

Public Question Time

Hilary Tosdevin

Question 1

Would like details of who has been consulted regarding the Devon Carbon Plan.

Written Answer

As promised, please find below, a written answer to your question to the Environment Policy Development Group meeting on 15th August 2023.

Members of the Environment PDG welcomed the public questions about the Councils' basis for and response to the climate emergency, which will only be possible to deliver if there is a united approach. The target to reach net zero by 2030 is ambitious but has been informed by the Devon Carbon Plan and the need for an international and local response to the predicted impacts of climate change. Mid Devon officers, members and residents will need to work together to play our part locally to support national and international efforts.

Key details about the Devon Carbon Plan (DCP) consultation processes.

Creating the Devon Carbon Plan involved five stages.



Evidence gathering at the early stages of developing the plan.

[Thematic Hearings – Devon Climate Emergency](#)

[Public Call For Evidence – Devon Climate Emergency](#)

Questions in the interim plan consultation.

[Interim Carbon Plan Consultation Report – Devon Climate Emergency](#)

Following the outcomes of the public consultation and the recommendations made by the [Devon Climate Assembly](#) the Interim Plan was updated to a Final Devon Carbon Plan. The Final [Devon Carbon Plan is available to read here](#).

Questions / issues addressed by the Devon Climate Assembly.

The assembly members met over [six weekends](#) in Spring 2020. The recruitment process for the Devon Climate Assembly (this included Mid Devon residents) in addition to details of how it worked, invitation criteria, the final report and the resolutions are available [here](#).

The assembly discussed: *HOW SHOULD DEVON MEET THE BIG CHALLENGES OF CLIMATE CHANGE?* The assembly focused on three big climate challenges which prior public consultation has said need further discussion:

- A. the role of onshore wind energy in Devon's energy mix;
- B. how to encourage people to use their cars less, whilst retaining mobility;
- C. and the issue of building retrofit.

The assembly split into three streams, each focusing on one of these three challenges. [Video recordings of sessions and topic presentations are available online](#).

What Now?

The Devon Carbon Plan is a 'live' document that belongs to all Devon communities, and widespread support is crucial to turn the aims into reality. The team that supports the Devon Climate Emergency partnership aim to maintain community engagement, as part of keeping it relevant, and share updates via the newsletter, social media etc. [Devon Carbon Plan – Devon Climate Emergency](#)

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I hope these are useful in illustrating the background to the DCP and how consultations were carried out.

James King

Question 1

Cost of net zero plans - shows £170m for net zero projects. My concern is what is that money going to be spent on? Strongly believe it could be invested to make the community a 15 or 20 minute city. Tiverton seems to be shutting down quickly. Money could be better spent in developing the town rather than increasing car park charges.

Answer

Dear Mr King,

As promised, please find below, a written answer to the question you raised at the Environment Policy Development Group.

Our 2023/24 service budget is £15.6m. The £117m figure is an estimate of costs for a range of potential schemes we have identified that could help to address climate change, but it is not a budget (and covers a much wider timeframe than a single year). Only projects that are shown to be affordable and feasible can go ahead.

As our Climate and Sustainability Specialist advised the committee, funding for possible schemes would need to be secured from a variety of sources, particularly

via Central Government. The majority of the circa £117m total estimated thus far for climate-related work c.£96.3m would benefit the Community; and by comparison only c.£20.9m for the Council's own Corporate climate work, of which over £4m has already been successfully sourced from central government and spent on invest-to-save energy efficiency and renewable energy projects.

Your wish for thriving, sustainable towns is reflected in the Council's work to support local enterprises and communities, ranging from grants to market places to the Local Plan for future development across Mid Devon. For example:

- [Mid Devon Prosperity Programme - MIDDEVON.GOV.UK](https://www.middevon.gov.uk/mid-devon-prosperity-programme)
- [Love your Town Centre funding - MIDDEVON.GOV.UK](https://www.middevon.gov.uk/love-your-town-centre-funding)
- [Food and Drink - Taste Mid Devon](https://www.middevon.gov.uk/food-and-drink-taste-mid-devon)
- [Other financial support - MIDDEVON.GOV.UK](https://www.middevon.gov.uk/other-financial-support)

We would welcome your ideas for ways to address these matters.

Members of the Environment PDG welcomed the public questions about the Councils' basis for and response to the climate emergency, which will only be possible to deliver if there is a united approach. The target to reach net zero by 2030 is ambitious but has been led by the Devon Carbon Plan and the need for an international and local response to the predicted impacts of climate change. Mid Devon officers, members and residents will need to work together to play our part locally to support national and international efforts.

Elizabeth Feltham

Question 1

Does council know the following?

The human and environmental suffering involved in EV/ green component mining i.e. lithium and cobalt, 300 year damage to the local water supply, human slavery and child labour. Shipping companies are starting to ban EVs because of the fires that can't be put out. UK companies have banned their use on trains and buses.

Question 2

Has Devon Fire Service been consulted with regard to management of toxic run off from EV fires?

Question 3

Have you individually independently researched this whole net zero carbon neutral narrative? Should you choose to continue with this extreme plan? Remember we are mostly carbon!

I am requesting a public forum where Council can evidence their climate data and their claim of a *man-made* climate emergency, because half an hour is not sufficient time.

Most people don't know the full extent of the Net Zero plans. Few have read the Absolute Zero, C40 Cities & IPCC reports and are blissfully ignorant of how much our lives will radically change if recommendations go ahead.

A few examples from these reports;

By 2030, UK airports close except Heathrow, Glasgow and Belfast, which close by 2050. By 2030, 50% less lamb and beef production... had *you* noticed we're being conditioned to eat insects? Industries destroyed, limited employment.

Petrol and Diesel completely phased out by 2050, but don't worry, you'll have a rather generous 3 item clothing allowance per year!
And so it goes on.

If you expect the public to willingly go along with losing our entire way of life, our livelihoods and our freedom and being impoverished, for generations, then you absolutely must *conclusively* prove it's necessary. Anything less is unconstitutional.

And evidence not just using cherry picked data the, zero authority IPCC put out. Full chart data showing everything, including the inconvenient ice core sample data which shows CO2 levels over 5 times greater than they are now with much higher global temperatures, with no detriment to the planet. CO2 is in fact a gas of life and at 0.04% of the atmosphere. The science community is not settled on this narrative, thousands of scientists have been silenced and threatened to not speak.

I'm not a climate change denier, she is alive so will evolve and change. The onus is on council to *prove* these effects are man-made and a disaster/emergency.

From your agenda today

“Legal Implications: Full Council declared a Climate Emergency in June 2019”.?
Excuse me how is that legal?

Question 4

Can council confirm the constitutional basis by which either they, or central government (both organizations made by the people) may act in any of these respects?

All I can find is on 1st May 2019 uk gov passed a non-binding motion to declare a climate emergency. All that is, is an opinion it has no legal binding and never lawful binding. It could not be voted on as it would be unconstitutional to every man woman boy and girl of the land.

Answer

Dear Ms Feltham,

As promised, please find below, a written answer to your questions to the Environment Policy Development Group meeting on 15th August 2023.

A combined answer to the questions posed.

What does the Council's climate emergency declaration mean?

The Council recognises (along with many other organisations and individuals) the climate change crisis is so severe that it deserves an urgent and coordinated

'emergency' response, to help communities to successfully deal with the consequences of climate change and find ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Full Council declared a Climate Emergency in June 2019. The resolution was debated at length and support was unanimous, as recorded in the decision details ([published here](#)). As a local government body, Mid Devon District Council has the authority to resolve declarations, decisions and policy. This fundamental Council function is laid out in its [Constitution](#).

Legally binding obligations for the Council with regard to current legislation.

The Council's environmental sustainability duties are underpinned by legislation e.g. [Environment Act 2021](#), [Climate Change Act 2008](#), [NERC Act 2006](#). All local authorities have obligations under the Climate Change Act 2008 with regard to climate change adaptation (resilience) and mitigation (emission reductions). Related national level policy, guidance, strategies and plans also feed into the actions and decisions that the Council take - about the way we operate and how we can work in partnership to influence Mid Devon as a whole.

Legal implications for reports.

The notes about legal implications on committee reports such as the 'Climate and Sustainability Update' pertain only to that paper. The note does not attempt to summarise the whole of the Council's statutory obligations.

Mid Devon communities care about action to address climate change.

Community consultations ([Devon Carbon Plan example](#)) and surveys have consistently found that residents are concerned about climate change. A large majority feel climate action is a high priority. (Mid Devon [2021](#) example.)

I hope that this assists you.

Les Tosdevin

How can you communicate the Council's plans to the 86% of voters that did not vote?

Answer

In fact, the voter turn-out at the last election was 34%.

We have a Communications Team which is well versed in communicating Mid Devon District Council's plans and aspirations to the whole of the electorate. This is done through a variety of channels including our website, social media channels, via our newsletter sign up platform and through local media, both print and online. The team also share material with all our elected members for them to disseminate within their communities, as well as through a network of parish clerks and local newsletters. Services also use direct mail where appropriate and paid for adverts if needed. The Council has also recently launched a two way engagement hub called Let's Talk Mid Devon which shares council news and consultations and seeks feedback and ideas from our electorate.

In relation to the questions about our climate change work and net zero target, we are considering convening a citizens' forum on climate change/net zero when the time is right. The Liberal Democrat manifesto makes a commitment to closer dialogue with Parish and Town Councils this Autumn, leading up to the State of the District debate (next Spring) through which the Council will seek their opinions and ideas on how the Council is working towards delivery of the 2030 target.