

6 December 2019

Climate Change Standing Overview Group – Corporate, Infrastructure and Regulatory Services Committee

Developing a Net Zero Citizens' Assembly for Devon Meeting

Recommendations

The Climate Change SOG recommends to Devon Climate Emergency Response Group that:

1. In order to get the right balance of rural/urban areas across Devon, need to go beyond the local super output areas designated as rural/urban to look at types of settlement.
2. Scrutiny SOG supports the openness of webcasting the citizens assembly but recommend that;
 - 2.1 the sessions are recorded but not live streamed to protect participants with the publication of the webcasts after the conclusion of the process.
 - 2.2 Provide support/training for people who may not be confident speaking in front of many people or on a webcast.
3. Identify the 'lead juror' role to have a longer-term relationship in discussion and dissemination of the resulting conclusions and recommendations from the citizens assembly.
4. Suggest the chair should be an independent person who is a judge, a coroner or from the planning inspectorate, or similar, who does not live or work in Devon, but is from the West Country.

Members discussed the following

Background

Following the previous SOG meeting, the SOG met to discuss and comment on the recommendations from the University of Exeter on the development and operation of the Devon Net-Zero Citizens' Assembly. The final design will be decided by the Devon Climate Emergency Response Group.

The SOG was invited to review the recommendations and provide comments for Phil Norrey, Devon County Council's representative on the Devon Climate Emergency Response Group.

Report

The SOG broadly supported the recommendations of the report and were appreciative of the University of Exeter report that has drew on a variety of sources including peer-reviewed academic literature, 'grey' literature, and official documentation, evaluations and reports produced by previous citizens' assemblies. Members also noted the helpful advice and comments provided by a group of experts who attended a workshop on the design of the citizens' assembly that was held at the University on 14th November 2019.

Issues Identified by Members

Representation

The SOG felt that to accurately represent Devon's geography, a system that reflected different settlement types would be more effective than, for example looking at the different Council areas.

Livestreaming

Members were somewhat concerned by the possibility of livestreaming and the effect it may have on those who may not wish to have a large live audience, particularly with the risk of internet harassment.

Longer term involvement of the Citizens Assembly

The SOG felt it would be important to make provision for some kind of longer-term involvement of the Citizen's assembly to, for example, aid in the presentation of the Recommendations of the Assembly.

Appropriate Chair

The SOG was interested in ensuring the Chair of the Citizens Assembly is both impartial and had the appropriate professional skillset for the role.

Actions

The CC SOG broadly supports the recommendations in the university of Exeter Report with the addition of the recommendations above and asks the Chief Executive of DCC to present these to the Devon Climate Emergency Response Group

Present

Councillors Alistair Dewhurst (Chair), Atkinson, Bloxham, Brazil, Colthorpe, Hodgson, Slade, Whitton
Doug Eltham, Environment and Sustainability Policy Officer DCC

Next meeting

To be arranged

COUNCILLOR DEWHIRST
CHAIR