

Somerset Council

Full Council
18 December 2024



MOTION B

On receipt of a Motion from a Councillor, the Monitoring Officer/Democratic Services Team will carry out an assessment as to its contents to establish whether there are likely to be significant consequences to the Council should the Motion be carried at the subsequent Full Council meeting.

The first question to be addressed will be:-

“Can the Motion, if approved, be implemented without the need for any resource (financial and otherwise) to be identified outside existing budgets or staffing capacity?”

If the answer is ‘yes’, then the Motion can proceed towards discussion and resolution.

An example of a Motion which would fall into the above category would be where the Council is being asked to lobby the Government or any other body on a particular issue. If the motion is carried, the action required will usually involve no more than a letter being prepared and sent to the intended recipient.

However, as in the case of the recent Motion on ‘Climate Change’, the answer to the above question would clearly be ‘no’.

In such circumstances, detailed analysis of the wording of the Motion will be required to identify what will be needed if the Motion – when it comes before Full Council – is carried.

Such analysis will include:-

- What additional resource would be required to ensure the Motion (if approved) could be implemented?
- What needs to be done to identify the level of resource necessary both in financial and staff terms?
- Are any approvals needed to provide these resources?
- Will this require reports to be submitted through Scrutiny and the Executive? If a Supplementary Estimate is required, Full Council approval will be required too.

If such analysis is required, the Democratic Services Team will arrange for the attached pro-forma to be completed and this will accompany the relevant Motion onto the agenda of the Full Council meeting so all Members are aware that further investigation will be required before the Motion – even if it is carried – can be implemented.

Motions to Council – Assessment Proforma

(To be used in circumstances where it appears the wording of a proposed Motion will commit the Council to providing further financial or staffing resources which cannot be met from existing budgets)

Details of the Motion:

The following motion will be proposed by Councillor Faye Purbrick and seconded by Councillor Lucy Trimnell:

Somerset Council notes with concern the proposed changes to inheritance tax announced by the Labour Government in the recent Autumn budget, which would scrap Agricultural Property Relief (APR). APR has been instrumental in allowing British family farms to remain intact across generations, supporting food security, sustaining rural communities, and aiding environmental stewardship.

This tax is estimated to impact over 70,000(1) family farms, leaving the average farming family with a tax bill of at least £240,000(2), which will force many to sell portions of their land or close entirely, paving the way for corporate ownership over family ownership.

Somerset Council believes that this tax will have severe impacts on:

- 1. Food Security:** Selling off land or closing farms will put our national food independence at risk, at a time when global stability is already fragile. British family farms are critical to ensuring a steady supply of homegrown food.
- 2. Rural Community Stability:** Family farms are the foundation of rural Britain and Somerset, contributing to local jobs, schools, and essential services. Labour's proposed tax risks destabilising communities, eroding the rural way of life, and causing a negative ripple effect across the countryside and our communities.
- 3. Environmental Stewardship:** Farms cover 70% of the UK's land (over 420,000 hectares in Somerset alone), with family farms playing a leading role in nature recovery, biodiversity, and sustainable land management. The sale and fragmentation of these lands would hinder conservation efforts and undermine environmental initiatives that his council has pledge to support.

Somerset Council resolves to:

1. Declare opposition to the Labour Government's changes to inheritance tax affecting family farms.
2. Write to the Prime Minister, Chancellor and the DEFRA Secretary, along with all Somerset MPs, outlining our opposition to this tax change and the scale of the impact to Somerset and our rural economy.
3. Advocate through all available means for the continued APR exemption of family farms to preserve the UK's food security, our rural communities, and environmental initiatives.

Somerset Council urges all Councillors to stand with Britain's family farms, to support our rural communities, enhance local food security, and to protect our environment by formally rejecting and calling for the reversal of the proposed "family farm tax."

References

1. CLA 2024 October <https://www.cla.org.uk/news/help-the-cla-save-your-family-business/>
2. AHDB 2024 October <https://ahdb.org.uk/news/ahdb-response-to-budget-2024>

Questions to be addressed:-

What additional resource would be required to ensure the Motion (if approved) could be implemented?

Answer:

- 1) No additional resources necessary, this could be met through a statement in the meeting.
- 2) No additional resources necessary.
- 3) It is difficult to assess item three as "all available means" is undefined and could have both resource and financial implications depending on the approach that is anticipated.

What needs to be done to identify the level of resource necessary both in financial and staff terms?

Answer:

Greater clarity is required to be able to assess item three in the list.

Are any approvals needed to provide these resources?

Answer:

None are immediately identifiable.

Will this require reports to be submitted through Scrutiny and the Executive? If a Supplementary Estimate is required, Full Council approval will be required too.

Answer:

No additional reports are immediately identifiable.

	Officer Name	Date Completed
Legal & Governance Implications	Jill Byron and Scott Wooldridge	05/12/24 sent
Finance & Procurement	Nicola Hix / Maria Christofi	05/12/24 sent
Workforce (*)	Dawn Bettridge	N/a
Asset Management (*)	Simon Lewis	N/a
Executive Director	Relevant Executive Director – Chris Hall	09/12/24
Executive Lead Member	Relevant Lead Member – Cllr Mike Rigby/Cllr Federica Smith-Roberts	05/12/24 sent
Consulted:	Councillor Name	
Local Division Members	List local members	N/a
Opposition Spokesperson(s)	Relevant Opposition Spokesperson – Cllr Sue Osborne/Cllr Suria Aujla	05/12/24 sent
Relevant Scrutiny Chair(s)	Relevant Chair – Cllr Martin Dimery	05/12/24 sent