

Dorset Climate Action Network

Summary of Dorset Council's Climate & Ecological Emergency Strategy and Action Plan

To provoke discussion at DorsetCAN's Open Meeting on 19th November

On 29th October, Dorset Council published a draft Climate & Ecological Emergency Strategy, which states how it proposes to pursue its Declaration of Emergency of May 2019. Its overall aim is to achieve net zero carbon emissions in its own activity by 2040, and in all activities within the county by 2050 (the Government's target date for the whole country). All Dorset residents are now invited to comment on the draft Strategy before 9 December. We encourage you to respond. You can find the document and the questionnaire at www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/climate-survey.

The Strategy sets out the framework for action to become a carbon neutral County. It is structured under key areas of action - Buildings, Natural Assets, Water, Economy, Renewable Energy, Food & Drink, Transport, Waste and 'Making it Happen'. These headings are then reflected in a detailed Action Plan, as a menu for action by the Council and by organisations and citizens throughout the County.

The Action Plan lists 187 actions. 100 of these may be achievable through 'business as usual' : the others may involve extra spending of £127 million over the next 20 years. This extra spending will start in 2021/22 with capital spending on electric vehicles and generating renewable energy.

The Council will act in three main ways to drive forward action within the County :

- direct action to reduce its own carbon footprint from use of energy and water on its buildings and land, staff travel, waste etc.
- indirect action to ensure that its key services - planning, housing, economic development, waste, transport etc – are delivered in a carbon-saving way
- work in partnership with towns, parishes, organisations and communities across the County to pursue programmes and projects which will create fundamental change.

It will push the Government for clear policy and the funding needed for transition to a zero carbon future. It will seek win-win linkage between climate-related action, enriching natural systems, strengthening the local economy and addressing social issues, such as fuel poverty, health and mental wellbeing, air quality and healthy diets. It will monitor and report each year on progress in action and in achieving the targets to reduce carbon emissions.

Dorset CAN will prepare a collective response to the Strategy, drawing on the views of all present at the 19 November gathering. A first draft of our response will be discussed at the members' meeting on 25 November. After a further round of consultations with members in early December, it will be finalised, submitted and publicised on 8 December.

We expect to examine particularly the following points :

- Are the target dates for zero carbon – 2040 for the Council's own activity, 2050 for the whole County – ambitious enough, in view of the growing evidence that the climate is changing very fast and causing grave social, economic and environmental damage ?
- Can we point to ways by which decarbonisation can be speeded up ?
- Can we, in the Climate Action Network, make a dynamic contribution to the process of cutting carbon emissions, enriching wildlife habitats, contributing to social justice ?
- Can we, indeed, be an active partner – as well (where necessary) a critic – of Dorset Council in this vital campaign to save the natural systems and populations of the world ?

We encourage members to take interest in the Strategy, because the proposals may increasingly affect all our lives. Moreover, we can all contribute to the fight to slow down global warming, reduce the adverse impacts of climate change, stop pollution and protect wildlife. We look forward to your comments at the meeting on 19 November.

