

**REPORT OF** Sustainability & Climate Officer  
**To:** Community & Resources Committee  
**Subject:** The Devon, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Adaptation Strategy  
**Date:** 15<sup>th</sup> April 2024 **Reference:** N/A

**PURPOSE OF REPORT: Inform Committee of the publication of a Devon, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Adaptation Strategy.**

## 1. CONTEXT

Our planet’s climate is changing and warming is accelerating. The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change published their sixth assessment report in March 2023. It states that:

“Human activities, principally through emissions of greenhouse gases, have unequivocally caused global warming, with global surface temperature reaching 1.1°C above 1850–1900 in 2011–2020. Widespread and rapid changes in the atmosphere, ocean, cryosphere and biosphere have occurred. Human-caused climate change is already affecting many weather and climate extremes in every region across the globe. This has led to widespread adverse impacts and related losses and damages to nature and people. Climate change is a threat to human well-being and planetary health. There is a rapidly closing window of opportunity to secure a liveable and sustainable future for all.”

We must not only make rapid, deep and immediate cuts in greenhouse gas emissions, but must understand the risks climate change poses for our region, and how we can adapt to these changes. The Devon, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Adaptation Strategy, published in November 2023 by the Devon, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Climate Impacts Group, provides this information.

## 2. SUMMARY OF DEVON, CORNWALL AND ISLES OF SCILLY ADAPTATION STRATEGY

The Devon, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Adaptation Strategy is a plan that details the risks the region may face in the future as climate change increasingly affects the UK and identifies how we can adapt to these changes. The Strategy can be read in full in Appendix One.

The Adaptation Strategy has three parts:

- 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
- the Action Plan, which sets out the priority actions for regional collaboration over the next five years.



## RISK REGISTER

Headline summary of climate risks/opportunities for the region:

Impacts	Type of impacts	Severity of impacts
<p><b>64</b></p> <p>Impacts evaluated across multiple sectors</p>	49 Risks	18 Severe
		28 Major
	7 Opportunities	16 Moderate
	8 Risks and opportunities	1 Minor
		1 Negligible

The climate change risk and opportunity assessment evaluated 64 climate change impacts for the region, considering both positive (i.e. opportunities) and negative (i.e. risks) effects. These were categorised into five sectors that broadly correspond with the sectors highlighted in the national climate risk assessment: natural environment (including agriculture and forestry), infrastructure, health and the built environment, business and industry, and cross-cutting impacts (including international dimensions).

Five main impact themes were scored as being the most severe for the region, all of which have impacts on human health. The themes are not listed in any order but discuss the broad hazards that the region faces from climate change.

**River and surface water flooding:** Devon and Cornwall are highly susceptible to the impacts of river and surface water flooding. Climate change is projected to increase winter rainfall and increase the intensity and frequency of storm events, furthering the region's vulnerability.

**Sea level rise (coastal flooding and erosion):** If global temperatures increase by 4°C by 2100, projections suggest sea level in the region is very likely to rise by between 0.24m and 0.38m by 2050. Wave height, storm surges and offshore wind speed are also expected to increase as a result of climate change, resulting in more intense storm events and greater impacts from coastal flooding.

**Reduced water availability (drought conditions):** It is projected that decreased summer rainfall will increase the likelihood and length of drought periods and water scarcity. Prolonged periods of reduced water availability will have significant negative impacts on agricultural productivity, commercial forestry and terrestrial and freshwater species and habitats.

**Temperature change and extreme heat/cold:** Climate change is expected to increase average temperatures, the number of hot days, summers, heatwaves, and periods of extreme heat. These are likely to cause negative health impacts, including direct impacts (e.g. from increased illness and death from cardiovascular and respiratory diseases and other chronic health conditions) and indirect impacts on health (e.g. impact on health services, increased risk of accidents, transmission of food and water borne diseases).

**Cascading impacts:** Interacting and cascading impacts can be triggered by multiple hazards that occur coincidentally or sequentially, creating substantial disruption to human and or natural systems. Across the region there is the risk that interaction between named hazards could result in the compounding of impacts across different systems.



## **ADAPTATION PLAN**

The purpose of the strategic-level adaptation plan is to set out how the region can create the conditions and capacity for everyone to adapt to climate change together over the next five years.

The adaptation plan considers four levels of adaptation planning and action, relating to different parts of society, shown below. These are policy/regulator-level, organisational-level, community-level, and individual-level actors and actions. This strategy document primarily focuses on the top two levels, it does recognise the role of communities in response, capacity building and resilience action planning.



A full list of actions can be found in the attached document, page 86 Appendix 4.

## **ACTION PLAN**

This action plan summarises the impacts from climate change on each sector and identifies the short-term actions from the Adaptation Plan (Section 3) for delivery over the next 2 – 3 years. It also provides a list of actions that strategic organisations can encourage businesses and individuals to implement.

## **TDC ALIGNMENT TO THE ADAPTATION STRATEGY**

Torrige District Council will support delivery of relevant strategic actions, and as a trusted partner in our area can help communities, families and individuals prepare for the impacts of climate change. Our endorsement of the Adaptation Strategy does not commit us to any additional work or resources (including finance).



The following actions are those relevant to TDC:

<p><b>Policymakers, regional / local government and arm's length bodies</b></p> <p>INFA1 – Build on and develop resilience partnerships. Ensure their Command, Control and Co-ordination arrangements for an emergency which involves the loss of both power and telecoms, and actively involve utilities companies in local planning where required to ensure linkage with regional and national developments. <i>Comment: TDC is a member of the Devon, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Local Resilience Forum.</i></p> <p>HBEA1 – Develop a Climate Change awareness campaign to inform stakeholders, including the public of the projected range of changes and their impacts alongside how we are adapting and what we can all do to respond. <i>Comment: We have recently agreed to part-fund a Comms post at the Devon Climate Emergency Partnership which will lead on this work.</i></p> <p>HBEA2 – Public authorities to continue to provide timely &amp; localised information on climate change impacts to enable appropriate adaptation planning by all. <i>Comment: TDC Sustainability &amp; Climate Officer will develop a pack for use by Town and Parish Councils as part of the above campaign.</i></p> <p>HBEA4 – Policymakers to engage with the public to ensure awareness and understanding of the predicted impacts of climate change around the coast generally, and on their local communities specifically – to co-produce knowledge and agree viable actions. <i>Comment: coastal change will be considered through the Local Plan Review and associated consultations.</i></p>
<p><b>Organisations, NGO's, Infrastructure operators, businesses, charities, trusts</b></p> <p>BIAA3 – Develop and expand the Climate Emergency / Readiness Action group – (Steering group formed from business, public sector, and academia) to take the lead on more projects within the region (e.g. Climate Ready Clyde). <i>Comment: TDC is a member of the Climate Emergency / Readiness Action group.</i></p> <p>BIAB4 – Put in place a flood plan to ensure business continuity and community awareness – sign up for alerts and check insurances for coverage on flooding / severe weather events. <i>Comment: This will be addressed through delivery of the Strategic Asset Management Plan.</i></p>

A full list of actions for the next 2-3 years can be found in the attached document, page 59 Table 9.

### 3. IMPLICATIONS

#### Legal Implications

None identified.

#### Financial Implications

It is anticipated that delivery of strategic adaptation actions will be through usual Council functions and services and no additional resource is required at present.

#### Human Resources Implications

It is anticipated that delivery of strategic adaptation actions will be through usual Council functions and services and no additional resource is required at present.

#### Sustainability/Biodiversity Implications

Endorsing the Devon, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Adaptation Strategy will support delivery of TDC's Carbon, Environment & Biodiversity Plan and the North Devon Biosphere's Nature Recovery Strategy.



### Equality/Diversity

There are not considered to be any negative impacts arising from publication of this Adaptation Strategy for any of the protected characteristics. Developing regional resilience to climate change will aid protected characteristics.

### Risk Management

None identified at this stage.

### Compliance with Policies and Strategies

Consistent with the Council's strategic objective and other references within this report.

### Data Protection (GDPR) Implications

None identified at this stage.

### Climate Change

Endorsing the Devon, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Adaptation Strategy will support delivery of our Devon Climate Emergency Declaration and TDC's Carbon, Environment & Biodiversity Plan.

### Ward Member and Lead Member Views

Date of Consultation – 22/2/24

'The effects of climate change are being experienced more and more frequently in the UK and in our region, as shown by increased flooding, higher temperatures, water shortages, stronger winds and other impacts. The Adaptation Strategy is therefore a vital document, providing very important guidance and information to councils, organisations and the public.'  
Cllr Hames

## **4. CONCLUSIONS**

Endorsement of this strategy supports delivery of our Devon Climate Emergency Declaration and TDC's Carbon, Environment & Biodiversity Plan. It does not commit us to any additional work or funding.

## **5. RECOMMENDATIONS**

That Community and Resources Committee endorse the Devon, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Adaptation Strategy.

## **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

Consultations: Date of Consultation – 20<sup>th</sup> March 2024  
Officers Consulted – Estate Manager  
Contact Officer: Sustainability & Climate Officer

Background Papers:

