

Report to: Cabinet



Date of Meeting 2 November 2022

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Review date for release N/A

Devon Carbon Plan

Report summary:

This report presents the final version of the Devon Carbon Plan following a comprehensive research, consultation and inclusive approach to evidence gathering, and considers the process of adoption, the implications of doing so, and how we integrate the actions and commitments with our own Climate Change Strategy.

I am proposing that we fully support the ambitions and commitments in the Devon Carbon Plan.

Adoption of the Devon Carbon Plan prompts a review and updating of our own ambitions that are contained in our Climate Change Strategy and linked Action Plan.

Climate Change

We adopted our Climate Change Strategy & Action Plan in January and February 2020, and prior to that (July 2019) we signed the Devon Climate Change Emergency Declaration.

As part of this process we committed to becoming a carbon neutral council by 2040 as a stretch target.

We have adopted an ambitious Climate Change Action Plan, and despite making good progress on a number of projects and schemes, we recognise the need to do more, think bigger, act faster and be bold and brave.

Since 2019 we have undertaken two comprehensive carbon footprint exercises under the guidance of The University of Exeter. We are showing a 22% reduction between 2018/19 (baseline year) and 2020/21. However, I suspect much of this is related to the Covid-19 pandemic before we celebrate great success in reducing our carbon footprint.

In developing our stance we always intended a review and refresh of our Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan after five years and alignment with the wider Devon climate change ambitions.

In **February 2021** I reported on the **Interim Devon Carbon Plan** – I advised that Devon County Council had been leading work on the production of a Carbon Plan for the county. This work had been developed with a range of partners and was part of the commitment in the Climate Change Emergency Declaration. The interim Plan went out for consultation and was to be finalised following a virtual Citizens Assembly process, incorporating comments from consultees.

The Plan set out a roadmap for becoming net-zero carbon by 2050 at the latest, with an interim target for a 50% reduction by 2030, below 2010 levels. The Plan emphasised this was intended for everyone in Devon to play a part and make a contribution.

The Plan picked up on the build back better theme and the governments then recently published ten point plan for a green industrial revolution. Eight high level themes were proposed:

1. Fossil fuels phased out as an energy source
2. Minimise energy consumption
3. Engaged communities acting for resilience and a net-zero carbon Devon
4. Carbon captured and stored from the burning of fuels

5. Minimise fugitive greenhouse gas emissions
6. Resilient local economies with access to green finance
7. A circular use of resources
8. Maximise carbon storage in marine and terrestrial environments

The Plan is supported by a wide range of partners and is underpinned with expertise, good data, enthusiasm and commitment.

In **January 2022** I reported to Cabinet on the Citizens Assembly - my report outlined the input into the draft Devon Carbon Plan that had been proposed through the Devon Citizens Assembly process. All signatories to the Devon Climate Emergency Declaration had been invited to consider and comment on the resolutions put forward by the Citizens or more correctly the Devon Climate Assembly prior to a further round of public consultation.

The Devon Climate Assembly was organised by Involve a charity that specialises in public consultation on social policy. A rigorous process of selecting, training and facilitating participant's debate, and producing a series of resolutions was undertaken by Involve. So we had some valuable further public input into the planning process for the Devon Carbon Plan.

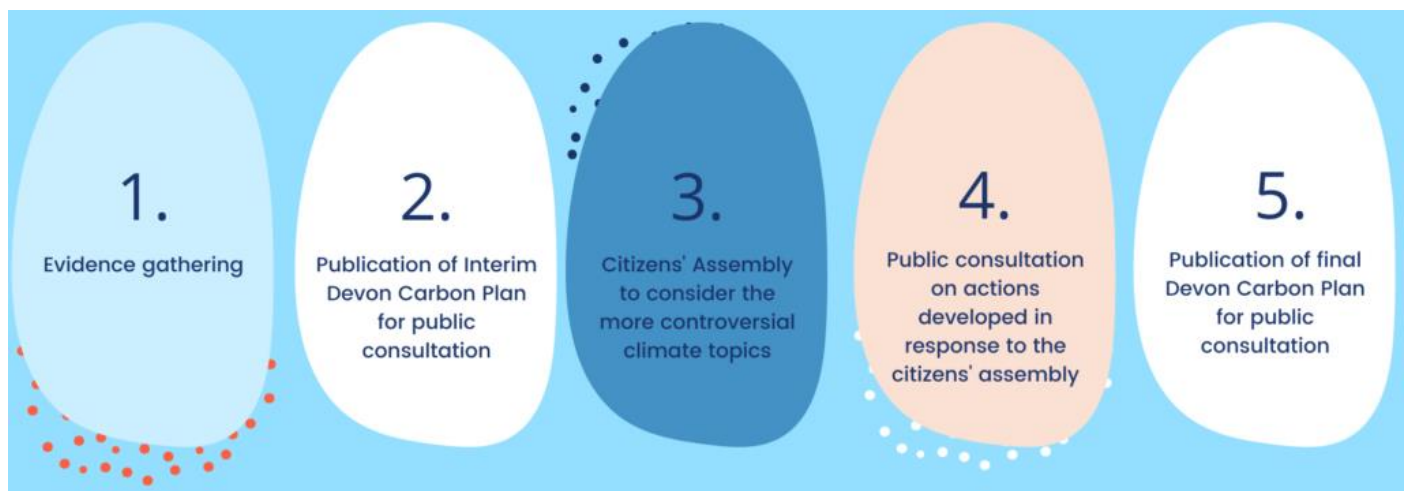
We broadly welcomed the resolutions presented by the Climate Assembly and agreed to work collectively with the Devon Climate Change Partnership to incorporate them into the revised and updated version of the Devon Carbon Plan. We also fed back our own comments.

The Devon Carbon Plan

The Devon Carbon Plan is the roadmap for how Devon will reach net-zero emissions by 2050 (at the latest). It has been built on detailed, ongoing assessments of Devon's greenhouse gas emissions.

Broadly speaking, emissions in Devon can be divided into five key sectors: economy and resources, energy supply, food, land and sea, transport, and the built environment. The Devon Carbon Plan will outline actions for how each of these sectors can reach net-zero emissions by 2050.

Creating the Devon Carbon Plan involved five main stages. During the first stage, our [Net Zero Task Force](#) took a robust, evidence-led approach, with an open call for evidence from the public and organisations wishing to contribute. Next, after we had developed the Interim Devon Carbon Plan, we asked for public feedback during a consultation. Following the successful completion of the Citizens' Assembly, the secretariat is now planning a public consultation on the actions developed in response to the assembly's recommendations.



Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget

Yes ☒ No ☐

Policy Framework Yes ☒ No ☐

Recommendation:

1. The Devon Carbon Plan is endorsed; and
2. The Council reviews and refreshes its own Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan to align and show how it will contribute to delivering the Devon Carbon Plan.

Reason for recommendation:

To endorse the Devon Carbon Plan and work in partnership to deliver the actions and activities contained in the Plan to reduce our carbon use.

Officer: John Golding Strategic Lead – Housing, Health & Environment.

Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- ☒ Climate Action and Emergency Response
- ☒ Coast, Country and Environment
- ☐ Council and Corporate Co-ordination
- ☐ Democracy, Transparency and Communications
- ☒ Economy and Assets
- ☐ Finance
- ☒ Strategic Planning
- ☒ Sustainable Homes and Communities
- ☐ Tourism, Sports, Leisure and Culture

Equalities impact Low Impact

Climate change High Impact

Risk: High Risk; The main risk is associated with not acting on climate change.

Links to background information

Link to [Council Plan](#)

Priorities (check which apply)

- ☐ Better homes and communities for all
- ☒ A greener East Devon
- ☐ A resilient economy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 In July 2019 the Council Declared a Climate Change and Biodiversity Emergency and at the same time committed to collaborating with Devon County Council, all the Devon

District Councils, Plymouth City Council and other agencies to address the Emergencies.

- 1.2 The Devon Climate Emergency Declaration was prepared by a consortium of public, private and voluntary organisations collaborating through the Devon Climate Emergency Response Group. It set 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.
- 1.3 The Devon Climate Emergency Partnership was formed which includes public, private and voluntary organisations. Following an expert, evidence led process, the Devon Carbon Plan was developed, which included public consultation and a Citizens Assembly.

2. Devon Carbon Climate Emergency Background

- 2.1 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.
- 2.2 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.
- 2.3 As part of this an independent Net-Zero Task Force was formed to help inform this plan. The Net-Zero Task Force is a collection of specialists from various fields who have expertise in topics relevant to carbon reduction and are drawn from economic, environmental, health and academic organisations, and was chaired by a leading climate expert from Exeter University. Minutes of all Net Zero Task Force meetings are published online for the purposes of transparency.

3. Devon Carbon Plan Summary and Process

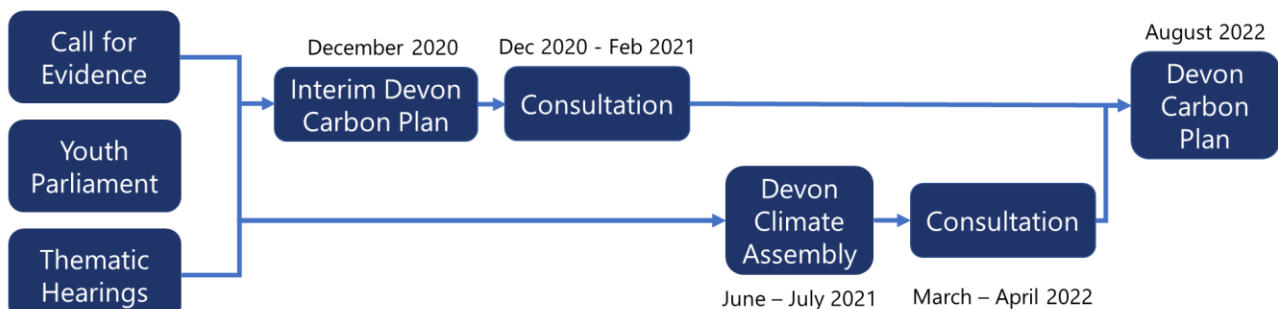
- 3.1 The Devon Carbon Plan is the roadmap for how Devon will reach net-zero emissions by 2050 (at the latest). It has been built on detailed, ongoing assessments of Devon's greenhouse gas emissions.
- 3.2 It divides action to reduce Devon's emissions into five sectors: economy and resources; energy supply; food, land and sea; transport; and the built environment.
- 3.3 Creating the Devon Carbon Plan involved five main phases;
 - During the first phase, the Net Zero Task Force took a robust, evidence-led approach, with an open call for evidence from the public and organisations wishing to contribute which received 893 submissions from the public.
 - Six Thematic Hearings (meetings) gathered expert input about barriers to reaching net-zero; and a Youth Parliament Climate Summit with 75 students from 15 primary and secondary schools across Devon was convened.
 - Next, the Interim Devon Carbon Plan was developed. The Devon Climate Emergency Partnership asked for public feedback during a consultation which received 1322 responses.

- The more controversial climate topics and action areas were set aside to be deliberated through a representative Citizens Assembly which was organised and chaired by a third party in the summer of 2021.
- Following the successful completion of the Citizens' Assembly, a further public consultation took place on the actions developed in response to the assembly's recommendations in spring 2022.

3.4 A visual representation of the process is shown below:

4. Citizens Assembly Summary and Background

Oct 2019 – Jan 2020



- 4.1 Through the initial consultations on the Interim Devon Carbon Plan, communities identified some challenges which required further discussion. These were transport, wind energy and building retrofit, which prior public consultation said needed further discussion.
- 4.2 A citizens' assembly was put together to put the views of the general public at the centre of Devon's action on climate change. A representative sample of 70 Devon citizens, including young people over the age of 16, were invited to take part in the Devon Climate Assembly.
- 4.3 The Sortition Foundation recruited assembly members using a process known as a 'civic lottery.' This is recognised internationally as the gold standard method for recruiting citizens' assembly members.
- 4.4 Recruitment began with inviting people from across Devon, Plymouth and Torbay to apply. 14,000 letters inviting people to register their interest in taking part were sent to randomly selected households.
- 4.5 This method of recruitment does typically tend to attract more expressions of interest from people from professional backgrounds and with higher levels of education. To help address this skewing, the Index of Multiple Deprivation was used to identify postcode areas with higher levels of deprivation and proportionately more addresses were selected in these areas.
- 4.6 Any person aged 16 or over living in a household that received an invitation were able to register their interest in participating by telephone or online. Respondents then completed a form asking a number of questions that helped us select members so that the whole assembly was demographically representative of Devon.

- 4.7 The Devon Climate Assembly produced 14 Resolutions across the three categories. Each resolution is attended by specific conditions, which can be found in appendix 2, the Devon Climate Assembly Report.

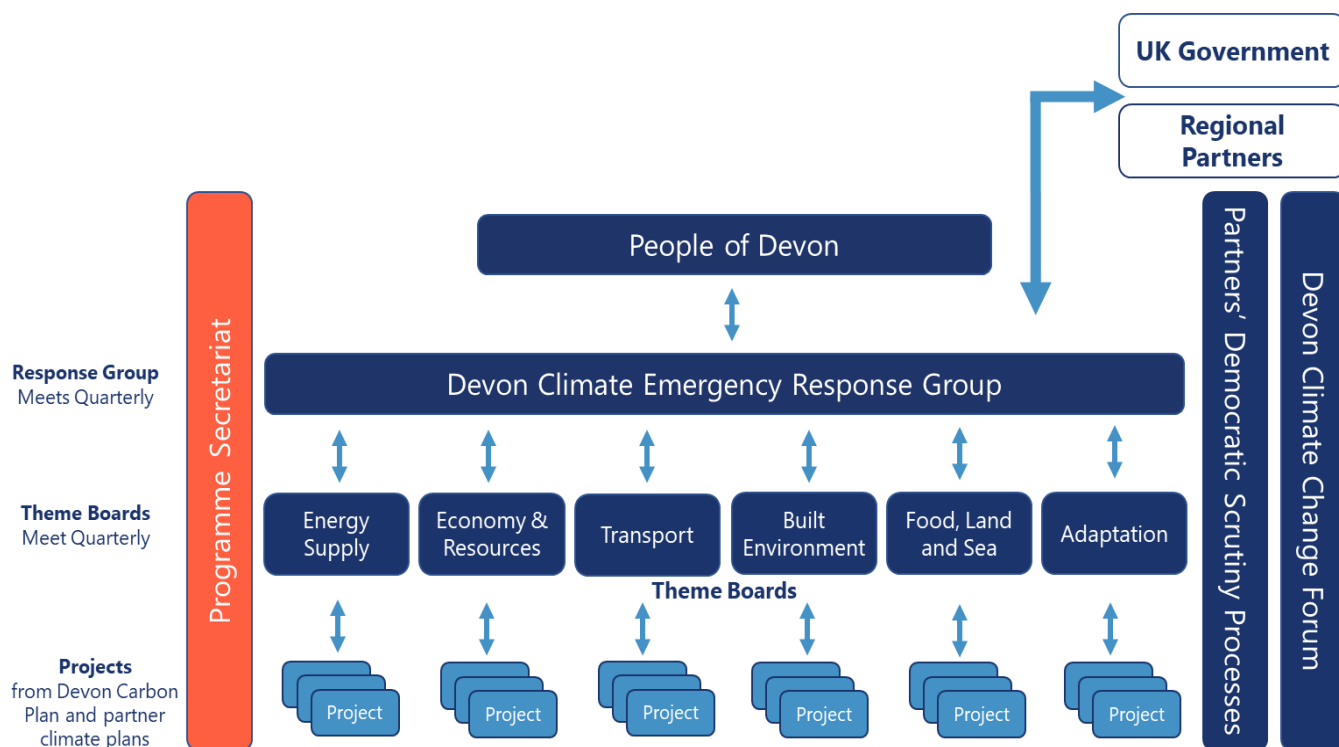
5. Endorsement and Impact upon the Council

- 5.1 The Devon Carbon Plan has followed a robust science led process involving thematic experts as well as including public consultation and a representative Citizens Assembly.
- 5.2 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 Devon Carbon Plan is a County carbon plan for all, where collaboration and working together is at the core of the Devon Climate Emergency Partnership.
- 5.3 The Devon Carbon Plan does not propose to supersede existing democratic scrutiny processes, it instead is an 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.
- 5.4 The Plan outlines how everyone in Devon can work together to reduce our emissions to net-zero. It highlights the barriers that need to be overcome, the resources required (whether they are existing or required) and where collaboration with national government is needed to do so.
- 5.5 Many of the actions have a degree of flexibility in their language, such as 'where possible', 'explore', 'investigate'. This is not there to downplay the critical nature of reducing carbon emissions, rather setting out key areas of focus for each partner organisation to contribute to the 2050 net-zero target.
- 5.6 Now would be an ideal opportunity to revise this Council's Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan to more closely align with the Devon Carbon Plan and to set out our own areas of focus.

6. Devon Carbon Plan Governance Arrangements

- 6.1 Day-to-day implementation of projects will be managed by the organisation leading or contributing to each individual project. i.e., it is down to organisations to lead on their chosen priorities.
- 6.2 It is expected that partner organisation's formal democratic scrutiny processes and climate change working groups will continue to provide challenge to the implementation and to the execution of individual projects their organisations may be leading.
- 6.3 Devon Climate Change Forum will be established to provide independent, impartial, expert oversight and advice on behalf of the people of Devon to all tiers of the governance structure. People will be invited to apply, rather than selecting participants from a known pool of people. This will help bring robustness to the processes by avoiding an 'echo chamber' and introduce a layer of balance to the process. An analogue for this is the Climate Change Committee who provide independent and impartial advice to the UK government on its responsibilities under the Climate Change Act.

6.4 A Governance Structure is illustrated below.



7. East Devon Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan

- 7.1 Our own Climate Change Strategy predated the publication of the Interim Devon Carbon Plan as it was an ambition of this Council to establish a framework for achieving net zero soon after our declaration of a climate emergency.
- 7.2 After two years since adoption, the Council has made progress on some of the actions in the action plan, and some actions have been investigated and deemed unlikely to be achievable in the short to medium term. The existing Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan is also not consciously aligned with the Devon Carbon Plan themes and contains actions that have been developed in collaboration, which could be strengthened in our own Action Plan.
- 7.3 It is proposed that the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan is revised and aligned with the Devon Carbon Plan, with the action plan itself streamlined to defined areas of focus for a shorter two year period (we currently review every five years), upon which another review will take place. This will ensure our focus is directed to those areas where we can have the greatest influence whilst also being able to reflect and respond to changes in national and local contexts.

8. Proposed Way Forward

- 8.1 Since declaring a Climate Change and Biodiversity Emergency, the global outlook remains poor with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) publishing its Sixth Assessment Report showing that the vast majority of future scenarios show temperatures are on track to reach well above 1.5 degrees (over the limit set by the 2015 Paris Agreement), but it also highlights that some of the risks associated with Climate Change can still be prevented or lessened (such as the July 2022 heatwaves and wildfires across UK and Europe) with prompt action. The cost of action still outweighs the cost of inaction.
- 8.2 The latest science from the IPCC and the UK Governments Climate Change Committee as well as real world extreme weather events have demonstrated how critical joined up action is at reducing the very worst of future climate change scenarios. The Devon Carbon Plan is a landmark piece of work for the County to help realise and achieve our aims of becoming net-zero by 2050 at the latest.
- 8.3 It is recommended that the Council endorses the Devon Carbon Plan and in doing so, it commences a review of our own Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan to align with the Devon Carbon Plan, and set out areas of focus for this Council for the next two years.

Financial implications:

There is no direct budget request in the recommendation of the report. Any actions that cannot be afforded out of existing budgets will need to be presented back to Cabinet and Council for consideration.

Legal implications:

Adopting a revised Climate Change Strategy will be a matter for Full Council as it forms part of the Policy Framework, otherwise these are matters that Cabinet can agree. There are no other legal implications requiring comment.

Appendix 1 Devon Carbon Plan

Devon Carbon Plan [Devon Carbon Plan – Quick Reads – Devon Climate Emergency](#)

Appendix 2 Devon Climate Assembly Report

<https://www.devonclimateemergency.org.uk/devon-climate-assembly/devon-climate-assembly-report/>

THE INTERIM DEVON CARBON PLAN

IN 8 POINTS



Fossil fuels no longer an energy source.

- We use more renewable energy
- Communities are active in energy issues
- We walk, cycle & use electric vehicles



Energy consumption is minimal.

- We drive less, we are active & healthy
- Services are local, reducing travel needs
- All buildings are more efficient



Community action for a net-zero Devon.

- We think innovatively
- Communities share ideas of net-zero
- Citizens are at the centre of change



Carbon captured from fuels burnt.

- Only used for unavoidable greenhouse gas emissions
- Devon pilots carbon capture & storage projects e.g. catching smoke from industrial chimneys



THE INTERIM DEVON CARBON PLAN

IN 8 POINTS



Escaping greenhouse gas emissions are minimised.

- Reduce escaping gases from sewage works, landfill & electrical equipment



Develop a resilient local economy.

- A circular, just, regenerative economy
- Reskill workers e.g. in renewable energy
- We spend money locally



Resources are used more circularly.

- We consume fewer materials
- Reduce household & commercial waste
- We reuse, repair & recycle more



Maximise natural carbon storage.

- Adapt to climate impacts e.g. flood controls
- Trees planted & habitats restored
- We enjoy healthy, locally sourced foods

