

Impact Assessment



Assessment of: Devon County Council's support of the Devon, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Climate Adaptation Strategy

Service: Climate Change, Environment and Transport

Head of Service: Meg Booth

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Assessment carried out by (job title): Doug Eltham, Environment and Sustainability Policy Officer

1. Description of project / service / activity / policy under review

Devon County Council (DCC) has declared a climate emergency and is a founding partner and principal funder of the Devon Climate Emergency initiative. In signing the Devon Climate Declaration, DCC has committed to working with partners to understand the near-term and future risks arising from climate change to plan for how infrastructure, public services and communities will have to adapt.

Climate adaptation refers to becoming more resilient to the changing climate by anticipating the adverse effects of climate change and taking appropriate action to reducing the risk from its impacts (e.g. sea level rise, heatwaves, flooding, drought etc.).

The Devon, Cornwall, and Isles of Scilly (DCIoS) Climate Impacts Group (CIG), currently chaired by the Environment Agency and coordinated by

DCC, was formed in 2019 in response to declarations of climate emergency across the three areas.

The CIG has prepared the draft DCIoS Climate Adaptation Strategy. It is a strategic-level document. It comprises of three sections:

1. A Climate Change Risk and Opportunity Assessment (CCRA) split by sector - natural environment, infrastructure, health and built environment, business and industry, and cross-cutting risks. These sectors broadly correspond with the sectors used in the national climate change risk assessment, which was used as the basis for the analysis.
2. A Strategic Adaptation Plan, which sets out the conditions for everyone to act on adapting to climate change together (“Adaptation Plan”). It provides a set of strategic objectives and suite of strategic-level adaptation options that could be considered for regional collaboration.
3. An Action Plan, which sets out the priority actions for regional collaboration over the next five years, and specific actions for different groups: policy makers, organisations, community groups and individuals.

It focuses on climate impacts which require, or which would benefit from, regional collaboration. Due to the place-based and context specific nature of climate risk and opportunities, it is not the purpose of this Adaptation Strategy to plan the detail of how individual areas and communities should adapt. Instead, such detailed plans will be captured at an appropriate level depending upon the risk – it could be at county, district, community or parish level – some communities already have these for specific issues, such as the Slapton Line in South Devon.

The CIG recognises that it has an important role in supporting others to develop their own adaptation plans at a range of scales, from sectoral to household level. The Adaptation Strategy is intended to inform a programme of regional interventions to adapt to climate change, as well as catalysing place-based, grassroots, and organisational action on climate adaptation.

The draft Adaptation Strategy has been open for public consultation during May and June 2023. The final version of the Strategy will be published in the autumn and partner organisations will subsequently be invited to endorse it.

2. Reason for change / review

A regional Climate Adaptation Strategy has not previously been prepared.

3. Aims / objectives, limitations and options going forwards (summary)

See Section 1.

4. People affected and their diversity profile

Climate change will affect everybody and therefore the result of implementing the recommendation will also affect everybody.

5. Stakeholders, their interest and potential impacts

Climate change will affect everybody in the county, and it will affect people less able to adapt the most. These include less affluent people, those living with physical and mental health conditions and those living in coastal communities or other areas prone to flooding and young people who will live with the effects becoming worse over their lifetimes. Implementing the recommendation will help grow efforts to reduce international carbon emissions and minimise these impacts.

Implementing the recommendation will help progress regional efforts to these impacts on everyone. The Strategy includes a more detailed commentary on people most vulnerable to climate change.

DCC aims to ensure that nobody's needs are overlooked in planning for climate change, and that the wide-ranging opportunities to improve health, wellbeing and social justice are seized

6. Research used to inform this assessment

- Climate Just - [Socially vulnerable groups sensitive to climate impacts](#)
- Devon, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Climate Adaptation Plan

7. Description of consultation process and outcomes

This assessment has not been the subject of consultation.

8. Equality analysis

Giving Due Regard to Equality and Human Rights

The local authority must consider how people will be affected by the service, policy or practice. In so doing we must give due regard to the need to: eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

Where relevant, we must take into account the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, sexual orientation, race, and religion and belief. This means considering how people with different needs get the different services they require and are not disadvantaged, and facilities are available to them on an equal basis in order to meet their needs; advancing equality of opportunity by recognising the disadvantages to which protected groups are subject and considering how they can be overcome.

We also need to ensure that human rights are protected. In particular, that people have:

- A reasonable level of choice in where and how they live their life and interact with others (this is an aspect of the human right to 'private and family life').
- An appropriate level of care which results in dignity and respect (the protection to a private and family life, protection from torture and the freedom of thought, belief and religion within the Human Rights Act and elimination of discrimination and the promotion of good relations under the Equality Act 2010).
- A right to life (ensuring that nothing we do results in unlawful or unnecessary/avoidable death).
- The Equality Act 2010 and other relevant legislation does not prevent the Council from taking difficult decisions which result in service reductions or closures for example, it does however require the Council to ensure that such decisions are:
 - Informed and properly considered with a rigorous, conscious approach and open mind, taking due regard of the effects on the protected characteristics and the general duty to eliminate discrimination, advance equality and foster good relations.
 - Proportionate (negative impacts are proportionate to the aims of the policy decision)
 - Fair
 - Necessary
 - Reasonable, and
 - Those affected have been adequately consulted.

Characteristics	Potential or actual issues for this group. [Please refer to the Diversity Guide and See RED]	<p>In what way will you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> eliminate or reduce the potential for direct or indirect discrimination, harassment or disadvantage, where necessary. advance equality (to meet needs/ensure access, encourage participation, make adjustments for disabled people, 'close gaps'), if possible. foster good relations between groups (tackled prejudice and promoted understanding), if relevant? <p>In what way do you consider any negative consequences to be reasonable and proportionate in order to achieve a legitimate aim?</p> <p>Are you complying with the DCC Equality Policy?</p>
All residents (include generic equality provisions)	The Strategy shows that adapting to climate change will have far reaching and profound implications for how communities function and how behaviours will need to change.	<p>DCC aims to ensure that nobody's needs are overlooked in planning for climate change, and that the wide-ranging opportunities to improve health, wellbeing and social justice are seized.</p> <p>Tactical-level changes to DCC's services arising from the need to adapt to climate change will need to undertake their own impact assessment to consider their effect on the equality characteristics of service users.</p> <p>There will be opportunities to advance equality through these measures.</p>
Age	See above	See above
Disability (incl. sensory, mobility, mental health, learning disability, neurodiversity, long term ill health) and carers of disabled people	See above	See above

Characteristics	Potential or actual issues for this group. [Please refer to the Diversity Guide and See RED]	In what way will you: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> eliminate or reduce the potential for direct or indirect discrimination, harassment or disadvantage, where necessary. advance equality (to meet needs/ensure access, encourage participation, make adjustments for disabled people, 'close gaps'), if possible. foster good relations between groups (tackled prejudice and promoted understanding), if relevant? In what way do you consider any negative consequences to be reasonable and proportionate in order to achieve a legitimate aim? Are you complying with the DCC Equality Policy ?
Culture and ethnicity: nationality/national origin, ethnic origin/race, skin colour, religion and belief	See above	See above
Sex, gender and gender identity (including men, women, non-binary and transgender people), and pregnancy and maternity (including women's right to breastfeed)	See above	See above
Sexual orientation and marriage/civil partnership	See above	See above

<p>Characteristics</p>	<p>Potential or actual issues for this group.</p> <p>[Please refer to the Diversity Guide and See RED]</p>	<p>In what way will you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eliminate or reduce the potential for direct or indirect discrimination, harassment or disadvantage, where necessary. • advance equality (to meet needs/ensure access, encourage participation, make adjustments for disabled people, 'close gaps'), if possible. • foster good relations between groups (tackled prejudice and promoted understanding), if relevant? <p>In what way do you consider any negative consequences to be reasonable and proportionate in order to achieve a legitimate aim?</p> <p>Are you complying with the DCC Equality Policy?</p>
<p>Other relevant socio-economic factors such as family size/single people/lone parents, income/deprivation, housing, education and skills, literacy, sub-cultures, 'digital exclusion', access to transport options, rural/urban</p>	<p>See above</p>	<p>See above</p>

9. Human rights considerations:

Tactical-level changes to DCC's services arising from the need to adapt to climate change will need to undertake their own impact assessment to consider their effect on human rights.

10. Supporting independence, wellbeing and resilience. Give consideration to the groups listed above and how they may have different needs:

In what way can you support and create opportunities for people and communities (of place and interest) to be independent, empowered and resourceful?

This will need to be considered at the tactical level as the Authority's services implement resilience enhancements.

In what way can you help people to be safe, protected from harm, and with good health and wellbeing?

This will need to be considered at the tactical level as the Authority's services implement resilience projects.

In what way can you help people to be connected, and involved in community activities?

This will need to be considered at the tactical level as the Authority's services implement resilience projects.

11. Environmental analysis

An impact assessment should give due regard to the following activities in order to ensure we meet a range of environmental legal duties. The policy or practice does not require the identification of environmental impacts using this Impact Assessment process because it is subject to (please mark X in the relevant box below and proceed to the 4c, otherwise complete the environmental analysis table):

Devon County Council's Environmental Review Process	
Planning Permission	
Environmental Impact Assessment	
Strategic Environmental Assessment	

	Describe any actual or potential negative consequences. (Consider how to mitigate against these).	Describe any actual or potential neutral or positive outcomes. (Consider how to improve as far as possible).
Reduce, reuse, recycle and compost:		
Conserve and enhance wildlife:	Potential negative effects on wildlife from new technology and land use changes, however planning policies and procedures, environmental assessment regulations relating to agricultural land, and constraints linked to grant funding mechanisms exist to avoid or minimise such impacts.	Using land and nature to improve local resilience, such as through natural flood risk alleviation, has the opportunity to have positive effects for wildlife.
Safeguard the distinctive characteristics, features and special qualities of Devon's landscape:	Introducing features into the landscape, such as trees to alleviate flooding or to provide shading, will need to be managed appropriately, taking into account existing landscape quality and character.	Landscape could be enhanced by such measures if planned carefully.
Conserve and enhance Devon's cultural and historic heritage:	Potential negative effects on the historic built environment from landscape-scale resilience projects that disturb soil or plant trees. Potential negative effects from adapting buildings for overheating. Guidance will need to be developed in partnership with agencies such as Historic England.	

Minimise greenhouse gas emissions:	Individual resilience projects will need to consider their impact on greenhouse gas emissions. E.g. hard infrastructure or air conditioning.	Some resilience projects could sequester carbon.
Minimise pollution (including air, land, water, light and noise):	There will be some projects that could have negative effects, such as construction projects. These will be subject to existing regulations and permitting regimes to minimise effects.	There will be opportunities within resilience projects to improve water quality (e.g. re-wetting peatlands).
Contribute to reducing water consumption:		Reducing water consumption is a direct objective of the Adaptation Strategy.
Ensure resilience to the future effects of climate change (warmer, wetter winters; drier, hotter summers; more intense storms; and rising sea level):		This is a direct objective of the Adaptation Strategy.
Other (please state below):		

12. Economic analysis

	Describe any actual or potential negative consequences. (Consider how to mitigate against these).	Describe any actual or potential neutral or positive outcomes. (Consider how to improve as far as possible).
Impact on knowledge and skills:	None significant.	There is considerable potential for adaptation to climate change to create new skills opportunities, such as in sustainable agriculture.
Impact on employment levels:	None significant.	<p>Evidence suggests that in Europe around 500,000 additional jobs (approximately 0.2 per cent of the working population) will be directly and indirectly created by 2050 as a result of the increase in adaptation-related activities.</p> <p>Investment in adaptation infrastructure is likely to have positive effects on employment, in particular because of the increased demand for construction work in projects to reduce climate-related risks.</p> <p>Source: The employment impact of climate change adaptation – Input Document for the G20 Climate Sustainability Working Group (ilo.org)</p>
Impact on local business:	None significant.	The increase in adaptation-related activities will provide local business opportunities.

13. Describe the linkages or conflicts between social, environmental and economic impacts (Combined Impacts):

The impacts of climate change will affect society, the environment and the economy. Adapting to its effects will improve community and environmental resilience, minimise economic impact and provide new opportunities.

14. How will the economic, social and environmental well-being of the relevant area be improved through what is being proposed? And how, in conducting the process of procurement, might that improvement be secured?

See 12 and 13. Procurement is non-applicable.

15. How will impacts and actions be monitored?

Individual projects arising from the DCIoS Climate Adaptation Strategy will need to monitor their impact on social, economic and environmental indicators.