

## **REPORT TO CUSTOMER FOCUS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE / STRATEGIC SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Date of Meeting: 4 June 2026

Report of: Strategic Director Place

Title: Exeter City Council's Corporate Carbon Reduction Plan

### **1. Summary:**

- 1.1 This report presents the City Council's Carbon Reduction Plan (Appendix A), approved by Executive 17 March 2026.
- 1.2 The Carbon Reduction Plan has been developed from the City Council's Costed Organisational Carbon Footprint Projections Report and relevant actions from the previous Carbon Reduction Plan reported to Strategic Scrutiny on 11 September 2025.
- 1.3 The Carbon Reduction Plan includes all Positive Current Trajectory measures (previously known as Business As Usual) and where possible, includes measures from the Mid-Term and Max scenario measures from across the main sectors of the City Council's operation.

### **2. Recommendations:**

- 2.1 Strategic Scrutiny review the Carbon Reduction Plan (Appendix A).
- 2.2 Members note and support work undertaken to incorporate Positive Current Trajectory (PCT) measures as set out in the Carbon Reduction Plan, into Service Plans, as well as intended outcomes from the Corporate Plan, and integrating the Corporate Performance Dashboard.

### **3. Issues which scrutiny could consider:**

- 3.1 Strategic Scrutiny to review the Carbon Reduction Plan and resources required to deliver the Plan.

### **4. Report details:**

- 4.1 In 2025 a report to Executive Committee presented a summary of the City Council's "Costed Organisational Carbon Footprint Projections" Report. The report, produced by the Centre for Energy and Environment at the University of Exeter, assessed the potential to achieve net zero by reducing emissions across five sectors: council-owned housing, non-domestic buildings, transport, renewable energy and land use change/afforestation.

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- 4.2 The Report includes cost estimates, and considers three scenarios:
- **Positive Current Trajectory (PCT):** The level of activity that is already planned for and/or committed to by the City Council. Activity will require additional funding from government, or other external sources.
  - **Mid Case (Mid):** An escalation of activity beyond the PCT scenario i.e., a 'stretch target' which would also require additional government grant funding and operational costs.
  - **Net Zero (Max):** A theoretical maximum level of uptake of measures, which would have considerable impact on cost, skills, supply chain and capacity.
- 4.3 The PCT measures have been incorporated into the Carbon Reduction Plan, combined with measures from the previously Carbon Reduction Plan. Where possible, some measures from the Mid and Max scenario have been included in the Carbon Reduction Plan. Actions labelled as a/b/c, indicates PCT/Mid/Max options from the Costed Organisational Carbon Footprint Projections Report.
- 4.4 Where known, the Carbon Reduction Plan includes estimated costs, metrics for each action, and the relevant Head of Service as lead officer. If projects have not secured funding to date, they represent future ambition.
- 4.5 The Carbon Reduction Plan covers seven sectors: Housing, Non-domestic buildings, Transport & Equipment, Land Use Change, Procurement, F-Gases & Waste and Overall Organisation.
- 4.6 The Carbon Reduction Plan is a live evolving action plan, which will be reviewed every 6 months to update on progress made, as well as any legislative, financial, technical and operational changes. The Carbon Reduction Plan is reported to Strategic Scrutiny every six-monthly basis to ensure progress is tracked and priorities and intended outcomes are reported.
- 4.7 The Net Zero team and relevant representatives from OMB meet twice a year and are responsible for updating the Carbon Reduction Plan, ensuring actions are aligned and are included within Service Plans.
- 4.8 To show progress, each action is reviewed and colour coded based on the following colours: green = near completion, orange = some progress, yellow = slight progress, red = no progress.
- 4.9 A full list of completed and committed projects, to reduce corporate carbon emissions can be found at the end of the Carbon Reduction Plan, showing year completed. Actions recently completed or in progress include:
- Construction of new Council homes to Passivhaus standard.
  - Loft and cavity insulation within City Council social homes.
  - Solar Photovoltaic (PV) Installations on City Council social homes.
  - Riverside Leisure Centre Decarbonisation Project.

- Solar PV installations at Exeter Arena, Wonford Sports Centre and St Sidwell's Point, Senate Court and Guildhall Car Park.
- Council corporate energy contract is from a renewable tariff.
- Migration of Council data from Council based data centres to cloud based.
- Trial of Hydrogenated Vegetable Oil (HVO) fuel within fleet vehicles.
- Expansion of electric fleet and portable equipment.
- Incentives to increase uptake of public transport for staff and cycle storage for active travel.
- Devon & Torbay Local Electricity Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) project currently underway with several City Council car parks due to have EV charging infrastructure installed.
- 799 trees planted in 2025. An assessment completed in 2023 by Treeconomics, assessing the canopy cover of the whole city of Exeter, found the estimated canopy cover to be 20.2%, higher than the UK national average (17%) for towns and cities.
- Procurement sends a Carbon Data Request form to all suppliers awarded with contracts over £100k providing for better measurement of scope 3 emissions.
- The City Council awarded silver status for Carbon Literacy Training.

4.10 Carbon reduction discussions are integrated into OMB meetings, with a dedicated Carbon Reduction Plan review meeting held with relevant Heads of Service every 6 months.

4.11 Delivery of the Carbon Reduction Plan includes extensive additional benefits, over and above a reduction in of GHG emission reduction, which includes:

- reduced use of fossil fuel lowers pollution levels.
- healthier more comfortable homes and buildings.
- energy efficient, cheaper to run social housing and corporate buildings.
- biodiversity enhancement.
- improved health for our workers and residents.
- reduced operational costs supporting sustainable City Council services.
- improved budget security from a self-supply of renewable energy generation.
- local leadership and dissemination for replication of decarbonisation measures.
- decarbonisation works provide for 'green' jobs and skills training.
- collaboration and innovation benefit the city and region.

## **5. Resource implications including non-financial resources:**

5.1 The original City Council Carbon Reduction Plan has been reviewed and updated to include all PCT measures, as set out in the Costed Organisational Carbon Footprint Projections Report. Funding operational and capital reduction measures is extremely challenging. Estimated capital and operational costs will inform discussions with relevant OMB representatives to support future grant funding bids.

5.2 The Carbon Reduction Plan is being incorporated into service business plans, which will form part of future planning of existing service budgets.

## 6. Legal aspects:

- 6.1 Section 1 of the Climate Change Act 2008 states that it is the duty of the Secretary of State to ensure that the net UK carbon account for the year 2050 is at least 100% lower than the 1990 baseline. The target was originally 80% and was increased to 100% by the Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019.

## 7. How does the matter contribute to the Council's Corporate Plan:

- 7.1 This report and the work of the Net Zero team links directly to the Corporate Plan 2025-28. Activity to reduce our GHG emissions links to key priorities set out in the Corporate Plan and in collaboration with City Council services, including using specific and measurable metrics to track progress against priorities and intended outcomes.

Local Economy	Work with Building Greater Exeter and Exeter College to support green skills, training and local employment opportunities, as part of new development and retrofit. Collaboration with other Public Sector organisations, such as the University of Exeter, the Met Office and Exeter Science Park to drive forward carbon reduction initiatives.
Sustainable Environment	Net Zero team focuses on reducing City Council GHG emissions. Decarbonisation reduces energy consumption and costs, reducing service delivery costs and supporting sustainable council services.
Homes	The housing retrofit programme delivers warmer homes, reduced energy consumption, reduced carbon emissions, energy bills and improved health outcomes and wellbeing for tenants. Together with Liveable Exeter, working collaboratively with developers in developing sustainable and accessible neighbourhoods and new homes, using sustainable construction methods.
People	Working in partnership with Live & Move in developing sustainable travel options for residents. Supporting and encouraging City Council officers to be more active and sustainable in their travel choices. Supporting leisure services through better energy management and efficiencies to maintain provision of affordable facilities. Tree planting provides for reduced surface water runoff, improved air quality, improved biodiversity and habitat, and cooling to address warmer summers.

## 8. Equality Act 2010 (The Act)

- 8.1 In reviewing the City Council's Carbon Reduction, potential impact has been identified on people with protected characteristics as determined by the Act. An Equality Impact Assessment has been included in the background papers for Member's attention.

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## **9. Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:**

9.1 The City Council declared a Climate Emergency in 2019. The Costed Organisational Carbon Footprint Projections Report provides a roadmap to reduce City Council GHG emissions. For context, GHG emissions arising from the City Council's direct activities (Scope 1), indirect energy emissions (Scope 2) and from other indirect activities (Scope 3) and included within the Carbon Reduction Plan.

9.2 Strategic decisions made either have a positive or negative effect on City Council GHG emissions. Work needs to be undertaken prior to decisions being made to determine the impact on City Council GHG emissions

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### **Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1972 (as amended)**

Background papers used in compiling this report:

List of Appendices:

Appendix A – Exeter City Council Carbon Reduction Plan