

## EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

1 October 2019

### EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY CLIMATE EMERGENCY RESPONSE

#### Report of the Head of Strategy and Performance

**Purpose of Report:** To agree Exmoor National Park Authority's response to the climate emergency

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** The Authority is recommended to:

- A) Declare a Climate Emergency.
- B) Agree to work towards the Authority being carbon neutral by 2030, and delegate to the CEO and Officers to prepare an action plan for achieving this, noting the 30% reduction already achieved since 2008.
- C) Sign up to the Devon Climate Declaration (Appendix 1), and contribute to the preparation of a Devon Carbon Plan.
- D) Contribute to the preparation of the Somerset Carbon Plan.

**Authority Priority:** The Exmoor National Park Partnership Plan and Local Plan both include the Vision *'We are closer to achieving a carbon-neutral National Park to help mitigate climate change, and have introduced measures to adapt to changes in climate that are already happening'*.

**Legal and Equality Implications:** Section 65(4) Environment Act 1995 – provides powers to the National Park Authority to *"do anything which in the opinion of the Authority, is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to:-*

- (a) the accomplishment of the purposes mentioned in s. 65 (1) [National Park purposes]*
- (b) the carrying out of any functions conferred on it by virtue of any other enactment."*

**The equality impact of the recommendations of this report has been assessed as follows:** There are no foreseen adverse impacts on any protected group(s).

**Consideration has been given to the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 and an assessment of the implications of the recommendations of this report is as follows:** There are no implications for the Human Rights Act.

**Financial and Risk implications:** No financial or risk implications have been identified. The ENPA climate response action plan will need to be costed and included in the Authority's Corporate Planning and budgeting processes.

## 1. Background

- 1.1 Recent announcements and protests have brought the issue of climate change back to the forefront of the media and public. In May 2019 the UK government declared a climate emergency, the first government in the world to do this. The announcement highlights the latest evidence from the [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change \(IPCC\)](#) which advises that carbon emissions must reduce globally by at least 45% by 2030 from 2010 levels and reach net-zero by 2050, if we are to avoid the worst effects of climate change by keeping warming below 1.5C. The UK Government has recently signed up to the 2050 target.
- 1.2 Locally, both Devon and Somerset County Councils have declared climate emergencies, along with several other Districts and organisations.
- 1.3 Devon County Council have, in partnership with Exeter University set up the [Devon Climate Emergency Response Group \(DCERG\)](#) alongside 25 other organisations (including Exmoor and Dartmoor National Park Authorities) to coordinate a Devon-wide collaborative response to the climate emergency. The group developed a [Devon Climate Declaration](#) (see Appendix 1) which ENPA has been invited to sign. This commits signatories to:
  - Review plans to reduce their organisation’s carbon emissions to meet or exceed the IPCC targets for reducing carbon emissions, and publicly reporting our carbon emissions annually.
  - Agree to collaborate on a Devon Carbon Plan and understanding the future risks to Devon from climate change.
- 1.4 Somerset County Council has established a similar response group, led by Leaders and Chief Executives, and a number of Councils have made their own climate emergency declarations.

## 2. Exmoor’s Response

- 2.1 ENPA can respond to the climate emergency both in terms of our own corporate performance and in terms of the implications for the National Park as a whole. The Authority has been working on climate change for many years. Following the Climate Change Act in 2008, Forum 21 was awarded funding through the Exmoor National Park Sustainable Development Fund, to establish the baseline greenhouse gas emissions for the National Park and to develop a programme that would support the achievement of a carbon-neutral National Park. This led to the production of an Exmoor National Park Carbon-Neutral [Programme](#) which was consulted on during 2010, and following on from this funding was secured for a three year project - Carbon Neutral Exmoor. The focus of the project was working with local communities to raise awareness and promote low carbon heating and renewable energy. The project supported the installation of at least 73 new renewable energy systems in communities, farms and houses across the Exmoor area. Many more will have been installed as a consequence of the raised awareness of renewable energy and energy efficiency that came about because of this initiative. As part of the winding up of the Carbon Neutral Exmoor project, a grant scheme was set up with Exmoor Trust to support ongoing community renewable energy projects.

- 2.2 ENPA has continued to respond to climate change as an integral part of the Authority's work, guided by objectives in successive National Park Management (Partnership) Plans. The Exmoor National Park Local Plan, adopted in 2017, includes comprehensive policies to both mitigate the causes of climate change, and adapt to changes that are already happening. Projects such as the Exmoor Mires restoration, Headwaters of the Exe, and rights of way climate resilience work and repairs following extreme events have provided positive practical management on the ground. The Authority has also taken steps to respond through management of its own estate, particularly the woodlands which are managed in-house, and works with other foresters and land owners to support positive woodland planting and management. In terms of the Authority's own carbon footprint, monitoring shows that carbon emissions have declined by 30% since 2008. Some of this may be attributable to cuts in Authority staff and activities following austerity budget constraints, but there has been a lot of positive action taken to improve energy efficiency within Authority owned buildings and install renewable energy.
- 2.3 The Authority is therefore well placed to continue to respond to the climate emergency, but recognising that this has to be set within the context of furthering National Park purposes, and recognising the current constraints on the budgets and capacity of the Authority. It is recommended that Members sign up to the climate emergency declaration, and delegate to the CEO and Officers to prepare an action plan for ENPA to work towards being carbon neutral by 2030, and contribute to the preparation of the Devon / Somerset Carbon Plans.

**Clare Reid**  
**Head of Strategy and Performance**  
**October 2019**

**Appendix 1 Devon Climate Emergency Declaration**

## **APPENDIX 1      Devon Climate Emergency Declaration**

1. This Declaration has been prepared by a consortium of public, private and voluntary organisations collaborating through a Devon Climate Emergency Response Group. It sets out an ambition to tackle climate change that covers all of Devon, including those people who live, work in and visit our county, and those businesses who are based or operate here.
2. We are aware of the significant implications of climate change for Devon's communities; it is already affecting our environment, infrastructure, economy and health & wellbeing. If not addressed, the impact on future generations will be profound and the ability to meet the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals will be severely compromised.
3. We understand that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has advised that carbon emissions must reduce globally by at least 45% by 2030 from 2010 levels and reach net-zero by 2050 if we are to avoid the worst effects of climate change by keeping warming below 1.5 degrees.
4. We will lead in the global response to climate change through our collective action, innovation and influence.
5. Individually, we will review (within 6 months) our plans to reduce our organisation's carbon emissions to meet or exceed these targets, including ensuring the people we do business with are doing the same. We will publicly report our carbon emissions annually in accessible formats.
6. In collaboration, we will engage Devon's residents, businesses and visitors to develop and implement a plan to facilitate the reduction of Devon's production and consumption emissions to meet IPCC recommendations at the latest. We will openly report progress on its delivery. We know this transformational change will be challenging and will include:
  - Deploying more renewable, decentralised and smart energy systems
  - Retrofitting energy-efficiency measures into our existing buildings
  - Constructing zero-carbon new buildings
  - Travelling less and using improved walking, cycling and public transport infrastructure more often, and using electric and hydrogen vehicles
  - Changing our consumption to use less, re-use more and choose low-carbon options
  - Challenging all economic sectors to review their practices and the values of those they do business with
  - Divesting from fossil fuels
  - Changing our dietary patterns and reducing food waste
  - Changing agricultural practices to reduce emissions associated with farming operations, manage soils sustainably and replenish soil carbon
  - Encouraging carbon storage such as through tree planting, the use of wood in construction and peatland restoration
  - Empowering the people of Devon with the knowledge and skills to act collectively.

7. Additionally, we will work to understand the near-term and future risks of climate change for Devon to plan for how our infrastructure, public services and communities will have to adapt for a 1.5-degree warmer world.
8. Local organisations and communities cannot do this alone as national government plays a key role in many of the policy areas that are vital to reducing emissions and adapting to climate change. We call on government to prioritise decarbonisation and adaptation within decision making and work with us by using its powers to provide the resources and funding necessary to accelerate the transition to a low-carbon and resilient economy and society.
9. We challenge every organisation, business, community and individual to do the same