

Impact Assessment



Assessment of: Devon County Council's endorsement of the consultation draft Interim Devon Carbon Plan

Service: Planning, Transportation and Environment

Head of Service: Dave Black

Version / date of sign off by Head of Service: 13/01/21

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 \(DCE\) initiative](#). In signing the [Devon Climate Declaration](#), DCC has committed to working collaboratively with partners to engage Devon's residents, businesses and visitors to develop and implement a plan to achieve the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions across the area to net-zero by 2050 at the latest.

An [independent Net-Zero Task Force](#) of specialists was set up by the initiative who have subsequently involved the public in the preparation of a [consultation draft Interim Devon Carbon Plan](#). The consultation has been open from the 7th December 2020 and closes on the 15th February 2021. The consultation draft Interim Devon Carbon Plan provides a comprehensive roadmap showing the extensive technological, infrastructure and behavioural changes required in communities to achieve net-zero carbon in Devon by 2050 at the latest.

Climate change is bringing warmer, wetter winters; hotter, drier summers; more intense storm events; and rising sea levels. To minimise the impacts, local leadership is necessary to encourage individuals, communities and organisations in Devon to reduce their carbon emissions which in turn can help influence national and international efforts.

2. Reason for change / review

A Devon-wide plan has not previously been prepared.

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

[Insert text here]

4. People affected and their diversity profile

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

Climate change 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.

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 Interim Devon Carbon Plan will require fundamental changes to society, including for example the way public services are provided, how energy is used in buildings, how transport services operate and how food is grown and distributed. This has the potential to impact negatively and positively on different communities.

DCC aims to ensure that nobody's needs are overlooked during the descent to net-zero and that the wide-ranging opportunities to improve health, wellbeing and social justice are seized. All parts of our communities, including businesses, will need to feel invested in the transition and will need time to adapt behaviours, change practices and adopt different technology.

6. Research used to inform this assessment

United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 1.5-Degree Special Report, 2018

7. Description of consultation process and outcomes

This assessment has not been the subject of consultation. The Interim Devon Carbon Plan is currently open for public consultation and has been consulted with the Corporate Infrastructure and Regulatory Services Climate Change Standing Overview Group and officers across the Authority.

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.

<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>All residents (include generic equality provisions)</p>	<p>The Plan shows that the transition to net-zero will have far reaching and profound implications for how communities function and how behaviours will need to change.</p> <p>Implementing the recommendation will encourage further action locally that in turn can build momentum for national and international action on decarbonisation to reduce the impacts of climate change on all characteristics.</p> <p>The Plan has been designed with an overarching principle (Principle 9) that:</p>	<p>DCC aims to ensure that nobody's needs are overlooked during the descent to net-zero and that the wide-ranging opportunities to improve health, wellbeing and social justice are seized. All parts of our communities, including businesses, will need to feel invested in the transition and will need time to adapt behaviours, change practices and adopt different technology.</p> <p>However, this is an emergency, and time is of the essence, which is why the Authority agrees with the recommendation for the UK's Sixth Carbon Budget from the Committee on Climate Change (December 2020) which declares that the decade from 2025 will be incredibly important to see accelerated effort to meet net-zero by 2050.</p> <p>For these reasons, DCC continues to be committed to playing its part in achieving net-zero in Devon by 2050 at the latest and urges every individual, community and organisation to act to reduce carbon emissions within their own influence as quickly and as early as they are able to.</p> <p>There will be opportunities to advance equality through the tactical-level</p>

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	<p>"A just transition is required to ensure that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Vulnerable and low-income segments of society and rural communities are not disadvantaged. b) The differing impacts of climate change on different groups e.g. disabled, minorities, gender, are addressed. c) Actions to decarbonise Devon must not be at the expense of other 	<p>changes to DCC's services over the next decade. These opportunities will need to undertake their own impact assessment to consider their effect on the equality characteristics of service users.</p>

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	<p>communities or ecology globally"</p> <p>Tactical-level changes to DCC's services over the next decade will need to undertake their own impact assessment to consider their effect on the equality characteristics of service users.</p>	

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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
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

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Sexual orientation and marriage/civil partnership	See above	See above
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	See above	See above

9. Human rights considerations:

The Plan shows that the transition to net-zero will have far reaching and profound implications for how communities function and how behaviours will need to change.

The Plan has been designed with an overarching principle (Principle 9) that:

“A just transition is required to ensure that:

- a) Vulnerable and low-income segments of society and rural communities are not disadvantaged.
- b) The differing impacts of climate change on different groups e.g. disabled, minorities, gender, are addressed.
- c) Actions to decarbonise Devon must not be at the expense of other communities or ecology globally”

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 carbon reduction opportunities.

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 carbon reduction opportunities.

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 carbon reduction opportunities.

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:		Achieving net-zero across Devon is likely to involve using resources more efficiently and thinking about the circular economy.
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.	Building a market for carbon offsets in Devon will provide opportunities to restore and extend habitats.
Safeguard the distinctive characteristics, features and special qualities of Devon's landscape:	Building a market for carbon offsets in Devon and the need for new technology will provide opportunities to introduce features into the landscape, such as trees, renewable energy and features associated with less intensive agricultural techniques. These will need to be managed appropriately, taking into account existing landscape quality and character.	Building a market for carbon offsets in Devon will provide opportunities to enhance landscape, taking into account existing landscape quality and character.
Conserve and enhance Devon's cultural and historic heritage:	Potential negative effects on the historic built environment from new technology, however planning policies and procedures exist to safeguard	

	these.	
Minimise greenhouse gas emissions:		Achieving net-zero across Devon will minimise greenhouse gas emissions.
Minimise pollution (including air, land, water, light and noise):		There will be opportunities alongside net-zero to improve air quality (e.g. sustainable transport), water quality (e.g. re-wetting peatlands) and light pollution (e.g. upgraded street lighting technology).
Contribute to reducing water consumption:		Consuming water emits carbon emissions due to the electricity required to pump and treat the water. Achieving net-zero across Devon may involve consuming less water.
Ensure resilience to the future effects of climate change (warmer, wetter winters; drier, hotter summers; more intense storms; and rising sea level):		Through carbon offsetting projects in Devon, there is an opportunity to use habitat restoration to reduce flood risk and provide summer shading.
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	There is considerable potential for the transition to clean technologies and sustainable practices to create new skills requirements.
Impact on employment levels:	Employment levels in carbon intensive and unsustainable sectors will decline, but these are expected to be outweighed by increased opportunities for employment in other sectors. The Interim Devon Carbon Plan includes an action to support people to transition into employment in emerging sectors.	There is considerable potential for the transition to clean technologies and sustainable practices to create new jobs.
Impact on local business:	Relocalisation is a theme within the Interim Devon Carbon Plan. There are opportunities for food and energy to be relocalised in particular and for large organisations to use their purchasing power to support the net-zero transition by purchasing services from local community companies.	There is considerable potential for the transition to clean technologies and sustainable practices to increase economic prosperity – nationally and locally in Devon.

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. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions globally will minimise its

effects.

Committing to achieve net-zero across Devon will create a fairer, healthier, more resilient and more prosperous society. Those most affected by climate change need more of a say in how we respond, and our actions to mitigate climate change must be aligned with goals for public health improvement, green growth and the reduction of social vulnerability.

Encouraging everyone to be more active by walking and cycling; improving air quality through the electrification of vehicles; insulating our homes to make them warmer; and eating more balanced diets will all improve public health and reduce pressures on the NHS.

There is considerable potential for the transition to clean technologies to create new jobs and skills requirements, improve our national energy security and increase economic prosperity - nationally and locally in Devon. Retrofitting energy efficiency measures into existing housing will reduce fuel poverty and illnesses associated with cold homes and subsequently provide enhanced opportunities for work and study.

Enhancing the ability of habitats along our coast, in our countryside and in our villages, towns and cities to store carbon offers tremendous opportunities to reverse the decline of biodiversity and restore the benefits healthy ecosystems provide. These include reduced flood risk, improved water and air quality, nutritious food, timber and fuel, and accessible greenspace.

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 13. Procurement is non-applicable.

15. How will impacts and actions be monitored?

Individual projects arising from the Interim Devon Carbon Plan will need to monitor their impact on social, economic and environmental indicators.