

Meeting: Overview and Scrutiny Board/Cabinet **Date:** 12 February 2025/18 February 2025

Wards affected: All

Report Title: Torbay Council Climate Change Action Plan

When does the decision need to be implemented? N/A

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1. Purpose of Report

2. To provide an update to Overview and Scrutiny Board on the revised Torbay Council Climate Change Action Plan 2024-2026 and make any recommendations to Cabinet prior to their consideration of the Plan on 18 February 2025. The Climate Change Action Plan outlines actions to reduce carbon dioxide emissions across Torbay Council's operations and services.

3. Reason for Proposal and its benefits

- 3.1. To meet the Community and Corporate Plan's continued commitment to tackle the Climate Emergency a new Torbay Council Climate Change Action Plan has been drafted. This is to replace the out-of-date Carbon Neutral Council Action Plan 2022- 2024.

4. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision

- 4.1. For Overview and Scrutiny Board to consider the Action Plan and make any recommendations to Cabinet prior to their consideration of the Plan.
- 4.2. That Cabinet approves the Torbay Council Climate Change Action Plan 2024-2026 as set out in Appendix 1 to the submitted report.

5. Appendices

Appendix 1: Draft Torbay Council Climate Change Action Plan

Appendix 2: Refreshed Environment and Net Zero Carbon Policy

6. Background Documents

[A Greener Way for Our Bay Framework and Action Plan.pdf](#)

Supporting Information

7. Introduction

- 7.1. This report focusses only on continued action to tackle the climate emergency across council operations and services.
- 7.2. In line with a request from Cabinet last year, a refreshed council action plan for 2024-2026 has been drafted. The new draft is outlined in Appendix 1. It was developed by the Climate Change Officers' Group and focuses on delivering actions that will reduce carbon emissions that arise from council's operations and services.
- 7.3. According to the latest carbon footprint for Torbay Council, carbon emissions over the past four years have reduced by seven percent in total.
- 7.4. This Board asked to see a draft action plan prior to it going to Cabinet for approval.
- 7.5. The Action Plan includes:
- Net Zero Carbon Target for 2030
 - Priority Actions – explained in detail below in para 7.6
 - Other actions

The draft is attached in Appendix 1.

- 7.6. The Priority actions are outlined in more detail below:

Phase 1 - Priority Actions

To maximise carbon savings and to help the Council save money on its energy bills, over the next 2 years we will firstly focus on:

- Subject to the development and approval of the business case, installing a new streetlighting control management system and LED lighting. The installation of a control management system and more energy efficient lighting will enable more efficient control of our streetlighting inventory and deliver significant carbon and energy savings.
- Undertake feasibility studies and whole building assessments to understand how to decarbonise ten of the council's worst energy performing buildings, including exploring the role of generating free energy from renewable energy sources such as solar power. Any propositions which provide a viable return on investment will be developed into business cases and will seek funding through business.
- Decarbonise Sherwell Valley Primary School (subject to a securing external funding)
- Decarbonise the Brixham Harbour estate (subject to a positive decarbonisation study)

- Decarbonise Tor Hill House building
- Recruit an Energy Officer to be take on the responsibility of managing the council's energy consumption, exploring quick win energy efficiency that can be enacted to reduce consumption and to lead on future decarbonisation and renewable energy projects.
- Introduce a new environment and climate change impact assessment tool for all council-led construction projects. The tool will be used by the Council's Capital and Growth Board to understand and help reduce negative environmental and climate related impacts of the things the council builds.
- Embed carbon and sustainability accounting into the early stages of procurement and commissioning. This will help reduce negative environmental and climate related impacts of the things the council buys/commission.

Phase 2 - Priority Actions

Travel

The Council and SWISCo need to fully understand how its staff and fleets operate in order to then reduce fuel consumption, costs and associated carbon emissions. This will take longer to explore and develop; hence this work will be undertaken as Phase 2 of the Action Plan.

Staff travel and journeys made by the Council and SWISCo fleets are responsible for the production of carbon emissions and other harmful pollutants (including staff using their personal cars for Council business, travel by bus, rail, taxi and other forms of travel i.e., hire cars). In 2022/23, these emissions accounted for 35%¹ of the Council's carbon footprint. We will explore work towards decarbonising the fleet and staff travel² through reducing the demand for travel, prioritising active, sustainable modes of transport and where journeys need to be made, make them in ultra-low/electric vehicles (EV)/car clubs where possible.

To maximise carbon savings and to help the Council and SWISCo save money on their fuel bills Over the next two years we will:

- Working with SWISCo, explore how to begin the transition of both the Council's and SWISCo's fleets to EV alternatives, whilst improving the optimisation of the fleet and improving the management of the fleet moving forward.
- Explore how council staff travel when out on council business and explore developing a series of actions to reduce the carbon emissions and costs arising from staff travel.

7.7. These priorities have been added to the CCAP and will be the priority over the next two years. The remaining actions within the action plan will continue to be delivered where capacity and funding allow. These are deemed deliverable by all lead officers. Many

¹ SWISCo fleet makes up 32% of these travel related carbon emissions

² Travel made in council employee's own vehicles or other i.e public/active transport modes to perform council duties

require no funding and only officer time. Other actions are enabling actions and must also be delivered to continue to make progress post 2026.

- 7.8. Please note that whilst these prioritised actions will deliver some carbon emissions savings to support the council net zero carbon target, action will need to be significantly accelerated from 2026/27 and up to 2030 (the estimated savings needed or offset by 2030 is approximately 1800 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalents). Future budgets will need to factor-in funding to deliver the accelerated carbon emissions savings needed by 2030.
- 7.9. The Council has an Environmental and Carbon Neutral Policy that was adopted in March 2022. Appendix 2 is a proposed updated version of this Policy and based on the proposed changes in within the new draft Action Plan.

8. Options under consideration

8.1. Option 1 – Adopt the revised CCAP

Benefits of Option 1: Outlines a co-developed, realistic and fundable set of actions that can deliver significant carbon and energy savings across our council estate, fleet and streetlighting. Also provides the framework for enabling actions that will deliver feasible solutions to create a pipeline of investable projects that can be delivered post 2026 and up to 2030.

Cons of Option 1: Whilst the plan does offer some significant carbon savings which are above the councils' historic levels of reduction (since 2019, the council has only made a 7% reduction in its carbon footprint), it does not meet the level of reduction required to meet the councils 2030 net zero target. Significant funding and actions will need to be taken post 2026 to ensure we meet our 2030 net zero target.

8.2. Option 2– Do not adopt the CCAP

Cons of Option 2: Without an adopted plan, the council will risk taking an unstructured and disjointed approach to tackling carbon emissions and reaching the 2030 net zero target. As a council it also won't meet our objectives as set out in the Council's Community and Corporate plan to ensure the effective use of our council resources and improving upon the council's value for money. This is highlight in the potential financial savings which will be missed from not taking a proactive approach to our energy consumption in our buildings and streetlighting and the fuel used by our council and SWISCo fleets.

9. Financial Opportunities and Implications

- 9.1. To deliver the CCAP's newly prioritised actions – phase 1, the estimated cost is £1,027,895. These costs are based on current estimations and are subject to finalised business cases; these funded actions can deliver annual savings of £238,440 and reduce over 566 tonnes of carbon emissions annually. The existing funding sources to deliver the priority actions in CCAP are outlined below:

Actions – Phase 1	Funding status	Cost to Deliver	Annual Savings	Annual Carbon Savings
Installing a new streetlighting control management system and LED lighting.	Council funded subject to an attractive Business Case, CGB approval (and Full Council)	£955,717 ³	£226,271	533
Embedding the new impact assessment into the Capital and Growth Board business case templates/wider processes.	No additional funding required	£0	N/A	100*
Procurement (Embed carbon and sustainability accounting into the early stages of procurement and commissioning Including IT).	No additional funding required	£0	N/A	50*
Decarbonise Sherwell Valley Primary School.	Subject to a successful PSDS round 4 bid	£19,361 (Subject to successful PSDS round 4 bid)	£12,500	32
Decarbonise the Brixham Harbour estate.	N/A (this will follow once feasibility work undertaken – see action below)	N/A (Funding for any identified solutions will be sought through business cases)	N/A	N/A
Decarbonise the Tor Hill House building.	N/A (this will follow once feasibility work undertaken – see action below)	N/A (Funding for any identified solutions will be sought through business cases)	N/A	N/A
Recruiting an Energy Officer.	Council funded – existing budget	£0	The officer in post will identify quick energy saving wins.	From the identified energy savings, carbon savings will be identified.

³ Subject to finalised costs

Undertake feasibility studies / whole building assessments including Solar PV on ten of the councils' buildings within the estate. Any propositions which provide a viable return on investment will be developed into business cases and will seek funding through business cases.	Council funded – existing budget	£30,000 (Existing Budgets)	The solutions that will be identified by the surveys will deliver carbon savings.	The solutions that will be identified by the surveys will deliver carbon savings.
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*These savings are dependent on each project that is influenced by these new processes and will vary in the level of savings.

- 9.2. More work needs to be undertaken before we can identify how to fund any projects that arise from Phase 2. These projects will be subject to an approved business case and follow the usual council/SWISCo approval processes for capital spend.
- 9.3. Future projects identified from actions such as the feasibility studies will seek additional funding through sources such as loans or grant funding where applicable or utilise the Climate Initiative Fund the delivery of any solutions. These projects will be subject to an approved business case and follow the usual council/SWISCo approval processes for capital spend.
- 9.4. The existing actions within the council action plan are broken down by their funding status below:
- 7 actions have secured funding through existing budgets or external grant funding, Including;
 - Installation of LED light upgrades in Tor Hill House
 - Feasibility work to explore decarbonisation solutions for Brixham harbour and the new development
 - Feasibility studies of the Council and SWISCo estate to establish renewable energy potential
 - 27 actions that don't require any additional funding, Including:
 - Developing projects that will be suitable for external grant funding
 - Procurement and Social Value actions to embed sustainable practices and best value principles in council contracts
 - Quantification of carbon impacts for all major schemes including housing and transport schemes
 - Staff Behaviour actions including the roll out of Staff Carbon Literacy Training, a mandatory I-Learn Climate Change Module and extensive staff behavioural communications

- 6 actions will require additional funding subject to approval of their business cases, Including;
 - Transport actions for the transition of the Torbay Council and SWISCo fleet to EV or low carbon alternatives including EV charging infrastructure
 - Any low-carbon or renewable energy solutions that are identified as per the estate feasibility work and provide a return on investment
- 9.5. The funding for council actions which are externally focused and will be undertaken with the Torbay area have been costed within the already endorsed Greener Way for the Bay framework and action plan and therefore not included with these costs.

10. Legal Implications

10.1. N/A at this stage.

11. Engagement and Consultation

11.1. The original actions within the new plan were developed and agreed by Climate Change Officers group. The refined set of prioritised actions have been developed with SLT and Senior Responsible Officers.

12. Procurement Implications

- 12.1. All actions will adhere to the Council's current procedures. Procurement colleagues are aware of three procurement exercises to be delivered in 2025 including;
- Streetlighting upgrade – value £955k + the additional costs to procure and install the CMS system and LED upgrades
 - Decarbonisation Technical feasibility works on our shortlist of Council and SWISCo buildings - Value £30k
 - Subject to a successful PSDS round 4 bid for heat pump installations at Sherwell Valley Primary School – Value £433k

13. Protecting our naturally inspiring Bay and tackling Climate Change

- 13.1. This action plan will be a vital part of delivering the on-going commitment to tackle the climate emergency (Community and Corporate Plan 2024 – 2040). A Protecting our naturally inspiring Bay and tackling Climate Change Impact Assessment has been carried out. The Action Plan will have a positive impact on our naturally inspiring Bay and efforts to tackle climate change. It will:
- Reduce Greenhouse Gases, mainly Carbon Dioxide, that arise from across the Council's operations and services. The Action Plan includes a range of actions across the estate and fleet + other to achieve this.

- Reduce energy consumption across the council estate and fleet. There are actions to explore roof top mounted solar schemes and to install low carbon heat pumps and two solar farms.
- Protect and enhance biodiversity and nature recovery. It includes developing a new Green Infrastructure Action Plan, new Nature Recovery Plan and actions to protect and enhance local Sea Grass populations.
- Embed sustainable procurement and commissioning practices. This Action Plan includes actions to work with our procurement and commissioning teams to embed sustainable procurement and commissioning practices The Action Plan also includes actions to achieve this within the Council's capital programme and major regenerations schemes.
- Support the Council to withstand future impacts from climate change on its own services. This action plan includes the Council identifying the impacts climate change is/will have on key services and planning appropriate actions to minimise significant risks now and in the future.

14. Associated Risks

- 14.1. The streetlighting priority action and future estate and fleet projects (paragraph 7.6) are all subject to the development of attractive business case and Capital Growth Board approval (and Full Council approval/ similar if for SWISCo).
- 14.2. We have undertaken a review of the action plan to identify any risks, their impact and probability of arising. Many of the actions within the plan have no inherent risks. Three actions face minimal risk of disrupted service delivery, through the construction stages of the project:
- Decarbonise the Brixham Harbour estate.
 - Decarbonise the Tor Hill House building.
 - Upgrade our streetlighting to LED lighting.

However, strategies will be in place to minimise such risks and ensure business continuity throughout.

15. Equality Impact Assessment

Protected characteristics under the Equality Act and groups with increased vulnerability	Data and insight	Equality considerations (including any adverse impacts)	Mitigation activities	Responsible department and timeframe for implementing mitigation activities
Age	<p>18 per cent of Torbay residents are under 18 years old.</p> <p>55 per cent of Torbay residents are aged between 18 to 64 years old.</p> <p>27 per cent of Torbay residents are aged 65 and older.</p>	<p>Installing a new streetlighting control management system and LED lighting: Consideration needs to be given to ensuring that areas are well illuminated to ensure safety for all ages.</p>	<p>Mitigation actions will be identified in the development of the business case.</p>	<p>SWISCo Streetlighting team</p>
Carers	<p>At the time of the 2021 census there were 14,900 unpaid carers in Torbay.</p> <p>5,185 of these provided 50 hours or more of care.</p>	<p>No adverse impacts identified.</p>		
Disability	<p>In the 2021 Census, 23.8% of Torbay residents answered that their day-to-day activities were limited a little or a lot by</p>	<p>No adverse impacts identified.</p>		

	a physical or mental health condition or illness.			
Gender reassignment	In the 2021 Census, 0.4% of Torbay's community answered that their gender identity was not the same as their sex registered at birth. This proportion is similar to the Southwest and is lower than England.	No adverse impacts identified.		
Marriage and civil partnership	Of those Torbay residents aged 16 and over at the time of 2021 Census, 44.2% of people were married or in a registered civil partnership.	No adverse impacts identified.		
Pregnancy and maternity	Over the period 2010 to 2021, the rate of live births (as a proportion of females aged 15 to 44) has been slightly but significantly higher in Torbay (average of 63.7 per 1,000) than England (60.2) and the South West (58.4). There has been a notable fall in the numbers of live births since the middle of the last decade across all geographical areas.	No adverse impacts identified.		

Race	In the 2021 Census, 96.1% of Torbay residents described their ethnicity as white. This is a higher proportion than the South West and England. Black, Asian and minority ethnic individuals are more likely to live in areas of Torbay classified as being amongst the 20% most deprived areas in England.	No adverse impacts identified.		
Religion and belief	64.8% of Torbay residents who stated that they have a religion in the 2021 census.	No adverse impacts identified.		
Sex	51.3% of Torbay's population are female and 48.7% are male	Installing a new streetlighting control management system and LED lighting: Consideration needs to be given to ensuring that areas are well illuminated to ensure safety for all sexes.	Mitigation actions will be identified in the development of the business case.	SWISCo Streetlighting team
Sexual orientation	In the 2021 Census, 3.4% of those in Torbay aged over 16 identified their sexuality as either Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or, used another term to describe their sexual orientation.	No adverse impacts identified.		
Armed Forces Community	In 2021, 3.8% of residents in England reported that they	No adverse impacts identified.		

	had previously served in the UK armed forces. In Torbay, 5.9 per cent of the population have previously served in the UK armed forces.			
Additional considerations				
Socio-economic impacts (Including impacts on child poverty and deprivation)		No adverse impacts identified.		
Public Health impacts (Including impacts on the general health of the population of Torbay)		No adverse impacts identified.		
Human Rights impacts		No adverse impacts identified.		
Child Friendly	Torbay Council is a Child Friendly Council, and all staff and Councillors are Corporate Parents and have a responsibility towards cared for and care experienced children and young people.	No adverse impacts identified.		

16. Cumulative Council Impact

- 16.1. The impact from actions that will lead to the implementation of new assets such as solar panels, heat pumps or upgrades to our streetlighting could, whilst being implemented, have some impact upon our council and SWISCo operations. However, these impacts will be mitigated to ensure that these works are undertaken with necessary decantation strategies in place to enable operational continuity.
- 16.2. All the actions have been deemed deliverable by officers with the two-year plan and will fall within the existing work programmes.

17. Cumulative Community Impacts

- 17.1. The community impacts are minimal given this is an internal council action plan, however where examples such as the upgrading of streetlighting may impact the operations of services, the necessary actions will be taken to minimise impact. The community impacts from our influencing council actions are covered with the Greener Way for the Bay framework and action plan.