

# Impact Assessment



Assessment of: Devon County Council's endorsement of the Devon Climate Emergency partnership's proposed responses to the Devon Climate Assembly

Service: Planning, Transportation and Environment

Head of Service: Dave Black

Date of sign off by Head of Service: 22/03/2022

Assessment carried out by: Doug Eltham, Environment and Sustainability Policy Officer

## 1. Description of activity under review

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.

Devon County Council (DCC) has declared a climate emergency and is a founding partner and principal funder of the [Devon Climate Emergency \(DCE\)](#) partnership. 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 partnership, who have subsequently involved the public in the preparation of the [Interim Devon Carbon Plan](#) whilst preparations for a Devon Climate Assembly were progressing.

The Devon Climate Assembly was held last summer after a year's delay due to COVID-19. Seventy randomly-selected individuals, representative of Devon's population, were invited to discuss three of Devon's key climate issues: onshore wind, how to encourage less car use, and how to accelerate the upgrading of buildings.

In [its report](#), the Assembly has made recommendations about how they would like to see the issues addressed. Their recommendations take the form of headline resolutions and supporting conditions to guide the implementation of the resolutions.

Over the past few months, the organisations of the DCE partnership have worked together to respond to the Assembly's recommendations. Some of the partnership's responses are actions to include in the next version of the Devon Carbon Plan, which will be available for partners to adopt from August 2022.

Relevant officers at DCC and the membership of the Corporate Infrastructure and Regulatory Services Scrutiny Committee Standing Overview Group have had the opportunity to influence the proposed responses ahead of a public consultation. These have been considered by the DCE Secretariat, alongside feedback from the other DCE partners, to arrive at the proposed wording of the responses.

The proposed wording is now available for public consultation. The consultation is the public's chance to say whether the DCE partnership has interpreted and responded to the Devon Climate Assembly's resolutions reasonably and effectively. The full list of the partnership's proposed responses are available on the [consultation website](#).

Devon County Council's Cabinet is recommended to endorse the proposed wording of the responses.

## 2. Reason for change / review

The Interim Devon Carbon Plan does not include actions to that respond to the recommendations of the Devon Climate Assembly. The change is needed to incorporate the Assembly's recommendations into the next version of the Devon Carbon Plan.

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

DCC has three options available:

- a. Endorse the partnership's proposed responses (the recommendation made to Cabinet).
- b. Endorse the intent of the partnership's proposed responses but provide further feedback on points of detail. This is not recommended because feedback from officers and the Corporate Infrastructure and Regulatory Services Scrutiny Committee Standing Overview Group has been collected over the past few months and considered by the DCE Secretariat, alongside feedback from the other DCE partners, to arrive at the proposed wording of the responses which are designed to be palatable to the whole partnership.
- c. Do not endorse the proposed responses. This is not recommended for the same reason as option b and this would add substantial delay to the DCE process.

### 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 require fundamental changes to society, including for example how energy is used in buildings, how transport services operate and where energy comes from. 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.
- Grantham Institute Briefing Paper No.31, Co-benefits of climate change mitigation in the UK, 2019
- The recommendations from the Devon Climate Assembly – a representative sample of Devon's population.

## 7. Description of consultation process and outcomes

This assessment has not been the subject of consultation. The Assembly's recommendations have been consulted with the Devon Climate Emergency partners who in turn have prepared responses to those recommendations. The Corporate Infrastructure and Regulatory Services Climate Change Standing Overview Group and officers at Devon County Council have influenced the partnership's responses.

## 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 <a href="#">Diversity Guide</a> and <a href="#">See RED</a>]</p>	<p>In what way will you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• eliminate or reduce the potential for direct or indirect discrimination, harassment or disadvantage, where necessary.</li> <li>• advance equality (to meet needs/ensure access, encourage participation, make adjustments for disabled people, 'close gaps'), if possible.</li> <li>• foster good relations between groups (tackled prejudice and promoted understanding), if relevant?</li> </ul> <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 <a href="#">DCC Equality Policy</a>?</p>
<p>All residents (include generic equality provisions)</p>	<p>The partnership's responses to the Devon Climate Assembly will become part of the next version of the Devon Carbon Plan.</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 Devon Climate Assembly is a 70-strong panel of Devon residents that is demographically representative of Devon as a whole. Postcodes with the lowest Indices of Multiple Deprivation were over-represented in the initial recruitment of people onto the Devon Climate Assembly because the experience of the external facilitators had shown that it can be difficult to engage people in those categories. The result was that the Assembly make-up matched demographic data for Devon very well. Black and Asian people were over-represented in the Assembly in comparison to baseline data because it was suspected that the baseline data underrepresented these members of our communities.</p> <p>The Devon Carbon Plan has been designed with an overarching principle (Principle 9):</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">"A just transition is required to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Vulnerable and low-income segments of society and rural communities are not disadvantaged.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>b) The differing impacts of climate change on different groups e.g. disabled, minorities, gender, are addressed.</li><li>c) Actions to decarbonise Devon must not be at the expense of other communities or ecology globally”</li></ul> <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>
--	--	--

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
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,	See above	See above



rural/urban		
-------------	--	--

## 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. Implementing the recommendation will help grow efforts to reduce international carbon emissions and minimise these impacts on everyone.

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

“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	

	<b>Describe any actual or potential negative consequences. (Consider how to mitigate against these).</b>	<b>Describe any actual or potential neutral or positive outcomes. (Consider how to improve as far as possible).</b>
Reduce, reuse, recycle and compost:		Retrofitting homes and encouraging less car use will involve using resources more efficiently.
Conserve and enhance wildlife:	There are potential negative effects on wildlife from new sustainable energy and transport infrastructure, however planning policies and procedures exist to avoid or minimise such impacts.	There is a statutory requirement to achieve biodiversity 'net-gain' from development of energy and transport infrastructure.
Safeguard the distinctive characteristics, features and special qualities of Devon's landscape:	The need for new sustainable travel and energy infrastructure, as well as retrofitting buildings, will introduce new features into the landscape. These will need to be managed appropriately, taking into account existing landscape quality and character. Planning policies and procedures exist to avoid or minimise such impacts.	
Conserve and enhance Devon's cultural and historic heritage:	Potential negative effects on the historic built environment from new sustainable travel and energy infrastructure, as well as retrofitting buildings, 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):		<p>Minimising fossil fuel consumption will improve air quality and reduce land and water pollution.</p> <p>Achieving less car use would reduce plastic pollution from tyres and brake pads.</p>
Contribute to reducing water consumption:		Retrofitting homes 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):		Retrofitting homes properly will improve their resilience to overheating in hotter summers.
Other (please state below):		

## 12. Economic analysis

	<b>Describe any actual or potential negative consequences. (Consider how to mitigate against these).</b>	<b>Describe any actual or potential neutral or positive outcomes. (Consider how to improve as far as possible).</b>
Impact on knowledge and skills:	None	There is considerable potential for the transition to clean transport, energy and retrofitting technologies 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.	There is considerable potential for the transition to clean transport, energy and retrofitting technologies to create new jobs.
Impact on local business:	None	There is considerable potential for the transition to clean transport, energy and retrofitting technologies to increase local economic prosperity.  All business sectors that adopt clean vehicles and retrofit their business premises will have a competitive advantage.

### 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; and insulating our homes to make them warmer 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.

**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.