

Report to: **Council**
Date: **23 July 2019**
Title: **Climate Change Update**
Portfolio Area: **Council**
Wards Affected: **All**
Urgent Decision: **N** Approval and clearance obtained: **Y**

Date next steps can be taken: **Immediately**

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RECOMMENDATIONS:

That Council is recommended to:

1. Delegate authority to the Head of Paid Service, in conjunction with the Leader of the Council, to sign the 'Devon Climate Declaration';
2. Note the progress of the Climate Change and Biodiversity Working Group established in response to the declaration of a 'Climate Change and Biodiversity Emergency' at Council on May 21st 2019;
3. Request that the Climate Change and Biodiversity Working Group develop an action plan to be brought back to full Council for approval on 10 December 2019.

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 At the meeting of full Council on May 21st 2019 it was resolved that 'West Devon Borough Council recognises that we have a Climate Change and Biodiversity Emergency' (minute CM 9 refers)
- 1.2 The resolution also included the recommendation that a cross-group membership Working Group be established and requested to report back to a meeting of full Council within three months with initial recommendations.
- 1.3 This report outlines recent developments with regard to climate change and sets out initial proposals to investigate how the Council can further reduce its carbon footprint in response to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report and the declaration of a Climate Change and Biodiversity emergency.

2. Background

- 2.1 Evidence shows that humans have already caused climate change, the impacts of which are being felt around the world. Global temperatures have already increased by 1 degree Celsius from pre-industrial levels. Atmospheric Carbon dioxide (CO²) levels are above 400 parts per million (ppm). This far exceeds the 350 ppm deemed to be a safe level for humanity.
- 2.2 In order to reduce the impact of Global Warming and limit the effects of Climate Breakdown, it is estimated that, globally, we need to reduce our CO²eq (carbon equivalent) emissions from their current 6.5 tonnes per person per year to less than 2 tonnes as soon as possible.
- 2.3 Understanding how an organisation impacts climate change is complex. Determining how to approach achieving a carbon neutral Borough or County is equally complex and requires a strategic evidence based approach.
- 2.4 The Greenhouse Gas (GHG) protocol introduced a widely accepted accounting tool, a methodology that splits consumption and production as follows;
 - Scope 1 – All Direct Emissions from the activities of an organisation or under their control. Including fuel combustion on site such as gas boilers, fleet vehicles and air-conditioning leaks.
 - Scope 2 – Indirect Emissions from electricity purchased and used by the organisation. Emissions are created during the production of the energy and eventually used by the organisation.
 - Scope 3 – All Other Indirect Emissions from activities of the organisation, occurring from sources that they do not own or control. These are usually the greatest share of the carbon footprint, covering emissions associated with business travel, procurement, waste and water.
- 2.5 Assessing Scope 1 and 2 emissions is relatively straightforward however Scope 3 requires detailed work and cooperation across numerous stakeholders.
- 2.6 Tackling this huge challenge will require action at all levels from international policy through to individual action but it is recognised that Local Authorities at all tiers are uniquely placed to deliver and enable a reduction in carbon emissions.
- 2.7 In addition to reversing the adverse impacts on the environment, reducing our carbon footprint can deliver economic benefits in terms of new jobs, economic savings and market opportunities, as well as improved personal, social and environmental well-being for people, locally and worldwide.
- 2.8 In terms of Biodiversity, The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (May 2019) concludes that 'Nature is declining globally at rates unprecedented in

human history — and the rate of species extinctions is accelerating, with grave impacts on people around the world now likely.'

- 2.9 It is recognised that whilst Climate Change and Biodiversity are separate issues they are also intrinsically linked.

3. Outcomes/outputs

- 3.1 The Council recognises the need to reduce its carbon footprint, and to respond to the challenges of climate change and loss of biodiversity in the interests of local, national and global well-being.
- 3.2 This report sets out progress to date, both locally and Countywide, and sets out emerging plans arising from the initial meeting of the Working Group.

4. Devon County Background

- 4.1 In recognition of the findings of the IPCC report Devon County Council declared a Climate Emergency on 21 February 2019 and has committed to review and recommend what further corporate approaches can be taken through their Climate Change Strategy and Corporate Energy Policy and to facilitate stronger Devon-wide action through collaboration at a strategic, community and individual level.
- 4.2 In response to this, a Devon Climate Emergency Response Group (DCERG) has been formed. The Group operate within the well-established emergency response framework to facilitate effective action across a broad partnership. The initial teleconference held on 9th May 2019 was joined by WDBC and a range of other partners including the other Devon Districts, Western Power Distribution, the University of Exeter, South West Ambulance Service Trust, Devon and Cornwall Police, Natural Devon, Devon Public Health, Public Health England and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and NHS England (South West).
- 4.3 Officers unanimously agreed to collaborate and to seek Member approval to sign up to a Devon Climate Declaration committing each organisation to review their own carbon reduction plans and to work together on a Devon-wide carbon plan.
- 4.4 The wording of the Devon Climate Declaration can be found at Appendix 1 and it is proposed that the Council join partners in signing the declaration.
- 4.5 In addition, Tactical and Climate Response Officers groups have been formed to support the DCERG in its preparation of a Devon Carbon Plan.
- 4.6 Full details of the work of the groups, funding and minutes from meetings are available on the Devon County Council website, as reached through the link below, and will be updated as the wider Devon response progresses.

<https://www.devon.gov.uk/energyandclimatechange/devon-climate-emergency>

- 4.7 Unlike Devon County Council, Plymouth City Council have not invoked emergency powers but have made a pledge to make Plymouth carbon neutral by 2030, and commit to working with other councils with similar ambitions. A "climate emergency action plan" will now be created for the council to consider in six months.

5. The Councils own activity to date

- 5.1 The Council has long since recognised the need to reduce its carbon footprint and has been proactive in this regard. A number of initiatives have already been implemented to reduce carbon emissions including;
- Introduction of agile working which has reduced both commuting and business mileage by an estimated 1 million miles per year, across its workforce, with a carbon saving of 483 tonnes.
 - Improving the energy efficiency of existing housing through grants and enabling schemes such as Cosy Devon, the Green Deal and the Energy Company Obligation.
 - Installation of Solar panels on main headquarters and a number of other assets.
 - Installation of Electric Vehicle charging points at main headquarters which are currently free to use to encourage uptake.
- 5.2 In terms of future carbon production, the Joint Local Plan (JLP) is one of only a handful of Local Plans in the country that has set a carbon reduction target to be achieved through effective implementation of its policies. The JLP provides a framework that ensures development makes a positive contribution with respect to all factors affecting and being affected by climate change. Policies require development to be environmentally conscious, support a low carbon economy, protect the best agricultural land and deliver resilient communities with good access to services by foot, cycling and public transport and which seek to protect and enhance biodiversity and linked habitats.
- 5.3 The JLP allocates sites for development that are located in places where access to services is good by foot and cycling; and have requirements (additional to the strategic and development management policies) that specifically require measures such as Landscape and Ecological Management Plans and contributions to public transport.
- 5.4 Development Management Policies provide further detail and requirements for development to address climate change. These include, for example, policies which supports local food growing by seeking provision of new allotments and / or community food growing sites, low carbon development by requiring consideration of the energy hierarchy and the promotion of renewable and low carbon energy, including community energy projects.

- 5.5 Whilst it is not possible to introduce in the emerging Supplementary Planning Documents 'new policies' with respect to climate change, those documents can set a clear and high bar for prospective developers on the basis that responding positively to climate change in a rounded and effective way is commensurate with good design.
- 5.6 The Council is also working with Neighbourhood Planning Groups to support the inclusion in Neighbourhood Plans of detailed policies and further specific measures that seek to address climate change in a balanced and effective way.

6. Emerging Plans

- 6.1 The Climate Change and Biodiversity Working Group met on 2 July 2019 and undertook an initial scoping of the issues. The group have agreed Terms of Reference and will meet monthly. The group will be supported by three members of the Extended Leadership Team.
- 6.2 The group recognised that climate change is a cross-cutting, strategic issue that impacts on all of the Council's six Corporate Strategy themes and as such it is proposed that the Portfolio sits with the Leader of the Council who will take on the responsibility as Lead Hub Member.
- 6.3 The complexity of the issues that cut across all council and community activities was recognised by the group, as was the need for a methodical project approach.
- 6.4 It was agreed that two clear work streams, which will be further subdivided, are emerging;
 - The Council's own Carbon Footprint – understanding and calculating this and creating a plan to become net-zero carbon by a future date.
 - The wider Community/Devon/Regional position – the need to support the emerging Devon Carbon Plan and establish similar wider plans on biodiversity.
- 6.5 The group will be developing the project approach over the coming weeks but in the meantime, training on measuring the Council's carbon footprint has been arranged with DCC and Exeter University on 23 July, 2019 and an externally facilitated member workshop, to be held jointly with South Hams DC, is proposed for 18 September, 2019.

7. Summary

- 7.1 Good progress has been made across Devon and within the Council in response to the various declarations of Climate Change and Biodiversity Emergencies.
- 7.2 The Climate Change and Biodiversity Working Group has had its initial meeting and is developing plans to manage the Council's response and will produce an Action Plan for approval at Council on 10 December 2019.

8. Implications

| Implications | Relevant to proposals Y/N | Details and proposed measures to address |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Legal/Governance | Y | <p>As a Category 2 responder under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 the Council has a duty to plan and prepare a response to an emergency or provide support to those who do.</p> <p>Devon County Council, a Category 1 responder, declared a Climate Emergency on 21 February 2019.</p> |
| Financial implications to include reference to value for money | | It is highly likely that declaring a climate emergency will have significant financial implications for the Council however it is not possible to estimate costs in advance of producing the action plan proposed by the report. |
| Risk | | <p>A number risks need to be highlighted; Based on the evidence put forward failing to respond to the emergency is likely to have long term impacts on the council and the community it serves.</p> <p>Acting in a disproportionate manner and directing resources away from other key areas may have adverse impacts in a number of areas including delivery of statutory services, customer satisfaction, vulnerable people and the financial sustainability of the organisation.</p> <p>Implementing new policies without full consideration of their impacts may directly impact on business, economic growth and delivery against the Joint Local Plan housing targets</p> |
| Supporting Corporate Strategy | | Developing a plan to meet the challenges of climate change supports all six corporate themes. |
| Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications | | |
| Equality and Diversity | | There are no implications arising from this report |
| Safeguarding | | There are no Safeguarding implications arising from this report. |
| Community Safety, Crime and Disorder | | There are no positive or negative impacts on crime and disorder reduction. |
| Health, Safety and Wellbeing | | Developing a plan to meet the challenges of climate change and biodiversity is likely to have a net |

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| | | positive impact on health, safety and well-being. The magnitude of this impact cannot be assessed at this stage. |
| Other implications | | None at this stage |

Supporting Information

| Process checklist | Completed |
|---------------------------------------------|------------------|
| Portfolio Holder briefed/sign off | Yes/No |
| SLT Rep briefed/sign off | Yes/No |
| Relevant Heads of Practice sign off (draft) | Yes/No |
| Data protection issues considered | Yes/No |
| Accessibility checked | Yes/No |

Appendix 1

Devon Climate Declaration