



# PLYMOUTH PLAN - AN UPDATE FOR CLIMATE CHANGE

## 1. WHAT IS THIS PAPER ABOUT?

On 18 March 2019, Members of Plymouth City Council voted unanimously to declare a 'Climate Emergency', and pledged to make Plymouth carbon neutral by 2030.

On 16 December 2019, the City Council approved Plymouth's first Climate Emergency Action Plan and resolved to 'Undertake an early review of the Plymouth Plan with city partners in order to ensure that the plan responds to the climate emergency and the commitments set out in the Climate Emergency Action Plan'.

This paper sets out a scoping analysis of the Plymouth Plan which has been undertaken to identify which policies may need to be amended in support of the Climate Emergency pledge.

The paper is being published to support conversations and consultations with city partners and the communities of Plymouth during autumn 2020, prior to the City Council adopting a new Plymouth Plan in early 2021.

## 2. THE NEED TO REVIEW THE PLAN

The Plymouth Plan is the City's single long term strategic plan, looking ahead to 2034. It sets out a shared direction of travel for the long term future of Plymouth and brings together a number of strategic planning processes into one place. It talks about the future of the city's economy; it plans for the city's transport and housing needs; it looks at how the city can improve the lives of children and young people and address the issues which lead to child poverty and it sets out the aspiration to be a healthy and prosperous city with a rich arts and cultural environment. It also incorporates Plymouth's spatial strategy which is set out within the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan.

The Plymouth Plan was written against the backdrop of the Government's target to be carbon neutral by 2050 and whilst it positively seeks to reduce emissions in Plymouth it now needs to be reviewed against the Council's target of reaching this reduction by 2030.

The University of Exeter<sup>1</sup> was commissioned by the City Council to provide the initial evidence base to help us ensure that Plymouth's response is informed by science based targets and expert guidance to ensure we deploy the most effective solutions to ensure we tackle climate change. One of the recommendations of the 'Carbon Neutral Plymouth' report was for the City Council to undertake a policy mapping exercise of its current and proposed policy to establish where it supports or hinders carbon reduction and identify key gaps.

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<sup>1</sup> [Carbon Neutral Plymouth \(Centre for Energy and the Environment, University of Exeter, October 2019\)](#)

### 3. THE SCOPE OF THE REVIEW

The Plymouth Plan is a strategic document which covers a wide range of areas most of which do not directly deal with climate change, such as adult and social care and access to jobs, services or sport facilities. In order to set a clear direction of travel for the review it was important to scope out which elements of the Plymouth Plan needed to be reassessed against its ability to shape and reduce carbon emissions as set out in the Climate Emergency Action Plan.

The current plan is already supportive and proactive in reducing carbon emissions within the city and it is envisaged that many of the policies identified for review may require only minor wording amendments or not require any changes at all but it is important that the objectives or policies which have a direct link to carbon reduction are reviewed to ensure consistency with the climate emergency agenda.

It should be noted that the only part of the Plymouth Plan excluded from the scope of this current review is the spatial strategy that also forms part of the Joint Local Plan. This is because the Joint Local Plan operates to a different legal framework and is considered to be up-to-date having been adopted in March 2019. The Joint Local Plan also has separate governance which includes both South Hams and West Devon councils, and any decisions about future plan review need to be taken collectively by the three councils.

Table 1 below sets out a summary of which elements of the plan need to be reviewed, a more detailed review is set out in the remainder of the report.

**Table 1. Summary of parts of Plymouth Plan to be reviewed**

Element of Plan	Review
<b>Philosophy</b>	
Roots; Opportunity; Power; Flourish and Connections	NO
<b>Theme</b>	
1. A Welcoming City	NO
2. A Green City	YES
<b>Vision</b>	
How Plymouth will be in 2034 and beyond is to be 'one of Europe's most vibrant waterfront cities where an outstanding quality of life is enjoyed by everyone'	NO
<b>Strategic Objectives</b>	
SO1 Healthy city	YES
SO2 Growing city	YES
SO3 International city	YES
<b>Policies</b>	
HEA1 - Health inequalities	NO
HEA2 - Delivering the best outcomes	NO
HEA3 - Health and social care needs	NO
HEA4 - Active role in the community	NO
HEA5 - Strong and safe communities	NO
HEA6 - Sustainable and health-enabling transport	YES
HEA7 - Benefits of the natural environment	NO
HEA8 - Meeting local housing needs	YES
HEA9 - Accessible health services	NO

GRO1 - Economic growth	NO
GRO2 - Skills and talent development	NO
GRO3 - Accelerating the delivery of new homes	NO
GRO4 - Transport investment to drive growth	YES
GRO5 - Enhancing sporting facilities	NO
GRO6 - Delivering natural network	NO
GRO7 - Reducing carbon emissions and adapting to climate change	YES
GRO8 - Dealing with flood risk	NO
GRO9 - Minimising waste	YES
INT1 - Ocean City	NO
INT2 - Plymouth in the global market place	NO
INT3 - Major UK destination	YES
INT4 - Distinctive, dynamic cultural centre	NO
INT5 - Sporting excellence	NO
INT6 - 'Green city' credentials	YES
INT7 - World class universities and research	NO
INT8 - Diverse communities	NO

## 4. PHILOSOPHY AND THEMES OF THE PLYMOUTH PLAN

The plan's philosophy creates an environment for the plan to be delivered in the best possible way for people. There are the five principles/values and two themes that anchor the plan, demonstrating confidence and openness about the basic values and beliefs that create the conditions to drive the prosperity and well-being of the area.

This philosophy whilst not directly referencing the climate emergency still positively supports the aspirations of the action plan through encouraging the principles of low carbon and green improvements within the city.

The City has also adopted two strategic themes which identify the kind of place Plymouth wishes to be identified as. The themes of a 'welcoming' and 'green' city can be seen as 'golden threads' that run through the entire plan.

The Welcoming City theme emphasises the importance of people meeting their needs and ensuring that services, public spaces and the physical environment is delivered to the highest value. The aspirations of the welcoming theme are not affected by the climate emergency.

Both the wording of the theme and the supporting text state an ambition for the city to be a carbon neutral city by 2050 and halving carbon emissions by 2034.

The City already aspires to be amongst the greenest and most sustainable places in Europe but this review allows the 'green city' theme to be reassessed against the climate emergency agenda. This may result in changes to this theme to ensure that the Plymouth Plan is setting a carbon neutral target by 2030.

**Table 2. Review of Philosophy and Themes of the Plymouth Plan**

Element of Plan	Review	Comments
<b>Philosophy</b>		
1. Roots: 2. Opportunity 3. Power 4. Flourish 5. Connections	NO	The philosophy that creates an environment for the plan to be delivered in the best possible way for people is not affected by Climate Emergency Action Plan.
<b>Theme</b>		
1. A Welcoming City	NO	Theme not affected by Climate Emergency Action Plan.
2. A Green City	YES	Key theme requiring review to bring target of halving 2005 levels of carbon emissions in line with the Climate Emergency Action Plan.

## 5. VISION OF THE PLYMOUTH PLAN

As set out in the plan the vision of how Plymouth will be in 2034 and beyond is to be ‘*one of Europe’s most vibrant waterfront cities where an outstanding quality of life is enjoyed by everyone*’.

The vision has been at the heart of policy and plan-making within the city for many years and its aspirations are not affected by the climate emergency and therefore this element of the Plan does not need to be reviewed.

The plan articulates the aims of being a healthy, growing and international city by setting out through examples ‘glimpses’ of what the city might look like in 2034. Given the climate emergency is now a key driver for the City there is an opportunity to update these examples to ensure that the net zero carbon agenda is captured and articulated.

## 6. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES OF THE PLYMOUTH PLAN

The Strategic Objectives set out in greater detail what the Plymouth Plan is seeking to deliver, and how.

Objective SO1 seeks to deliver a healthy city by enabling all citizens to enjoy an outstanding quality of life, including happy, healthy, safe and fulfilled lives. The majority of this objective is not affected by the climate emergency agenda, however bullet point 7 addresses ‘providing a safe, efficient, accessible and health-enabling transport network which supports freedom of movement and active travel and promotes low carbon lifestyles that are beneficial to physical and mental health’.

It is therefore suggested that this is the only part of the objective which is reviewed to ensure that the wording is consistent with the climate emergency.

Objective SO2 is about using Plymouth’s economic, social and environmental strengths to drive quality growth which transforms the city’s long term prosperity, so that the needs of all of its people are met and they benefit from the highest quality of services and facilities.

Similarly the objective is broadly in line with the climate emergency agenda, however bullet points 3, 7 and 8 all seek to deliver sustainable and resilient approach to energy, transport and waste management and whilst they are all supportive of this approach it is recommended that the wording is reviewed to see if minor word changes are required or helpful.

Finally Objective SO3 sets Plymouth as an international city and reflects on how it projects itself to the wider world, to people who might invest in or visit the city, the sense of pride that local people take in their city and how Plymouth’s businesses engage with an increasingly global market place.

Only bullet point 7 needs reviewing as this seeks to enable Plymouth to be viewed internationally as a leading green city. A view will need to be taken on whether this wording is too broad to help drive the Council’s climate emergency aspirations or whether the wording which is already supportive is ok and that detailed plans and strategies which support the plan will deliver the target.

**Table 3. Review of Strategic objectives of the Plymouth Plan**

Strategic Objective	Review	Comments (part of objective needing review in brackets)
SO1 (PP) - Delivering a healthy city	YES	Check on wording around low carbon lifestyles and its link to climate emergency aspirations. (7)
SO2 (PP) - Delivering a growing city	YES	Minor check on wording around energy, sustainable transport and waste management. (3, 7, 8)
SO3 (PP) - Delivering the international city	YES	Check on wording around recognising Plymouth internationally as a leading green city and whether this should be expanded to link to carbon neutral aspirations of the Climate Emergency Action Plan. (7)

## 7. REVIEW OF THE POLICIES OF THE PLYMOUTH PLAN

The Plymouth Plan sets out a further 26 detailed policies which support the 3 Strategic objectives of a Healthy, Growing and International city. These policies identify specifically what the Council and its partners will do in order to meet the strategic objectives.

A number of policies cover topics such as adult and social care, delivering skills and talent and supporting world class universities and research institutions have no direct impact on the reduction of carbon emissions and therefore do not need to be reassessed as part of this review.

Whilst there are 7 detailed polices in total that require a review these do have 43 bullet points dealing with specific aspects of the policy. However as for the earlier objectives and themes, a number of these may not require any change of wording or only minor word changes.

Policy GRO7 will require revision as this seeks to reduce carbon emissions and sets out how to adapt to climate change, in particular it sets out to halve 2005 levels of carbon emissions by 2034 and this target will need to be amended in line with the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan.

**Table 4. Review of the policies of the Plymouth Plan**

<b>Policy</b>	<b>Review</b>	<b>Comment</b> (part of objective needing review in brackets)
HEA1 (PP) - Addressing health inequalities, improving health literacy	NO	No direct carbon reduction impact.
HEA2 (PP) - Delivering the best outcomes for children, young people and families	NO	No direct carbon reduction impact.
HEA3 (PP) - Supporting adults with health and social care needs	NO	No direct carbon reduction impact.
HEA4 (PP) - Playing an active role in the community	NO	No direct carbon reduction impact.
HEA5 (PP) - Delivering strong and safe communities and good quality neighbourhoods	NO	No direct carbon reduction impact.
HEA6 (PP) - Delivering a safe, accessible, sustainable and health-enabling transport system	YES	Check on wording to see if elements of policy require tweaking to specifically refer to climate emergency. (1-10)
HEA7 (PP) - Optimising the health and wellbeing benefits of the natural environment	NO	No direct carbon reduction impact.
HEA8 (PP) - Meeting local housing needs	YES	Check on wording to see if elements of policy require tweaking to specifically refer to climate emergency aspirations around energy supply, reduction and the use of renewables.(4)
HEA9 (PP) - Delivering accessible health services and clinical excellence	NO	No direct carbon reduction impact.
GRO1 (PP) - Creating the conditions for economic growth	NO	No direct carbon reduction impact.
GRO2 (PP) - Delivering skills and talent development	NO	No direct carbon reduction impact.
GRO3 (PP) - Accelerating the delivery of new homes	NO	No direct carbon reduction impact.

GRO4 (PP) - Using transport investment to drive growth	YES	Check on wording to see if elements of policy require amending to specifically refer to climate emergency aspirations. (4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15)
GRO5 (PP) - Enhancing Plymouth's sporting facilities	NO	No direct carbon reduction impact.
GRO6 (PP) - Delivering Plymouth's natural network	NO	No direct carbon reduction impact.
GRO7 (PP) - Reducing carbon emissions and adapting to climate change	YES	Key policy requiring review to bring target of halving 2005 levels of carbon emissions in line with the Climate Emergency Action Plan. (1-7)
GRO8 (PP) - Dealing with flood risk	NO	No direct carbon reduction impact.
GRO9 (PP) - Minimising Plymouth's waste	YES	Check on wording to see if elements of policy require amending to specifically refer to climate emergency aspirations particularly around reuse and recycling. (1-6)
INT1 (PP) - Implementing Britain's Ocean City	NO	No direct carbon reduction impact.
INT2 (PP) - Plymouth in the global market place	NO	No direct carbon reduction impact.
INT3 (PP) - Positioning Plymouth as a major UK destination	YES	Check on wording to see if elements of policy require amending to specifically refer to climate emergency aspirations particularly around low carbon public transport and electric car charging.(3)
INT4 (PP) - Delivering a distinctive, dynamic cultural centre of regional, national and international renown	NO	No direct carbon reduction impact.
INT5 (PP) - Celebrating Plymouth's sporting excellence	NO	No direct carbon reduction impact.
INT6 (PP) - Enhancing Plymouth's 'green city' credentials	YES	Check on wording around whether this should be expanded to link to carbon neutral aspirations of the Climate Emergency Action Plan. (1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8)
INT7 (PP) - Supporting world class universities and research institutions	NO	No direct carbon reduction impact.
INT8 (PP) - Celebrating diverse communities	NO	No direct carbon reduction impact.

## 8. CONCLUSION

From our analysis and the review of the policies earlier in this paper it is apparent that much of the plan is entirely consistent with the Climate Emergency pledge and therefore does not need to be reviewed.

The Plan is already supportive and proactive in reducing carbon emissions within the city and it is envisaged that many of the policies identified for review may require only minor wording amendments or not require any changes at all.

However it is important that the objectives or policies which have a direct link to carbon reduction and identified within this paper are reviewed to ensure consistency with the climate emergency agenda.

The paper has identified the key areas for the review are:

- The need to amend the current target of halving 2005 levels of carbon emissions in line with the Climate Emergency Action Plan.
- Whether the 'Green City' objective should be strengthened and expanded to incorporate both the net zero target and link to carbon neutral aspirations of the Climate Emergency Action Plan.
- Whether to incorporate new examples linked to the net zero agenda into the vision section of the plan.
- Check on wording to see if elements of the policies identified for review require tweaking to align the zero carbon agenda specifically around the following areas:
  - Safe, accessible, sustainable and health-enabling transport system
  - Low carbon public transport and electric car charging
  - Energy supply, reduction and the use of renewables
  - Waste, reuse and recycling
  - Enhancing Plymouth's 'green city' credentials

## 9. NEXT STEPS

We will be undertaking a programme of engagement and consultation with partners, the public and other stakeholders seeking views on the objectives and policies identified within this paper for review.

We will use comments we receive on this consultation, and the results of our own assessment, to set out a revised version of the Plymouth Plan which is fully aligned to the Climate Emergency pledge.



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