



Somerset Council  
Scrutiny Committee  
– Climate and Place, September 20<sup>th</sup> 2023

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Task and Finish Group – Somerset Energy Plan

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Executive Lead Member: Cllr Dixie Darch

Division / Local Member: n/a

## **1. Summary**

- 1.1.** The report is requesting the set-up of a Task and Finish group to input and review the three work packages of the Somerset Wide Energy Plan.
- 1.2.** This project is one of the key deliverables from the Somerset Climate Emergency Strategy as part of the Council's "Cleaner, Greener Somerset" priority.

## **2. Issues for consideration / Recommendations**

- 2.1.** Scrutiny committee is asked to approve the creation of a task and finish group to input and review the three work packages of the Somerset Wide Energy Plan. The group will meet monthly for 1 hour from October 2023 to February 2024 with the first meeting being hybrid and then moving to online for the remaining meetings.

## **3. Background**

- 3.1.** A Local Area Energy Plan is one of the key deliverables in the Somerset Climate Emergency Strategy, specifically to "develop and deliver an Energy Plan for Somerset - Roadmap to decarbonising the energy system in Somerset. whole systems approach (buildings, heat, transport and power generation)."

A Local Area Energy Plan is an evidence-based approach that sets out the most effective route for the local area to reach both its local and national net zero target. The Plan considers the complex interactions of power, gas, heat and transport and the different ways our energy might be supplied, managed and consumed in the future.

The Somerset Wide Energy Plan differs from the more traditional Local Area Energy Plan by mapping at a higher level and specifically focusing renewable technologies. We are also using this work to scope potential on our own assets and how the findings can be included within the upcoming new Somerset Local Plan.

Funding for this piece of work was committed by members of the Climate Strategic Management Group (SMG) in 2021. However, this funding was not enough to progress the project based on the initial soft market testing conducted. Additional funding has been provided by three of the four previous district planning authorities planning policy teams based on the project beginning to inform the development of the new Somerset Local Plan.

Our plan specification is as follows as determined by representatives from across the five authorities from the climate and planning policy teams.

- Develop a high-level assessment of renewable opportunities to support the development of the new Somerset wide Local Plan to identify areas suitable for renewable energy
- Understand the opportunities for renewables on council owned assets both free standing and council buildings
- A report detailing the current state of renewable energy generation and an unconstrained area-wide map of renewable energy opportunities irrelevant of land ownership.
- A GIS map showcasing a high-level assessment of unavoidable constraints and reasonably high level (e.g LCA, access to the grid), subjective constraints to help understand the potential likelihood of reaching the objectives outlined in the Somerset Climate Emergency Strategy.
- Identify investment projects and opportunities ensuring evidence is in place to allow the new Somerset Council to take these forward directly or in partnership and have the evidence available bid for potential future funding
- A roadmap towards the objectives outlined in the Somerset Climate Emergency Strategy including a target of net zero by 2030 and how to work alongside community energy organisations, the private sector and various other stakeholders on to invest and grow renewable energy generation in Somerset.

### **3.2.** The project is split into three work packages.

1. **Work package 1:** Baseline existing local renewable resources focused on understanding the pipeline and demand for renewables in Somerset. Develop a high-level overview of unavoidable and subjective constraints for renewable installations and an assessment of energy infrastructure and council assets for the development of renewable technologies.
2. **Work package 2:** Scenarios and Roadmap. Develop a road map of net zero scenarios for 2030, 2040 and 2050 and how this aligns to national and local scenarios and policies. Analysis of potential generating capacity and yield for technologies across locations.
3. **Work package 3:** Investment Plan Development. Produce an economic benefit assessment of how to deliver the road map along with recommendations on policy routes and viable projects in Somerset. Critically ensure that stakeholder engagement takes place at all stages of the plan's development

#### **4. Consultations undertaken**

- 4.1. The project has established a core steering group that meets biweekly and an internal Somerset Council Officer steering group that meets monthly.
- 4.2. Two external stakeholder webinars will also take place. The first was in July 2023 and the second is scheduled for 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2023.

#### **5. Appendices**

- 5.1. Appendix A: Scrutiny Task and Finish – Somerset Energy Plan

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