Somerset West and Taunton

Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience Plan

Draft Framework Document

DRAFT

September 2019

Version	Purpose	Date
1	Draft Framework for Climate Change Member Working Group and Scrutiny Committee Agenda	27/09/2019

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Contents

Terminology used in this document

This document refers to a number of terms and phrases that may not be familiar to many people, or which differ from terminology that has been used previously.

For instance, people will generally be familiar with the terminology of "climate change" and "global warming", however, in line with other organisations looking to take a lead in this field, the Council is keen to shift the language used in relation to this topic to reflect the urgency of the situation and need for action now. Therefore this document uses the phrases "***climate emergency***" to refer to the situation that our climate now finds itself, primarily as a result of the "***global heating***" caused and exacerbated by human activity.

Carbon emissions are referred to throughout this document. Carbon dioxide in our atmosphere is the principle contributor to global heating due to the sheer volume of it that exists and its long lifespan. However, a number of other greenhouse gases contribute including methane, nitrous oxide and f-gases. Some of these are far more significant in terms of their potency measured in carbon equivalent, but they exist in much smaller volumes and have shorter lifespans. Therefore, all greenhouse gas emissions need to be reduced, however, it is the carbon emissions that are most important and as such are generally the focus for action.

Carbon Neutrality means "*achieving net zero carbon emissions by balancing a measured amount of carbon released with an equivalent amount sequestered or offset*" [i].

Climate Resilience means ensuring that our communities are adapted to cope with the projected impacts of global heating locally.

Mitigation essentially refers to actions which will lead to the avoidance or reduction of emissions or will reduce the projected impacts of global heating.

Adaptation refers to actions which are necessary to deal with the impacts that cannot be mitigated.

Offsetting is a way of mitigating emissions, by taking action elsewhere. For instance, it may not be possible, feasible or viable to actually reduce emissions from a particular source any further, so instead money would be diverted to deliver additionality in mitigation projects elsewhere to make up for the emissions that will remain.

Sequestration is the process of capturing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and the long-term storage of it in trees and plants, soils and geological formations and the ocean.

Co-benefits are secondary or ancillary benefits of an action that are also a relevant reason for that action in their own right. Many actions to mitigate and adapt to the climate emergency will have co-benefits such as improving health and wellbeing, improving air quality and building biodiversity.

Our Climate Emergency Declaration

In February 2019, the then shadow Council resolved:

1. To declare a climate emergency.

2. With partners across the district and region, to start working towards making Somerset West and Taunton carbon neutral by 2030, taking into account emissions from both production and consumption (7).

3. To call on the UK Government to provide guidance and the powers and resources to make carbon neutrality possible by writing to local MPs, the Secretaries of State for Business Energy & Industrial Strategy, Transport, Environment, Food & Rural Affairs and Housing, Communities & Local Government.

4. To develop a Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience Plan, starting from July 2019, with a cross party working group and the necessary officer support to assist with investigative work, drafting the plan and the delivery of early projects.

5. To report to Full Council before the end of 2019 with costed proposals for projects for the Council to effectively start addressing the climate emergency, which could include:

a) Enabling more cycling, walking and use of shared and public transport.

b) Providing electric car charging points in car parks and other suitable locations, including for use by council tenants and council vehicles.

c) Adopting high energy efficiency standards and providing for the effective use of recycling services in new buildings through the planning system.

d) Demonstrating and developing a programme for retrofitting high standards of energy saving and insulation in existing council buildings, including housing, and assets; initially focusing on where the greatest benefits could be gained.

e) Promoting waste reduction, reuse and recycling on the go, and supporting community projects.

f) Sourcing electricity used by the council from renewable energy suppliers and providing support for smart energy infrastructure, including demand management and storage.

g) Supporting green businesses and social enterprises.

h) Review of planning policies and investment opportunities for local renewable energy and infrastructure and environmental markets, as well as divestment from fossil fuels.

i) Adaptation for flooding, coastal erosion and other impacts of climate change.

j) The appointment of a specialist officer to develop and champion the delivery of the Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience Plan.

6. To provide an annual review and update of the plan thereafter.

7. A provisional budget of £25,000 to be allocated to allow this work, including early projects agreed by the working group, to be undertaken either through resources already available or through commissioning. This sum to include £15,000 as a supplementary budget allocation from the General Fund in 2019/20, to be taken from general reserves and returned if able to be undertaken from already available resources, and £10,000 to be prioritised from the proposed HRA Maintenance Budget in 2019/20.

Context

Introduction

Somerset West and Taunton Council has declared a climate emergency and committed to working towards making the Council and the area which we cover carbon neutral by 2030. Alongside this, it is recognised that it is essential that we prepare our communities, businesses and buildings to ensure they are resilient to the climate change which is already in motion. In preparing a Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience Plan for the district, the Council aims to take a leadership role in starting the conversations on how things need to change, taking action where it can, supporting and enabling others to play their parts, and lobbying Government and other actors to make necessary changes.

This Framework Document is the first step in the process – it begins to identify the core issues for the Plan to cover, the key risks to the district, and what our action/delivery plan might look to cover. Crucially, however, this is a starting point for meaningful engagement with our communities, businesses, interest parties and other key stakeholders, designed to start a conversation about how we can collectively own the issues, the necessary actions and ultimately delivery against the 2030 target. We want to hear your thoughts on what the issues are, how we should tackle them, who could deliver on the actions, and develop ground-up solutions to make a difference.

"We want to hear your thoughts on what the issues are, how we should tackle them, who could deliver on the actions, and develop ground-up solutions to make a difference"

The Somerset West and Taunton Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience Plan sits alongside a county-wide Somerset Climate Emergency Strategy which is being developed simultaneously. Rather than each of the Somerset districts developing their own strategies covering similar issues requiring potentially similar approaches, we feel it is better to consider the overall strategic approach to tackling the climate emergency collectively, enabling us to identify opportunities for achieve things together, share costs, share ideas and learning, and grow our power and influence with Government and others. The Somerset West and Taunton Plan will add detail to the approaches identified by the county-wide Strategy, and dealing with risks, issues and opportunities specific to the district.

Why tackling the climate emergency matters

"Climate change is moving faster than we are… If we do not change course by 2020, we risk missing the point where we can avoid runaway climate change, with disastrous consequences for people and all the natural systems that sustain us"

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)[3] identifies that human activities are estimated to have caused approximately 1°C of global heating above pre-industrial levels. Based on current rates, this level is likely to reach 1.5°C globally somewhere

between 2030 and 2052. The IPCC also identifies that "*Without increased and urgent mitigation ambition in the coming years, leading to a sharp decline in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, global warming will surpass 1.5˚C in the following decades, leading to irreversible loss of the most fragile ecosystems, and crisis after crisis for the most vulnerable people and societies*"[4] and that limiting global heating to 1.5˚C implies reaching global carbon neutrality in around 2050[5].

However, based on current levels of commitments worldwide, we are on track to actually experience in the order of 3˚C of heating globally. This will lead to catastrophic changes in global climatic conditions including major sea level rise due to polar ice cap melt – which is well documented as already occurring faster than was predicted to be the case. But the impacts will be felt differently in different parts of the world. The global impacts will be felt to different levels in different parts of the world. This matters locally here in Somerset West and Taunton, with a vulnerable coastline and particularly low-lying areas of land on the Levels and Moors. Limiting global heating to 1.5˚C has been proven by the IPCC report to significantly limit the impacts that will be experienced globally.

The Committee on Climate Change (the UK Government's independent advisor on climate change) advised earlier this year that the UK should look to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050, explaining that this target would align with the country's commitments under the Paris Agreement and be capable of being met broadly within the same cost envelope as the previous 80% target[6]. The UK Parliament subsequently declared a climate emergency and legislated to amend the Climate Change Act 2008 to legally bind the UK to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050.

However, as the fifth largest economy worldwide[7], the UK might be considered more capable than most to achieve the 2050 carbon neutrality target recommended by the IPCC and therefore take up some of the strain of those that are less capable.

Considering the projected impacts of global heating locally and globally, and the need for significant progress globally by 2030, Somerset West and Taunton Council feel that it is important to strive towards a more ambitious target of achieving carbon neutrality by 2030. We must, however, be clear, that this more ambitious target is not informed by detailed evidence of what can be achieved locally. Without significant changes in wider society and national Government regulation, policy, funding and action, achieving this target will be near impossible. The target is therefore a signal of intent, a call to action and a commitment that locally we will do everything that we can to take action and lobby others to do so too.

What is the role of the Council?

It is vital that the Council acts as a community leader in responding to the climate emergency – to set an example, encourage and influence others and enable us to require action with the conscience that we are doing our bit. "Getting our own house in order" is a key part of this as Council operations and processes result in range of direct and indirect emissions. This Framework includes a number of early tasks for the Council to undertake to better understand the sources of these emissions and start taking action.

The Council is also uniquely placed to act as a co-ordinator and facilitator of action within the district. It has a key role in taking specific actions as well as enabling and supporting others. However, it is important to note that the Council only has limited

powers, responsibilities, resources and finances, and that many of the changes that will be required to achieve carbon neutrality and climate resilience must be the responsibility of others including public, private and third sectors and individuals. It is therefore important that the Somerset West and Taunton Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience Plan is widely owned and delivered by everyone living, working, carrying out business etc. within the district, and that it is evidence-based and built upon ground-up engagement with these groups.

This Council commits to use all of its powers to action, enable and support everyone to work towards achieving carbon neutrality and climate resilience by 2030. Will you join us by making a similar commitment and tasking yourself, your friends and family, your employer or business to make the changes necessary to achieve it?

"This Council commits to use all of its powers to action, enable and support everyone to work towards achieving carbon neutrality and climate resilience by 2030. Will you join us by making a similar commitment?

Making changes

It is reasonable to suggest that awareness of the climate emergency is at an all-time high. However, this should not be mistaken to mean that everyone is on the same page. For many, new scientific discoveries, the media, high profile campaigns and changing weather patterns have all helped to grow understanding. Recent world climate summits and government policies have also helped to focus the mind on the need for action and specifically the target of carbon neutrality.

Many residents and businesses across the district have begun to take action, largely in small incremental ways: car sharing, recycling and eating more local produce. Yet tied to this are issues (such as reducing the need to fly, buying the latest tech, and the buying of plastic wrapped foods) that for many people are considered either 'too hard to tackle', or that lead to perceptions that 'only governments can sort it out'. This can lead to the proliferation of myths and inactivity. Some might argue that they don't have enough time, or if tested, they might admit to a lack of confidence in knowing what to do.

Accepting change can be difficult. Yet, there are examples of changes in society that we can draw upon: don't drink and drive campaign, the ban on smoking and paying 5p for a plastic bag. These are all commonly accepted social norms now.

Change can also be difficult to make. Particularly for the most vulnerable in society including those on low incomes. Meeting the targets of carbon neutrality and climate resilience will require major societal shifts and changes to be made from all sectors of society. However, the most affluent in society contribute significantly more emissions than those on the lowest incomes, yet are more able to change habits and make different choices. Ensuring that the most able and least vulnerable in society shoulder more of the burden, and protecting the most vulnerable from unreasonable burdens and impacts is important to achieving a just transition to a low carbon economy. This Framework recognises the need for a just transition and this will influence the development of action plans and projects as part of the Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience Plan.

Purpose, Scope and Methodology

What is the purpose of the Plan?

The Somerset West and Taunton Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience Plan will provide a community-owned plan of action for how we respond to the climate emergency locally. It will identify the projects, plans, schemes and initiatives that we commit to locally pursuing in order to work towards carbon neutrality and climate resilience in 2030.

It is not solely a Council-owned plan. It is a vehicle to galvanise support and action across the district. It is a prospectus for seeking funding and investment. It will be a living delivery plan that evolves and updates regularly as things are delivered and our understanding of the issues and consequences of the climate emergency improves.

It will also identify the barriers to achieving this target which are posed by issues outside of our control as a local authority and as a local area. It will form a platform for us to lobby Government and other parties to take the necessary actions to change policies, investments, funding and powers so that the targets can be achieved.

The purpose of this initial Framework Document is to spark a conversation and engage with our communities and stakeholders over what direction our Plan should take, what projects and activities are already taking place out there, and ultimately ensure that the Plan itself is well informed and owned by the people, businesses and communities of the district.

What is the Scope of the Plan?

So what do we mean by "Carbon Neutrality"? We are taking it to refer to "*achieving net zero carbon emissions by balancing a measured amount of carbon released with an equivalent amount sequestered or offset*"[8]. Essentially, that means 100% of our emissions are reduced or offset through processes that will sequester (absorb/remove) what is left.

Our primary goal will be to develop solutions to reduce carbon emissions wherever they can be directly mitigated (avoided or reduced). But this will not always be possible or viable and we will need to offset some of our emissions. To help us prioritise our offsetting actions and control the secondary impacts of these actions, we propose to prioritise offsetting at or as near to the source for the emissions as possible, before widening out the locations for offsetting projects to the district, county, region, UK, EU then rest of the world.

> "Carbon neutrality means achieving net zero carbon emissions by balancing a measured amount of carbon released with an equivalent amount sequestered or offset"

We are working towards achieving carbon neutrality across the district – not just across the Council in its operations and functions, but across the entire geographical extent of the district and all of the activities taking place within it. We are also looking to measure our progress both in terms of the emissions produced within the district

(territorial emissions) and the emissions associated with goods and services consumed within the district (consumption emissions).

And what about "Climate Resilience"? This refers to ensuring that our communities are prepared, adapted and able to cope with the changes to our climate that will result from the global heating which is already in motion.

What will be needed to achieve carbon neutrality?

The Committee on Climate Change identifies the options on the table for deep decarbonisation in the UK in its *Net Zero*[9] report published earlier this year. These options are divided into Core, Further Ambition, and Speculative – and they can help to prioritise action. The Net Zero report admits that "*it is impossible to predict the exact mix of technologies and behaviours that will best meet the challenge*", but recommends a set of scenarios to meet the UK target of carbon neutrality in 2050. As we develop our Plan we will need to take heed of the direction that the Net Zero report recommends the UK takes nationally, but bear in mind that achieving this same target by 2030 may require a slightly different mix of options due to local circumstances and wider embedded assumptions, and certainly ramping up of ambition. The scenarios identified for meeting the UK target of carbon neutrality in 2050 are (paraphrased):

- **Improvements in resource and energy efficiency** to reduce demand for energy, minimise the amounts of additional low carbon power, hydrogen and carbon capture and storage (CCS) that will be needed;
- **Changes in societal choices** to lower emissions associated with our activities, e.g. shifting to healthier diets with reduced consumption of beef, lamb and dairy;
- **Significant electrification**, particularly of transport and heating, with all power produced from low carbon sources (compared to 50% today);
- **Increased hydrogen production and combustion** to meet demands for some industrial processes, long-distance land and sea-based logistics, and for electricity and heating in peak periods;
- **Carbon capture and storage** (CCS) as a necessity for industry, bioenergy and very likely for hydrogen and electricity production; and
- **A major shift in farming and land use** that would see a fifth of UK agricultural land used for tree planting, energy crops and peatland restoration to improve carbon sequestration and biomass production.

Other publications have also been produced by different bodies and organisations recommending different mixes of options and solutions to achieve similar and more ambitious targets for carbon neutrality. Almost all of these publications refer to the need for the following in different variations of ambition:

- High energy efficiency standards in new buildings;
- Retrofitting of existing buildings;
- Electrifying our reduced energy use;
- Significant expansion of low carbon and renewable energy generation and energy storage including on-shore wind;
- Moving to more plant-based diets;
- Improving agricultural processes and land use;
- Planting trees, restoring peatlands and 're-wilding' areas;
- Reducing how much we travel and changing how we travel to less carbon and energy intensive modes;

- Investing in public and active transport infrastructure;
- Reducing the amount that we fly;

As we develop our Plan we will need to take account of the above, evidence our local approach and develop projects, policies and initiatives to deliver on many of these.

What are the co-benefits of taking action?

Taking action to combat the climate emergency can have major ancillary or co-benefits in relation to jobs and the economy, health and wellbeing, food/water/energy security, biodiversity and many other issues. For instance, planting trees can also increase biodiversity, transition to electric vehicles can also reduce air quality issues and effective insulation of homes can also reduce adverse health conditions in residents. Understanding these co-benefits is an important reason for taking a strategy-led approach to action.

By maximising the co-benefits of action, rather than simply delivering piecemeal and one-dimensional responses to issues, we can potentially deliver far greater outcomes for the environment, society and the economy. It can also help to identify where climate action can meet statutory duties and reduce costs of service delivery across the public sector which are not immediately apparent. This can help to build business cases for funding and resourcing, and can help to sell the benefits of action to individuals, businesses and partners who do not see climate action as such a priority. Therefore, our action/delivery plan will be developed taking account of these co-benefits.

Developing the Action Plan

Workstreams

Responding to the Climate Emergency will require changes to business as usual across all aspects of society. This can be overwhelming to some, and understandably so. For this reason and in the interests of simplifying and breaking down task and project ownership, as well as communicating things and engaging with the public we have taken the decision to break the issue and tasks down into more manageable workstreams through both our own Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience Plan and the County-wide Climate Emergency Strategy. Despite this, taking a holistic approach, identifying the co-benefits of action and working together to maximise these is the most likely way to be successful in accessing funding and ultimately delivery. This highlights the importance of strategy, rather than piecemeal action. The workstreams are:

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

"We want to know what you think needs to be done here in Somerset West and Taunton, who should take ownership for this, and where the funding to deliver on your ideas might come from"

This initial Framework takes a lead from research across the county into key issues and objectives for each workstream and the priority themes that have been identified. It then builds on these to outline the direction of travel and an early indication of tasks and projects related to each workstream to take forward within the district of Somerset West and Taunton. Direction of travel, tasks and projects are all intended to be indicative early thoughts and we expect to supplement, amend and replace as appropriate through public engagement and consultation over the coming months. We want to know what you think needs to be done here in Somerset West and Taunton, who should take ownership for this, and where the funding to deliver on your ideas might come from.

1. Built Environment

The Built Environment workstream essentially considers how our towns and villages, buildings and communities, existing and new are constructed, located, powered, heated, function, how resilient they are to the expected local impacts of the climate emergency, and how they need to change in order to align with and contribute towards the Plan's targets. The Built Environment interacts with other workstreams (for instance energy efficiency of buildings under the Energy workstream or access to active travel infrastructure and public transport under the Transport workstream). It is also an area within which Local Authorities can potentially exercise a fair amount of influence and control, through town and country planning, transport planning, regeneration and other development opportunities and council-owned buildings, as well as acting as an enabler and supporter for others. The County-wide Framework identifies two priority themes for the Built Environment: New Development and Existing Buildings and Communities. The SWT Framework builds on these themes to identify directions of travel for each theme and key tasks which could help to see early progress and support more detailed action and project development.

1.1 New Development

Direction of travel:

- Ensure that all new developments are located in sustainable locations and minimising the need to travel and enabling active and sustainable transport as the primary means of transport;
- Ensure that all new buildings achieve zero carbon by as early a date as reasonably possible and that they are constructed to be resilient to the climate change that is already in motion (considering wider demands placed on development, viability etc.);
- Ensure that all new developments incorporate wider climate resilience and sustainable behaviour encouraging features including SUDS, urban trees, appropriate materials in public realm, cycle storage, waste management etc.

Key early tasks:

- Reviewing implementation and performance of existing planning policies,
- Incorporating strong policy and guidance on development location, transport planning, carbon reduction targets and sustainability requirements into the Local Plan Review Issues and Options document due for consultation later this year as well as other emerging design guides etc.;
- Incorporating a specific award category into the proposed Taunton Garden Town Awards Scheme in relation to development that exemplifies action to tackle the climate emergency;
- Exploring the potential for proposed Council-owned development / regeneration sites to showcase the art of the possible and be developed as exemplars. Such aspirations would need to be balanced with other demands / requirements being placed on the sites.

1.2 Existing Buildings and Communities

Direction of travel:

- Ensure that pathways for the retrofitting of existing buildings and communities with the above are explored and delivered.

Key early tasks:

- Researching, categorising and mapping buildings (of all ownerships) with a view to identifying high level retrofit strategies and specific projects for groups of

buildings/communities, with a particular focus on auditing council-owned buildings including retained housing stock;

- Exploring potential to simplify, encourage and de-risk action to deliver retrofit to existing buildings and communities through planning and other means;
- Identifying priority locations and opportunities for delivery of retrofitted Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems;
- Identifying opportunities for urban tree planting projects and preparing bids for round 2 of the Urban Tree Challenge Fund and other available tree planting grants in 2020.

2. Energy

The Energy workstream looks at how we generate, store and consume energy smartly in terms of both heat and power. It considers how we can deliver greater levels of low carbon and renewable energy generation, store this energy so that it is available for use when we need it, improve our levels of energy security, reduce levels of fuel poverty, and improve energy efficiency across all aspects of society. Energy interacts with other workstreams (for instance energy efficiency of buildings under the Built Environment workstream or proliferating Electric Vehicles (EVs) under the Transport workstream). Again, it is an area within which Local Authorities can potentially exercise a fair amount of influence and control, through town and country planning, transport planning, council procurement and operations, as well as acting as an enabler and supporter for others. The County-wide Framework identifies three priority themes for Energy: Reducing and Shifting Energy Demand; Low Carbon and Renewable Energy Generation and Storage Technologies; and Own Estate and Operations. The SWT Framework builds on these themes to identify directions of travel for each theme and key tasks which could help to see early progress and support more detailed action and project development.

2.1 Reducing and Shifting Energy Demand

Direction of travel:

- Ensure that domestic, industrial and transport energy use is reduced and minimised;
- Ensure that where possible, energy use is shifted to periods of peak supply and away from periods of peak demand; and
- Engage the public about the importance and co-benefits of action to reduce and shift energy consumption and how to go about it.

Key early tasks:

- Exploring the development of energy efficiency, reduction and usage campaigns to promote which can help signpost people and businesses to relevant support;
- Researching and engaging with key stakeholders such as Western Power Distribution to understand when peaks of electricity supply and demand are expected to be, and what can be done to help people shift times away from periods of peak demand; and
- Incorporating planning policies on reducing energy demand and increasing energy efficiency in new developments into the Local Plan Review.

2.2 Low Carbon and Renewable Energy Generation and Storage Technologies

Direction of travel:

- Ensure that the energy (heat and power) consumed within the district is decarbonised as much and as quickly as possible;
- Identify ways to ensure we maximise and realise the potential for low carbon and renewable energy generation and storage across the district, whilst taking account of major constraints to deployment such as the National Park and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
- Ensure that local communities benefit directly from new installations by supporting community energy initiatives; and
- Ensure that grid capacity constraints can be overcome or bypassed by exploring opportunities for decentralising supply.

Key early tasks:

- Working with community energy companies, town and parish councils and neighbourhood planning groups to raise awareness and interest in developing community energy projects and taking local action, and signposting to potential funding sources (e.g. Rural Community Energy Fund);
- Researching and mapping renewable energy resources (e.g. suitable wind speeds) across the district, conducting a renewable energy 'call for sites' alongside the Local Plan Review consultation, overlaying constraints mapping and re-visiting mothballed renewable energy projects to understand potential generation capacity;
- Exploring potential for heat networks through opportunity mapping;
- Working with Western Power Distribution to fully understand the local electricity grid constraints and opportunities for overcoming; and
- Working with partners across the county to develop an EV Charging Strategy.

2.3 Own Estate and Operations

Direction of travel:
- Ensure that direct and indirect emissions arising from the Council's own operations are decarbonised as quickly and effectively as possible/viable; and
- Ensure that we use our powers and influence to encourage action by staff, tenants, suppliers, and partners.

Key early tasks:
- Conducting an assessment of our own corporate energy use to better understand the infrastructure, processes, policies and procurements that contribute and where we best focus efforts;
- Researching the efforts of other local authorities who have taken action to reduce and decarbonise their energy use;
- Launching an internal communications campaign to encourage action to reduce energy demand and promote energy efficiency amongst staff.
- Exploring opportunities to decarbonise our energy supply, including within current contracts, opportunities for wider collaborative procurement across the county, power purchase agreements and on-site generation;
- Exploring the most appropriate point in time to switch the existing corporate fleet to EV/Hybrid/ULEV considering the embodied carbon of new vehicles.
- Overlaying land and asset ownership mapping with renewable energy and heat opportunity mapping referred to above to identify potential opportunities on Council-owned land.

3. Farming and Food

The Food and Farming workstream looks at the environmental impact and emissions arising from food production and consumption and land management practices. It considers how we look to reduce the impacts arising from the food we consume such as in relation to food miles and livestock emissions, but also how farmland across the district can be managed better to be less carbon intensive, secure environmental enhancements, store more carbon and deliver ecosystem services. Farming and Food interacts with other workstreams (for instance building natural capital and delivering ecosystem services under the Natural Environment workstream or changing land use/management to help slow the flow and reduce downstream flood risk under the Water workstream). It is an area within which Local Authorities have a relatively small amount of influence and control through statutory processes, though opportunities do exist through town and country planning, council procurement and operations, as well as acting as an enabler and supporter for others. The County-wide Framework identifies three priority themes for Food and Farming: Reducing Net Emissions; Carbon Storage; Climate Change Adaptation; and Food Consumption. The SWT Framework builds on these themes to identify directions of travel for each theme and key tasks which could help to see early progress and support more detailed action and project development.

3.1 Reducing Emissions

Direction of travel:
- Ensure that emissions associated with farming are reduced whilst simultaneously improving and increasing farming productivity and efficiency.

Key early tasks:
- Researching and engaging with the farming community to identify best practice, raise awareness, build up a picture of current practice and issues and better understand what could incentivise farmers to take more action.

3.2 Carbon Storage

Direction of travel:
- Ensure that the carbon storage potential of farmland within the district is maximised whilst balancing this with the need to produce food and ensure farms remain viable.

Key early tasks:
- Researching and mapping potential opportunities to plant trees, widen and re-connect hedgerows, and change land management practices to improve the carbon storage capacity of farmland in the district;
- Researching and mapping potential opportunities to re-wild and re-instate major carbon sequestering features such as saltmarshes, peatlands and wetlands;
- Engaging with the farming community on what measures they are already undertaking, raise awareness and support them to take action on their land; and
- Exploring potential to incorporate policies into Local Plan Review supporting rural diversification where it will enable farmers to change practices to more viably deliver ecosystem services.

3.3 Climate Change Adaptation

Direction of travel:
- Ensure that the agricultural sector, farmland and food production are prepared, adapted to and resilient to the climate change that is projected to occur;

- Ensure that opportunities to deliver wider adaptation improvements on farmland is realised, whilst balancing the need to produce food locally, protect our local environment and landscapes and biodiversity and ensure that farms remain viable.

Key early tasks:
- Identifying specific crop types that are well adapted to projected climatic conditions;
- Researching and evidencing the economic and co-benefits case for transitioning and diversifying current practice into more resilient and lower impact practices;
- Engaging with the farming community to raise awareness, celebrate best practice and build resilience into their future plans.

3.4 Food Consumption
Direction of travel:
- Ensure greater public understanding and knowledge about the carbon and environmental footprints of their diets and food choices;
- Ensure that all sectors of society are given reasonable and realistic opportunities to reduce the carbon and environmental footprints of their diets without financially or otherwise overburdening the most vulnerable; and
- Ensure that wherever possible, the carbon and environmental footprints of food produced, packaged and/or sold in the district is minimised.

Key early tasks:
- Engaging with the public and businesses to understand levels of existing knowledge, and the barriers people face to adopting more balanced, locally-sourced and environmentally conscious diets;
- Researching tools and incentives to help communicate impacts and encourage more sustainable behaviours around food;
- Auditing existing food sold in Council-owned outlets (e.g. leisure centres and corporate refreshments), and exploring opportunities to improve their carbon and environmental impacts;
- Launching an internal communications campaign to educate and encourage action to reduce carbon and environmental impacts of food choices amongst staff.

4. Industry, Business and Supply Chain

The Industry, Business and Supply Chain workstream looks at the carbon emissions and wider environmental impact of industry and businesses across the district, including the Council's own corporate processes. It considers how businesses can make changes to their own operations, but also become an influencer through their supply chains, encouraging employees and by become catalysts for change within their sector and community, whilst building workforce resilience. Industry, Business and Supply Chain interacts other workstreams (for instance switching corporate energy supplies to renewables or developing on-site generation under the Energy workstream or switching corporate fleets to EV under the Transport workstream). It is an area within which Local Authorities have a reasonable amount of influence and control through economic development and inward investment strategies, council procurement and operations, as well as acting as an enabler and supporter for others. The County-wide Framework identifies three priority themes for Industry, Business and Supply Chain: Emissions Reduction and Stakeholder Engagement; Data Collection and Analysis; and Business and Workforce Resilience to Climate Change. The SWT Framework builds on these themes to identify directions of travel for each theme and key tasks which could help to see early progress and support more detailed action and project development.

4.1 Emissions Reduction and Stakeholder Engagement

Direction of travel:

- Ensure that businesses based and operating within the district are able to view tackling the climate emergency as opportunities to innovate, enhance productivity and mitigate risks going forward, and are actively exploring or taking action to reduce direct emissions and combat supply chain emissions;
- Ensure that best practice action by businesses is recognised and shared; and
- Ensure that businesses act as ambassadors for action with their employees, consumers and partners, showcasing the commercial and productivity opportunities arising out of innovation and change.

Key early tasks:

- Developing a communications plan and peer network to engage with businesses on how they can reduce their direct and supply chain emissions, why it is important to do so, what barriers they face in doing so, what the benefits of doing so can be, and to showcase best practice;
- Establishing an annual low carbon business awards scheme to celebrate and recognise business action to tackle their direct and supply chain emissions;
- Identifying large business energy users and exploring ways to reduce energy consumption and green their energy supply;
- Holding multiple local business "Summits" to engage businesses and identify best practice already being delivered;
- Working to encourage and adopt a "design for sustainability" approach, in which new products are designed to minimise waste and to be broken down for reuse or recycling;
- Conducting an assessment of our own corporate emissions and environmental impacts to better understand the processes, policies and procurements that contribute and where we best focus efforts; and
- Building the need to provide evidence of climate action into the Council's procurement processes, funding agreements and contracts.

4.2 Data Collection and Analysis

Direction of travel:

- Ensure that sufficient business emissions data is available, reported and verified to enable effective monitoring of progress.

Key early tasks:

- Working across the county to design an environmental management and audit toolkit to help businesses assess and reduce their direct and supply chain emissions.

4.3 Business and Workforce Resilience to Climate Change

Direction of travel:

- Ensure transition of the local economy to a low carbon future, both in terms of boosting business specifically involved in the green economy, and by enabling and encouraging all businesses to be compatible with a low carbon local economy.
- Ensure that businesses understand potential future impacts associated with the climate emergency, and that they are supported in efforts to become more resilient to the effects; and
- Ensure that workforces are protected, skills and employability are preserved, and a 'just transition' is delivered.

Key early tasks:

- Providing certainty to the green economy over potential project pipeline (e.g. renewable energy and sustainable construction environmental consultancy and technologies, including sustainable construction) through incorporation of strong policies into Local Plan Review;
- Seeking to encourage inward investment in relevant sectors that can help the local area to deliver mitigation and adaptation opportunities and solutions for use locally and export to other areas;
- Identifying and working with businesses likely to be particularly susceptible to projected climatic changes to reduce risks and build resilience;
- Working across the county to research and understand the local skills and employment challenges relating to the transition to a low carbon economy and the specific businesses and sectors in which the greatest skills gaps will exist;
- Engaging with local businesses to understand the impacts that reducing emissions and implementing climate action could have on workforces and business viability and working with businesses likely to see greatest impacts to find appropriate solutions;
- Understanding how different business models (such as adopted by businesses responding to digital economy opportunities) might support the transition to a low carbon economy; and
- Identifying the staff resource capacity of the Council to effectively deliver and implement the Council's responsibilities identified across all workstreams in the Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience Plan.

5. Natural Environment

The Natural Environment workstream looks at the land, water, air, trees, plants and wildlife that make up the natural world around us. It considers how human activity is impacting on these elements and how predicted changes in climate could impact them. It also explores how we can protect and enhance our natural environment to increase sequestration, improve air quality, strengthen biodiversity and improve land management. Natural Environment interacts other workstreams (for instance identifying areas for afforestation and changing land management practices under the Farming and Food workstream or exploring potential for biodiversity or environmental net gain from new developments under the Built Environment workstream). It is an area within which Local Authorities have some influence and control through town and country planning, council assets and operations, as well as acting as an enabler and supporter for others. The County-wide Framework identifies three priority themes for Natural Environment: Sequestration and Land Usage Change; Landscape Resilience; and Co-ordination and Data Collection. The SWT Framework builds on these themes to identify directions of travel for each theme and key tasks which could help to see early progress and support more detailed action and project development.

5.1 Sequestration and Land Usage Change

Direction of travel:

- Ensure that across the district, opportunities for afforestation, environmental protection, habitat creation and climate adaptation are maximised and potential realised;
- Ensure that, working with partners, a consistent new approach to land management practices is agreed and delivered across the district to build on the above and deliver against the Pollinator Action Plan; and
- Ensure that the Council provides leadership by ensuring our own actions and operations are as environmentally friendly as possible and empowering residents to take responsibility for managing areas of land appropriately.

Key early tasks:

- Refreshing the Council's open space management plans, adaptation plans and open space information boards to ensure they align with and support action to deliver mitigation and adaptation to the climate emergency and help to explain why we are managing spaces differently;
- Preparing a community 'call for sites' to empower residents to manage open spaces on behalf of the Council and partners in line with the Pollinator Action Plan;
- Mapping and quantifying opportunities for wildflower meadows, habitat creation and tree planting schemes across the district, overlaying Council and other public sector land ownerships to identify potential early deliverable projects. Aim to initiate 3-4 flagship pilot areas in year one;
- Building on the above mapping exercise, prepare bids for round 2 of the Urban Tree Challenge Fund and other available tree planting and woodland creation grants in 2020;
- Building on the 'Green Makeover' ideas identified in the Taunton Garden Town Vision including promoting a scheme for residents to plant apple trees in every garden and increase tree cover;
- Exploring the potential to use Council-owned nurseries to grow our own trees, to reduce the costs and potentially emissions associated with transporting trees to be planted in the district from elsewhere; and

- Exploring potential to incorporate proposals for biodiversity or environmental net gain and protection of soil quality into Local Plan Review.

5.2 Landscape Resilience

Direction of travel:
- Ensure our landscape and ecosystems are adapted and resilient to projected climatic changes; and
- Ensure that an appropriate balance is found between the mitigation and adaptation benefits and local landscape and visual amenity and other short/medium/long term environmental impacts of emerging projects and proposals.

Key early tasks:
- Factoring landscape sensitivity and biodiversity and habitat vulnerability in to proposed renewable energy and afforestation opportunity mapping exercises in particular; and
- Incorporating appropriate policy wording in relation to striking the balance between landscape impacts and wider mitigation and adaptation benefits into Local Plan Review.

5.3 Co-ordination and Data Collection

Direction of travel:
- Ensure that a coherent, complementary and holistic approach to mitigation and adaptation is taken across the Natural Environment, Farming and Food and Water workstreams and all potential partners.

Key early tasks:
- Collating and sharing relevant data and evidence across the workstreams and with partners to ensure all projects and proposals can be grounded in the same evidence base;
- Engaging with stakeholders across these workstreams collectively in order to avoid duplication and divergence.

6. Transport

The Transport workstream looks at how we move and travel and considers ways to create an accessible, efficient and fit for purpose carbon neutral transportation system for the people and businesses of the district. It explores how we can reduce the need to travel, increase active travel and levels of public, shared and community transport, and decarbonise personal and logistics transport. Transport interacts other workstreams (for instance exploring strong transport planning policies under the Built Environment workstream or development of an electric vehicle (EV) charging strategy under the Energy workstream). It is an area within which Local Authorities have a good level of influence and control through transport planning, town and country planning, regeneration and other development opportunities, council operations, as well as acting as an enabler and supporter for others. The County-wide Framework identifies three priority themes for Transport: Public Transport; Personal Transport; and Logistics, Planning and Innovation. The SWT Framework builds on these themes to identify directions of travel for each theme and key tasks which could help to see early progress and support more detailed action and project development.

6.1 Public Transport

Direction of travel:

- Ensure the district is well served by an efficient and fit for purpose public and community transport system to make it the easier option for residents and business people for both short and long journeys;
- Ensure that public and community transport is decarbonised; and
- Ensure that barriers to the use of public and community transport are overcome and encouragements and incentives enable public and community transport to become the default choice for most people where active travel is not possible.

Key early tasks:

- Continuing and redoubling efforts to re-open Wellington train station;
- Re-visiting Taunton Bus Rapid Transit proposals and exploring potential for a wider mass rapid transit system along the A38;
- Exploring opportunities to transition bus fleets to electric/hybrid/ULEV with bus companies;
- Exploring ways to improve the attractiveness and supplement the viability of the Taunton Park and Ride service;
- Exploring how technology and subsidy could be used to enable public or community transport services to be viably reinstated to rural communities;
- Reviewing the strategy for public, workplace and private parking spaces and charges in our town centres to ensure that they support the push to public and community transport;
- Engaging with Somerset County Council, the Peninsula Transport Shadow Sub National Transport Body and public and community transport companies to collectively work through barriers to use of public transport and identify solutions.

6.2 Personal Transport

Direction of travel:

- Ensure that active travel (e.g. cycling, walking, running) is the default choice for shorter journeys, with public, community and shared transport all being preferable to personal vehicle use for all other journeys;
- Ensure that infrastructure is well thought through, funded, delivered, improved and transformed to enable this to be the case, with active travel infrastructure being coherent, direct, safe, comfortable and attractive;

- Ensure that barriers to active travel are minimised and that the public are informed and incentivised to choose active travel for suitable journeys; and
- Ensure that the public and businesses are well informed about EVs (benefits and impacts) and that EV charging infrastructure is delivered in appropriate locations across the district to support transition.

Key early tasks:
- Incorporating the transport hierarchy alluded to above into policies of the Local Plan Review, project development, regeneration developments and funding decisions, and exploring potential for reduced and car-free developments in appropriate locations;
- Researching and evidencing the specific local physical, mental, and perceived barriers to active travel in different circumstances and in different parts of the district in order to more effectively target and support engagement, education, incentives and interventions;
- Working with Somerset County Council, Taunton Area Cycle Campaign and other partners to develop detailed and costed designs for projects identified in the Taunton Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and explore potential to develop LCWIPs for other towns in the district. Ensuring that relevant and costed projects are included in any SCC bid to the Local Pinch Point Fund in January 2020;
- Exploring opportunities for further walking and cycling routes such as between Wellington and Taunton and between the Comeytrowe-Trull Urban Extension and Vivary Park/South Road in Taunton;
- Building on the 'Moving Cleaner, Moving Smarter' ideas identified in the Taunton Garden Town Vision including prioritising cycling and walking schemes for all abilities and giving more street space to buses and cyclists and improving the walking experience of the town;
- Exploring potential for car club and pool bike schemes in both urban and rural parts of the district;
- Looking into ways to encourage and incentivise staff to commute and conduct business mileage by walking and cycling;
- Working across the county to develop an EV Charging Strategy for Somerset, incorporating appropriate policies relating to EV charge points into the Local Plan Review and exploring ways for the Council to lead by example through installation of charge points in Council-owned car parks;
- Delivering projects funded through the Council's Community Charge Point Fund;
- Exploring ways to reasonably deter personal car use, whilst protecting the most vulnerable in society and ensuring they are not the hardest hit;
- Exploring the potential effects and impacts of reducing speed limits in our town centres and on key approach roads; and
- Researching the full life-cycle impacts of new EVs in order to evidence when the Council should transition its corporate fleet to EV.

6.3 Logistics, Planning and Innovation
Direction of travel:
- Ensure that the need to travel to access services and employment bases is reduced;
- Ensure that technological advances and innovations support and enable cleaner and smarter use of the transport network, public modal choice and logistics;

Key early tasks:

- Exploring ways to further improve the coverage, speed, resilience and reliability of digital connectivity across the district, including full fibre and 5G networks;
- Incorporating digital connectivity requirements and requirements for new homes to be within a reasonable proximity of basic services into policies of the Local Plan Review;
- Building on the 'Moving Cleaner, Moving Smarter' proposal in the Taunton Garden Town Vision for transport in the town to be smart, connected and electrified;
- Exploring ways to use technology to inform and incentivise the public to make more sustainable travel choices such as through real time information and gamification; and
- Exploring opportunities for smart, shared and active last-mile delivery solutions in feasible locations around the district.

7. Waste

The Waste workstream looks at the waste produced across the district and considers how best to improve management within the waste hierarchy of refuse, reduce, reuse, recycle. It explores how we can build the value of certain waste materials to develop a more circular economy and how we can use our position of community leadership to change habits and practices within our communities. Waste interacts other workstreams (for instance building a more circular economy and engaging with businesses over their waste management under the Industry, Business and Supply Chain workstream or requiring best practice waste management in new developments under the Built Environment workstream). It is an area within which Local Authorities have a good level of influence and control through statutory waste responsibilities, town and country planning, council operations, as well as acting as an enabler and supporter for others. The County-wide Framework identifies three priority themes for Waste: Commercial Waste and the Circular Economy; Residential Waste and Behaviour Change; and Public Sector Waste. The SWT Framework builds on these themes to identify directions of travel for each theme and key tasks which could help to see early progress and support more detailed action and project development.

7.1 Commercial Waste and the Circular Economy

Direction of travel:

- Ensure businesses across the district are more aware of the impacts of their commercial waste and are working to reduce waste and improve recycling rates;
- Ensure considerable improvements are made in the level of commercial waste recycled and reused across the district; and
- Ensure significant steps are made towards development of a circular economy across the district/county/region.

Key early tasks:

- Engaging with businesses through Locality Leads and Business Improvement Districts to identify current waste management practices, celebrate and share best practice and identify what support and guidance they need to improve;
- Exploring the development of a collaborative procurement pilot with businesses in Taunton town centre to secure greater levels of recycling and separated waste collections for associated businesses more akin to domestic collections;
- Continuing to engage with the University of Exeter-led ExeMPLaR research project in building a regional circular plastics economy, and identifying opportunities to trial and showcase proposals arising from this work; and
- Exploring potential for trials of Deposit Return Schemes and Extended Producer Responsibility with local businesses.

7.2 Residential Waste and Behaviour Change

Direction of travel:

- Ensure that we continue to support the direction of the Somerset Waste Partnership and the high level ambitions identified through the Somerset Climate Emergency Framework including improving our already very good levels of domestic waste recycling, reducing domestic food waste and diverting residual waste away from landfill to generate energy;
- Ensure that forthcoming changes in recycling and refuse collections are effectively communicated and our residents understand why they are required and support them; and
- Ensure new development fosters sustainable waste management behaviours.

Key early tasks:
- Communicating forthcoming changes to domestic refuse and recycling collections to be brought in by "Recycle More", and the "Slim my waste, feed my face" food waste reduction campaign;
- Engaging with residents to improve understanding of the waste hierarchy and how their waste is managed;
- Incorporating requirements for sustainable waste management to be built into new developments into the Local Plan Review and emerging design guides;
- Exploring opportunities for community reuse and repair shops and engaging with the public to raise awareness;

7.3 Public Sector Waste

Direction of travel:
- Ensure that Council controlled waste is effectively reduced and all remaining waste is appropriately redirected to reuse, recycling or energy production;
- Ensure that the Council removes single-use items from Council operations by as early a date as reasonably possible;
- Ensure that the Council leads by example as a role model to other local authorities and local businesses; and
- Ensure waste does not enter the wider environment (in particular watercourses).

Key early tasks:
- Baselining Council internal service waste streams, single-use items and end uses, and exploring specific measures to reduce the amount of waste we produce, improve our levels of reuse and recycling and diverting residual waste away from landfill to energy generation;
- Exploring ways to reduce waste from deliveries and improve waste management in supply chains;
- Incorporating improved public recycling and litter bins into Council regeneration developments and Public Space Improvement Projects in Taunton town centre and exploring opportunities for rollout in other parts of the district; and
- Setting up a community of practice with other public sector bodies and local businesses to work collectively towards improving public sector and commercial waste management across the district.

8. Water

The Water workstream looks at how we mitigate and adapt to the water-related risks posed by climate change (such as increased flood risk, drought risk and water stress). It also considers our impacts on water quality as well as the significant energy demands associated with water and waste water treatment and how we can reduce demand. Water interacts other workstreams (for instance identifying opportunities to plant trees and manage land differently to slow the flow under the Natural Environment and Farming and Food workstreams or requiring new developments to incorporate water efficiency measures under the Built Environment workstream). It is an area within which Local Authorities have a good level of influence and control through statutory risk management authority and coastal protection authority responsibilities, health and wellbeing responsibilities, town and country planning and council land ownerships, as well as acting as an enabler and supporter for others. The County-wide Framework identifies three priority themes for Water: Strategy and Policy; Data Collection and Analysis; and Schemes and Initiatives. The SWT Framework builds on these themes to identify directions of travel for each theme and key tasks which could help to see early progress and support more detailed action and project development.

8.1 Strategy and Policy

Direction of travel:

- Ensure that all Council strategies and policies are informed by, reflect and align with up to date flood risk and coastal change data including the most recent climate change projections and associated risks;
- Ensure that flood and coastal change mitigation and adaptation strategies are in place for areas of the district that are at most risk;
- Ensure that new development does not adversely impact water quality;
- Ensure that energy required to treat water and waste water locally is reduced and decarbonised and opportunities to generate energy from water and treatment are harnessed where suitable and viable; and
- Ensure that strategies and policies are developed to reduce water demand and losses across all sectors.

Key early tasks:

- Incorporating appropriate and necessary policies regarding flood risk, sequential test, coastal change management, water quality protection and water efficiency into the Local Plan Review;
- Incorporating guidance on managing water and Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) in developments into emerging design guides drawing on experiences and schemes delivered through the SPONGE 2020 project amongst others;
- Endorsing and publishing the Taunton Strategic Flood Alleviation Improvements (TSFAI) Project Delivery Plan;
- Exploring potential necessity for further flood mitigation and adaptation plans (including frameworks for monitoring and managing retreat) to be developed for other parts of the district as identified to be at high risk through the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) or otherwise;
- Completing the Taunton Waterways Action Plan;
- Incorporating projects and proposals from the TSFAI and Taunton Waterways Action Plan into the Taunton Garden Town Delivery Plan;
- Committing to identify a Member Champion for water and deliver Member and officer technical training in order to raise knowledge and awareness within the Council; and

- Exploring how water and waste water treatment processes can improve energy efficiency, carbon intensity and renewable energy generation with key stakeholders.

8.2 Data Collection and Analysis

Direction of travel:

- Ensure resilience to flooding by understanding and mapping the risks of fluvial, coastal, ground and surface water flooding across the district and ensuring they are up to date and incorporate the latest climate projections;
- Ensure resilience to water emergencies by understanding the risks of drought, water stress, storms and peak water locally, incorporating the latest climate projections; and
- Ensure effective management, monitoring and forecasting of flood risk, water quantity and quality, and water usage underpins our strategies, policies and projects.

Key early tasks:

- Publishing the recently completed Level 1 SFRA and developing the Level 2 SFRA as the Local Plan Review progresses;
- Analysing and publishing the projected localised impacts of climate change; and
- Exploring opportunities to improve local data gathering and monitoring through partnership working and trialling innovative new technologies as part of intelligent solutions.

8.3 Schemes and Initiatives

Direction of travel:

- Ensure projects identified in strategies are delivered in priority order;
- Ensure that opportunities to extend and build on successful projects are explored and taken;
- Ensure that existing schemes and infrastructure are resilient to the most recent climate projections and kept under review;
- Ensure that schemes and initiatives are developed in partnership with multi-agency stakeholders;
- Ensure that we reduce water usage and management across Council operations; and
- Ensure that public and businesses across the district are aware and actively working to reduce water demand and losses.

Key early tasks:

- Progressing projects identified in the TSFAI in line with the recommended priority order;
- Exploring opportunities for further SUDS retrofit schemes around the district, building on the SPONGE 2020 project;
- Exploring opportunities for cost-effective natural flood management and land management solutions building on the FWAG Triple C project;
- Auditing existing schemes and infrastructure to ensure that they are compliant with latest climate projections;
- Baselining water use and management within our Council operations and processes with a view to identifying ways to improve our current performance;
- Identifying large water users across the district and working with these businesses and sectors to develop water saving initiatives and develop best practice;

- Researching and mapping major water quality influencers across the district with a view to developing appropriate solutions; and
- Engaging with the public and businesses to raise awareness of the energy and carbon footprint associated with water, how they can reduce water usage and losses and the benefits of doing so.

9. Communications and Engagement

The Communications and Engagement workstream ultimately looks to deliver carbon neutral lives with confidence by embarking on a mission to help shape new climate behaviours. It looks at how we get the message about the need for climate action out to the public, how we grow confidence and knowledge in the public to take action and ensure that our plans and projects are palatable to, informed by and owned and actioned by our communities. Communications and Engagement interacts with all other workstreams in one way or another and will be vital to the success of delivering action. It is an area within which Local Authorities have a good level of influence as we have interactions with almost all persons in the district to different degrees through our various services. The County-wide Framework identifies three priority themes for Communications and Engagement: Engagement and Consultation; Internal Communications and External Communications. The SWT Framework builds on these themes to identify directions of travel for each theme and key tasks which could help to see early progress and support more detailed action and project development.

9.1 Engagement and Consultation

Direction of travel:

- Ensure that we enable collective action and collective solutions to be developed; and
- Ensure that our engagement and consultation is inclusive.

Key early tasks:

- Publishing this Framework document and future iterations of the Plan both online and in a small number of public locations in hard copy;
- Delivering an online survey to support consultation;
- Organising a Climate Summit in Taunton;
- Organising a Business Climate Summit in Taunton;
- Working closely with stakeholders including town and parish councils to organise multiple business and community roadshow events across the district;
- Organising engagement events with schools and colleges across the district;
- Engaging directly with key identified stakeholders; and
- Exploring opportunities for ongoing engagement with communities and stakeholders.

9.2 Internal Communication

Direction of travel:

- Ensure that we enable, inspire and grow confidence in abilities for action with staff and Members both in work and at home;
- Ensure officers and Members are equipped and empowered to disseminate the need for action and what people can do to their own personal networks;
- Ensure that officers and Members not directly involved in production of the Plan, actions or projects get the opportunity to effectively influence and input to their development.

Key early tasks:

- Developing the Plan, actions and projects with the Climate Change Member Working Group;
- Organising Member and staff briefing sessions and learning and development sessions; and

- Communicating on issues, action and solutions via the Member and staff intranet, emails and newsletter.

9.3 External Communication

Direction of travel:
- Ensure that we are open and transparent in all communications with the public;
- Ensure we use our position of influence across the district to communicate key messages about the need for action, how we and others are taking action and ultimately inspire and build confidence in the public about how they can make a difference to achieving our target;
- Ensure we use a wide range of communication methods to improve the spread of the community that we reach;
- Ensure that we effectively foster the need for collective responsibility and action, and communicate the extent of the Council's role and influence; and
- Ensure that we coherently and effectively communicate the need for national legislative, regulatory and policy change to central Government in close co-operation with other local authorities and partners.

Key early tasks:
- Launching a dedicated webpage within the Council's website to host updates, key documents, consultations, surveys, case studies and other materials;
- Launching a communications campaign to support consultation on each iteration of the County-wide strategy and SWT Plan; and
- Developing and launching a clear and simple awareness raising communications campaign focused on providing people with inspiration and ideas for action and raising awareness of the consequences of different activities.

Taking action

Our best chance of achieving carbon neutrality lies in taking co-ordinated action aligned to a well thought through strategy. This enables us to maximise any co-benefits, achieve economies of scale, improve attractiveness to investment, and ensure we are more aware of secondary consequences and any conflicting ideas/projects.

However, it is action (and early action) that really matters. It is important that we don't stifle projects that are clearly good ideas and which will contribute to meeting our target. We have already taken action that contributes towards achieving our target, and we are continuing to develop and deliver other actions alongside production of the County-wide Strategy and SWT Plan. Some of the more recent actions are briefly summarised below.

Taunton Garden Town Vision
Our target to achieve carbon neutrality and climate resilience featured heavily in the Garden Town Vision document which we adopted in July, and will continue to shape the Garden Town Delivery Plan, Charter and Checklist and Public Realm Design Guide.

Disclosure to CDP
In July we disclosed the district's emissions and the Council's current climate action to CDP – a not-for-profit charity which collates, aggregates and publishes data from companies and cities/authorities across the globe, tracks progress in reducing emissions and wider environmental impacts and evaluates and benchmarks performance against peers. We have not yet received the evaluation of our submission.

Climate Emergency governance
Over the last few months we have set up internal and cross-authority governance arrangements to oversee and agree development of the County-wide Strategy and SWT Plan which will enable us to work effectively to deliver the strategy documents and ultimately deliver the actions identified.

Financial support for Taunton Park and Ride
In July we agreed to provide additional financial contributions to support the viable delivery of Taunton's Park and Ride service until March 2020.

Local Plan Review
We recently announced the timetable for our Local Plan Review, which will see us consult on an Issues & Options document later this year. The Local Plan represents an important opportunity to deliver on some important tasks set out in this Framework.

Community Charge Point Fund
In August we wrote to town and parish councils across the district inviting them to submit funding bids to install community EV charge points in publicly accessible locations. The Council has set aside a £20,000 pot to deliver successful proposals.

Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
In July we completed a Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment covering Somerset West and Taunton and South Somerset districts. This provides an important baseline of current and future flood risk across the district and is the basis upon which we will need to develop future mitigation and adaptation strategies and projects.

Taunton Strategic Flood Alleviation Improvements Project Delivery Plan
In October we will be publishing the Taunton Strategic Flood Alleviation Improvements PDP which provides a framework and costed programme of works to deliver protection to Taunton against fluvial flooding.

SPONGE 2020
Somerset County Council and Westcountry Rivers Trust have led on development of this European funded project which works with local people to develop innovative, nature-based solutions to address surface water flood risk. This summer, raingardens and sustainable urban drainage systems have been installed with community help to Middleway, Lyngford Park Primary School and Holway Park Primary School.

St James Street pedestrianisation
In May we worked closely with Somerset County Council to close St James Street in Taunton to traffic as part of a 12 month pedestrianisation trial to improve public space in the town centre. Monitoring of impacts is ongoing.

Committee reports
We have recently added requirements to assess and summarise the climate and sustainability implications of recommendations to Council committees, specifically referencing the Council's declaration of a climate emergency and carbon neutrality target. This will help to ensure that Members and officers are cognisant of how the decisions being made will impact on this commitment.

Procurement
We are in the process of incorporating wording into our procurement processes that will aim to ensure that our suppliers and partners are actively working towards reducing their carbon and environmental footprints.

Auditing Council housing stock
We are in the process of auditing our retained Council housing stock to understand opportunities for sustainable retrofit and where to prioritise action.

Wellington Warmer Homes
In 2016, the Council began a pilot scheme to identify and tackle some of the most energy inefficient and fuel poorest of its retained housing stock. The project focused on 111 non-traditional homes in Wellington which were collectively subjected to a fabric first upgrades including new windows, external wall insulation, positive input ventilation systems and in some cases air source heat pumps. The scheme has been branded a complete success and all of the properties increased their EPC ratings from E/F up to C.

Wildflower planting and re-wilding
The Council is in the process of scoping out opportunities to plant wildflowers and re-wild various areas of roadside verges, parks and open spaces.

What next?

Over the next 9-12 months we will be working up the Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience Plan. This Framework document represents the first step of that process and proposes a direction of travel for us to work around as we develop action plans and identify projects to help us meet and monitor progress against our targets.

This document sets out where we think we need to head on a variety of issues, but we want to hear what you think and listen to your proposals for action. We want to know what you are already doing and if it is something that could be rolled out to other areas and communities.

We want the Plan to be influenced by but also owned by the people, businesses and communities of the district, so over November and December we will be consulting on this Framework document.

You can send us your thoughts and comments on the Framework document by responding to our online survey at ...., by emailing............., or by writing to................. or by talking to us at one of the engagement events planned across the district:

Insert arrangements for engagement events here...

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Hard copies of the Framework can be viewed at Deane House in Taunton and West Somerset House in Wiliton, as well as at the following libraries:

- ....

Following our initial consultation and engagement on this Framework we will be developing a Draft Plan. The Draft Plan will begin to identify specific actions and projects which are required to achieve our targets. We expect the Draft Plan to be completed in early Spring 2020, with a view to further consultation and engagement, before completion of the final Plan in Summer 2020.

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