

Meeting: Cabinet **Date:** 13 December 2022

Wards affected: All

Report Title: Devon Carbon Plan

When does the decision need to be implemented? Immediately

Cabinet Member Contact Details: Mike Morey, Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, Environment and Culture, mike.morey@torbay.gov.uk

Director/Divisional Director Contact Details: David Edmondson, Divisional Director Planning, Housing and Climate Emergency, david.edmondson@torbay.gov.uk

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 Torbay Council declared a Climate Emergency in June 2019. A range of actions are already being taken to work towards tackling the Climate Emergency and Torbay becoming carbon neutral by 2030 (see section 1.1 – 1.5 in the supporting information section).
- 1.2 In addition to the work above, Officers have been working with the Devon Climate Emergency Response Group to oversee the development of a Devon Carbon Plan. This paper is seeking Cabinet's endorsement for the recently launched Devon Carbon Plan, known hereon in as the Plan.
- 1.3 Key priority actions from the Plan will be embedded into the forthcoming Carbon Neutral Torbay Action Plan (see below).

2. Reason for Proposal and its benefits

- 2.1 A range of actions to tackle climate change are most effective if delivered at a county-level, these include projects to support the decarbonisation of housing, transport, business sectors and in bidding for government funding. There is also additional capacity at a Devon-level that can support climate action locally in Torbay. Torbay has therefore been working with the Devon Climate Emergency Partnership to oversee the development of a Devon Carbon Plan.
- 2.2 The Plan sets out an ambition to tackle climate change across all of Devon, including those people who live, work in and visit our county, and those businesses who are based or operate here.

- 2.3 The Plan is the roadmap for how Devon will reach net-zero emissions by 2050 (at the latest) with an interim target of 50% reduction by 2030, and how each partner organisation can help to achieve this.
- 2.4 It divides action to reduce Devon's emissions into five sectors: economy and resources; energy supply; food, land and sea; transport; and the built environment.
- 2.5 The Plan consists of 8 objectives and many actions per sector. See Appendix 1 and Appendix 2. A number of quick reads can also be accessed [here](#).
- 2.6 The Devon Carbon Plan action tables include columns which indicates who an action is most relevant to. Very rarely is an action relevant to a single organisation. The Plan is a County carbon plan for all, where collaboration and working together is at the core of the Devon Climate Emergency Partnership
- 2.7 According to the Plan the benefits are below. These benefits will also filter down to Torbay and help it thrive:
- It is a scientific evidence led plan which forms a roadmap for how Devon can achieve net-zero carbon by 2050 at the latest, with an interim target of 50% reduction by 2030 below 2010 levels, and how each partner organisation can help to achieve this. Without such a plan it will be difficult for Devon to play its part in achieving the national target of Net zero emission by 2050.
 - Addressing the climate and ecological emergency is an opportunity to **create a fairer, healthier, more resilient and more prosperous society**. Those most affected by climate change need more of a say in how we respond, and policy makers' actions to mitigate climate change must be aligned with goals for public health improvement, green growth and the reduction of social vulnerability.
 - Encouraging everyone to be more active by walking and cycling; improving air quality through the electrification of vehicles; insulating our homes to make them warmer; and eating more balanced diets will all **improve public health and reduce pressures on the NHS**.
 - There is considerable potential for the transition to clean technologies to **create new jobs and skills** requirements, **improve energy security** and **increase economic prosperity**. Retrofitting energy efficiency measures into housing will **reduce fuel poverty** and illnesses associated with cold homes and subsequently provide enhanced **opportunities for work and study**.
 - Enhancing the ability of habitats to store carbon offers tremendous opportunities to **reverse the decline of biodiversity** and restore the benefits healthy ecosystems provide. These include **reduced flood risk, improved water and air quality, nutritious food, timber and fuel, and accessible greenspace**.

3. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision

1. That the Devon Carbon Plan be approved.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Summary of the Devon Carbon Plan

Appendix 2 – Devon Carbon Plan

Background Documents

[Devon Carbon Plan](#)

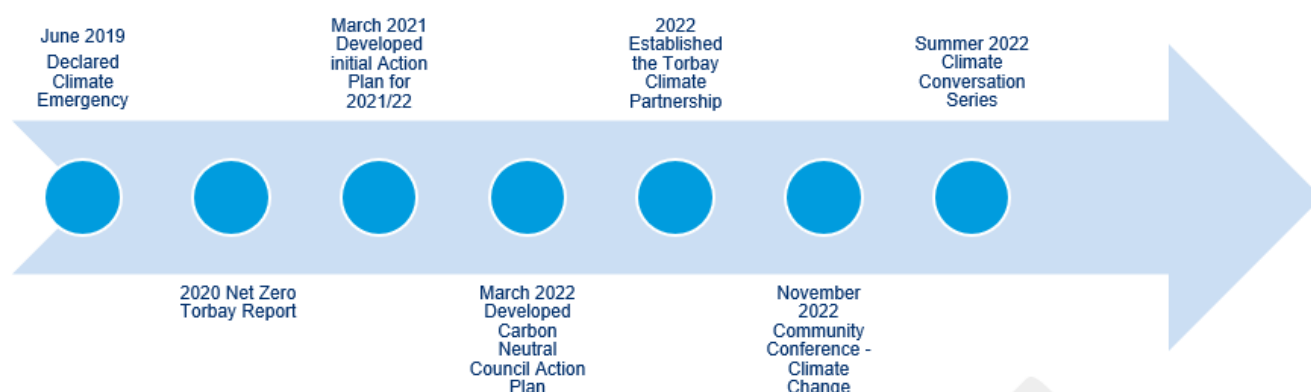
Supporting Information

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. Human and natural systems are already being impacted as our climate changes. We are seeing flooding, droughts, heatwaves, and crop yield reductions all being experienced more frequently.
- 1.2 Internationally most Governments continue to work towards keeping global temperature rises below 1.5C by the 2100 and avoiding the worst of the climate crisis's impacts.

Local Action

- 1.3 Torbay is on a journey to reduce emissions and become carbon neutral by 2030. This is our journey so far.



- 1.4 In 2019 Torbay Council declared a climate emergency², committed to work towards becoming carbon neutral by 2030 and adopted tackling climate change as one of its four key visions as outlined in the Community and Corporate Plan (2019-2023). The Net Zero Torbay report by the University of Exeter was commissioned to help inform how Torbay should take a science-based approach and prioritise actions to work towards becoming carbon neutral. In 2021 an Initial Carbon Neutral Torbay Action Plan was developed. This was developed by Torbay Council and partners to accelerate climate action. It focussed on 10 key actions including developing solar farms, installing new walking and cycling infrastructure, decarbonising Torbay Leisure Centre, and retrofitting homes to make them more energy efficient with new low carbon heating.

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 The climate emergency reflects the need for urgent action to reduce or halt climate change and avoid potentially irreversible environmental damage resulting from it.

- 1.5 However, tackling climate change needs everyone to take action. In 2021 a new Torbay Climate Partnership was formed to accelerate climate action locally. This Partnership has committed to developing and delivering this Carbon Neutral Torbay Action Plan. A consultation draft of this Action Plan will be published on 13 December 2022 and aims to be adopted by April 2023.

Regional action

- 1.6 Regionally, a range of public, private and voluntary organisations from across Devon came together on 22nd May 2019 to form the Devon Climate Emergency Response Group, to declare a climate and ecological emergency and to endorse the principles of the Devon Climate Declaration. Torbay Council is part of this group.
- 1.7 These organisations have collaborated since 2019 to develop a carbon action plan for the county, the Devon Carbon Plan. 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.
- 1.8 Creating the Devon Carbon Plan involved a number of phases including open calls for evidence, six thematic hearings, public consultation on the interim Devon Plan and Citizens' Assembly. Please see appendix 1.
- 1.9 Appendix 1 and 2 outlines the full Plan and a summary. The Plan consists of 8 objectives and many actions per sector including built environment, transport, energy, food, land and sea, economy and resources and a range of cross cutting themes.

Impact on Torbay

- 1.10 Many of the actions in the Devon Carbon Plan will be delivered by a range of partners. As part of the development of the forthcoming Carbon Neutral Torbay Action Plan, the Devon Carbon Plan actions will be assessed through a priority matrix and included, where identified as a priority, in Torbay's new Action Plan.
- 1.11 Proposals for how the Plan will be governed is outlined in Appendix 1. The Devon Response Group has given the go ahead to review the proposed governance arrangements for the Devon Carbon Plan to ensure it is delivery focused, agile and not onerously bureaucratic. Therefore, the governance structure is likely to evolve.
- 1.12 Day-to-day implementation of projects in the Plan will be managed by the organisation leading or contributing to each individual project.
- 1.13 It is expected that partner organisations formal democratic processes and climate change partnerships/groups will continue to govern area-wide climate plans

Benefits of working with partners to deliver the Devon Carbon Plan

- 1.14 Many actions in the Devon Carbon Plan are also what we need to do in Torbay and will feature in our plans once finalised. Rather than duplicating efforts and repeating the same actions individually, it is more efficient to work with Devon partners to co-develop and co-

deliver actions. This will provide additional capacity and support in areas such as strategic nature recovery, domestic energy efficiency, strategic renewable energy generation, waste disposal and education and transport. Bidding for future government funding such as HUG2 and procuring services such as delivery partners to install energy saving measures in homes and electric vehicle charging infrastructure, will help Torbay deliver more within the current limited capacity available. There may also be an economy of scale and cost savings associated with some future opportunities.

2. Options under consideration.

2.1 Members can consider to:

- (i) Not to endorse the Devon Carbon Plan
- (ii) Endorse the Devon Carbon Plan

2.2 Option (i) above will result in some actions within the Devon Carbon Plan not being delivered across Devon and in Torbay. This may slow progress towards Torbay's 2030 target and Devon's 2050 target. 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 significant progress towards tackling the Climate Emergency, meeting the 2030 target and meeting the Community and Corporate Plan's ambition by working with partners across Devon. It will also support Devon to deliver on its ambitious plans and met its 2030 and 2050 targets.

3. Financial Opportunities and Implications

3.1 There will be no financial consequences of endorsing the Devon Carbon Plan. Torbay will prioritise actions and deliver what it can with the available resources we have locally. Where additional funding is required to deliver the Plan's actions we will work with Devon partners to secure this.

4. Legal Implications

4.1 There are no legal implications.

5. Engagement and Consultation

5.1 Appendix 1 highlights the engagement and consultation undertaken to develop the Devon Carbon Plan including thematic hearings, citizens' assemblies, public consultation on the Interim Devon Carbon Plan.

- 5.2 Internally officers from across the Council, TDA and SWISCo (climate emergency, economic development, transport, parking, waste and others) have reviewed and fed into the development of the Plan.

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 endorsing a key strategy for the region that will help Devon to accelerate action to tackle the climate emergency. It will also support Torbay to meet its targets and accelerate climate action. Many actions will support carbon reduction locally in Torbay.

8. Associated Risks

- 8.1 If option ii is not approved meeting Devon's and Torbay's climate targets will be difficult without a coordinated long term plan.
- 8.2 Option i may also give rise to duplication of actions and efforts locally and regionally resulting in an inefficient use of limited resources. This would not deliver the best carbon and wider outcomes for Torbay and Devon.

9. Equality Impacts - Identify the potential positive and negative impacts on specific groups

		Negative Impact & Mitigating Actions	Neutral Impact
Older or younger people	The Devon Carbon Plan supports a range of actions that support creating energy efficient, warmer, and healthier homes. It will also support reducing homes in fuel poverty. Tree planting, Sustainable, active transport projects are also included the Plan and will help improve air quality and health of older and young people.		

People with caring Responsibilities			No direct impacts at the stage
People with a disability		Some active travel options within the Plan could exclude people with disability. For all projects lead organisations will work with staff and the community to ensure new plans do not have any negative impacts on this specific group.	
Women or men			No direct impacts at the stage
People who are black or from a minority ethnic background (BME) (Please note Gypsies / Roma are within this community)			No direct impacts at the stage
Religion or belief (including lack of belief)			No direct impacts at the stage
People who are lesbian, gay or bisexual			No direct impacts at the stage
People who are transgendered			No direct impacts at the stage
People who are in a marriage or civil partnership			No direct impacts at the stage
Women who are pregnant / on maternity leave			No direct impacts at the stage
Socio-economic impacts (Including impact on child poverty issues and deprivation)	The Devon Carbon Plan supports a range of actions that support creating energy efficient, cheaper to run homes. It will also support reducing homes in fuel poverty. Active transport projects will improve accessibility across Torbay and Devon and Tree planting and rewilding projects will help enhance local areas.		

Public Health impacts (How will your proposal impact on the general health of the population of Torbay)	The Plan supports a range of actions that support creating energy efficient, warmer, and healthier homes. It will also support reducing homes in fuel poverty. Tree planting, Sustainable, active transport projects are also included in the Plan and will help improve air quality and health of the population of Torbay and Devon.		
--	--	--	--

9.1 Devon County Council carried out a full Equality Impact Assessment on the Plan.

10. Cumulative Council Impact

10.1 It is possible that other services could adversely affect the ability of Devon to meet its 2030 and 2050 target by continuing to do things that give rise to carbon emissions or developing projects/policies that increase Torbay's and wider Devon's carbon emissions. This is why the Council's Policy and Carbon Neutral Council Action Plans (adopted in March 2022) are so important as a tool to help staff consider and make more sustainable, low carbon decisions. Carbon Literacy training and regular staff communication will also be important.

11. Cumulative Community Impact

11.1 It is likely that Torbay's communities, businesses, and organisations all will adversely affect the ability of Torbay and Devon to meet their 2030 and 2050 target if they continue to do things that give rise to carbon emissions and by developing new projects/practices that increase carbon emissions. This is why the newly established Torbay Climate Partnership and their forthcoming Carbon Neutral Torbay Action Plan will be so important in helping all of Torbay make more sustainable, low carbon decisions. The Devon Climate Change Forum will also be vital for the wider Devon area.