

Public Question – Cabinet 10 January 2023

<p>Question (1) submitted by Julie Adams to the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, Environment and Culture (Councillor Morey)</p>	<p>At the Cabinet meeting on 13 December Councillor Mike Morey cited the Devon Carbon Plan as being a scientific, evidence led plan which forms a roadmap for how Devon can achieve net zero carbon by 2050 at the latest. At the same meeting Councillor David Thomas asked the following question ‘the climate emergency was declared by this administration June 2019 and with the target being 2030, that’s 11 years which means we’re 25% of the way into this plan, so looking at zero carbon how much have we achieved in savings?’ In response David Edmondson, Divisional Director for Planning, Housing and Climate Emergency only offered the figure of 40% Carbon reduction for Torbay from 2008 to 2020 adding government figures come out every two years, it will be another two years before we have the figures for this year 2022. That the 40% figure sounds a lot because a lot of that is achieved by the production of more sustainable energy nationally, so that has had a significant impact on Torbay already. The UK only produces 1.03% of the worlds total Carbon output. In light of all of these statements, I have the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What percentage of the UK’s total carbon output is Torbay’s total carbon output, who measures and how is Torbay’s carbon output measured?• Where are the figures/reports for Torbay’s carbon output found?• Are there Trusts and or charities involved?• Who produced/owns the scientific data used to form the Devon Carbon Plan and where can it be obtained?• Torbay declared a climate emergency in 2019 and have the data for 2008 to 2020, what are the figures for 2019 to 2020 and where is that information obtained?• It was stated that government figures come out every two years, waiting for those figures takes Torbay to the end of 2024 and halfway into a plan whilst only just receiving figures. Why is Torbay Council marching head first into a plan without seeing any previous data?• Is the 40% carbon reduction for Torbay, or nationally?• How has 40% reduction in carbon output nationally or locally significantly helped the people of Torbay?
<p>Councillor Cowell provided the answer on behalf of Councillor Morey</p>	<p>UK greenhouse gas emissions in 2020 were 406 million tonnes of CO2 equivalents (Carbon dioxide plus other greenhouse gases i.e. Methane, Nitrous Oxide, Fluorinated gases (please note carbon emissions make up 79% of this figure)). The source of this information is the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy document 2020 UK final greenhouse gas emissions statistics: one page summary (publishing.service.gov.uk)</p> <p>Torbay’s greenhouse gas emissions in 2020 were 421,200 tonnes of CO2 equivalents. Again the source of this information is the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and is set out in a document: UK-local-authority-ghg-emissions-2020.xlsx (live.com)</p>

Therefore, Torbay was responsible for 0.1% of the UK's total emissions (CO2 equivalents) in 2020.

The data set is collated by the Government and combines data from the UK's Greenhouse Gas Inventory with data from a number of other sources, including local energy consumption statistics, to produce a nationally consistent set of greenhouse emissions estimates at local authority level from 2005 to 2020. They show "territorial" emissions, meaning emissions that occur within the UK's borders. The data show emissions allocated on an "end-user" basis where emissions related to energy use are distributed according to the point of energy consumption. Emissions that are not energy related are distributed based on the point of emission, other than emissions from waste management which are distributed based on where the waste was produced.

The figures/reports for Torbay's carbon output can be found at [UK local authority and regional greenhouse gas emissions national statistics, 2005 to 2020 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) and per authority breakdown at [UK-local-authority-ghg-emissions-2020.xlsx \(live.com\)](#).

Previous reports on Torbay's carbon emissions can also be found at [Net Zero Torbay Report – Devon Climate Emergency](#) (Please note this was based on 2016 data. The University of Exeter is developing an up to date, even more robust greenhouse gas inventory report based on the national data sets above for Torbay up to 2020. In this draft report Torbay's emissions in 2020 are slightly greater at 437,000 tCO₂e (the difference is additional data collated by the University).

With regards to the involvement of trusts and or charities, these organisations have not involved in data collation. However, they have been involved in local climate action.

All studies produced for the Devon Climate Emergency Response Group to form the Devon Carbon Plan are available on Devon Climate Emergency website. Various authors have produced the studies including the University of Exeter.

According to the government data available for Torbay, total emissions in 2019 were 469,100 tonnes of CO₂e. Total emissions in 2020 were 421,200 tonnes of CO₂e. A summary report on Torbay's emissions inventory is also being collated by the University Exeter. This will be available by end of January and published. It too is based on the government's datasets with additional data held by the University.

Whilst government figures come out every two years, we have seen previous data and we understand where Torbay's carbon emissions arise from. The government data sets referred to earlier provides us data up to 2020. The Net Zero Torbay report by the University of Exeter also summarised where Torbay's emissions arise from and makes recommendations for priority, no regret actions (i.e. actions we need to do no matter what and that have lots of co-social/economic outcomes)

to help Torbay work towards carbon neutral by 2030. These priority actions form part of the Torbay Climate Emergency Action Plan (currently out for consultation), alongside a series of action that our residents highlighted as important to take. Even if we could, right now, access 2021 and 2022 data sets for Torbay it is highly likely that it would still show the same priority, no regret actions needed for Torbay i.e. immediate action across all sectors with a priority focus on decarbonising buildings (including homes), transport, power and businesses. If we were to wait for up-to-date data then even more emissions will enter the atmosphere making tackling climate change and meeting local and national/international targets harder. Therefore, Torbay's proposed Torbay Climate Emergency Action Plan is based on a series of no regret actions and/or actions that our community deem important. Many actions will have a number of benefits for Torbay, i.e. economic and social benefits, hence waiting will also prevent these outcomes arising and ultimately will not support Torbay's ambition to thrive.

Given the national data sets do have a 2 year lag, and to ensure we can track progress of the Torbay Climate Emergency Action Plan, a set of interim outcomes and indicators are being established. The University of Exeter is developing these for use in the action plan, and subsequent plans, all the way up to 2030. This will allow us to track progress in between receiving data from the Government or University. Where local progress is lagging the Torbay Climate Partnership will review and explore actions regularly to address this.

The 40% reduction in carbon for Torbay does come with a number of co-benefits on a local and national scale:

- Addressing the climate emergency is an opportunity to create a fairer, healthier, more resilient and thriving society. It is about creating nice places to live and work now and in the future.
- 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, improve energy security and increase economic prosperity. Retrofitting energy efficiency measures into housing will reduce fuel poverty and illnesses associated with cold homes and create local jobs.
- Enhancing the ability of habitats to store carbon offers 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.

	<p>To ensure we can track progress of the Torbay Climate Emergency Action Plan, a set of interim outcomes and indicators are being established. The University of Exeter is developing these for use in this plan, and subsequent plans, all the way up to 2030. This will allow us to track progress (including a set of local co-benefits) in between receiving data from Government or University. A Final set will feature in the Torbay Climate Emergency Action Plan which is seeking approval by the Torbay Climate Partnership and Cabinet in April 2023.</p>
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