

BIDEFORD TOWN COUNCIL



**Town Hall
Bideford
Devon
EX39 2HS**

Telephone:
Bideford (01237) 428938

Paul Swan
Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer

24th January 2025

To: Members of the Decarbonisation and Environment Committee

You are hereby summoned to attend a Meeting of the **Decarbonisation and Environment Committee** of the above-named Council to be held in the Council Chamber, on **Wednesday 12 February 2025 at 6.30 pm** for the purpose of transacting the following business.

In accordance with The Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 members of the public are welcome to attend. There is a legal right to film/record/photograph/report public meetings.

Paul Swan
Clerk to the Council

AGENDA

1. To receive apologies and reasons for absence.
2. To receive declarations of interest on items on the agenda and note any requests for dispensation received by the Clerk prior to the meeting. Enc.
3. Public participation session of 15 minutes duration on items on the agenda.
4. To approve the minutes of the Meeting held on 4 December 2024 as a correct record. Enc.
5. Items brought forward by the Chairman.

6. To discuss and make recommendations on the town climate plan before submission to full council.
7. To discuss and make recommendations to full council on mechanism for green grants being awarded by town council.
8. To make suggestions on suitable areas for wild seeding in Bideford and suitable date to 'break ground' on the project.

DECARBONISATION AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Councillors: Mr J McKenzie Mr J Craigie Mrs J Gubb
 Mr J Gordon Ms R Clarke Mrs S Smith
 Mr K Hind

Date of the next meeting – TBD

Declaration of Interests at meetings

- Where a matter relates to an interest in list A, the member shall not participate in a discussion or vote on the matter. He /she only need declare it if it is not already noted on the register of interests.
- Where the matter is in list A, but is a sensitive interest, the member shall not participate in a discussion or vote; the member shall disclose that there is an interest but not the nature of it.
- Where a matter relates to an interest on list B the member shall not vote and may only speak as a member of the public.
- A member only has to declare an interest in list B if it is not already on the register of interests.
- If the interest is in list B and is sensitive in nature and not already registered then the member shall disclose the interest but not the nature of it.
- Where a matter relates to the financial interest of a friend, relative or close associate (other than in list A) the member shall disclose the interest and not vote. He or she may speak but only as a member of the public.

List A:

- 1 **Employment, office, trade or vocation** – carried on for profit by member or spouse or civil partner.
- 2 **Sponsorship** – any payments for the previous 12 months, other than by the Council, to assist in Council duties
- 3 **Contracts** – any current contracts between the Council and the member or his/ her spouse or civil partner or a company the member is a director or partner of.
4. **Land** – any beneficial interest in land within the area of the Council by member, spouse or civil partner.
- 5 **Licenses** - any license, alone or with others, by spouse, civil partner or member to occupy land in area of Council.
- 6 **Corporate Tenancies** - any tenancy where the Council is the landlord and the member, spouse or civil partner has a beneficial interest in the tenant.
7. **Securities** – a beneficial interest is held in a body that has land or business in the area of the Council by the member, spouse or civil partner that either exceeds £25,000 or the total share capital is in excess of one hundredth of the of the total shares issued.

List B:

Any interests which relate to or is likely to affect:

1. Any body where the member has general control or management and was appointed by the Council.
2. Any body that the member is in a position of control or management and either:
 - (a) exercises functions of a public nature;
 - (b) is for charitable purposes; or
 - (c) has the purpose of influencing public opinion or policy (including political parties and trade unions)
3. Any gifts or hospitality that the member has received by virtue of his or her office in excess of £50.



BIDEFORD TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Decarbonisation and Environment Committee Meeting
held in the Council Chamber,
on Wednesday 4 December 2024 at 6.30 pm**

PRESENT: East Ward: Councillor Mrs R Clarke (Mayor)
Councillor Mrs J Gubb
North Ward: Councillor J Gordon (Chairman)
South Ward

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr P Swan (Town Clerk)

23 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Valid reasons for absence were received on behalf of Councillors – None given

- Councillor J McKenzie – Did not attend
- Councillor J Craigie – Did not attend
- Councillor S Smith – Did not attend
- Councillor K Hind – Did not attend

24 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST ON ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

There were no Declarations of Interest.

25 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PERIOD**

No members of the public present.

26 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 3rd October 2024 were approved and signed as a correct record.

It was proposed by Councillor Mrs R Clarke, seconded by Councillor Mrs J Gubb and

RECOMMENDED TO FULL COUNCIL: The Minutes of the Decarbonisation and Environment Committee meeting held on the 3rd October 2024 were approved and signed as a correct record.

(Vote – For: 3; Against: 0; Abstention 0)

27 **GREEN GRANTS**

The members reviewed the proposal. Councillor Gordon explained that a significantly small sum can have a large impact to some of the local community groups and having this facility could make positive community impact.

It was proposed by Councillor Mrs R Clarke, seconded by Councillor Mrs J Gubb and

RECOMMENDED TO FULL COUNCIL: That the Green Grant proposal be adopted.

28 **SOLAR PV INSTALLATION**

The installation of the Solar PV array for the New Town Ranger Depot was discussed and

It was proposed by Councillor Mrs R Clarke, seconded by Councillor Gubb and

RECOMMENDED TO FULL COUNCIL: That the remainder of the 25/26 Decarbonisation budget be allocated to the Town Ranger Depot Solar PV Array project.

29 **TOWN CARBON PLAN**

Councillor Gordon gave feedback on the Torridge Carbon Plan, advising that a significant proportion was not under the remit of Town Council control and did the Committee feel the Town Carbon Plan consider the wider Bideford remit or just that under the control of Bideford Town Council. After consideration the members

RECOMMEND TO FULL: that only items under the control of Bideford Town Council should be considered in the Town Carbon Plan.

30 **NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting was agreed to be at the discretion of the Chair.

The Chairman thanked the Members for their attendance and support. He concluded the Meeting at 18:38.

Signature of Town Mayor:..... Date:.....

Signature of Chairman:..... Date:.....



Bideford
Town Council

Town Climate Plan

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Forward

In July 2019, Torrridge District Council (TDC) declared a "Climate Emergency," acknowledging the urgent need to address the environmental, social, and economic impacts of climate change. Building on this commitment, Bideford, as one of the key towns in Torrridge, recognizes its vital role in contributing to the **district's ambitious target of achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2030**.

In response to this challenge, Bideford has developed its own Climate Action Plan, aligning with TDC's Carbon, Environment, and Biodiversity Plan. This plan outlines local strategies to address the climate crisis while enhancing the town's resilience to its effects. It reflects our dedication to reducing carbon emissions, protecting biodiversity, and fostering sustainable practices within our community.

Climate change is already impacting northern Devon, and Bideford is committed to leading by example. We recognize the importance of collective action and will work closely with residents, businesses, and other stakeholders to deliver meaningful change. This plan not only addresses the immediate need for environmental responsibility but also embraces the opportunities for a healthier, greener, and more prosperous future for all who live and work in Bideford.

Background on Bideford

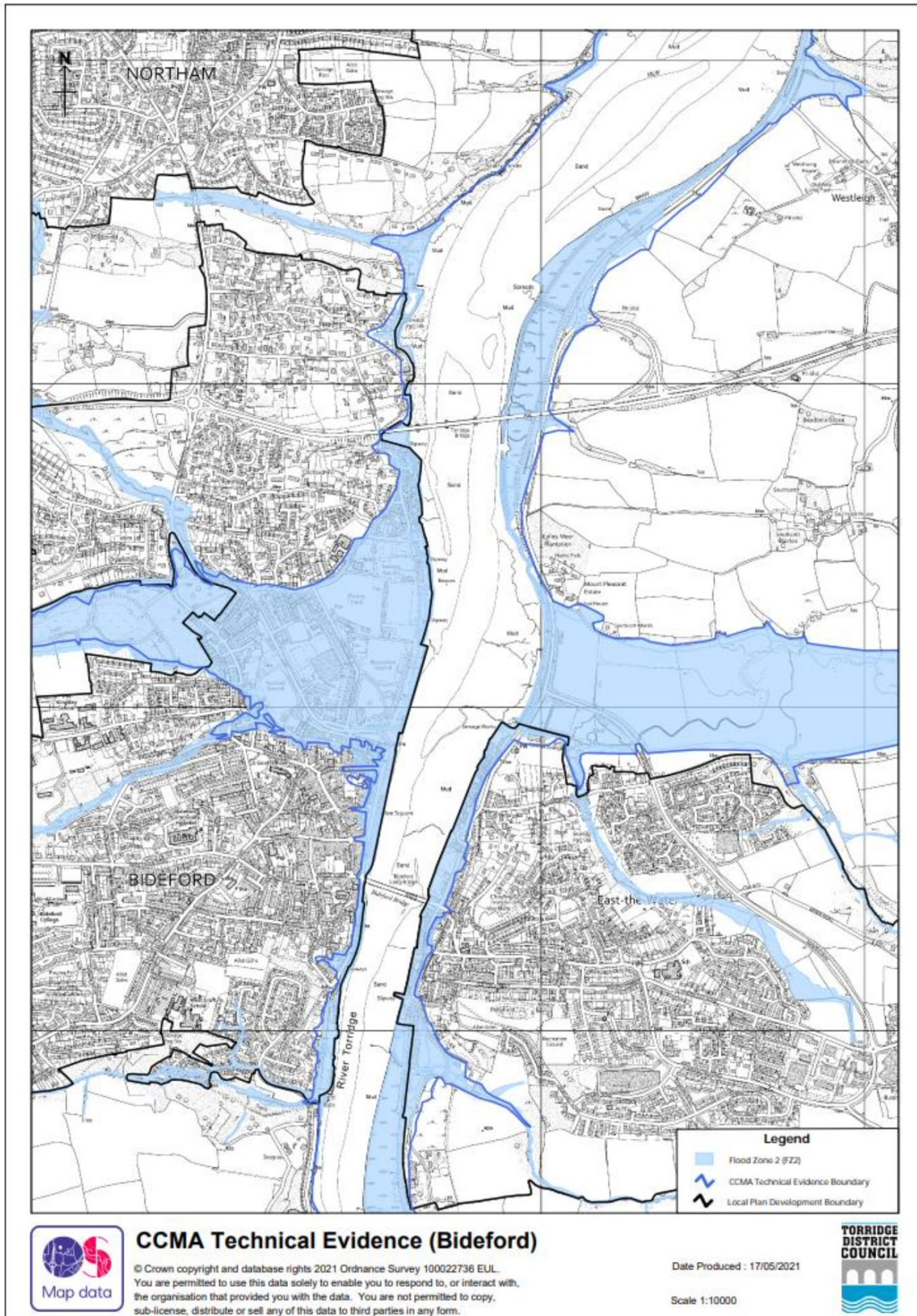
Bideford is a historic market town in northern Devon, situated on the banks of the River Torrridge. With a population of approximately 17,500 (2021 Census), it is **one of the largest settlements in the Torrridge District** and serves as a central hub for the surrounding rural areas.

Economically, Bideford faces a mixed profile. The average household income in the Torrridge District, which includes Bideford, is estimated at **£28,700 per year, below the national average of £33,000** (Office for National Statistics, 2022). The town contains areas of significant deprivation, with parts of East-the-Water and the town center ranking among the **most deprived 20% of areas in England**, according to the 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD).

Bideford's geographical location along the River Torrridge places it at significant risk from the effects of climate change. The Environment Agency's Flood Risk Assessment identifies parts of the town as being **highly vulnerable to tidal and fluvial flooding**. With global sea levels projected to rise by between 0.3 and 1.2 meters by 2100, depending on emission scenarios. The risk of storm surges and flooding is also expected to increase significantly with climate change likely bringing periods of much heavier rainfall.

The impacts of these changes could have profound consequences for Bideford's residents and economy. Flooding threatens homes, businesses, and vital transport links, while rising sea levels could lead to long-term challenges in maintaining infrastructure and safeguarding

heritage sites. Vulnerable populations, including elderly residents and low-income households, are disproportionately at risk, with limited capacity to adapt to these challenges.



Local Biodiversity and habitats

Bideford is home to a diverse bird population, with both resident and migratory species relying on local habitats. The area serves as an important stopover for migratory birds, highlighting the need to protect key feeding and nesting grounds. The River Torridge provides a vital aquatic ecosystem, supporting a range of wildlife, while gardens also play a crucial role in urban biodiversity. However, many garden habitats are being lost due to development and land use changes. Bideford Town Council (BTC) can explore ways to support wildlife-friendly gardening initiatives, such as promoting pollinator-friendly planting, providing guidance on wildlife corridors, and encouraging community-led conservation efforts.

A wild seeding project is already in place to enhance biodiversity, creating new habitats for insects, birds, and small mammals. This initiative helps restore natural ecosystems, improves soil health, and reduces the need for mowing, making it a key step in supporting local biodiversity. BTC can continue expanding and maintaining these efforts to ensure long-term ecological benefits.

BTC Carbon emissions

Without a comprehensive carbon audit of all BTC operations, it is not currently possible to determine an exact figure for the council's total carbon emissions. However, **a preliminary assessment can identify the areas of operation most likely to contribute significantly to BTC's CO₂ output**, helping to prioritise key actions for emission reduction.

It has been identified that the area of operations likely to generate the highest carbon emissions within BTC is the use of its diesel- and petrol-powered vehicle fleet. This fleet currently includes a Ford Transit Tipper, a Toyota Hilux Tipper, and a Renault Trafic, which collectively cover over 12,000 miles annually, primarily navigating Bideford's steep streets. This level of use results in significant carbon emissions, estimated at a minimum of 3 tonnes of CO₂ per year. While replacing these vehicles represents a substantial expense, exceeding BTC's current annual decarbonisation budget, transitioning to low-emission alternatives will be essential for making significant progress toward carbon-neutral operations. Given that the vehicles are predominantly used for short, local journeys, they would be well-suited for electric vehicle replacements when budgets and market conditions allow, offering a practical step toward reducing emissions and supporting long-term sustainability goals.

To achieve carbon net neutrality by 2030, it is likely that BTC's decarbonisation budget will need to increase to support necessary investments in sustainable infrastructure and technology. However, making strategic investments now—such as

upgrading to electric vehicles or installing solar panels—can offer significant financial and environmental returns in the long run. These projects not only reduce operational emissions but also have the potential to pay for themselves over time through fuel savings, lower maintenance costs, and energy efficiency improvements. Proactively increasing funding in these areas will ensure BTC stays on track to meet its sustainability commitments while delivering long-term value for the community.

What has already been achieved

Using funds allocated from the decarbonisation budget, BTC has already **transitioned from petrol-powered groundskeeping equipment to electric alternatives**. This shift will not only contribute to a reduction in BTC's annual CO₂ emissions but also significantly decrease the release of other harmful air pollutants commonly produced by one- and two-stroke engines. These pollutants, including carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, and particulate matter, can have detrimental effects on air quality and public health. As the equipment is often used in close proximity to residential areas, this transition is particularly important for safeguarding community well-being and improving local air quality.

Funds have been allocated for the installation of up to 12kW of solar photovoltaic (PV) panels, along with battery storage, at BTC's new Caddesdown ranger station. This renewable energy system could reduce BTC's carbon footprint by approximately 2.5 tonnes of CO₂ annually, equivalent to the emissions produced by driving a typical family car over 10,000 miles, by providing a clean, carbon-free power source for charging electric groundskeeping equipment. Battery storage will help maximise energy use by storing excess power for later use, reducing reliance on grid electricity. Surplus energy could also be sold back to the grid, contributing to green energy production while generating additional revenue to support BTC's sustainability efforts.

BTC has recently committed to transitioning to 'paperless' meetings, significantly reducing paper use and improving sustainability practices. Previously, BTC was printing up to 300,000 sheets of paper annually solely for town council meetings. By reducing this figure to nearly zero, the council is achieving both a substantial cost saving and a measurable environmental benefit, as each sheet of paper has a carbon footprint of approximately 4g CO₂. **This shift is estimated to reduce BTC's overall carbon footprint by 1,200 kg annually**. Additionally, the elimination of printed document packs has reduced the need for hand deliveries, cutting mileage on council vehicles, further lowering fuel consumption and emissions, and freeing up valuable staff resources for other essential tasks.

Carbon Reduction Action Plan

The following table outlines some of the actions that BTC can take and is in the process of taking in order to meet the goal of **net zero carbon emissions**.

Item	Impact to carbon reduction	Cost	Implementation
Replace town ranger vehicles with electric vehicles	High Transitioning to electric vehicles will eliminate tailpipe emissions, significantly reducing the town's overall greenhouse gas emissions. This will have a direct and measurable impact, especially since ranger vehicles are a primary contributor to BTC's carbon footprint.	*65,000 *Estimated costs	Project Proposal Stage Early groundwork is being done to estimate costs of replacing Town Rangers vehicles and how to factor this into future budgets
Solar Panels and Batteries for Ranger Station	High Installing solar panels will lower reliance on grid electricity, much of which may be derived from fossil fuels. This will reduce the town's indirect emissions by generating renewable energy on-site, with lasting benefits over the system's lifetime.	Solar Panels £14,200* Batteries £15,000 *Estimated costs	Approved Project has been approved and
Switch to electric equipment	Moderate Switching to electric equipment will cut emissions from petrol and diesel, especially for regular tasks like landscaping and maintenance. Reduced noise pollution and improved air quality are added benefits, alongside a direct reduction in operational carbon footprint.	£4000	Implemented Equipment was purchased Already in use by Town Rangers.
Wild Seeding grass verges managed	Low	Wild Seed (annual) £300	Approved

<p>by BTC</p>	<p>Wild seeding increases carbon sequestration potential by promoting natural habitats and biodiversity. While its direct impact on carbon emissions is small, it supports long-term ecosystem health and indirectly reduces emissions by minimising mowing and chemical fertiliser use.</p>		<p>Project has been approved and necessary wild flower seed purchased. Suitable sights now need to be chosen ready for sowing in the Spring.</p>
<p>Use of locally sourced products for town council events</p>	<p>Low</p> <p>By reducing food miles and favouring local supply chains, this measure lowers emissions associated with transportation. While the impact is smaller compared to other initiatives, it demonstrates commitment to sustainable practices and has a cumulative effect when consistently implemented.</p>	<p>Further research required</p>	<p>Project Proposal Stage</p>