

Somerset Waste Partnership Business Plan 2023 - 2028

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Forward Plan Reference:	<i>SWB/22/05/06</i>
Summary:	<p>The draft Business Plan 2023 -28 appended to this paper has been informed by the discussion at the September Board and Scrutiny meetings. Usually a draft is presented to this meeting ahead of consultation with partners, but as previously noted by the board this formal partner consultation will not happen this year due to the Local Government Reorganisation process. The new Somerset Council has not yet set a County Plan nor has guidance come out on the Business Planning Process. The financial climate affecting local authorities is particularly challenging, and hence the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) may have a significant impact on the Business Plan. Additionally, clarity is expected from Government in the coming months on a number of key policy areas, including packaging Extended Producer Responsibility, Collection Consistency and charging for DIY waste. All of these areas may affect the Business Plan 2023-28 and hence it may be revised ahead of the February Board and Scrutiny meetings.</p>
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> <p>I. notes and approves the draft Somerset Waste Partnership Business Plan 2023-28, noting that the Somerset Council Corporate Plan has not yet been set, that the MTFP process is ongoing, and clarity on national government legislation is expected in the coming months.</p>
Reasons for recommendations:	Approval is required to set a clear mandate for SWP activities for

	<p>the period and is a constitutional requirement. The approach to reflect local government reorganisation has been previously agreed by the Board.</p>
<p>Links to Priorities and Impact on Annual Business Plan:</p>	<p>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. It may be revised if this is necessary to align with the Somerset Council County Plan and MTFP.</p>
<p>Financial, Legal and HR Implications:</p>	<p>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. When decisions have been taken on the MTFP the Business Plan may be revised.</p>
<p>Equalities Implications:</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>Risk Assessment:</p>	<p>Failure to approve a Business Plan will impact on the ability of the SWP to effectively deliver the board's vision. There is a risk that the Business Plan may be affected by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) The ongoing impact of Covid-19, which has already disrupted progress in achieving the current business plan. The cumulative impact on staff from the intense work required to maintain services cannot be understated. b) Uncertainties due to the takeover by Biffa of some aspects of Viridor's contract with SWP (inc recycling centres), the potential takeover of Biffa and the take-over of SUEZ. c) Central Government policy changes, in particular Extended Producer Responsibility, Deposit Return Scheme, Collection Consistency and charging at HWRCs. d) The recession and its impact on both public behaviour and Local Authority funding, in particular to deliver SWP's ambitions on reuse and decarbonisation in particular. e) The Future of Local Government in Somerset, including resource pressures that this will inevitably bring to senior management in SWP and partners, and the uncertainty it may mean for staff.

	Risk assessments will be undertaken for any service changes or new programmes as they are developed and the SWP risk register will be updated accordingly as part of the business planning process.
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1. Background

1.1. In normal circumstances the Board is required to approve a draft business plan annually. The plan is rolling five year plan reflecting current priorities, risks, issues and opportunities, updated to reflect where we have greater detail and also where factors (e.g. Covid or delays in clarity on national legislation) have resulted in changes to the anticipated timescale. 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. It remains our intention to seek to bring a final business plan (in the format requested by the new Somerset Council) to the Somerset Waste Board at the February 2023 meeting, to align with the Medium Term Financial Planning Process for the new authority.

2. Options Considered and reasons for rejecting them

2.1. The SWP Business Plan is a constitutional requirement and no other option is available. This will be Somerset Waste Partnership's final Business Plan before the establishment of the new Somerset Council.

3. Summary

3.1. The draft Business Plan is attached at appendix A. No changes have been made to the format of the Business Plan as we await the development of a new strategic plan for Somerset Council and we expect that to lead to the development of a new business/service planning approach. The risks, issues and priorities discussed at the September Board and Scrutiny papers remain the factors that have principally informed the development of the Business Plan, though it is worth noting the following changes which have informed the draft plan:

- The national cost of living crisis has worsened and we are entering a national and possibly global recession. This will impact in particular on resident behaviour and on the recycle market.
- The financial challenges facing local authorities have worsened substantially since September meaning that significant revenue savings need to be found by all services and that the availability of capital is very constrained.
- Government expects to publish its formal response to the consultation on consistency in collections before the end of the calendar year, and we also expect a final position from them on charging for DIY waste at HWRCs. These will have significant impacts on SWP. SWP is involved in work with Defra to shape packaging Extended Producer Responsibility, which we

expect to result in significant income to the Council in 2024/25.

4. Implications

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

5. Background papers

- 5.1.** SWP Business Plan 2023 - 2028 (Appendix A)