

# Somerset West and Taunton

## Scrutiny Committee – 17 July 2019

### Climate Change Strategy – Joint Scrutiny Task and Finish Group

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Peter Pilkington (Climate Change Portfolio Holder)

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#### 1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 Work has recently begun on a Somerset-wide Climate Change Strategy. This report updates Scrutiny Committee on progress to date, sets out a timetable for completion of the strategy and requests recommendation of two Members to sit on a Joint Scrutiny Task and Finish Group. The report also updates members on the wider climate governance arrangements, both for Somerset and SWT, and development of an SWT specific strategy.
- 1.2 In February 2019, the SWT Shadow Council passed a motion declaring a Climate Emergency and committing to achieving carbon neutrality by 2030. A £25,000 budget was approved for development of a Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience Plan.
- 1.3 All five Somerset Councils have now passed similar motions (though specific details vary a little). The motion passed by the County Council committed to *“facilitate stronger Somerset-wide action through collaboration at a strategic, community and individual level; and...to work with partners...to identify ways to make Somerset carbon neutral by 2030 taking into account both production and consumption emissions”*. Arising from this, the development of a joint Somerset-wide Climate Change Strategy has been proposed, that will identify measurable ways in which to make Somerset carbon neutral by 2030, be developed by a joint Strategic Management Group and be overseen by a Joint Scrutiny Task and Finish Group as well as a Joint Cabinet Portfolio Holders Group. SWT’s Scrutiny Committee should recommend two Members to sit on this Joint Scrutiny Task and Finish Group. Approximately £10,000 of the £25,000 approved budget is anticipated to be put towards this joint work.
- 1.4 The Somerset-wide Strategy will focus on evidence gathering; development and assessment of Strategy options and recommendations; and the development of high level action plans for County-wide issues. It is anticipated that a draft of the joint Somerset-wide Strategy and an early indication of Action Plans will be completed by Autumn 2019, with the final Strategy and Action Plan complete in time to feed into budget setting for the 2020/21 financial year. Councils across Somerset are also committed (through their respective climate emergency resolutions) to developing authority-specific strategies and detailed action plans. These strategies, whilst containing commitments and actions relevant and specific to each district, will also complement the joint Somerset Strategy, particularly where a co-ordinated response to tackle the climate challenge

would be more effective.

- 1.5 Work on an SWT-specific Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience Plan will begin whilst the Somerset-wide work is in development and be completed following the Somerset-wide work, so that it can take account of the evidence and high level strategy and action plans agreed through it. It is anticipated that a draft SWT-specific Strategy and indicative Action Plan will be completed alongside or shortly after the draft Somerset-wide Strategy in Autumn 2019, and the final Strategy and Action Plan will be completed by Summer 2020.
- 1.6 Officer and Member governance arrangements for both the SWT and Somerset-wide Strategy work are outlined within this report.

## 2 Recommendations

- 2.1 **That Scrutiny Committee note and endorse the scope, process, budget implications, governance arrangements and timescale associated with developing the joint Somerset-wide Climate Change Strategy, and related SWT-specific Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience Plan.**
- 2.2 **That Scrutiny Committee endorse the nomination of Councillor David Mansell and Councillor Loretta Whetlor to serve on the Joint Scrutiny Task and Finish Group, which will oversee development of the joint Somerset-wide Climate Change Strategy.**

## 3 Risk Assessment

### Risk Matrix

Description	Likelihood	Impact	Overall
(1) Failure to endorse the approach or recommend members for the joint task and finish group could result in a Somerset-wide strategy being developed without SWT representation or input.	5	4	20
<i>(1) The mitigation for this is to endorse the approach and nominate two members to sit on the joint task and finish group.</i>	1	4	4
(2) Failure to join county-wide work on a joint Climate Change Strategy could result in higher costs for developing our own SWT-specific strategy and action plans as well as missing out on potential economies of scale for delivery of action plans.	4	5	20
<i>(2) The mitigation for this is to endorse the approach and nominate two members to sit on the joint task and finish group.</i>	1	5	5

### Risk Scoring Matrix

<b>Likelihood</b>	5	Almost Certain	Low (5)	Medium (10)	High (15)	Very High (20)	Very High (25)
	4	Likely	Low (4)	Medium (8)	Medium (12)	High (16)	Very High (20)
	3	Possible	Low (3)	Low (6)	Medium (9)	Medium (12)	High (15)
	2	Unlikely	Low (2)	Low (4)	Low (6)	Medium (8)	Medium (10)
	1	Rare	Low (1)	Low (2)	Low (3)	Low (4)	Low (5)
			1	2	3	4	5
			Negligible	Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic
<b>Impact</b>							

<b>Likelihood of risk occurring</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Description (chance of occurrence)</b>
1. Very Unlikely	May occur in exceptional circumstances	< 10%
2. Slight	Is unlikely to, but could occur at some time	10 – 25%
3. Feasible	Fairly likely to occur at same time	25 – 50%
4. Likely	Likely to occur within the next 1-2 years, or occurs occasionally	50 – 75%
5. Very Likely	Regular occurrence (daily / weekly / monthly)	> 75%

## 4 Background and Full details of the Report

### Introduction

- 4.1 In February 2019, the SWT Shadow Council passed a motion declaring a Climate Emergency and committing to achieving carbon neutrality by 2030. The full motion can be read in the [minutes of the February Shadow Council meeting](#). As part of this, a £25,000 budget was approved for development of a Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience Plan.
- 4.2 Since this Council passed its Climate Emergency motion, each of the four other Somerset local authorities (Mendip District Council, Sedgemoor District Council, Somerset County Council and South Somerset District Council), have also passed similar motions. Whilst the details of the motions vary slightly, they all commit to achieving carbon neutrality, and all commit to production of a climate change strategy or words to that effect with an associated budget for the work. The motion passed by Somerset County Council committed to “*facilitate stronger Somerset-wide action through collaboration at a strategic, community and individual level; and...to work with partners...to identify ways to make Somerset carbon neutral by 2030 taking into account both production and consumption emissions*”.

### Joint Somerset-wide Strategy

- 4.3 Arising from this, the development of a joint Somerset-wide Climate Change Strategy

has been [proposed](#). Many of the issues impacting upon the levels of greenhouse-gas emissions emanating from and as a result of activities within SWT as an administrative area are shared across the county (and indeed the country and beyond) – such as transport, energy, agriculture and industry. As such, it makes good strategic and financial sense to work together on establishing the baseline evidence, broad strategy, high level action plans for cross-cutting issues and ultimately on delivery of certain actions. That being the case, participation in the development of a Somerset-wide Strategy, working in partnership with the other Somerset authorities will be essential if SWT as an administrative area is to achieve its carbon neutral commitment. Governance arrangements for this are explained in paras 4.11 – 4.24 and in the attached governance diagram at Appendix A.

- 4.4 The joint Senior Management Group tasked with developing this Somerset-wide Strategy has met twice and has begun to drill down into the scope of the joint strategy, how it will be developed, timescale for completion, and the relationship with more detailed strategy and action plan development for each individual authority.
- 4.5 The scope is still in flux and may change as work begins to dig down into detail, but at present, the joint Somerset-wide Climate Change Strategy is anticipated to:
- Cover the geographical area (i.e. not just Council functions);
  - Be focused around six main areas:
    - natural environment;
    - waste, recycling and resource management;
    - energy;
    - built environment;
    - travel and transport; and
    - economy and business;
  - Consider three overarching themes:
    - awareness;
    - engagement; and
    - behaviour change
  - Look into both direct (Scope 1 and 2) and indirect (Scope 3) emissions associated with Council functions, identifying ways for the Councils to lead the way.
  - Gather evidence;
  - Develop and assess strategy options and recommendations; and
  - Develop high level action plans for County-wide issues.
- 4.6 Through this scoping work to date it has been identified that, with no dedicated internal resource and considering the skills and expertise required, external consultancy support is required to help in drawing the joint strategy together. Approximately £10,000 of the £25,000 approved budget is anticipated to be put towards appointment of this support for the joint strategy work. The Senior Management Group met on 28<sup>th</sup> June to conduct soft market testing with a number of potential suppliers and subject experts to help with setting the scope of the strategy and what a consultant brief / invitation to tender might include. At this stage, it is felt that the best use of external consultancy support will be in providing objective expertise on specific issues and the interventions we could take. A verbal update on progress with this will be made to Scrutiny on the day of the meeting.
- 4.7 It is envisaged that a draft Strategy and “early indication” action plan will be completed and presented to the Chief Executives and members Task and Finish group by end September 2019 and onward for approval by the constituent local authorities. Following feedback a final strategy document will be completed and a costed Action Plan developed. (The aim is to feed this into the financial planning cycles of the participating

authorities and financial plans for 2020-21 (and onwards).

### SWT Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience Plan

- 4.8 A more detailed and area-specific strategy and action plan will also be developed by SWT. This will need to take account of the Somerset-wide Strategy which will provide an evidence base and high level framework to build on. This may entail detailing precise projects that can deliver on action plans from the Somerset-wide Strategy, but also development of additional strategy responses and action plans relating to issues that are of particular relevance within SWT. It will also provide an opportunity to develop a monitoring framework against which we can assess our delivery and performance.
- 4.9 There will also be a greater focus on what the Council can do corporately itself, as such corporate action, procurement, communications and funding will be additional cross-cutting themes.
- 4.10 Whilst completion of this SWT-specific Strategy cannot reasonably be completed until after the Somerset-wide work, early scoping, planning and capacity building can begin immediately and the intention will be to develop as much of the Strategy alongside the Somerset-wide work. The governance arrangements below detail a structure where there is a two-way dialogue between production of the Somerset-wide Strategy and the SWT-specific Strategy, ensuring that they both influence one another, enable sharing of knowledge and experience and avoiding duplication of efforts. On this basis, it is hoped that a draft of the SWT-specific Strategy and an early indication Action Plan could be completed alongside or just after the Somerset-wide Strategy in Autumn 2019, and the final Strategy and Action Plan completed by Summer 2020.

### Governance arrangements

- 4.11 Separate, but aligned and complementary governance arrangements are required for development of the Somerset-wide and the SWT-specific strategies. The governance arrangements below aim to ensure that there is an effective project management structure in place and also that the strategies are developed with the necessary levels of leadership engagement and ownership. A diagram covering the governance arrangements for both strategies and the interrelationships between them is included in Appendix A.

### Somerset-wide Strategy governance

- 4.12 To demonstrate commitment at the highest leadership level the Somerset Leaders and Chief Executives have requested that the Project reports directly into their group. Brendan Cleere (SWT Head of Localities) will be the Senior Officer Sponsor (SoS), reporting in to the Somerset Leaders and Chief Executives.
- 4.13 A joint Scrutiny Task and Finish Group comprising two Members from the participating authorities will:
- Oversee the development of the Somerset-wide Strategy;
  - Contribute to and review the scope of the Strategy, and provide recommendations on the content and intended outcomes;
  - Engage with relevant stakeholders, e.g. businesses, business groups, the Local Enterprise Partnership, environmental groups, community groups and individuals to provide expertise to contribute to the review of the strategy and provide recommendations to further corporate approaches;
  - Provide guidance and advice to the Strategic Management Group; and

- Act as a conduit between the Strategic Management Group and relevant Scrutiny committees
- 4.14 Following discussion with the Leader and Portfolio Holder, the Chairman of Scrutiny Committee has nominated Councillor David Mansell and Councillor Loretta Whetlor to be SWT's representatives on this group. Scrutiny Committee are asked to endorse these nominations in the recommendations to this report. The first meeting of the Joint Scrutiny Task and Finish Group is anticipated to be held in August 2019.
- 4.15 A group comprising cabinet/executive members with responsibility for climate change (1 per authority) will be also established, to provide the necessary political leadership and ownership across the participating authorities. This group will consider the advice and recommendations emerging from the above Scrutiny/Task and Finish group. As Portfolio Holder for Climate Change, Councillor Peter Pilkington will serve on this group.
- 4.16 To manage, co-ordinate and undertake the work required to develop the Strategy and ensuing action plan, a Strategic Management Group of Senior Officers from each of the 5 Councils has been convened. It is the intention to set up a number of working groups to support the Strategic group, which will operate on a task and finish basis and will stand as work is required and be stood down once the tasks have been completed. These working groups may include members of the Strategic Management Group, but will also include subject matter expert officers from the participating authorities.
- 4.17 Michele Cusack – Director Economic and Community Infrastructure Commissioning at Somerset County Council (SCC) will chair the Strategic Management Group, oversee the Officer Working Group(s) and will report on progress to the SoS.
- 4.18 Communication and stakeholder engagement activity will be undertaken throughout the process and arrangements will be established to facilitate this.
- 4.19 It is also envisaged that the Heart of the South West Joint Committee will maintain a strategic overview of climate change strategy across the Devon and Somerset area. Detailed reporting arrangements have yet to be established but it is anticipated that respective senior officers and elected members from Devon and Somerset will facilitate collaboration and shared learning to tackle climate change across the joint committee area.

#### SWT-specific Strategy governance

- 4.20 The SWT internal governance arrangements have been designed to complement the Somerset-wide arrangements and build upon the established Authority PMO processes.
- 4.21 The project will ultimately report to the SWT Executive Committee, via Scrutiny Committee. However, a new Climate Change Member Working Group will oversee development of the strategy, action plan and delivery of projects. This Member Working Group will be comprised of the nominated joint Scrutiny Task and Finish Group members, the Chair of Scrutiny Committee, the Climate Change Portfolio Holder and the Leader, supported by key officers.
- 4.22 A Programme Board comprising the Senior Officer Sponsor (Brendan Cleere), Strategy Lead (Graeme Thompson), Programme Management Lead (Erica Lake) will oversee development of the strategy and action plan and delivery. It will receive reports on progress, ensure strategic alignment and agree and delegate tasks between the Member Working Group and the Operational / Delivery Groups. Common membership between

the Somerset-wide Strategic Management Group, SoS and the SWT Programme Board will ensure strategic overview. Communications and Engagement involvement at this level will be important to ensure we are owning and promoting important internal and external messaging in relation to the work we are doing.

- 4.23 Work on drawing up the SWT strategy response, developing up action plans and ultimately delivery in relation to specific areas and themes will be the remit of Operational / Delivery Groups. These groups will be aligned to the thematic working groups on the Somerset-wide Strategy, and be comprised of relevant officers from across the Council, with appropriate external support as necessary. These groups will work up SWT-specific responses, monitor and deliver projects and report progress to / seek approval from the Programme Board. These groups will be organised around the Authority PMO process so they have a delivery focus with strong project management resource. Many of the individuals working within each of the specific areas and themes for the SWT-specific Strategy may also form part of the thematic working groups for the Somerset-wide Strategy.

#### Delivery and resource implications

- 4.24 The above governance arrangements have been designed so as to ensure a strong emphasis on delivery and use individual's technical skills and expertise for the best purposes. Many officers within the Council will need to be involved, particularly in the Operational / Delivery Groups identified above. There may be circumstances where additional technical skills and expertise are required, that we do not currently have in-house. As the need for these skills and expertise arises, the Council(s) will need to consider how best to respond to this – whether this is through procurement of additional external consultancy support, or through appointment of additional temporary or permanent staff (including potentially on a shared/pooled basis across the county).
- 4.25 Whilst it is important that we develop coherent and comprehensive strategies and action plans, it is important that we start delivering action as soon as possible. Whilst in some circumstances it will be important to wait until the strategy approach has been fully considered and action plans identified, in others this can be an unnecessary burden. Bringing forward smaller, oven-ready projects in the meantime can provide important local evidence and data as proof of concept / trialling of proposals. Processes should therefore avoid overly stifling “quick wins”, so long as there is a reasoned logic to bringing forward delivery ahead of the strategy being completed, and provided that any evidence, data and knowledge arising from the project is shared to enable further understanding of rollout on a wider basis.

## **5 Links to Corporate Aims / Priorities**

- 5.1 Climate change is not currently reflected in the corporate priorities of the previous Taunton Deane or West Somerset Corporate Strategies. However, a new Corporate Strategy is under development and will reflect the increased priority given by this authority towards tackling the climate emergency.

## **6 Finance / Resource Implications**

- 6.1 A £25,000 budget has already been assigned for development of a Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience Plan. Approximately £10,000 of this is expected to be used towards engaging expert consultants in developing the Somerset-wide Strategy. The remaining £15,000 would be available for development of the SWT-specific Strategy or potentially kick-starting key delivery projects.

6.2 Long-term, development of these strategies will amount to commitments to action, and these actions will have substantial financial costs associated with them. The costs of implementing the action plans developed by this work are not included in this report. However, these financial costs should be considered alongside avoided financial, environmental and social costs associated with inaction (for example flood damage, stranded assets, homelessness and health and wellbeing impacts as a result of increased flood risk and rising sea levels).

## **7 Legal Implications (if any)**

7.1 There are no specific legal implications associated with this report

## **8 Environmental Impact Implications (if any)**

8.1 Development of the Somerset-wide and SWT-specific Strategies will directly and indirectly impacting on addressing the climate emergency through action plans that will help to achieve carbon neutrality and climate resilience. Specific impacts relating to specific action plans / projects will need to be assessed at a later stage.

## **9 Safeguarding and/or Community Safety Implications (if any)**

9.1 Climate change is the greatest risk to the ongoing safety of our communities. The proposal is to develop a strategy and action plan to help address and reduce this risk.

## **10 Equality and Diversity Implications (if any)**

10.1 This strategy will be produced for and impact on all residents of the area including both those persons who share relevant protected characteristics and those who do not. The impacts of action will benefit all residents. The impacts of inaction will disproportionately impact on lower income groups and more vulnerable parts of the population.

## **11 Social Value Implications (if any)**

11.1 The development of a climate change strategy and action plan will inherently add social value in itself.

## **12 Partnership Implications (if any)**

12.1 This project relies heavily upon partnership working with Somerset County Council and the other local authorities across Somerset. External consultancy support is to be procured for assistance in producing the Somerset-wide Strategy, with costs associated with this support being shared between the constituent authorities. Procurement of the services is likely to be undertaken by Somerset County Council who will then need to invoice SWT for their portion of the costs (anticipated to be approximately £10,000).

## **13 Health and Wellbeing Implications (if any)**

13.1 The development of a climate change strategy and action plan will inherently deal with health and wellbeing issues and encourage in itself.

## **14 Asset Management Implications (if any)**

14.1 Development of the strategies and action plans will directly impact on management of our own assets. For instance, in order to achieve carbon neutrality and ensure our communities are resilient to climate change we will need to consider how we deal with



