

Report to: **Council**

Date: **17 December 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**

Author: **Drew Powell** Role: **Director of Governance and Assurance**

Contact: **01803 861240 email: drew.powell@swdevon.gov.uk**

---

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**That Council is RECOMMENDED to:**

- 1. Adopt the Climate Change and Biodiversity Action Plan (as attached at Appendix 1);**
- 2. Note the content of the Councils first Greenhouse Gas Inventory (as outlined at Section 5);**
- 3. Aim to reduce the Councils organisational carbon emissions (Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions) to net-zero by 2030;**
- 4. Commit to working with partners through the Devon Climate Emergency Response Group to aim to reduce the Borough of West Devon's carbon emissions to net-zero by 2050 at the latest;**
- 5. Aim for a 10% Biodiversity Net Gain in the habitat value of its green and wooded public open space by 2025.**
- 6. Request that the Climate Change and Biodiversity Working Group develop a Climate Change and Biodiversity Strategy to be brought back to full Council for approval on 22 September 2020; and**
- 7. Request that an update on progress against the adopted aims be brought back to Council on an annual basis.**

## **1. Executive summary**

- 1.1 At the meeting of full Council on July 23rd 2019 it was resolved that the Council sign the Devon Climate Emergency Declaration (Minute CM 29 refers)
- 1.2 The Council also approved the recommendation that the Climate Change and Biodiversity Working Group develop an Action Plan to be presented back to the Council for approval in December 2019.
- 1.3 This report outlines progress in developing the Action Plan and proposals for progressing implementation along with proposed targets for reducing carbon emissions both organisationally and across the Borough.

## **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 (CO<sup>2</sup>) 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 CO<sup>2</sup>eq (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 on the Action Plan to date, proposals for specific targets and details the baseline carbon footprint from the Councils own activities.

### **4. Action Plan**

- 4.1 The Climate Change and Biodiversity Action Plan (The Plan) (see Appendix 1) has been developed, for consistency, using the 12 Decarbonisation Themes being put forward as part of the emerging Devon Carbon Plan plus an additional 13<sup>th</sup> Theme, Biodiversity. A lead Officer, with expertise in the relevant area, has been allocated to each Theme and a list of proposals has been generated.
- 4.2 At this stage the Plan is a compilation of proposals generated to date by officers and Members of the Working Group and it is important to stress that it will remain a live, working document that will be subject to regular review by the Working Group.
- 4.3 The Plan takes the form of an interactive spreadsheet that allows the proposals to be subjectively assessed against a number of criteria including likely benefit in terms of carbon reduction, biodiversity gain, cost and the influence the Council has in taking action.
- 4.4 This allows a high level prioritisation exercise to be undertaken to determine which of the over 150 proposed actions should be individually assessed first. It is proposed that an overall cost/ benefit

analysis will be undertaken for each proposal prior to determining whether to implement, pend or to reject.

- 4.5 The above approach will allow low cost, 'quick wins' to be implemented as soon as possible whilst more complex and potentially costly actions can be fully assessed and included within budget setting and decision making processes.

## **5. The Councils Carbon Footprint**

- 5.1 It is recognised that the Council has a key role in tackling the Climate Change and Biodiversity Challenge both directly as an organisation and also through its leadership role within the community.
- 5.2 The Councils own activities generate a carbon footprint and the Working Group have been keen to quantify this and to lead by example by reducing it.
- 5.3 In view of this the Council commissioned Exeter University, a key partner in the development of the Devon Carbon Plan, to carry out a Greenhouse Gas Inventory based on the financial control of the Council. This inventory is essentially the carbon footprint of the organisation.
- 5.4 The West Devon Borough Council Greenhouse Gas Inventory report (Appendix 2), which has just been received, quantifies the emissions in terms of metric tonnes of Carbon Dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) equivalent (tCO<sub>2</sub>e) in line with standard methodology arising from Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions.
- 5.5 This data, for 2018/19, establishes a baseline position against which progress in reducing carbon emissions can be measured year on year. This is the first time the Council has been able to quantify its actual contribution to climate change.

5.6 The following table shows the summary of emissions (metric tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e);

No.	Category	2018/19
<b>SCOPE 1: Direct GHG emissions and removals</b>		<b>1435.2</b>
1.	<i>Stationary combustion</i>	<i>73.3</i>
2.	<i>Owned transport</i>	<i>1361.9</i>
3.	<i>Process emissions</i>	<i>0.0</i>
4.	<i>Fugitive emissions</i>	<i>0.0</i>
<b>SCOPE 2: Energy GHG indirect emissions</b>		<b>51.0</b>
5.	<i>Electricity</i>	<i>51.0</i>
<b>SCOPE 3: Other indirect GHG emissions</b>		<b>3713.2</b>
6.	<i>Purchased material and fuel</i>	<i>1017.1</i>
7.	<i>Transport related activities</i>	<i>123.8</i>
8.	<i>Waste disposal</i>	<i>0.0</i>
9.	<i>Leased assets and franchising, outsourcing</i>	<i>2572.4</i>
10.	<i>Sold Goods and Services</i>	<i>0.0</i>
<b>TOTAL GROSS FOOTPRINT (SCOPES 1, 2 and 3)</b>		<b>5199.4</b>
11.	<i>Offset Emissions</i>	<i>0.0</i>
<b>TOTAL NET FOOTPRINT (SCOPES 1, 2 and 3 and Offsets)</b>		<b>5199.4</b>

5.7 The Councils total carbon footprint is estimated at approximately 5200 metric tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent (tCO<sub>2</sub>e) per year. For comparison, the average home in the United Kingdom is estimated to contribute 2.7 tCO<sub>2</sub>e per year through heating.

5.8 It can be seen that the key contributor where the Council has full control, Scope 1 and 2 emissions, relates to 'owned transport' (Scope 1.2) which includes mileage from our own vehicle fleet, excluding waste and cleansing.

5.9 Under Scope 3, the key contributors are Scope 3.6: Purchased material and fuel and Scope 3.9: Leased assets and franchising, outsourcing. This includes energy usage within the leisure centres and the Waste and Cleansing contract outsourced to FCC.

5.10 As this report has just been received Officers are in the process of analysing the data to establish a clear understanding of the implications going forward.

## 6. Next Stages

6.1 The Working Group originally agreed to focus on two distinct work streams:

- The Councils 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.
- 6.2 Now that we have an established baseline carbon footprint for the Council it is proposed to align the relevant proposals within the Action Plan to the footprint and determine which should be pursued in line with the principles set out in 4.3 to 4.5 above
- 6.3 The above will be carried out by officers and brought back to the Working Group for consideration.
- 6.4 In terms of the wider Borough/Devon position it is clear that there are number of the proposals in the Action Plan that can be delivered at a local, Community/Borough level and others that are likely to be more achievable if included as part of the wider, Devon Carbon Plan.
- 6.5 In view of the above the logical approach it to align these proposals as part of the Councils wider approach effectively creating two distinct, but complimentary, plans
- The Operational Carbon Reduction Plan – Reducing Our Footprint
  - The West Devon Climate Change and Biodiversity Action Plan (which will be aligned to the Devon Carbon Plan)
- 6.6 In order to set the context and evidence base for the plans, it is recommended that the Council develops a Climate Change and Biodiversity Strategy to provide the framework and set out the organisational aims and objectives. The Strategy, once adopted by the Council, would support all six Corporate Themes and ensure that Climate Change and Biodiversity are key factors in future decision making.

## **7. Setting Targets**

- 7.1 Setting targets for reducing carbon emissions is notoriously difficult. A key factor is the level of control over which, in this case, the Council have in securing the necessary reductions. Whilst the Council can influence, promote and support change it has very limited direct control other than over its own activities.
- 7.2 However, it is considered that targets need to align with established and recognised dates as put forward by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and IPBES.
- 7.3 In addition, as leaders in the Community the Council should help set the standard, be aspirational and promote the changes needed in support of the Climate Change and Biodiversity Emergency that Members declared on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2019.
- 7.4 It is proposed that two targets are set in line with the Action Plans proposed in 6.5 above.

- 7.5 There are a number of options that are available to the Council for reducing its own organisational carbon footprint;
1. Option 1 - set no targets and measure progress against the Action Plan
  2. Option 2 – set a target to reduce the Council's organisational carbon emissions (Scope 1 and 2 only) to net-zero by 2030
  3. Option 3 - set a target to reduce the Council's organisational carbon emissions (Scope 1,2 and 3) to net-zero by 2030

It is recommended that Option 3 is adopted as it is considered both aspirational and realistic.

- 7.6 In terms of the wider Borough target;
1. Option 1 – set no targets and measure progress against the Action Plan
  2. Option 2 – Commit to working with partners through the Devon Climate Emergency Response Group to reduce West Devon's carbon emissions to net-zero by 2030 at the latest;
  3. Option 3 - Commit to working with partners through the Devon Climate Emergency Response Group to reduce West Devon's carbon emissions to net-zero by 2050 at the latest;

It is recommended that Option 3 is adopted in view of the lack of control the Council has over the vast majority of factors that influence carbon emissions within the Borough and as it aligns both with the Devon Climate Declaration, to which then Council is a signatory, and the Government's position.

- 7.7 In terms of a measurable target for Biodiversity, it is proposed that the Council commission a benchmarking of the baseline habitat value of its green and wooded public open space, and aim for a 10% Biodiversity Net Gain in the value of these sites by 2025.

- 7.8 Defra have recently released a 'Biodiversity Metric Calculator' which is being used for planning purposes (Development Management and Strategic Planning) but equally could be used to establish the current baseline of 'Biodiversity units' at the Council owned public open spaces. The exercise would record the type and size of parcels of habitat within a site, multiplying the sizes by scores for the quality of the existing habitat (which are based on pre-set distinctiveness score and assessed condition, strategic significance and connectivity scores). This gives a biodiversity unit value for each habitat parcel and represents the 'baseline' or 'pre-intervention' value.

- 7.9 The calculation can then be repeated for a post-intervention scenario, typically post-development, but in this case post land management change. In the case of the Council owned public open spaces, changes to the Council's land management such as tree planting or conversion

of part of amenity greenspace/verges to meadow planting would have a positive effect on the biodiversity unit value. The calculation would be repeated periodically to assess performance towards the 10% increase in value as the condition of the habitat parcels improves.

- 7.10 There will be a cost associated, which can be found within existing budgets, with the commissioning of benchmarking of the baseline habitat value and the specification and parameters of this will require careful consideration as this method of assessing the biodiversity value of a site is relatively new (the Biodiversity Metric Calculator is currently a 'test' version). However, in addition to the Climate Change and Biodiversity Action Plan proposals associated with this report, there may be additional benefits to the Council in terms of contributing evidence towards future Open Space Assessments which will be required for Local Plan Reviews. In addition, a commitment to a 10% Biodiversity Net Gain on the Council's estate would be a proactive move which may encourage others, for example Town and Parish Councils, to undertake similar measures.

## **8. Initiatives the Council is Progressing**

- 8.1 The Council has engaged with British Solar Renewable (BSR) and negotiated to purchase a site and develop 2 solar farms, totalling over 20MW capacity. The above is subject to a review of the business case and Member approval.
- 8.2 A staff policy to facilitate a salary sacrifice scheme for pure electric cars is being investigated. The policy, which promotes uptake of Ultra Low Emissions Vehicles (ULEVs), will help reduce emissions from business and commuting mileage.
- 8.3 An electric pool car is on order and is estimated to arrive just ahead of Christmas. The car will be used to reduce business mileage and further promote car sharing for essential journeys.
- 8.4 The Assets team are currently measuring electricity usage at Kilworthy Park to ascertain how much real spare capacity is available with a view to installing further Electric Vehicle (EV) charging capacity.
- 8.5 A review of the Councils current vehicle fleet is underway with the aim of moving over to pure EV over a 5 year period.

## **9. Resources**

- 9.1 In order to progress future work on this agenda, A Climate Change Policy Officer (a two year temporary post) has been included in the budget proposals for 2020/21 at a cost of £25,000 per annum (WDBC share). The post will be reviewed after year 2.



## 10. Summary

10.1 The Council has established its own carbon footprint and now has an understanding of its climate change impact. Through this and its developing Action Plan, the Council is now in a position to respond positively to the Climate Change and Biodiversity Emergency at an organisational and Borough level.

## 11. Implications

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	Details and proposed measures to address
Legal/Governance	Y	<p>As a Category 1 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, also a Category 1 responder, declared a Climate Emergency on 21 February 2019.</p>
Financial implications to include reference to value for money	Y	<p>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 detailed work on individual actions within the developing Action Plan.</p>
Risk	Y	<p>A number of 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	Y	<p>Developing a strategy to meet the challenges of climate change and Biodiversity supports all six corporate themes.</p>

Climate Change - Carbon / Biodiversity Impact	Y	The report focusses on these issues and the impact will be assessed for each arising action.
<b>Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications</b>		
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 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:**

**Appendices:**

Appendix 1: Draft Climate Change and Biodiversity Action Plan

Appendix 2: West Devon Borough Council Greenhouse Gas Inventory Report

**Background Documents:**

Devon Climate Declaration

Climate Change and Biodiversity Working Group agenda papers and action notes;

Council meeting agendas and minutes – 21 May 2019 and 23 July 2019.