

Clerk: Teresa Buckley  
Telephone: 01803 207013  
E-mail address: [governance.support@torbay.gov.uk](mailto:governance.support@torbay.gov.uk)  
Date: Wednesday, 16 September 2020

Governance Support  
Town Hall  
Castle Circus  
Torquay  
TQ1 3DR

Dear Member

## **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD - WEDNESDAY, 16 SEPTEMBER 2020**

I am now able to enclose, for consideration at the Wednesday, 16 September 2020 meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board, the following reports that were unavailable when the agenda was printed.

<b>Agenda No</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Page</b>
7.	<b>Climate Emergency Verbal Update</b>	(Pages 88 - 91)

Yours sincerely

Teresa Buckley  
Clerk

**Devon Climate Declaration** - <https://www.devonclimateemergency.org.uk/devon-climate-declaration/>

1. This Declaration has been prepared by a consortium of public, private and voluntary organisations collaborating through a Devon Climate Emergency Response Group. It sets out an ambition to tackle climate change that covers all of Devon, including those people who live, work in and visit our county, and those businesses who are based or operate here.
2. We are aware of the significant implications of climate change for Devon's communities; it is already affecting our environment, infrastructure, economy and health & wellbeing. If not addressed, the impact on future generations will be profound and the ability to meet the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals will be severely compromised.
3. We understand that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has advised that carbon emissions must reduce globally by at least 45% by 2030 from 2010 levels and reach net-zero by 2050 if we are to avoid the worst effects of climate change by keeping warming below 1.5 degrees.
4. We will lead in the global response to climate change through our collective action, innovation and influence.
5. Individually, we will review (within 6 months) our plans to reduce our organisation's carbon emissions to meet or exceed these targets, including ensuring the people we do business with are doing the same. We will publicly report our carbon emissions annually in accessible formats.
6. In collaboration, we will engage Devon's residents, businesses and visitors to develop and implement a plan to facilitate the reduction of Devon's production and consumption emissions to meet IPCC recommendations at the latest. We will openly report progress on its delivery. We know this transformational change will be challenging and will include:
  - Deploying more renewable, decentralised and smart energy systems
  - Retrofitting energy-efficiency measures into our existing buildings
  - Constructing zero-carbon new buildings
  - Travelling less and using improved walking, cycling and public transport infrastructure more often, and using electric and hydrogen vehicles
  - Changing our consumption to use less, re-use more and choose low-carbon options
  - Challenging all economic sectors to review their practices and the values of those they do business with
  - Divesting from fossil fuels
  - Changing our dietary patterns and reducing food waste
  - Changing agricultural practices to reduce emissions associated with farming operations, manage soils sustainably and replenish soil carbon
  - Encouraging carbon storage such as through tree planting, the use of wood in construction and peatland restoration
  - Empowering the people of Devon with the knowledge and skills to act collectively.
7. Additionally, we will work to understand the near-term and future risks of climate change for Devon to plan for how our infrastructure, public services and communities will have to adapt for a 1.5-degree warmer world.
8. Local organisations and communities cannot do this alone as the national government plays a key role in many of the policy areas that are vital to reducing emissions and adapting to climate change. We call on the government to prioritise decarbonisation and adaptation within decision making and work with us by using its powers to provide the resources and funding necessary to accelerate the transition to a low-carbon and resilient economy and society.
9. We challenge every organisation, business, community and individual to do the same.

## Devon’s Timeline to Net-Zero Carbon

### Background

The Devon Climate Emergency (DCE) partners expect that the Devon Carbon Plan will indicate the earliest credible date for achieving a net-zero Devon, based on evidence, which the partners, particularly the local authorities, can collectively support.

### Purpose

This paper outlines the Task Force’s conclusion on the timeline to net-zero that is proposed to appear in the consultation draft Interim Devon Carbon Plan. Its content is for discussion by the Tactical Group and Response Group.

### Context

The UK has declared and enshrined in law a target of net-zero emissions by 2050 – the first major economy to do so.

The thirteen local authorities in the DCE partnership have declared these dates for net-zero:

Authority	Geography date	Organisation Date
Exmoor National Park	2050 <i>at the latest</i> and 45% reduction by 2030 from 2010 levels	2030
North Devon District Council	2050 <i>at the latest</i> and 45% reduction by 2030 from 2010 levels	?
Torridge District Council	2050 <i>at the latest</i> and 45% reduction by 2030 from 2010 levels	?
South Hams District Council	2050 <i>at the latest</i> and 45% reduction by 2030 from 2010 levels	2030
West Devon Borough Council	2050 <i>at the latest</i> and 45% reduction by 2030 from 2010 levels	2030
East Devon District Council	2050 <i>at the latest</i> and 45% reduction by 2030 from 2010 levels	2040
Devon County Council	2050 <i>at the latest</i> and 45% reduction by 2030 from 2010 levels	2030
Dartmoor National Park	2045 <i>at the latest</i>	2025
Exeter City Council	2030	2030
Mid Devon District Council	2030	2030
Plymouth City Council	2030	2030
Torbay Council	2030	2030
Teignbridge District Council	2025	2025

### The Climate Science

The 2018 IPCC report, *Global Warming of 1.5 Degrees*, is clear that achieving net-zero emissions by 2050, globally, provides a 50% chance of keeping global warming below 1.5 degrees Celsius. Achieving net-zero sooner improves that chance.

**Message: We should achieve net-zero as soon as possible**

### The Technical Evidence

The Centre for Alternative Technology report, *Zero Carbon Britain*, describes a scenario using existing technology that could achieve net-zero emissions by 2030. However, it states:

*“Without national-scale, systematic transition in place, time is now very tight. 2030 remains a valid target from the perspective of climate science, but we must recognise that this is now becoming a hugely challenging delivery timeline”*

**Message: The technology exists now to achieve net-zero production emissions, but deep, systematic change is required to implement it, much of which is not in the control of local partners.**

The Committee on Climate Change (CCC) report, *Net Zero*, recommended to Government a UK target of net-zero by 2050 as “*the earliest credible date*”, which Government has accepted. The potential costs are up to 2% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) each year, which is cost-effective against the potential impacts of climate change. Their scenario avoids punitive measures and capital scrappage. It states:

*“A UK net-zero GHG target in 2050 is feasible, but will only be deliverable with a major strengthening and acceleration of policy effort”*

**Message: To achieve a just and cost-effective transition to net-zero, 2050 is the earliest credible date that has been modelled for the UK.**

The Net-Zero Devon report produced by the Centre for Energy and the Environment off the back of the CCC report identifies the net cost (sum of costs minus benefits) for the area administered by Devon County Council to achieve net zero in 2050 to be £658 million per year. This equates to 1.6% of Devon’s GDP in 2050. Achieving the CCC 2050 scenario by 2030 would in effect require compressing the same measures into a timeframe that is only about a third as long. The costs to meet the target by 2030 increases the estimated annual net cost to Devon to about £1,852 million per year (7.1% of Devon’s GDP).

**Message: 2030 would be costly to Devon’s economy and communities if other UK and international regions do not follow.**

The UK economy will still be emitting greenhouse gases beyond 2050, but various carbon offsetting schemes will operate nationally to net-off those emissions to zero. Assuming that national policy remains focussed on 2050, for Devon to achieve net-zero ahead of 2050, Devon’s emissions will need to be offset using local schemes.

Devon's emissions are attributable to individuals and organisations operating in, and visiting, Devon. There is no mechanism that would force these emitters to buy carbon offsets ahead of 2050, and indeed if there were, these emitters might move away from Devon, or visit other areas of the UK, that do not require them to pay to offset their emissions. In the year 2030, Devon's forecasted residual emissions under the CCC scenario would cost the economy approximately £575m to offset at £50 per tonne of carbon dioxide. This, combined with the £658m per year for technological measures to reduce residual emissions referenced above, means a total cost each year of £1,233 million, or 4.7% of Devon's GDP. Furthermore, using tree planting as the carbon offset opportunity, there is not enough land available in Devon to offset Devon's projected residual emissions between 2030 and 2050 and so investments would need to occur elsewhere in the UK and most likely internationally.

**Message: Achieving net-zero emissions ahead of UK policy is highly problematic, costly and not feasible within Devon's borders**

## Proposal

The Task Force's recommendation that is proposed to appear in the consultation draft Interim Devon Carbon Plan is:

- 2050 as the target for net-zero carbon
- Interim carbon budgets for Devon set for years 1-5, 6-10 and 11-15 years based on the CCC scenario, incorporating a 45% reduction of 2010 emission by 2030.
- The Plan needs to be front loaded with impactful actions to support the partners that have set 2030 as their net-zero targets.
- Trigger points to fundamentally revise the plan must be included, particularly where reductions are not moving at the required pace, or where international targets are amended.

The Plan would also need to state that partners should endeavour to achieve net-zero sooner and exceed these targets if possible, particularly supporting with a collaborative spirit the five local authorities that have earlier ambitions.

## Summary

Five of the 13 local authorities in the DCE partnership have set net-zero targets of 2030 or sooner. Seven have accepted the IPCC recommendations, pending different advice from the Net-Zero Task Force. One has set 2045.

The net-zero target of 2050 with 45% reduction by 2030 from 2010 levels, as proposed by the IPCC, will require unprecedented social change. 2030 is technically possible but even its advocates acknowledge how challenging it would be.

The UK Government has amended the Climate Change Act to embed the target of net-zero by 2050, which is world leading. It would be highly problematic to achieve net-zero in Devon ahead of the UK timeframe as Devon's emissions are dependent on national policy initiatives.