

# CABINET

## 18 FEBRUARY 2021

### INTERIM DEVON CARBON PLAN

**Cabinet Member(s):** Cllr Elizabeth Wainwright, Cabinet Member for Climate Change

**Responsible Officer:** Andrew Busby, Corporate Manager for Property, Leisure and Climate Change

**Reason for Report:** To provide Members with a copy of the Interim Devon Carbon Plan that was out for public consultation.

**Recommendation:** For Cabinet to approve the feedback from the Environment PDG on the Interim Devon Carbon Plan as stated on para 3.6 and to submit that feedback to the Devon Climate Emergency Partnership.

**Financial Implications:** All actions within the Interim Devon Plan are subject to the budget available to budget approval.

**Budget and Policy Framework:** The Council declared a Climate Emergency on 26 June 2019, but there has been no dedicated budget set to date. Any projects or workstreams that are likely to incur more than negligible costs outside budget will need formal approval through Cabinet and Council. The Council welcomes recent confirmation of £311k grant funding from BEIS to support decarbonisation projects.

**Legal Implications:** None directly arising, but there will be implications arising from planned projects and decisions brought forward to deliver progress on cutting our carbon footprint; those implications and whole life carbon costings will be considered as part of those projects.

**Risk Assessment:** The Climate Change risk assessment will be reviewed and managed via the Council's SPAR system and will be regularly reported to the Audit Committee.

**Equality Impact Assessment:** The impact on equality will be considered for each action within the plan by the Citizens' Assembly panel.

**Relationship to Corporate Plan:** A Sustainable Planet – Environment.

**Impact on Climate Change:** The Full Council declared a Climate Emergency and as part of that commitment, the Council agreed to produce a Carbon footprint baseline.

## 1.0 Introduction

1.1. The Council has declared a Climate Emergency and aims to become carbon neutral by 2030. Carbon neutrality is a term used to describe the actions that organisations, businesses and individuals can take to remove as much carbon dioxide from the atmosphere as each puts in to it. The overall goal of carbon neutrality is to achieve a zero carbon footprint. To become carbon neutral we needed to accurately measure our carbon footprint and create a baseline against which future changes can be measured. The assessment needed to

establish a baseline from which to measure the reductions that we plan to make via our action plan and make informed recommendations to Members.

- 1.2. Following the recent climate change declaration by councils across Devon, there are now two emerging work streams; an internal organisation focus on reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions to (net) zero; and the wider agenda looking at reducing emissions across the whole Mid Devon area. Clearly, the first of these is much more of a process that a) the Council can manage/monitor/influence; and b) can control to a significant degree, as it relates to our own assets and operational base. For the wider piece linked to the whole of the Mid Devon area achieving net zero emissions, this is work that DCC will be initiating linked to baselining work being undertaken for the whole county. However, as a District we will work as a partner with local businesses, organisations, community groups and other residents to support the District's journey to net zero. As we learn figures for the whole District's CO<sub>2</sub> footprint, we will be able to do this more effectively.
- 1.3. The definition of a carbon footprint is the amount of carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere as a result of the activities of a particular individual, organisation, or community. A carbon footprint is measured in tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO<sub>2</sub>e) and CO<sub>2</sub>e is calculated by multiplying the emissions of each of the greenhouse gases (GHG) by its 100 year global warming potential (GWP).
- 1.4. Having a net zero carbon footprint, refers to achieving net zero carbon dioxide emissions by balancing carbon emissions with carbon removal (often through carbon offsetting) or ideally, by eliminating carbon emissions altogether (the transition to a post-carbon economy). It is used in the context of carbon dioxide releasing processes associated with transportation, energy production, agriculture and commercial/industrial processes.
- 1.5. Impacts of climate change on our wider ecosystem also needs to be considered as part of our climate change journey (i.e. availability of water, changing natural habitats and landscapes). Taking one example the Council prepared and consulted upon a draft Green Infrastructure Plan (GIP) in 2011, the Green Infrastructure Assessment (Section 2 of the GIP) was then revised to take account of comments from residents and other stakeholders. Other planning policies have links to Biodiversity and these will be listed and signposted on an updated web page for Climate Change.

## 2.0 **Devon Climate Emergency**

- 2.1 The Council are part of the tactical group for the Devon-wide carbon plan. DCC are also business planning for the offer of a local power purchase agreement between large energy consumers in Devon and community-owned renewable energy, and we are talking to DCC about this.
- 2.2 More widely, the tactical group is a key link for the synchronising of MDDC's climate plans with Devon-wide plans. The Devon Climate Emergency put out a call for evidence to contribute to the Devon Carbon Plan -- the group received almost 900 submissions, mostly from individuals, and a summary of submissions by theme can be viewed here:

<https://www.devonclimateemergency.org.uk/devon-carbon-plan/call-for-evidence/>

2.3 Some of the suggestions have been reviewed and incorporated into our own plan, and others will need to be discussed as part of our NZAG and Mid Devon Climate Conversations.

### **3.0 The Interim Devon Carbon Plan- Annex A**

3.1 The consultation of the Interim Devon Carbon Plan went live on 7 December 2020 and residents will have the chance to shape the county's roadmap to creating a net zero Devon. The Devon Climate Emergency group have estimated the emissions and therefore the Carbon Footprint in Mid Devon as 911,349 tc02e.

3.2 The consultation, which opened on Monday 7th December 2020 and runs for 10 weeks, allows the public to offer their thoughts and feedback on the plan. This is the chance for residents to have their say on Devon's collective response to the global climate emergency. As a Partner to the group we are able to submit our feedback post the closing date of the 15<sup>th</sup> February 2021.

3.3 The Net-Zero Task Force (a group of fifteen experts in areas including renewable energy, transport, planning and the built environment) has been developing the plan for creating a net-zero Devon. The consultation follows a series of hearings chaired by experts and an evidence gathering stage of more than 893 submissions of ideas and evidence by the public. This is the pivotal next step towards producing the Final Devon Carbon Plan, which will follow the Citizens' Assembly, now in 2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

3.4 The Devon Climate Emergency (DCE) partnership, which is made up of 25 organisations, wants to hear your views on the key actions in the plan that are deemed necessary to create a thriving net-zero Devon.

3.5 The draft of the Interim Devon Carbon Plan was reviewed at the Environmental PDG at their meeting on the 12<sup>th</sup> of January 2021, where consideration was given to:

- Some Members felt that there was a mis-perception of the Farming community
- The costs were too high
- How did people picture the countryside in 2030
- How much each district would need to contribute financially to the Plan

3.6 The Group requested that the Cabinet give consideration to the following in it's response to the draft Plan:

- Anaerobic Digesters – for's and against must be addressed
- The size of the documents that the public were expected to read needed to be considered
- Costs needed to be explained and the affordability of Mid Devon residents taken into consideration. The Plan needed further explanation of the cost benefits
- There needed to be a bigger involvement with the farming community

- Air travel should be included

3.7 All the actions are based on the latest evidence and address the suggestions from the public call for evidence. The topics range from active travel, renewable energy, and improved air quality to better insulation and warmer homes, reduced fuel poverty and eating more balanced diets. These actions will help to create a fairer, healthier and stronger Devon. Additionally, they highlight issues that are more challenging to implement. These will be prioritised for discussion at the Citizens' Assembly in 2021 to ensure the recommendations in the Final Devon Carbon Plan reflect the views of Devon's citizens. The more people who take part in the consultation, the stronger our argument becomes, the more momentum we create and the more likely we are to realise our goals. Together, we can build back better and create a net-zero Devon where people and nature thrive.

#### **4.0 District-wide community engagement**

4.1. Devon-wide Citizens Assemblies to discuss the climate crisis and seek input from residents were planned, but the Covid19 crisis has pushed these back to 2021. At a more local level, Cllr Wainwright had hoped to host in-person 'Mid Devon Climate Conversations' with town, parish, community group and business representatives, to encourage networking and collaboration, and to listen to ideas, questions and information. The Covid19 crisis has meant we have had to put in-person meetings on hold, but in the meantime, we have been hosting online discussions. Content from these discussions will be documented and considered as the Council moves forward with this work, and as part of the Net Zero Advisory Group. This agenda is one that many people are interested in and have expertise in, which the council can benefit from. It is also a good opportunity to improve community engagement.

4.2. We are mapping district-wide groups and initiatives that are working on the net zero carbon agenda, to support residents to connect and learn more. We will put this on our website.

4.3. Members are of course continued to be invited to be part of the Climate Conversations mentioned above. In addition, please feel free to share articles, ideas and suggestions as we move forward with this work. It is a topic that goes beyond any one political party, and a collaborative approach will help us tackle this complex issue at a local level.

#### **5.0 Mid Devon Updated and New Related Policy, Plans and Strategies.**

- Corporate Plan 2020-2024
- Climate Strategy and emerging Climate Action Plan
- Mid Devon Core Strategy 2007-2026
- Local Plan 2013 - 2033
- Forward Planning/Local Plan documents
- Green Infrastructure Assessment
- Housing Strategy

- Asset Management Plan

### **List of Background Papers:**

- Cabinet report 19 December 2019 Update on carbon baseline.

<https://www.middevon.gov.uk/residents/planning-policy/adopted-local-plan-evidence/green-infrastructure-assessment/>

- A vision for green infrastructure was then produced that can be reviewed as part of our journey: <https://www.middevon.gov.uk/media/114235/vision-and-strategic-objectives.pdf> .
- As part of our Local Plan review on sustainability appraisal dated January 2017 can be found here: <https://www.middevon.gov.uk/media/342723/sustainability-appraisal-update-2017.pdf> this also links into biodiversity across the District.

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**Circulation of the report:** Cllr Wainwright and Leadership Team