



District Executive

Thursday 5th December 2019

9.30 am

**Council Chamber, Council Offices,
Brympton Way, Yeovil, BA20 2HT**

(disabled access and a hearing loop are available at this meeting venue)



Members listed on the following page are requested to attend the meeting.

The public and press are welcome to attend.

If you would like any further information on the items to be discussed, please contact the Democratic Services Specialist on 01935 462148 or democracy@southsomerset.gov.uk

This Agenda was issued on Wednesday 27 November 2019.

Alex Parmley, *Chief Executive Officer*



This information is also available on our website
www.southsomerset.gov.uk and via the mod.gov app

District Executive Membership

Jason Baker
Mike Best
John Clark
Adam Dance
Sarah Dyke
Peter Gubbins
Henry Hobhouse
Val Keitch
Tony Lock
Peter Seib

Information for the Public

The District Executive co-ordinates the policy objectives of the Council and gives the Area Committees strategic direction. It carries out all of the local authority's functions which are not the responsibility of any other part of the Council. It delegates some of its responsibilities to Area Committees, officers and individual portfolio holders within limits set by the Council's Constitution. When major decisions are to be discussed or made, these are published in the Executive Forward Plan in so far as they can be anticipated.

Members of the Public are able to:-

- attend meetings of the Council and its committees such as Area Committees, District Executive, except where, for example, personal or confidential matters are being discussed;
- speak at Area Committees, District Executive and Council meetings;
- see reports and background papers, and any record of decisions made by the Council and Executive;
- find out, from the Executive Forward Plan, what major decisions are to be decided by the District Executive.

Meetings of the District Executive are held monthly at 9.30 a.m. on the first Thursday of the month in the Council Offices, Brympton Way.

The Executive Forward Plan and copies of executive reports and decisions are published on the Council's web site - www.southsomerset.gov.uk.

The Council's Constitution is also on the web site and available for inspection in Council offices. The Council's corporate priorities which guide the work and decisions of the Executive are set out below.

Questions, statements or comments from members of the public are welcome at the beginning of each meeting of the Council. If a member of the public wishes to speak they should advise the committee administrator and complete one of the public participation slips setting out their name and the matter they wish to speak about. Each individual speaker shall be restricted to a total of three minutes. Answers to questions may be provided at the meeting itself or a written reply will be sent subsequently, as appropriate. Matters raised during the public question session will not be debated by the Committee at that meeting.

Further information can be obtained by contacting the agenda co-ordinator named on the front page.

District Executive

Thursday 5 December 2019

Agenda

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Declarations of Interest

In accordance with the Council's current Code of Conduct (as amended 26 February 2015), which includes all the provisions relating to Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI), personal and prejudicial interests, Members are asked to declare any DPI and also any personal interests (and whether or not such personal interests are also "prejudicial") in relation to any matter on the Agenda for this meeting.

Members are reminded that they need to declare the fact that they are also a member of a County, Town or Parish Council as a Personal Interest. Where you are also a member of Somerset County Council and/or a Town or Parish Council within South Somerset you must declare a prejudicial interest in any business on the agenda where there is a financial benefit or gain or advantage to Somerset County Council and/or a Town or Parish Council which would be at the cost or to the financial disadvantage of South Somerset District Council.

3. Public Question Time

4. Chairman's Announcements

Items for Discussion

5. Somerset Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019 - 2023 (Pages 4 - 35)

6. Somerset Climate Emergency Framework (Pages 36 - 70)

7. District Executive Forward Plan (Pages 71 - 74)

8. Date of Next Meeting (Page 75)

Agenda Item 5

Somerset Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019 - 2023

Executive Portfolio Holder: Cllr. Val Keitch, Strategy and Housing
Director: Netta Meadows, Director Strategy and Support Services
Lead Specialist: Jan Gamon, Lead Specialist Strategic Planning
Lead Officer: Leisa Kelly, Case Officer, Service Delivery
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Purpose of the Report

1. For members to adopt the Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019 – 2023.

Public Interest

2. District Councils have a statutory duty to adopt a Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy. This strategy sets out the strategic goals for the four Somerset Housing Authorities including a detailed action plan to show how this will be delivered. Our existing Somerset Homeless Strategy was adopted in May 2018; this was an interim strategy which only runs until this year so we needed to update the strategy taking into consideration the priorities identified in the Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Needs Assessment 2019 and the new requirements of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

Recommendations

3. That District Executive adopts the Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019 – 2023 subject to any final changes to the strategy and action plan to be delegated to the Director, in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder for Strategy and Housing.

Background

4. The 2002 Homelessness Act places a duty on Local Authorities to develop a homelessness and rough sleeper strategy and an obligation to renew it every five years. The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, introduced new measures for dealing with homelessness including:
 - increasing the length of time a housing authority should treat someone as threatened with Homelessness from 28 to 56 days;
 - The introduction of Personalised Housing Plans for clients to outline the circumstances of homelessness, the housing needs of the client, any support required to secure and sustain accommodation, steps that the client is required to take along with the steps the Local Authority is required to take to assist the client;
 - a new duty to prevent homelessness for all eligible households threatened with homelessness;
 - a new duty to relieve homelessness for all eligible homeless applicants;
 - a new duty on public services to notify a local authority if they come into contact with someone they think may be homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.
5. The current interim strategy was developed by the four District Councils in Somerset and was adopted in 2018. Since the adoption of the Interim Strategy we have conducted a Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Needs Assessment which has been used as the evidence base for the “Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019 – 2023” as well as considering the new requirements of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

The Strategy

6. A Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Needs Assessment 2019 (Appendix 1) was carried out to assess the need of the County, this has been used to inform the new Somerset Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019 – 23 (Appendix 1). The strategy includes 6 priorities for 2019-23:
 - Provision of adequate, affordable housing stock
 - Support clients to remain in their existing accommodation where appropriate
 - Enable specific client groups to access suitable accommodation
 - Support the government's commitment to combat rough sleeping.
 - Maintain strong working relationships across partnerships.
 - Track and respond to the impacts of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
7. The 'Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019-2023' will be implemented by each district through the Homeless Managers Group (HMG) who will be responsible for the day to day delivery of this strategy and actions contained within the action plan; including monitoring progress against actions and targets at the monthly HMG meetings. There will also be a link with the Strategic Housing Officers Group (SHOG) who are responsible for the delivery plan for the 'Somerset Housing Strategy 2019-2023' so close links will be maintained between both groups to ensure we keep track of progress on all actions overall.

Financial Implications

8. There are no specific resources requested as part of agreeing the Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019-23, however there may be financial implications linked to the achievement of the action plan which will either be covered within existing budgets or come forward for funding as appropriate.

Risk Matrix

The risks have been identified on the table below, attention should be drawn to risk reference 5 and 7 as these are the highest scored risks. By adopting the strategy these risks are lowered as these refer to us not having a valid Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy which is updated every 5 years which was a requirement of the Homelessness Act 2002. The implication of not having an up-to-date Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy is that any homelessness decisions on applications would be invalid. Ensuring we have an adopted strategy would mitigate this risk.

Ref	Risk Title	Inherent Rating	Residual Rating
1	Financial: Loss of future funding if we fail to meet government targets	8	8
3	Delivery of Services: Risk of not being able to adequately deliver homelessness prevention and relief duty	8	8
4	Staffing / Capacity: Staff retention and capacity following the introduction of the HRA 2017	14	13
5	Reputation: Failure to have a strategy and clear processes on how we deal with homelessness and rough sleeping	23	2
6	Health & Safety & Environmental: Failing to accommodate vulnerable applicants	13	8
7	Governance & Legal: We are required to have a Strategy and comply with government legislation	22	8

Council Plan Implications

9. *Council Plan 2016 – 2021 aim:*
 - Aim to enable housing to meet all needs
 - Improve health and reduce health inequalities

Area of focus within the Housing Theme for 2019-20

- Enable sufficient housing in appropriate places to meet community needs
- Maximise the number of affordable homes including providing more affordable home to support rural economies and communities
- Reduce homelessness and rough sleeping
- Match lifelong independent living with appropriate property solutions

Area of focus within the Healthy, Self-reliant Communities Theme for 2019-20

- Work with partners to support people in improving their own physical and mental health and wellbeing

Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications

10. None

Equality and Diversity Implications

11. A comprehensive Equality Impact Assessment is attached (Appendix 2)

Privacy Impact Assessment

12. It is not necessary to process personal data as part of the strategy, therefore, a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) is not needed

Background Papers

- Homeless and Rough Sleeper Needs Assessment 2019
- Scrutiny Minutes and Agenda, October 2019
- District Executive Minutes and Agenda, May 2018
- Somerset Homeless Review and Strategy 2017

Somerset Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019 - 2023

Mendip District Council
Sedgemoor District Council
South Somerset District Council
Somerset West and Taunton Council

FINAL DRAFT

November 2019

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1 INTRODUCTION

The 2002 Homelessness Act places a duty on Local Authorities to develop a homelessness and rough sleeper strategy and an obligation to renew it every five years. The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 brought significant changes transforming service delivery to prevention focused services. New measures for dealing with homelessness were introduced including:

- Increasing the length of time a housing authority should treat someone as threatened with Homelessness from 28 to 56 days;
- The introduction of Personalised Housing Plans for clients to outline the circumstances of homelessness, the housing needs of the client, any support required to secure and sustain accommodation, steps that the client is required to take along with the steps the local authority is required to take to assist the client.;
- A new duty to prevent homelessness for all eligible households threatened with homelessness;
- A new duty to relieve homelessness for all eligible homeless applicants;
- A new duty on public services to notify a local authority if they come into contact with someone they think may be homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

In 2018 the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) published its “Rough Sleeping Strategy” which set out the government’s vision “to support every person who sleeps rough off the streets and into a home”; to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and ending it by 2027. It focuses on three key themes: Prevention; Intervention; and Recovery, aspirations which we also share.

The current interim strategy was developed by the four District Councils in Somerset and was adopted in 2018. Since the adoption of the Interim Strategy we have conducted a Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Needs Assessment which has been used as the evidence base for the “Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019 – 2023” We have also considered the impact of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and the need for continued service development to address emerging new priorities.

The delivery of this Strategy will be monitored by the Homeless Managers Group (HMG). A full review will be conducted in 2023 when a new needs assessment will be carried out to guide development of a refreshed strategy.

2 HOW THE STRATEGY LINKS IN WITH OTHER STRATEGIES



In Somerset we have an overarching strategy, developed by the Somerset Health and Wellbeing Board “Improving Lives in Somerset Strategy 2019 - 2028”, which details the county vision which includes the following:

- A thriving and productive Somerset that is ambitious, confident and focused on improving people’s lives
- A county of resilient, well-connected and safe and strong communities working to reduce inequalities
- A county infrastructure that supports affordable housing, economic prosperity and sustainable public services
- A county and environment where all partners, private and voluntary sector, focus on improving the health and wellbeing of all our communities

The “Somerset Housing Strategy 2019 – 2023” was launched in March 2019, covers the whole county and sits beneath the “Improving lives Strategy in Somerset Strategy 2019 - 2028”. The Strategy sets out the following vision for the county:

- **Strong and effective strategic Leadership:**
To deliver leadership across an integrated system that embraces communities, housing, health & wellbeing, social care and town & country planning
- **A local Economy that provides opportunity for all:**
To increase housing supply across all tenures and maximise the proportion of affordable homes including within rural communities, to be constructed by a skilled local labour force
- **Homes in Somerset are good for your Health:**
A healthy living environment with secure and decent homes that fosters independent living within strong communities
- **A Society that supports the vulnerable:**
Coordinated support to individuals and communities to reduce the impact of Welfare Reform, to prevent homelessness, and to facilitate a balanced housing stock that meets the needs of all local people

The “Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019 – 2023” sits beneath the “Somerset Housing Strategy” and works to support the vision and priorities detailed in it. The “Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019 – 2023” details what we know, what we are doing and what we will do to continue to improve the service we provide.

3 OVERVIEW OF HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING IN MENDIP, SEDGEMOOR, SOUTH SOMERSET, SOMERSET WEST AND TAUNTON

There were 478 homeless applications decisions taken in Somerset during 2018/19. Out of these 218 were owed a homelessness duty¹. The most common reason for initial contact throughout the county was the loss of an assured shorthold tenancy. The main reason for priority need was having dependent children, with the remaining factors covering the main criteria for a vulnerable individual.

¹ A main homelessness duty is owed where the authority is satisfied that an applicant is eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless and falls within a specified priority need group. Such statutorily homeless households are referred to as ‘acceptances’.

58% of applicants owed a main duty were aged 25 – 44 years followed by the 16 -24 years age group, who made up 25% of the applicants. The younger bias of those in need of support is very clear.

A total of 1495 prevention and relief cases presented during 2018/19. Of this total, 133 were assisted to remain in their accommodation and 516 were assisted into alternative accommodation under the prevention duty² (there were also another 251 that were assisted under the prevention duty but we were unable to break this down further), whilst 589 were assisted to relieve their homelessness under the relief duty³.

The use of temporary accommodation has been consistently low in Somerset over the last few years; we have accommodated 106 people, in such accommodation, as of quarter 4 (January – March) of 2018/19.

As a result of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (HRA) we are expecting demand for temporary accommodation to increase. This expectation stems from the fact that under this statutory provision we are obliged to help prevent an applicant becoming homeless, or relieve them of homelessness regardless of whether they are intentionally homeless. This requirement can mean that an applicant who is intentionally homeless will still need to be placed into temporary accommodation, if needed, whilst we try to relieve their homelessness during the 56 days' 'relief duty'.

We are also seeing an increase in the volume of approaches and the length of time staff are working on an individual case. This increase in volumes can mean that often cases where an applicant is likely to be intentionally homeless now remain with the officer concerned, as part of their casework, until a final decision is made.

We currently have approximately 568 armed forces veterans in the county who neither own nor rent a property and who could potentially become homeless. Homeless veterans have been found on average to be older and more likely to have alcohol-related problems. In considering the needs of homeless veterans, directing them to specialist advice can be as important as meeting their accommodation needs.

Pathways to Independence (P2i) is the commissioned service that deals with youth housing in Somerset. The highest proportion of youths needing help during 2018/19 were aged between 18-21 years, with the main reason for presenting being the threat of homelessness.

Positive Lives, which support adults with complex needs, supported 850 people during 2018. They provided other support too, such as helping 380 people to engage with education and training, 226 people to move into independent living and 47 people to gain employment.

² Homelessness prevention means providing people with the ways and means to address their housing and other needs to avoid homelessness. - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homelessness-data-notes-and-definitions>. This could involve services such as debt advice, undertaking the Tenancy Accreditation Scheme, rapid response service, Intensive Tenancy Support, rapid support that is carried out jointly between CAB & LA, mediation, floating support, deposit schemes, rough sleeper outreach, direct access hostels, tech loan to enable support etc.

³ Homelessness relief³ is where an authority has been unable to prevent homelessness but helps someone to secure accommodation, even though the authority is under no statutory obligation to do so - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homelessness-data-notes-and-definitions>

We also saw the launch, in April 2019, of the 'Second Step' service funded by Somerset County Council which helps clients with complex needs to live fulfilling lives in their communities, thus retaining their tenancy and reducing repeated homelessness.

We continue to assess gypsy and traveller provision within the county to ensure that we have suitable sites for settled or settling gypsies and travellers as well as transit sites for those who are moving through the county.

Rough sleeping within the county is currently a challenge in the Taunton area of Somerset West and Taunton Council and for Mendip District Council, but is at lower levels in the other districts

4 CHALLENGES AND GAPS IDENTIFIED IN CURRENT PROVISION:

The Somerset Homeless Needs Assessment concluded that:

- Population projections show that the population is due to grow faster than anticipated, especially in the former Taunton Deane area and in Sedgemoor. The challenge to deliver sufficient affordable homes and to support the tenure needs of our residents will become more pressing, not less.
- Whilst earnings have reduced, the average selling price of a house in Somerset has increased over the last five years, with a house costing typically close to eight times the earnings in the lowest quartile.
- There is a considerable gap in the affordability of homes for private rent in Somerset. The average rent currently accounts for 36% of the median gross monthly pay compared with 28% in 2015. Whilst the delivery of additional social housing may go some way to deal with the gap it will not resolve the entire issue for example affordable rents are not always affordable to all prospective tenants.
- The gap between the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) and the market rent for private lets is a significant barrier in allowing applicants to secure a private rented property because they cannot secure financial support to make the home affordable. This can force people to make a difficult choice and move away from support; e.g. to move away from their family.
- Finding better quality private rented stock accessible to low earners and people in receipt of benefits to meet their needs is challenging.
- There is concern the wider roll out of Universal Credit will place further demands on homeless services; we should continue to track these demands and may need to increase the proportions of Homefinder applicants who present in the Gold Band.
- Bringing empty properties back into use is always a challenge. Therefore, there is value in exploring and sharing best practice to increase the numbers brought back into use.
- When assessing what housing is needed in the county we need to ensure that adequate housing is provided which is suitable and available to help prevent youth homelessness. This may point to the need for smaller shared units rather than larger multi occupancy dwellings. Stakeholders also point to the need for more access for single and couples, non-priority households. It may also be worth considering ways to enable young people

to be educated in school regarding homelessness to try to help alleviate future youth homelessness since funding has been removed for this service.

- The highest proportion of homeless applicants are aged 25-44 years, with the most common reason for being made homeless being due to receiving a notice to quit from a private sector landlord. Work could be undertaken to understand and consider what we could do to reduce the number of notices issued. Support could be given to landlords facing difficulties to stay in the private renting market if they are finding it problematic.
- Whilst we have been successful with cases, preventing and relieving their homelessness, we continue to seek new ways to reduce the number of people approaching us needing temporary accommodation.
- The Homeless Reduction Act 2017 brought increased demands on services with new duties and extended periods (namely, 56 days' prevention duty and 56 days relief duty). We now have a duty to produce and agree a personal housing plan, support all clients for a longer period during the extended duty time, and including increased length of time in Temporary Accommodation. We will need to continue to find ways to improve processes to deal effectively with this increased demand.
- When working with veterans and their families, additional protocols may be needed to signpost to support with other factors, such as PTSD, alcohol or mental health problems exacerbating the situation.
- We have an ageing population in Somerset, especially in the 85 years and older group. The future needs of older people need to rise up the agenda and more energy given to understanding their requirements and future housing options.
- Rough sleeping is a concern for all and particularly a challenge in much of the county in particular, due to higher numbers and complexity of need. It will continue to demand sustained focus and resource with additional interventions, strategies and coordinated partnership working. It's likely that there is rough sleeping which is 'unseen', which would include those sofa surfing, sleeping in vehicles and tents hidden in rural areas. It is key that we address reconnections robustly and swiftly.
- There is a continued need for increased collaborative working with partnership agencies where homelessness is an issue or risk, especially to support the vulnerable and those with complex needs. Resources are limited and in many cases, different agencies hold a different part of the jigsaw.
- Continued intervention where possible to help clients to remain in their existing homes to aid the prevention of homelessness. It is well recognised that homelessness costs individuals in terms of their mental and physical health as well as the cost to their finances and local service resources.

5 WHAT WILL WE PRIORITISE?

Since the adoption of the Interim Homelessness Strategy we have seen the introduction of the Homeless Reduction Act (HRA) in April 2018. A priority for the new strategy will be to Track and respond to the impacts of the Act over the term of the new strategy.

PRIORITY 1: Provision of adequate, affordable housing stock

As a result of the widening affordability gap, it is important that we continue to press developers to deliver affordable homes of all tenures. We can also prop up the provision of appropriate housing through bringing existing vacant dwellings back into use and by supporting landlords to continue to make homes available for social rent. Finally, we should push for the continued improvement of the quality of private rented housing stock.

PRIORITY 2: Support clients to remain in their existing accommodation where appropriate.

This priority supports the policy and legislative agenda to prevent homelessness and looks at improving the range of options, support and tools that can assist an individual to remain in their existing accommodation. Needing to move accommodation can be hugely disruptive and costly for individuals and families; therefore being able to sustain current accommodation can deliver cost savings for Local Authorities and their partner agencies, as well as reducing the negative impact on individuals' and families' lives. In particular, we need to reduce the incidence of those being given notice to quit. Understanding the detail behind this may require further engagement.

This priority would help us to meet the 'prevention duty' detailed in the HRA 2017 which places a duty on us as districts to make available for all who are at risk of becoming homeless and not just those individuals that are in 'priority need'⁴. Prevention duty lasts for 56 days and is designed to reduce homelessness. If we are not able to prevent the individual becoming homeless they will then come under 'relief duty' which requires housing authorities to help those that are homeless to secure accommodation. This duty applies to individuals that are both homeless and eligible for assistance. The 'relief duty' lasts for another 56 days; during this time reasonable steps must be taken by the housing authority and the applicant to secure accommodation. These steps are set out in a personalised housing plan (PHP) which is drawn up with the applicant. The PHP is a new requirement to help the applicant take ownership and work with the housing advice team to relieve their homelessness.

⁴ "The following have a priority need for accommodation:

- a pregnant woman or a person with whom she resides or might reasonably be expected to reside;
- a person with whom dependent children reside or might reasonably be expected to reside;
- a person who is vulnerable as a result of old age, mental illness or handicap or physical disability or other special reason, or with whom such a person resides or might reasonably be expected to reside;
- a person who is homeless or threatened with homelessness as a result of an emergency such as flood, fire or other disaster."

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/52/section/189>

PRIORITY 3: Enable specific client groups to access suitable accommodation

It may not always be possible for a client to remain in their current accommodation so where a move cannot be avoided, this priority will support and empower them to access suitable accommodation that is affordable to them in a timely manner. This priority looks at the options open to clients and considers the accommodation choices available such as the private rented sector and move-on options.

More specifically, we need to influence housing providers to deliver a range of housing that meets local need including to help prevent youth homelessness, which may point to the need for smaller shared units rather than larger, multi-occupancy dwellings. We also have an ageing population, especially evident in the growing number of those aged 85 years or older, and we need to commit to understanding their needs to enable us to plan to meet their future requirements.

PRIORITY 4: Support the government's commitment to combat rough sleeping.

All districts are committed to support the MHCLG commitment to combat rough sleeping. Whilst there will be common approaches within the county there will be targeted actions to address specific needs within districts, such as:

- Collectively be robust and timely in our reconnection policies and practices
- Ensure there is effective and adequate emergency accommodation for rough sleepers
- Enhance our cold weather provision to engage rough sleepers who are otherwise hard to reach
- Collaborate with other services to tackle the root causes of homelessness
- Identify organisations and groups inadvertently sustaining rough sleeping. Help them to understand the issues and work together to create a consistent approach
- Understand the reasons for non-engagement and developing policies for prevention, intervention and recovery for rough sleepers
- Continuously monitor, review and develop our existing interventions to optimise their effectiveness

PRIORITY 5: Maintain strong working relationships across partnerships.

This strategy is a partnership approach between four Local Authorities as well as their partners. It cannot be delivered in isolation and this priority recognises the need for existing working relationships to be maintained and built upon. Effective partnership working brings a number of benefits including the sharing of best practice and effective use of resources to deliver cost savings to all working partners and, for this reason, it remains a priority.

We especially need to work together to ensure there are effective accessible pathways which empower vulnerable individuals and those with complex needs.

Many of those sleeping rough will have complex needs, and there will be others across the district who are highly vulnerable, including those with dual diagnosis, where the only option is to work in partnership if we are to improve their outlook.

PRIORITY 6: Track and respond to the impacts of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

The Act became effective from 3rd April 2018 and requires the expansion of existing homeless services. It presents a number of challenges due to the level of change it required and associated resource implications.

We need to:

- Continue to deliver prevention focussed housing options services and review their effectiveness
- Look at ways of improving staff retention and recruitment into the Housing Options profession
- Monitor and respond to increased numbers in temporary accommodation due to the length of time we now have to accommodate under the HRA 2017

6 WHAT WILL WE DO?

The following actions relate to the conclusions identified in the 'Somerset Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Needs Assessment 2019'. The priorities and actions relate to the county as a whole, if an action is just connected to a specific authority this will be detailed in the responsibility section so that this is clear. Each priority is detailed individually on the following pages with the relevant actions detailed below the priority for ease. The actions have been categorised as those which we can **deliver**, those which we will **enable** and those where the role of the council is to **support**:

PRIORITY 1: Provision of adequate, affordable housing stock

No	Our role	Action	Timescale (Importance)	Responsibility	Measure	Review date
6.1.1	Enable	Strengthen our relationships with registered providers and developers to increase the amount of new affordable housing provided within the county	Ongoing	Enabling Teams		
6.1.2	Enable	Maximise the provision of 1 bed affordable social housing accommodation across all areas by working with registered providers and new build developers		Enabling Teams		
6.1.3		Work closely with planning and housing enabling teams to ensure we encourage development of diverse appropriate housing to meet local needs including consideration of modular and other non-traditional forms of housing	Ongoing	Enabling Teams		
6.1.4	Support	Work with P2i to look at the types of accommodation that are needed for dealing with youth homelessness and where these dwellings would be best located	Ongoing	HMG		
6.1.5	Deliver	Look at the vacancies that have arisen on Homefinder for social housing supported accommodation for older people which have been difficult to let to try and establish the reasons why and look at what is needed to ensure that this accommodation is desirable to older persons		Homefinder Management and Monitoring Board		
6.1.6	Enable	Share best practice to bring more private sector properties back into use to increase our success rate		Empty Homes Officers/Team		
6.1.7	Support	Continue to monitor the effect organisations such as Airbnb has on the private rented sector	Ongoing	HMG		
6.1.8	Enable	Review the effectiveness of bond schemes to ensure they support access to the private rented sector		HMG		

SOMERSET HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPER STRATEGY

PRIORITY 2: Support clients to remain in their existing accommodation where appropriate

No	Our Role	Action	Timescale (Importance)	Responsibility	Measure	Review date
6.2.1	Deliver	Review processes to gain more information from households who present at the risk of homelessness and the reasons why they have received notice to quit, to get an idea of the reasons why and if its related to the landlord facing issues including new legislation, financial difficulties or tenancy issues; we can work with the landlords to resolve the problems and keep the property on the private rented market.		HMG		
6.2.2	Support	Consider whether a Private Rented Officer is needed to work with landlords to overcome barriers such as: bonds not being accepted; Universal Credit applicants being rejected; finding solutions so that the applicant is accommodated and the landlord is reassured with any concerns they may have. This could also cover areas such as working with the applicants to get rent paid direct to the landlord if needed as there has been some movement on this since Universal Credit was first introduced		Individual districts that do not already have a private rented officer		
6.2.3	Deliver	Monitor the effectiveness of and ensure we deliver "value for money" prevention schemes to support homelessness prevention, building on previous initiatives such as tenancy support; mediation and rent in advance for non-priority cases		HMG		

PRIORITY 3: Enable specific client groups to access suitable accommodation

No	Our role	Action	Timescale (Importance)	Responsibility	Measure	Review date
6.3.1	Deliver	To review how we deliver bespoke good quality and meaningful Personal Housing Plan tasks. Explore opportunities to improve and streamline the process as it is currently resource intensive		HMG		
6.3.2	Deliver	Look at joint training opportunities for staff to upskill to continuously improve our service delivery including particular reference to high quality individual Personal Housing Plans (PHP).		HMG		

SOMERSET HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPER STRATEGY

No	Our role	Action	Timescale (Importance)	Responsibility	Measure	Review date
6.3.3	Deliver	Monitor the incidence of clients with mental health needs unable to access services due to their high needs and no dual diagnosis. If there is evidence of unmet need in this respect, ask Somerset County Council commissioners to review provision to ensure that they are able to meet identified local needs		HMG		
6.3.4	Support	Identify support schemes across the county and work in partnership to ensure clients can access suitable accommodation effectively		HMG		
6.3.5	Support/ Enable	Look at funding opportunities to enable young people to be educated in school regarding homelessness to try and help alleviate youth homelessness		HMG		
6.3.6	Support	Ensure there is a focus on income maximisation to manage arrears and debts and encourage clients to start saving as early as possible if needed to manage expectations and the reality of available housing, predominantly in the private rented sector.		HMG		
6.3.7	Deliver	Investigate training opportunities for staff to gain more awareness of the needs of armed forces veterans to enable us to modify how we work with veterans and where they can be directed for additional support.		Districts		
6.3.8	Deliver	Consider any additional needs for particular client groups as identified in the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)		HMG		April 2020

PRIORITY 4: Support the government's commitment to combat rough sleeping.

No	Our role	Action	Timescale (Importance)	Responsibility	Measure	Review date
6.4.1	Deliver	Continue to monitor the extent of rough sleeping at a frequency appropriate to local need, daily if required, so that swift action can be taken when new rough sleepers are identified	Ongoing	HMG		
6.4.2	Enable	Work with partner organisations to ensure there are viable accommodation options and effective housing pathways to help new and longer term rough sleepers	Ongoing	HMG		
6.4.3	Deliver	Where appropriate review reconnection success in order to strengthen reconnection policy and practice		Districts		

SOMERSET HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPER STRATEGY

No	Our role	Action	Timescale (Importance)	Responsibility	Measure	Review date
6.4.4	Deliver and enable	Identify organisations and groups inadvertently sustaining rough sleeping. Help them to understand the issues and work together to create a consistent approach		Districts		
6.4.5	Deliver	Review opportunities presented through severe weather provision to engage rough sleepers who are reluctant to accept services		HMG		
6.4.6	Deliver	Continuously monitor, review and develop our existing interventions to optimise their effectiveness	Ongoing	Districts		
6.4.7	Deliver	Ensure practice focuses on prevention, early intervention/reconnection and recovery for rough sleepers		Districts		

PRIORITY 5: Maintain strong working relationships across partnerships.

No	Our role	Action	Timescale (Importance)	Responsibility	Measure	Review date
6.5.1	Deliver	Monitor the Second step contract to ensure that positive outcomes are delivered for this client group		Districts		

PRIORITY 6: Track and respond to the impacts of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

No	Our role	Action	Timescale (Importance)	Responsibility	Measure	Review date
6.6.1	Deliver	Monitor the volume and quality of cases following the introduction of the Homeless Reduction Act 2017, making use of intelligence from HCLIC data, respond to local issues. Identify what works well and the extent to which teams prioritise early intervention to get the best outcomes		Individual Districts		
6.6.2	Deliver	Ensure pro-active casework continues once applicants are in temporary accommodation and policies including the Homefinder Somerset Common Allocations Policy, support rapid throughput and early exit from temporary accommodation		Districts		
6.6.3	Support	Work with DWP to increase the advice and opportunities to our customers to maximise their income and skills		HMG		

SOMERSET HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPER STRATEGY

No	Our role	Action	Timescale (Importance)	Responsibility	Measure	Review date
6.6.4	Deliver	Review the outcomes of the use of a hospital discharge worker in South Somerset and explore opportunities to roll out any best practice from this pilot		HMG		
6.6.5	Deliver	Review the outcomes of the use of a drug and alcohol worker in South Somerset and Somerset West and Taunton and explore opportunities to roll out any best practice from this pilot		HMG		
6.6.6	Deliver	Review systems currently in place to reduce the number of repeated client contacts/assessments with different services i.e. improve referrals and information sharing protocols and explore a single point of access to make it easier for both the client and housing options teams		HMG		
6.6.7	Enable	It is essential that local policies and practices support homeless prevention and relief and are inclusive of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged clients. Therefore, we need to make sure that the Homefinder Somerset Common Lettings Policy is up to date in tune with the latest government thinking and that social housing allocations are made in line with the policy and support the intention of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.	Ongoing	HMG		
6.6.8	Enable	Review the Common Lettings Policy and the implementation of the policy by Registered Providers, referring any issues back to the Board for action.		Homefinder Somerset Coordinator		
6.6.9	Deliver	Review the triage process to ensure clients presenting to other agencies can easily be referred to avoid repeating contacts and assessment processes.		Districts		
6.6.10	Deliver	Review the quality and efficiency of advice given by the teams and make recommendations for improvement including best practice in Personal Housing Plans tailored to clients. Share learning through the HMG.		Districts		

7 HOW WILL WE BE MEASURED?

The 'Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019-2023' will be implemented by each district through the Homeless Managers Group (HMG) who will be responsible for the day to day delivery of this strategy and actions contained within the action plan; including monitoring progress against actions and targets at the monthly HMG meetings. There will also be a link with the Strategic Housing Officers Group (SHOG) who are responsible for the delivery plan for the 'Somerset Housing Strategy 2019-2023' so close links will be maintained between both groups to ensure we keep track of progress on all actions overall.

Each district will also have their own additional measures in place to monitor the progress of the actions relating to their district as well as performance monitoring which covers things such as: number of households helped; number of households in temporary accommodation and average number of nights in bed and breakfast. These measures are normally reported on a quarterly basis so, can be evaluated at each quarter to assess if there is anything that needs to be looked at in more detail or actioned in addition to the action plan itself.

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	4 Councils in Somerset including Mendip DC, Sedgemoor DC, South Somerset DC and Somerset West and Taunton Council
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Version	V1	Date Completed	November 2019
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Description of what is being impact assessed

Somerset Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019 to 2023

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

Somerset Homelessness and Rough Sleeper needs assessment 2019

The assessment outlines the extent of homelessness and rough sleeping across Somerset at district authority level, evaluating existing provision and identifying gaps in provision

Main points:

- South Somerset is the largest district geographically
- Sedgemoor is expected to experience the largest population change
- As at date of needs assessment (June 2019) there were 8795 people currently expressing a need for affordable housing, with one bedroom accommodation the most in demand, especially in Taunton Deane
- The highest age prevalence is in the age range 25-59, except West Somerset, where the highest age group is 45-59 and 65-74.
- In Taunton there is a slightly higher proportion of 25-44 year olds

- In West Somerset 42% are 60 year or over, compared to 33% for Somerset as a whole
- To afford to buy a home in Somerset would require 7.6 time their earnings, although there is wide disparity in affordability across the Somerset districts. The highest ratio is in Mendip and West Somerset where in 2017 a household would have required more than 10 times their earnings to afford a home. Sedgemoor has also seen a sharp ratio increase
- There is a widening gap in affordability to rent, with median monthly rent accounting for an average of 36% of gross monthly pay, an increase since 2015
- In all districts the highest need is for social rented dwellings which account for 70-80% of overall need
- Taunton Deane has the highest combined number of 'Gold' and emergency need households, followed by South Somerset
- There are 2041 (October 2018) long term vacant dwellings in Somerset
- In 2018/19 indicative figures indicate that the districts delivered the following number of affordable homes
 1. Mendip – 100
 2. Sedgemoor – 130
 3. South Somerset – 122
 4. Taunton Deane – 218
 5. West Somerset – 3
- The outcome of homeless applications can be seen as follows

	Mendip	Sedgemoor	South Somerset	Somerset West and Taunton
Eligible, unintentionally homeless and is priority need	10	84	83	62
Eligible, homeless, in priority need but intentionally homeless	4	7	9	0
Eligible, homeless but not in priority need	18	38	25	7
Eligible but not homeless	2	14	2	2
Lost contact prior to assessment	2	3	0	0
Withdrew prior to assessment	1	0	1	89
Not eligible for assistance	0	1	4	10
Total	37	147	124	170

- There are a number of reasons why an individual contacts the local authority with a threat of Homelessness, including
 1. Loss of Assured Shorthold Tenancy
 2. Family no longer able/willing to accommodate
 3. Non-violent breakdown in relationship
 4. Domestic abuse
- In 2018/19 the following number of applicants were accepted by the Somerset local authorities as homeless and in priority need:
 1. Mendip - 10
 2. Sedgemoor – 84
 3. South Somerset – 80
 4. Taunton Deane and West Somerset – 41
- Priority need groups include:
 1. Households with dependent children
 2. Pregnant women
 3. People who are 'vulnerable' in some way, e.g. because of mental illness and physical disability
 4. Aged 16-17
 5. Aged 18 to 20 who were previously in care
 6. Vulnerable as a result of time spent in care, in custody, or in HM Forces
 7. Vulnerable as a result of having to flee their home because of violence or the threat of violence
- The main reason for priority need is having dependent children
- 55% of applicants who are owed a main housing duty are aged 25-44
- 16-24 year old, who disproportionately make up 25% of the applicants
- Using MOD data from 2017, they estimated that 49,000 veterans live in Somerset of which 75.64% own a house, 23.19% rent a property. The balance, 1.17% (568) would imply are potentially homeless
- P2i is a multi-agency homelessness prevention service for young people aged 16-25 who reside in or have a local connection to the Somerset area. The age demographic for P2i as at 28/3/19 is as follows:

	16/17	18/21	22 and over
Mendip	4	30	5
Sedgemoor	10	19	9
South Somerset	5	17	9
West Somerset and Taunton	2	22	12
Total	21	88	35

- There 2 predominant reasons why the P2i service is contacted and they are threatened with homelessness (71.6%) and Homeless tonight (25.2%).
- Positive lives is a multi-agency, cross sector alliance, which delivers creative solutions for entrenched adults with complex needs. Over the past year Positive Lives have
 - Supported 850 people
 - Supported 400 people at any one time
 - 380 people engaged in education and training
 - 266 people moved into independent living
 - 47 people obtained employment
 - 38 very vulnerable/high risk people moved into independent living
 - 20 people engaged in formal volunteering as a preparation for work
 - 262 people from local communities have provided voluntary support
- Step together commissioned by SCC for adults in Somerset who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and also have a mix of mental health needs, drug and alcohol problems, behavioural issues, debt or have been involved in the criminal justice system
- Rough sleeping – based a single snapshot in autumn every year using street counts and intelligence drive estimates, in 2018 the following numbers were the extent of rough sleeping:

Mendip 14 Sedgemoor 3 South Somerset 3 Taunton Deane 14 West Somerset

Initial assessment of statutory homelessness duties owed – ethnicity- January to March 2019

	Total owed a duty	White British	White Irish	White Gypsy and Traveller	White Other	Black, African Caribbean	Asian	Mixed	Other	Unknown
SDC	155	134	3	2	9	1	2			4
SSDC	127	115			8		3		1	
MDC	236	199	3	2	10	1		3	2	16
Taunton	149	128		1	7	3	7	1	1	1
West Somerset	35	33				2				

Priority need category of households owed a main duty by LA – January to March 2019

	Total	HH with dependent children	HH with pregnant women	Total Vulnerable household	Old Age	Physical, ill health	Mental Health	Young	Other
SDC	26	19	0	7	0	3	2	0	0
MDC	2								
Taunton	7	4	0	3	0	1	1	0	1
West Somerset	2								
SSDC	19	12	3	4	0	1	1	0	1

Rough Sleeping by age, nationality and gender – January to March 2019

	Total	UK	EU	Non EU	Not known	Under 18	18-25	26 and over	Not known	Male	Female
SDC	3	1	1	0	1			3		3	
MDC	14	11	2	1	0			13	1	9	5
SSDC	3	3						3		3	
Taunton	14	13	1				1	12	1	14	
West Somerset	2	2						2		2	

Somerset Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019 to 2023 - Priorities

Priority One – Provision of adequate, affordable housing stock

Priority Two – Support clients to remain in their existing accommodation where appropriate

Priority Three – Support specific client groups to access suitable accommodation through effective support

Priority Four – Support the government's commitment to combat rough sleeping

Priority Five – Maintain strong working relationships across the partnership

Priority Six – Track and respond to the impacts of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

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

1. A homelessness survey was available throughout November and December 2018. The survey was sent to a sample of homeless applicants and all stakeholders.

2. Responses received by districts is as follows:

District	Applicants	Stakeholders
Mendip	7	32
Sedgemoor	12	22
South Somerset	11	12
Taunton Deane	11	4
West Somerset	2	3
Total	43	73

3. Feedback

- More work is needed with applicants on how to improve Personalised Housing Plans (PHP), as only 10 found them useful and referred to them again
- Temporary accommodation not always suitable for client's needs, including disability
- Stakeholders were asked how relevant a number of issues were to them in their role. The top 2 were housing options for single, non-priority households and the occurrence of rough sleeping. Other issues include:
 - Community outreach to prevent homelessness
 - Adequate suitable temporary accommodation

- Difficulty assessing the private rented sector
- Housing options for people with disabilities

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age is captured on all homeless and housing need customers • There no evidence that those in any age group are disadvantaged in their access to the service or housing assistance • The needs assessment (June 2019) 58% of applicants owed a main duty were aged 25-44 • 25% of the applicants were 16-24 years old • The highest proportion of young people needing help in 2018/19 were aged 18 to 21 years old with the main reason for presenting being the threat of homelessness • P2i works to prevent youth homelessness for the age 16 to 25. In 2018 21 16/17 year olds, 88 18/21 year olds and 35 22 and over used the service • West Somerset in particular has a significant over 60 year old population with 42% over 60 in comparison to 33% for Somerset as a whole 	□	⊗	□

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2018/19 there were 14 households accepted as owed a minia homelessness duty who were over 60 For the period January to March 2019, of the 36 identified as rough sleeping, the majority were over 26, with only 1 between 18 and 25 			
Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive lives is a multi-agency, cross sector alliance, championing a new approach for the most entrenched adults with complex needs. The project has supported 850 people during 2018 Step Together is a new support service (2019) for adults who are homeless or are at risk of homelessness and have a mixture of mental health needs, drug and alcohol problems, behavioural issues. Finding suitable temporary accommodation for people with disabilities is an issue For the period January to March 2019 who are in priority need owed a main duty by the LA, of the 56, 5 had physical disabilities and 4 had Mental Health issues that were declared 	☒	☐	☐
Gender reassignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have no evidence to suggest that applicants from this group are disadvantaged in any way by the strategy They may be at risk of homelessness arising from transphobic reactions, Hate Crime and harassment by family, neighbours or members of local communities 	☐	☐	☐
Marriage and civil partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicants are not disadvantaged by either being married or on a civil partnership or not when accessing affordable housing on terms of the housing register or homelessness/homeless prevention services 	☐	☐	☒

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Registered civil partners have the same rights as married heterosexual spouses in relation to proper recognition 			
Pregnancy and maternity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Since the 1st April 2004, it has been unlawful for local authorities to house families with children and pregnant women in bed and breakfast accommodation for more 6 weeks, which has put increased pressure on the housing system Of the 56 in priority need where owed a main duty by local authority, for the period January to March 2019, 3 were pregnant 	□	□	☒
Race and ethnicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gypsy and Traveller communities; Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers a recognised ethnic categories within the Equality Act 2010 The GTAA in 2013 identified pitch, transit and showpeople yards. At the present time, there is no transit facility in Somerset although there is work being undertaken to see if at least one site can be got off the ground in 2020. Unauthorised encampments of Gypsy and Travellers has increased over the past 18 months with particular areas vulnerable to returning encampments including Sedgemoor and Taunton Deane Using ONS Local Area Migration Indicators for 2018, Somerset population totals 546,000, with Non UK born population approximately 7.9% (about 43,000) Based on the H-CLIC data for January to March 2019, of the 702 application, for that period, where an initial assessment of statutory duty owed, 10.3% were from nationalities other White British. 	☒	□	□

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Of the 702 applications, 0.7% with from Gypsy and Traveller origins and determining housing requirements for them will be needed as they have their own culture. • In respect of rough sleeping for the period January to March 2019, of the 36 rough sleepers in the County, approximately 14% were from either the EU or non EU country • Language barriers and lack of understanding of the housing system are potential challenges in accessing support 			
Religion or belief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no evidence to suggest that applicants from this group are disadvantaged in anyway by the strategy • Assessment of need and Personal Housing Plans should take account of specific beliefs and religion • Setting the Local Housing Allowance at 30% of the rate of private rents in the area, and not having an LHA for more than 4 bedrooms, could therefore disproportionately affect some religious groups who may multi-generational/larger families living in one property 	□	⊗	□
Sex (gender)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing comprehensive advice services across all tenures will benefit women, especially those at risk of domestic abuse and who could be at risk through the impact of welfare reform • Since 1st April 2004, it has been unlawful for local authorities to house families with children and pregnant women in bed and breakfast accommodation for more than six weeks, which has put increased pressure on the housing system • For the period January to March 2019, of the 36 rough sleepers in Somerset, approximately 85% are male and 15% female, with Mendip and Taunton Deane having the highest percentage of rough sleepers 	□	⊗	⊗

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programmes are in place to support vulnerable adults including Positive Lives and the new service from April 2019, Step Together. 			
Sexual orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessments of need and Personal Housing Plans may be a suitable way to determine what types of dwellings are required which could include location and neighbourhood to avoid harassment or discrimination In a survey with LGBT young people in Somerset, 85% of the respondents indicated that they had either been bullied, witness bullying or both with 86% had experienced verbal abuse 	☐	☒	☐
Armed Forces Veterans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 568 Armed Forces Veterans who neither own or rent a property and who could potentially become homeless. Homeless veterans tend to be older and more likely to have alcohol-related problems Other factors that could contribute to homelessness amongst single veterans include their experience of service, including unfamiliarity with civilian life, making it difficult to secure housing and to manage tenancies 	☒	☐	☐
Rurality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Somerset is a rural county with South Somerset the largest geographically Rough sleepers may well go unseen due to the rural nature of the county Transport is a significant issue for Somerset and can lead to isolation in some of the more rural areas of the county In census 2011 around 10% of White British households in Somerset do not access to a car, compared to 15-16% of all other ethnic groups 	☐	☒	☐

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internet connectivity is an issue in a number of rural communities which can impact on people being to access services as they go increasingly online 			
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
•	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
•	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
•	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
•	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
•	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
•	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
•	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
•	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
If negative impacts remain, please provide an explanation below.				
Further work is needed to review the negative impacts and agree appropriate mitigations. This will be looked at by the Homeless Managers Group to agree any additional actions that may be required. An action has been included in the strategy action plan to confirm that this will take place.				

Completed by:	
Date	
Signed off by:	To be signed off once the action above has been completed
Date	
Equality Lead/Manager sign off date:	
To be reviewed by: (officer name)	
Review date:	April 2020

Agenda Item 6

Somerset Climate Emergency Framework

Executive Portfolio Holder: Sarah Dyke, Environment
Director: Clare Pestell, Director Of Commercial and Income Generation
Lead Specialist: Jan Gamon, Lead Specialist, Strategic Planning
Contact Details: Jan.gamon@southsomerset.gov.uk or 07971 111884

Purpose of the Report

1. To inform Members about the emergence of a framework for developing the county-wide Climate Strategy and to seek comments to guide development of the Strategy.

Forward Plan

2. This report appeared on the District Executive Forward Plan with an anticipated Committee date of December 2019.

Public Interest

3. The five councils which operate across Somerset are coming together to develop a Climate Emergency Strategy. As part of the development of the Strategy, we have produced a framework to guide the work we do. This is needed to ensure that all of the workstreams are given the same scope, that we operate within an agreed timescale and that the governance arrangements for progressing the Strategy are visible to the public, in addition to officers and members.

Recommendations

4. That the District Executive:
 - a. Review the Climate Change Framework and intended work streams and provide feedback
 - b. Agree that the final Framework document and the draft Strategy and Action Plan may be signed off by the Portfolio Holder for the Environment

Background

5. In 2019 the five Somerset Local Authorities recognised 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.
6. SSDC's own Environment Strategy fits within this county wide work. In developing our own strategy we referenced that there were additional areas that would be addressed within the wider county Strategy; these are now included within the framework.

Report

7. A group of officers representing Somerset County Council, the four district authorities, SWP and Exmoor National Park Authority is guiding and shaping the framework within which the detailed investigation needed will be undertaken. This group – the Strategic Management Group - will have

a critical overseeing role in shaping the desired outcomes that emanate from that work. SSDC's representation on that group is Jan Gamon.

8. Feeding into the Strategic Management Group will be the detailed work undertaken by operational experts and stakeholders within nine work streams:

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

Each of these work streams is working to a detailed brief and has a nominated lead. They are research and prioritising key issues, identifying possible actions to mitigate and understanding the full life cycle of decisions to implement these actions. SSDC has representation on several of these work streams, wherever we are able to support with appropriate subject-matter expertise.

9. The work of officers is overseen by a group of portfolio holders from across the districts, which includes Sarah Dyke, and by the Leaders and CEOs, with Brendan Cleere and Michele Cusack acting as the conduit between these groups. The work of all groups is scrutinised by a Task and Finish Group; our representation on that group is through Gerard Tucker and Paul Maxwell.

Proposed Timings

10. Members are asked to note the proposed timings for delivery of the Climate Emergency Strategy, which includes provision for consultation during January and February 2020.

Date	Stage
October– December 2019	Framework Strategy through authorities' Scrutiny and District Exec Committees
January – February 2020	Consult on Framework Strategy to include Climate Change 'Have your Say' events in February
April 2020`	Draft Strategy and action plan through joint T&F group, Portfolio Holders and joint Leaders and CEOs group
May – June 2020	Consult on draft Strategy
July 2020	Final Strategy and action plan through joint T&F group, Portfolio Holders and joint Leaders and CEOs group
August 2020	Final strategy through individual authorities' Scrutiny and District Executive Committees
August 2020	Final Strategy to individual Councils for adoption

11. Consultation activities are in the early stages of development, but are expected to include an online consultation aimed at secondary school-aged children 11-18 years, preceded by school visits to encourage participation. They also include an online consultation aimed at all residents, communities and businesses in Somerset and a series of Summits, one per district, which will take the form of a full day, face-to-face consultation event, open to all.

Financial Implications

12. At this stage, SSDC has committed £10k to support the development of the county-wide strategy; largely to permit the Strategic Management Group to access appropriate external expertise, including execution of the consultation plan.
13. All authorities have already committed considerable resource to development of the framework to date and, as a result of our activity so far, it is becoming apparent that future development would be better served by securing project management expertise. This is likely to incur an additional cost but will be supported by a detailed costing plan and brought forward for approval through appropriate channels.

Council Plan Implications

14. We believe that development of a county-wide approach to tackling the effects of climate change fits neatly with SSDC's current Council Plan (2019-20), which identifies the environment as one of our five key areas of focus.

Background papers

Climate Emergency Framework, October 2019

Draft Somerset Climate Emergency Framework

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1: Introduction

This framework document has been produced by the five Somerset Local Authorities (Mendip District Council, Sedgemoor District Council, Somerset County Council, Somerset West and Taunton District Council, and South Somerset District Council). It aims to summarise and outline the work currently co-ordinated by the Local Authorities to meet our targets for carbon neutrality. A brief account of the current situation in Somerset and issues associated with climate change is provided, highlighting why we are undertaking this work.

This framework is intended to spark a conversation with our communities, interest groups, businesses and other relevant stakeholders in order to generate true community engagement and strategy co-development, ensuring that everyone in Somerset feels a sense of ownership of the full Climate Emergency Strategy and the actions that arise from it. This initial document will provide some high-level detail explaining the expected directions of travel required to address the various issues that have been identified. However, it is essential that the detailed Climate Emergency Strategy and Action Plans derived from it are informed by listening to the communities that will be affected by any changes, whilst we learn from initiatives, projects and actions already planned and implemented within our communities. The final Climate Emergency Strategy produced by this work will not simply be a Council document; it will be recognised and owned by everyone in Somerset and be held as a collective response to the Climate Emergency.

The Climate Emergency Strategy will contain more detailed analysis of the changes required for Somerset to become carbon neutral and increase resilience to the risks posed by climate change locally. The Strategy will aim to detail programmes and projects to address these issues, with estimated costs, carbon emissions reductions and cost-benefit analysis included. Actions will be split over short-, medium- and long-term timescales to enable prioritisation and effective planning.

Individual Local Authorities will produce Action Plans supplementing the Climate Emergency Strategy. These Action Plans will specifically identify how the overall Strategy is relevant to each district, how projects will be delivered and funded, and detail the response to area-specific issues. To maximise the effectiveness and efficiency of the mitigation and adaptation responses implemented by the Local Authorities, these Action Plans will be dynamic and flexible in nature, continuously adapting to the most up to date evidence, methodologies, funding sources and ideas. Engaging with communities throughout the life-cycle of these Action Plans will be essential as the Plans evolve to meet new challenges or opportunities.

2: The Declarations

In 2019, the five Somerset Local Authorities passed resolutions to declare or recognise 'Climate Emergencies' and have since agreed to collaborate to produce and deliver an ambitious, joint Climate Emergency Strategy encompassing the county of Somerset.

Each declaration is slightly different, but all aspire to achieving carbon neutrality and ensuring that we are adapted to the effects of climate change within each administrative area. The appendix contains the individual motions of each Council in full.

3: Contextualising Climate Change

3.1: Global

A recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report highlights the importance of taking immediate action to limit global warming to a 1.5°C threshold, compared to temperatures from the pre-industrial period¹. Whilst achieving this limit is a challenge, requiring 'rapid and far-reaching transitions in land, energy, industry, buildings, transport and cities' to meet the required net-zero carbon emissions targets, it is certainly possible and requires action to meet these targets immediately¹.

The risks associated with missing this 1.5°C threshold are significant: global warming reaching 2°C has considerable implications for sea level rise, Arctic Ocean sea ice coverage, and prevalence of extreme weather, whilst 99% of all coral reefs would be lost¹.

3.2: United Kingdom

In response to the IPCC report, the Committee on Climate Change (the UK Government's independent advisor on Climate Change) published *Net Zero – The UK's contribution to stopping global warming*², which suggested that the UK should set a national target for carbon neutrality by 2050, and recommended numerous 'core', 'further ambition' and 'speculative' options, policy changes and projects for the UK to pursue. Since then, the UK Government has declared a climate emergency and set a legally binding target for carbon neutrality in 2050 through amendments to the Climate Change Act³. However, Government policy continues to lag behind this target and the recommendations of the CCC.

Nationally, the UK has reportedly made significant progress, reducing emissions by approximately 40% since 1990. However, the majority of progress derives from changes made in the power, waste and industry sectors. Key sectors, such as the built environment and transport, have made little progress – transport emissions have remained steady with little reduction since 1990. The importance of achieving net-zero carbon emissions is highlighted within legislation; the UK's 2050 net zero target is legally binding³ and offers an opportunity for the UK to be an exemplar case study in inspiring other countries to legislate for and meet ambitious carbon neutrality targets.

3.3: Somerset

The tangible impacts of climate change will be particularly visible in Somerset. Due to the topography of the region, rising sea levels will significantly impact coastal flooding in low-lying regions such as the Somerset Levels and Moors, whilst increases in extreme weather events will increase river and surface water flood risk. Coastal communities are likely to become more vulnerable to coastal erosion and shoreline retreat.

Additionally, temperatures are likely to increase in excess of the global average. Even if the global temperature increase is limited to 2°C, Somerset is likely to experience temperature change higher than this⁴. The latest projections (UK Climate Projections 18, produced by the Met Office) indicate that summers will be hotter, with increases by 3.7°C to 6.8°C, depending on how carbon emissions are managed, by 2070⁵. Hot spells, defined as consecutive days reaching temperatures in excess of 30°C, will increase in likelihood by almost 20 times⁵. This increases risk to drought, heat-waves, water stress and pressures to existing water infrastructure, which can become major issues disproportionately impacting those most

vulnerable in society. Current rates of heat-related mortality reach around 2,000 premature deaths per year; by 2020 this figure could increase to 3,400 and approach 11,000 in 2080⁶.

Ensuring local businesses are prepared for these projected climatic changes is important to consider for Somerset, due to the prevalence of small-medium sized enterprises in the region. If implemented incorrectly, a transition to a greener economy more resilient to the impacts of climate change could harm the most vulnerable in society. In order to avoid this, bottom-up engagement and co-development is essential to ensure a fair transition and provide adequate support, up-skilling and re-training for the necessary workforces at risk where industry is required to adjust to meet emissions reductions targets.

Changes to the natural environment, driven by increases to temperature and precipitation profiles, can mean existing ecosystems are vulnerable to die-back or different pest species; ensuring that the rich biodiversity found in our landscapes is preserved is of considerable importance. These changes will impact farming and agriculture, and so developing detailed and evidence-based strategies to mitigate these impacts and provide support to farmers within the industry is important.

3.4: Net Emissions in Somerset

Work has been undertaken to baseline the current net carbon emissions picture within Somerset. Quantifying both emissions and sequestration in the present-day is fundamental to evidence-based strategy development. Understanding sources of emissions in each district is important due to both the geographical and demographical variation within Somerset and a singular action plan is unlikely to be successful. Highlighting key areas of focus to identify maximum benefits and prioritisation of areas for concentration will increase the success of the Strategy and relies upon accurate baselining and monitoring of changes implemented.

3.4a: Emissions

In 2017, a total of 3,285 kt (kilotons) of CO₂ were emitted in Somerset⁷ from industrial, domestic and transport-related sources. For context, a kiloton of carbon is emitted by 200 average cars in 1 year. In fact, the majority of emissions in Somerset derive from the transport sector - 46.7%, compared to 29.5% from industry and 23.8% from the domestic sector.

The relative contributions of each sector vary by Local Authority: in Sedgemoor, 54.1% of emissions derive from transport (with the majority of these sourced from the M5 motorway), compared to only 38.6% of emissions in Mendip. For this reason, specific analysis of emissions sources within each overall sector is required.

Whilst the dataset used to calculate emissions at a high-level separates data at an overall District level, utilising other sources can provide a more detailed picture of emissions sources in Somerset. For example, using the Energy Performance of Buildings database⁸, emissions produced by individual houses can be analysed. Work going into further detail will be carried out by the Energy and Built Environment workstreams.

Calculating emissions produced by industries and businesses is more difficult, primarily due to emissions from their supply chains. Not all emissions have to be disclosed by businesses to the public, so there is a lack of data available online to assess the emissions of individual

organisations. The Industry, Business and Supply Chain workstream will work to assess these emissions.

3.4b: Sequestration

Carbon sequestration is the natural process of capturing and storing atmospheric CO₂. Long term storage of CO₂ through plants, soils and geological formations can mitigate the effects of climate change by offsetting carbon emissions produced by human activity.

Using data from the National Forest Inventory (NFI) it was calculated that approximately 66.1 kt of CO₂ is removed from the atmosphere each year by trees in Somerset⁹. This is equivalent to the domestic emissions of Sedgemoor alone – the lowest contributor to domestic emissions in Somerset – or 2.0% of the total emissions produced directly within Somerset in 2017 alone⁸.

Data from the NFI is updated annually, meaning any changes to tree cover can be tracked and monitored. It is important to note that sequestration rates vary between different tree species and age of trees – the figure provided is an estimate but gives a simple foundation for tracking the progress of Somerset to carbon neutrality. In comparison to the emissions produced in Somerset, the total volume of CO₂ removed is relatively low; this highlights the importance of emissions reduction at the source, rather than prioritising offsetting, which supports the foundational concept of the Strategy to take direct action to reduce total emissions and in situations where this is not possible, offset emissions.

Additional work will be undertaken by relevant workstreams to quantify the net sequestration rates of crops, hedgerows and soils (such as peatlands). Specific research is required due to the variation in management practices used by farms contributing to different net emissions totals.

4: The Climate Emergency Strategy Scope

The Climate Emergency Strategy, co-ordinated by the Somerset County and District Councils in conjunction with relevant partners, will identify ways in which Somerset could become carbon neutral by 2030. This will undoubtedly include overcoming a number of issues that will require legislative change and we will actively lobby for the necessary amendments to legislation to be implemented. For the purposes of this Strategy, carbon neutrality is defined as:

'Carbon neutrality, or having a net zero carbon footprint, refers to achieving net zero carbon emissions by balancing a measured amount of carbon released with an equivalent amount sequestered or offset'¹⁰

The primary objective for the Strategy will be to identify ways that carbon emissions can be directly reduced or avoided. Offsetting and sequestration of emissions will be supplementary actions for situations where direct reduction is not possible, reasonable or cost-effective. It is important to note the distinction between *carbon neutrality* (the aim of the Strategy) and *zero carbon*; emissions will be reduced as much as feasibly possible, but any remaining emissions will be offset to the same quantum.

In this regard, the Strategy will uphold 'responsible research and innovation principles'¹¹; offsetting of emissions will be implemented as close to the emissions source as possible. This

will increase the local relevance of the projects undertaken, whilst increasing the likelihood of adequately managing the primary and secondary impacts and effects of delivery.

As well as working to reduce emissions, the Strategy will identify the adaptations required to ensure Somerset is resilient to predicted environmental changes induced by climate change, such as increased temperatures, more varied precipitation profiles, extreme weather events and sea level rise. Secondary impacts associated with these changes, such as increased pest prevalence impacting the natural environment, will be also be identified, evaluated and mitigated within the Strategy.

5: Opportunities

Immediately taking proactive steps to mitigate and adapt to these inevitable changes can offer numerous opportunities to improve the local communities we live in and living standards for all in Somerset. Projects and proposals can provide significant socio-economic, non-environmental 'co-benefits' and reduce costs to society in other places whilst contributing to increased standards of living of all residents of Somerset.

For example, changes implemented to reduce emissions from transport contribute to many health co-benefits, which can reduce healthcare costs and improve the quality of life for many – increasing rates of cycling or walking can contribute to reductions in heart disease rates or obesity-related risks and lower rates of urban and noise pollution¹²; whilst transport systems prioritising rapid transit can improve access for vulnerable groups improving equality and access to healthcare¹².

Similarly, whilst tree-planting schemes are intended to increase the rate and volume of CO₂ removed from the atmosphere via natural sequestration, increasing tree coverage in urban areas can deliver public and mental health benefits for residents in the communities as well as serving to improve biodiversity in urban or natural regions.

Within the energy sector, actions intended to reduce reliance on fossil fuels or decrease energy consumption have numerous associated co-benefits. Construction of community renewable energy generation and storage projects can provide greater energy security, lower energy bills, revenue opportunities as well as jobs for both local communities and the wider region. Delivery of retrofit schemes, intended to reduce energy consumption and increase energy efficiency within domestic or other buildings, can contribute to reductions to energy bills and fuel poverty rates whilst decreasing health concerns associated with cold and damp homes for those in vulnerable communities.

Whilst the Climate Emergency Strategy will primarily focus on climate change and its associated impacts, delivery of projects intended to reduce carbon emissions or adapt to predicted changes are likely to have co-benefits relevant to other environmental issues. Issues relating to single-use plastic consumption, biodiversity and health and well-being of local communities are not the primary focus of the Strategy. However, in some situations individual workstreams may develop responses, action plans and projects relevant to these areas where there is a significant overlap with climate change and clear opportunities to meet the primary objectives of carbon neutrality and adaptation are present.

Although initial costs of project implementation may be high, it is undoubtable that these costs are minimal compared to those that will be incurred if a 'business as usual' approach is continued. For example, the 2013-2014 winter floods cost Somerset up to £147.5 million with £20 million to residential property alone¹³ – climate change will increase both the frequency and severity of flooding, making similar events more likely in the region. Taking proactive steps to adapt to the impacts of climate change can considerably reduce these costs derived from flooding alone; long-term impacts to the economy associated with other changes, such as drought or reductions to water quality, can also be avoided.

6: Challenges to Delivery

Whilst the direct contribution of the five Local Authorities to Somerset's total emissions has not yet been calculated it is likely to be a small proportion overall. Work commissioned by Manchester City Council indicated that they only produce 3% of the total emissions within their administrative area¹⁴. The immediate influence that we have in reducing the net emissions of Somerset is limited to internal infrastructure or contracts, such as making changes to the estates owned by the Authorities or to services delivered, supplied and procured.

However, the policies, strategies and other regulatory powers of the Authorities can influence reductions to net emissions externally across Somerset. For example, planning policies setting carbon reduction targets for new developments can influence the emissions picture county-wide as opposed to continuing a business as usual approach. In addition, the role that the Local Authorities play in encouraging action by stakeholders, businesses, partners or communities that can directly reduce emissions themselves is essential. By working with an array of groups, the Local Authorities can empower, encourage and support the strategic actions required by these parties to achieve carbon neutrality and act as a catalyst towards a carbon neutral Somerset. This underlines why it is essential to build consensus and ensure everyone in Somerset feels a sense of ownership of the Strategy and in delivery of its actions.

Other challenges associated with delivery are less simple to overcome. The composition of Somerset, in both environment and demographics, can add to difficulties associated with delivery. For example, whilst the beauty of the natural environment and rurality of the region makes Somerset a special place to live, reducing emissions from the transport sector is less simple than in an urbanised city region with a more concentrated, less dispersed population. In total, there are 6,604km (4,104 miles) of roads in the county with a total of 4.31 billion miles travelled in 2018¹⁵; whilst urban centres like Taunton, Yeovil and Bridgwater are well connected, accessibility is an issue in rural areas due to the limited local road network located in regions like the Mendip Hills or Exmoor. Additionally, the presence of the arterial roads spanning Somerset (M5 and A303) contributes to a large proportion of transport emissions with journeys not necessarily originating or terminating within the county – 26% of Somerset's total transport emissions derive from the M5 alone¹⁵.

Furthermore, the abundance of protected landscapes, such as Exmoor National Park and the four Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), add to the natural capital within Somerset, yet may prove problematic when identifying areas suitable for renewable energy generation and storage or climate change adaptation projects.

Initial scoping work has highlighted the need for retrofit or replacement of a large proportion of existing domestic and commercial buildings in Somerset to improve energy efficiency, decarbonise heat and power, and ensure buildings are resilient to the impacts of climate change. To meet the national net-zero target it is estimated that 27 million properties across the UK will require deep retrofit by 2050; this equates to 20,000 properties per week, yet currently only 20,000 per year are in receipt of energy efficiency measures¹⁶. The lack of disposable income and prevalence of fuel poverty in some of our communities, as well as the limited opportunities for Local Authorities to influence existing properties, presents more barriers to project implementation.

With the current economic climate and lack of resources available for Local Authorities to deliver projects or infrastructure change, prioritising resource allocation is essential. Due to the limited availability of funds, identifying opportunities providing the optimal cost-benefit (e.g. carbon emissions savings per £) is essential and requires in-depth analysis. Producing an extensive evidence-base will enable the Local Authorities to prioritise where resources are concentrated and ensure optimal projects are delivered in Somerset.

This issue is made worse by the national policy gap - to reach net-zero emissions for the UK as a whole, further legislation and strategy needs to be delivered to prioritise investment and provide funding to enable delivery of the extensive projects required to achieve this target. In these circumstances, it will be most appropriate for the combined Local Authorities to lobby Central Government for increased national policy and action, funding, local regulatory powers, or all of the above. Identifying situations in which we will require further support – from stakeholders, Central Government, or other relevant parties – forms a crucial aspect of this work.

Overcoming these barriers will be important for the success of the Climate Emergency Strategy.

7: Strategy Development

It is important that an overarching Strategy is developed to co-ordinate Somerset's response to the climate emergency and ensure actions are taken to achieve carbon neutrality. Without an aligned strategy, ad-hoc or piecemeal action is likely to result in higher costs, incompatible projects running in parallel, and potentially undesirable and/or unintended outcomes and consequences.

To produce the Strategy, we will collaborate with sector and industry experts to develop joint approaches in tackling climate change whilst sharing resources to maximise the benefits of projects implemented. Additionally, we will identify ways for the Local Authorities to assist businesses, industry, communities and individuals in making the necessary changes required for Somerset to achieve carbon neutrality, whilst ensuring that the most vulnerable within society are not disproportionately affected by these changes.

Traditionally 'co-developed' projects are more successful: we will be engaging with individuals, young people, the elderly, communities, interest groups, businesses and industry, educational institutions, wards, town and parish councils, and other relevant sectors. All sectors of society will have the opportunity to help us develop the strategic responses, action plans and projects

produced from this work. We will work with these groups to identify projects and proposals, and then provide support in assessing the wider benefits or unintended consequences of each action and assist in the delivery of projects.

Whilst the Somerset Climate Emergency Strategy will include higher level actions and projects that are relevant across Somerset, all individual Authorities will supplement the Strategy with their own Action Plan. These will outline the necessary policies, projects and actions required to meet the strategic targets and identify resources required to enable the delivery of the Strategy. These will be dynamic and evolve as our evidence-base grows, ensuring that the most up-to-date projects are prioritised and funding opportunities identified.

8: The Workstreams

8.1: Workstream Function

Climate change will impact every aspect of society. To make the task more manageable, work will be separated into nine workstreams:

- Built Environment
- Energy
- Farming and Food
- Industry, Business and Supply Chain
- Natural Environment
- Transport
- Waste and Resource Management
- Water
- Communications and Engagement

Due to the co-benefits associated with project delivery, public health will be important for consideration by all workstreams and will be a priority focus for all workstreams, with health experts contributing to project research, development and implementation for all workstreams.

Each workstream will contain sector and subject-matter experts. They will:

- Research and prioritise key issues
- Develop mitigation and adaptation strategies
- Evaluate costs, benefits and unintended secondary consequences
- Work together where appropriate

Work has been undertaken to identify key areas for further research. These are presented as initial themes within this framework, but to ensure the success of the overall Climate Emergency Strategy wider stakeholder engagement and input is crucial to provide feedback and alternative ideas for consideration to the workstreams. We are keen to draw on ideas, expertise and enthusiasm from all to ensure that the actions to be delivered are appropriate and informed by a wide cross-section of the people and organisations of Somerset.

This research has highlighted some potential projects for delivery over short-, medium-, and long-term timescales. These, and other ideas emerging from engagement and consultation

events, will be explored and evaluated in further depth to ensure that the Strategy and Action Plans are evidence-based.

Actions taken intended to mitigate or adapt to climate change often come with co-benefits, defined as 'the positive effects that a policy or measure aimed at one objective might have on other objectives'¹⁷. In many cases, these can help to meet the statutory duties of Local Authorities and other public-sector bodies. Evaluating these co-benefits will support business cases and enable us to access increased funding. Also, it is true that climate change may not be a priority for everyone in Somerset – by identifying the co-benefits, we can clarify how action taken to address the climate emergency can improve other aspects of life in Somerset¹⁸.

The broad range of stakeholders identified for engagement, as well as experts included within each workstream, will ensure that the views, ideas and concerns of relevant parties are considered and accounted for within the Strategy.

8.2: Built Environment

32% of the UK's emissions derive from the business and residential sectors¹⁹, and 45% of energy use occurs in houses, offices, shops and public buildings²⁰. In Somerset in 2017, total domestic emissions are greater than the national county average (783 kt CO₂ yr⁻¹ compared to 539 kt CO₂ yr⁻¹), although domestic emissions per capita are comparable to the national county average²¹.

Therefore, minimising and decarbonising energy consumption in buildings will be crucial to meeting carbon neutrality targets by 2030. Through planning, local authorities have the power to influence location and type of development, materials used in construction, carbon reduction, building design and low carbon and renewable energy generation in relation to new development. However, the majority of buildings that will be standing by 2030 and beyond to 2050 are likely to have already been built and influencing how these are retrofitted and improved is more complex.

Both new developments and existing buildings and communities will need to be resilient to projected climatic changes.

Theme 1: New Developments

The workstream will explore ways to ensure that new developments reduce carbon emissions. This can include minimising the need to travel, reducing energy consumption of homes and businesses, facilitating low carbon and renewable energy generation, encouraging sustainable behaviours, and ensure that they are adapted to the projected future climate of Somerset.

Initial directions of travel for this workstream are to:

- Identify opportunities to ensure that all new residential and commercial developments consider sustainable travel and transport links to lessen the impact of the scheme.
- Ensure that all new developments consider projected climatic changes and encourage planners to incorporate sustainable urban drainage schemes (SuDS), urban trees, and waste management.

- Highlight building designs that reduce the carbon footprint throughout the life cycle of homes and work towards all buildings achieving zero carbon accreditation as soon as possible.
- Review the effectiveness of existing planning policies against minimum standards for new housing development and identify opportunities to improve the delivery of those policies. This is likely to include the requirement to lobby Central Government to improve minimum building regulation and energy performance criteria, as well as implement changes to the National Planning Policy Framework.

Theme 2: Existing Buildings and Communities

Whilst changes to planning policy improving the efficiency and resilience of buildings are essential to ensure that future developments are fit for the climate future, many improvements to the performance of existing buildings are required. Identifying priority buildings or communities, as well as projects intended to deliver improvement, is essential. Overcoming the issue of funding is likely the primary barrier to delivery of wide-scale changes across Somerset; lobbying Central Government for increased investment will be required.

This workstream will:

- Identify sources of funding, investment or subsidy for retrofit opportunities, in conjunction with the Energy workstream.
- Highlight priority buildings and communities requiring retrofit or improvements to resilience and develop high-level strategies for delivering the required changes. This will include specific focus on council-owned buildings and retained housing stock to ensure the Local Authorities set an example within Somerset, as well as identifying opportunities to incentivise and enable change in privately-owned properties.
- Explore the potential to simplify, encourage and de-risk action to deliver retrofit to existing buildings and communities via planning or other means.

8.3: Energy

Somerset has significant potential for renewable energy generation, ranking highly in both a national and European context. In 2017, Somerset possessed installed renewable energy capacity of 506MW, of which 90% was attributable to photovoltaic technology²² – but there is still a considerable amount of untapped renewable energy source. Increasing total renewable energy capacity and generation is crucial to meet carbon neutrality targets, yet changing the source of energy supply exerts significant pressure on the electricity grid. However, implementation of renewable energy technologies can contribute to a range of societal benefits, including: socio-economic development; increased energy access; a more secure energy supply and a reduction to negative environmental and health impacts associated with large-scale combustion of fossil fuels²³.

37% of UK emissions derive from heating²⁴; reducing end-user emissions totals, via retrofit and improvements to insulation, is important – yet only a start. Decarbonising heat, via innovative solutions such as decentralised heat networks or implementation of hydrogen or biogas technologies to green the gas grid, is cited as being essential to meet zero-carbon targets by 2050²⁵. Whilst potentially difficult to implement in Somerset, due to the rurality and prevalence

of fuel poverty in some regions, developing projects that can overcome these barriers is crucial to meet the aspirations of carbon neutrality by 2030.

Theme 1: Reducing and Shifting Energy Demand

Working with the Built Environment workstream, opportunities will need to be identified to reduce energy consumption within buildings in Somerset. This will include delivering retrofit projects to improve the performance of existing building stock whilst working to increase minimum energy standards and requirements for planning proposals to reduce energy consumption in new developments.

Priority tasks for this workstream are to:

- Identify existing houses or communities with high energy consumption and develop strategies to overcome these issues via retrofit.
- Research and develop mapping of identify existing/ potential major heat sources or loads.
- Liaise with planning departments and developers to produce a uniform, Somerset-wide approach to reducing energy consumption and increasing energy efficiency in new developments.

Theme 2: Low Carbon and Renewable Energy Generation and Storage Technologies

The workstream will develop a co-ordinated strategy to increase the prevalence of low carbon technologies and renewable energy generation and storage in Somerset. Reducing emissions derived from heating in the domestic, industrial and commercial sectors will require development of decarbonised heat infrastructure. Working with relevant stakeholders - such as the Built Environment working group, energy providers and developers - opportunities identified by this workstream are likely to positively influence public health and reduce the impacts of fuel poverty on top of reducing carbon emissions.

This will include:

- Liaising with local community groups and relevant stakeholders to overcome issues relating to capital investment and grid infrastructure.
- Lobbying Central Government to incentivise uptake of such technologies, like photovoltaic energy generation or electric vehicle infrastructure and to change national policy to release the potential for onshore wind.
- Identifying sites suitable for renewable energy generation and storage projects.
- Explore opportunities for low carbon technology, like electric vehicle infrastructure or projects intended to decarbonise heat production, across Somerset.

Theme 3: Own Estate and Operations

Whilst influencing external parties to minimise energy usage and carbon emissions may be difficult for Local Authorities, the ability to reduce internal emissions derived from estates and operations is more significant as direct action can be taken to increase the efficiency of internal infrastructure. The workstream will identify how to cost-effectively implement these proposals and then develop business cases ready for project implementation.

The workstream will:

- Explore utilising council owned land to generate renewable or low carbon energies to decrease reliance on fossil fuels and generate revenue for alternative climate-related projects.
- Develop an Energy Policy and Energy Management Plan for each Local Authority to minimise energy waste, mitigate future energy price rises and ensure responsible stewardship of public money.
- Initiate internal communications campaign to encourage best practice by staff and highlight the exemplar actions taken by the Local Authorities to external businesses and organisations.
- Identify current and historic activity implemented by Local Authorities and promote upscaling of similar projects county-wide.
- When contracts allow, look to collaborative procurement strategies in purchasing energy from renewable sources.

8.4: Farming and Food

The agricultural industry will be significantly impacted by climate change. Rising temperatures, rainfall patterns and variations to atmospheric CO₂ concentrations will impact operations and productivity, as well as pest prevalence, within the UK²⁶. Impacts to global food production could influence UK markets and the food industry²⁷.

With the considerable importance of agriculture to Somerset's economy and livelihood of many residents, ensuring the sector remains resilient to these predicted climatic changes will be an important aspect of the Climate Emergency Strategy.

Working to reduce net greenhouse gas emissions from the agricultural sector will contribute to mitigating some of the impacts of climate change. The IPCC have highlighted the importance of reducing red meat and dairy consumption²⁸ and encouraged a transition to the consumption of more fruit and vegetables. However, we recognise the importance of agriculture within Somerset and the fact that the carbon efficiency of British farms is amongst the best in the world²⁹; ensuring there is a balance between responsible consumption and prioritising locally sourced, high quality produce will be carefully considered within our Strategy.

The contribution of agriculture to the total emissions of the UK has been recognised by industry and sector experts, such as agricultural trade bodies or the NFU, and pathways to making the industry carbon neutral (e.g. via responsible land management practices and further reductions in emissions from livestock) have been identified³⁰.

Theme 1: Reducing Net Emissions

Net greenhouse gas emissions can vary significantly between farms, dependent on many factors. Variations to land usage or management practices, such as quantity, timing or type of fertiliser used by arable farms or type of feedstock used for livestock on pastoral farms, can greatly influence total emissions production by a farm. Often, changes made to management practices intended to reduce the net emissions are more cost-effective than existing practices and come with associated economic benefits for farmers.

To work towards reducing the net emissions of farms in Somerset, this workstream will begin to:

- Identify and increase awareness surrounding best practice relating to emissions for both arable and pastoral farms.
- Explore opportunities to incentivise or provide subsidy to encourage best practice for both arable and pastoral farms.
- Produce a baseline for the net emissions picture of Somerset to monitor progress and identify optimal project delivery.

Theme 2: Carbon Storage

By conserving and enhancing naturally existing hedgerows, woodlands or carbon-rich soils, and improving land management practices, higher volumes of CO₂ can be removed from the atmosphere. To encourage these changes, incentivising positive practices relating to carbon storage, via ecosystem service payments or similar schemes, may be required.

This workstream will:

- Explore methods to incentivise farmers to implement positive management practices.
- Identify restoration schemes, such as peatland or wetland restoration projects, to increase carbon storage, in conjunction with the Natural Environment workstream.
- Increase awareness of more innovative land management practices, such as silvopasture, intended to increase carbon sequestration and storage rates.

Theme 3: Climate Change Adaptation

Many existing agricultural strategies, including crop selection and management, are not well adapted to predicted climatic changes, such as increased temperatures, variations to weather patterns and increasing prevalence of extreme events like floods and droughts. Improving the resilience of existing farmland ecosystems is important to minimise impacts of climate change and provides opportunities to enhance crop productivity. Additionally, changes to the climate are predicted to increase the prevalence and biodiversity of pest species. Co-benefits associated with the delivery of projects, intended to increase preparedness for the impacts of climate change, include supporting pollinator species and biodiversity.

In order to assist farmers in adapting to these changes, this workstream will:

- Model current farmland ecosystem and specific crop responses to climatic changes and classify regions by vulnerability.
- Identify crop species and management strategies that are adapted to predicted climatic changes and suitable for implementation within Somerset.
- Develop a strategy to implement and deliver 'ecosystem resilience improvement' projects.
- Develop education strategies to highlight the economic and environmental benefits associated with transitioning to more resilient management practices.

Theme 4: Food Consumption

Reducing the demand for high-emissions livestock products has been highlighted as significantly important by both the IPCC³¹ and CCC³². Increasing awareness surrounding the issues associated with carbon intensive products, such as beef or dairy, can lead to more balanced consumption practices and reduced environmental impacts. Eating more balanced diets can contribute to positive health impacts. Encouraging consumers to select locally sourced, ethically produced products, with lower carbon footprints - as opposed to foreign meat or dairy - can decrease the carbon footprint associated with the sector with a less radical change than eliminating meat or dairy products entirely.

Initial directions of travel for this workstream will be to:

- Produce education and engagement strategies highlighting the impacts of high-carbon food production and consumption, and suggest alternative foods with lower carbon footprints.
- Identify opportunities to reduce high-carbon food consumption within the respective Local Authority workplaces and operations.
- Encourage reductions to high-carbon food consumption externally within the wider community.

8.5: Industry, Business and Supply Chain

Industry and businesses in Somerset contribute to approximately 29.5% of Somerset's emissions. Whilst many organisations have taken steps to reduce their carbon footprint, exploring strategies to reduce supply chain emissions is cited as the next step to reduce emissions further and mitigate some of the impacts of climate change³³. Supply chains can contain between 60-80% of greenhouse gas emissions associated with both the production and consumption of goods and services^{34,35}.

Despite the potential direct and indirect benefits for businesses associated with demonstrating best practice and minimising supply chain emissions, legislation is identified as a key driver to enable pro-environmental behaviour within organisations³⁶. Working to incentivise and increase awareness of the benefits associated these changes will drive changes in industries and businesses in Somerset.

Specific engagement strategies will be required in order to appeal to these organisations and ensure engagement of SMEs and larger groups in Somerset. Highlighting the co-benefits of taking steps to reduce carbon footprints, which are often economic in nature, will comprise an important part of the work carried out by this workstream.

Theme 1: Emissions Reduction and Stakeholder Engagement

Due to the minimal influence the Local Authorities have in reducing the emissions of private sector bodies, we require specific strategies for engaging with industries and businesses to encourage net emissions reduction. These strategies will highlight the economic and financial benefits often associated with actions intended to mitigate impacts related to climate change.

To do this, the workstream will:

- Explore ways to reduce supply chain emissions for industry and businesses in Somerset whilst encouraging sustainable material manufacture, processing and usage.

- Encourage the transition by corporations, industries and businesses to renewable energy providers or generation of on-site renewable energy.
- Incentivise positive behaviour change and showcase examples of best practice within Somerset with an environmental awards scheme.
- Create a peer network for engagement and collaboration to share knowledge and best practice regarding the shift to a low carbon, clean growth economy.
- Provide support and platforms for knowledge sharing and feedback between businesses and industries in Somerset.
- Hold business-specific Climate Summits during Strategy consultation stages.

Theme 3: Data Collection and Analysis

Whilst large amounts of data are available for assessing domestic emissions at a high resolution, data quantifying emissions produced by individual businesses and industries is not available publicly. In order to track the progress of businesses in Somerset toward carbon neutrality, additional monitoring of data will be required.

To overcome this barrier, the workstream will:

- Incorporate monitoring of progress on emissions into the Somerset Local Economic Assessment (LEA).
- Present this data on the new LEA website (called Somerset Trends) in order to ensure a centralised online data resource for partners to use and evaluate their own progress to reducing emissions.
- Design a generic methodology or 'toolkit' to assist businesses and industries in quantifying, and then reducing, supply chain emissions.

Theme 4: Business and Workforce Resilience to Climate Change

Ensuring business and industry in Somerset remains resilient to the projected impacts of climate change is important for the local economy. Additionally, a change to a low carbon society or greener economy must be delivered fairly in order to ensure a 'just transition' and ensure workforce skills and employability are preserved.

In order to achieve these goals, the workstream will:

- Design research to better understand the local skills and employment challenges relating to the climate change agenda and shift to a low-carbon economy
- Identify employment in at-risk sectors or businesses and undertake a skills gap assessment
- Develop guidance for re-skilling for training providers and relevant support bodies.
- Highlight businesses or industry susceptible to the projected impacts of climate change and aid in developing mitigation strategies to reduce the risk of these impacts.

8.6: Natural Environment

Projected meteorological changes as a result of climate change, such as warmer temperatures, increasing variability and intensity of precipitation and extreme weather events (like flooding and droughts)³⁷, will exert pressure on ecosystems adapted to present-day conditions. Increasing the resilience of Somerset's Natural Environment to predicted impacts is essential

– yet should be a minimum requirement, due to the potential for innovative projects to provide emissions mitigation and cross-sector benefits.

Theme 1: Sequestration and Land Usage Change

The workstream will explore opportunities to increase the volume of CO₂ removed from the atmosphere by trees and plants via sequestration, whilst ensuring that existing carbon stocks contained in the natural environment - such as in soils, peatlands and existing trees - are preserved and managed responsibly.

To achieve this, the workstream will:

- Identify and designate land classification scenarios to provide an evidence-base for what is required to achieve a zero-carbon county.
- Liaise with the Built Environment workstream to ensure new developments minimise impacts to the environment. For example, adapting planning policy to ensure new developments produce Environmental Net Gain of minimum thresholds (e.g. 20%). This could follow the case study of Manchester with a clear mitigation hierarchy.
- Embed Natural Capital consideration into all planning and major investment decisions to minimise the declining condition of Natural Capital assets.
- Support schemes to increase tree cover in Somerset, such as the Urban Tree Challenge Fund or the Parish Tree Policy produced by the Re-Imagining the Levels programme.
- Work to stop peat extraction and increase peat restoration schemes in Exmoor to restore wetlands and coastal habitats.

Theme 2: Landscape Resilience

Existing ecosystems are not well adapted to predicted climatic changes, such as increased temperatures, variations to weather patterns and increasing prevalence of extreme events like floods and droughts. These changes are likely to increase both the prevalence and biodiversity of pest species and impact pollinators. This workstream will utilise the latest climatic projections to identify vulnerable ecosystems and develop opportunities to increase the resilience of the Natural Environment.

Theme 3: Co-ordination and Data Collection

Whilst all workstreams are required to identify key issues requiring a collaborative approach, co-ordination between the Natural Environment, Farming and Food, and Water workstream is particularly important. This workstream will develop a communications and implementation strategy between appropriate working groups ensuring relevant information, analysis and findings are shared.

Key objectives for this workstream are to:

- Bring together existing datasets to establish repeatable monitoring of Somerset's baseline as an ecological network for the county.
- Identify key opportunities for collaboration based upon the above science and evidence-base to ensure a targeted approach to the natural environment between relevant stakeholders.

- Engage with, or merge with, the Local Nature Partnership to ensure collective delivery is a priority and avoid duplication of work.

8.7: Transport

Emissions from transport are the largest contributor to emissions across a range of scales, from locally in Somerset (45%, with Sedgemoor and Taunton-Deane >50%)⁷ to the UK (27%)³⁸ and to Europe³⁹. Since 1990, emissions totals have steadily declined across all sectors – other than transport, indicating the inherent difficulties associated with implementing wide-scale changes to sector⁷.

Whilst reducing transport emissions in Somerset is a challenge due to the rurality of the region, meaning it is difficult for public transport schemes to connect dispersed communities, the European Commission Strategy for low-emission mobility highlights the roles that local authorities can fulfil³⁹. With the diversity of Somerset and variation in access to public transport, it is unlikely for there to be a singular solution appropriate for all areas. However, the Local Authorities encouraging a modal shift to more active or public transport where appropriate and seek investment to develop, improve or upgrade existing transport links.

Theme 1: Public Transport

Increasing both the frequency and quality of service provided by public transport is important to encourage a modal shift from personal vehicle usage. Whilst active travel is carbon zero, we recognise that not all journeys are appropriate for walking or cycling. Improving the public transport provided in Somerset whilst transitioning to lower emissions vehicles can significantly reduce emissions derived from Transport.

To achieve this, the workstream will:

- Amend evaluation criteria and contract terms for passenger transport contracts awarded by SCC in the DPS review in March 2021 to encourage usage of lower emission vehicles.
- Develop an innovative rural transport pilot project following on from work currently investigated in South Somerset.
- Commission a data analytics study to identify potential demands for bespoke passenger transport for clusters of working age people who may be attracted to a quality service.
- Develop a detailed proposal for mass-movement rapid transport on the A38 supporting existing priority infrastructure proposals; this could provide an opportunity for a testbed for electric fleets or CAV trials in the long term.
- Explore expanding Demand Responsive Transport Provision, potentially developing additional routes in the morning/afternoon for college students.

Theme 2: Personal Transport

Reducing the demand for car travel is essential for minimising transport emissions. Enabling active travel, via improvements to walking or cycling infrastructure or subsidising the cost of cycling equipment, can eliminate the need for car journeys. Increasing awareness surrounding the impacts associated with short car journeys may contribute to a modal shift in travel; however, under many circumstances car usage is unavoidable. Popularising car sharing schemes can eliminate repetition of similar journeys.

To reduce the demand for car travel and incentivise a modal shift to active travel, some examples of work to be undertaken include:

- Develop a detailed countywide travel behaviour change/travel demand management proposal, focusing on community action and individual responsibility, learning from previous and current activity in Bridgwater.
- Agree walking and cycling capital programme funding allocation.
- Submit Department for Transport (DfT) Pinch Points bid focused on walking and cycling.
- Develop feasibility designs and costed schemes from current Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) while commissioning additional LCWIPs for other towns.
- Lobby Central Government for a dedicated walking and cycling fund.
- Increase awareness of the impact short car journeys can have and highlight the benefits associated with active travel via numerous engagement schemes, such as the 'Think Travel' web portal to access travel-related information.

Theme 3: Logistics, Planning and Innovation

Engaging with relevant communities, stakeholders and organisations is crucial to promote sustainable transport. With new developments, planning strategies can be implemented to minimise the need for travel and thus reduce emissions. A holistic approach to development can reduce emissions derived from logistical operations, such as 'last-mile' deliveries or HGV freight. With the considerable lack of progress made in reducing transport emissions since 1990 across the UK, innovative ideas and concepts are required.

Some objectives to explore for the workstream include:

- Liaise with parish/town councils to produce a list of high priority/biggest difference actions that could be taken relating to transport.
- Organise a commission to ensure engagement with academic experts and industry leaders to identify opportunities to reduce transport emissions.
- Understand logistics patterns, HGV vehicle movements and employee personal vehicle use to develop programs to reduce associated emissions, such as via car or freight share.
- Identify locations suitable for electric vehicle charging points.
- Work with planners and the Built Environment workstream to ensure new developments are designed to reduce the demand for car travel.
- Launch a digital competition to design an app enabling people to reduce demand for car travel.
- Upscale the agile-working Programme used in Shepton Mallet to other district council offices, enabling work from home for all staff within Somerset Local Authorities. Highlighting the benefits from this scheme can incentivise uptake of similar programmes by private sector organisations.

8.8: Waste

Recent research highlights the potential for the UK Waste Management sector to drive reductions to greenhouse gas emissions⁴⁰. Since 1990, emissions have decreased by 70% with an acceleration in annual average abatement between 2012 and 2016 of 10%.

In Somerset, household and non-household waste contributes to a significant proportion of the region's carbon emissions – the majority (>90%) derive from methane produced by the decomposition of biodegradable waste⁴¹.

Somerset's domestic waste and recycling is managed by Somerset Waste Partnership. Somerset is independently ranked as a 'high flying' (top 10%)⁴² area in England in carbon saving from its household waste and recycling services, saving 103kg of a carbon equivalent per person⁴³.

Major progress in the Waste Management sector will only be achieved if waste is considered as a resource whilst increasing management of industrial and commercial waste. The workstream will look at opportunities to move towards a more circular economy and increase consideration of the relationship between Waste Management and other economic activities.

Theme 1: Commercial Waste and the Circular Economy

Nationally, commercial recycling rates are low (30%) and minimal source segregation of waste or separate food waste collection is undertaken. Targeting this sector, in conjunction with the Business, Industry and Supply Chain workstream, can provide potential for considerable emissions reductions and show Somerset's national leadership on the climate agenda.

The workstream will:

- Identify how the Local Authorities can celebrate and share best practice, whilst avoiding 'greenwash' (or the deceptive promotion of an organisation's environmental policies).
- Work with local businesses and relevant partners to identify the support and guidance they require to improve waste management.
- Seek to pilot collaborative procurement for recycling and waste – reducing costs for businesses, improving environmental outcomes and aligning with local needs.
- Create a route-map identifying the steps required to create a more circular economy in Somerset.
- Explore opportunities to ensure that Somerset has the recycling reprocessing industry needed to match its ambitions for the future.

Theme 2: Residential Waste and Behaviour Change

The workstream will explore opportunities to encourage behavioural change across a variety of sectors, such as minimising household waste in the domestic sector and increase recycling 'on the go'. This will be supported by identifying ways to ensure adherence to adequate planning standards for waste management within new housing developments.

This will include:

- Improving domestic waste recycling opportunities by adding in additional recycling to the existing weekly kerbside collection (Recycle More). This will result in reductions to waste by 15% and increase recycling by 20-30%, and improve on our already 'high-flying'⁴² carbon saving performance.

- Introducing more stringent controls that ensure even more waste is processed within the UK and not exported elsewhere. Currently over 90% of Somerset's recycling remains in the UK.
- Roll-out a behavioural change campaign ('Slim my waste, feed my face') in early 2020. This scheme intends to encourage reducing food waste within homes.
- Working with the Built Environment workstream and planning departments to ensure new development planning proposals consider resource management, waste storage, and waste disposal.
- Moving away from landfill by Spring 2020. Whilst reduction, reuse and recycling always remain better, this transition will ensure that the little waste that is leftover is mostly used to generate electricity rather than going into landfill.

Theme 3: Public Sector Waste

The public sector is a major employer in Somerset and can lead by example with how it deals with its own waste. There is potential for considerable improvement within the sector; for example, the current recycling rate in schools is only 25% and recycling across the Local authority's own buildings is patchy. Using the scale of the sector provides an opportunity to shape the market for commercial waste services in Somerset and instigate significant changes within the industry.

The workstream will:

- Develop a joined-up approach across the public sector in Somerset to maximise reuse, separate recycling and minimise waste arisings from the public sector.
- Utilise the buying power across the public sector in Somerset to create a viable commercial market offering environmentally optimal commercial waste recycling.
- Identify if there are any stakeholders in Somerset who may need additional support in order to recycle effectively seek to develop a cost-effective pilot which improves recycling and reduces waste.
- Expand the Schools Against Waste programme and incentivise schools to recycle more (including though rolling out additional services to them such as plastic pots, tubs and trays, cartons/tetrapak recycling).

8.9: Water

Climate projections predict increasing precipitation intensity and variability in the UK, leading to increased risks of flooding, drought and extreme weather events⁴⁴. Flood risks in Somerset are exacerbated by sea level rise, with low-lying regions such as the Levels and moors particularly vulnerable to these changes⁴⁵.

Additionally, predicted climatic changes impact current water management practices and adaptation schemes, which are unlikely to be robust enough to cope with these added pressures⁴⁴. Ensuring future developments consider the most recent climatic projections is required to minimise flood risk and other issues.

The requirement for the Water workstream to be cross-sector in approach is significant; alterations to land usage and management practices in both the natural environment and agricultural ecosystems are likely to impact flood risk, water quality and other aspects of the

hydrological cycle. Ensuring these issues are both accounted for and minimised will be crucial to minimise the secondary consequences associated with project implementation.

Theme 1: Strategy and Policy

Improving existing strategies and policies relating to water will ensure co-ordinated response by all partner organisations, provide long-term risk assessment for predicted climatic changes, and enable access to increased sources of funding.

Examples of reviews and updates to be explored by this workstream are:

- Update internal and statutory strategies to ensure the inclusion of most recent climate change projections and associated risks
- Support the establishment of the Somerset Rivers Authority to deliver adaptation schemes to address projected risks

Theme 2: Data Collection and Analysis

Detailed modelling of changes to the flood, drought and extreme weather profile of Somerset is required to inform evidence-based project development, business cases and feasibility studies.

Initial tasks for this workstream will be to:

- Map changes to flood risk caused by climate change.
- Map changes to coastal erosion caused by climate change.
- Develop integrated flood investment strategies from predicted changes.
- Map priority regions suitable for sustainable drainage (SuDS) projects.

Theme 3: Schemes and Initiatives

Developing projects to adapt to the projected risks of climate change is crucial to ensure the communities of Somerset remain resilient to these predicted impacts.

The workstream will:

- Continue to deliver adaptation schemes to minimise the risks of flooding, drought and coastal erosion.
- Assess pre-existing adaptation schemes and infrastructure to ensure they are resilient to the most recent climate projections.
- Identify opportunities and potential funding to develop water processing infrastructure for future resilience.

8.10: Communications and Engagement

Substantial levels of communication and engagement will be crucial to the success of all the workstreams and delivery of the overall Climate Emergency Strategy. As well as facilitating changes within the areas under the direct control of the five Local Authorities, the success of the Strategy will be underpinned by encouraging action to be taken by the many individuals, communities and other stakeholders.

Whilst many groups and communities are actively engaged with the climate change agenda currently experiencing considerable coverage within the media, some groups prioritise the issue to less of an extent. Receiving feedback from these groups and individuals and encouraging them to engage with the development of the Strategy is a vital action for this workstream.

Theme 1: Engagement and Consultation

Ensuring that everyone in Somerset feels a sense of ownership of the Strategy is fundamental to its success; therefore ensuring as many people as possible from a cross section of society have an opportunity to contribute to the development of the Strategy is essential.

To achieve this, the workstream will:

- Develop Climate Summits in each district in conjunction with Somerset Climate Action Network (SCAN).
- Produce an online forum for on-demand engagement with the Strategy development.
- Organise specific engagement with young people through school and college events.
- Explore further opportunities for ongoing feedback and suggestions for the Strategy and subsequent Action Plan development.
- Work with local communities, towns, wards and parish councils to ensure local interest and community buy-in with the Strategy and associated Action Plan development.

Theme 2: Internal Communications

The five Local Authorities and partners have well-established internal communications channels. These can all be immediately used to engage and inform a significant workforce and seek to develop a significant body of ambassadors for the strategy and source of good practice case studies.

This workstream will:

- Highlight the importance of best practice, encompassing suggestions from all workstreams, within internal communication channels such as employee email and online newsletters.
- Explore opportunities to incentivise partner employee best practice and behaviour change.

Theme 3: External Communications

An appealing online presence will be a major component of the external communications and engagement strategy. Developing a central repository or hub for information, case studies, progress updates, resource packs and relevant materials will be critical in informing the wider community of the climate emergency whilst ensuring community buy-in and contribution to Strategy development. More traditional forms of media, such as press releases, news features or specific events, will supplement the external communications strategy to ensure accessibility for all.

Initial components of this work will include:

- Developing a uniform communications strategy to be implemented at all levels from all five Local Authorities.
- Utilising the Councils' established communications channels, such as traditional PR, in conjunction with the combined social media presence and reach, to maximise engagement opportunities.
- Ensure that documents and resources are available in other, accessible formats.

9: Climate Emergency Strategy Delivery

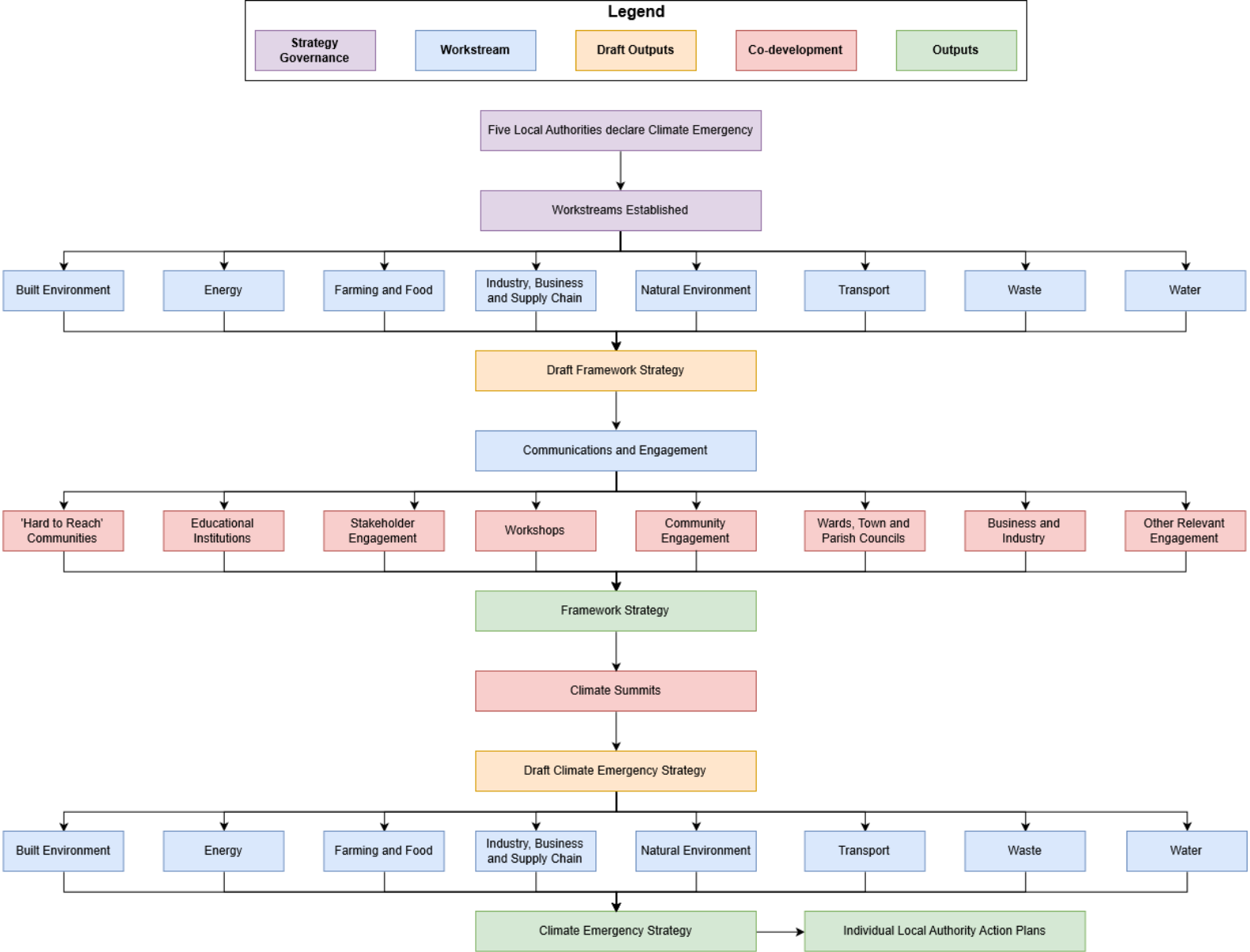
The flowchart below aims to simplify the steps that will be taken in order to develop and deliver the final Climate Emergency Strategy.

Community engagement will be a priority throughout Strategy development. We have chosen to deliver a 'Climate Summit' in each district to provide the opportunity for as many individuals and communities to engage with the development of the Strategy. However, this is only one strand of the engagement strategy. We will also be seeking feedback from an online platform as well as events at local schools and colleges to engage with the young people of Somerset. Each workstream will identify issues requiring stakeholder or sector-specific expertise and look to engage with the relevant academic or industry experts throughout Strategy development. It is hoped that through this engagement and consultation additional or alternative themes will be identified as priority issues for individuals and communities requiring action from the Climate Emergency Strategy.

Whilst workstreams appear independent in the flowchart below, it is important for these groups to work together. A collaborative approach is required to reliably evaluate key issues and develop projects encompassing a range of issues.

Additionally, development of the Individual Local Authority Action Plans is occurring simultaneously to the Climate Emergency Strategy. This means the Action Plans will be implemented alongside the final Strategy, ensuring that action is taken as soon as feasibly possible, once specific evidence-based projects are prioritised and developed following feedback from the public.

However, actions to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change are already in progress across Somerset. Whilst time is being taken to develop an evidence-based Strategy, it is key that the actions being undertaken already are not slowed down by this process. Many projects will continue to be delivered throughout Strategy development, such as those intended to increase Somerset's resilience to flood risks and the continuation of preparation for the roll-out of the Somerset Waste Partnership's Recycle More scheme in 2020.



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11: Appendix

Somerset County Council

Full Council resolves to:

- a) affirm the Council's recognition of the scale and urgency of the global challenge from climate change, as documented by the latest Special Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, and declares a climate emergency; and
- b) mandate the Policy and Place Scrutiny Committee to review and recommend what further corporate approaches can be taken through a SCC Climate Change Strategy and to facilitate stronger Somerset-wide action through collaboration at a strategic, community and individual level; and
- c) pledge to work with partners, including the Heart of the South West LEP, individuals and community action groups across the county to identify ways to make Somerset carbon neutral by 2030, taking into account both production and consumption emissions (scope 1, 2 and 3); and
- d) write to the Secretaries of State for Business Energy & Industrial Strategy, Transport, Environment, Food & Rural Affairs and Housing, Communities & Local Government calling for the creation, provision or devolution of powers and resources to make achievement of the 2030 target possible here in Somerset; and
- e) report to Full Council before the end of 2019 with the actions the Council has and will take to address this emergency; and
- f) allocate £25,000 from the Council's 2018/19 contingency budget and authorise the Lead Director for Economic and Community Infrastructure to utilise this funding to resource the work necessary to support Scrutiny Committee for Policies and Place and to assess any specific recommendations and financial implications. Any unspent allocation will be carried forward into 2019/20 to continue the work.

Somerset West and Taunton District Council

Shadow Full Council resolves:

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.

South Somerset District Council

The Council have agreed to:

1. Note the background information above.
2. Declare its recognition of a 'Climate and Ecological Emergency'.
3. Develop a Strategy by the Full Council meeting on 19th September 2019*, that sets ambitious targets to protect the environment and ecology; to reduce Carbon Emissions; and for a) South Somerset District and b) the Council to become carbon neutral
4. Develop a delivery plan that sets out the necessary policies, projects and actions to deliver the targets, and identifies the resources necessary to enable the delivery of the strategy.
5. Work with councils and other partners in Somerset to develop collaboration, joint approaches and share resources in tackling climate change and protecting the environment

*Now Autumn 2019

Sedgemoor District Council

Proposed Climate Change Motion that Council:

- a) Affirms the recognition of the scale and urgency of the global challenge from climate change, as documented by the latest Special Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
- b) Pledges to work with partners, including the HoTSWLEP, Somerset County Council, Somerset Districts, individuals and community groups to identify ways to make Sedgemoor and Somerset carbon neutral by 2030, taking into account both production and consumption emissions
- c) Joins with the County Council and Somerset Districts in writing to the Secretaries of State for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy, Transport, Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and Housing, Communities and Local Government calling for the creation, provision or devolution of powers and resources to make achievement of the 2030 target possible here in Sedgemoor and Somerset
- d) Allocates up to £25,000 from the Council's Community Development Fund and authorises the Strategic Director (Doug Bamsey) to utilise this funding to resource the work necessary and develop a strategy and actions
- e) Will receive a report before the end of 2019 with the actions that have been and will be taken to address this target.

Mendip District Council

Full Council calls on Mendip District Council to:

1. Declare a 'Climate and Ecological Emergency';
2. Pledge to make the district of Mendip carbon neutral by 2030, taking into account both production and consumption emissions (scope 1, 2 and 3);
3. Call on Westminster to provide the powers and resources to make the 2030 target possible;
4. Work with other councils and governments to determine and implement best practice methods to limit Global Warming to less than 1.5°C;
5. Continue to work with partners across the district and region to deliver this new goal through all relevant strategies and plans;
6. Submit a bid as part of the Council's budget setting process for an additional £100,000 to fund a 'Sustainability' Officer Post for a two-year period to champion the scoping and delivery of the District Council's Climate Emergency 2030 commitment.
7. Report to Full Council every six months with the actions the Council will take to address this emergency.

Agenda Item 7

District Executive Forward Plan

Executive Portfolio Holder: Val Keitch, *Leader, Housing and Strategy*
Director: Netta Meadows, *Strategy and Support Services*
Lead Officer: Angela Cox, *Democratic Services Specialist*
Contact Details: angela.cox@southsomerset.gov.uk or (01935) 462148

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This report informs Members of the current Executive Forward Plan, provides information on Portfolio Holder decisions and on consultation documents received by the Council that have been logged on the consultation database.

2. Public Interest

- 2.1 The District Executive Forward Plan lists the reports due to be discussed and decisions due to be made by the Committee within the next few months. The Consultation Database is a list of topics which the Council's view is currently being consulted upon by various outside organisations.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 The District Executive is asked to:-

a) approve the updated Executive Forward Plan for publication as attached at Appendix A

4. Executive Forward Plan

- 4.1 The latest Forward Plan is attached at Appendix A. The timings given for reports to come forward are indicative only, and occasionally may be re scheduled and new items added as new circumstances arise.

5. Consultation Database

- 5.1 The Council has agreed a protocol for processing consultation documents received by the Council. This requires consultation documents received to be logged. There are no current consultation documents.

6. Background Papers

- 6.1 None.

Appendix A - SSDC Executive Forward Plan

Date of Decision	Decision	Portfolio	Service Director	Contact	Committee(s)
January 2020	Policy for Awarding Private Sector Housing Grants/Loans and other Financial Assistance	Portfolio Holder - Protecting Core Services	Director Service Delivery	Vicki Dawson, Lead Specialist (Environmental Health)	District Executive
January 2020 January 2020	Council Tax Support Scheme setting 2020/21	Portfolio Holder - Finance, Legal & Democratic Services	Director Service Delivery	Ian Potter, Lead Specialist (Vulnerable Customers)	District Executive South Somerset District Council
January 2020	Draft 2020/21 Budget Update	Portfolio Holder - Finance, Legal & Democratic Services	Director Strategy and Support Services	Section 151 Officer	District Executive
January 2020	Commercial Asset Update Report	Portfolio Holder - Economic Development including Commercial Strategy	Director Commercial Services & Income Generation	Robert Orrett, Commercial Property Manager	District Executive
January 2020	Future funding of CASS, SPARK and Access for All	Portfolio Holder - Health & Well-Being	Director Strategy and Support Services	David Crisfield, Specialist (Strategic Planning)	District Executive
January 2020	Somerset Waste Partnership Annual Report and Draft Business Plan 2020 - 2024	Portfolio Holder - Environment	Director Commercial Services & Income Generation	Chris Cooper, Environment Services Manager	District Executive

Date of Decision	Decision	Portfolio	Service Director	Contact	Committee(s)
February 2020	Capital & Revenue Budget monitoring reports for Quarter 3	Portfolio Holder - Finance, Legal & Democratic Services	Director Strategy and Support Services	Nicola Hix, Lead Specialist (Finance)	District Executive
February 2020	Quarterly Corporate Performance Report	Portfolio Holder - Strategy & Housing	Director Strategy and Support Services	Cath Temple, Specialist (Performance)	District Executive
February 2020 February 2020	2020/21 Revenue and Capital Budget	Portfolio Holder - Finance, Legal & Democratic Services	Director Strategy and Support Services	Section 151 Officer	District Executive South Somerset District Council
February 2020 February 2020	2020/21 Capital Strategy	Portfolio Holder - Finance, Legal & Democratic Services	Director Strategy and Support Services	Section 151 Officer	District Executive South Somerset District Council
February 2020 February 2020	2020/21 Investment Strategy	Portfolio Holder - Finance, Legal & Democratic Services	Director Strategy and Support Services	Section 151 Officer	District Executive South Somerset District Council
February 2020 February 2020	Council Plan 2020/21	Portfolio Holder - Strategy & Housing	Director Strategy and Support Services	Jan Gamon, Lead Specialist (Strategic Planning)	District Executive South Somerset District Council

Date of Decision	Decision	Portfolio	Service Director	Contact	Committee(s)
March 2020 March 2020	Adoption of Yeovil Public Realm Design Guide - Supplementary Planning Document	Portfolio Holder - Area South including Yeovil Refresh	Director Service Delivery	Ian Timms, Yeovil Refresh Project Manager	District Executive South Somerset District Council
TBC	Leisure Contracts	Portfolio Holder - Health & Well-Being	Director Service Delivery	Lynda Pincombe, Specialist (Strategic Planning)	District Executive
TBC	Dualling of A303 from Sparkford to Ilchester	Portfolio Holder - Protecting Core Services	Director Strategy and Support Services	Lynda Pincombe, Specialist (Strategic Planning)	District Executive

Agenda Item 8

Date of Next Meeting

Members are asked to note that the next scheduled meeting of the District Executive will take place on **Thursday, 9th January 2020** in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil commencing at 9.30 a.m.