

Meeting: Cabinet

Date: 23 March 2021

Wards Affected: All

Report Title: Carbon Neutral Torbay Approach 2021-2022 and Initial Action Plan

When does the decision need to be implemented? Immediately

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1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 Torbay Council declared a Climate Emergency in June 2019. A range of actions are already being taken but there is now an immediate need to accelerate actions to work towards tackling the Climate Emergency and Torbay becoming carbon neutral.
- 1.2 This paper proposes an 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 Torbay's Energy and 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 CN priorities.
- 1.3 The appended Initial Action Plan is seeking approval by the Cabinet.
- 1.4 Cabinet are also asked to approve the proposed CN approach for 2021-22 (para 1.9) including the development of the Carbon Neutral Council Action Plan and Carbon Neutral Torbay Action Plan.

2. Reason for Proposal and its benefits

We want Torbay and its residents to thrive.

We want Torbay to be a place where we have turned the tide on poverty and tackled inequalities; where our children and older people will have high aspirations and where there are quality jobs, good pay and affordable housing for our residents.

We want Torbay to be the premier resort in the UK, with a vibrant arts and cultural offer for our residents and visitors to enjoy; where our built and natural environment

is celebrated and where we play our part in addressing the climate change emergency.

- 2.1 Climate change is having a major impact on our planet, and locally in Torbay. Our planet is warming and we are seeing a range of impacts. For example it has been predicted that due to the climate change we will see the sea level rise in Torbay by over one metre. In the next 100 years the frequency and impact of water coming over the top of the sea walls will increase, resulting in more infrastructure and properties being affected by flooding. On top of that, more intense rainfall will increase the risk of localised flooding and erosion.
 - 2.2 If approved the proposals in this report will help the Council, and wider Torbay area, to accelerate actions towards meeting the Community and Corporate Plan's CN priorities. It will also ensure we play our part in trying to avoid the worst climate change impacts in the future.
 - 2.3 There are many benefits to tackling climate change. Carrying out immediate actions and developing long term action plans will ensure the Council and community can work together to help create a climate resilient, carbon neutral Torbay.
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3. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision

- (i) Approve the Initial Action Plan as set out at Appendix 1.
- (ii) Approve the proposed CN approach for 2021-22 (as set out at Appendix 2) including the development of the Carbon Neutral Council Action Plan and Carbon Neutral Torbay Action Plan.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Initial Carbon Neutral Action Plan

Appendix 2: Proposed Carbon Neutral Approach 2021-22

Background Documents

[Energy and Climate Change Strategy 2014 – 2019](#)

[Climate Emergency Declaration June 2019](#)

Supporting Information

1. Introduction

- 1.1 There is scientific consensus¹ that currently observed global warming is overwhelmingly a result of human influence, being significantly over and above the warming caused by natural factors alone.
- 1.2 However, human and natural systems are already being impacted by climate change with flooding, droughts, heatwaves and crop yield reductions all being experienced more frequently.
- 1.3 Torbay's Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in 2018 were just under 500,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO₂) equivalent². The total emissions for Devon, Plymouth and Torbay was 7.8 million tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO₂) equivalent in 2018. These emissions arise from human activities such as travel, industry, electricity generation, agriculture and heating and powering our homes. These emissions are contributing to an overall warming of our planet and knock-on extreme weather events.
- 1.4 Torbay has suffered the impacts of a changing climate. For example flood events, causing damage to residents, communities and businesses. Further warming will make these types of event even more common.
- 1.5 Therefore there is a clear and compelling rationale to mitigate and adapt to a changing climate, which is why Torbay declared a climate emergency in June 2019 and committed to, in Torbay's Community and Corporate Plan (2019-2023), becoming a CN council and working with others to create a CN community.
- 1.6 A range of actions have been carried out to date by Torbay Council, partners, community groups and individuals. Appendix 1 outlines some actions taken to date including the Energy and Climate Change Strategy 2014-2019.
- 1.7 The challenge of creating a CN council and Torbay by 2030 is significant. Both the Council and the area of Torbay will need to not be responsible for any net release of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere by 2030. For Torbay as a whole we will need to reduce, remove or store 500,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO₂) equivalents.
- 1.8 To achieve this will require everyone in Torbay to play a part, as well as central government and key regional/national/international partners. To ensure progress that gives Torbay the best chance of meeting its carbon neutral target, Torbay needs a coordinated, prioritised approach.
- 1.9 Appendix 2 outlines a proposed coordinated approach which includes:
 - An Initial Carbon Neutral Action Plan to deliver immediate actions in 2021 (See appendix 1)

¹ IPCC (2014) Climate Change 2014: Synthesis Report. Contribution of Working Groups I, II and III to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

² This reflects the effect of the emissions of a basket of six GHGs on global warming, converted into equivalent units of carbon dioxide

- The development of the Carbon Neutral Council Action Plan by April 2022
 - The co-design and development with partners of the Carbon Neutral Torbay Action Plan by April 2022 (and refresh of the Energy and Climate Change Strategy 2014 – 2019).
- 1.10 If approved, the Initial Carbon Neutral Action Plan will demonstrate 10 actions that the Council has committed to developing and/or delivering in 2021. It demonstrates immediate action in tackling the Climate Emergency.
- 1.11 Whilst the actions in the Initial Action Plan are delivered the Council will also develop its own corporate CN programme. This will include development of a new CN policy, CN officer group and new CN council action plan by April 2022. With the CN Action Plan ready for implementation post April 2022.
- 1.12 If approved, and working with the community, the Council will also facilitate the co-design of a new action plan to create a CN Torbay. This will include public consultation events, webinars and other community engagement activity. This will be developed in 2021 and ready for implementation post April 2022 onwards. See appendix 2.
- 1.13 The full costs of tackling climate change in Torbay are not known, nor is it for one organisation to solely fund all the actions needed. In their new national 'Balanced Pathway' scenario the Climate Change Committee (CCC)³ recommend that the most rapid emissions reductions should occur between 2025-2035. Their analysis suggests that the yearly cost of achieving net-zero would be 0.6% of national GDP (Gross Domestic Product) by the early 2030s, before falling to around 0.5% by 2050. They also looked at the longer-term impact on GDP of transitioning to a cleaner society and concluded that it could see a GDP boost of around 2% within a decade⁴.
- 1.14 Securing funding and developing innovative funding mechanism to deliver carbon neutrality by 2030 in Torbay will form a large part of the development of the proposed CN Council Action Plan and CN Torbay Action Plan.
- 1.15 The Council recognise the value of becoming carbon neutral as quickly as possible, in light of the negative impacts that climate change will have on our health, wellbeing, economy, and environment in the future if left unchecked. There is also a range of societal benefits that can be felt sooner.
- 1.16 Figure 1 highlights some of the co-benefits of tackling the Climate Emergency locally and their added value beyond carbon reduction. It will create a range of economic, health, social and wider environmental benefits locally, and help Torbay's recovery from COVID-19. Figure 1 below summarises some of the likely local benefits

³ [The Climate Change Committee \(CCC\) is an independent, statutory body established under the Climate Change Act 2008](#)

⁴ [CCC: UK must cut emissions '78% by 2035' to be on course for net-zero goal | Carbon Brief](#)



2. Options under consideration

2.1 Members can consider to:

- (i) Not approve the proposed approach (as per para 1.9) and adopt an ad-hoc, not fully coordinated approach to tackling the Climate Emergency and meeting the Community and Corporate Plan's carbon neutral ambitions
- (ii) Approve the approach as per para 1.9, enabling the development of a longer term coordinated approach, up to 2030, which will be capable of making significant progress towards tackling the Climate Emergency and meeting the Community and Corporate Plan's CN ambitions (as outlined in appendix 2)

2.2 Option (i) above will result in actions developing on ad-hoc basis. Due to the uncoordinated nature of this option, there will be no overall plan with prioritised actions capable of making significant progress towards 2030. This option is therefore not recommended.

2.3 Option (ii) is the preferred, recommended option. It will provide the Council with the best chance of working effectively, internally and externally with partners, communities and residents towards Torbay's CN targets. If approved this option will:

- Demonstrate immediate action across the Council and community
- Demonstrate a long term approach to creating a CN Council
- Use work by the University of Exeter and Devon Carbon Emergency Partnership to help the Council and Torbay understand how to reach its carbon neutral targets and what priority actions should be taken up to 2030
- Work across communities, and with partners, to create longer term prioritised actions and an CN Torbay Action Plan
- Ensure currently limited resources are deployed efficiently to maximise carbon reduction actions and other environmental, economic and societal benefits; and
- Allow the development of a CN pipeline of projects that are in need of future funding and a strategy for securing such funding.

2.4 It will take over a year to develop option ii, however, it greatly increase the chances of working towards and meeting the Community and Corporate Plan’s CN targets.

3. Financial Opportunities and Implications

3.1 The Initial Action plan’s actions will be funded through the Council’s 2021/22 budget and various government, partners and developer contributions/funding streams. Therefore there are no immediate additional budgetary implications. Table below summarises the sources of funding to deliver the actions:

Action	Funding Source
We will continue to explore the development of two solar farms, one at Brokenbury and the other near the Willows in Torquay.	£4.8 million – Torbay Council 2021/22 budget allocation
A new Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) has been launched for consultation. Once finalised it will guide future cycling and walking infrastructure plans. £120,000 of walking and cycling projects will be prioritised in 2021/22.	£120,000 - To be funded from the Local Integrated Transport Block (capital). Exact commitments for the period 2021-2026 will be confirmed by Cabinet in April 2021 through the Local Transport Action Plan.
As our climate is changing, sea levels are rising and more storms are hitting Torbay. With the Environment Agency we will act to rapidly reduce properties at risk from flooding. This will include consulting on the design of new sea walls along Paignton and Preston sea fronts, with construction to start towards the end of the summer months in 2021	£3.1 million - Torbay Council, Environment Agency, Section 106 Contributions
We will deliver effective tree planting schemes as part of a new three year funded i-tree 2 initiative. We will plant over 350 of the right trees in the right place. It will include community participation and the launch of a supportive Tree Warden scheme. This programme is all about planting trees for our children's children.	£150,000 - Torbay Council 2021/22 budget (* note this is over 3 years)
The Council have a commitment to improve the walking and cycling routes around the bay area, eventually connecting Torquay to Brixham with a coastal route. In 2021 we will provide a safer, more	To be funded from secured developer contributions allocated to this scheme

direct and attractive walking and cycling connection between Goodrington and Broadsands.	
Reducing, reusing and recycling the waste we create will help us all to play a part in tackling climate change. Through our new recycling support co-ordinators we will help residents to recycle more of their waste, focussing initially on their food waste. New leaflets will also be sent out to all households clarifying what materials can be recycled. We will also introduce a new charged-for garden waste collection service.	Through SWISCo budget
We will continue to offer the Eco Flexible Eligibility Scheme and working with Exeter Community Energy we will deliver energy saving advice to homes in fuel poverty. We will also establish an advice portal to help residents across Torbay to make energy efficient changes to their homes	No cost to the Council Advice Portal - £40,000 - Torbay Council 2021/22 budget allocation
Torbay Council have secured £1.8 million of funding from the Government's Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme to reduce Torbay Leisure Centre's carbon emissions. We will install a range of energy and carbon saving measures including air source heat pumps to create low carbon heating and hot water and solar panels to generate clean electricity.	£1.8m Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme Funding
We will work with South West partners to bring electric vehicle charging points to selected car parks in Torbay.	Currently awaiting the outcome of a bid to On Street Residential Chargepoint Scheme (ORCS).
As part of the new Melville Street Project we will deliver targeted and practical energy efficiency advice to residents in this area.	No Cost to the Council.

3.2 The development of the longer term CN Council and CN Torbay Action Plans will be led by the new Climate Emergency Officer, with support from a range of existing staff and partners. The additional resources, communication support, technical and policy costs associated with delivering the new Action Plans will be presented at a

future Cabinet meeting and will provide a high-level indication of the additional resources that may be required to deliver carbon neutrality.

- 3.3 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 place them in a better position to take advantage of, and secure, a range of future funding as it arises/develop innovative community/private investment propositions.

4. Legal Implications

- 4.1 There are no legal implications at this stage.

5. Engagement and Consultation

- 5.1 The initial CN Action Plan and proposed approach as outline above have been developed through consultation with existing council officers and some key partners. These include council officers across Housing, Transport, Highways, Planning, Waste and Recycling (and wider SWISCo services), Public Health, Procurement, Governance Support and the TDA (flooding, economic development and assets). Partners such as Devon Climate Emergency, Devon County Council, South West Energy Hub, Groundwork South and Torbay Geopark have also been made aware of the proposals. All engagement to date has been positive.
- 5.2 Subject to approval, informal and formal consultation on the refresh of Torbay's Energy and Climate change Strategy and the co-design of the CN Torbay Action Plan will commence. This is likely to include a range of internal council staff, external partners including NHS and various community groups/partnerships and key sector specific partners from across Transport, Buildings (domestic and non-domestic), Industry, Power, Agriculture and Land use. A community and stakeholder mapping exercise is being carried out in March to identify key audiences to engage and consult with over 2021/22.
- 5.3 The actions within the Initial Action Plan and the proposed wider CN approach has also been developed through engagement with the Overview and Scrutiny Board and their Climate Change Emergency Review Panel. The Board at their meeting on 17 February 2021 agreed to recommend to Cabinet the approval of the CN approach.

6. Purchasing or Hiring of Goods and/or Services

- 6.1 At this stage there are no procurement issues. However, appropriate procurement processes will be addressed through the delivery of individual schemes within the Initial Action Plan and the CN Council and CN Torbay Action Plans (once developed).

7. Tackling Climate Change

- 7.1 This paper proposes to deliver immediate actions to tackle the Climate Emergency whilst also allowing some time to refresh the Torbay Energy and Climate Change Strategy (2014-2019) and co-design and develop with partners, new longer term action plans to work towards becoming Carbon Neutral (CN) council and CN Torbay. By April 2022 this approach will enable the Council to

demonstrate immediate 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. It will also ensure longer terms plans are in place to continue to work towards carbon neutrality by 2030.

8. Associated Risks

- 8.1 If option ii (para 1.9) is not approved there will be no overall plan with prioritised actions capable of making significant progress towards carbon neutrality by 2030. This would risk failure to meet the Community and Corporate Plan's priority to become a CN council and community. Having declared a climate emergency and publicly committed to achieving carbon neutrality this will put the Council at great reputational risk.
- 8.2 Option i (para 1.9) may also risk the implementation of actions that will not deliver the best carbon and wider societal outcomes and could risk directing currently limited resources to less beneficial actions/actions that actively increase greenhouse gases.
- 8.3 Not implementing the approach will also delay low carbon investment and, potentially, prevent the Council from maximising additional funding opportunities in the future.

Equality Impacts

9.	Identify the potential positive and negative impacts on specific groups			
		Positive Impact	Negative Impact & Mitigating Actions	Neutral Impact
	Older or younger people	The initial CN Action Plan supports a range of actions that will support older people. For example – energy saving actions to support creating energy efficient, warmer and healthier homes. It will also support reducing homes in fuel poverty (which include a high proportion of elderly occupied homes)	If approved, we will work with the community to ensure any actions within the CN Council and CN Torbay Action Plans do not have any negative impacts on this specific group.	No direct impacts at this stage, however once CN Council and CN Torbay Action Plans are in place there will be benefit from investment in energy efficiency, tree planting, sustainable transport, flood resilience for all users
	People with caring Responsibilities		If approved, we will work with the community to ensure any actions within the CN Council and CN Torbay Action Plans do not have any negative impacts on this specific group.	No direct impacts at the stage, however once CN Council and CN Torbay Action Plans are in place there will be benefit from investment in energy efficiency, tree planting, sustainable transport, flood resilience for all users
	People with a disability		If approved, we will work with the community to ensure any actions within the CN Council and CN Torbay Action Plans do not have any negative impacts on this specific group.	No direct impacts at the stage, however once CN Council and CN Torbay Action Plans are in place there will be benefit from investment in energy efficiency, tree planting, sustainable transport, flood resilience for all users
	Women or men		If approved, we will work with the community to ensure any actions within the CN Council and CN Torbay Action Plans do not have	No direct impacts, however once CN Council and CN Torbay Action Plans are in place there will be benefit from investment in energy efficiency, tree planting,

		any negative impacts on this specific group.	sustainable transport, flood resilience for all users
People who are black or from a minority ethnic background (BME) <i>(Please note Gypsies / Roma are within this community)</i>		If approved, we will work with the community to ensure any actions within the CN Council and CN Torbay Action Plans do not have any negative impacts on this specific group.	No direct impacts, however once CN Council and CN Torbay Action Plans are in place there will be benefit from investment in energy efficiency, tree planting, sustainable transport, flood resilience for all users
Religion or belief (including lack of belief)		If approved, we will work with the community to ensure any actions within the CN Council and CN Torbay Action Plans do not have any negative impacts on this specific group.	No direct impacts, however once CN Council and CN Torbay Action Plans are in place there will be benefit from investment in energy efficiency, tree planting, sustainable transport, flood resilience for all users
People who are lesbian, gay or bisexual		If approved, we will work with the community to ensure any actions within the CN Council and CN Torbay Action Plans do not have any negative impacts on this specific group.	No direct impacts, however once CN Council and CN Torbay Action Plans are in place there will be benefit from investment in energy efficiency, tree planting, sustainable transport, flood resilience for all users
People who are transgendered		If approved, we will work with the community to ensure any actions within the CN Council and CN Torbay Action Plans do not have any negative impacts on this specific group.	No direct impacts, however once CN Council and CN Torbay Action Plans are in place there will be benefit from investment in energy efficiency, tree planting, sustainable transport, flood resilience for all users
People who are in a marriage or civil partnership		If approved, we will work with the community to ensure any actions within the CN Council and CN Torbay Action Plans do not have any negative impacts on this specific group.	No direct impacts, however once CN Council and CN Torbay Action Plans are in place there will be benefit from investment in energy efficiency, tree planting, sustainable transport, flood resilience for all users

<p>Women who are pregnant / on maternity leave</p>		<p>If approved, we will work with the community to ensure any actions within the CN Council and CN Torbay Action Plans do not have any negative impacts on this specific group.</p>	<p>No direct impacts, however once CN Council and CN Torbay Action Plans are in place there will be benefit from investment in energy efficiency, tree planting, sustainable transport, flood resilience for all users</p>
<p>Socio-economic impacts (Including impact on child poverty issues and deprivation)</p>	<p>Active travel actions, energy efficiency actions and new flood defences as within the Initial Action Plan will have socio-economic benefits. Providing improved active travel and public transport networks benefit all but have a particular impact on deprived areas where car ownership is typically lower. Providing advice and measures to help people save energy in their homes helps people save money and reduce fuel poverty. Improvements to flood defences will benefit all but especially those at the greatest risk of flooding which has adverse economic and health impacts.</p>	<p>If approved, we will work with the community to ensure any actions within the CN Council and CN Torbay Action Plans do not have any negative impacts on this specific group.</p>	<p>No direct impacts, however once CN Council and CN Torbay Action Plans are in place there will be benefit from investment in energy efficiency, tree planting, sustainable transport, flood resilience for all users. Some actions will also help residents to save money for example schemes to improve energy efficiency of homes in fuel poverty will reduce fuel poverty.</p>
<p>Public Health impacts (How will your proposal impact on the general health of the population of Torbay)</p>	<p>Active travel proposals within the Initial Action Plan will have a direct benefit on the health of the population in Torbay, supporting the public health key priority. Tree planting can also help create cleaner air. Energy efficient homes can create healthier, warmer homes with reductions in excess winter deaths and respiratory illness.</p>	<p>If approved, we will work with the community to ensure any actions within the CN Council and CN Torbay Action Plans do not have any negative impacts on this specific group.</p>	<p>No direct impacts, however once CN Council and CN Torbay Action Plans are in place there will be benefit from investment in energy efficiency, tree planting, sustainable transport, flood resilience for all users. All will have positive impacts. For example schemes to increase walking and cycling will help</p>

			people to live healthier lifestyles and improve local air quality.
10..	Cumulative Council Impact (proposed changes elsewhere which might worsen the impacts identified above)	Current proposals in the Initial Action Plan will be delivered by colleagues across the council, SWISCO and TDA. We will revisit this once the CN Council and CN Torbay Action Plans are in development.	
11.	Cumulative Community Impacts (proposed changes within the wider community (inc the public sector) which might worsen the impacts identified above)	If approved, we will work with the community to ensure any actions within the CN Council and CN Torbay Action Plans do not have any negative impacts on the wider community.	