

Climate Emergency Framework

Cabinet Member: Cllr David Hall - Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Planning and Community Infrastructure

Local Member(s) and Division: All

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1. Summary / Background

- 1.1.** Following motions passed by the respective authorities earlier in 2019, the five Councils of Somerset (Mendip District Council, Sedgemoor District Council, Somerset County Council, Somerset West and Taunton and South Somerset District Council) have agreed to work together to identify ways in which the County of Somerset could achieve carbon neutrality by 2030.
- 1.2.** A Framework document has been produced that sets out some high-level detail explaining the expected directions of travel required to address the various issues that have been identified. However, it is essential that the detailed Climate Emergency Strategy and Action Plans derived from it are informed by listening to the communities affected by any changes, whilst we learn from initiatives, projects and actions already planned and implemented within our communities.

This paper sets out the proposed methods of Consultation with communities, business and industry and young people to enable their input into the Strategy document.

2. Recommendations

2.1. That the Cabinet

- 1. Endorses the draft Climate Emergency Framework document for consultation and the approach to its delivery through the workstreams**
- 2. Endorses the timeline for development of the full Climate Emergency Strategy**
- 3. Endorses the proposed consultation activities**
- 4. Notes the risks in item 7 below and the challenges to delivery in section 6 of the Framework document.**

3. Reasons for recommendations

- 3.1** In 2019 the five Somerset Local Authorities each recognised or declared a 'Climate Emergency' and agreed to collaborate in producing a joint Climate Emergency Strategy.
- 3.2** Whilst each declaration is slightly different, all aspire to achieving carbon neutrality in their own operations and to work towards achieving this across the geography of their administrative area.
- 3.3** Given the alignment of the declarations, it was agreed that a cross-authority Strategy be developed to identify ways in which the county of Somerset can become 'Carbon Neutral' by 2030.
- 3.4** This Framework document has been developed to initiate conversation with individuals, our communities, interest groups, businesses and other relevant stakeholders to inform the full Climate Emergency Strategy and the actions and priorities that arise from it.

4. Other options considered

- 4.1.** In order for individuals, communities and interest groups to have a sense of ownership of the resultant Strategy it is essential that they get an opportunity to shape it in a meaningful way by providing feedback on the draft Framework.

It is important that we do not present all of the answers as we see them, but to provide opportunities for people to feedback on the proposed direction of travel of the Framework, the areas for concentration and priority actions.

All of the feedback received to date from Stakeholders, activist groups and industry and academic experts is that engagement, communications and consultation is key to the delivery and implementation of a credible strategy and from the outset this needs to be done correctly and earnestly; done incorrectly it could mean the strategy does not gain support and traction from the beginning.

There has been pressure from some quarters, notably Extinction Rebellion, to form a People's Assembly as the main means of public consultation for Strategy development. This option has been discounted at present as it has been deemed too costly and time-consuming to set up, however, the option of having smaller, People's Juries to debate the relative merits of smaller, discreet projects is not being ruled out at this stage.

5. Links to County Vision, Business Plan and Medium-Term Financial Strategy

5.1. The framework has links to all of the objectives within the County Plan:

- A thriving and productive County that is ambitious, confident and focussed on improving people's lives.
- A County of resilient, well-connected and compassionate communities working to reduce inequalities.
- A County where all partners actively work together for the benefit of our residents, communities and businesses and the environment in which we all live.
- A County that provides you with right information, advice and guidance to help you help yourself and targets support to those who need it most.

Actions taken intended to mitigate or adapt to climate change often come with co-benefits, defined as 'the positive effects that a policy or measure aimed at one objective might have on other objectives'. It is clear that all of the objectives of the County Plan could be contributed to by the delivery of actions contained within the Climate Emergency Strategy.

5.2. Many of the recommended actions and priority areas for concentration identified within the final Strategy document will undoubtedly require additional funding; this will be picked up through the respective MTFP processes.

It must be noted that any proposed actions over and above Business as Usual are currently unfunded.

Individual projects and actions that are being identified for immediate action are currently being costed and will be subject to Business Cases and the MTFP (2020/23) process.

6. Consultations and co-production

6.1. The Framework document has been co-produced by the five Somerset Local Authorities (Mendip District Council, Sedgemoor District Council, Somerset County Council, Somerset West and Taunton and South Somerset District Council).

6.2. The approach has been discussed and developed with a wide range of subject matter experts and climate activist organisations including, but not limited to, Exeter University, Somerset Climate Action Network (SCAN), Somerset Community Energy and Extinction Rebellion.

6.3. The approach to the Consultation process has been formulated in conjunction with SCAN who will be supporting and facilitating the Climate Emergency drop

in sessions and online survey and will provide analysis of the outputs.

Consultation with the Business Community is being developed and is being coordinated in conjunction with the local Chamber of Commerce and Federation of Small Businesses.

Consultation with young people will include an online survey for 11-25 year-olds and is being coordinated with the help of Somerset Association of Secondary Headteachers.

7. Financial and Risk Implications

7.1. Somerset County Council, as part of its Declaration of a Climate Emergency at the Full Council Meeting of February 2019, allocated £25,000 from the Councils contingency budget to develop the strategy. All of the District Councils have also allocated similar amounts of funding towards the development of the strategy.

These monies are, in part, being utilised to fund the consultation process, as well as paying for additional project resource and being available to commission discreet, specialised research projects.

7.2. Risk 1: Lack of engagement with the public resulting in insufficient responses to the consultation process

This will be mitigated by the holding of a series of Climate Emergency Have your Say events, one in each District of the county. The events will be heavily promoted through media channels and through partner organisations to ensure as wide a reach and interest as possible.

The Consultation will also be hosted online for the requisite Consultation period so attendance at the events will not be required for engagement with the Consultation process

Likelihood	2	Impact	3	Risk Score	6
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Risk 2: That the draft Framework sets expectations that are not then followed through in the Climate Emergency Strategy due to lack of financial resource.

Likelihood	4	Impact	4	Risk Score	16
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8. Legal and HR Implications

8.1. There are no Legal or HR implications as a result of the development of the Framework document for consultation, however, there may be some implications as a result of the development of the full Strategy document.

These will be documented and addressed at the time of the Strategy development.

9. Other Implications

9.1. Equalities Implications

The Somerset District Councils have assumed the responsibility for arranging the Climate drop-ins around the county. All relevant accessibility issues are being considered.

To ensure the widest range of attendees the events is being heavily promoted across media channels, including through the substantial combined reach of the Somerset Local Authorities social media platforms.

The Consultation will also be hosted online for the requisite Consultation period so attendance at the events will not be required for engagement with the Consultation process

9.2. Community Safety Implications

Given the subject matter of the Framework document and the Consultation, it is possible that emotions may run high during the events.

The Consultation events and venues will be dynamically managed to ensure community safety at all times.

9.3. Sustainability Implications

The Framework document contains a set of broad themes for Consultation which propose ways in which we can reduce carbon and other greenhouse gas emissions across Somerset.

It also sets out a number of ways in which the landscape of Somerset can be adapted to the inevitable effects of Climate Change.

It is planned for individuals, communities and groups to have the opportunity to shape the priorities of the resultant Strategy and Action Plans. The full sustainability implications of the proposed projects and actions will be considered and measured at that point.

9.4. Health and Safety Implications

N/A

9.5. Health and Wellbeing Implications

While Health and Wellbeing is not one of the defined Workstreams within the Framework, it is clear that public health and the identification of the co-benefits of the proposed actions must be a golden thread throughout the document and the resultant Strategy

The implementation of proposed actions and projects will have numerous opportunities to improve local communities and living standards for all in Somerset. A number of the projects and proposals will provide significant socio-economic and health benefits, can reduce healthcare costs and improve the quality of life for many.

9.6. Social Value

Although we are unable to provide detail of the contents of the Climate Emergency Strategy at this stage as the Framework document is yet to be consulted upon, the Strategy and resultant projects will undoubtedly include a number of Social Value benefits. These are likely to include measures that will:

- Address fuel poverty for those in deprived areas
- Address air pollution in built-up urban areas
- Look at the affordability and availability of public transport
- Encourage healthier, sustainable forms of transport
- Create community cohesion through the development of local projects
- Provide an opportunity for community groups and individuals to feel that they are vested in the Strategy development and delivery through a robust and comprehensive consultation process

10. Scrutiny comments / recommendations:

10.1. The Draft Somerset-wide Framework was considered by Somerset County Council's Policies and Place Scrutiny Committee on 9th October 2019. A number of members identified concerns in relation to specific points within the document. These points have been raised with the Strategic Management Group and discussed at the Somerset Climate Emergency Joint Task and Finish Group on 22nd October 2019 alongside points raised at other authorities. The Framework is being amended as considered appropriate taking account of these discussions and will be circulated for agreement by the Joint Cabinet / Portfolio Holders Group in consultation with the Chair of the Task and Finish

Group.

11. Background

- 11.1.** In 2019 the five Somerset Local Authorities each recognised or declared a 'Climate Emergency' and agreed to collaborate in producing a joint Climate Emergency Strategy for Somerset. Whilst each declaration is slightly different, all aspire to achieving carbon neutrality in their own operations and to work towards achieving this across the geography of their administrative area. Given the alignment of the declarations, it was agreed that a cross-authority Strategy be developed to identify ways in which the county of Somerset can become 'Carbon Neutral' by 2030.

Experts from the fields of academia, industry, climate activism and subject matter experts from across the Somerset local authorities have been engaged to develop the scope of the Framework and identify the key areas of focus and to help understand the scale of the challenge set by the ambitious targets within the 'Climate Emergency' to inform the resulting Strategy and local Action Plans

- 11.2.** The Framework document identifies a number of key themes and proposed actions and an initial planned direction of travel for the Strategy and recommends a number of discreet yet interdependent workstreams comprised of local authority and industry and subject matter experts to identify actions and deliver the strategy.

The framework is intended to stimulate conversation with communities, interest groups, businesses and other relevant stakeholders in order to generate true community engagement and strategy co-development, ensuring that everyone in Somerset feels a sense of ownership of the full Climate Emergency Strategy.

It is intended that this Framework document reaches as wide a range of people of Somerset as possible to give them the opportunity to input into and shape the final Strategy document.

To facilitate this, the proposed Consultation process will be multi-faceted and multi-media; it is proposed to use both face-to-face and online approaches, with a strong communications programme to make the public aware of the opportunities to engage with us on this matter.

Face to face contact – Within each district area, a day long 'Climate Emergency - Have your Say drop-in session' has been arranged to allow the public to attend, at a time that suits them, to understand what was being

proposed and give their feedback on our approach. This would also be supplemented by a series of panels through the day on subjects of interest. The panels would be filled by subject specialists and would be a discussion of a climate topic rather than about our proposals. The aim of the panels is to draw people in, in a way that they might not otherwise feel it was worth their attending. The events will be managed and facilitated on the day by Somerset Climate Action Network (SCAN), not the councils. In this way it is hoped that people will feel more comfortable to attend the events.

Online consultation – running over the Consultation period there will also be an online consultation which people can access at a time that suits them. This will cover the same 'asks' as those made during the drop-in sessions to ensure that there is consistency.

District supplemental events – where considered helpful to districts, it is proposed that they offer smaller events as appropriate to help them flesh out the area specific plans in their district. These events are seen to be an opportunity to engage the community in local activities, sign-post people to the online consultation and promote the work the councils are doing.

Business and Industry events – a tailored business and industry focussed Consultation event (supported by the Federation of Small Business and the Chamber of Commerce) will be run to garner the views of those specifically engaged in Somerset's business communities with their unique challenges.

Young People -There is a recognition that many young people have strong views on climate change and the impact on the planet. Actions coming from the strategy will impact their future and so it seems appropriate to engage with them separately.

A two-fold approach is suggested that takes account of the need to show that as local authorities we are taking this matter seriously but also allows young people to respond electronically.

1. A programme of attendances at schools and colleges will take place which will see council representatives promoting the consultation process.
2. A young person's online consultation will run, independently from the public one, to allow them to feed in their views.

It is proposed that this work makes use of the enthusiasm of the members of the Somerset UK Youth Parliament and that they are asked to support the formation of the online consultation as well as promoting the programme amongst young people.

It is also planned to promote the consultation to a number of faith groups and voluntary organisations in order to gain their views.

The outputs of the Consultation responses will then be analysed and help to inform and shape the Strategy document.

Time-table

The proposed timeline for development and sign-off of the Strategy can be seen below. It was revised following the delay of the public consultation from November to February due to the general election period.

Date	Stage
Sept 2019	Framework Strategy through joint T&F, Leaders and CEOs
Oct-Dec 2019	Framework Strategy through individual Council Scrutiny and Cabinets/ Executive Committees
Nov-Feb 2020	Working groups continue to develop plans
Jan-Feb 2020	Consult on Framework Strategy with public events / online
Mar-Apr 2020	Draft Strategy and action plan through joint T&F, Leaders and CEOs, Cabinet Member groups
May-June 2020	Consult on draft strategy
June-July 2020	Final Strategy through joint T&F, Leaders and CEOs
Jul-20	Final Strategy and Action plan to full Councils for adoption

12. Background Papers

12.1. A full set of references are contained within the Appendix 1 Framework Document.

Report Sign-Off

		Signed-off
Legal Implications	Honor Clarke	Click or tap to enter a date.
Governance	Scott Woodridge	05/11/19
Corporate Finance	Sheila Collins	28/10/19
Human Resources	Chris Squire	30/10/19
Property	Paula Hewitt	01/11/19
Procurement / ICT	Simon Clifford	29/10/19
Senior Manager	Paula Hewitt	01/11/19
Commissioning Development	Ryszard Rusinek for information	29/10/19
Local Members for information	All members	10/12/19
Cabinet Member	Cllr David Hall - Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Planning and	04/12/19

	Community Infrastructure	
Opposition Spokesperson for information	Cllr Jane Lock (on behalf of Cllr Simon Coles)	28/10/19
Scrutiny Chair for information	Cllr Anna Groskop - Place Scrutiny	28/10/19