

Somerset Climate Emergency Framework

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Purpose of the Report

To inform Members about the emergence of a framework for developing the county-wide Climate Strategy and to seek comments to shape further prior to going to District Executive in November.

Actions Required

1. To review the Climate Change Framework and intended work streams and provide feedback
2. To note the timeline for delivery of the Strategy
3. For members to note the intended consultation activities and to share the opportunity to contribute with residents and community groups

Background

In 2019 the five Somerset Local Authorities recognised a climate emergency and agreed to collaborate in producing a joint Climate Emergency Strategy. 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.

Report

A group of officers representing Somerset County Council, the four district authorities, Exmoor National Park Authority is guiding and shaping the framework within which the detailed investigation needed will be undertaken. This group – the Strategic Management Group - will have a critical overseeing role in shaping the desired outcomes that emanate from that work. SSSC's representation on that group is Jan Gamon.

Feeding into the Strategic Management Group will be the detailed work undertaken by operational experts and stakeholders within nine work streams:

1. Built Environment
2. Natural Environment
3. Energy
4. Farming and Food
5. Industry, Business and Supply Chain
6. Transport
7. Waste and Resource Management
8. Flood water and adaptation
9. Communications and Engagement

Each of these work streams is working to a detailed brief and has a nominated lead. They will be research and prioritising key issues, identifying possible actions to mitigate and understanding the full life cycle of decisions to implement these actions.

SSDC has representation on several of these work streams, if we are able to support with appropriate subject-matter expertise.

The work of officers is overseen by a group of portfolio holders from across the districts, which includes Sarah Dyke, and by the Leaders and CEOs, with Brendan Cleere and Michele Cusack acting as the conduit between these groups. The work of all groups is scrutinised by a Task and Finish Group; our representation on that group is through Councillors Gerard Tucker and Paul Maxwell.

Proposed Timings

Members are asked to note the proposed timings for delivery of the Climate Emergency Strategy, which includes provision for consultation during November and December 2019.

Date	Stage
Sept 2019	Framework Strategy through joint T&F, Leaders & CEOs, Cabinet Members Group
Oct-Nov 2019	Framework Strategy through individual Council Scrutiny and Cabinets / Executive Committees
Nov 2019 - Jan 2020	Consult on Framework Strategy to include Climate "Summits" in December 2019
Feb 2020	Draft Strategy and action plan through joint T&F, Leaders & CEOs, Cabinet Members Group
Feb-Mar 2020	Consult on Draft Strategy and action plan
Apr 2020	Final Strategy and action plan through joint T&F, Leaders & CEOs, Cabinet Members Group
May-Jun 2020	Final Strategy and action plan through individual Council Scrutiny and Cabinets / Executive Committees
July 2020	Final Strategy and action plan to full Councils for adoption

Consultation activities are in the early stages of development, but are expected to include an online consultation aimed at secondary school-aged children 11-18 years, preceded by school visits to encourage participation. They also include an online consultation aimed at all residents, communities and businesses in Somerset and a series of Summits, one per district, which will take the form of a full day, face-to-face consultation event, open to all.

[NB. Provisional date for South Somerset is 30th November but is still to be confirmed].

Financial Implications

At this stage, SSDC has committed £10k to support the development of the county-wide strategy; largely to permit the Strategic Management Group to access appropriate external expertise, including execution of the consultation plan.

All authorities have already committed considerable resource to development of the framework to date and, as a result of our activity so far, it is becoming apparent that future development would be better

served by securing project management expertise. This is likely to incur an additional cost but will be supported by a detailed costing plan and brought forward for approval through appropriate channels.

Council Plan Implications

We believe that development of a county-wide approach to tackling the effects of climate change fits neatly with SSDC's current Council Plan (2019-20), which identifies the environment as one of our five key areas of focus.

Background papers

Climate Emergency Framework, October 2019
