

Somerset Waste Partnership Business Plan 2021 - 2026

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Summary:	The Somerset Waste Board is required to annually approve a rolling five-year business plan. This report seeks approval to the draft business plan for consultation. It also reminds the board about the changes to how garden waste payments will be taken in future and informs the board about delegations that SWP will be seeking from partner authorities to underpin our enforcement capabilities
Recommendations:	<p>The Joint Waste Scrutiny Panel considers and comments on the following recommendations in this report.</p> <p>That the Somerset Waste Board:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approves the draft Business Plan 2021-2021 for consultation 2. Notes the changes to how garden waste payments will be made in 2021, as previously agreed by the board 3. Notes that SWP will be asking District Council partners to renew their delegation of powers to underpin SWP's Advice, Support & Enforcement Policy.
Reasons for recommendations:	Approval is required to set a clear mandate for SWP activities for the period and is a constitutional requirement.
Links to Priorities and Impact on Annual Business Plan:	The annual Business Plan sets key aims and priorities for Somerset Waste Partnership for the coming year.
Financial, Legal and HR Implications:	Many actions within the business plan will require specialist input, including financial, legal, HR and procurement advice. Some activities are subject to a business case and funding. The draft budget (subject of a separate paper) will be added to the

	draft business plan for consultation with partners.
Equalities Implications:	Many of the actions in the business plan relate to the implementation of decisions already taken by the board, and Equalities Impact Assessments (EIAs) were undertaken at the time. Other actions relate to reviews/future actions, and EIAs will be carried out as appropriate to inform the board's decision making. Some other actions will not require EIAs. In most cases the decision to proceed based on the outcome of the impact assessment will be delegated to SWP's Managing Director. Where significant issues are identified through the assessment process that would have implications for major projects or programmes, the decision to proceed will return to the Board prior to commencing development.
Risk Assessment:	Failure to approve a Business Plan (a constitutional requirement) will impact on the ability of the SWP to effectively deliver the board's vision.

1. Background

- 1.1. The constitution requires an annual Business Plan to be formally adopted by the Board to provide a framework within which the Board can make decisions and steer the delivery of Waste Partnership services. The process of review is continuous but it contains a snapshot of where we are now, the things that have a major impact on us, resources/budget, and our priorities. Based on a discussion paper taken to the September Board, a draft is presented to the Board in December to approve for partner consultation, before returning to the board in February for final approval and adoption. The quarterly performance reports submitted to the board are then aligned with the approved business plan.
- 1.2. The Board is almost exclusively funded from contributions from partners. It is therefore dependent on agreement between partners on the level of funding provided by each of them in line with the cost sharing formula. Business Planning and Budget setting are therefore part of the same process. Under the terms of the Inter Authority Agreement, the Board cannot make a decision that has an adverse financial implication on any partner without that partner's agreement. The Board has delegated authority for decision making across all services and therefore must take into account any requirements to make savings and make proposals on how these can be achieved.

2. Options Considered and reasons for rejecting them

- 2.1. The SWP Business Plan is a constitutional requirement and no other option is available.

3. Consultations

- 3.1. SMG were consulted over the Summer and the Board and Joint Waste Scrutiny Panel were consulted on the approach at their meetings in December. Formal consultation with partners is planned as follows:

When	Body consulted
7 January 2021	South Somerset District Council Executive
11 January 2021	Mendip District Council Cabinet
20 January 2021	Somerset County Council Cabinet
20 January 2021	Somerset West and Taunton Executive
27 January 2021	Sedgemoor District Council Executive

Feedback from this partner consultation will be reflected in the final Business Plan presented to the Board in February 2021. Given the importance to all partners of the roll-out of Recycle More, the presentation we give to each partner will include a update on the roll-out in Mendip and the planned approach going forward, as well as update them on other key issues (such as coping with Covid-19 and our move away from landfill).

4. Implications

- 4.1. The Business Plan explains how we will work towards our vision over the next five years, with a particular focus on next year (our Annual Action Plan). It contains three outcomes, beneath which sit a range of inter-linked activities which contribute to these outcomes. Whilst it is an iteration of the previous Business Plan, there is much change as we look beyond the roll-out of Recycle More, having transitioned away from landfill, and having set out wider objectives through our work on the Climate Emergency strategy. These changes have meant a slight change to the outcomes under which the plan is structured:

- a) **Delivering Excellent Services:** *Household waste is effectively collected, reused, recycled and treated (as per previous business plan)*
- b) **Changing behaviours:** *People trust SW and see waste as a resource (broadly as per previous business plan)*
- c) **Tackling climate change:** (a new outcome to reflect the importance of this agenda to SWP and because some of the actions we are planning go beyond the services we are tasked with delivering).
- d) Building our capability: *SWP maximises its contribution to tackling the climate emergency* (removed as an outcome so all our outcomes are externally focussed. Relevant activities have been included within other parts of the business plan, such as 'improving the customer experience')

- 4.2. Key areas of activity in the draft 2021-26 Business Plan are as follows:

	<i>Area of activity</i>	<i>Content</i>
1	Waste reduction	Food waste, Refill, Pledge against Preventable Plastic, Signposting to zero waste shops, reusable nappies
2	Promoting Reuse	Developing, implementing and monitoring a reuse strategy
3	Recycling	Recycle More roll-out, ensuring homes are built with recycling in mind, food waste in communal properties, rolling year garden waste subscriptions, tackling hard to treat waste streams, HWRCs, composition and participation analysis, recycling A-Z guide, targeted campaigns
4	Decarbonising residual waste	Heat offtake, carbon capture and storage, education
5	Decarbonising our operations	Electric supervisors vans, green depot infrastructure, pilot alternative fuels, drive down carbon intensity of day to day operations, partial refleet of refuse vehicles
6	Tackling non-household waste	Schools, public sector estate, business waste
7	Working with others	Parish Councils, local data and engagement, developing partnerships, community action groups, engagement with front-line staff
8	Improving the customer experience	In-cab technology, innovation, website, CRM system procurement, GDPR, assisted collection review, processes around new home occupation, enforcement, supporting the most vulnerable
9	Supporting wider goals in Somerset	Tackling waste on the go, tackling fly-tipping, supporting local businesses and those far from the labour market
10	Enabling activities	Depot infrastructure, health and safety, contract management, service reviews, influencing national policy, long term strategy, behavioural insights, business continuity planning

- 4.3.** The challenges and opportunities facing SWP are set out in the business plan but key risks which may impact on delivery of the business plan include:
- a) The ongoing impact of Covid-19, which has already disrupted and delayed progress in achieving the current business plan
 - b) Resource pressures on SWP due to the intense workload associated with implementing the Recycle More service change
 - c) Central Government policy changes, in particular those that result from the next phase of consultations on policy outlined in the Resources & Waste Strategy (in particular on Extended Producer Responsibility, Deposit Return

- Scheme, and Collection Consistency)
- d) Brexit and its knock-on impacts
- e) Funding available to implement the Climate Emergency Strategy and financial pressures on local authorities
- f) The Future of Local Government in Somerset

5. Garden waste: rolling year subscriptions

- 5.1.** In our current (2020-25) Business Plan it sets out that SWP will centralise garden waste payments because this will enable us to improve the customer experience and enable residents to sign up for a year at any time, and remove the need for garden waste stickers.

This change in how payments are handled will not result in any reduction in income to District Council partners, simply in who processes the income and the timing of income receipts with District partners. SWP have managed garden waste income successfully for Mendip District Council in 2020, and this pilot enables us to be confident in implementing this for other partners.

This change will not reduce the customer channels – whilst we would encourage them to do it online, they will still be able to subscribe via District Council call centres and websites. They will now also be able to sign up via the SWP website and do so at any time year-round. This is likely to be of particular benefit when Recycle More makes it harder for those residents who are currently putting garden waste in their rubbish bin (as demonstrated through our composition analysis). This change also enables us to address challenges from previous internal audits of difference between SWP/contractor records and records of payments held by District Councils – largely caused by the complexities inherent in having four different processes. The expected improvement in data quality, combined with effective utilisation of in-cab devices, will also mean that we can cease to send out garden waste stickers – a time intensive activity which introduces another source of potential error and risk into our current processes. It will also ensure that we remove the confusing anomaly from the SWP finances that whilst we show the garden waste costs we do not show the income.

Like any project of change (especially in our complex partnership landscape of differing ICT systems) this project is not without risks. SMG will oversee this project over the coming months, supported by expert input from all partner customer services and ICT teams. S151 officers have been consulted on the financial changes this entails. The suspension of the garden waste service during the first Covid-19 lockdown in Spring 2020 has meant that 2020/21 subscriptions will end on 11 May 2021 rather than 31 March 2021 as they normally would. Following consultation with District Council customer services it is proposed to send out renewal reminder letters at the same time as normal to avoid clashing with heavy demand faced by these teams associated with council tax letters.

6. Advice Support and Enforcement: Delegations from District Partners

- 6.1.** SWP are refreshing the policy on Advice, Support and Enforcement. The existing Enforcement Policy was adopted by the SWB in December 2015, but a technical issue regarding the legal delegations has meant that SWP do not currently have the ability to issue Fixed Penalty Notices. It is important to note that our approach to enforcement will not significantly change, and we will continue to work with residents and businesses to support, advise and problem solve. The aim is to give SWP the ability to take enforcement action as a last resort for the very small minority who persistently refuse to engage or cooperate. This policy will be brought to the Board for approval in Spring 2021 once we have the necessary delegated powers. Through the normal reporting processes we will then keep the Board updated on the use of these powers and hence the effectiveness of our Advice, Support and Enforcement.

- 6.2.** To enable us to progress this, we will be seeking fresh delegations of powers under the Environmental Protection Act, 1990 from each of the district partners. This will provide Somerset County Council (as administering authority), acting through SWP, with the authority to issue Fixed Penalty Notices and instigate prosecutions. SWP will provide each district partner a list of the delegations required in order that the decisions can be made by each authority as part of the Business Plan approval process. These delegations will only cover those powers relating to domestic and commercial waste offences, relating to kerbside collections and recycling centres and Duty of Care. It will not include any functions still covered by the district councils – including littering and fly tipping offences. Following consultation with SMG, it is planned to undertake this as part of the annual round of Business Plan consultations.

7. Background papers

- 7.1.** Draft SWP Business Plan 2021 - 2026 (Appendix A)