

<b>REPORT REFERENCE NO.</b>	<b>DSFRA/20/15</b>
<b>MEETING</b>	<b>DEVON &amp; SOMERSET FIRE &amp; RESCUE AUTHORITY</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>23 OCTOBER 2020</b>
<b>SUBJECT OF REPORT</b>	<b>ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGY</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	<b>Director of Finance &amp; Resourcing</b>
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<p><i>(a). that the Authority declares a Climate Emergency;</i></p> <p><i>(b). that the Service Environmental Strategy as appended to this report aimed at addressing, by adaptation and mitigation, climate change be endorsed;</i></p> <p><i>(c). that the Audit &amp; Performance Review Committee, in consultation with the Authority’s Climate Change and Sustainability Member Champions, be asked to develop appropriate targets and/or Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to facilitate monitoring by that Committee of progress in implementing the Service Environmental Strategy.</i></p>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	Climate change is an issue requiring action at a national, regional and local level. This paper invites the Authority to formally recognise a climate emergency and sets out an Environmental Strategy whereby the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service (“the Service”) will, through adaptation and mitigation, seek to address climate change issues.
<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>	Any resources associated with implementation of the Environmental Strategy will be contained from within existing resources.
<b>EQUALITY RISKS AND BENEFITS ANALYSIS</b>	Not applicable
<b>APPENDICES</b>	A. Service Environmental Strategy
<b>BACKGROUND PAPERS</b>	<p><a href="#">Global Warming of 1.5°C – Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)</a></p> <p><a href="#">Climate Emergencies – fire and rescue services</a></p>

## **1. BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1. Climate change is the most serious and urgent challenge facing not just the communities of Devon and Somerset but across the world. In October 2018 a 'Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C' was published by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change which:
  - (a). describes the enormous harm that a 2°C average rise in global temperatures is likely to cause compared with a 1.5°C rise; and
  - (b). confirms that limiting Global Warming to 1.5°C may still be possible with ambitious action from national and sub-national authorities, civil society and the private sector.
- 1.2. The UK Government has recently committed to reducing carbon emissions to net zero by 2050 following advice from the Committee on Climate Change. Additionally, a number of local authorities (including this Authority's constituent authorities of Devon County Council, Somerset County Council, Plymouth City Council and Torbay Council) have declared climate emergencies and have either adopted, or are in the process of adopting, strategies to address the economic, social and environmental costs of climate change.
- 1.3. In its March 2020 publication "Climate Emergency – Fire and Rescue Services", the Local Government Association identified both current and future risks stemming from a failure to tackle, effectively, climate change. These include, of particular relevance to fire and rescue services:
  - more frequent and more extreme flooding and coastal erosion, caused by wetter winters, heavier rain, stronger storms and rising sea levels;
  - more water shortages and higher drought risk, caused by hotter drier summers and less predictable rainfall;
  - more frequent and more extreme fires and wildfires; and
  - more damage to wildlife and the habitat on which it depends – in many cases, the damage may be existential.
- 1.4. There are two key elements to addressing climate change issues – adaptation and mitigation. For the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service ("the Service"), mitigation means reducing the Service's greenhouse gas emissions and carbon footprint, waste and pollution. Adaptation means reducing the vulnerability of communities served from climate change, thereby making the environment and communities safer. In an operational context, mitigation can be associated with emergency response and recovery work aimed at directly reducing the worst impacts of extreme weather events on local communities, when they occur.

- 1.5. While individuals can and should accept responsibility for living in a more sustainable way, they cannot be expected to make these changes on their own. All governments – nationally and locally - have a duty to limit the negative impacts of climate change. The Service recognises this and has developed the attached Environmental Strategy designed to reduce carbon dioxide equivalent (CO<sub>2</sub>eq) emissions in working towards carbon neutrality as quickly as possible and ultimately a “Carbon net positive” position.

## **2. SERVICE ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGY**

- 2.1. The Service Environmental Strategy is attached at Appendix A to this report. The key themes of the Strategy (Our People; Our Buildings; Our Journeys; and Our Services) will require significant change and investment over time to support the overall goals of:

*Service 2020: Understanding the baseline impact of Service activities and then reducing emissions and waste from these activities.*

*Service 2030: carbon neutral or net carbon emissions means the Service is achieving an overall balance between emissions produced and those taken out of the atmosphere.*

*Service 2050: Carbon net positive approach means the Service will do more good than harm to the environment.*

- 2.2. As indicated, the first priority is to baseline existing Service activities and its carbon footprint to monitor progress. Work on this has already commenced. The changes required to meet the strategy goals require environmental factors to be central aspects of Service decision making priorities.
- 2.3. The Authority is therefore recommended to support the declaration of a climate emergency, to endorse the attached Environmental Strategy and to approve its ongoing monitoring through the Audit & Performance Review Committee.

**AMY WEBB**  
**Director of Finance & Resourcing**