

Report to: **Executive**

Date: **1 December 2022**

Title: **Devon Carbon Plan**

Portfolio Area: **Climate Change – Cllr Tom Holway**

Wards Affected: **All**

Urgent Decision: **N** Approval and clearance obtained: **Y**

Author: **Adam Williams** Role: **Climate Change Specialist**

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That Council is RECOMMENDED to:

- 1. endorse the ambition and objectives set out within the Devon Carbon Plan, and**
- 2. revise its Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan to show how it will contribute to delivering the Devon Carbon Plan.**

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 On the 25th 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.

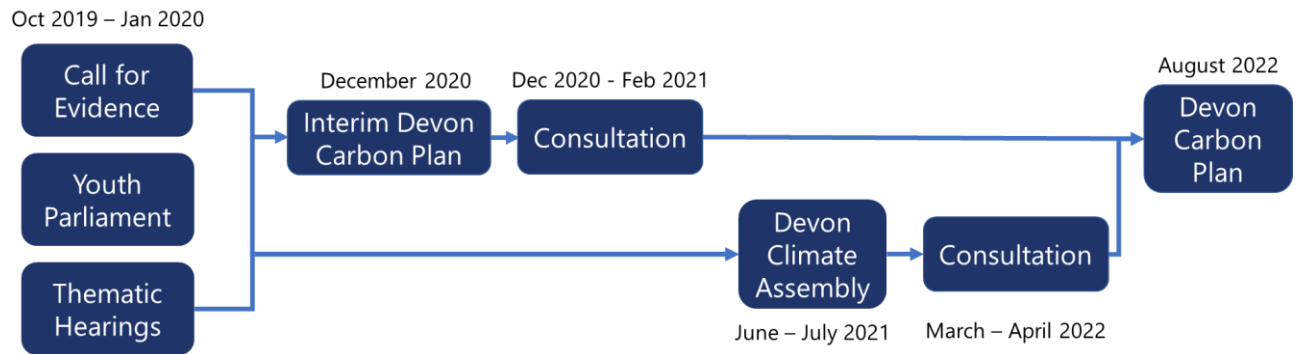
3. Devon Carbon Plan Summary and Process

- 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

- 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.

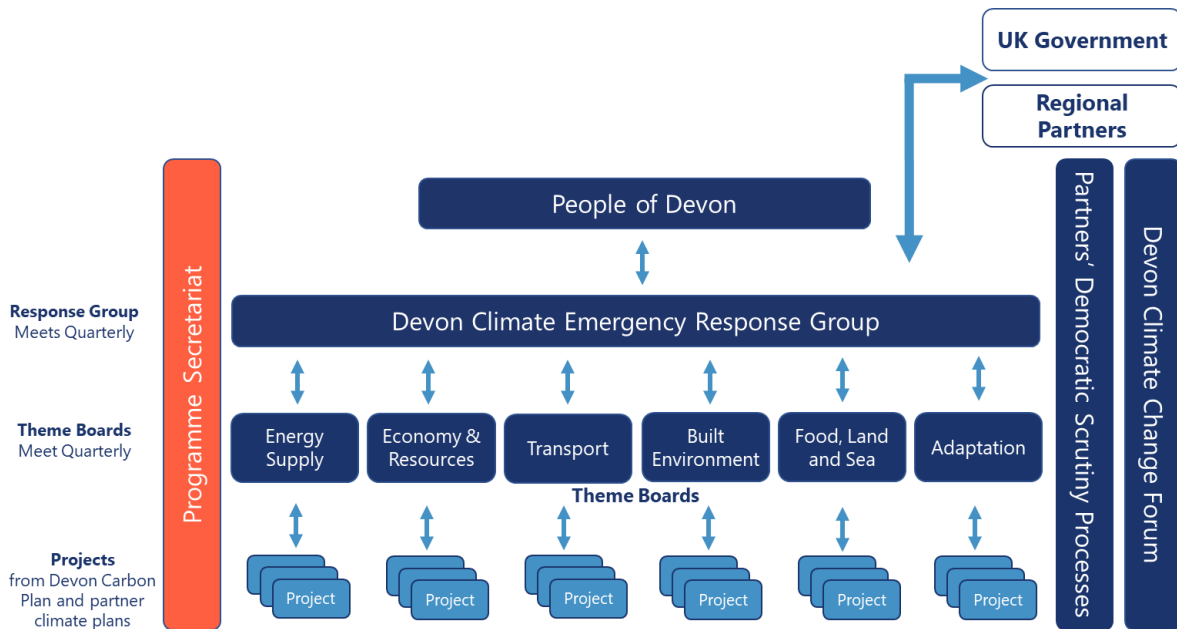
- 4.7 The Devon Climate Assembly produced 14 Resolutions across the three categories. Each resolution is attended by specific conditions, which can be found in appendix 2, the Devon Climate Assembly Report.

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 doesn't 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 isn't 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 Authority's climate strategy and action plan to more closely align with the Devon Carbon Plan to set out our own areas of focus. This is explored further in section 7 of this report.
- 5.7 In terms of the governance arrangements for the plan, this is explained in section 6 below.

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 organisations 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. However, since the publication of the plan, there has been concern that this appears too complex and bureaucratic which could slow progress, a review of this is taking place at the moment, reduce the time demand so that everyone can focus on delivery of the priorities, and to find something that enables collaborative conversations to happen between the right people and the people of Devon.



7. South Hams District Council 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 a year and a half 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 aligned with the Devon Carbon Plan themes and contains actions that have been developed in collaboration which are missing from 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 a focus for a two year period upon which another review will take place. This will ensure our focus is directed to those areas where we can have the biggest 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 shoot 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 the Council's 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.

Appendix 1 Devon Carbon Plan

Devon Carbon Plan [<https://devonclimateemergency.org.uk/view-devon-carbon-plan-full/>]

Devon Carbon Plan Quick Read Summaries [
<https://devonclimateemergency.org.uk/view-devon-carbon-plan/>]

Appendix 2 Devon Climate Assembly Report

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