

## **Emerging Decision – Briefing for SLT, Cabinet Members and Climate Change Review Panel**

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### **Subject: Working Towards a Carbon Neutral Community and Council – A proposed approach for 2021-22**

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#### **What is the proposal and it benefits?**

##### **Background**

Since 2008 Torbay Council has been taking action to tackle climate change, including a range of actions as outlined in two previous climate change strategies the Local Plan (2012-2030) and Local Transport Plan (2011-2026), as well as many other associated actions in other policy documents. Highlights include:

- Developing 2 large solar farms
- All Council reports include a Climate Change section
- All officers encouraged to actively seek environmentally friendly ways of working / supply of goods and services
- Tor Bay Harbour Authority has installed solar PV panels, procured an electric forklift truck and installed LED lighting
- Energy efficiency advice available to homes through Cosy Devon Partnership and Exeter Community Energy
- Delivery of active travel (walking and cycling) infrastructure in particular through the Local Sustainable Transport Fund

However, in light of Torbay Council declaring a Climate Emergency in June 2019, there is now an immediate need to accelerate action and make significant progress over the next ten years to achieve carbon neutrality across the Council and Community.

This paper outlines an initial approach to be delivered across 2021 - April 2022. It proposes to deliver immediate actions to tackle the Climate Emergency whilst also allowing some time to refresh the Torbay Climate Change Strategy (2014-2019) and co-design and develop with partners, new longer term action plans to work towards a Carbon Neutral (CN) council and CN Torbay (community). By April 2022 this approach will enable the Council to demonstrate progress

in working towards achieving the Community and Corporate Plan's priority to become a CN Council and work with others to create a CN community.

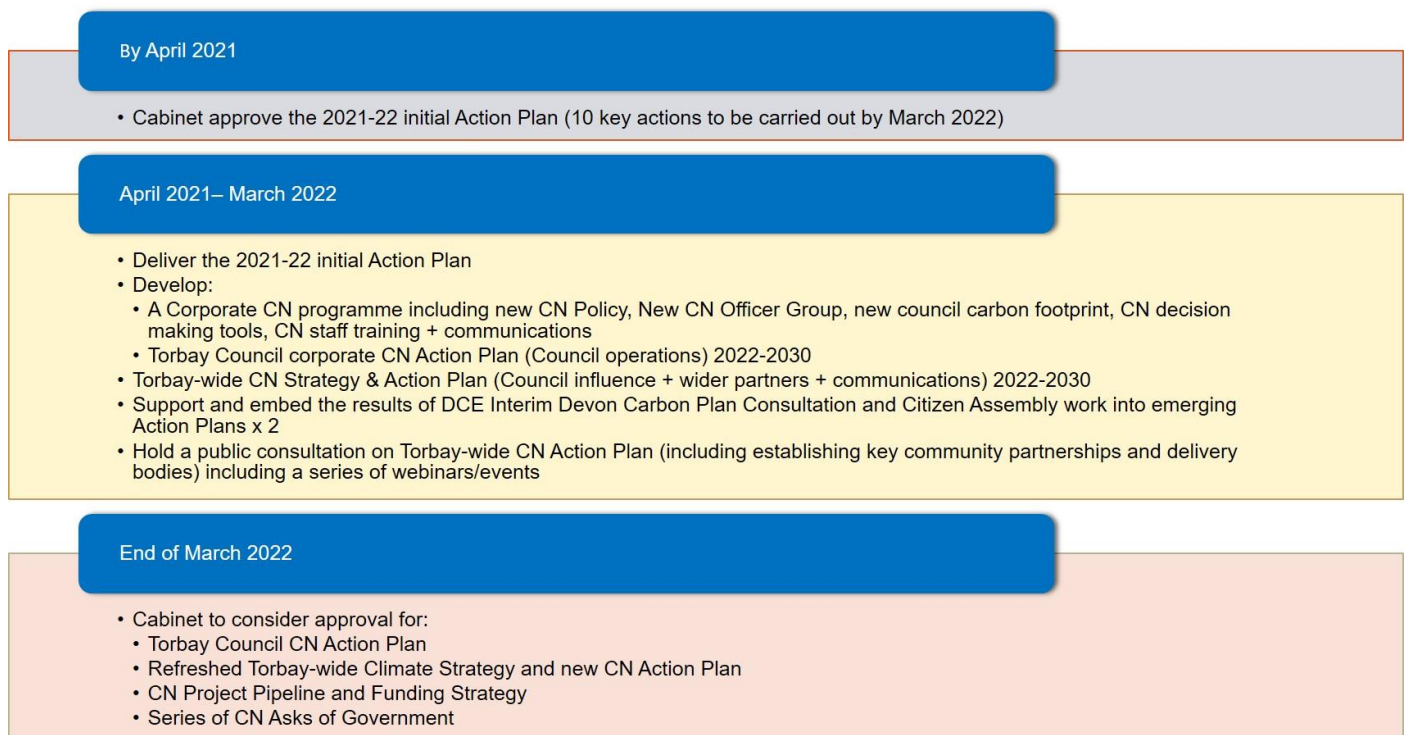
Furthermore, this approach will allow Torbay Council to take into consideration further evidence that is being developed through the [Devon Carbon Plan](#) (see below). This work is ongoing and will conclude by the end of 2021. This will help the Council to understand, at a strategic level, how Devon will achieve net zero carbon by 2050 and the role(s) it will need to play in achieving this work locally. It will also provide further evidence on the deliverability of achieving carbon neutrality in Torbay by 2030.

## The Proposal

The Working towards a Carbon Neutral Community and Council proposed approach for 2021-22 focusses on two distinctive elements:

- 1) Council related operations (for example operations that the council control i.e. energy use, water and waste consumption across the council's estate)
- 2) Torbay-wide, community focussed actions (including partners/communities work to decarbonise Torbay's transport, buildings, power, industry and agriculture and land-use sectors and activities that Torbay Council can influence)

Figure 1 summarises the Working towards a Carbon Neutral Community and Council approach for 2021-2022 and the key deliverables:



The key deliverables are outlined below in detail:

### Short term (completed by April 2021)

- Developed 10 key actions to be delivered between April 2021 and April 2022 (known as the 2021-2022 Initial Action Plan) – A verbal update on the emerging actions will be provided at the meeting.

- Gain Cabinet approval March 2021

### **Longer term (completed by April 2022)**

#### **Council Operations**

- Created a new Corporate CN programme including:
  - New CN Policy (to set out some CN principles for all of the Council to follow. See Appendix 1 for an example)
  - New CN Officer Group and senior responsible officer (to be responsible for developing and delivering council actions and Council Action Plan)
  - Established the carbon footprint for the Council (the amount of carbon dioxide released as a result of council operations/activities. It will be vital to monitor this and establish annual reduction targets in line with Torbay's CN target. See Appendix 1)
  - Explored strengthening decision making processes in light of the Climate Emergency (including the use of CN Impact Assessment tool. See Appendix 1)
  - Explored carbon literacy training for staff and members (to raise staff and members awareness)
  - Developed a Torbay Council CN Action Plan 2022 - 2030 (including a list of prioritised actions that the Council commits to deliver up to 2030. See Appendix 1)
  - Gain approval from Cabinet to deliver the Torbay Council CN Action Plan

### **Longer term actions (completed by April 2022)**

#### **Torbay-wide**

- Developed with partners and community groups a review of the existing Torbay Climate Change Strategy (2014 – 2019) and developed a new Torbay-wide CN Action Plan 2022 – 2030 (list of resourced, prioritised actions, pipeline of projects and future funding strategy)
- Supported the development of the Devon Carbon Plan (including active engagement in the Devon Citizen Assembly)
- Embed the results of the Devon Carbon Plan into the new Torbay-wide CN Action Plan
- Developed a CN pipeline of projects (this is designed to create a list of investment ready projects capable of securing future funding as it arises)
- Held a public consultation and series of events to develop the new Torbay-wide CN Action Plan (this is to test the draft plans and gauge the appetite of residents and businesses to deliver certain actions) – extent determined by available resources
- Created a coalition of partners to deliver the plans
- Gained approval from Cabinet for the new Torbay-wide Strategy and CN Action Plan.

#### **Devon Carbon Plan**

As mentioned above, this 2021-2022 approach will allow alignment with the work of the Devon Climate Change Emergency Response Group and the Interim Devon Carbon Plan. The Devon Carbon Plan will be a high level strategic plan which provides a whole area evidence base across the Devon region and identifies targeted actions to be delivered. It offers the potential for real value to be added to Torbay Council's own efforts to meet carbon neutrality in the most effective

and evidence-led way possible. A [draft interim Devon Carbon Plan](#) is currently out for public consultation. A draft Torbay Council response to this Plan is attached (Appendix 2) for this Panel's comment.

## **The Benefits**

The following are some of the benefits to the proposed approach outlined above:

1. Demonstrates immediate progress to tackling the Climate Emergency and meets various Council and Community carbon neutral commitments as set out in the One Torbay Community and Corporate Plan (2019 – 2023)
2. Creates a longer term corporate programme of CN actions that will allow the council to lead by example and encourage other partners to take similar action
3. Co-designed, refreshed Torbay Climate Change Strategy and new Action Plan which will lead to community buy-in to help deliver plans
4. Enables the Council and partners to have a pipeline of CN projects that are ready to apply for and secure future funding
5. Delivery of the two new Action Plans will have a range of co-benefits such as creating a range of economic opportunities that can help Torbay recover from the COVID-19 such as new green jobs, upskilling and training opportunities and new business opportunities. There are also a range of environmental, social and health benefits that can arise through tackling the Climate Emergency including improved air quality, reduction in respiratory illness and excess winter deaths, alleviation of fuel poverty.

## **What decision is required?**

At this stage no decision is required. Members of the Panel are invited to provide steer on the proposed approach and consultation response to the Interim Devon Carbon Plan. A Cabinet decision on the 2021-2022 Initial Action Plan will be sought in March 2021. Further Cabinet decisions will be needed. See below.

## **Is the decision a 'key decision' and therefore require the submission of a forward plan?**

Yes. The 2021-2022 Initial Action Plan, draft CN Council Action Plan and the consultation draft of the CN Torbay Action Plan will be submitted onto the forward plan in due course (see timetable below).

## **What are the financial opportunities/implications?**

The development of the short term 2021-22 Initial Action Plan will be led by the new Climate Emergency Officer, with support from a range of existing members of staff and partners. It is envisaged that the actions will be delivered through existing funding streams. Therefore there are no immediate budgetary implications.

The development of the longer term CN Council and CN Torbay Action Plans will also be led by the new Climate Emergency Officer, with support from a range of existing and new members of staff and partners. The additional resources, communication support, technical and policy costs associated with the new Action Plans will be presented at a future Cabinet meeting and will provide a high-level indication of the resources that may be required to deliver carbon neutrality.

The creation of a CN pipeline of projects, which is to accompany the CN Torbay Action Plan, is proposed to place Torbay in a stronger position to secure future financial opportunities. Creating such a pipeline will enable the council and partners to explore what initial support they need to develop investment ready projects and then be in a better position to take advantage of, and secure, a range of future funding as it arises or develop innovative community/private investment propositions.

### **How does this link to the delivery of the Community and Corporate Plan?**

The Approach will result in short and long term plans to work towards the Community and Corporate Plan's priority to become a Carbon Neutral (CN) Council and work with others to create a CN community.

### **Will other Council services or partners be affected?**

At this proposal stage no services or partners are affected. As the CN Council and CN Action Plans develop a range of services and partners will need to engage and co-design actions. The resources, measures and policy costs associated with the draft Action Plans will be presented at a future Cabinet meetings and will provide a high-level indication of the resources that may be required to achieve carbon neutrality.

### **Who needs to be engaged/consulted as this proposal is progressed, including any formal consultation for implementation?**

A range of services across the council will need to be engaged/consulted on. These include:

- Housing, Transport, Highways, Planning, Waste and Recycling, Public Health, HR, ICT, Procurement, Governance Support, TDA (economic development and assets) and SWISCo.

Informal and formal consultation and the co-design of the CN Torbay-wide Action Plan plans will include a range of external partners:

- Various community partners/partnerships, Devon Climate Emergency, Devon County Council, Other local authorities, Heart of the South West LEP, South West Energy Hub, key other sector specific partners from across Transport, Buildings (domestic and non-domestic), Industry, Power, Agriculture and Land use.

### **Outside the Cabinet members, what other councillors need to be briefed on this issue and at what stage? *This may need to be determined by the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council.***

The Initial Action Plan, Draft CN Council Action Plan and the consultation draft of the CN Torbay Action Plan (and finalised draft) will be submitted onto the forward plan in due course. An initial meeting was held on 12 January with the Leader, Cllr Morey, Cllr Kennedy, Cllr Atiya-Alla and Cllr Howgate. In addition to this proposal being discussed at this review panel meeting, the proposal has also been discussed at SLT will also be discussed by the Overview and Scrutiny Board on 17 February prior to Cabinet in March 2021.

## What external communications are needed?

None at this stage. Subsequent reports to Cabinet will follow post spring 2021 and will need external communication and a comprehensive communication plan in place.

## What is the proposed timetable for progression? How can Overview and Scrutiny contribute?

Proposed timetable:

Key Activities	Timescale
<b>Short term (Jan – March 2021)</b>	
Develop 1 year Initial Action Plan (2021-22) and secure Cabinet approval	Jan - March 2021
Delivery of 1 year Initial Action Plan	March 2021 – April 2022
<b>Longer term (March 2021- April 2022)</b>	
<p><b>Council-wide</b></p> <p>Development of new CN Council Programme including:</p> <p>Establish new internal officer group</p> <p>Develop a new corporate CN Policy</p> <p>Development of CN Council Action Plan 2022 – 2030 (including carbon footprint for the Council)</p> <p>Explore Carbon Literacy training for employees and members</p> <p>Cabinet approval for Council CN Action Plans</p>	<p>Feb 2021</p> <p>March 2021</p> <p>Feb – March 2022</p> <p>2021</p> <p>April 2022</p>
<p><b>Torbay-wide</b></p> <p>Co-design and development of new Torbay-wide CN Action Plan 2022- 2030 with partners</p> <p>Devon Carbon Plan – Citizen Assembly and Finalised Devon Carbon Plan</p> <p>Cabinet approval for the draft Torbay CN Action Plans and permission to proceed to public consultation</p> <p>Public consultation and events on draft Torbay-wide CN Action Plan</p> <p>Cabinet approval for Council and Torbay CN Action Plans</p>	<p>May -Feb 2022</p> <p>Jan – Sept 2021</p> <p>August 2021</p> <p>Sept – Feb 2022</p> <p>March 2022</p>

## **How can Overview and Scrutiny contribute?**

The following are suggested milestones for when Overview and Scrutiny (and/or the Overview and Scrutiny Climate Review Group) may wish to contribute:

### **Within the first 3 months**

- Review the proposed working towards a Carbon Neutral Community and Council approach 2021-22 (as outlined above)
- Prior to Cabinet review the initial 1 year Plan (Climate Review Panel - 3 February and Overview and Scrutiny - Board 17 February 2021)

### **August / September 2021**

- Review progress being made against the working towards a Carbon Neutral Community and Council approach 2021-22 and review draft Torbay CN Action Plan (including update on Net Zero Torbay Report)
- Prior to Cabinet, review progress of the Devon Carbon Plan
- Recommendations to Priorities and Resources Review Panel (November)

### **Early 2022**

- Prior to Cabinet review Torbay CN Action Plan

### **Ongoing, post spring 2022**

- Regular monitoring of the Council and Torbay CN Action Plans
- Recommendations to Priorities and Resources Review Panel (November)