

Somerset Waste Board meeting
11 February 2022
Report for decision

Somerset Waste Partnership Business Plan 2022 - 2027

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Forward Plan Reference:	25/01/2022
Summary:	The draft Business Plan for partner consultation was approved by the Somerset Waste Board (SWB) on 10 th December 2021. This report updates the board on the partner consultation and seeks approval to the final Business Plan 2022-27.
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. Notes and considers feedback from the partner consultation process as set out in paragraph 3.1 and as verbally updated at the meeting. 2. Approves the Business Plan 2022-2027, noting the significant ongoing risks to implementation of the Business Plan. 3. Notes the approach proposed to the trial of collecting soft plastic from the kerbside as set out in section 4.1.
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 next 5 years, with a particular focus on 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. Where actions (e.g. related to climate change) are not currently funded they are clearly identified in the business plan.
Equalities Implications:	Some 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, others relate to future actions, and EIAs will be carried out as appropriate at the time. In most cases the decision to proceed based on the outcome of the impact assessment will be delegated to SWP's Managing Director, unless the implications identified mean that the decision to proceed should return to the Board.
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.
- 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. The Plan notes the risks that the ongoing pandemic places on delivery, given the priority attached by SWP and all partners attached to supporting communities through these unprecedented challenges.

3. Consultations

3.1. Consultation was undertaken as follows:

When	Body consulted
19 th January	Somerset County Council Cabinet
19 th January	Somerset West and Taunton Executive
26 th January	Sedgemoor District Council Executive
7 th February	Mendip District Council Cabinet
10 th February	South Somerset District Council Executive

At the time of writing this paper, not all partner consultations had been held, so a verbal update will be provided to the board on any feedback received after the paper deadline. Feedback received to date has resulted in updating references to the work involved and approach to local government reorganisation, and these minor changes are reflected in the Business Plan attached for approval.

4. Updates on the Business Plan

4.1. Possible trial of soft plastics kerbside collection

Action 3.1 of the Business Plan 2022-27 sets out our ambition for further plastic kerbside collection. SWP has accordingly applied to be part of a trial, likely to start in the second half of 2022, to trial the collection of flexible plastics and films at the kerbside. A paper will be brought to the June Board setting out the planned trial approach in more detail prior to SWP agreeing participation and signing a project and funding agreement, but key points are:

- The 3 year project will trial the collection of flexible plastic packaging and will seek to understand what works best (communication with residents, operational impacts and requirements, infrastructure requirements). SWP will join the project at the second stage (Industrialisation) for years 2 and 3 of the project.
- If successful in our application Somerset will be one of 9 Local Authorities nationwide to be part of the trial. Local authorities will be selected in order to represent a range of different 'DNAs' (profiling of various factors such as social demographics, geographies, GDP and social factors), collection systems (kerbside sort, source segregated, twin stream and co-mingled) and operators (outsourced and in house).
- Household numbers in the trial will need to be agreed - whilst each trial participant is nominally starting with 5%, due to its size SWP may start at a lower percentage of households, or at 5% of one district. Numbers of households will also need to be agreed for the second year with SWP, but we would hope to significantly expand the households covered in the trial.
- The nationwide trial is being managed by the Flexible Plastic Fund (a body established by around 18 major brands and working with EcoSurety, a compliance scheme operator, WRAP and others) and is funded by the packaging industry via the Flexible Plastic Fund, Defra and UKRI (UK Research

& Innovation). SWP's involvement in the trial will be fully funded (other than existing officer time) with a written project and funding agreement in place. Discussions are ongoing about continuity at the end of the project and to minimise financial risk to SWP.

- The materials to be collected are yet to be finalised, but the potential scope includes all packaging structures which flex easily, and which can be made of both single and multi-layered plastic, including plastic with metallised layers (e.g. crisp packets), both 'dry' (carrier bags, bread bags, films from food punnets) and 'wet' flexible packaging (packaging containing liquid based products, e.g. cat food pouches or toothpaste tubes). It is still to be determined, but it is possible that participating households will be given a supply of recyclable bags to contain all flexibles, with the bag being placed within one of our existing containers – this is to ensure that there is no contamination of our other recycling.
- SUEZ are confident that there is sufficient UK capacity to deal properly with what is collected through the trial, but tracking this and learning from it will be a crucial part of the trial. However, it may be necessary to process some material in EU facilities, particularly where technology is not yet commercially available in the UK. Materials arising from the trials will not be sent outside the UK or EU for sorting/reprocessing. Materials will be used as Solid Recovered Fuel only as a last resort.
- DEFRA's Consultation on Consistency in Household and Business Recycling proposes that plastic films and flexibles should be collected by local authorities as soon as possible, and no later than the end of financial year 2025/26. We are awaiting finalisation of this policy, which is expected soon. It should help clarify what materials are within scope of the trial and the need for any special funding arrangements to ensure continuity at the end of the trial.

5. Implications

- 5.1.** The SWP Business Plan is a constitutional requirement. Failure to approve the plan will result in difficulties as outlined above.

6. Background papers

- 6.1.** SWP Business Plan 2021 - 2026 (Appendix A)
- 6.2.** Waste Board Constitution:
<http://www1.somerset.gov.uk/council/boards.asp?boardnum=32>