

Cheltenham Borough Council & Housing Services

Full Council – 15th December 2025

Carbon Emission Report: Financial Year 2024/25

Accountable member:

Cllr Richard Pineger, Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency

Accountable officer:

Maizy McCann, Climate Officer

Jack Cole, Social Housing Climate Change Officer

Ward(s) affected:

n/a

Key Decision: No

Executive summary:

Cabinet Member Introduction: Benefits of reporting

Future-proofing: Central government and funding bodies increasingly require demonstrable climate action for grants and partnerships. Without robust reporting, CBC risks losing access to decarbonisation funding streams like UKSPF and future levies.

Cost-saving opportunities: The report identifies where emissions reductions align with energy efficiency and cost savings—for example, Building Management System improvements and fleet electrification have already delivered measurable reductions.

Investment justification: Every green capital scheme now needs a clear financial payback. This report provides the data to calculate ROI and prioritise projects that save money while cutting emissions.

Energy price volatility: Gas consumption rose 19% this year, partly due to increased occupancy. Without monitoring, CBC could face uncontrolled cost spikes. The report flags these trends early so corrective action can be taken.

Regulatory horizon: Even if net zero isn't mandatory now, future compliance costs will be higher for councils that haven't planned ahead. This report is a low-cost way to avoid expensive retrofits later.

Public trust: Residents expect councils to lead on climate action. Publishing this report demonstrates integrity and positions CBC as a responsible authority.

Economic development: Businesses increasingly choose locations aligned with sustainability goals.

Transparent reporting helps Cheltenham attract investment and jobs in the green economy.

Actionable insights: The report isn't just numbers—it highlights where emissions are concentrated (e.g., procurement, leisure facilities) and sets out next steps like feasibility studies for major sites.

Method

This Carbon Report calculates organisational carbon emissions for the financial year 2023-24, borough wide emissions are not included in the scope of this report.

Carbon emissions are a direct result of organisational energy use and organisation procurement activities. These include scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions, outline below in Table 1 (Cheltenham Borough Council) & Table 2 (Cheltenham Borough Council Housing Services) below. Throughout this report, CBC and CBC Housing Services have been considered separately, however for the next reporting year the previous emissions and baseline will be revised, with careful consideration as to how to measure progress towards net zero.

Table 1: Cheltenham Borough Council Operations

Category	Description	Source	Total (tCO ₂ e)	% Reduction from baseline
Scope 1	Direct emissions as a result of burning fossil fuels.	Gas usage within Council, Ubico, Cheltenham Trust sites, miscellaneous properties & vehicle fleet gas/fuel use.	1511.71	-55%
Scope 2	Indirect emissions from purchasing energy for operations.	Metered electricity uses for Council, Ubico, Cheltenham Trust sites & miscellaneous properties.	1064.82	+23%
Scope 3	All other quantifiable indirect emissions produced in relation to the organisational activity.	Staff commuting & business travel, water usage, procurement, 50% of airport electricity & ground operations, transmission & distribution of electricity.	7237.1	NA

Scope 1 Emissions

- Total scope 1 emissions, those that relate to fossil fuel use, have reduced by 139.3 tCO₂e (8.4%) relative to the previous year, and 1812.1 tCO₂e (54.5%) when compared to the baseline.
- Diesel usage in the Cheltenham Ubico fleet, has decreased 1228.2 tCO₂e in emissions from the baseline year and 47.2 compared to the previous year due to the transition to hydrogenated vegetable oil (HVO) as a fuel, fleet electrification, and further route optimization.
- There has been an increase of gas consumption at Council properties, correlating with increased occupancy and usage of the sites.

Scope 2 Emissions

- An increase in scope 2 emissions is evident when compared to 23/24 figures. This is due to an increased consumption of electricity across our portfolio. This trajectory is expected when considering the actions needed to decarbonise CBC's portfolio, it largely relies on large scale electrification to move away fossil fuels.

- The UK electricity factor is prone to fluctuate from year to year as the fuel mix consumed in UK power stations and the proportion of net imported electricity changes. In the 2024 update, the UK Electricity CO2e factor has remained at a similar level to 2023 update.

Scope 3 Emissions

- Emissions relating to purchasing of good and services is the highest source of total emissions, which is common practice.
- The calculation methodology and the approach to address these supply chain emissions remains an underdeveloped area of carbon accounting.
- As we develop our approach to working with our suppliers to explore our emissions in more detail, the numbers will likely continue to fluctuate, though we provide a best estimate based on the tools available to support further work in this area.

Table 2: Cheltenham Borough Council Housing Services

Category	Description	Source	Total (tCO2e)	% Reduction from base line
Scope 1	Direct emissions as a result of burning fossil fuels from activities owned or controlled by the organisation	Property schemes managed by CBC that have a communal supply of gas – metered gas use. CBC Housing fleet vehicle fuel use	415.47	-7.89
Scope 2	Indirect emissions from purchased energy (electricity) consumed by Cheltenham Borough Council Housing Services.	Metered electricity use for communal areas of properties managed by CBC Housing organisational office spaces. Office space used by Housing that is separate from CBC	147.2	-19.14
Scope 3	All other quantifiable indirect emissions from sources not owned or controlled by CBC Housing.	Business travel, all housing stock including that is managed by CBC Housing, transmission and Distribution losses from all purchased electricity in Scope 2, un-official offsets from communal solar PV arrays, procurement emissions from the supply chain.	11588.7	NA

Scope 1 Emissions

- Have reduced by 7.89% on the 2019/20 baseline, which is a reduction of 32.78 tCO2e. And have increased based on the previous year (24/25: 415.47 tCO2e vs. 23/24: 394.71tCO2e).
- Notable changes within scope 1 emissions compared to the previous year’s report are reductions in the gas usage in communal heating systems and less diesel used within our fleet.
- As the emissions we report on within scope 1 are under our direct control, reduction in this area reflects a small amount of work that has been put into areas such as introducing more HVO vehicles, replacing diesel usage.
- Property schemes remain an area that needs addressing.

Scope 2 Emissions

- Have reduced by 40.86% on the baseline, however there is a large set of data that has been copied from the previous reporting year, rather than actual data. This is because we no longer have access to our landlord supply electricity data which consist of 258 individual electricity supplies. And have decreased on the previous year (24/25: 147.2 tCO2e vs. 23/24: 160.06 tCO2e).

- The most notable changes within the reported scope 2 emissions are that we have not included the majority of previously reported on CBC office spaces, as these are no longer shared between two organisations and will be reported in the overarching CBC carbon footprint.
- The emissions reported on in scope 2 are directly controlled by us, and whilst there has been a rise this year compared to last year, we have reduced well on the baseline. Continued reduction in this area will rely on the greening of the electricity grid but also changes to internal behavioural should see less power used.

Scope 3 Emissions

- Have increased by 23.03% on the 2019/20 baseline, which is an increase of 2034.83 tCO₂e but have decreased on the previous year (24/25: 11588.68 tCO₂e vs 23/24:12,184.97 tCO₂e).
- Notable changes within scope 3 emissions compared to the previous year's report are the reduction in supply chain emissions, and a very slight increase in the housing stock emissions.
- Introduction of supply chain emissions since the baseline is one reason for increased emissions compared to the baseline. They have fallen compared to last year's figure of 4578.56, a decrease of 2.97%. The calculation of these emissions is based heavily on economic spend, with a decrease being intricately linked to less money having been spent on capital works.
- The emissions produced by the housing stock increased by 99.8 tCO₂e compared to the 2023/24 figure, an increase of 1.4%. It is possible that this increase is due to having more accurate EPC data, following the ongoing stock condition survey that started just after the previous reporting year. As well as this, there were more colder days than the previous year meaning more energy would have been required.

Legal and Policy Context

The UK's Climate Change Act 2008 (amended in 2019) sets a legally binding national target for net zero emissions by 2050, but it does not impose direct statutory duties on English local authorities to report or reduce carbon emissions. Councils are, however, expected to play a critical role through planning, housing, transport, and procurement powers, and government policy strongly encourages local action via initiatives such as the Local Net Zero Forum. International agreements like the Paris Agreement shape national obligations, which cascade to local government through guidance and funding rather than legal compulsion. Many councils, including Cheltenham, have voluntarily declared climate emergencies and set ambitious local targets to align with national and global commitments. In Scotland and Wales, there are stronger duties: Scotland: Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 imposes duties on public bodies, including councils, to act in ways that contribute to national targets and report annually. Wales: Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 requires councils to pursue a low-carbon society goal.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that Council:

- Reaffirm their commitment to carbon reduction across operations
- Approve the publication of this report

1. Implications

1.1 Financial, Property and Asset implications

Scope 1 and 2 carbon emissions arise as a direct result of energy consumption. This is the gas and electricity used in Council's operational buildings, including the properties Cheltenham Borough Home's manage, communal heating systems, and landlord electricity supplies to communal areas. In the light of persistent high energy costs, efforts should be focused on driving down consumption through improved energy efficiency measures, exploration of the cost effectiveness of low carbon heat projects and the potential for capital expenditure on larger scale renewable energy generation, where appropriate, to drive down electricity costs and emissions simultaneously.

Achieving net-zero in our portfolio will rely on capital investment. To support future decarbonisation works preparatory work is needed for buildings within the property portfolio. Working towards reducing carbon emissions can mean long term financial savings but will require upfront investment, which may not fit the criteria for an invest to save project. Any funding bids will need to be supported by robust business cases to allow Members to make informed and transparent decisions around investing to reduce our carbon footprint.

2. **Signed off by:** Jon Whitlock, Head Of Finance (Deputy S151 Officer), jon.whitlock@cheltenham.gov.uk

1.2 Legal implications

None arising directly from the report. When future specific projects or actions are taken to implement the agreed and published 'net zero by 2030' commitment, further legal advice and support may be required, and officers will consult with One Legal on a case-by-case basis.

Signed off by: legalservices@onelegal.org.uk 01684 272203

1.3 Environmental and climate change implications

These reports are fundamental to ensuring that the authority is effectively and transparently monitoring and reporting on organisational progress towards the achievement of our net-zero carbon emissions by 2030 target.

Signed off by: Maizy McCann, Climate Officer, Maizy.mccann@cheltenham.gov.uk

1.4 Corporate Plan Priorities

This report contributes to the following Corporate Plan Priorities

- Working with residents, communities and businesses to help make Cheltenham #netzero by 2030
- Ensuring residents, communities and businesses benefit from Cheltenham's future growth and prosperity
- Being a more modern, efficient and financially sustainable council

1.5 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Implications

There will be no direct implications from the reporting of the carbon footprint on equality or discrimination, although we recognise that climate change is likely to have a disproportionate impact on those with protected characteristics, and those on low incomes, therefore this needs to be carefully considered when planning our mitigating actions in response to the climate emergency.

1.6 Performance management – monitoring and review

Each financial year the annual carbon footprint will be calculated and reported. Analysis of the results will underpin CBC's progress towards its net zero target and any required changes to our action planning. Review of data collection and carbon calculating methods will occur to ensure that the most accurate and best available estimates are reported.

The report annual carbon emissions form part of the organisation's key performance indicators.

2 Background

2.3 Cheltenham Borough Council has a key leadership role to play in tackling climate change by reducing

carbon emissions from its in-house services, those which CBC directly control, and by working with others in the borough to lower district-wide carbon emissions. The council has set out clear and transparent aspirations and a commitment to help tackle climate change by:

- Declaring a climate emergency in 2019 and committing to strive towards council emissions to net-zero by 2030.
- Publishing a full Climate Emergency Action Plan (reviewed, refined and updated during 2024), detailing an associated framework to becoming a net zero Council and Borough by 2030.
- Launching a Climate Impact Assessment Tool for ensuring all proposals and projects the Council undertakes consider their social and environmental impacts.

3. Reasons for recommendations

3.1. To remind councillors that this is our part in a society-wide and globally necessary effort

3.2. For a clear and transparent reporting process.

Alternative options considered

3.3. There are no other reasonable alternative options to measuring carbon emissions.

UK local government carbon reporting is **not legally mandated** but strongly guided by:

- **GHG Protocol** (global standard for scopes and principles),
- **DEFRA Environmental Reporting Guidelines** (UK-specific methodology and factors),
- **LGA GHG Accounting Toolkit** (sector-specific templates), with increasing alignment to **TCFD** and emerging UK Sustainability Reporting Standards (ISSB-based).

4 Consultation and feedback

- a. This report has been written with internal consultation across the wider housing, climate and property teams.
- b. No public consultation needed.

5 Key risks

Included as appendix 1.

Report author:

Maizy McCann, Climate Officer

Jack Cole, Social Housing Climate Change Officer

Appendices:

- i. Risk Assessment
- ii. Equality Impact Assessment – Screening (to be included in all Cabinet and Council reports)
- iii. Cheltenham Borough Council Greenhouse Gas Emission Report 2024/25
- iv. Cheltenham Borough Council Housing Services Annual Greenhouse Gas Emission Report 2024/25

Background information:

[Climate Emergency Action Plan – pathway to net zero](#)

[Gloucestershire Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment](#)

Appendix 1: Risk Assessment

Risk ref	Risk description	Risk owner	Impact score (1-5)	Likelihood score (1-5)	Initial raw risk score (1 - 25)	Risk response	Controls / Mitigating actions	Control / Action owner	Deadline for controls/ actions
127	Carbon Neutral - If we fail to make Cheltenham carbon neutral by 2030 then we will not achieve our corporate objectives.	Climate Manager	4	4	16	Reduce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ongoing review and alignment of the capital program with the Corporate Plan - Quarterly budget monitoring - Cabinet engagement - budget proposals - Gateway reviews of all projects through the Corporate Programme office - Cabinet Away Day challenge and decisions - Business case and approval for all new projects, including allocation of resources and budgets 	Climate Manager	2030

Appendix 2: Equality Impact Assessment

1. Identify the policy, project, function or service change

a. Person responsible for this Equality Impact Assessment

Officer responsible: Maizy McCann	Service Area: Climate and flooding
Title: Climate Officer	Date of assessment: 25/11/24
Signature: MMcCann	

b. Is this a policy, function, strategy, service change or project?

Other

If other, please specify: **Report**

c. Name of the policy, function, strategy, service change or project

Cheltenham Borough Council & Housing Services Carbon Emission Report's: Financial Year 2024/25

Is this new or existing?

Other

Please specify reason for change or development of policy, function, strategy, service change or project

Annual report

d. What are the aims, objectives and intended outcomes and who is likely to benefit from it?

Aims:	To report on the organisational carbon emissions for the year 2024/25.
Objectives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Calculate and report on total carbon emissions. - Explain increases and decreases in emissions compared to the previous year and baseline year.
Outcomes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measure the organisations progress towards the key priority 2 in the corporate plan, to make Cheltenham Borough Council net zero by 2030.

Benefits:	This benefits internal service areas such as property, finance, and climate as it captures all organisational activity and associated emissions. Providing an evidence base to support carbon reduction projects.

e. What are the expected impacts?

Are there any aspects, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could have an impact on the lives of people, including employees and customers.	No
Do you expect the impacts to be positive or negative?	No impact expected

Please provide an explanation for your answer:

This report aims to calculate and report on annual carbon emissions. There are associated decarbonisation works which account for increases/decreases in emissions, however describing the specific details and related of impacts of these works sits outside the scope of this report.

If your answer to question e identified potential positive or negative impacts, or you are unsure about the impact, then you should carry out a Stage Two Equality Impact Assessment.

f. Identify next steps as appropriate

Stage Two required	No
Owner of Stage Two assessment	
Completion date for Stage Two assessment	

Please move on to Stage 2 if required ([intranet link](#)).
