

Somerset County Council
Scrutiny Committee- 19th July 2023

Climate, Sustainability and Environment-Next Steps

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Cabinet Member:

Division and Local Member:

1. Summary

- 1.1.** The paper sets out the next steps of the Council's strategic approach to Climate, Environment and Sustainability, to ensure the Council is committed to reducing carbon emissions, achieving Net Zero and supporting nature's recovery.
- 1.2.** The paper relates to the following priorities in the Council Plan
 - A greener, more sustainable Somerset.
 - A Flourishing and more resilient Somerset.

2. Issues for consideration / Recommendations

- 2.1.** The purpose of the report is to provide an update to Scrutiny members on the development of the Climate, Environment and Sustainability Directorate.
- 2.2.** We would like Members to agree to a task and finish group to support the refresh of the Climate Strategy, and development of key performance indicators (KPI's) for the service.

3. Background

- 3.1.** On the 1st April 2023, the five Councils in Somerset came together, and a new directorate was formed bringing together a wider team including climate, waste, ecology, countryside, water, and civil contingencies.
- 3.2.** Bringing together the services has given us an opportunity to review how the areas work together, with the wider organisation, partners, residents, and businesses. It has enabled a focus on existing best practice and ensured combined efforts go towards resolving blockers and challenges.
- 3.3.** The service is now aligning itself to ensure: -
 - That the Council understands its role in climate change mitigation and adaption and that it has a clear plan of action.
 - The Council can take a leading role, and take direct action, on addressing climate change and the ecological emergency.
 - That the Council mainstreams climate change mitigation, adaption, and space for nature across services.
 - That the Council continues to work with businesses, communities, and residents to support work to mitigate climate change and develop resilience.

- 3.4.** The table below shows the work we need to complete over the next six months to set the direction for the service, ensuring there are clear objectives and measures in place: -

Task	Completion Date
Develop a structure for the team to enable effective delivery of the strategy, and our statutory requirements (for example Biodiversity Net Gain, Local Nature Recovery Strategy).	Tier 4 roles by Nov 2023
Refresh the Climate Strategy to include the Ecological Emergency & Motion for the Ocean, including updated data sets and a new short read version.	Oct 2023
Develop an action plan to sit alongside the strategy with SMART (specific, measurable, achievable/agreed, realistic and time-bound) objectives.	Oct 2023
Development of KPI's to enable progress to be monitored in a clear and transparent way.	Oct 2023
Update our carbon emissions data to have a baseline for Somerset as a whole and develop a pathway & action plan to take us towards NetZero.	Sept 2023
Development of Communities of Practice (CoP) to enable the flow of information and ideas across service areas and portfolios.	Nov 2023
Carried out a skills audit and address any gaps.	Jan 2023
Compile a directory of fundable, shovel ready projects, to ensure grant opportunities are fully exploited.	Jan 2024

- 3.5.** The CoP's will play an integral role in embedding climate across the organisation, by their nature they cross-professions and organisational boundaries. Membership is optional, and the ways of working are informal, but they bring together colleagues who have a common goal and want to share and learn from each other. Through collaboration, they can help shape a better future, or find innovative ways to support a more joined up solution for the best possible outcome. The CoPs will align with the Council Plan and the Climate Strategy ensuring they have clear outcomes and targets.
- 3.6** As a service we want to work closely with Climate and Place Scrutiny, we would encourage Members to support us in the development of our refreshed strategy, and stress-test and question actions set out in our action plans. We would also like Members to engage with us in developing KPI's for the service.
- 3.7** It is important to note whilst this more strategic work is progressing several other areas of work continue, for example development of a countywide energy strategy, food and sustainability conference, implementation of the tree strategy and pilots across service areas relating to biodiversity net gain and water quality.

4. Consultations undertaken

4.1. None taken.

5. Implications

5.1. None

6. Background papers

6.1.

Note For sight of individual background papers please contact the report author