

Report to: **Hub Committee**

Date: **5 March 2024**

Title: **Devon Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly  
Climate Adaptation Plan**

Portfolio Area: **Cllr Lynn Daniel  
Natural Environment**

Wards Affected: **All**

Urgent Decision: **N** Approval and clearance obtained: **Y**

Date next steps can be taken: Following the Full Council meeting held on 26 March 2024

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

**That the Hub Committee RECOMMENDS to Council to endorse the Devon Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Climate Adaptation Plan set out at Appendix A to this report.**

**1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1. On 21<sup>st</sup> May 2019, West Devon Borough Council declared a Climate Change and Biodiversity Emergency and on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2019, delegated authority was given to the Head of Paid Service, in conjunction with the Leader of the Council, to sign the 'Devon Climate Declaration'.
- 1.2. As a result of the Devon Climate Declaration, a range of public, private and voluntary organisations from across Devon came together on 22nd May 2019 to form the Devon Climate Emergency Response Group.
- 1.3. The primary focus of the response group was to develop the Devon Carbon Plan, which focuses on climate mitigation, i.e. reducing carbon emissions to limit further warming. Climate Adaptation is another key strand to climate action, as part of the Devon Climate Declaration, The Devon, Cornwall, and the Isles of Scilly (DCIoS)

Climate Impacts Group was formed, a partnership of strategic organisations, including local authorities, that is chaired by the Environment Agency - with the assistance of RSK, an engineering and environmental consultancy.

- 1.4. The Adaptation Strategy has been developed by the DCIoS Climate Impacts Group recognising that we need to understand the current and future risks of climate change for Devon and communities will have to adapt to a warmer world.
- 1.5. The DCIoS Climate Adaptation Strategy has now been published and will help to ensure that the region can make the changes needed to cope with the worst effects of climate change.

## **2. DCIoS Climate Adaptation Plan Background**

- 2.1. The DCIoS Climate Impacts Group was formed following the Devon Climate Emergency Declaration. Its role was to lead on adaptation, members of the Climate Impacts Group are, the Met Office, University of Exeter, NHS Devon, Devon County Council, Environment Agency, South West Water, Devon and Cornwall Police, Public Health Devon, Devon Local Nature Partnership, Devon, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Local Resilience Forum, Cornwall Council, Westcountry Rivers Trust, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and Cornwall Fire & Rescue Service.
- 2.2. The Climate Adaptation Plan was commissioned by the DCIoS Climate Impacts Group and was led by RSK Group. The Strategy aims to help communities and organisations across the Southwest better understand the risks their area might face in the future, as climate change increasingly affects the UK. It will also help them to adapt to these changes, thereby improving their resilience and community safety.
- 2.3. A public consultation was held on the draft version of the DCIoS Climate Adaptation Strategy from 9th May to 30th June 2023. Overall, there was clear support for the Strategy —eighty percent of respondents either “support the strategy” or “support some parts of the strategy but not others.” Only twenty percent selected “I don’t support the strategy.” Concerns about the resources to deliver the strategy, as well as monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and enforcement recurred in feedback given. A summary of the consultation can be found at appendix B.

## **3. DCIoS Climate Adaptation Plan Summary**

- 3.1. The Adaptation Strategy sets out risks to the region from climate impacts, the conditions for everyone to act on adapting to climate

change together, and priority actions for regional collaboration over the next five years.

- 3.2. The world has already experienced warming of around 1.1°C above pre-industrial levels (1850-1900). If global temperatures increase by 4°C by 2100, projections suggest sea level in the DCIoS region is highly likely to rise by between 0.24m and 0.38m by 2050 relative to the 1981 – 2000 average, putting coastal and low-lying communities at risk.
- 3.3. Furthermore, public water supplies will need more than 3.4 billion extra litres of water per day by 2050, impacting our rural economy as crop failures will become more frequent in response to droughts.
- 3.4. Other projected climate impacts include drier, hotter summers with more heatwaves; increased risk of extreme events like wildfires and storms; a shift in the growing seasons; and changes to pest and disease pressures as well as Cascading impacts: Interacting and cascading impacts can be triggered by multiple hazards that occur coincidentally or sequentially.
- 3.5. If the region does not plan to adapt to climate change, it will face impacts to the economy, tourism, public health, infrastructure, wildlife and more. Work by the Climate Change Committee indicates that the benefit-cost ratios of climate adaptation means that £1 spent on adaptation could deliver between £2 to £10 in net economic benefits.
- 3.6. The Adaptation Strategy has three sections:
  - The Risk Register, which identifies regional climate impacts and their risks and opportunities;
  - The Adaptation Plan, which sets out the conditions for everyone to act on adapting to climate change together; and
  - The Action Plan, which sets out the priority actions for regional collaboration over the next five years.
- 3.7. Priority short-term actions for local government and public institutions include building and developing resilience partnerships to ensure the co-ordination of arrangements for an emergency, developing a climate change public awareness campaign, and providing information to enable adaptation planning by businesses and householders. These are actions the Council can undertake.
- 3.8. In terms of monitoring and governance, the climate emergency response structures within the three geographical areas of Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly are accountable for ensuring the delivery of the Climate Adaptation Strategy. These are:
  - The Devon Climate Emergency Response Group;

- The Cornwall Climate Change Board; and
  - Isles of Scilly Emergency Planning.
- 3.9. Progress reports will be provided to these groups by the Climate Impacts Group on a quarterly basis. It will be the responsibility of the Devon County Council, Cornwall Council, and the Isles of Scilly Council representatives on the CIG (Climate Impacts Group) to ensure the quarterly reports are reported upwards to the relevant group. These can be circulated to members when they are signed off. The Council can feed in any actions being taken to the CIG or Devon Climate Emergency Response Group.
- 3.10. The Adaptation Plan is also a snapshot in time, The Adaptation Strategy will be reviewed every 5 years to provide a coherent update and progress report on actions being taken in the DCIoS region.

#### **4. Endorsement and Impact upon the Council**

- 4.1. The DCIoS Adaptation Plan is a high level, regional strategy, and plan. It does not propose to supersede existing democratic scrutiny processes, nor mandate action from partner authorities or impose additional resource demands. However, endorsing the adaptation plan will set a clear signal of intent and provide a blueprint for the Council to follow to ensure best efforts are made towards climate adaptation. Of relevance is an action contained within our audit, which recommended that the Council should consider how best to adapt to new scenarios brought about by climate change, at both an organisational level and a wider district/borough level.
- 4.2. In terms of the delivery of the action plan, whilst partner organisations are identified, applications for grant funding and working with government to identify additional funds will be necessary to deliver the enhanced and/or new adaptation projects as a result of the Action Plan. Current funding being provided to start work on climate adaptation projects include, devolution settlements, funding from responsible authorities to lead the preparation of Local Nature Recovery Strategies, UK Shared Prosperity, Natural Capital Programme and through a pilot to strengthen Local Resilience Forums.
- 4.3. Whilst many of the actions rely on regional level projects and collaboration, some of the adaptation work already underway by West Devon Borough Council include the regenerative farming work through UKSPF (UK Shared Prosperity Fund), natural regeneration and urban tree planting around our towns.
- 4.4. Actions listed in appendix 6 of the strategy mostly revolve around work led by other partner agencies. Actions where Local Authorities are listed relate to work, we already do or are responsible for, such

as emergency command, control and co-ordination, emergency planning, partnership participation, managing risk through procurement, communications, retrofit grant delivery and planning functions.

4.5. This may change in the future, as the government confirmed in October 2023 that it will pilot climate adaptation reporting by local authorities under the Adaptation Reporting Power. Pilot reports will be due by the end of 2024. The guidance for reporting has been co-designed by Defra and a group of volunteer local authorities taking an agnostic approach to the local assets and services that should be considered in risk assessments and also what different local authorities have oversight and responsibility for.

4.6. In terms of developing Council actions and capturing these, it is proposed to align adaptation actions through a revised Climate Change and Biodiversity Action Plan which is being developed now that the ambitions of the Council have been established through a revised Plan for West Devon.

## 5. Implications

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	Details and proposed measures to address
Legal/Governance	Y	Reporting on progress in delivering on our Plan for West Devon priorities is a key element of our Performance Management framework. It enables Councillors to consider the progress we are making and to probe officers to understand why particular actions may not be on track. The report also sets out the progress against agreed strategy budgets, the current strategic risk profile and key performance indicators.
Financial implications to include reference to value for money	Y	There are no financial implications as part of this report.
Risk	Y	This report sets out the current strategic risk profile of the Council (Appendix A)
Supporting Corporate Strategy	Y	This report provides an update on progress against the Natural Environment Corporate Strategy theme.

Climate Change - Carbon / Biodiversity Impact	Y	'Natural Environment' is a specific theme within A Plan for West Devon and there are specific deliverables that support our climate and biodiversity ambitions
Consultation & Engagement Strategy	Y	This report acts as a clear and easily understood progress updates in delivery against our corporate priorities. In addition to this report, each theme update to Overview and Scrutiny is published on our website for the public to easily navigate. <a href="https://westdevon.gov.uk/article/8241/A-Plan-forWest-Devon-2021">https://westdevon.gov.uk/article/8241/A-Plan-forWest-Devon-2021</a>
Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications		
Equality and Diversity		None as a direct implication of this report
Safeguarding		None as a direct implication of this report
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder		None as a direct implication of this report
Health, Safety and Wellbeing		None as a direct implication of this report
Other implications		

### **Supporting Information**

#### **Appendices:**

Appendix A – DCIoS Climate Adaptation Plan

[https://www.climate-resilient-dcios.org.uk/view-adaptation-strategy/?cat\\_id=12122](https://www.climate-resilient-dcios.org.uk/view-adaptation-strategy/?cat_id=12122)

Appendix B – DCIoS Climate Adaptation Plan Consultation

<https://www.climate-resilient-dcios.org.uk/consultation-report-summary/>