

**Meeting:** Overview and Scrutiny Board

**Date:** 4 September 2024

**Wards affected:** All

**Report Title:** A Greener Way for Our Bay Framework and Action Plan: Update

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

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## 1. Purpose of Report

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- 1.1 Since 2021, Torbay Council, with others has been working with the Torbay Climate Partnership (TCP) to facilitate a Greener Way for Our Bay Framework and Action Plan. This is a long term plan to continue actions to tackle climate change locally.
- 1.2 This report presents the results of the consultation and the revised Greener Way for Our Bay Framework and Action Plan (GWFOB FAP).
- 1.3 As a partnership developed plan, and not a council plan, the TCP has approved the GWFOB FAP. However, as a partnership approach to area-wide action that supports the Torbay Story, the Place Leadership Board (PLB) will be asked by the TCP to consider endorsing this finalised GWFOB FAP. This paper gives the Overview and Scrutiny Board a second opportunity to note the results of the GWFOB FAP public consultation, the asks specifically of the Council to deliver certain priority actions and offer any final comments that can be passed to the Place Leadership Board prior to their endorsement (subject to a positive review) of this work.

## 2. Reason for Proposal and its benefits

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- 2.1 The paper outlines a finalised new GWFOB FAP and gives the Board a final chance to comment on it and the asks on the Council to deliver certain priority actions, prior to its endorsement (subject to a positive review) by the Place Leadership Board.
- 2.2 The GWFOB FAP is vital to meet the Community and Corporate Plan's continued commitment to tackle the Climate Emergency and help to deliver the benefits of a sustainable, healthy, happy and prosperous Torbay. Without such a plan, this commitment is unlikely to be achieved by 2040.
- 2.2 A collective approach is taken to delivering the GWFOB FAP as the Torbay Climate Partnership (TCP) acknowledge that it will take sustained commitment and work from all partners, businesses and the public, to effectively continue to tackle climate change locally.

## 3. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision.

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1. That the Overview and Scrutiny Board note the results of the GWFOB FAP public consultation, the asks specifically of the Council to deliver certain priority actions and offer any final comments that can be passed to the Place Leadership Board prior to their endorsement (subject to a positive review) of this work.

### Appendices

Appendix 1: Draft Greener Way for Our Bay Framework and Action Plan

Appendix 2: Tonic Creative Report

Appendix 3: A Greener Way for Our Bay - Consultation Report

Appendix 4: Summary Result Report

Appendix 5: GWFOB FAP Torbay Council-led actions 2024 - 2027

Appendix 6: Equality Impact Assessment

### Background Documents

[Review of current Climate Change related work – including Torbay Climate Emergency Action Plan \(consultation draft 2023 -2025\)](#)

### Supporting Information

#### 1. Introduction

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- 1.1 On 6 September 2023 this Board received a [paper](#) on the then current Torbay Climate Partnership's draft Torbay-wide Climate Emergency Action Plan, the results of its first public consultation and proposed timeline to finalise it. As the first consultation was not considered

to have had adequate reach, a second consultation was to be carried out, and the Board asked to see a new draft once it had been subject to another round of public engagement and consultation.

- 1.2 The previous consultation's feedback suggested that the name of the document was considered alarmist by some members of the public, leading to the name change to the Greener Way For Our Bay Framework and Action Plan (GWFOB FAP). Some actions were also adapted, removed, or amended, in line with some of the responses received. Significantly, to ensure that the plan was achievable, the target date for Torbay to reach carbon neutrality was revised from 2030 to net zero emission by 2050. A summary of changes made is [here](#).
- 1.3 Appendix 1 is the new revised GWFOB FAP. It strikes a balance between immediate actions and long-term strategies, recognising that some measures can be implemented swiftly, while others require careful planning and resources. The Framework sets a direction for the long haul, with a series of short-term action plans (three-year plans) to guide Torbay through incremental steps towards the 2050 net-zero target.
- 1.4 Feedback from the previous consultation suggested that due to the large number of actions proposed, it was difficult to easily understand what was being delivered. So the consultation draft GWFOB included 10 key things that could be promoted and easily explained throughout the consultation.
- 1.5 The Ten things were:
  1. Help more people live and work in homes and buildings that are energy efficient
  2. Make sustainable transport and public transport more accessible and affordable
  3. Ensure that roads and paths are safer and more accessible for cyclists and walkers
  4. Reduce waste and increase recycling
  5. Enjoy and protect our marine and natural environment
  6. Help green our businesses and create new jobs with the environment at their heart
  7. Ensure the community is at the heart of local action
  8. Monitor progress and set up initiatives that celebrate success
  9. Help everyone understand why change is needed and how sustainable choices will make a difference
  10. Work with nature and the local community to prepare for a changing climate
- 1.6 A consultation on this new draft GWFOB FAP was held in Winter 2023 - Spring of 2024. This was significantly longer than most public consultations. The latest consultation included an online survey and Tonic Creative were employed to run a comprehensive active engagement programme across the Bay, particularly with young people – a full list of activities carried out is in Appendix 2. Across the three online consultation surveys there were more than 600 responses in total. Through Tonic's work 1263 people were engaged,

including 1063 face to face engagements. Appendix 2 provides a full summary of the results.

- 1.7 The consultation results showed broad support for the GWFOB FAP. See appendix 3 and 4. Based on the results of the GWFOB FAP consultation the following amendments were made including:
- A range of new community based actions on local food and young person focussed climate action programmes,
  - Explicit references to who's document this is and the governance of it to promote trust,
  - A monitoring progress section has been reintroduced to promote accountability
  - Led by Torbay Council, action added to develop new planning guidance on refurbishing homes and buildings, including historic buildings.
  - New action added to ensure all local campaigns are reached by all as more communication was a highly supported theme within the GWFOBFAP. A full summary is available [here](#).
  - As per the previous consultation, TCP received a small number of comments suggesting that climate change is a hoax/similar. Given the wealth of scientific consensus on climate change and our government's continued commitment to tackle it, the TCP have decided to continue with this work and actions to help tackle climate change locally.
- 1.8 On 21 June 2024, the Torbay Climate Partnership approved GWFOB FAP.
- 1.9 Given this is a partnership framework and action plan, and not a council document, it was agreed by Senior Leadership of the Council that the GWFOB FAP should be endorsed by the Place Leadership Board. Therefore, as part of the TCP seeking their endorsement of the GWFOB FAP in Autumn 2024, comments received by this Board will be passed to the Place Leadership Board for their consideration.
- 1.10 The Council has also developed its own action plan for 2024 - 2026 to tackle carbon emissions that arise across its own estate, fleets and services. This Plan is likely to seek approval from Cabinet in early 2025. To play its part in helping to reduce Torbay-wide carbon emissions, the work that Torbay Council are asked to deliver in the GWFOB FAP is also referenced in the Council's new action plan and referred to as influencing actions<sup>1</sup>. For clarity, the actions that the Council are asked to deliver as part of GWFOB FAP are outlined in Appendix 5 for 2024- 2027.

## 2. Options under consideration

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- 2.1 This paper proposes that the Overview and Scrutiny Board review and comment on the GWFOB FAP. It also proposes that as part of the TCP seeking their endorsement of the

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<sup>1</sup> Influencing actions promote actions in the wider Torbay area. For example, rolling out electric charging points or promoting energy efficiency actions in privately rented homes.

GWFOB FAP in Autumn 2024, comments received by this Board be passed to the Place Leadership Board for their consideration.

- 2.2 There are no other options to consider.
- 2.3 More widely, without an area-wide endorsed plan, actions will be delivered in a non-coordinated, ad-hoc way or not at all. This option would not be a preferred option as it is very unlikely to lead to actions capable of meeting the Corporate and Community Plan's climate commitments. It may also be less cost effective and could lead to duplication of efforts and missed opportunities to add value, including through enhancing community cohesion and collective pride in place.
- 2.4 It will also make it unlikely that Torbay will help meet our national net zero emission target by 2050, and the international Paris Agreement Target. <sup>2</sup>

### 3. Financial Opportunities and Implications

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- 3.1 The GWFOB FAP is a high-level plan that sets us on a path towards delivering Net Zero Carbon by 2050.
- 3.2 Achieving the action in the GWFOB FAP will require sufficient financial and other resources to be in place. All actions have been agreed by local partners. Some actions are already fully funded. Other actions will require funding, and securing this is included in the actions – see appendix 1 (and Appendix 5 relating to council-led actions).
- 3.3 Funding to deliver the GWFOB FAP will come from a range of local and national partners, businesses and in some cases residents. It is not down to the Council or the TCP to fund all the actions required. The TCP acknowledges that they will have to explore a broad range of financial models to help accelerate climate action.

### 4. Legal Implications

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- 4.1 None.

### 5. Engagement and Consultation

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- 5.1 Every effort was made during this consultation to achieve a higher level of public engagement. Appendix 2,3 and 4 outlines the extensive work carried out and the results.

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<sup>2</sup> Keeping global temperature rise this century well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. Pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

## 6. Procurement Implications

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- 6.1 The GWFOB FAP is a high-level plan, created in collaboration with the TCP. Partners responsible for delivery will have to procure using their own procurement rules and processes. For Torbay Council-led actions within the GWFOB FAP there is no immediate implications. All actions to be delivered by the Council will develop procurement strategies as part of their delivery.

## 7. Protecting our naturally inspiring Bay and tackling Climate Change

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- 7.1 The GWFOB FAP is vital to meeting the Council and Community Plan's commitment to continue to tackle the climate emergency and create a sustainable future. An environmental impact assessment has been undertaken on the 30 priority actions within the GWFOB AP. No major adverse impacts were identified for these actions, over the next three years. Six actions were deemed to have significantly positive environmental impacts, 12 had positive impacts, eight actions were neutral, and four actions were deemed uncertain and will require further investigation prior to commencement. They were ranked uncertain mainly as the action has yet to be fully developed and therefore it is unknown what impacts could arise. The four actions that were considered uncertain were:

- In 2024, Torbay Council will develop a new long-term plan for how we travel about Torbay (a Local Transport Plan for Torbay)
- In 2025 Torbay Council and partners to develop a new plan to restore and protect nature
- By 2027, TCP to explore finance models to help accelerate climate actions
- By 2027, TCP to develop a list of asks to lobby central government on, asking for more support to deliver this work

This assessment will be repeated in all future action plans developed, to ensure any future impacts on Torbay are kept under consideration.

## 8. Associated Risks

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- 8.1 Failure to endorse a Torbay-wide action plan will lead to ad-hoc or limited delivery towards the net zero targets, both locally and nationally. This will also pose reputational risks for the Council and TCP. Coordinated plans will deliver the best carbon reduction and wider outcomes. Without such plans there is a risk of directing currently limited resources to less beneficial actions/actions that actively increase greenhouse gases. It will also make it unlikely that Torbay will help our national government to achieve our national net zero

emissions target by 2050, and the international Paris Agreement Target <sup>3</sup>. Leading to a changing climate and range of adverse impacts for our economy, society and environment.

- 8.2 Economic and social impact assessments of the GWFOB AP priority actions were also carried out. Over the next three years, no major adverse impacts were identified for these actions. Therefore, no adverse risks were identified.
- 8.3 Delivering the action in the GWFOB AP will require sufficient financial and other resources to be in place. All actions have been agreed by local partners. Some actions are already fully funded. Other actions will require funding, and securing this is included in the actions – see appendix 1 (and 5 relating to council-led actions). There is a risk that lead partners, including the Council, may fail to secure the funds required to deliver the GWFOB FAP.
- 8.4 We know that not everyone will be able to take some of the actions needed in the future (beyond this FAP which runs up to 2027). Some actions will be relatively easy for us all to make, including no cost actions such as turning off lights when you leave the room. Others may require us to invest in things like energy efficient light bulbs and loft insulation. These have the potential to save us money in the long term but require an upfront cost. Some support is currently available to help with the costs of improving the energy efficiency of homes and installing low carbon heating. However, there could be a risk in the future that some sections of society are unable to afford this. More financial support from Government is likely to be needed for those most in need. It is vital that the transition is fair and just for all. This will be an important part of the TCP's work (and others) going forward, especially in the run up to significant national changes.
- 8.5 Without clear plans that outline low carbon investment opportunities, the Council and TCP partners may risk not attracting additional external funding opportunities in the future.

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<sup>3</sup> Keeping global temperature rise this century well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. Pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

## 9. Equality Impact Assessment

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- 9.1 Torbay Council has conducted a full, equalities impact assessment for the 30 priority actions within GWFOB AP . See Appendix 6. No major adverse impacts were identified for these actions, over the next three years. One action was deemed to have significantly positive equality impacts, 16 had positive impacts, nine actions were neutral, and four actions were deemed uncertain and will require further investigation prior to commencement. This assessment will be repeated in all future action plans developed so as to ensure no/limit any future impacts on Torbay. The uncertain actions were the same as those listed above in 7.1.



## 10. Cumulative Council Impact

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10.1 Torbay Council are clear that it will take sustained commitment and work to effectively deliver allocated actions within the GWFOB FAP. As part of the Council's continued commitment to tackle the Climate Emergency, Appendix 5 outlines the actions the Council is asked to deliver between 2024 – 2027. All actions have been deemed deliverable by the officers delivering them, however, there is a risk that staff are redirected to deliver other priorities within the Community and Corporate Plan.

## 11. Cumulative Community Impacts

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11.1 Torbay Council and the Torbay Climate Partnership are clear that it will take sustained commitment and work from all partners, businesses and the public to effectively implement this plan.

11.2 The risk associated with climate change cannot be avoided by changes in Torbay alone.

11.3 Strong local action will have to be mirrored across the country and the globe to reduce carbon emissions in line with Net Zero by 2050.

11.4 Therefore, national and international governance will have a significant impact on funding and supporting the transition required.

11.5 There are a range of benefits to delivering the GWFOB FAP. Once delivered, it will bring a range of economic and social benefits for Torbay. Taking action now is an opportunity to create a healthier, more resilient and thriving Torbay. It is about creating nice places to live and work now and in the future. A video [here](#) summarises some of the benefits. A few are outlined below:

- Encouraging everyone to be more active and healthier by walking and cycling.
- Improving air quality through the electrification of vehicles (both actions are about giving people more sustainable options for travel and not about reducing their freedom to travel).
- Insulating our homes to make them warmer will improve public health and reduce pressures on the NHS and help reduce fuel poverty and the impact of the current cost of living crisis and energy crisis. To date local schemes are estimated to have saved residents £387,000<sup>4</sup> off their fuel bills
- There is considerable potential for the transition to clean technologies to create economic growth, new jobs and skills and improve energy security.
- Enhancing the ability of habitats to store carbon offers opportunities to reverse the decline of biodiversity and restore the benefits healthy ecosystems provide. These include reduced flood risk, improved water and air quality, nutritious food, timber and fuel, and accessible greenspace. It also will help protect our naturally inspiring area.

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<sup>4</sup> Source: Exeter Community Energy

- Improved local resilience from storms/future changes in climate and avoided costs and reduced stress and other wellbeing issues.

11.6 We know that not everyone will be able to take some of the actions needed now and, in the future (beyond this FAP which runs up to 2027). More financial support from Government and external partners is likely to be needed for those most in need to be supported to take certain actions. It is vital that the transition is fair and just for all. This will be an important part of the TCP's work (and others) going forward, especially in the run up to significant national changes.