

## FULL COUNCIL

26 JUNE 2019

### Devon Climate Declaration

**Cabinet Member(s):** Councillor Bob Deed, Leader of the Council  
**Responsible Officer:** Stephen Walford, Chief Executive

**Reason for Report:** To consider the declaration of a climate change emergency

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** See paragraph 5.0 below.

**Financial Implications:** as a policy decision there are no financial implications arising from this decision. Implications will arise as a result of any future decision on actions/interventions.

**Legal Implications:** as a policy decision there are no legal implications arising from this decision. Implications will arise as a result of any future decision on actions/interventions.

**Risk Assessment:** No risk assessment has been undertaken, although clearly the wider risk of not taking action on matters of climate change, both resilience and adaptation, are significant.

**Equality Impact Assessment:** as a policy decision there are no equality impact implications arising from this decision. Implications will arise as a result of any future decision on actions/interventions.

#### 1.0 Background

1.1 Devon County Council has declared a climate emergency. They have committed to facilitating the reduction of Devon's carbon emissions to net-zero by 2050 at the latest and have formed the Devon Climate Emergency Response Group (DCERG) to enable strategic partners to collaborate on producing a Devon-wide Carbon Plan.

#### 2.0 Context

2.1 The UK government has, through the Climate Change Act 2008<sup>1</sup>, committed the UK to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 80% (from the 1990 baseline) by 2050. The latest published figures (Feb 2019) show that the government met its carbon reduction targets in its first two carbon budgets (dated '08-12 and '13-17) – see Appendix B for details.

2.2 The national Committee on Climate Change has expressed concerns that while the 3<sup>rd</sup> Carbon budget ('18-22) is projected to be on track, the 4<sup>th</sup> (covering '23-27) is not. This recognises that future targets will be harder to

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/27/contents>

achieve as the 3% yearly reduction gets progressively more challenging to meet<sup>2</sup>.

2.3 The Devon-wide target is more ambitious than that set out in law, against which it is estimated that the UK will find increasingly challenging. However, it is felt that being bold in our ambition will not only set out a statement of intent, but will galvanise public opinion and sentiment – since many of the interventions necessary to achieve carbon neutrality can only be achieved by the actions and behaviours of the people of Devon.

2.4 It should be noted that at the time this report was being finalised, the Prime Minister had indicated that she intended that the UK government would be seeking to revise the national targets to achieve a net zero position by 2050, substantially accelerating the required progress to achieve carbon reduction interventions and outcomes. If appropriately enacted through legislation in due course, this would bring the national target and policy position in line with what Devon is proposing.

### 3.0 **Recent actions**

3.1 As a result of the DCC declaration, the DCERG was convened under normal 'emergency response' protocols and as such has been led by officers acting under such protocols. Members have been previously advised by the Chief Executive on these arrangements (note that these events occurred during the pre-election purdah period and immediately thereafter), with an undertaking that any appropriate policy statement or policy undertaking will be put to members in a public forum to enable a council vote on whether to adopt such a policy.

3.2 On the 22nd May 2019, the members of DCERG endorsed the underlying principles of the Devon Climate Declaration. It was agreed that each senior officer would seek the opportunity for their organisation to discuss/debate and sign the Declaration as quickly as their procedures allow. This item provides that opportunity to members of Mid Devon District Council.

3.3 In addition, it should be noted that on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> May, the council received a delegation from protesters linked to the climate change agenda as part of the School Strike for Climate – an international movement of school students deciding not to attend classes and instead take part in demonstrations to demand action to prevent further global warming and climate change<sup>3</sup>.

### 4.0 **Next steps**

4.1 Members are invited to consider whether the council should formally sign up to the declaration as drafted. They may also wish to consider delegating a follow-up item to the relevant policy development group (PDG) to give more consideration as to how the council can take appropriate steps to reduce its own carbon impact and support the residents and businesses of Mid Devon to do likewise.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.theccc.org.uk/tackling-climate-change/reducing-carbon-emissions/how-the-uk-is-progressing/>

<sup>3</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/School\\_strike\\_for\\_climate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/School_strike_for_climate)

## 5.0 **Recommendations**

5.1 It is recommended that:

5.1.1 The council adopts the statement at Appendix A outlining the Devon Climate Change Declaration.

5.1.2 The council agrees to work to the Devon-wide target of net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.

5.1.3 The council continues to work, through the DCERG and other mechanisms as appropriate, to collaborate on producing a Devon-wide Carbon Plan.

5.1.4 The council directs the Environment Policy Development Group (PDG) to act as the initial owner of this policy activity within the council; with future PDG meetings considering how best to determine the council's own policy response(s) such as may then be subsequently recommended to cabinet and council in the normal way.

**Contact for more information: Stephen Walford, Chief Executive**

**List of Background Papers:** All related information can be found at: <https://www.devon.gov.uk/energyandclimatechange/>

## Appendix A – The Devon Climate Declaration

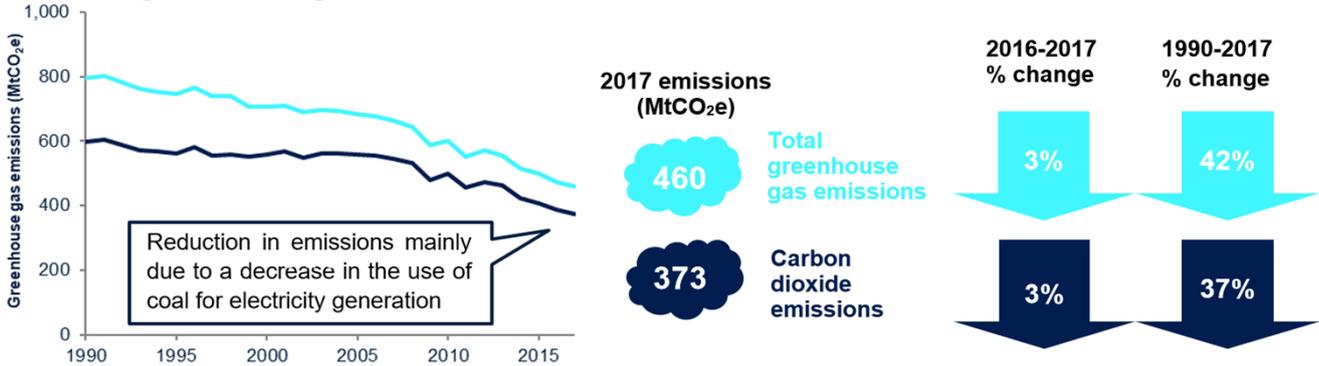
1. This Declaration has been prepared by a consortium of public, private and voluntary organisations collaborating through a Devon Climate Emergency Response Group. It sets out an ambition to tackle climate change that covers all of Devon, including those people who live, work in and visit our county, and those businesses who are based or operate here.
2. We are aware of the significant implications of climate change for Devon's communities; it is already affecting our environment, infrastructure, economy and health & wellbeing. If not addressed, the impact on future generations will be profound and the ability to meet the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals will be severely compromised.
3. We understand that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has advised that carbon emissions must reduce globally by at least 45% by 2030 from 2010 levels and reach net-zero by 2050 if we are to avoid the worst effects of climate change by keeping warming below 1.5 degrees.
4. We will lead in the global response to climate change through our collective action, innovation and influence.
5. Individually, we will review (within 6 months) our plans to reduce our organisation's carbon emissions to meet or exceed these targets, including ensuring the people we do business with are doing the same. We will publicly report our carbon emissions annually in accessible formats.
6. In collaboration, we will engage Devon's residents, businesses and visitors to develop and implement a plan to facilitate the reduction of Devon's production and consumption emissions to meet IPCC recommendations at the latest. We will openly report progress on its delivery. We know this transformational change will be challenging and will include:
  - Deploying more renewable, decentralised and smart energy systems
  - Retrofitting energy-efficiency measures into our existing buildings
  - Constructing zero-carbon new buildings
  - Travelling less and using improved walking, cycling and public transport infrastructure more often, and using electric and hydrogen vehicles
  - Changing our consumption to use less, re-use more and choose low-carbon options
  - Challenging all economic sectors to review their practices and the values of those they do business with
  - Divesting from fossil fuels
  - Changing our dietary patterns and reducing food waste
  - Changing agricultural practices to reduce emissions associated with farming operations, manage soils sustainably and replenish soil carbon
  - Encouraging carbon storage such as through tree planting, the use of wood in construction and peatland restoration
  - Empowering the people of Devon with the knowledge and skills to act collectively.
7. Additionally, we will work to understand the near-term and future risks of climate change for Devon to plan for how our infrastructure, public services and communities will have to adapt for a 1.5-degree warmer world.
8. Local organisations and communities cannot do this alone as national government plays a key role in many of the policy areas that are vital to reducing emissions and adapting to climate change. We call on government to prioritise decarbonisation and adaptation within decision making and work with us by using its powers to provide the resources and funding necessary to accelerate the transition to a low-carbon and resilient economy and society.
9. We challenge every organisation, business, community and individual to do the same.

# Appendix B

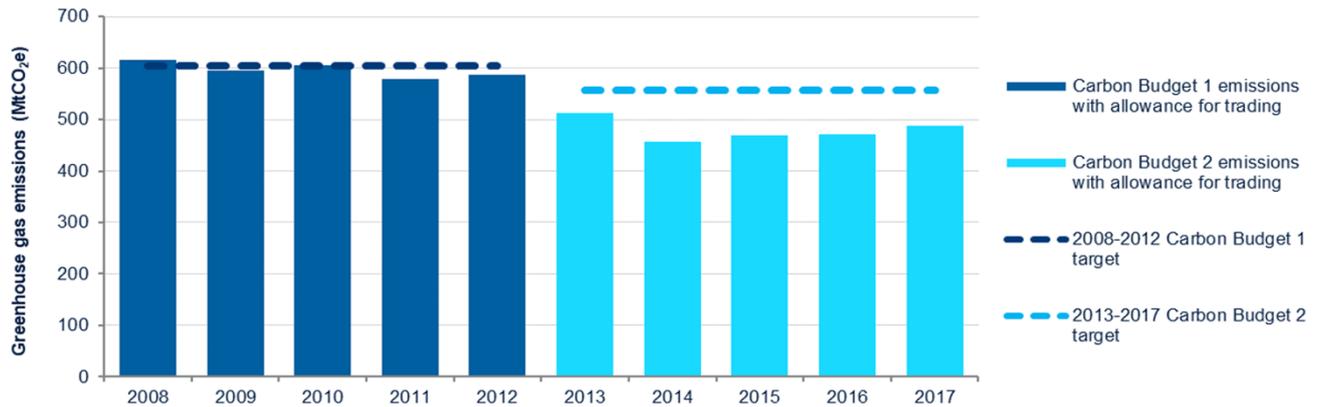
## 2017 UK Greenhouse Gas Emissions



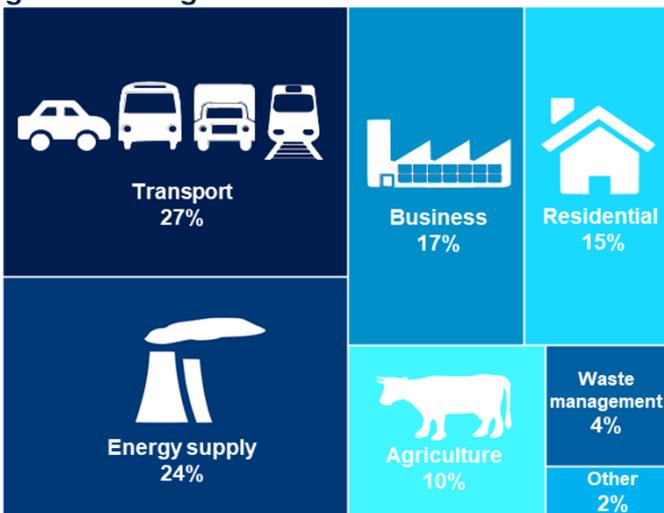
2017 UK greenhouse gas emissions are estimated to have decreased from 2016



The UK has met its target in the Second Carbon Budget, covering 2013-2017 emissions



Transport was the largest emitting sector of UK greenhouse gas emissions in 2017



Energy supply and the residential sector delivered the largest reductions in emissions from 2016 to 2017

Sector	2016-2017 % change	1990-2017 % change
Transport	0%	2%
Energy supply	8%	60%
Business	2%	30%
Residential	4%	16%
Agriculture	1%	16%
Waste management	1%	69%
Other	2%	88%

Other includes Public, Industrial Processes and the Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) sectors (note that LULUCF acts as a net sink of emissions). The percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

The energy supply sector has accounted for around half of the overall reduction in UK emissions since 1990, at which point it accounted for 35% of all emissions in the UK. It was the largest emitting sector until its emissions fell below transport in 2016.

Further information: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/final-uk-greenhouse-gas-emissions-national-statistics>

Enquiries: [ClimateChange.Statistics@beis.gov.uk](mailto:ClimateChange.Statistics@beis.gov.uk)

Responsible statistician: Amanda Penistone Tel: 0300 068 8090