

# **Somerset Climate Emergency Framework**

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## **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.

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

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