

# Impact Assessment

Assessment of: Carbon Reduction Plan Update 2024 - 2027

Service: CCET

Head of Service: Meg Booth

Version / date of sign off by Head of Service: 02 September 2024

Assessment carried out by (job title): Climate and Ecological  
Emergency Officer








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

In February 2019 Devon County Council (DCC) declared a climate emergency and brought together partners to form the Devon Climate Emergency partnership. The partners prepared the Devon Climate Declaration, which requires its signatories to review their plans to reduce their own organisation's carbon emissions and those of their supply chains. DCC signed the Declaration on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2019 and then brought out a new Carbon Reduction Plan in 2020 to replace a 2014 plan. Subsequently, acting on the climate emergency has become a priority in DCC's Strategic Plan.

## 2. Proposal, aims and objectives, and reason for change or review

There has been great progress on the 2020 Carbon Reduction Plan and DCC is ahead of the target to reduce corporate emissions. Unsurprisingly given the innovative nature of some of the actions, there have been some projects which have not gone ahead. In addition, we have found it difficult to find carbon offset credits for the years up to 2030/31. These conditions have prompted us to review the strategy and update our plans.

### Net-Zero from 2030

Street Lighting	School Transport	Buildings & Land	Staff Travel	Fleet	Offsetting	Supply Chain
 <p>Respond to community requests for reduced lighting. Improve controls.</p>	 <p>Encourage small vehicles to switch to electric.</p>	 <p>Upgrades through regular maintenance. Deep retrofit 10 buildings. Deploy at least 11 MWp of renewable electricity.</p>	 <p>Use agile working and technology to minimise travel. Enable walking and cycling and better use of public transport and electric vehicles.</p>	 <p>Replace most small vehicles with electric alternatives at the end of their life.</p>	 <p>Use a variety of offsetting approaches from 2030.</p>	 <p>Deliver the Low Carbon Supply Chain Strategy.</p>

### 3. Summary - risk assessment, limitations and options explored

#### **Equality and human rights**

It is difficult to identify impacts on specific groups at this stage. Where projects within the plan are likely to have impacts on residents or the workforce in general, these will be considered at the project stage and through consultation processes. Some of these are likely to be positive e.g. improved air quality in areas of deprivation, reduced eco anxiety amongst young people, and renewable energy generation could lead to lower bills for local people.

#### **Environment**

Reducing the burning of fossil fuel will reduce emissions of particulates, which will improve public and environmental health. There is scope for environmental damage from the sourcing of rare metals for the manufacture of batteries at the point of extraction. This will be mitigated through enforcing traceability in the supply chain in partnership with vehicle manufacturers. There is an opportunity to benefit wildlife through carbon offsetting projects and landscaping around renewable energy installations.

#### **Economic analysis**

There is considerable potential for the transition to clean technologies to create new jobs and skills requirements, improve energy security and increase economic prosperity in Devon.

### 4. People affected, diversity profile and analysis of needs

Climate change will affect everybody and therefore the result of implementing the Plan will also affect everybody. Climate change is affecting 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 are living with the effects becoming worse over their lifetimes.

### 5. Stakeholders, their interest and potential impacts

Individual projects will affect specific staff and communities and the impacts of these will be minimised at the delivery stage.

### 6. Additional relevant 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 Devon Carbon Plan.

## 7. Description of consultation process and outcomes

Staff who will be responsible for implementing the projects in the Plan, and who represent building and fleet users, have been consulted through meetings and the Environmental Performance Management Group and Environmental Performance Board.

---

## Background information

### 8. Equality analysis

Under the Equality Act 2010, the local authority must consider how people will be affected by a 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 across protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership (for work), sex, sexual orientation, race, and religion and belief. 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.

- a) Is this group negatively or potentially negatively impacted, and in what way?
- b) What could be done or has been done to remove the potential for direct or indirect discrimination, harassment or disadvantage and inequalities?
- c) In what way do you consider any negative consequences to be reasonable and proportionate in order to achieve a legitimate aim?
- d) What can be done to advance equality further? This could include meeting specific needs, ensuring equality of opportunity and access, encouraging participation, empowering people, making adjustments for disabled people and action to reduce disparities and inequalities.

e) Is there a need to foster good relations between groups (tackled prejudice and promote understanding) and help people to be safe and protected from harm? What can be done?

### **All residents by geographic area**

The plan covers a range of actions and projects aiming to reduce carbon emissions from DCC's services and operations. Individual actions and projects may impact residents in particular areas e.g. street lighting switch off and solar farms. These will be considered at the project stage. These are likely to be positive e.g. some local communities are asking for street lighting to be switched off after a certain time to aid sleep and to enjoy dark skies and, depending on the financing model, local residents could benefit from reduced energy bills associated with solar farm or wind turbine. These projects will only proceed after consultation with local communities, which will assess the impact on particular groups.

Overall, this plan will have a positive impact as climate change is having a greater impact on those in poverty or facing discrimination/ inequality.

### **Age**

No specific impacts identified.

### **Disability (includes sensory, mobility, mental health, learning disability, neurodiversity, long term ill health) and carers of disabled people**

No specific impacts identified.

### **Race and culture: nationality/national origin, ethnic origin, skin colour, religion and belief, asylum seeker and refugee status, language needs**

No specific impacts identified.

### **Sex and gender identity and reassignment (including men, women, non-binary and transgender people), and pregnancy and maternity (including women's right to breastfeed)**

No specific impacts identified.

### **Sexual orientation, and marriage/civil partnership if work related**

No specific impacts identified.

### **Other relevant socio-economic factors and intersectionality**

This includes:

- people on low incomes, children in care and care experienced people, armed services veterans, family background (size/single people/lone parents/family carers etc.), sub-cultures, refugee status, asylum seeker no recourse to public funds.
- housing quality and tenure, education and skills, language and literacy skills, health and wellbeing.
- rural isolation, access to services and transport, access to ICT/Broadband, social connectivity.

Also consider intersectionality with other characteristics.

Some proposals e.g. major renewable energy installations could be set up to reduce energy bills of local residents – this will be considered when assessing financing options.

## 9. Human rights considerations:

We 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).

No specific impacts identified in the UK, although concerns have been raised about human rights within the solar panel supply chain e.g. use of slave labour in China. This is covered by DCC's Anti-slavery statement. [Modern Slavery Statement - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion \(devon.gov.uk\)](#)

## 10. 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 11, otherwise complete the environmental analysis information below):

<b>Devon County Council's Environmental Review Process</b>	
<b>Planning Permission</b>	
<b>Environmental Impact Assessment</b>	
<b>Strategic Environmental Assessment</b>	

- a) Description of any actual or potential negative consequences and consider how to mitigate against these.
- b) Description of any actual or potential neutral or positive outcomes and consider how to improve as far as possible.

**Reduce, reuse, recycle and compost**

Implementing the plan will result in using less fossil fuel. More rare metals will be required for electric vehicle batteries and so it will be important to ensure these are recycled at the end of their life. There are companies in Devon specialising in this activity.

**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.

Carbon offsetting and renewable energy installations if delivered appropriately can benefit wildlife.

**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, may occur. However planning policies and procedures exist to safeguard these.

**Minimise greenhouse gas emissions**

Achieving net-zero will minimise greenhouse gas emissions.

### **Minimise pollution (including air, land, water, light and noise)**

Minimising fossil fuel consumption will improve air quality and reduce land and water pollution.

Achieving less car use would reduce plastic pollution from tyres and brake pads.

### **Contribute to reducing water consumption**

Retrofitting buildings 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)**

Project-level impact assessments will identify amendments required to future proof infrastructure for climate.

### **Other (please state below)**

None

## **11. Economic analysis**

- a) Description of any actual or potential negative consequences and consider how to mitigate against these.
- b) Description of any actual or potential neutral or positive outcomes and consider how to improve as far as possible.

### **Impact on knowledge and skills**

There is considerable potential for the transition to clean transport, energy and retrofitting technologies to create new skills requirements.

### **Impact on employment levels**

There is considerable potential for the transition to clean transport, energy and retrofitting technologies to create new jobs.

### **Impact on local business**

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.