energy Boost Mid Devon](#), a partnership project with charity ECOE Advice, launched in April. By the end of Q1 ECOE Advice had done 4 outreach events, dealt with 42 enquiries, made 13 home visits, and used £864 of the £15,000 Energy Efficiency Fund to help Mid Devon residents.
- 3.4.2 The Housing Initiatives Officer worked with DCC and other districts on a bid for the Warm Homes: Local Grant as part of the Devon consortium. Grant allocated to Mid Devon area: £472,500. Delivery deadline spring 2026.
- 3.4.3 By the end of 2025 the Council is on track to replace old stock with 48 new properties that achieve Net Zero energy performance. With demolitions completed, sites are in preparation at [Bampton](#) and Tiverton. This will achieve progress on the Climate Action Plan, ahead of schedule.
- 3.5 Green Growth and Bright Futures
 - 3.5.1 [Green Enterprise Grants](#). From numerous expressions of interest, by August we had invited 28 applicants to bid. The Decision Panel considered and approved grant offers to 2 bids; each is estimated to save at least 1 tCO₂e annually from their carbon footprint. Launched in May 2025, the scheme offers grants £500 to £5k for small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) to drive local investment to help reduce emissions in Mid Devon.
 - 3.5.2 Deletti 'Phase 2' partnership. The Council will host 12 new rapid [chargepoints](#) under this scheme, run on renewable power, owned and operated by Wenea. Status: 6 installed. (On target to have 10 by 2028 as per Corporate Plan.)
 - 3.5.3 Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) scheme. Devon County Council's (DCC) procurement is completed. Delivery details to be announced.

4.0 **Corporate activities**

- 4.1 Net Zero Advisory Group (NZAG) is reviewing its Terms of Reference. Discussion thus far has covered the group type, how to run it, options for the areas of focus, choice of achievable goals, and the short time left before MDDC would merge with other authorities.

NZAG noted progress and milestones reached since the original Terms of Reference e.g.: award-winning Net-Zero-ready housing with excellent adaptation features; renovation of housing stock; Green Enterprise Grants for local businesses; tree planting and community orchards; engagement projects; boosting green transport infrastructure (active travel and EV); driving infrastructure investments and development masterplanning; progression through the Local Plan review (climate change being the overarching priority) with the interim planning policy statement and new resources to help developers design operational efficiency and Net-Zero-ready homes; Public Health initiatives for private sector housing (e.g. damp and mould campaigns,

government funding) air quality campaigns, taxi licensing policy to encourage cleaner vehicles, and supporting community emergency / resilience planning.

4.2 The C&S Specialist continues to give support to all teams and has:

- Maintained the C&S Corporate Plan performance data and a cross-team External Funding tracker (measure 1.2) and carried out risk reviews.
- Coordinated CAP monitoring.
- Commissioned and coordinated data collation for the carbon footprint report.
- Worked to support and brief the Corporate Management Team (CMT), service leads and others on corporate environment aims.
- Supported team meetings and Service Lead meetings with climate and sustainability being a regular agenda item. Met quarterly with key operational managers to support communications, teamwork and to help prioritise actions. Shared opportunities with Members, NZAG, CMT, colleagues etc.
- Provided NZAG secretariat support.
- Worked with the Cabinet Member to take forward actions raised by this PDG and NZAG with colleagues and partners.

4.3 Mid Devon District Council **ranked 32** out of 164 UK district and city council results on the [Council Climate Scorecards](#), a campaign to compare climate action by local authorities. MDDC scored **44%** (up by 16 points this year), which placed us in the top 20% (8 out of 10 scored less). For context, other authorities scored 35% on average and the best was only 68%. This was encouraging but bear in mind the scorecards are unofficial and subjective.

Financial Implications. The financial implications associated with this report are the overall costs of the C&S Programme, budgets linked specifically to the Council's Corporate Plan, Climate Strategy and CAP.

Legal Implications. The Council's environmental sustainability duties are underpinned by legislation e.g. [Environment Act 2021](#). All local authorities have obligations under the [Climate Change Act 2008](#) with regard to climate change adaptation (resilience) and mitigation (emission reductions). [Full Council declared a Climate Emergency in June 2019](#).

Risk Assessment. Progress on Performance Indicators (PI) provided separately by Performance and Risk Reports. There are 2 main risks (to the Council): 1) that the Council does not take sufficient actions to enable it to meet its Climate Emergency declaration ambitions; and 2) that the financial implications of Climate Change are not adequately measured and reflected in the Council's decision making.

Impact on Climate Change. The role of the C&S Specialist in support of the corporate officer team is central to the Council's C&S Programme by actions such as the development of strategic positions and delivery of projects through internal, community and partnership work.

Equalities Impact Assessment. There are no equality impacts associated with this report. Specific projects and policies are subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty. (Assessing the equality impacts of proposed changes to policies, procedures and practices is not only a legal requirement, but also a positive opportunity for authorities to make better decisions based on robust evidence.)

Relationship to Corporate Plan. Please refer to the Planning, Environment and Sustainability section and to the performance measures for points 1.1, 1.2 and 1.4.

Section 3 – Statutory Officer sign-off / mandatory checks

Statutory Officer: Andrew Jarrett
Agreed by or on behalf of the Section 151 Officer
Date: 10 September 2025

Statutory Officer: Maria De Leiburne
Agreed on behalf of the Monitoring Officer
Date: 10 September 2025

Chief Officer: Stephen Walford
Agreed by Chief Executive
Date: 10 September 2025

Performance and risk: Steve Carr
Agreed on behalf of the Corporate Performance & Improvement Manager.
Date: 05 September 2025

Cabinet member notified: Yes.

Report: Exclusion of the press and public from this item of business on the published agenda on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information. No.

Appendix: Exclusion of the press and public from this item of business on the published agenda on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information. No.

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Jason Ball, Climate and Sustainability Specialist: Email: JBall@MidDevon.gov.uk Tel: 01884 255255.

Background papers: Previous update provided to this [PDG](#) on 10 June 2025. For background details, please refer to previous reports, all [available online](#).