

Paper A

Towards a Climate Resilient Somerset – Somerset's Climate Emergency Strategy

Cabinet Member(s): Cllr Clare Paul – Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing and Climate Change

Local Member(s) and Division: all

Lead Officer: Michele Cusack – Director, Economic and Community Infrastructure Commissioning

Author: Jon Doyle – Strategic Manager, Community Infrastructure, Flood and Water Management and Climate Change

Contact Details: JYDoyle@Somerset.gov.uk

1. Summary / Background

- 1.1.** This Strategy has been developed in response to the declaration or recognition of a Climate Emergency by Somerset County Council and the four District Councils of Somerset. It has been developed to identify ways in which Somerset can become carbon neutral by 2030 and to make the county resilient to the effects of Climate Change in the longer term.
- 1.2.** The Strategy provides an evidence base of the current and future issues, outlines the goals and outcomes that we want to achieve and provides an initial, high-level action plan to deliver the activities required to achieve those aims.

The Strategy has been co-produced by SCC and District partners, along with a wide range of partner organisations. It is planned that this Strategy will be adopted by SCC and the four District Councils of Somerset before the end of 2020 and will inform policy and funding decisions over the coming years.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. That the Cabinet receives the statement from the cross-Local Authority Cabinet Members Group in support of the Strategy**
- 2.2 That the Cabinet endorses – *Towards a Climate Resilient Somerset – Somerset's Climate Emergency Strategy* – and recommends its adoption by SCC Full Council on 18 November 2020**

3. Reasons for recommendations

- 3.1** The development of a Strategy that identified ways in which Somerset can become carbon neutral by 2030 was a requirement of the resolution and Climate Emergency declaration passed by Somerset's Full Council in February 2019.
- 3.2** This Strategy has been co-produced by the five local authorities of Somerset in collaboration with academic, industrial and climate activism expertise and has been consulted on widely.
- 3.3** The Strategy provides:
- An evidence base, setting out how our climate is changing and the challenges and opportunities we face
 - A policy document, outlining our goals and ambitions for tackling Climate Change here in Somerset, and
 - A high-level action plan, setting out the critical actions needed to deliver our goals, enabling us all to adapt and thrive in the future.

4. Other options considered

- 4.1.** No other options were considered; the development of a Climate Change Strategy was a deliverable of the Climate Emergency declaration and resolution passed by Somerset County Council's Full Council in February 2019.

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

- 5.1.** This Strategy and its Goals strive to deliver against all aspects of the County Vision:
- 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

6. Consultations and co-production

- 6.1.** This Strategy has been co-produced by Somerset County Council and the four District Councils of Somerset. It has been developed with significant input from academic and industry subject matter experts.
- 6.2.** Comprehensive consultation exercises have shaped the content and focus of the Strategy including:

- Four public drop-in events; one in each council District
- Wide-ranging online survey
- Young person specific consultation questionnaire
- Consultation event specifically aimed at local businesses

6.3. The development of the Strategy has been overseen by a cross-Authority joint Scrutiny Task and Finish group, who, as a group, have recommended to their respective Scrutiny Committees the adoption of the Strategy (see section 10.1).

The Strategy has also been overseen and approved by a group of the Cabinet Members of the five Local Authorities of Somerset with the Climate Change remit. The following statement has been issued to the respective Cabinets and District Executives in support of the adoption of the Strategy:

Climate Emergency

Cabinet Members Group Statement

For Full Councils

The 5 Cabinet Members responsible for Climate Change are delighted to recommend to you the Climate Change Strategy "Towards a Climate Resilient Somerset."

This is a very important piece of work which we are proud to be associated with which starts us on our journey to making this county resilient to the impacts of Climate Change.

We have liaised closely with the Task and Finish Group and Officers from the Local Authorities across the county who have all worked extremely hard to develop this Strategy and to give us what we feel is an ambitious but deliverable route map for the way forward.

We would ask that this Full Council formally adopts this Strategy so implementation on the ground can commence as soon as possible.

7. Financial and Risk Implications

7.1. High level assumptions of potential financial costs has been factored into preparation of the Action Plan, however more detailed work is required to understand specific costs of individual actions, and detailed costs are not yet known for every action that has been identified.

Whilst the delivery of every identified action would clearly have significant financial implications, the commitment to working towards carbon neutrality has already been made through the Climate Emergency Declaration. A range of actions has been identified that will require funding to progress and each is to be considered on its own merit and with an appropriate business case.

Priority actions will be considered by the service planning and, where appropriate, the budget setting process over the coming months. Annual reviews of the Action Plan are intended to be aligned to budget setting processes. Discussions are ongoing regarding the future governance and funding arrangements for the actions to be delivered.

7.2. Risks

Failure for all authorities to adopt the strategy

While the Strategy has been co-developed so as to be a Strategy for the whole of Somerset, a great number of the actions will need to be coordinated and delivered by the five Local Authorities of the County. This joined-up approach will ensure economies of scale are sought and delivered, actions are prioritised, and benefits tracked.

Failure of one or more of the Local Authorities to adopt this strategy will put this at risk.

Mitigation

There has been close collaboration between all authorities at all times and at all levels in the development of the Strategy. Every authority has bought into and is invested in the development and delivery of this Strategy

Likelihood	2	Impact	3	Risk Score	6
------------	---	--------	---	------------	---

Insufficient funds to deliver the actions of the strategy

In order for the Goals of the strategy to be delivered, significant capital and revenue investment will be required from all County and District councils of Somerset. Council funds are finite, and it is common for local authorities to have competing priorities for business as usual alongside transformational activity. There are, of course, particular current issues with local authorities having to react to and prioritise unplanned spend pursuant of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Mitigation

The governance overseeing the delivery of planned activities needs to reflect the importance and priorities that the authorities need to give to the actions if the Strategy is to be successful.

Likelihood	4	Impact	4	Risk Score	16
------------	---	--------	---	------------	----

Central government investment out of step with Somerset timing

There is a potential for a significant timing lag between the required investment from central government to enable the goals of the Somerset-wide strategy to be achieved.

The Strategy aims to deliver carbon neutrality within Somerset by 2030, however, the UK Parliament and Government have set a target of carbon net zero by 2050. This disparity may result in the required investment into carbon reduction and mitigation at an infrastructural and nationally strategic level not being made in time to enable our 2030 targets to be met.

Mitigation

We must work collectively as Somerset councils and with our Local Authority neighbours on the South West peninsula and with colleagues in the South West Councils area to develop a number of asks of central government, including to lobby for the prioritisation investment in Somerset and the South West to enable the success of the Strategy

Likelihood	3	Impact	4	Risk Score	12
------------	---	--------	---	------------	----

Inadequate resourcing and governance of the delivery of actions

Without the coordination and prioritisation required for the effective delivery of the required actions, there are risks that maximum benefit of the actions will not be gained, economies of scale will not be delivered, and the risk of unintended consequences increased.

Mitigation

Ensure an effective programme management approach to the delivery of the strategy with dedicated resources and robust, effective and accountable governance.

Likelihood	3	Impact	3	Risk Score	9
------------	---	--------	---	------------	---

Lack of response from the public and economy

While the Local Authorities will be responsible for the delivery of a number of actions within the Action Plans associated with the Strategy, we will only be able to provide an influencing and/or enabling role in others. The biggest changes to the consumption and emissions within the county will be made by effective and lasting behavioural change – by the public and by business and industry. Changes to purchasing habits, lifestyles, sources of domestic and industrial properties power supply as well as transport will need to be made if sufficient carbon savings are to be made to enable carbon neutrality.

The economy will also need to respond to fill in any skills, technological and capacity gaps to be able to deliver the necessary changes. There needs to be a response at a macro level, in that governments, educational and training establishments all need to take collective and strategic action as well as individual businesses taking action at a micro level to facilitate the necessary supply-shift in the required skills, know-how and available technologies to deliver the changes that we need.

Mitigation

A comprehensive ongoing programme of public and targeted communications will be developed to create public awareness and support as well as signposting to resources of information and funding.

Likelihood	3	Impact	4	Risk Score	12
------------	---	--------	---	------------	----

8. Legal and HR Implications

8.1. There are no direct detailed legal implications associated with the the Strategy. Individual actions may have legal implications associated with their delivery, though at this stage it is not possible to identify exactly what these might be. Accordingly, these will need to be considered in more detail as projects are developed. The strategy and plan are not produced in pursuit of formal statutory requirements, and therefore there are no mandatory regulatory or legislative legal requirements which apply to their production, scope or publication to comply with.

8.2. There are no immediate HR implications associated with the Strategy, however, if we are to be successful in our Goal of carbon neutrality there will need to be changes to the way that we work corporately and with our partners.

These changes will be managed through the ‘New Ways of Working’ group, which will also have Union representation alongside the delivery of the Somerset County Council ‘People Strategy’.

9. Other Implications

9.1. Equalities Implications

An Equality Impact Assessment has been produced to accompany the Action Plan. Officers within the Council with an overview of the Equalities function, who have experience of identifying impacts on those with protected characteristics have been consulted for this initial identification of potential impacts.

The assessment identifies at a high level where there is potential for negative,

neutral and positive outcomes as a result of the actions identified depending on the detail of actions as projects develop. Generally, actions were expected to have broadly positive outcomes, but would require further assessment and wider external consultation in relation to delivery plans of some of the actions within the Action Plan where an individual or group would see or experience a direct physical change as a result of an action.

9.2. Community Safety Implications

Ongoing Community Safety is a key consideration of the Goals of the Strategy which looks to ensure the future resilience of the County to the effects of Climate Change.

Many actions to mitigate and adapt to the Climate Emergency will have community safety in mind and these have influenced the development of the Action Plan and will influence the prioritisation of actions, therefore consideration of community safety underpins the Strategy and Action Plans.

9.3. Sustainability Implications

The Strategy is intended to directly lead to carbon reductions and improved resilience of our Council and communities to the projected impacts of Climate Change.

9.4. Health and Safety Implications

No Health and Safety implications are envisaged as a result of the adoption of the Strategy, however the H&S implications of individual projects to deliver the action plans will be considered on a project by project basis.

9.5. Health and Wellbeing Implications

Improved Health and Wellbeing is a key co-benefit of many actions identified within both the Strategy and the Action Plan and the theme of positive impacts on public health has been considered throughout the Strategy. This includes those aimed at increasing levels of active travel, delivering green and blue infrastructure, and proliferating electric vehicles. Detailed implications will be considered on a case-by-case basis as business cases projects are developed and implemented.

9.6. Social Value

The Strategy and Action Plan should act as a guiding policy framework to influence any consideration of social value within future procurements and

decisions, though it does not explicitly state how the plan, its directions of travel, or and specific projects arising from it should be considered in relation to social value.

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, and these have influenced the development of the Action Plan and will influence the prioritisation of actions. Therefore, consideration of social value underpins the Strategy and Action Plan.

10. Scrutiny comments / recommendations:

- 10.1.** The Strategy was considered by the Policies and Place Scrutiny Committee on 14 October 2020 and received unanimous recommendation that the Strategy should proceed for adoption by Full Council.

The cross-authority Task and Finish group also recommended adoption by the five authorities and issued the following statement:

Statement on behalf of the Cross-Authority Scrutiny Task and Finish Group for the Climate Emergency

'The Climate Emergency Scrutiny Task and Finish Group gave support, guidance and advice to the cross-Local Authority group of Officers who prepared this Climate Emergency Strategy and its associated Action Plans. The Strategy outlines Somerset's first steps towards meeting the urgent challenges which the Climate Emergency and Climate Change present.

What is being considered today is the result of a year's worth of research, analysis, consultation and debate, all of which has informed and enabled the writing of this evidence-based Strategy. Officers from all 5 Authorities worked in collaboration with a host of partner organisations, sector experts and local activists, drawing on their expertise, every one passionate about tackling the effects of the Climate Emergency.

The Strategy is robust and ambitious. While individual Members of the Task and Finish Group may support elements of the Strategy and Action Plan to differing degrees, we all agree that the time for Somerset to take action to minimise our environmental impact is now.

This is a Strategy for the whole of Somerset, not just our 5 Local Authorities. It will take the efforts of every community, business, adult and child in Somerset to commit to the aims of the Strategy if we are to make swift progress towards carbon neutrality, and aid Somerset's resilience to the impacts of the Climate Emergency.

The analysis of the feedback from our comprehensive consultations over the last year has revealed overwhelming support for the actions and approach being proposed in the Strategy, coupled with a message, that came through loud and clear, that we as local authorities and community leaders must start taking action on Climate Change as soon as possible, provided that it is effective, communicated and, where possible, done in collaboration with local communities. The adoption of this Strategy would be important step in the enabling of the coordinated necessary actions that we must all be taking.

As the foreword to the Strategy says, this is the start of the journey. We won't have included everything that we need to do, or got everything right first time. Policies will change and our understanding of the challenges ahead will increase. We don't have all the answers yet, but we are committed to taking the necessary actions.

The Task and Finish Group is proud to be associated with this Strategy and recommend to this Committee that it progresses to Full Council for adoption.'

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. 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
- 11.2.** Experts from the field of academia, industry, climate activism and subject matter experts from across the Somerset Local Authorities worked together to develop the scope of a high-level Framework document. It described how we planned to approach this work and identified the key areas of focus and to help members of the public understand the scale of the challenge set by the ambitious targets within the 'Climate Emergency' and to inform the resulting Strategy and local Action Plans
- 11.3** The Framework document identified a number of key themes and proposed actions and an initial planned direction of travel for the Strategy. It recommended the work would be carried out through a number of discreet yet interdependent workstreams made up of local authority and industry experts. The role of these workstreams would be to understand the international, national and local context and impacts of Climate Change and to begin to focus on the challenges ahead, the outcomes we would need to achieve and to identify specific actions and activities to deliver the Strategy's

Goals and Objectives.

11.4 Consultation

Somerset Climate Action Network (SCAN) was commissioned to support a comprehensive public consultation on the Framework document during January and February 2020. The public feedback was overwhelmingly positive on the direction of travel proposed and the emerging foci for the Strategy. The consultation report noted overwhelming public agreement with the majority of actions being proposed receiving a 90%-plus approval rating as being a 'priority' or 'major priority', in the public view.

Of the 33 proposed actions the least popular was still regarded as a 'priority' or 'major priority' by 76% of respondents.

The overwhelming message was that the Somerset adults and young people who took part in the consultation wanted the Councils to take Climate Change action as soon as possible, provided it was proven to be effective, communicated and, where possible, taken forward in collaboration with local communities.

Further consultation was undertaken with the business community of Somerset; an event held at Taunton Rugby Club in January 2020 was attended by over 100 delegates from businesses across Somerset who were invited to feedback their priorities regarding Climate Change, the barriers to implementing initiatives and to share best practice.

Another event hosted by the South West Councils and sponsored by WSP Consulting was also successfully held earlier in February 2020 providing further insight and expertise to leading edge thoughts on tackling Climate Change.

Due to the overwhelmingly positive feedback on the Framework document and the express wish of the public for the Strategy to be completed and implemented as soon as possible, the decision was taken to revise the original plans and dispense with the requirement for a second consultation on the final draft Strategy document itself.

11.5 Strategy Development

Following the consultation, work began on shaping the Strategy based on the feedback received and analysis of the changes required for Somerset to

become carbon neutral and increase our resilience to the risks posed by Climate Change at a local level.

To utilise the knowledge available within the County, a wide range of partners with sector expertise were invited to inform and lead several workstreams within the Strategy along with input and review from a range of key organisations with Climate Change and sustainability sector intelligence and expertise. To ensure the approach taken was on a sound scientific basis, further guidance was also taken from academics at Exeter University and experts from Somerset Climate Action Network (SCAN).

A joint, cross-authority Scrutiny Task & Finish (T&F) Group comprising nominated members from each of the 5 Local Authorities was set up in 2019 to oversee development of the Strategy and to provide guidance to the Strategic Management Group of Officers responsible for bringing the Strategy together. The T&F Group has met on six occasions between September 2019 and September 2020. These meetings have included a number of workstream-based breakout sessions, the consideration of workstream progress reports and provided an opportunity for Members to discuss and give advice and support on:

- the scope of the Strategy
- the guiding principles to guide the work and direction of travel
- the Somerset Climate Emergency Framework document and consultation process
- the Goals and Outcomes
- the draft Somerset-wide Strategy

With support and guidance from a range of organisations and individuals with sector knowledge, the Strategy was developed to:

1. provide an **evidence base**, setting out how our climate is changing and the challenges and opportunities we face
2. provide the beginnings of a **policy framework**, outlining our goals and ambitions for tackling Climate Change here in Somerset, and
3. **inform a high-level action plan**, setting out the critical actions needed to deliver our goals, enabling us all to adapt and thrive in the future.

11.6 Focus of the Strategy

The Climate Emergency Strategy for Somerset is built around 3 goals:

- **Goal 1:** To decarbonise Local Authorities, the wider public sector estates and reduce our carbon footprint
- **Goal 2:** To work towards making Somerset a Carbon Neutral County by 2030
- **Goal 3:** To have a Somerset which is prepared for, and resilient to, the impacts of Climate Change

Work was undertaken to understand where Somerset's carbon emissions are generated, and to begin to understand our wider carbon consumption, identifying nine sectors which are impacted by Climate Change and have a major impact upon our ambition to become a carbon neutral County by 2030.

These nine sectors are:

1. The **Energy** we use, the emissions produced from its use and the types of energy we will look to harness in future
2. Our **Transport** networks, when and where we travel, and the means we choose to make these journeys
3. The **Built Environment** - where and how we live and work, the types of homes we live in, our commercial and industrial buildings and what we want for buildings in the future
4. Our local economy, specifically our **Business, Industry and Supply Chains**
5. Our **Natural Environment** - how we can protect it and utilise it to reduce the harmful impacts of Climate Change
6. Our **Farming and Food** - what, where and how we produce our food and crops, vital to the rural economy of Somerset
7. Our **Water** resources - how they are managed to minimise the impacts of flooding and drought on our residents, buildings and landscapes
8. The management of our **Waste and Resources**
9. How we **Communicate** and engage with Somerset's citizens to enable us all to make life choices which reduce our impact on the environment locally, nationally and globally

Specialists from the Local Authorities and partner organisations led work on each of the nine themes or sectors, analysing and prioritising current and future issues, considering local and UK Government policy implications, analysing opportunities and challenges each would face in achieving our Goals and identifying a series of actions needed to minimise emissions and build resilience within each area of work.

The Strategy outlines a wide range of objectives and outcomes that each sector will need to deliver in order to cut emissions and to adapt and build our County's resilience to the adverse impacts of Climate Change in the immediate, medium and longer term.

A summary of the opportunities and benefits and barriers and challenges in each of the sectors are documented within the main body of the Strategy, with more detailed analysis within respective sectoral documents that are appended to the main Full Strategy document.

Whilst the majority of the technical detail is contained within the appendices, the Strategy is still a complex and lengthy document. In order to ensure accessibility to the general public a much shorter 'Summary' Strategy Document has also been developed. This Summary document focuses more on the issues of Climate Change, what it will mean for Somerset and what we are going to do about it. It also focusses on some suggestions on how the residents can get involved and what they can do to address some of the issues.

11.7 Strategic Action Plan

An initial high-level Action Plan has been created setting out a list of actions that have been identified which will be required to start us on the journey to carbon neutrality.

Where known, these actions have been costed, key lead organisations identified and timescales for delivery set. Other actions require further work to understand in more detail the quantum of the task ahead and to define associated costs. In some areas more detailed feasibility studies are required and project funding is still to be identified. The Action Plan is a 'live' document which will be reviewed and updated regularly to monitor progress, new technologies and innovations, national and local policy, legislative change, and funding streams as they become available or cease.

Projects within the strategic Action Plan will be prioritised through an

assessment of:

- strategic fit with the Goals of the Strategy;
- activities which can be taken forward quickly;
- scale of impact;
- deliverability risk;
- timescales to completion;
- resources and capacity to deliver;
- funding required and available to initiate and enable the activity;
- costs of projects against return on investment (in terms of carbon saved and progress towards achieving our agreed goals and outcomes);
- benefit to Somerset; and
- sustainability.

The ability of the Somerset authorities to deliver on these actions is entirely dependent on our ability to:

- secure and maintain partnership buy-in and ownership of the Somerset-wide Strategy;
- engage all segments of our Community in contributing; and
- lobby for and secure Government support, national policy change, funding and resources.

Discussions are ongoing regarding the future governance and funding arrangements for the actions to be delivered by the five Local Authorities.

11.8 Delivery

The Strategy identifies that it will be essential to prioritise actions and project delivery. It proposes further work to develop a Marginal Abatement Cost Curve (MACC) tool (which essentially illustrates the cost effectiveness of different actions by presenting their cost per tonne of CO₂ saved and the total amount of CO₂ that could be saved). MACC assessments are a powerful tool for understanding the best place to put funding in order to deliver carbon savings. It is likely that MACC analysis will influence future iterations of the Action Plan as well as the evolving strategic action plan for the Somerset-wide Strategy.

The Strategy highlights a number of issues where a pan-Somerset, wider than single authority or multi-agency approach, is required or would otherwise be beneficial. The Strategy also notes that as Local Authorities we have limited reach in terms of our powers and influence. For this reason, the engagement and commitment of every organisation, business, community and resident of

Somerset is required. The Somerset-wide Strategy sets out that we will collectively work with communities, communicate effectively with them, and lobby Government to enable this.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) will be developed at a programme level to monitor actions and review progress. Progress will subsequently be reviewed and reported to each local authority annually.

Exmoor National Park Authority is supportive of the Strategy and is working with relevant thematic groups and partners to identify where they can work together on actions to deliver the shared ambitions of their climate response.

11.9 Joint Scrutiny Task and Finish Group and Approval Process

As noted earlier, a Joint Scrutiny Task & Finish (T&F) Group was set up in 2019 to oversee development of the Somerset-wide Strategy.

The draft Somerset-wide Strategy was first presented to the T&F group at a meeting on 13th August 2020 and subsequently revised to take account of comments made by the group and officers. Subsequently the final draft document has been discussed again with the T and F members and Portfolio Holders on 21 September 2020.

In a separate meeting on 25th September 2020, the Leaders and Chief Executives Group approved for the Strategy to be taken through the relevant governance meetings.

As a result, the Strategy is now being taken through each of the Somerset Councils' democratic arrangements along the following timescales (note dates were correct at the date of publishing, but each Council's website should be checked for updates). The intention is for the Somerset-wide Strategy to have been adopted by each of the Councils by the end of November 2020.

	SWaT	MDC	SCC	SSDC	SDC
Scrutiny	14 th Oct	19 th Oct	14 th Oct	3 rd Nov	16 th Nov
Executive /	20 st Oct	2 nd Nov	9 th Nov	5 th Nov	25 th Nov

Cabinet					
Full Council	26th Oct	9th Nov	18th Nov	19th Nov	25th Nov

11.10

Conclusion

The Strategy has been produced jointly by the Somerset local authorities as a joint strategic response to each Council's Climate Emergency Declaration. It sets three strategic goals, provides the strategic context, evidence and exploration of issues associated with delivery against those goals and identifies the outcomes needed to work towards carbon neutrality as well as a strategic action plan.

It is intended that the Strategy is formally adopted by the Full Council on 18th November 2020 as a corporate strategy to guide project development and delivery and inform local policy, budget setting processes and as a means to engaging with our communities, businesses and partners on how we are working towards our carbon neutrality target.

The Council has already committed to working towards carbon neutrality for the Council and the county as a whole by 2030. How we get there and when carbon neutrality can actually be achieved by depends on the scale and pace of radical action. Members should be under no illusions that meeting the target of carbon neutrality by 2030 will be extremely difficult and we have to be cognisant that it relies heavily on action beyond our own control, but it is important that we do everything we can within our power to work towards achieving it.

We must be clear, that the 2030 target we committed to working towards through our Climate Emergency Declaration 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, (things beyond our immediate control) achieving this target will be near impossible.

At this stage, the carbon impact of delivering the actions contained within the Action Plan have not been fully quantified. This is a conscious decision to focus on implementation of the plan and delivery of the actions within it. This means that we cannot yet identify the specific pathway that all of the actions contained within the plan would result in. Despite this, we know that the actions being proposed are based on assessment of the issues, opportunities and what the Committee on Climate Change and others deem to be necessary to reach carbon neutrality, and we are frontloading delivery of

these actions wherever possible so that we can do everything within our sphere of influence to push us towards the Paris-aligned trajectory and compliance with our cumulative CO₂ budgets.

12. Background Papers

- 12.1.** Copies of the Strategy, the Summary Strategy, and appendices to the Strategy can be found at:

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/climate-emergency/>

Report Sign-Off

		Signed-off
Legal Implications	Honor Clarke	21/10/20
Governance	Scott Woodridge	23/10/20
Corporate Finance	Jason Vaughan	22/10/20
Human Resources	Chris Squire	23/10/20
Property	Paula Hewitt / Oliver Woodhams	21/10/20
Procurement / ICT	Simon Clifford	22/10/20
Senior Manager	Michele Cusack	21/10/20
Commissioning Development	Sunita Mills / Ryszard Rusinek	21/10/20
Local Member	All	Click or tap to enter a date.
Cabinet Member	Cllr Clare Paul – Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing and Climate Change	21/10/20
Opposition Spokesperson	Cllr Tessa Munt	23/10/20
Scrutiny Chair	Cllr Anna Groskop - Place Scrutiny	21/10/20

Somerset Equality Impact Assessment

Before completing this EIA please ensure you have read the EIA guidance notes – available from your Equality Officer

Organisation prepared for	Somerset County Council, Mendip District Council, Sedgemoor District Council, Somerset West and Taunton Council, South Somerset District Council
----------------------------------	---

Version	1.0	Date Completed	24th September 2020
----------------	------------	-----------------------	---------------------------------------

Description of what is being impact assessed

Towards a Climate Resilient Somerset – Somerset’s Climate Emergency Strategy Strategy and Draft Strategic Action Plan

The Action Plan describes, in high level terms, the activity that will take place, and the changes that will be delivered, as part of the Councils’ response to addressing the Climate Emergency. Further detail regarding a number of these activities will be necessary in due course and will be contained within various project plans that will flow from this Action Plan, but which do not exist at this point in time.

This EIA therefore identifies in general terms the likely impact of this work on different groups of people taken in the round, rather than on an action-by-action basis (although some of the actions will be referenced where appropriate). If necessary, depending upon the type of action proposed (specifically where an individual or group would see or experience a direct physical change as a result of an action with the Action Plan), specific EIAs will be necessary in order to help shape the relevant delivery plan for that action.

It also needs to be recognised that not all people sharing a protected characteristic within the county will necessarily experience the same impact (be it positive or negative) from a particular action.

Evidence

What data/information have you used to assess how this policy/service might impact on protected groups? Sources such as the [Office of National Statistics](#), [Somerset Intelligence Partnership](#), [Somerset's Joint Strategic Needs Analysis \(JSNA\)](#), Staff and/ or [area profiles](#), should be detailed here

The Somerset Climate Emergency Strategy and associated appendices including the strategic action plan has been reviewed.

As explained below, a review of data as well of wider consultation will be necessary at a later point when it comes to detailed design of actions that will have a direct impact on individuals and groups with protected characteristics.

Who have you consulted with to assess possible impact on protected groups? If you have not consulted other people, please explain why?

Officers within Somerset County Council with an overview of the Equalities function, who have experience of identifying impacts on those with protected characteristics have been consulted for this initial identification of potential impacts.

Wider external consultation will be necessary in relation to delivery plans of some of the actions within the Action Plan where an individual or group would see or experience a direct change as a result of an action

Analysis of impact on protected groups

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires us to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations with protected groups. Consider how this policy/service will achieve these aims. In the table below, using the evidence outlined above and your own understanding, detail what considerations and potential impacts against each of the three aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty. Based on this information, make an assessment of the likely outcome, before you have implemented any mitigation.

Protected group	Summary of impact	Negative outcome	Neutral outcome	Positive outcome
Age	<p>The factors that make people vulnerable to the impacts of Climate Change are most acute amongst particular groups; older people are one of these categories. Older people are physiologically at most risk of health impacts from extreme heat and cold. This Strategy and associated action plans aims to help mitigate the effect and risk of Climate Change on older people with this protected group and should be seen as delivering, over time, a positive impact.</p> <p>Those potentially most likely to gain from actions around improving energy efficiency within the home are people who traditionally suffer from fuel poverty, which includes a significant proportion of older people.</p> <p>Recouping any personal investment required in the form of energy bill savings is likely to be over the medium/long-term and, therefore, may be of disproportionately less benefit to older people.</p>	X		X X

	<p>Particular care and attention should however be given to mitigate or eliminate any potential negative impacts for the group relating to the focus on active travel within the plan (e.g walking and cycling). Important to encouraging walking amongst older people in particular to ensure mental and physical health and wellbeing, is the provision of facilities such as toilets and benches. Installation of such amenities within the pedestrian environment should be a consideration if walking is to be maximised amongst all equality groups.</p> <p>Climate Change and action to address climate issues are seen to be of particular interest to younger people and enabling the young people to be engaged in initiatives and observe that direct action is being will be a positive outcome for this age group</p>			<p>X</p> <p>X</p>
<p>Disability</p>	<p>The factors that make people vulnerable to the impacts of Climate Change are most acute amongst particular groups; people with disabilities are one of these categories. People with certain disabilities (particularly circulatory and respiratory conditions) are physiologically at most risk of health impacts from extreme heat and cold. The Strategy and associated action plans aim to help mitigate the effect and risk of Climate Change so should be seen as delivering, over time, a positive impact.</p> <p>Air pollutants can worsen respiratory conditions such as asthma. The actions of this Strategy will, over time, help improve air quality within the county and should therefore, have a particularly positive impact for those with such conditions.</p>			<p>X</p> <p>X</p>

	<p>Additionally, those potentially most likely to gain from actions around improving energy efficiency within the home are people who traditionally suffer from fuel poverty, notably older and disabled groups.</p> <p>However, depending on grants available, the affordability to invest in energy efficiency improvement schemes could disproportionately affect those with lower disposable incomes which data tells us could include disabled people.</p> <p>Particular care and attention should be given to mitigate or eliminate any potential negative impacts for the group relating to the focus on active travel. As with older people, it is important to encourage walking amongst people with disabilities, is the provision of facilities such as toilets, benches and flat and ramped routes for wheelchair users. Installation of such amenities within the pedestrian environment should be a consideration if walking is to be maximised amongst all equality groups.</p> <p>Encouragement of electric modes of transport such as e-bikes and e-scooters have posed particular risks to people with visual impairment in other areas. Particularly short-term rentals of e-scooters. Their speed and almost silent operation are an issue as is inconsiderate parking, where there have been numerous examples of them being left on pavements, creating a significant trip hazard for the visually impaired. Separation of pedestrians and e-scooter and bike riders within any pedestrianised space will help mitigate this risk together with dedicated parking bays / racks for these modes of transport. The</p>	X		X
--	--	---	--	---

	<p>involvement of people with disabilities in designing schemes could help in mitigating the risks involved</p> <p>Careful consideration to people with language disabilities should be made when designing and implementing community communications campaigns with regard to promoting climate action initiatives</p>	X		
Gender reassignment	Mitigating the impacts of Climate Change should be seen as delivering, over time, a positive impact for everyone, including people within this group. No additional impacts, from the proposed Strategy and associated action plans have been identified that would disproportionately affect this group.			X
Marriage and civil partnership	Mitigating the impacts of Climate Change should be seen as delivering, over time, a positive impact for everyone, including people within this group. No additional impacts, from the proposed Strategy and associated action plans, have been identified that would disproportionately affect this group.			X
Pregnancy and maternity	<p>Air pollutants can cause respiratory illness in pregnant women and also lead to low birth weight or pre-term birth. This proposal will, over time, help improve local air quality and should have a positive impact on some pregnant women.</p> <p>More pedestrian and other active travel routes will positively impact pre and post-natal women</p> <p>No additional impacts, from the proposed Strategy and associated action plans have been identified that would disproportionately affect</p>			X X X

	this group.			
Race and ethnicity	Mitigating the impacts of Climate Change should be seen as delivering, over time, a positive impact for everyone, including people within this group. No additional impacts, from the proposed Strategy and associated action plans have been identified that would disproportionately affect this group.			X
Religion or belief	Mitigating the impacts of Climate Change should be seen as delivering, over time, a positive impact for everyone, including people within this group. No additional impacts, from the proposed Strategy and associated action plans have been identified that would disproportionately affect this group.			X
Sex	Mitigating the impacts of Climate Change should be seen as delivering, over time, a positive impact for everyone, including people within this group. No additional impacts, from the proposed Strategy and associated action plans have been identified that would disproportionately affect this group.			X
Sexual orientation	Mitigating the impacts of Climate Change should be seen as delivering, over time, a positive impact for everyone, including people within this group. No additional impacts, from the proposed Strategy and associated action plans have been identified that would disproportionately affect this group.			X

<p>Other, e.g. carers, veterans, homeless, low income, rurality/isolation, etc.</p>	<p><u>Low Income</u> - Mitigating the impacts of Climate Change should be seen as delivering, over time, a positive impact for everyone, including people within this group</p> <p>Individuals and households on low incomes may be particularly vulnerable to the impacts of Climate Change during prolonged periods of hot or cold weather in particular; due to their inability to afford fuel for adequately heating or cooling their homes. This Strategy and associated action plans aims to help mitigate the effect and risk of Climate Change so should be seen as delivering, over time, a positive impact. In particular the action around improving energy efficiency within the home will be particularly positive to low income households that experience fuel poverty. However, this group may, by definition, be least likely to be able to afford to pay for energy efficiency initiatives within their homes, therefore without government support and may miss out on the opportunity, thereby being disadvantaged.</p> <p><u>Carers</u> - Mitigating the impacts of Climate Change should be seen as delivering, over time, a positive impact for everyone, including people within this group.</p> <p>However, the possible negative impacts identified within the Disability group are also likely to apply to this group.</p> <p>Rural Isolation - Mitigating the impacts of Climate Change should be seen as delivering, over time, a positive impact for everyone, including people within this group. The positive impacts will include greater access to public transport, better rural broadband connectivity and access to alternative energy sources. No negative impacts, from the</p>	<p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p>		<p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p>
--	--	-------------------------------------	--	-------------------------------------

	proposed Strategy and associated action plans, have been identified that would disproportionately affect this group.			
--	--	--	--	--

Negative outcomes action plan
 Where you have ascertained that there will potentially be negative outcomes, you are required to mitigate the impact of these. Please detail below the actions that you intend to take.

Action taken/to be taken	Date	Person responsible	How will it be monitored?	Action complete
Age - Recouping any personal investment required for energy savings initiatives. Lobby for and promote government schemes and grants	31/12/2021	Energy and Built Environment workstreams	Lobbying of central government and promotion of schemes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disabilities – Affordability of energy savings initiatives Lobby for and promote government schemes and grants	31/12/2021	Energy and Built Environment workstreams	Lobbying of central government and promotion of schemes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disabilities – The unintended consequences of promotion of use of e-bikes, e-scooters etc Involve disabled groups in the design and development of schemes	31/12/2021	Transport and Energy Workstreams	Involvement of people with disabilities in the design and development of schemes	<input type="checkbox"/>

Low Income - Affordability of energy savings initiatives Lobby for and promote government schemes and grants	31/12/2021	Energy and Built Environment workstreams	Lobbying of central government and promotion of schemes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Carers – As disabilities, above	31/12/2021	Transport, Energy and Communications workstreams	Involvement of people with disabilities and carers in designing of schemes and tools	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
If negative impacts remain, please provide an explanation below.				
Completed by:	Jon Doyle			
Date	24th September 2020			
Signed off by:	Jon Doyle			
Date	24th September 2020			

Equality Lead/Manager sign off date:	5th October 2020
To be reviewed by: (officer name)	Mark Fortune
Review date:	1st July 2021

