

**Meeting: Cabinet**

**Date: 13 July 2021**

**Wards Affected: All**

**Report Title:** Exploring a Torbay Climate Partnership

**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, including the actions as outlined in the recently approved Initial Carbon Neutral Torbay Action Plan (2021/22). However, tackling the Climate Emergency requires everyone to play a part and to work together.
- 1.2 A climate partnership/similar is needed to co-design, accelerate and coordinate actions across Torbay's businesses, communities and with our residents. We also want to do it in a way that allows Torbay to thrive now and in the future. This paper is an update on the work to date to explore a Torbay-wide climate partnership, including an informal meeting held with partners on 4 June 2021.
- 1.3 Cabinet is asked to note the progress being made to establish a Torbay Climate Partnership/similar.

## **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. It is no one person or organisation that can solely tackle climate change.
  - 2.2 Local authorities have significant scope to influence emissions in buildings, surface transport, and waste, which together account for 40% of UK greenhouse gas emissions. Reducing local authority own emissions is also important and can account for up to 5% of their area's emissions. It also demonstrates leadership in their local area.
  - 2.3 Torbay Council cannot deliver carbon neutrality across Torbay on its own. It will need significant system level changes and require our partners, businesses, communities, and residents to all act. A partnership, with representatives from Torbay's key organisations, businesses and communities is essential in order to meet Torbay's carbon neutral 2030 target.
  - 2.4 There are many benefits to tackling climate change through a climate partnership. Carrying out immediate actions and developing long term action plans will ensure Torbay can work together to help create a climate resilient, carbon neutral Torbay.
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### **3. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision**

- (i) That the progress being made to develop a climate partnership be noted.
- (ii) That the Council continue to explore with partners the creation of a Torbay Climate Partnership, building on the discussions at the meeting held on 4 June 2021 (outlined in paragraphs 1.12 – 1.14 in this report).

### **Appendices**

Appendix 1: Options for Climate Partnership.

### **Background Documents**

[Interim Climate Change Emergency Task and Finish Report February 2021](#)

[Cabinet Report – 23 March 2021: Carbon Neutral Torbay Approach](#)

## **Supporting Information**

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 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 Carbon Neutral (CN) council and working with others to create a CN community by 2030.
- 1.2 A range of actions have been carried out to date by Torbay Council, partners, community groups and individuals. However, this alone is unlikely to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030.

- 1.3 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 with some kind of strategic body/partnership/board/working group that that can oversee and accelerate local action.
- 1.4 On 23 March 2021 Cabinet approved the following:
- An [Initial Carbon Neutral Torbay Action Plan](#) (2021/22).
  - 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).
- 1.5 Through the work of Overview and Scrutiny's Climate Change Emergency Review Panel a recommendation was also proposed to Cabinet on 23 March 2021 to establish a cross party climate change emergency working group.
- 1.6 Cabinet appreciated the work Overview and Scrutiny have done during the Climate Change Emergency Review and recognised that their work had concluded as the approach moves to delivery and implementation of the action plan. However, Cabinet is aware that across the country there are a number of models for working groups. Cabinet therefore requested officers to present a further report for Cabinet's consideration on the different models of working groups, the membership and terms of reference. This report is an interim update to this request.
- 1.7 In addition, and to meet Torbay's Community and Corporate priority to make Torbay thrive, a "just transition" – making sure that nowhere and no-one is left behind in the transition to a net zero carbon economy – is also vitally important. At the heart of the just transition is participatory justice that focuses on the critical importance of those impacted by decisions being involved in their formation, especially at the community level. It also has a distributive dimension ensuring the interests of the most vulnerable are centre stage.
- 1.8 There are a range of different models that have been set up to govern local climate action. In a recent report by PCAN (Place-Based Climate Action Network) on trends in local climate action in the UK (March 2021) three types of local climate change partnerships have been identified. These are:
- Independent Climate Partnership
  - Local Authority Initiatives
  - Third Sector initiative
- 1.9 These partnerships all have varying aims and objectives. They all include a cross section of local and regional partners, businesses and community groups. Many oversee the development, coordination and delivery of local action plans and try to add additional capacity to help local authorities deliver actions. More recently some are independent of local councils, whilst others are either advisory or part of the council's formal governance structures. All partnerships/similar are bespoke to their local area and are increasingly trying to have representatives from across the whole area, including the communities they are serving. This is to ensure a just transition. Community participation in various forms is a vital and common element to all partnerships, with many delivering a range of participatory approaches to gain their communities consensus on how and what to tackle in their communities. Such methods include climate assemblies and juries.

- 1.10 See appendix 1 for a summary presentation of the three partnership options.
- 1.11 There are a range of benefits to having a climate partnership. These are highlighted below.



- 1.12 On 4 June 2021 an informal meeting was held to explore the idea of a Torbay Climate Partnership or similar. The Council convened this initial meeting and invited a cross section of partners from across Torbay including Torbay Community Development Trust, Devon Climate Emergency, South West Energy Hub, Exeter Community Energy, Stagecoach, Torbay and South Devon NHS Trust, University of Exeter, Torbay Coast and Countryside Trust, Geopark, Environment Agency, Spark, Brixham Town Council, Brixham Chamber of Commerce and Torbay Council.
- 1.13 Just under 30 partners attended the meeting. The following is a summary of the outcomes of the meeting:
- The Group want to continue to explore a partnership for Torbay
  - It could be a partnership with key partners and an impartial chair with ongoing operational support from Torbay Council. It was felt that there was no capacity within the third sector to operate a third sector-led partnership.
  - The group spent a lot of time discussing the importance of community engagement.
  - If an independent partnership is preferred, the partnership's route to making recommendations to the council would be via the Overview and Scrutiny Board. This Board is advisory to Cabinet/Council but can make recommendations to Cabinet/Council as required. A new partnership would not need to be part of the council's formal governance structures.
  - Some partners suggested a hub and spoke operational model. This would include a new strategic central board (hub) and then existing key community

groups (spokes) utilised to engage, understand and empower local community projects that the community want.

- The group needs to investigate a few other partnerships for advice on terms of reference and governance structures before confirming the approach.
- The Group agreed to meet again and continue to develop ideas in July.
- The Group also agreed to map out the existing work of partners and to carry out stakeholder engagement mapping.

1.14 The full costs of establishing a new partnership are unknown at this early stage. The Council will, if required, initially provide administrative support and the assistance of the Council's Climate Emergency Officer. This in-kind support will equate to helping set up and administer quarterly meetings (although it is expected that there may need to be more frequent meetings in this first year as the Partnership establishes its own priorities and action plan). It is also hoped that this partnership will, with the support of the Council's Climate Emergency Officer (and other officers), lead the development of the CN Torbay Action Plan (see para 1.4).

## **2. Options under consideration**

2.1 Members can consider:

2.2 Option (i) - do not continue to explore a partnership. This is likely to result in Torbay-wide actions developing on an ad-hoc basis. Due to the uncoordinated nature of this option, there will be no overall plan across Torbay with prioritised actions capable of making significant progress towards 2030. This option is therefore not recommended.

2.3 Option (ii) is to continue to explore options with partner. It will provide Torbay with the best chance of working effectively with partners, communities and residents towards its CN targets.

2.4 It will take longer to develop option ii, however, it greatly increases the chances of working towards and meeting the Community and Corporate Plan's CN targets. There is risk that the commitment to develop a CN Torbay Action Plan by April 2022 may be delayed given the time taken to establish an effective partnership.

2.5 Option ii is the recommended option.

## **3. Financial Opportunities and Implications**

3.1 At this stage there are no immediate financial opportunities or implications. There is capacity to support the newly formed group through the Council's Community Engagement Team and with support from the Climate Emergency Officer. This support will equate to administering quarterly meetings.

## **4. Legal Implications**

4.1 There are no legal implications at this stage.

## **5. Engagement and Consultation**

5.1 Para 1.12 outlines existing engagement with a range of partners.

## **6. Purchasing or Hiring of Goods and/or Services**

6.1 At this stage there are no procurement issues.

## **7. Tackling Climate Change**

7.1 This paper proposes to establish a climate partnership that will co-develop, coordinate and deliver Torbay-wide actions to tackle the Climate Emergency.

## **8. Associated Risks**

8.1 If option ii is not approved there will be no overall partnership 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 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.

## 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	.		No direct impacts at this stage. Once established the new partnership will try and include representatives from this specific group / umbrella organisations representing this group.
People with caring Responsibilities			No direct impacts at this stage. Once established the new partnership will try and include representatives from this specific group / umbrella organisations representing this group.
People with a disability	.		No direct impacts at this stage. Once established the new partnership will try and include representatives from this specific group / umbrella organisations representing this group.
Women or men			No direct impacts at this stage. Once established the new partnership will try and include representatives from this specific group / umbrella organisations representing this group.
People who are black or from a minority ethnic background (BME) <i>(Please note Gypsies / Roma are within this community)</i>			No direct impacts at this stage. Once established the new partnership will try and include representatives from this specific group / umbrella organisations representing this group.

Religion or belief (including lack of belief)			No direct impacts at this stage. Once established the new partnership will try and include representatives from this specific group / umbrella organisations representing this group.
People who are lesbian, gay or bisexual			No direct impacts at this stage. Once established the new partnership will try and include representatives from this specific group / umbrella organisations representing this group.
People who are transgendered			No direct impacts at this stage. Once established the new partnership will try and include representatives from this specific group / umbrella organisations representing this group.
People who are in a marriage or civil partnership			No direct impacts at this stage. Once established the new partnership will try and include representatives from this specific group / umbrella organisations representing this group.
Women who are pregnant / on maternity leave			No direct impacts at this stage. Once established the new partnership will try and include representatives from this specific group / umbrella organisations representing this group.
Socio-economic impacts (Including impact on child poverty issues and deprivation)			No direct impacts at the stage.
Public Health impacts (How will your proposal impact on			No direct impacts at this stage.

	the general health of the population of Torbay)			
10..	<b>Cumulative Council Impact</b> (proposed changes elsewhere which might worsen the impacts identified above)	n/a		
11.	<b>Cumulative Community Impacts</b> (proposed changes within the wider community (inc the public sector) which might worsen the impacts identified above)	n/a		