

# Carbon Neutral Torbay - Initial Action Plan

March 2021 - April 2022



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# Introduction

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## Background

Since 2008 Torbay Council has been taking action to tackle climate change, including a range of actions to reduce the amount of carbon dioxide emissions the Council and the Torbay area emit. Such actions are as outlined in a range of strategies including Torbay's Energy and Climate Change Strategy (2014-2019), Local Plan (2012-2030) and Local Transport Plan (2011-2026). The Energy and Climate Change Strategy for Torbay described how we aim to help minimise the economic, social and environmental costs of climate change in the Bay by demonstrating leadership and providing encouragement in working toward emission reductions and resilience to our changing climate.

## Highlights

The following are some of the actions the Council and its partners have taken to date to tackle climate change locally:

- Progressing the development of two solar farms in Torbay
- Tor Bay Harbour Authority has installed solar PV panels, procured an electric forklift truck and installed LED lighting
- Delivered energy efficiency advice to homes in fuel poverty through Exeter Community Energy
- Delivered a range of walking and cycling infrastructure projects through the Local Sustainable Transport Fund and the recent Active Travel Fund - Torbay Council
- All new homes, with off street parking, built in Torbay have electric vehicle charging points installed
- Developed a Tree and Woodland Framework for Torbay firmly committing the Council to maintaining and enhancing Torbay's trees and woodlands as a vital part of the environment and helping tackle climate change
- Communities across the bay are making real, sustainable change by volunteering in parks and green spaces enabling wider engagement with the natural environment leading to real local action to help tackle climate change
- With partners Groundwork South, and local communities, we are protecting and enhancing Westerland Valley. This is a 35-acre haven for wildlife, with a rich tapestry of inter-connected habitats supporting an abundance of wildlife including many species of both local and national significance.
- Torbay's recycling rate as at year end 2019/20 is 40.2%
- Torbay has become a Zero to Landfill authority and has run a variety of waste minimisation schemes, often working within partnerships. Notable successes include: The 'Watch Your Waste-line' and 'Love Food Hate Waste' food waste campaigns as well as a joint contract with DASWC (Devon Authorities Strategic Waste Committee) authorities for face to face engagement with individual households, to encourage waste reduction and increased recycling.
- Recently the Council consulted on a new Resource and Waste Strategy for Torbay which seeks to support a path towards carbon neutrality and increase the recycling rate and contribute towards the national targets of 55% recycling by 2025 and 60% by 2030. This was approved by Council (25.02.2021).

- Installed efficient energy saving LED street lights, together with a comprehensive overhaul of traffic signal inventories, has led to significant energy and carbon savings.

However, climate change is having a major impact on our planet. Our planet is warming and we are seeing a range of impacts. A landmark report by the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in 2019 warned that the window to take action and prevent global temperatures rising beyond 1.5 degrees Celsius and avoid the worst climate change impacts will close in the next decade. We are already seeing impacts locally in Torbay.

It has been predicted that due to the climate change we will see the sea level rise in Torbay by over one metre. In the next 100 years the frequency and impact of water coming over the top of the sea walls will increase, resulting in more infrastructure and properties being affected by flooding. On top of that, more intense rainfall will increase the risk of localised flooding and erosion.

For more details on climate change and the impacts of climate change please see Torbay's [Energy and Climate Change Strategy \(2014-2019\)](#).

## Climate Emergency

Like many local authorities, on 24 June 2019, Torbay Council declared a 'Climate Emergency'. The Council recognises it has a key role and opportunity to tackle the causes and effects of climate change in Torbay. It will play its part in working towards carbon neutrality and strengthening Torbay's resilience to a changing climate.

In light of Torbay Council declaring a Climate Emergency, there is now an immediate need to accelerate action and make significant progress over the next nine years to achieve carbon neutrality. This commitment is outlined in Torbay Council's Community and Corporate Plan below.

**We will create a whole community response to protect our environment. One Torbay: Working for all of Torbay to tackle climate change. We will:**

**Become a Carbon Neutral Council and work with others to create a carbon neutral community**

**Increase recycling rates**

**Reduce Torbay's carbon footprint**

**Encourage a sustainably developed built environment**

**Implement re-wooding and rewilding**

**Address flooding risks**

**Improve communications and transport connectivity and sustainability**

## Initial Action Plan - 2021/22

In 2021 we will deliver immediate action to tackle the climate emergency and refresh and develop longer term plans to work towards creating a carbon neutral council and wider Torbay.

This initial action plan focusses on short term actions that will be delivered in 2021/2022. It also commits the Council to developing a new carbon neutral council programme, and with the Community, co-designing a new carbon neutral Torbay action plan.

The following actions are to be delivered. All are important and will help to reduce carbon emissions (and other harmful greenhouse gases) or to build local resilience to a changing climate across Torbay.

Action	Potential Carbon Savings/Improved Climate Resilience
We will continue to explore the development of two solar farms, one at Brokenbury and the other near the Willows in Torquay.	★ ★ ★
A new Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) has been launched for consultation. Once finalised it will guide future cycling and walking investment in infrastructure. £120,000 of walking and cycling projects will be prioritised in 2021/22.	★ ★ ★
As our climate is changing, sea levels are rising and more storms are hitting Torbay. With the Environment Agency we will act to rapidly reduce properties at risk from flooding. This will include consulting on the design of new sea walls along Paignton and Preston sea fronts, with construction to start in 2021.	★ ★ ★
We will deliver effective tree planting schemes as part of a new three year funded i-tree 2 initiative. We will plant over 350 of the right trees in the right place. It will include community participation and the launch of a supportive Tree Warden scheme. This programme is all about planting trees for our children's children.	★ ★
The Council have a commitment to improve the walking and cycling routes around the bay area,	★ ★

Action	Potential Carbon Savings/Improved Climate Resilience
eventually connecting Torquay to Brixham with a coastal route. In 2021 we will provide a safer, more direct and attractive walking and cycling connection between Goodrington and Broadsands.	
Reducing, reusing and recycling the waste we create will help us all to play a part in tackling climate change. Through our new recycling support co-ordinators we will help residents to recycle more of their waste, focussing initially on their food waste. New leaflets will also be sent out to all households clarifying what materials can be recycled. We will also introduce a new charged-for garden waste collection service.	★★
We will continue to offer the Eco Flexible Eligibility Scheme and working with Exeter Community Energy we will deliver energy saving advice to homes in fuel poverty. We will also establish an advice portal to help residents across Torbay to make energy efficient changes to their homes.	★★
Torbay Council have secured £1.8 million of funding from the Government's Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme to reduce Torbay Leisure Centre's carbon emissions. We will install a range of energy and carbon saving measures including air source heat pumps to create low carbon heating and hot water and solar panels to generate clean electricity.	★★
We will work with South West partners to bring electric vehicle charging points to selected car parks in Torbay.	★★
As part of the new Melville Street Project we will deliver targeted and practical energy efficiency advice to residents in this area.	★

(KEY: \*\*\* - Significant potential for saving carbon/area-wide carbon benefits, \*\* - Potential carbon savings across some areas of Torbay, \* - Potential carbon savings in very localised areas of Torbay)

## Other Priority Actions

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In addition to delivering the actions outlined above, by April 2022 the Council will also:

- Work with the Devon Climate Emergency Partnership and play our part in helping Devon tackling the Climate Emergency locally. This will include supporting the development of the draft Devon Interim Carbon Plan and Devon Citizen Assembly.
- Understand how the Council and the wider area of Torbay could become carbon neutral and what key actions we will all need to take towards 2030. We will also determine what support we will need locally from partners and from central government in the longer term.
- Develop a new Carbon Neutral Action Plan for the Council.
- With our partners (including NHS, Environment Agency and Devon Climate Emergency Partnership) and our communities, refresh our Energy and Climate Change Strategy 2014 - 2019 and co-design a new Carbon Neutral Action Plan for Torbay (including strengthening Torbay's resilience to a changing climate).
- All residents and community groups are encouraged to take action. To find practical tips and advice visit the Devon Climate Emergency website [here](#) or contact Torbay Council's Climate Emergency Officer on 01803 201201. Further ways to get involved will be developed in the forthcoming Carbon Neutral Torbay Action Plan.

## Benefits

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There are many benefits to tackling climate change. Carrying out immediate actions and developing long term action plans will ensure the Council and Community can work together to help create a climate resilient, carbon neutral Torbay. This will also create a range of economic, health, social and wider environmental benefits locally, and support Torbay's recovery from COVID-19. Figure 1 below summarises some of the likely local benefits. These will be fully explored in the refreshed Climate Change Strategy and Carbon Neutral Torbay Action Plan.



Figure 1. Co-benefits of tackling climate change locally.

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For more information please contact [future.planning@torbay.gov.uk](mailto:future.planning@torbay.gov.uk)

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