Scrutiny for Climate and Place

Transport and Planning Policy Guiding Principles

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Somerset Council

Background

- Executive Board on 10th July 2023: Decision to endorse and adopt guiding principles which will inform the development of the new Local Transport Plan (LTP), new Local Plan, and our overall approach to transport planning, development management, consideration of planning proposals, and other relevant policies and plans.

- Key aim to have a vision-led approach:

  - High quality design,

  - Better places,

  - Reduced carbon emissions,

  - Move away from 'predict and provide' increasing highway capacity for private cars,

  - Reflects rural needs and challenges/ opportunities in rural areas.

- Aim to develop an ambitious devolved long-term funding settlement with Government.

- Includes placemaking principles that will ultimately be adopted as a material planning consideration for the adoption of masterplans, pre-app advice, planning applications and development management activity.

- Subject to further analysis and consultation as part of the detailed development of statutory policies and plans.

- Detailed financial implications will be quantified as an outcome of the policy and delivery programme development process and will be considered as part of the process of adopting the new statutory policies in due course.

Local Transport Plan Process

- Statutory document required by the Department for Transport (DfT). Mandate from Government is that all Local Transport Authorities are required to update plans

- Somerset's most recent version (known as the Future Transport Plan) was a 15-year plan and published in 2011

- The new LTP must include the following pieces of work/documents:

  - **Carbon quantification** of new policies/interventions
  - Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy
  - Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs)
  - Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP)

Local Transport Plan Outline Programme:

- Summer 2023: Initial member and key stakeholder engagement.

- Autumn 2023: High-level transport vision

- Summer 2024: Quantification of future policy impacts and potential costs Supply evidence base to Department for Transport

- Winter 2024/ Spring 2025: Adoption of new Local Transport Plan

- Consultation and Engagement at key stages.

Local Plan Process

The structural change order establishing Somerset Council requires the Council to have in place a new Local Plan within 5 years of 1 April 2023 i.e by 1 April 2028. Work is underway to scope this and to develop a Local Development Scheme for agreement by the Executive. There are a number of stages for the development of the Plan:

- Agree Local Development Scheme

- Agree Statement of Community Involvement (a draft Statement of Community Involvement was agreed by the Council for consultation and is programmed to be adopted at a future Executive meeting)

- Regulation 18 consultation – Draft Plan

- Regulation 19 publication of the Submission Plan

- Submission for Independent Examination by a Planning Inspector

- Adoption by the Council

- Consultation and Engagement throughout the plan making process

Guiding Principles (1)

a. Reducing carbon emissions will be the key priority for the transport and development plans including adoption of a transport decarbonisation pathway.

b. We will adopt a holistic approach to policy and strategy development, working beyond just transport. We will ensure that all our policies are rural-proofed and will continue to build relationships with public health, education services, adults and children's social care and others within the organisation to deliver co-benefits.

c. We will adopt a vision-led 'decide and provide' or 'vision and validate' approach to new development whereby a strong vision for great places to live with a reduced need to travel is agreed. This will involve co-locating housing and other facilities to create neighbourhoods where the natural first choice is to walk or cycle to access work, education, learning and healthcare etc.

d. We will endorse the vision led approach to street and highway design as part of wider high quality placemaking; and agree the vision and principles as set out in Appendix A for consultation with key stakeholders.

e. Subject to detailed analysis, priority policy interventions will be related to reducing the need to travel and promoting sustainable travel (active travel for shorter distances, e-bikes and micromobility for slightly longer distances, shared transport, bus, demand responsive transport, and rail for longer distances; and policy interventions such as parking management that aim to reduce demand for travel by private car).

f. We will expect developers to provide high quality active travel and public transport networks within and accessing new development areas, to ensure new development does not create significant additional congestion, rather than creating additional highway capacity for private car traffic. We will expect developers to implement high-quality sustainable travel plans which include a wide range of measures and incentives to enable active travel.

Guiding Principles (2)

g. Increasing highway capacity will only be considered as a last resort and in exceptional circumstances. We will continue to complete highway capacity improvements that are already in the pipeline as funded schemes but it is likely that we will not be seeking Government funding for improvements that increase capacity for private car travel beyond the current pipeline.

h. We will build on the successful community -led approach to constructing rural multi-user paths between settlements and will co-develop a proposed network for community-based delivery. We will also consider how to create an improved environment for pedestrian movement in more semi-urban, rural locations where the environment can be dominated by high-speed traffic.

i. We will aim to secure a devolved Government funding package to implement an ambitious sustainable transport programme, building on our current success with Bus Service Improvement Plan funding and Active Travel funding.

j. We will oversee delivery of a comprehensive charging network for electric vehicles and will appoint a private sector delivery partner to ensure that public funding is only used where necessary to address market failure in a similar way to that adopted for Broadband rollout. EV recommendations are set out in Appendix B.

k. The Council's own vehicles up to and including 3.1 tonnes GVW and those of our contractors will be electric vehicles as soon as this can be realistically, and cost effectively achieved; and we will consider alternative fuels for larger vehicles at the earliest opportunity in line with the evolution of emerging technology.   *[as amended at Executive 10th July]*

l. We will work with bus operators to agree the most appropriate alternative fuels pathway for public transport operations and support them in implementing this.

m. We will develop a new policy seeking greater consistency in highway lighting, creating a default preference for part-night lighting, dimming and user activated lighting.

n. We will examine the implications of incorporating explicit requirements for carbon reduction and reduced travel across all the Council's services, including carbon reduction targets within our contracts with suppliers, with a view to implementing changes to our procedures at the earliest opportunity.

Placemaking & Movement Principles

Vision Statement

Streets and spaces will be designed to be attractive, pleasant and inclusive places that accommodate all users and feel safe for use by all walking and wheeling users. They should prioritise active travel and public transport, maximising connectivity, and permeability not only within the site itself, but also providing for wider connectivity. Crossings and junctions should always prioritise pedestrians in residential areas. Streets and spaces should also be designed to reflect a hierarchy where movement is related to land use and character.

Placemaking & Movement Principles (1)

- Reduce need to travel via private car (internal trips) by ensuring key facilities and services, existing and proposed, are within a 20-minute walking or wheeling time. Streets should link to existing roads and local services, ensure permeability, connectivity and not turn their backs on neighbours.

- In towns and more urban areas reduce parking provision in combination with hard and soft travel plan measures and include the provision of car/bike clubs, EV bikes/scooters, EV charging and public transport provision. Incorporate a mobility hub approach with mobility and non-mobility components as suitable for the site. The vision in these areas is for low car ownership and ambitious modal shift enabled by an increase in multimodal travel measures.

- Design parking to be unobtrusive in the public realm, avoiding dominance in the streetscene. Allow for the future phasing out of parking to reduce carbon emissions as ownership levels reduce. Prioritise car ports over garages. Secure cycle parking / infrastructure is to be provided with well-designed storage facilities either on street or within the property street frontage. Public cycle repair facilities should be incorporated into the scheme.

- Design an attractive and high-quality environment where streets incorporate trees in the highway and green spaces, avoiding large expanses of asphalt. Wherever possible streets should make positive use of existing natural features. Highway trees should be provided in tree pits rather than planters. The design should build in opportunities for biodiversity net gain, green infrastructure, surface water management (permeable surfaces, swales, SUDS) and opportunities to contribute to phosphate mitigation.

Placemaking & Movement Principles (2)

- Design using natural traffic calming to achieve speeds less than 20mph. Buildings and footways should be located to define junctions. Junction and vehicle movement geometry, sightlines and tracking should be tightened to reduce vehicle speeds with priority given to pedestrians and cyclists.

- Careful consideration should be given to how children and parents are to access schools without reliance upon private cars, instead encouraging walking, cycling and public bus use. The design approach to school parking will reflect the desire to maximise active travel movements to school.

- Material palettes are to be simple, take the local context into account (not just black top). Material attractiveness, reducing carbon emissions as well as durability and ease of maintenance are to be considered.

- Design should seek to minimise street clutter and keep footways and cycleways clear of infrastructure. Lighting, signage and public EV charging should, where possible, be fixed onto a structure.

- Consider services and lighting at an early design stage to avoid impact on placemaking features like street trees and the quality of the movement network. Consider whether lighting is required (dark skies). Undefined strips of land should be eliminated at the design stage by fully allocating land to private ownership, highway adoption or stewardship with clear definition of public and private land.

- Consideration should be given to incorporating waste storage facilities to ensure sufficient storage capacity, convenient access and design solutions that complement the wider development.

- Within rural areas, the importance of safe connectivity within and between communities and facilities/services will be recognised whilst taking into account factors including landscape, character, appearance and ecology.

- Ensure early engagement with and input from people with responsibility for approvals throughout the whole planning and delivery process.

Local Transport Plan: Quantified Carbon Reduction

Somerset
Council

A New Approach to Local Transport Plans

- A move away from 'predict and provide' demand-led planning

- Replaced with a '**vision led**' (decide and provide) approach – focus on outcomes and local priorities. Not just transport in isolation;
  - What sort of place are we creating
  - What kind of activities do people need access to
  - How will we provide access to those activities (active and sustainable travel)

- 'Place-based' approach – understand the unique characteristics of the local area
  - Community engagement embedded from the outset – not just 'technical' stakeholder
  - Engagement with Local Community Networks
  - Evidence led – strategic planning carrying more weight

- LTPs and Local Plans to have stronger alignment, helped by move to Unitary

- Opportunity to join up internally to deliver shared objectives – Climate Change/Spatial Planning/Public Heath
  - LTP is umbrella for other plans and strategies across the authority
  - Provide cohesion and prevent duplication

- Engagement with Scrutiny early in the process

- Embed decarbonisation consideration into the planning process

Carbon Reduction – National Context

Why is carbon important

- UK government has legislated to achieve ambitious carbon reduction targets – Net Zero emissions by 2050
  - Somerset has set the goal of delivering carbon neutrality for the area by 2030

- Move to understand or 'quantify' greenhouse gas emissions across policy areas, including transport

- DfT will issue new 'Quantifiable Carbon Reduction (QCR) guidance' – standardising an evidence-led carbon approach to LTP development and reporting of LTPs carbon impact
  - DfT not including QCR targets – decision making tool only

- Different national pathways representing different interpretations of the pace at which emissions must fall to avoid the worst impacts of climate change
  - Net Zero Strategy
  - Transport Decarbonisation Plan

How do economy wide emissions in Somerset compare to the UK as a whole?

UK (2019)

Somerset (2019)

Legend: Industry, Commercial, Public Sector, Domestic, LULUCF, Agriculture, Waste, Transport
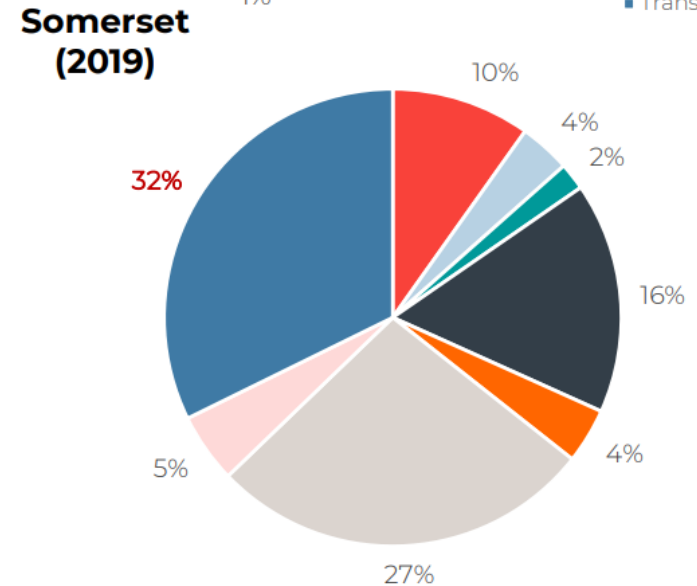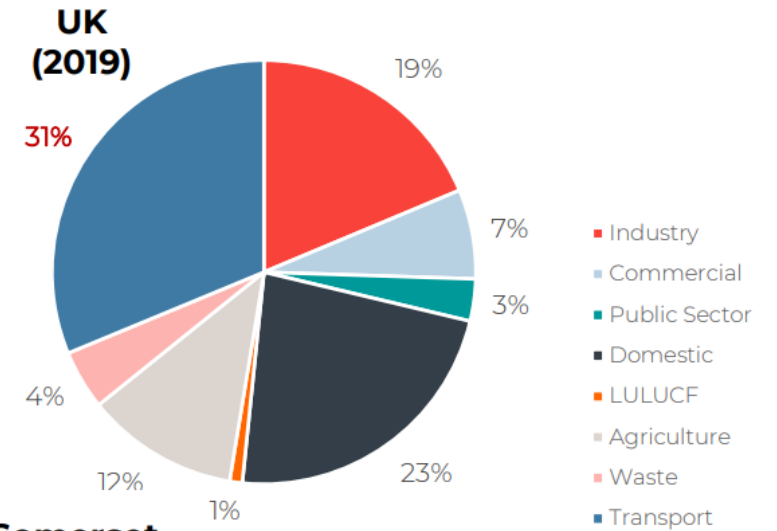
Carbon Reduction and the LTP – Local Context and Next Steps

- Somerset will need to decide its decarbonisation pathway
    - An internal decision-making tool rather than a local target

- We have started work on QCR steps in conjunction with LTP strategy development
    - Phase 1 identified Somerset's baseline emissions
    - Phase 2 is underway and will establish a decarbonisation pathway as part of setting the vision and objectives of the LTP (expected completion late August)
        - Will help Somerset Council gauge how ambitious we want to be and inform the nature, scope and scale of measures developed for the LTP

- The LTP will need to set out a bold but also realistic and achievable <u>vision</u> of how Somerset Council and local communities would like their area to be in future – published <u>Autumn 2023</u>
    - Reducing carbon emissions and adopting a decarbonisation pathway is a key priority within the guiding principles considered by Executive Board

Somerset Emissions Data

Emissions by Origin & Destination / Road Type

Vehicle Emissions: Proportion by Trip Genesis

19%

39%

19%

23%

- From
- To
- Within
- Through

Vehicle Emissions: Proportion by Road Type

31%

64%

5%

- SRN
- MRN
- Local
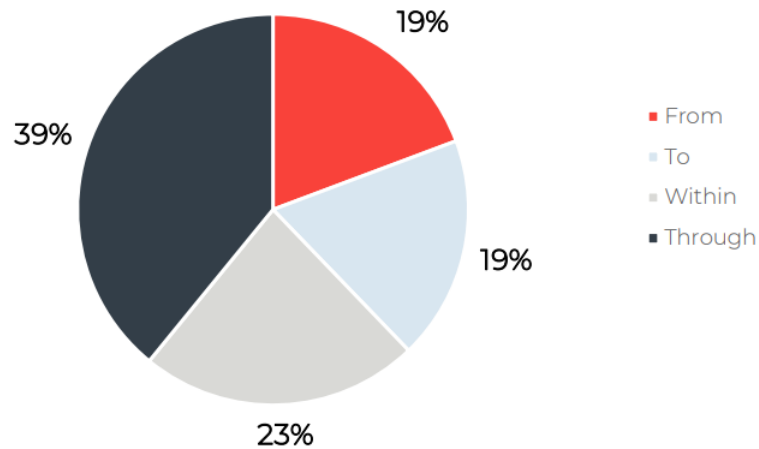
- 61% of transport emissions generated in Somerset are from trips either starting, ending or being made entirely within Somerset.

- Of which, 23% of transport emissions are generated by internal Somerset journeys.

- Most emissions (64%) are generated on local roads, with forecasts showing this is likely to remain the case in the future.

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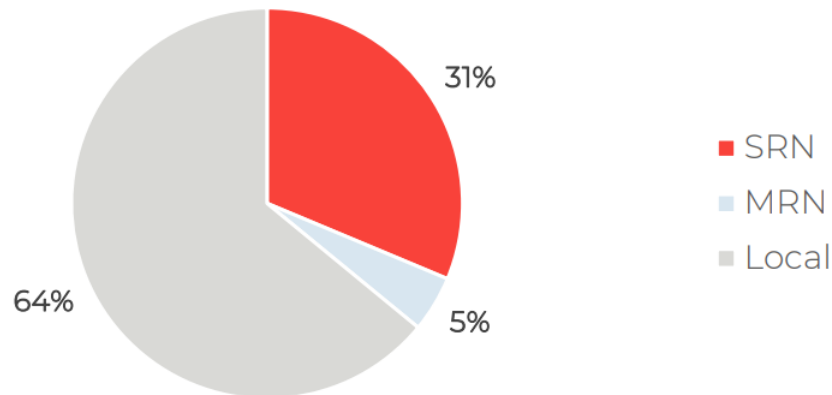
Emissions by Place of Origin

Somerset Emissions by Trip Origin 2019

- 26%
- 29%
- 21%
- 24%

■ Sedgemoor ■ South Somerset ■ Mendip ■ Somerset West and Taunton
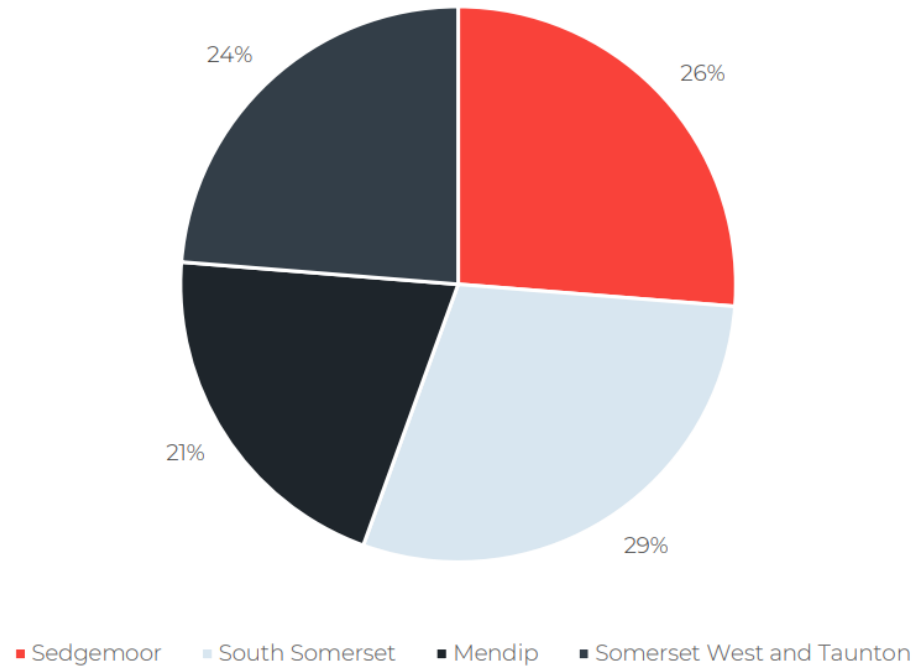
Emissions are split relatively evenly between all areas of Somerset, reflecting the need for action in all parts of the county.

Per Captia Emissions by Area

2019

Local Authority	2019 tCO2e	Population (mid 2019)	Per Capita
Sedgemoor	347045	123655	2.8
South Somerset	386915	168614	2.3
Mendip	273840	115706	2.4
Somerset West and Taunton	313414	155596	2.0
Somerset (TOTAL)	**1321213**	**563570**	**2.3**

2050 (BaU)

Local Authority	2050 tCO2e	Population (mid 2050)	Per Capita
Sedgemoor	159895	141662	1.1
South Somerset	178175	181951	1.0
Mendip	124547	133768	0.9
Somerset West and Taunton	147298	189151	0.8
Somerset (TOTAL)	**609915**	**646532**	**0.9**

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Emissions by Mode for Road Transport

Emissions by mode (BEIS 2019)

The largest proportion of surface transport emissions are attributed to road transport. This is true at a national level and for Somerset. In 2019 road transport accounted for:

97.3% (S)

96.6% (UK)

Vehicle Emissions in 2019: Proportion by mode*

- 17% HGV
- 18% LGV
- 65% Car

Legend: Car, LGV, HGV
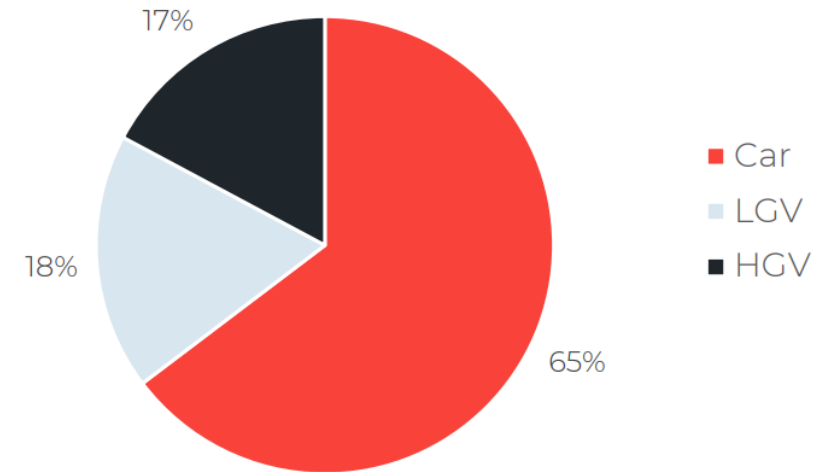
- The largest proportion of emissions by mode in Somerset are attributed to car (65%).

- This share is forecast to decrease with EV uptake, so proportion of emissions attributable to HGVs and LGVs forecast to increase

- However, under Business-as-Usual, cars remain responsible for the highest proportion of emissions in 2050.

*excludes through trips

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Emissions by Trip Length

2019

Legend:
- less than 1 mile
- 1 to 5 miles
- 5 to 10 miles
- 10 to 25 miles
- 25 to 50 miles
- 50+ miles
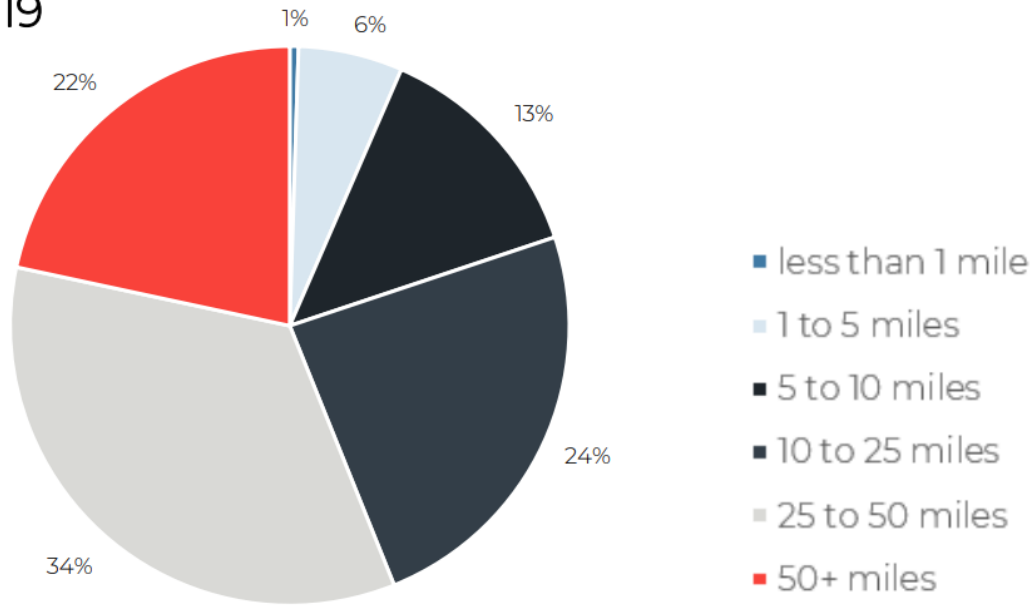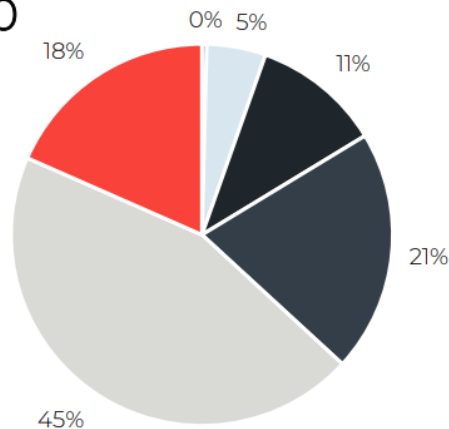
2050

- In Somerset in 2019, only **7%** of emissions were from trips **less than 5 miles** in length, with this share forecast to shrink slightly to 2050. These are trips considered amongst the easiest types of journeys to shift to alternative modes.

- **13%** of emissions are from trips **5 to 10 miles** in length.

- **58%** of emissions in Somerset are attributable to journeys between **10 to 50** miles. Whilst more challenging to shift, local solutions within this area of influence, enabling longer journeys to take place across multiple modes are within the remit of the LTP.

- **22%** of emissions are from trips **greater than 50** miles. These journeys are likely to rely heavily on partnership working to decarbonise, beyond the boundary of the LTP's direct influence.

- In a BAU 2050, longer journeys are forecast to make up a larger share of emissions overall, demonstrating need to take action to tackle emissions attributable to journeys of all lengths.

- Based on DfT statistics/trends
- Starting point for forecasting (does not show effect of interventions)
- Calculations based on BAU approach

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Indicative example of an **80%** carbon reduction pathway for transport to 2030

2020 transport carbon budget and a 'do nothing' scenario

The left hand column shows total surface transport emissions in 2020. Under a 'do nothing' scenario, with no national or local action, emissions rise by 7% by 2030 as new development continues to create additional trip demands.

Step 2: Substitute trips

Trips are substituted through digital, transport and land use planning interventions. These reduce travel demand and associated transport emissions by 14%.

Step 4: Switch fuels

Private vehicles, public transport and freight switch to zero carbon fuels in line with the projected UK national pathway up to 2030. This reduces emissions by the remaining 53%.

Step 1: Negative carbon developments

All development is located and designed to generate zero emissions from transport, and to potentially facilitate the removal of carbon from the wider transport network. This cancels out the emissions growth under the 'do nothing' scenario.

Step 3: Shift modes

Vehicle trips are reduced by switching modes to active and public transport, based on current UK best practice benchmarks. This reduces transport emissions by 6%.

Under the 'additional target', trips are further reduced through increased mode shift to active and public transport, based on more ambitious assumptions that exceed current UK benchmarks. This reduces transport emissions by a further 7%.

2030 transport carbon budget under a 'do everything' scenario

An 80% reduction achieved, with a further 20% reduction needed to achieve net zero by 2050.

Pathway to net zero:
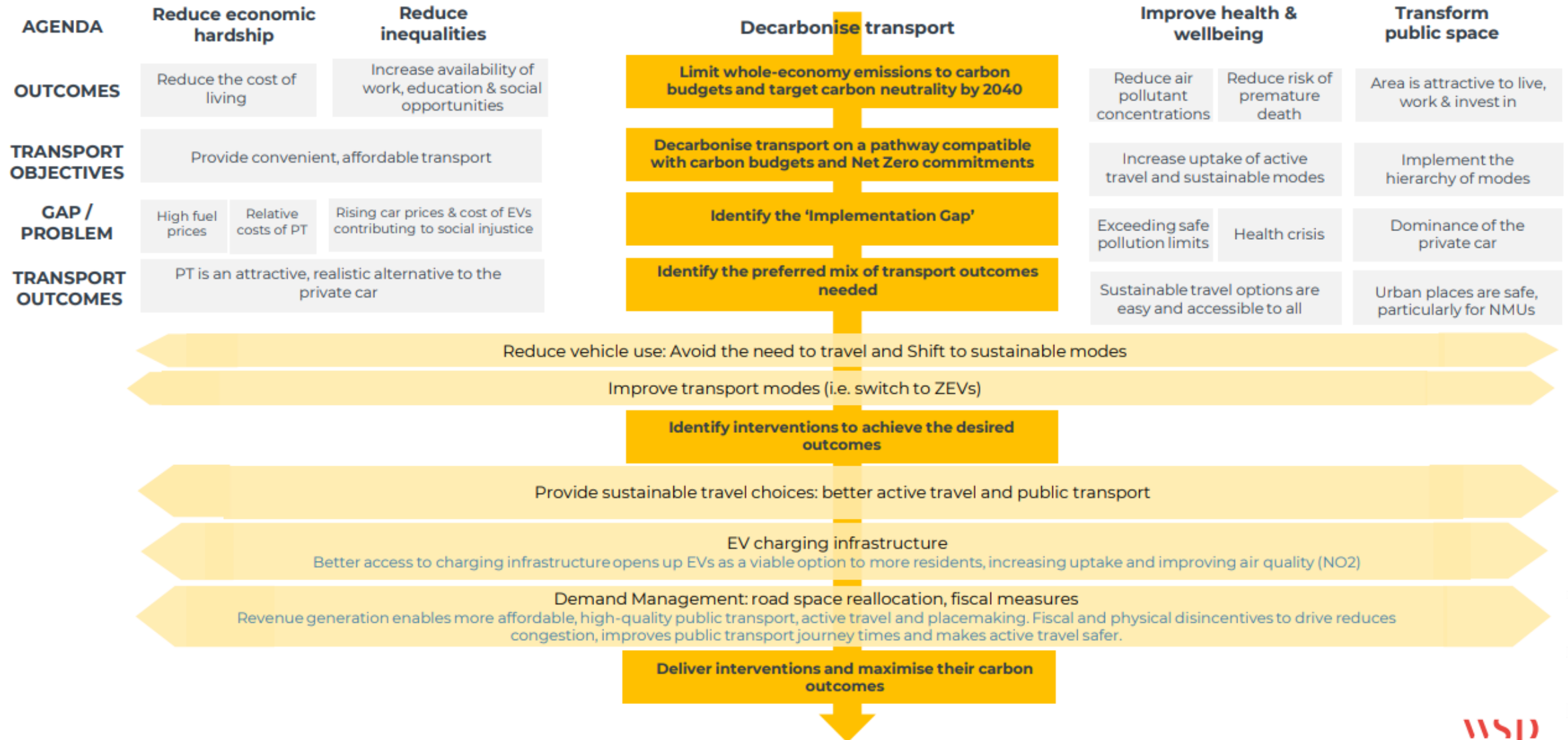- All new development is planned and delivered in a way that achieves net zero carbon emissions; and
- Ideally to be '*negative carbon*', demonstrating wider carbon reduction benefits by providing infrastructure that enables other places to decarbonise

WIDER POLICY BENEFITS

Transport decarbonisation interventions can support positive outcomes across the wider policy agenda

AGENDA	Reduce economic hardship	Reduce inequalities	Decarbonise transport	Improve health & wellbeing		Transform public space
OUTCOMES	Reduce the cost of living	Increase availability of work, education & social opportunities	Limit whole-economy emissions to carbon budgets and target carbon neutrality by 2040	Reduce air pollutant concentrations	Reduce risk of premature death	Area is attractive to live, work & invest in
TRANSPORT OBJECTIVES	Provide convenient, affordable transport		Decarbonise transport on a pathway compatible with carbon budgets and Net Zero commitments	Increase uptake of active travel and sustainable modes		Implement the hierarchy of modes
GAP / PROBLEM	High fuel prices / Relative costs of PT	Rising car prices & cost of EVs contributing to social injustice	Identify the 'Implementation Gap'	Exceeding safe pollution limits	Health crisis	Dominance of the private car
TRANSPORT OUTCOMES	PT is an attractive, realistic alternative to the private car		Identify the preferred mix of transport outcomes needed	Sustainable travel options are easy and accessible to all		Urban places are safe, particularly for NMUs

Reduce vehicle use: Avoid the need to travel and Shift to sustainable modes

Improve transport modes (i.e. switch to ZEVs)

Identify interventions to achieve the desired outcomes

Provide sustainable travel choices: better active travel and public transport

EV charging infrastructure
Better access to charging infrastructure opens up EVs as a viable option to more residents, increasing uptake and improving air quality (NO2)

Demand Management: road space reallocation, fiscal measures
Revenue generation enables more affordable, high-quality public transport, active travel and placemaking. Fiscal and physical disincentives to drive reduces congestion, improves public transport journey times and makes active travel safer.

Deliver interventions and maximise their carbon outcomes

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Member Briefing – Key Outcomes

- Somerset Council needs to decide acceptable level of risk and carbon reduction pathway
    - Informed by evidence – carbon pathway work will help decision makers and officers decide a package of interventions

- Interventions that prioritise sustainable transport will be required if an ambitious carbon reduction pathway is set for Somerset, including;
    - Road space re-allocation which prioritises active travel/sustainable modes
    - Parking and speed restrictions
    - School Streets
    - Pedestrianisation of larger town centres
    - Spatial planning based on '20-minute neighbourhood' concept

- Carbon Neutrality by 2030 incorporated into LTP vision and objectives, setting Somerset's trajectory to Net Zero by 2050
    - Propose a pathway approach – preparatory work between now and 2030, to enable delivery of Net Zero target by 2050

Next Steps

- Executive Board – 10th July
- Climate and Place Scrutiny – 19th July
- Agree and set up task and finish group

- Commence engagement on Local Transport Plan
- Publish high-level transport vision – Autumn 2023
- Consultation with key stakeholders on placemaking vision and principles
- Adopt the placemaking principles as a material planning consideration (Service Director's delegated decision).
- Develop scope of new Local Plan and Local Development Scheme
- Public consultation on full transport plan – Spring 2024
- Local Plan engagement timetable to be agreed

Time for Questions

Executive Board Paper 10th July 2023:

[Item 7 Transport and Planning Policy Guiding Principles.pdf (somerset.gov.uk)](https://democracy.somerset.gov.uk/documents/s10637/Item%207%20Transport%20and%20Planning%20Policy%20Guiding%20Principles.pdf)
https://democracy.somerset.gov.uk/documents/s10637/Item%207%20Transport%20and%20Planning%20Policy%20Guiding%20Principles.pdf

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