Chapter 9 Summary

Built Environment

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Buildings and outdoor lighting produced 42% of Devon's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in 2019, due to burning fossil fuels for space & water heating and manufacturing processes (30%) and the consumption of grid-supplied electricity (12%).

To Reduce These Emissions, Several Changes Are Needed:

Retrofit Existing Houses.

We need a high take-up of energy-efficiency measures and low-carbon heating technologies in every one of our 581,000 homes. This retrofitting process must be affordable to everybody and independent and trusted advice needs to be available.

New Buildings Need To Be Net-Zero As Soon As Possible.

We need to be constructing new buildings using low-carbon materials and ensuring they won't need retrofitting in the future, which would be five times more expensive.

Retrofit Existing Commercial And Industrial Premises.

Just like our homes, the 53,000 non-domestic buildings in Devon need upgrading too.

Minimise Energy Use By Amenity Lighting.

Lighting in public areas needs to be efficient and used only when required without affecting people's safety or feelings of vulnerability.

Achieving these goals will generate new jobs to carry out necessary retrofits, protect vulnerable people from cold-related health conditions, and help those in poverty by minimising money spent on energy.

Actions:

Everyone:

- Check if you're eligible for free energy efficiency improvements for lower-income householders
- Take a personalised Home Energy Check
- If you have not already done so, turn the thermostat down
- Insulate your home
- Install LED lightbulbs
- Wash at 30°c
- Hang dry your clothes
- If you're in a position to do so, install a low carbon heating system
- Ensure new building work is as energy efficient as you can afford

Actions:

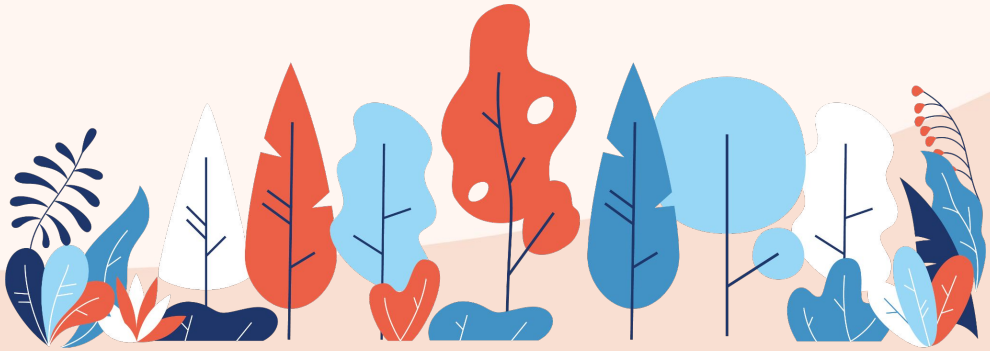
Communities:

* Work with landlords to retrofit community buildings
* Raise awareness of the co-benefits of living in retrofitted homes and provide retrofitting advice to encourage people to undertake a retrofit
* If you have retrofitted properties in your community, organise ‘Open Homes’ events to show the properties to other local people

Actions:

Organisations:

- Retrofit your buildings, taking part in trials where these are available
- Share your retrofitting experience with others
- Ensure new building work is conducted to a net-zero standard
- Reduce exterior and public lighting and convert to LED technology



Actions:

Local Policy Makers:

- Develop projects to expand whole-house retrofit trials
- Explore putting financial incentives and regulations in place to encourage retrofit (e.g. tax breaks & rebates, low-interest loans and green mortgages)
- Collaborate with communities to establish a Devon-wide energy advice service
- Enforce minimum energy efficiency standards
- Work with central government and developers to accelerate the delivery of affordable new, net-zero homes