

# Public Document Pack

**Contact:** Leo Taylor  
**Direct Dial:** 01934 634621  
**E-mail:** leo.taylor@n-somerset.gov.uk  
**Date:** Wednesday, 12 July 2023

Dear Sir or Madam

**The Transport, Climate and Communities Policy and Scrutiny Panel – Thursday, 20 July 2023, 10.00 am – New Council Chamber - Town Hall**

A meeting of the Transport, Climate and Communities Policy and Scrutiny Panel will take place as indicated above.

The agenda is set out overleaf.

Yours faithfully

Assistant Director Legal & Governance and Monitoring Officer

To: Members of the Transport, Climate and Communities Policy and Scrutiny Panel

Councillors:

Steve Bridger (Chairperson), Mike Bird, Peter Burden, Ciaran Cronnelly, Nicola Holland, Sue Mason, Stuart McQuillan, Tom Nicholson, Robert Payne, Terry Porter, Michael Pryke and Luke Smith.

**This document and associated papers can be made available in a different format on request.**

## Agenda

### 1. **Election of the Vice-Chairperson for the 2023/24 Municipal Year**

### 2. **Public Discussion (Standing Order SSO9)**

To receive and hear any person who wishes to address the Panel on matters which affect the District and fall within the remit of the Panel. The Chairman will select the order of the matters to be heard. Members of the Panel may ask questions of the member of the public and a dialogue between the parties can be undertaken.

Requests to speak must be submitted in writing to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, or the officer mentioned at the top of this agenda letter, by noon on the day before.

### 3. **Apologies for Absence and Notifications for Substitutes**

### 4. **Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (Standing Order 37)**

A Member must declare any disclosable pecuniary interest where it relates to any matter being considered at the meeting. A declaration of a disclosable pecuniary interest should indicate the interest and the agenda item to which it relates. A Member is not permitted to participate in this agenda item by law and should immediately leave the meeting before the start of any debate.

If the Member leaves the Chamber in respect of a declaration, he or she should ensure that the Chairman is aware of this before he or she leaves to enable their exit from the meeting to be recorded in the minutes in accordance with Standing Order 37.

### 5. **Minutes** (Pages 5 - 10)

Minutes of the Partnerships, Corporate Organisation and Overview Management Policy and Scrutiny Panel (PCOM) held on 2 March 2023 – to approve as a correct record.

Panel to note the change to the Panel's title and remit.

### 6. **Matters referred by Council, the Executive, other Committees and Panels (if any)**

### 7. **Role, Remit and Work Plan of the Transport, Climate and Communities Policy and Scrutiny Panel** (Pages 11 - 20)

### 8. **WESTLink Services and 3-Month Review** (Pages 21 - 30)

### 9. **Finance report – Medium term financial plan (MTFP)** (Pages 31 - 38)

### 10. **Climate Emergency Action Plan update and progress report** (Pages 39 - 50)

## Exempt Items

Should the Transport, Climate and Communities Policy and Scrutiny Panel wish to consider a matter as an Exempt Item, the following resolution should be passed -

“(1) That the press, public, and officers not required by the Members, the Chief Executive or the Director, to remain during the exempt session, be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business on the ground that its consideration will involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in Section 100I of the Local Government Act 1972.”

Also, if appropriate, the following resolution should be passed –

“(2) That members of the Council who are not members of the Transport, Climate and Communities Policy and Scrutiny Panel be invited to remain.”

### **Mobile phones and other mobile devices**

All persons attending the meeting are requested to ensure that these devices are switched to silent mode. The chairman may approve an exception to this request in special circumstances.

### **Filming and recording of meetings**

The proceedings of this meeting may be recorded for broadcasting purposes.

Anyone wishing to film part or all of the proceedings may do so unless the press and public are excluded for that part of the meeting or there is good reason not to do so, as directed by the Chairman. Any filming must be done as unobtrusively as possible from a single fixed position without the use of any additional lighting, focusing only on those actively participating in the meeting and having regard to the wishes of any members of the public present who may not wish to be filmed. As a matter of courtesy, anyone wishing to film proceedings is asked to advise the Chairman or the Assistant Director Legal & Governance and Monitoring Officer's representative before the start of the meeting so that all those present may be made aware that it is happening.

Members of the public may also use Facebook and Twitter or other forms of social media to report on proceedings at this meeting.

### **Emergency Evacuation Procedure**

#### **On hearing the alarm – (a continuous two tone siren)**

Leave the room by the nearest exit door. Ensure that windows are closed.

Last person out to close the door.

**Do not** stop to collect personal belongings.

**Do not** use the lifts.

**Follow** the green and white exit signs and make your way to the assembly point.

**Do not** re-enter the building until authorised to do so by the Fire Authority.

**Go to Assembly Point C – Outside the offices formerly occupied by Stephen & Co**

## Minutes

of the Meeting of

# The Partnerships, Corporate Organisation and Overview Management Policy and Scrutiny Panel Thursday, 2 March 2023

New Council Chamber

Meeting Commenced: 2.00 pm

Meeting Concluded: 4.00 pm

### Councillors:

Geoffrey Richardson (Chairman)  
Stuart McQuillan (Vice-Chairman)

Peter Bryant  
John Cato  
James Clayton  
Robert Payne  
Terry Porter  
Richard Tucker

**Apologies:** Councillors Gill Bute and Mark Crosby.

**Absent:** Councillor John Ley-Morgan.

**Also in attendance:** Councillors Ash Cartman, Peter Crew, and Karin Haverson.

**Officers in attendance:** Amy Webb (Director of Corporate Services), Nicholas Brain (Assistant Director Legal and Governance and Monitoring Officer), Stuart Anstead (Head of Support Services Partnership), Emma Diakou (Head of Business Insight, Policy and Partnerships), Dee Mawn (Environmental Health Service Manager) Howard Pothecary (Safer Communities Service Manager), Harry Mills (Safer Communities enforcement Manager), Jason Reading (Senior Project Manager), Julia Stuckey (Super Weston Placemaking Project Manager), Samantha Usher (Electoral Services Manager), Brian Veale (Managing Director, North Somerset Environment Company) and Leo Taylor (Policy and Scrutiny Manager)

### PCO Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (Standing Order 37) 21

None.

### PCO Minutes 22

**Resolved:** that the minutes of the meeting held on 10 November 2022 be approved as a correct record.

**PCO 23 The Panel's Work Plan March 2023**

Members noted the work plan which included detail of informal scrutiny work undertaken since the last panel meeting held in November 2022 together with planned work going forward.

Members then considered the appendix to the work plan setting out the Chair's work plan recommendations to the Panel when it is reconstituted after the forthcoming district election (as set out in his scrutiny report to Council on 21 February 2023):-

**Concluded:**

- (1) that the work plan be received and updated accordingly; and
- (2) that the following recommended areas of work plan focus for the Panel - going forward into the new administration - be endorsed:-
  - Contribute to policy discussions for the procurement of energy.
  - Arrange all member briefings/consultations on 2023-24 budget and Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP).
  - Ensure Customer Services improvements happen as planned.
  - Ensure capital spending and major projects provide value for money.
  - Ensure Climate Emergency actions are met.
  - Support Community Safety initiatives.
  - Ensure Accommodation Strategy progresses to plan.

**PCO 24 The Winter Gardens Community Use**

The Weston Placemaking Programme Manager presented the report updating elected members on the continued community use of the Winter Gardens together with an update from the Community Board, which was established because of specific clauses in the Legal Transfer Agreement between North Somerset Council and Weston College in early 2016.

The Programme Manager was thanked for her report.

**Concluded:**

- (1) that the report be received; and
- (2) that a further update be provided in six months' time.

**PCO 25 Elections Act and North Somerset Local Elections 4 May 2023**

The Electoral Services Manager presented the report providing an update on the planning and actions undertaken to ensure the effective and efficient delivery of the forthcoming North Somerset District and Parish elections. It also noted the provisions of the Elections Act 2022, the impact this would have for these elections and the steps being taken to ensure those who were eligible would be able to cast their vote at the polling station.

In discussion, Members sought the following assurances:

- the adequacy of resources to support the administration of the election ;

- the numbers of applications for Voter Authority Certificates. Although numbers were relatively low at this stage, assurance was given that resourcing was in place to address any late surge in applications;
- the speed and efficiency around processing applications.
- around contingency planning for security incidents at polling stations; and
- around the effective targeting of information at groups of people most likely to struggle with or be unaware of the voter ID requirements;

In further discussion concern was raised that some people were finding it difficult to get the information needed to support a Voter Authority Certificate application. Officers emphasised that these issues were mostly confined to first time applications and that anyone struggling could be referred to the Council's Library Service for assistance.

**Concluded:** that the report be received.

**PCO 26 Update on the progress of the council's Programme Management Office, award of Levelling Up Fund (LUF), and Q3 update on Projects and Property**

[This item was taken out of sequence]

The Head of Business Insight, Policy and Partnerships presented the report which provided updates on the progress of the council-wide Programme Management Office (PMO); the award and management of Levelling Up Funds and Major projects by exception.

In discussion, Members sought and received clarification on the following:

- the level of accreditation sought for Council project managers (Association of Project Managers membership and chartered status);
- the process by which projects were assessed and monitored to ensure those underperforming were filtered out;
- governance (CGP) and role of the Executive, Scrutiny and peer review in the process - Members noted that an audit of the capital governance process was being planned;
- review and learning following project closures;
- the approach to capturing project environmental impacts;
- the Council's capacity to deliver levelling-up fund projects; and
- training for Members on project management - it was noted that a this was being planned for Members' induction.

**Concluded:** that the report be received.

**PCO 27 Domestic Abuse and VAWG Crime**

The Domestic Abuse and VAWG Lead presented the report which outlined for following:

- the work led by North Somerset Council's Safer and Stronger Communities

Team in partnership with other agencies to meet the statutory requirements of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, and on local service developments to support survivors of domestic abuse and VAWG; and

- the future priorities and planned actions for the development and future funding of the Council's response to domestic abuse and violence against women and girls.

There was discussion around the following topics:

- Accommodation/refuges – this was a significant challenge with just three refuges in central Weston-super-Mare requiring more out-of-area placements. The team were reaching out to social housing providers to find solutions and the next stage was to focus on “move-on” accommodation. They were also looking at creative solutions where victims were able to remain in their own properties (such as facilitating the moving of perpetrators to alternative accommodation).
- Next Link/the Bristol commissioning model – officers referred to increasing coordination with Bristol City and South Gloucestershire Councils allowing greater agility and capacity to place victims across the wider area. This had been pioneered by Bristol in its approach to related service commissioning and the Council (NSC) was confident it would take a similar approach when it came to recommissioning its own services in the area.

**Concluded:** that the report be received

## **PCO 28 Review of Public Space Protection Orders 2023**

The Environmental Services Manager presented the report which provided background (legislation and policy) around the forthcoming review of Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) and set out the options considered and recommendations regarding which PSPOs to renew together with suggestions for any additions/amendments needed as part of the review which must take place no later than 15 October 2023.

In discussion some Members provided feedback on proposals with their respective wards and the Panel sought and received further clarification on the following:

- the process for making changes to PSPOs – it was noted that decisions on additions/amendments would be taken by the Executive Member and;
- the extent of the public consultation (Parish and Town Councils were included);

In closing discussion, the Chair encouraged Members to engage with and provide further feedback to the consultation going forward.

**Concluded:** that the report be received.

## **PCO 29 Delivery of the ICT Strategy Action Plan**

The Head of Support Services presented the report which provided, for Panel



review and feedback, a detailed list of commitments made in the ICT strategy together with the progress being made in delivering the associated action Plan.

In discussion Members sought and received clarification on the following:

- the six activities shown in the report as “de-prioritised” – officers confirmed that there had been challenge around identifying critical resources in the current financial year but gave assurance that these would be brought back on track in 2023-24;
- call-centre performance – it was noted that this issue was being considered further by the Panel’s Customer Services working group;
- concerns about telephone access to staff working from home – The Director of Corporate Services encouraged Members to report any incidents and referred them to the Chief Executive’s recent statement on the issue.

**Concluded:** that the report be received and that Members feedback be provided to officers in the form of the minutes.

### **PCO 30 NSEC shareholder update**

The Executive Member for Corporate Services presented the report which gave an update on North Somerset Environment Company Limited (NSEC), the Council’s wholly owned subsidiary company, providing an overview by the shareholder representative (the Executive Member) from a governance perspective on the activities and performance of the company, which had seen a marked improvement. He also introduced the Managing Director of NSEC.

In discussion, Members received the following responses to their comments and queries:

- Non-executive Directors – it was confirmed these were all external appointments;
- developing new business – Operational staff had experience in that area and the Company had full membership on the Local Council Road Innovations Group (LCRIG);
- Finance officer – this post had been recruited and was being supported to work towards achieving full chartered status;

Members also sought and received clarification on the following:

- composition of the client team managing the NSEC contract
- progress addressing driver shortages - NSEC was now training drivers and the shortage had reduced

**Concluded:** that the report be received.

### **PCO 31 Accommodation Strategy**

The Director of Corporate Services presented the report providing an update on the Council’s Accommodation strategy Programme.

In discussion, Members sought and received clarification on the following:

- status of the Project Manager leading on the strategy programme;

- the reasons for the procurement of new pc monitors and clarification on numbers;
- changes in staff behaviour in respect of changing workstyles - Members noted that there was recognition of importance of face-to-face contact and that staff were being encouraged to work in the office should they wish;
- the implications of desk booking systems designed to ensure compliance with fire regulations and maximum numbers of staff attending the office at any one time. Issues around staff being unable to access office space when required were not anticipated.

**Concluded:** that the report be received and that Members feedback be provided in the form of the minutes.

---

Chairman

---

## North Somerset Council

### Report to the Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel

**Date of Meeting: 13 July 2023**

**Subject of Report: Role, Remit and Work Plan of the Transport, Climate and Communities Policy and Scrutiny Panel**

**Town or Parish: All**

**Officer/Member Presenting: Policy and Scrutiny Manager**

**Key Decision: NO**

**Reason:**

It does not meet the criteria for a key decision.

**Recommendations**

That the Panel:-

1. Receive the contents of the report and information provided on policy and scrutiny.
2. Develop and agree the Panel's Work Plan.

**1. Summary of Report**

- 1.1 The details of the role, remit and work plan of the Transport, Climate and Communities Policy and Scrutiny Panel (TCC) are discussed below.
- 1.2 Members will have this opportunity to begin the process of developing the Plan going forward.

**2. Policy**

- 2.1 A copy of the Corporate Plan 2020-24 can be found by following this link: <https://n-somerset.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2022-03/corporate%20plan%202020-24.pdf>  
This sets out the priorities and vision of North Somerset Council. Most reviews undertaken by this Panel contribute towards the council's corporate aim of being an open and enabling organisation.

**3. Details**

- 3.1 Members are referred to **Appendix 1** for an overview of the policy and scrutiny function and how it currently operates at North Somerset Council. At the panel meeting, Members will develop and agree the Panel's work plan. Effective work planning will lay the foundations for targeted, incisive, and timely work on issues of local importance, where scrutiny can add value. Members are referred to **Appendix 2** for guidance on developing the work plan and **Appendix 3** sets out the current work plan template.

3.2 The remit of the TCC Panel (as defined in the Council's Constitution): -

- External partnerships; local and regional governance
- Climate Emergency
- Corporate organisation
- Procurement and contract management including capital projects.
- Council owned/controlled companies and organisations.
- Highways and transport
- Waste, recreational services, environmental protection including flooding and marine environment.
- Crime and disorder, community safety including review of Prevent activity.
- Corporate Service finance and performance

3.3 The Panel's Work Plan summarises the activity that the Panel plans to undertake in its consideration of issues of significant public concern, areas of poor performance and areas where Members think the Council could provide better value for money. The work plan is a "live" document and is subject to change as priorities or circumstances change.

The Panel meets formally three times a year but its Work Plan is informed and supported by a range of on-going "informal" activity undertaken by Panel members - including task and finish working groups and briefings. See Appendices 1 and 2 for further information.

3.4 The Work Plan is reviewed at every formal meeting for review and update.

3.6 The TCC Panel's corresponding scrutiny panel in the last administration was the Partnerships, Corporate Organisation and Overview Management Scrutiny Panel (PCOM). At its last meeting (2 March 2023) before the recent election, PCOM recommended a number of areas of work plan focus - for consideration by the scrutiny panel that would replace it in the new Council administration. These recommendations are as follows:

- Contribute to policy discussions for the procurement of energy.
- Arrange all member briefings/consultations on 2023-24 budget and Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP).
- Ensure Customer Services improvements happen as planned.
- Ensure capital spending and major projects provide value for money.
- Ensure Climate Emergency actions are met.
- Support Community Safety initiatives.
- Ensure Accommodation Strategy progresses to plan.

#### **4. Consultation**

Members will agree the Panel's work plan, taking into account any views that local constituents have expressed to them. Officers are encouraged to contribute their ideas, and the Panel is cognisant of the work being undertaken by the relevant Executive Members.

#### **5. Financial Implications**

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. In undertaking future work, the Panel may make recommendations that have financial implications for the council.

## **6. Legal Powers and Implications**

N/A

## **7. Climate Change and Environmental Implications**

N/A

## **8. Risk Management**

Risk assessments would be undertaken in respect of any future work.

## **9. Equality Implications**

The work of the Panel is based on the council's commitment to ensure that the consideration of equality and diversity becomes a day-to-day part of decision-making to bring about positive changes that are felt by services users and employees.

## **10. Corporate Implications**

Corporate implications would be dependent on the outcome of individual reviews.

## **11. Options Considered**

N/A

### **Author:**

Leo Taylor

Tel: 01934 634621

Policy and Scrutiny Senior Officer

### **Appendices:**

Appendix 1: The Policy and Scrutiny Function

Appendix 2: Panel Work Planning guidance

Appendix 3: (attached separately) The Panel's Work Plan template June 2023

### **Background Papers:**

North Somerset Corporate Plan 2020-24 (see link above).

## **Appendix 1**

### **The Policy and Scrutiny Function**

Policy and scrutiny is an essential part of ensuring that decision makers remain effective and accountable. It helps in ensuring that the Executive's decision-making process is clear and accessible to the public and that there are opportunities for the public and their representatives to influence and improve council policy and services.

Policy – examining the council's aims and priorities and considering whether or not they are being achieved. This provides a vital means of ensuring all councillors can take part in the development of council policy.

Scrutiny – questioning and challenging major decisions that are being made about delivering services in order to help drive improvement. This is the main democratic means of ensuring that the council and its partners are held to account for decisions made.

### **FOUR PRINCIPLES OF GOOD SCRUTINY:**

1. Provides "critical friend" challenge to executives as well as external authorities and agencies.
2. Reflects the voice and concerns of the public and its communities.

3. Should take the lead and own the scrutiny process on behalf of the public.
4. Should make an impact on the delivery of public services.

*[Centre for Governance and Scrutiny Good Scrutiny Guide]*

### **WAYS OF WORKING:**

- Formal work: Panel meetings (three meetings per year) – held in-person and in public to review issues and make recommendations.
- Informal work– a significant amount of Panel work will be done informally (typically – though not exclusively held virtually). This includes:
  - Task and finish working groups - meetings involve small groups of Councillors who have been appointed by the Panel to investigate a given issue before reporting back to the Panel with recommendations for improvement or value for money. Topics are agreed and prioritised with the Chairman, taking account of officer resource to ensure capacity;
  - Steering Groups – ongoing monitoring and policy development. These can be organised and progressed by identified lead members in direct consultation with the relevant directorate officer/team;
  - Site visits / public consultation;
  - Workshops – usually ad hoc sessions to receive information on a service or issue of concern to Members;
  - Call-in – a formal challenge of a decision made by the Executive or Executive Member, undertaken at a panel meeting where the decision will be examined and recommendations sent back to the Executive or Executive Member; and
  - Informal briefings or information sent to Members – can be done at any time in order to ensure that Members are aware of changes to services and are best placed to undertake meaningful debate and make informed recommendations.

## **Appendix 2**

### **Work Planning Guidance**

The work plan is a flexible document that is updated at each meeting to reflect progress and new developments.

Scrutiny is most effective when focusing on a limited number of in-depth topics, so it is important to prioritise suggestions put forward. When identifying topics to add to the work plan, the Panel should ask the following questions:

- Have Members or Officers identified the topic as a key issue for the public?
- Is it an area of poor performance?
- Has the topic been identified as a strategic risk?
- Is there new government guidance or legislation that will require a significant change to services?
- Has the external auditor or other inspection body highlighted concerns about the issue?
- Could scrutiny lead to increased value for money?
- Is there potential for policy development?
- Will the outcome make a difference?

Once topics have been chosen, brief terms of reference should be agreed at the panel meeting to address the basic questions of:

- What does the topic include?
- Why should the Panel consider?
- How should the Panel proceed? (such as working group, workshop, site visit, informal briefing, item for agenda)
- Who should be involved? (agree appropriate Members, Officers and witnesses)

- Timescale

## Appendix 3

### **Current Panel Work Plan (template) – July 2024**

The current work plan template is attached separately with the agenda papers.

This page is intentionally left blank



# Transport, Climate and Communities Policy and Scrutiny Work Programme July 2023

(to be updated following each Panel meeting)

The Panel will consider issues of significant public concern, areas of poor performance and areas where Members think the Council could provide better value for money. This is a “live” document and is subject to change as priorities or circumstances change.

**Section One – Active & Scheduled panel projects as identified in the overarching Strategic Work Plan.** Projects are ranked in priority order. Scheduled projects will commence as active projects are completed or if reprioritised as circumstances require

Topic	Reason for scrutiny	Method of scrutiny and reporting process	Timeline	Progress	Contact
ICT (including Members’ ICT)	Heightened importance given the increased reliance on ICT in supporting flexible and remote working	<b>Steering Group</b>  To lead on related strategy development			
Financial planning and Medium-Term Financial Plan	Review of budget development plans for 2022/2023 and beyond to 2023/24 Budget Budget engagement plan	<b>Steering Group</b> to develop forward looking engagement with financial pressures and the budget setting process			
Accommodation Strategy	<b>Accommodation Strategy (AS):</b> a specific piece of work focused on the council’s ways of working and use of office accommodation.	All member engagement sessions  Focused <b>working group</b> meetings as required			
Major Projects / Capital Projects	To implement more strategic approach to programme management.	Steering Group - Engagement with Project Management Office and approach to managing major projects			
Community Safety	To engage with the promotion and delivery of Community Safety Projects undertaken across North Somerset	<b>Steering Group</b> – Regular steering group meetings to be arranged			

**Section Two – proposed projects (listed in priority order). These must be agreed by the Panel and will be referred for discussion with Chairs and Vice Chairs as part of PCOM’s overview remit (for inclusion in the Strategic Work Plan):**

Topic	Reason for scrutiny	Proposed method of scrutiny and reporting process	Timeline	Contact
Schools academisation (linking with Major Projects WG)	Review financial implications	TBA	TBA	

**Section Three – briefings, workshops, and informal panel meetings. Outcomes may, with Chairman’s agreement, generate panel agenda items (for inclusion in S4 below) or, with panel agreement, be escalated to S2 above:**

Topic	Reason for scrutiny	Date	Outcome	Progress	Contact
PMO	PCOM-led all-Councillor briefing – to update and engage with Members on the development of the PMO service	22/07/22	Further review to be arranged when the system had had an opportunity to further bed in.	Progress to be considered at March 2 <sup>nd</sup> Panel Meeting	Alastair Shankland/ Emma Diakou
Customer Services Strategy (CSS)	Briefing to update and receive feedback from PCOM on the CCS	22/09/22	Further progress update meeting to be arranged with the Panel	Meeting arranged on 6/2/23.	Simone Woolley
Development Sites Action Plan	PCOM/Place panel briefing to update and receive feedback from Members on the Development Sites Action Plan prior to report to 8 <sup>th</sup> November Council	04/10/22	Members feedback to be taken into consideration.	Chairs of PCOM and Place to discuss next steps	Jenny Ford
Climate Emergency Action Plan	PCOM-led all Councillor briefing on the Draft Climate Emergency Action Plan prior to report to 08/09 Council	28/10/22	Members feedback to be taken into consideration.	Report to future PCOM on the Action Plan and progress	Victoria Barvenova
Budget 2023/24 Scrutiny session	To scrutinise proposals for 2023/24 Budget.	17/11/22 01/02/23	Further scrutiny session to be arranged on 01/02/23 (to take account of Local Govt Finance Settlement)	Additional meeting arranged for 01/02/23 - financial scrutiny arrangements going forward to be picked up at future Panel meeting	Mel Watts

**Section Four - agenda reports to the Panel meetings as agreed by the Chairman.** This section primarily provides for the rolling forward planning of agendas and a useful record of panel meeting activity. When considering reports at meetings, outcomes may include proposing a workstream, escalating it to S2 above for potential inclusion on the Strategic Forward Plan.

**TCC 20 July 2023**

Report Title	Purpose of Report	Outcome (actions)	Progress	Contact
Work Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to review the recommended priorities (from the last Panel)</li> <li>- Chair to outline proposed work plan principles</li> <li>- to consider proposed areas of work/topics from Panel Members</li> <li>- the item will also include Panel discussion around re-establishment (or not) of working/steering groups inherited from PCOM/PLACE Panels</li> </ul>			
Update on WESTlink bus service				
MTFP/Budget Monitoring and Panel engagement				
Climate Action Plan				

**TCC 30 November 2023**

Report Title	Purpose of Report	Outcome (actions)	Progress	Contact
Rights of Way Improvement Plan				
Green Infrastructure Strategy				

**TCC 29 February 2024**

Report Title	Purpose of Report	Outcome (actions)	Progress	Contact


**Section Five - Recommendations - Response from Executive Member**

Area for investigation/ Recommendations	When were the recommendations to the Executive agreed?	Expect answer by (first panel meeting after recommendations were submitted)
--	--	--

**Section Six - Progress and follow-up on implementing Panel recommendations**

Panel Recommendation	Date of response	Actions – implementation progress
----------------------	------------------	-----------------------------------

**APPENDIX**

Chair’s recommendations for Panel priorities (for the new administration following local elections in May 2023) set out in the Scrutiny report to Council on 21<sup>st</sup> February: **For Panel discussion/endorsement**

- Contribute to policy discussions for the procurement of energy.
- Arrange all member briefings/consultations on 2023-24 budget and Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP).
- Ensure Customer Services improvements happen as planned.
- Ensure capital spending and major projects provide value for money.
- Ensure Climate Emergency actions are met.
- Support Community Safety initiatives.

# North Somerset Council

## Report to the

## Transport, Climate and Communities Policy and Scrutiny Panel

### Date of Meeting:

20 July 2023

### Subject of Report:

WESTlink Services and 3-month review

### Town or Parish: n/a

### Officer/Member Presenting:

Louis Mertens, Principal Transport Planning Officer

Carl Nicholson, Services Manager for Passenger Transport

### Key Decision:

None to take

### Reason:

This report is an update report that references a project that is ongoing.

### Recommendations

None, this is an update report.

## 1. Summary of Report

The WESTlink service is a positive and popular improvement to the public transport offer in North Somerset and the West of England. It provides demand responsive public transport to parts of the area that don't have or have never had public transport services.

WESTlink is a trial demand responsive transport service. It is funded by the Bus Service Improvement Plan until 2025. All demand responsive transport services are unique to their geography and demographic, and as such it is always anticipated that changes must be made over time to maximise service efficiency and performance.

North Somerset Council and the West of England Combined Authority have agreed that the service should be subject to a regular review period of three months, to decide appropriate changes in response to the data and public feedback.

There is currently a three-month review of the service taking place which is intended to report by the beginning of September.

This report introduces to the committee the first three-month review for the WESTlink service, as well as public feedback sought by the chair of the committee.

## **2. Policy**

The delivery of demand responsive transport services is a key feature of the Bus Service Improvement Plan, and more broadly supports the objectives of the North Somerset Council Corporate Plan by improving transport and connectivity in areas of the district not served by public transport, particularly in rural areas which is addressed as a key challenge by the corporate plan.

## **3. Details**

Full detail of the report can be found in the appendices.

## **4. Consultation**

The project is delivered by the West of England Combined Authority in partnership with North Somerset Council as part of the Bus Services Improvement Plan. The BSIP includes its own arrangements for engagement and consultation, including through the enhanced partnership.

On WESTlink, feedback is regularly received by officers from councillors to inform the development of the service, and community engagement has been delivered by officers which has also captured feedback from members of the public. All feedback will be considered as part of the first 3-month evaluation.

## **5. Financial Implications**

WESTlink is fully funded out of the Bus Service Improvement Plan funding, awarded jointly to the West of England Combined Authority and North Somerset Council by the Department for Transport.

The contract for WESTlink is between the West of England Combined Authority, the technology provider and the operator respectively.

## **6. Legal Powers and Implications**

None to note, contract is not held by North Somerset Council

## **7. Climate Change and Environmental Implications**

WESTlink promises to fill a gap in existing public transport provision that will make public transport a much more attractive solution to members of the public in North Somerset and the West of England.

## **8. Risk Management**

Risks for WESTlink are managed at a BSIP project and programme level by the West of England Combined Authority.

## **9. Equality Implications**

An equality impact assessment has been undertaken for the Bus Service Improvement Plan, and for the DDRT project (the original WESTlink pilot) by the West of England Combined Authority.

Impact assessments will be completed for the 3-month review of WESTlink before changes are delivered.

## **10. Corporate Implications**

None to note, beyond contributing to modal shift in the district which has clear positive implications for sustainable development and climate change.

## **11. Options Considered**

Options for development of the service are outlined in Appendix 1.

### **Author:**

Carl Nicholson, Services Manager for Passenger Transport

Louis Mertens, Principal Transport Planning Officer (Behaviour Change)

### **Appendices:**

Appendix 1. WESTlink Demand Responsive Transport Services (South Zone) Report, 20 July 2023

### **Background Papers:**

[West of England Bus Services Improvement Plan](#)

# Appendix 1. WESTlink, Demand Responsive Transport Services (South Zone) report, 20 July 2023

By: Louis Mertens, Principal Transport Planning Officer (Behaviour Change)  
Carl Nicholson, Head of Passenger Transport Services

**Directorate: Place Directorate**



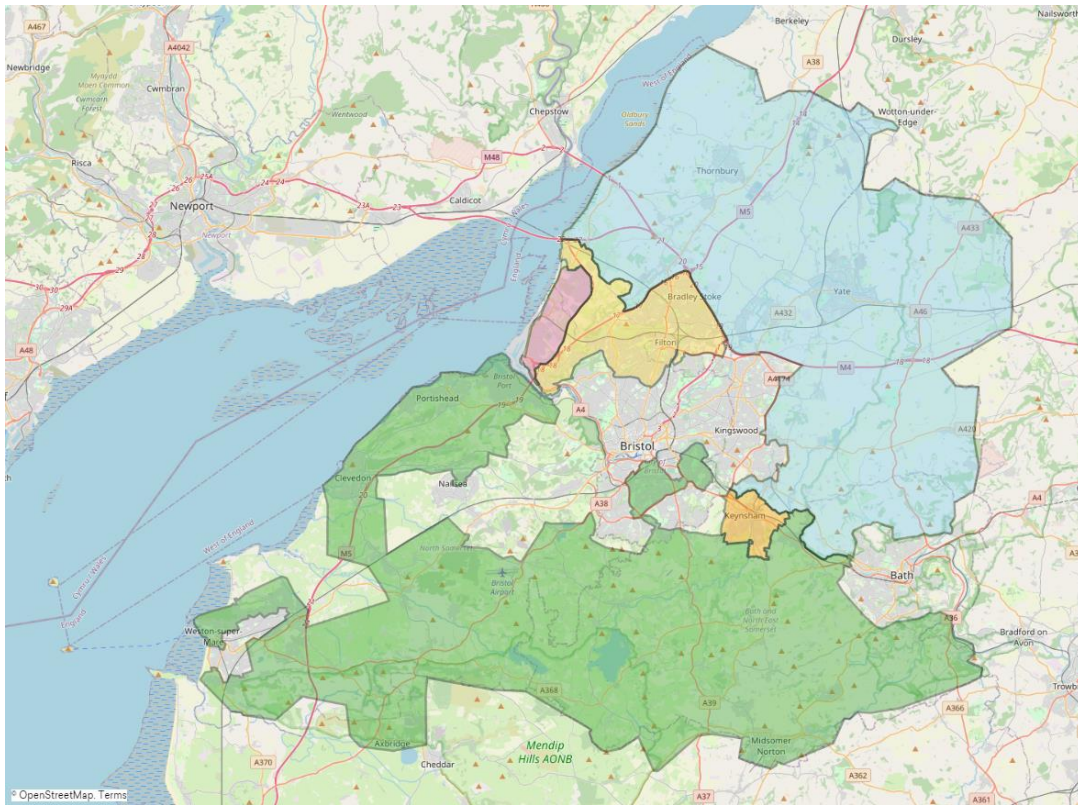


## 1. Summary

- 1.1 The WESTlink service is a positive and popular improvement to the public transport offer in North Somerset and the West of England. It provides demand responsive public transport to parts of the area that don't have or have never had public transport services.
- 1.2 WESTlink is a trial demand responsive transport service. It is funded by the Bus Service Improvement Plan until 2025. All demand responsive transport services are unique to their geography and demographic, and as such it is always anticipated that changes must be made over time to maximise service efficiency and performance.
- 1.3 North Somerset Council and the West of England Combined Authority have agreed that the service should be subject to a regular review period of three months, to decide appropriate changes in response to the data and public feedback.
- 1.4 There is currently a three-month review of the service taking place which is intended to report by the beginning of September.
- 1.5 This report introduces to scrutiny the first three-month review for the WESTlink service, as well as public feedback sought by the chair of the committee.**

## 2. Introduction

- 2.1 WESTlink is a demand responsive transport service being delivered in the West of England and North Somerset by the West of England Combined Authority, with input from North Somerset Council. It is funded by UK Government bus service improvement funding won in the bus service improvement plan bid submitted jointly by North Somerset Council and the West of England Combined Authority.
- 2.2 A demand responsive transport service is a ride-share service which typically uses small-medium size buses and operates across a zone in response to demand, rather than on a fixed route with a timetable. Demand responsive transport technologies allow users to submit requests for bookings, for those to be confirmed or refused based on availability, and for those journey needs to be met by the service.
- 2.3 The objective of WESTlink is to fill the gaps in fixed line bus services, and to feed customers into the scheduled bus network through shorter local journeys and connection to hubs and interchanges.
- 2.4 In the South Zone, which covers most of North Somerset Council area and Bath and North East Somerset Council, the service is contracted to WeMOVE Solutions, who sub-contract to Via Transportation to provide the technology to run the service and to E-Zec to operate the buses. WeMOVE Solutions provide the call-centre, in house.
- 2.5 The contract for WESTlink is between the West of England Combined Authority, Via Transportation and WeMOVE Solutions. However, North Somerset Councils officers work with the West of England Combined Authority, Via and WeMOVE Solutions in order to advise and feedback on the service.



### 3. Public Feedback

3.1. Since the service launched, public feedback has been collected through a number of channels:

3.1.1. Community engagement on the WESTlink service has been prioritised to help people understand how to use the service and to gather feedback to inform the first three-month evaluation. To this end officers have completed 17 community engagement events across North Somerset.

3.1.2. The WESTlink app also requests a user rating for each journey. This continues to report an average ride rating of 4.8 out of 5 from people completing journeys on the service. This is consistent for the South Zone and the whole service, meaning that most people completing journeys and completing the survey on the service are rating it highly. Across the whole service, there are about 730 responses to date.

3.1.3. Feedback submitted to the West of England Combined Authority is logged and as well as any feedback that is inadvertently received through North Somerset email channels, including to officers.

3.2. In addition to this, The West of England Combined Authority have developed a user survey that will be distributed to all WESTlink users to complete in the near future. This will help to gain a clearer picture of its reception amongst people who hold an account for the service. The responses to this survey will be used to inform the future evaluations of the service.

## 4. Key Themes of Public Feedback

Throughout our engagement with the public on WESTlink, a range of key themes have emerged.

### 4.1. Positive

- 4.1.1. "I like that there are new places to go to".
- 4.1.2. "I like the fact it only costs £2 to go wherever I want".
- 4.1.3. "I like that I can get a bus within the hour, if there's one available".
- 4.1.4. "I like having the real time information on the app".
- 4.1.5. "It's really helpful having the call centre to confirm a journey, this gives me confidence".
- 4.1.6. "It came exactly when it said it would".
- 4.1.7. "the driver was great, and really friendly".
- 4.1.8. "the call centre were great, and really friendly".

### 4.2. Negative

- 4.2.1. "It arrived later than I thought it would / it said it would".
- 4.2.2. "I can't get a journey when I want one".
- 4.2.3. "I see them go past, but they're often empty".
- 4.2.4. "I don't feel like I can rely on the service when I need to".
- 4.2.5. "I'm worried that I won't be able to get back, after my outbound trip".
- 4.2.6. "I'm worried I'll be late to work, or time critical appointments".
- 4.2.7. "I'm worried the service won't be able to support itself and will be withdrawn".
- 4.2.8. "I wasn't clear on where it would pick me up".
- 4.2.9. "It gave me a pickup location but I wasn't sure where that was."

### 4.3. In a very few cases, customers have also reported:

- 4.3.1. The operator calling them to explain they can no longer meet a journey they had agreed to and delaying the journey by up to an hour.
- 4.3.2. Journeys taking longer routes than expected to take them to their destination.
- 4.3.3. Long call centre waiting times.
- 4.3.4. Lack of assistance from drivers.

4.4. North Somerset Council, and the West England Combined Authority have raised each of these issues with the operator, and as much as possible have investigated them using data fed back from the service. North Somerset Council access to WESTlink data is currently limited whilst both organisations pursue a data-sharing agreement. However, anonymised service performance data is intermittently being shared with North Somerset Council, in good faith.

4.5. The data confirms certain concerns raised by customers, such as availability of the service (met demand) which is improving over time. However, it also shows that some of the issues mentioned by customers in paragraph 4.3 are not common occurrences. Other issues concerning journeys taking longer than expected and a lack of assistance offered by

drivers are difficult to validate with data alone but are investigated on a case-by-case basis.

## **5. 3-month review criteria**

- 5.1. There is currently a three-month review of the service taking place between officers at North Somerset Council, the West of England Combined Authority, and the operator. The first review is intended to report by the beginning of September.
- 5.2. A review of the service is to take place every three months of operation. Each three-month review will help the West of England Combined Authority and North Somerset Council to agree short, medium and long-term changes. The public feedback captured above will help to inform these changes, alongside a review of the data being fed back from the service, officer expertise and input from the operator and technology partners.
- 5.3. The scope of the three-month review includes:
- 5.3.1. System parameters**
- This includes a review of booking windows, arrival times, and acceptable route detouring which means how far the system will allow a bus to deviate from a route it is on, in order to accommodate journeys from another passenger.
- 5.3.2. Fares models**
- Considering whether distance-based pricing could be used to help improve service performance and encourage shorter trips in line with the service objectives.
- 5.3.3. Ticket integration**
- Consideration of the potential timescales for through ticketing or MAAS based ticketing, and the impact on the service.
- 5.3.4. Communications and marketing**
- Review of how potential communications and marketing activities might impact on service performance.
- 5.3.5. Customer feedback**
- Development of a WESTlink passenger survey.
  - Consideration of any gaps in feedback gathering, and how they might be filled.
- 5.3.6. Travel logic**
- Reviewing zones, to understand the likely impact of splitting the south zone into a series of smaller zones.
  - Introducing key drop-off points that have been investigated.
- 5.3.7. Fleet mix**
- In the long term, consider whether additional smaller vehicles would help to improve the efficiency of the service.
- 5.3.8. App changes**

- Consideration of any changes to messaging in app, or user journey in order to improve customer experience.

#### **5.3.9. Operating hours**

- Consideration of whether additional funding can be acquired to increase the operating hours of the service, and whether there is enough resource to support this.

#### **5.3.10. Drivers**

- Consideration of what additional support drivers might want to assist them in their delivery of the service.

### **5.4. Short-term**

5.4.1. A number of short-term changes, that fall within scope of the review have already been introduced. These will be reviewed again at the next review cycle to ensure that they are still the most appropriate options for the service. These include:

- a) Extend booking window search by -30 mins and +30 mins

This allows more options to be made available to people searching for journey opportunities in the app, which means that while the exact journey they want to make might not be available, they're now able to see more journey opportunities that might be taking place just before the time they were seeking to depart by.

- b) Improving traffic data

The source of traffic data has recently been changed to provide a more accurate and up to date reflection of traffic across the WESTlink zones. This means that drivers are more likely to be offered routes to follow that avoid difficult congestion spots, allowing lateness to improve and free-up resource.

- c) Increasing detour to prioritise utilisation

At launch, the service prioritised “quality of service” to offer more direct trips to customers. The system parameters on this have been adjusted which means while some customers will experience longer journeys than they had previously, WESTlink is able to accommodate more journey requests.

### **5.6. Medium-term**

5.6.1. Without prematurely anticipating the outcome of the evaluation, the following are the key options being considered to improve service performance and deliver on the objectives of WESTlink. These changes will take longer to introduce and are therefore being considered for the medium term:

- a) Investigate a distance-based pricing model

A distance-based pricing model would move WESTlink away from a fares structure that charges £2 for every journey. Distance-based pricing is used in both conventional bus services and is common across other DRT services. Distance-based pricing means that the service might charge £2 for journeys up until a range, and then charge over £2 for journeys longer than X kilometres. Officers are conscious that while price is a powerful lever for influencing behaviour, it needs to be ensured that it won't penalise people who live in exceptionally rural areas and will need to travel further to reach amenities. Full impact assessments will be made before decisions are made.

b) Investigate journey caps

A journey cap would limit the distance a user can travel to in a single journey, based on their origin. This means that each user will have a different range of potential journey destinations depending on where they start from, which might map more closely with the range of networks of places that people are used to travelling to.

Introducing journey caps would reduce the amount of distance a bus is travelling, meaning they can be more responsive to different journey demands and can return to a settlement quicker than they might be able to if they were to be taken out of the area on longer journeys.

c) Splitting and reducing zones sizes

An alternative to introducing a hard journey cap, would be to split the South Zone into smaller zones, each with their own smaller and committed bus fleet. This would have the advantage of ensuring that buses don't stray far from any pattern of journeys in each area, but new zones would need to be carefully drawn to ensure that populations were not severed from amenities closer to them that they typically travel to.

d) Reviewing South Zone, and split Bristol Zone from South Zone, introduce Long Ashton Park and Ride

This is an "easy-win" for demand management with WESTlink. Long Ashton Park and Ride is frequently fed back to the project team as a destination that people want to travel to. Introducing the park and ride and splitting parts of the Bristol zones from the South Zone, would improve service availability for both areas, in part because it would prevent WESTlink buses from being caught in congestion in Bristol. The Long Ashton Park and Ride, as a key service interchange location, also fits the base model and criteria of the DRT.

## North Somerset Council

### Report to the Transport, Climate and Communities Policy and Scrutiny Panel

**Date of Meeting: 20 July 2023**

**Subject of Report: Finance report – Medium term financial plan (MTFP)**

**Town or Parish: All**

**Officer/Member Presenting: Melanie Watts, Head of Finance**

**Key Decision: N/A**

**Reason:** The recommendations within this report are not decisions of the Executive.

### Recommendations

That the Panel;

- a) Takes the opportunity to review and discuss the proposed arrangements being put in place in respect of preparing the council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for the period 2024-2028 as detailed throughout the report, and
- b) Provides feedback on the specific areas of; policy and scrutiny activity to support the MTFP process, and improving communication and engagement within the MTFP process so that they can be shared with the Executive for consideration.

### 1. Summary of Report

This report summarises the council's proposed timeline and process to ensure delivery of the medium term financial plan for the period 2024 to 2028 and draft revenue budget for the 2024/25 financial year and provides an opportunity for the Panel to discuss and consider how the communication and engagement aspects of the Plan should be delivered and also how the MTFP process should be aligned with the policy and scrutiny function.

### 2. Policy

The council's MTFP process is an integral feature of its overall financial processes, ensuring that resources are planned, aligned, and managed effectively to achieve successful delivery of its aims and objectives. The revenue and capital budgets should be set within the context of the council's Corporate Plan which outlines the key priorities for the district.

### 3. Details

#### 3.1. MTFP context and strategic planning considerations

- 3.1.1. There are a range of strategic issues to consider when developing the council's MTFP as these could shape and influence parts of the process as well as specific

outcomes. Some of these issues are noted below and will be explained in more depth within future MTFP reports that will be submitted to the Executive;

- Understanding the local context, noting that elections have recently taken place and a new administration has been elected for the four-year period to 2027,
- Alignment with the corporate plan, noting that this is currently being refreshed following the elections and therefore policies and priorities could change during the period of the MTFP,
- Understanding the national context, noting that a general election will take place during the MTFP period and this could influence both the national policy / regulatory agenda, as well as the council's future funding levels,
- Understanding the economic position, as this could influence a range of financial factors and core assumptions that underpin MTFP forecasts.

### **3.2. Proposed reporting timeline**

- 3.2.1. The Executive have a responsibility to recommend an annual budget to council for their consideration before the start of the following financial year.
- 3.2.2. Council have a legal duty to consider this budget, along with any other alternative budget that may be presented to them, so that they can approve a budget for the following year that is balanced in terms of how much it would like to spend on delivering its services, compared to how much income it thinks that it will receive.
- 3.2.3. This duty also requires Council to approve the relevant council tax bandings for the area that will be paid by residents and these actions must be completed by no later than 11 March of the preceding year.
- 3.2.4. Officers have assessed these responsibilities and aligned them to dates within the annual municipal calendar which sets out when the various committees and panels are scheduled to meet. This formal reporting timeline has been used to provide a structure for the developing the MTFP timeline, which will culminate in final decisions being made by the Executive and Council within the required timescales.
- 3.2.5. Shown at Appendix 1 is the proposed MTFP timeline indicating the reports that are planned to be shared with the Executive and Council up to February 2024, along with an indication of the information that could potentially be included within those reports. As the MTFP is a complex process and is dependent upon a lot of external factors and information, it should be noted that the final reports and contents may change over time as the MTFP process is refined and areas developed in more detail.

### **3.3. Policy and scrutiny activity**

- 3.3.1. The council is aware that policy and scrutiny activity forms an essential part of the overarching governance arrangements in terms of developing policies and supporting decision-making although recognises that there are different ways that this can be delivered for specific areas of work.
- 3.3.2. Developing the council's MTFP is a complex matter as it cuts across all of the directorate structures, individual executive portfolios and also specific funding arrangements however, that complexity also applies to how policy and scrutiny



activity is carried out because the MTFP would also cut across all of the current Panels who represent their own individual services areas.

3.3.3. Whilst there are some benefits from having detailed discussion on the MTFP considered by each of the individual Panels, the council recognises that this is likely to involve a lot of duplicated effort and may result in a silo'd approach, rather than being able to form a council-wide position if the council were able to develop a more cohesive and integrated policy and scrutiny process to support the MTFP as a whole.

3.3.4. This report aims to open a discussion to gather ideas and suggestions that could be taken into account to support the latest MTFP process. The discussion should cover the different elements of the Panels, i.e.

- **policy activity** – for example, this should provide members with an opportunity to help shape and feed into the MTFP process by being asked for their views and opinions, being given choices and options, and to gather information by asking questions;
- **scrutiny activity** – for example, this should provide members with an opportunity to discuss and share views on activity or decisions that have been made throughout the process;

3.3.5. The report is actively looking to gather information from the Panel so that officers can better understand how policy and scrutiny activity should be progressed – to help prompt discussions the following questions have been suggested;

- **what** – what areas or information from the MTFP would the Panel want to focus activity on? E.g. £-values, core assumptions, impacts on specific services, underlying processes, decisions etc
- **who** – who should be involved in the process, i.e. policy and scrutiny panel chairs, groups leaders, groups, all members?
- **how** – how should this be delivered, i.e. through a series of formal meetings, informal workshops, in-person meetings, virtual events. Also think about the medium for information, i.e. written reports, power points, questionnaires etc
- **when** – when should meetings be held, and how often? We will need to plan ahead and agree dates

### **3.4. Communication and engagement activity**

3.4.1. The council is also aware that communication and engagement also forms an important part of developing its future budget plans as these decisions have the ability to make a real impact on the lives of residents and businesses who live and work within our communities.

3.4.2. Traditionally this has been a difficult area to address and the council is committed to making improvements and so would like to openly discuss how this could be achieved in the future so that all residents are aware of the council's budget plans and have an opportunity to feed into them.

3.4.3. It is important to understand that there may be different phases to this activity, with some of the initial focus being on the council sharing and informing, before moving into gathering information and ideas, understanding local priorities and also developing choices within budget plans. Similar to section 3.3 above, some prompts have been provided to help support discussions of the Panel;

- **who** – both who do we want to engage with and who should be involved in the process, i.e. residents, businesses, other stakeholders?
- **how** and **when** this activity should be delivered to ensure the maximum benefits.

#### **4. Consultation**

The government, through its legislative framework, clearly expects that local authorities will be able to demonstrate that they have in place mechanisms to ensure that 'representatives of local people' are being appropriately informed, consulted or involved in services, policies or decisions that affect or interest them.

There are many aspects of service delivery which impact on our residents, customers and other stakeholders and members of the public, and so we recognise that it is our responsibility to ensure that any changes we make to them through the budget, need to be considered and consulted upon. Failure to do so adequately could result in aspects of the budget being subject to legal challenge. This report is a key part of the council recognising its duty and taking steps to ensure that suitable provision is put into place.

#### **5. Financial Implications**

There are no specific financial values contained within this report.

#### **6. Legal Powers and Implications**

The Local Government Act 1972 lays down the fundamental principle by providing that every local authority shall make arrangements for the proper administration of their financial affairs, although further details and requirements are contained within related legislation. The setting of the council's budget and the resultant council tax levels for the forthcoming year is an integral part of the financial administration process. The council manages its financial affairs through a detailed financial monitoring and reporting framework and also through the development and approval of the MTFP.

#### **7. Climate Change and Environmental Implications**

When setting budgets for the year ahead the council is aware that it must reflect the financial impacts that environment and climate change issues could have on its plans. Whilst there are many ongoing aspects relating to this within the council's individual services and budget lines, this report aims to provide focus on the framework and policies which will drive future budget decisions, rather than focus on the specific plans at this time.

#### **8. Risk Management**

In setting the revenue and capital budgets for the year ahead, the council must consider the known key risks that may affect its plans. Whilst many of the council's risks are likely to be financial in nature or lead to financial outcomes, the council recognises that there are inherent risks associated with the proper administration of its financial affairs, although these risks are lowered when transparent workplans and timelines are publicly shared and subject to scrutiny. This report helps to mitigate this risk.

#### **9. Equality Implications**

There are many aspects of service delivery which impact on our residents, customers and other stakeholders and members of the public, and so we recognise that it is our responsibility to ensure that any changes we make to them through the revenue budget, need to be considered and consulted upon. Failure to do so adequately could result in aspects of the budget being subject to challenge. All future changes to the council's budget as a result of the MTFP process will be shared publicly and supported by an Equalities Impact Assessment.

## **10. Corporate Implications**

The Corporate Plan and MTFP, along with the supporting financial monitoring processes and performance management framework are vital tools to help align effort across the organisation and ensure that core services are all are focused on delivery to agreed community and organisational priorities.

With continuing financial pressures and rising demands for services, it is essential that the councils' limited resources continue to be prioritised and allocated in line with the identified priorities that will be developed through the upcoming refresh of the Corporate Plan.

## **11. Options Considered**

The council is legally required to set a balanced budget for the year ahead and to implement a robust financial framework to ensure that spending is aligned to available resources and this paper helps to provide an organisation focus on achieving that objective by providing detailed plans and timelines.

### **Author:**

Melanie Watts, Head of Finance [melanie.watts@n-somerset.gov.uk](mailto:melanie.watts@n-somerset.gov.uk) 01934 634618

### **Appendices:**

Appendix 1 Proposed timeline showing reports to be considered by the Executive and Council

Appendix 2 Proposed timeline and content for the TCC policy and scrutiny panel reports

### **Background Papers:**

Executive report – February 2023, MTFP & Revenue Budget 2023-2026

Council report – February 2023, Council Tax Setting 2023/24

**APPENDIX 1 – PROPOSED MTFP TIMELINE ALIGNED WITH THE MUNICIPAL CALENDAR**

Executive	06/09/2023	18/10/2023	06/12/2023	07/02/2024
<b>Report type:</b>	<b>Information</b>	<b>Information</b>	<b>Information</b>	<b>Decision</b>
<b>Report purpose:</b>	Refresh / rollover MTFP for 2024-2028	Progress update report - to be aligned with corporate plan refresh	Progress update report	Submission of 2024/25 Revenue Budget to Council for approval
	Scene setting re broader context, challenges and opportunities; sharing core assumptions for resources and spending plans	Include details about specific spending pressures and £ impacts	Present draft <b>balanced</b> budget for 2024/25 along with list of savings plans	Directorate budget allocations for 2024/25 along with final list of savings plans
	Also share range of updated budget gaps for scenarios and MTFP timeline	Include savings strategies being considered <b>over 4 year period</b>	Share updated budget gap 2025-2028 and progress	Reminder of updated budget gap 2025-2028

<b>Report purpose:</b>	-	Share draft principles linked to the council's Capital Strategy	-	Submission of 2024/25 Capital Strategy to Council for approval
------------------------	---	---	---	--

<b>Report purpose:</b>	-	-	-	Approval of Fees & Charges for 2024/25
------------------------	---	---	---	--

Council	19/09/2023	14/11/2023	09/01/2024	20/02/2024
<b>Report type:</b>	-	-	<b>Information</b>	<b>Decision</b>
<b>Report purpose:</b>	-	-	Update resources from LG Finance Settlement and Taxbase;	Approve 2024/25 Revenue Budget and Council Tax increase / bandings

<b>Report purpose:</b>	-	-	-	Approve 2024/25 Capital Strategy
------------------------	---	---	---	----------------------------------

**APPENDIX 2 – PROPOSED TIMELINE AND CONTENT FOR TCC P&SP MEETINGS**

TCC Scrutiny Panel		20/07/2023	30/11/2023	29/02/2024
Report type:		Information	Information	Information
Report purpose:		<p>MTFP scene setting to provide high level overview of the process and timeline;</p> <p>Discussion opportunity to feed into how the P&amp;S activity should be undertaken this year;</p> <p>Discussion opportunity to feed in how engagement activity could be undertaken to support the budget setting process</p>	<p>Progress report update covering financial forecasts and assumptions as well as scrutiny activity and engagement activity (nb some aspects will be driven by the outcomes of information gathered from previous meeting)</p> <p>Will also provide an opportunity to feed specific ideas and proposals into the MTFP process over the 4-year period</p>	<p>Look back and review of policy, scrutiny and engagement activity supporting the MTFP and discussion opportunity to inform future plans;</p>

This page is intentionally left blank

## North Somerset Council

### Report to the Transport, Climate and Communities Policy and Scrutiny Panel

**Date of Meeting: 20 July 2023**

**Subject of Report: Climate Emergency Action Plan update and progress report**

**Town or Parish: All**

**Officer/Member Presenting: Victoria Barvenova, Climate Emergency Project Manager**

**Key Decision: No**

**Reason:** The recommendations within this report are not decisions of the Executive.

### Recommendations

Members of the Transport, Climate and Community Policy Scrutiny panel to:

- Re-endorse their commitment to achieving net zero carbon by 2030 through the actions described.
- Note the Action Plan information on carbon emissions of council own estate.

Note the progress on existing projects to tackle climate change, which are also summarised in this report

### 1. Summary of Report

The report sets out progress update on the actions of Climate Emergency Strategy and Action Plan. It requests the panel to re-confirm North Somerset Council's (NSC) commitment to achieving net zero carbon by 2030 through the actions described. Progress updates on emissions and current projects are provided for context.

The North Somerset area emissions data will be released in the end of July 2023 and will be included in the report to full council in September 2023.

### 2. Policy

In 2019 NSC declared a climate emergency with ambition of becoming Net Zero council and area by 2030. In November 2022 council adopted a refreshed Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP) that identifies priority areas aimed at decarbonisation:

1. Become a net zero carbon council
2. Decarbonise transport
3. Decarbonise the built environment
4. Low carbon business and skills
5. Renewable energy generation

- 6. Resources and waste
- 7. Adaptation and resilience
- 8. Replenish our carbon stores

### 3. Details

#### Measuring Council's emissions

The 2018/19 financial year acts as a baseline against which to monitor future emissions.

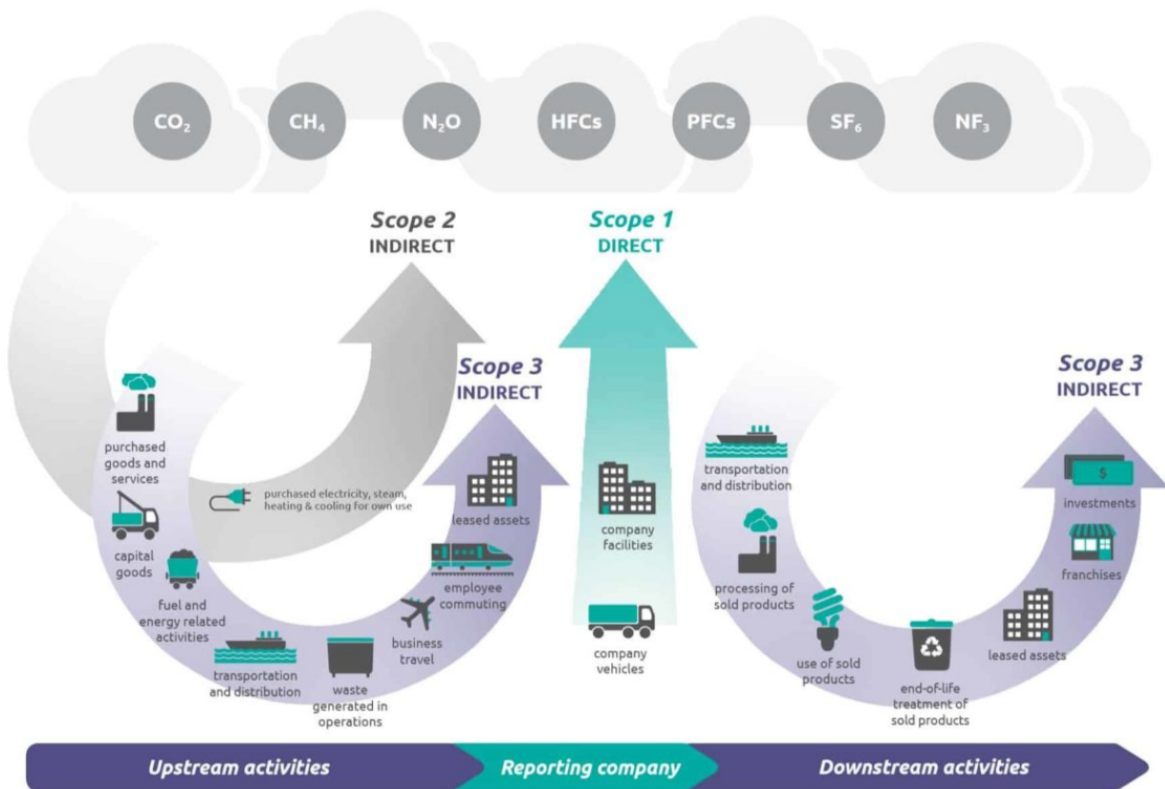
Emissions are categorised within the following groupings (further illustrated in the diagram below):

Scope 1: Direct emissions from company's facilities (gas) and vehicles.

Scope 2: Indirect emissions from purchased electricity.

Scope 3: indirect emissions from business activities including business travel, supply chain, purchased goods etc.

**Figure 1. Definition of Emissions Scopes. Source: Greenhouse Protocol.**



The Council aspires to lead by example and reach net zero for at least Scopes 1 and 2 at an earlier date than 2030 if possible. Good progress has been made over the years, however the data from 2022/23 financial year has seen an increase in council's emissions. Further progress will require significant changes to and investment in the council's buildings and fleet.

Emissions reporting in this report details those emissions for Scopes 1, 2 and 3 (Figure 1) that are currently available to us. Each year we aim to improve the completeness of our inventory by including more information.



For more information on the methodology used to report the council's emissions, please see the baselining report available on our website at [North Somerset Council Climate Emergency - Report on Baseline Emissions \(n-somerset.gov.uk\)](https://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/nscce-emissions-report).

## Summary of emissions information

**Table 1. Emissions Associated with Council's activities.**

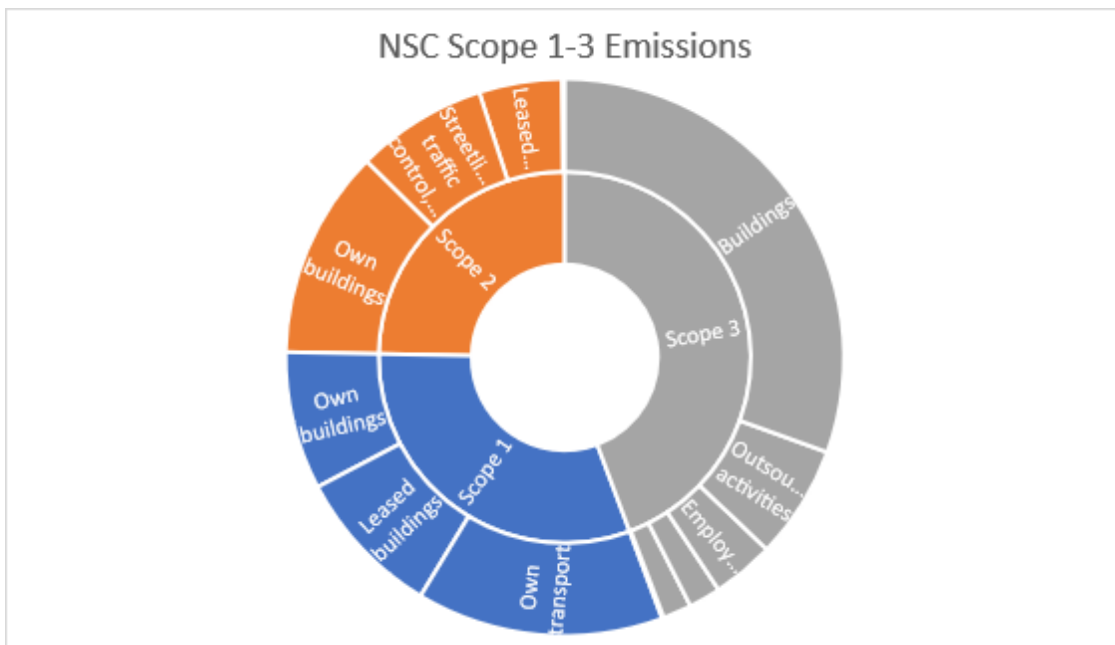
	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Change since base year
<b>Scope 1</b>						
Own buildings	1,181	1,067	1,208	1,232	936	-21%
Own transport	2,018	2,083	1,958	1,974	1,673	-17%
Leased buildings	1,408	1,164	710	1,188	1,147	-19%
<b>Total Scope 1</b>	<b>4,607</b>	<b>4,314</b>	<b>3,877</b>	<b>4,394</b>	<b>3,755</b>	<b>-18%</b>
<b>Scope 2 (Purchased Electricity)</b>						
Own buildings	1,451	1,334	1,041	1,067	1,417	-2%
Leased buildings	758	705	265	422	562	-26%
Streetlights, traffic control, other buildings, miscellaneous	2,001	1,791	1,064	733	890	-55%
Owned electric vehicles	22	22	14	20	20	-8%
<b>Total Scope 2</b>	<b>4,231</b>	<b>3,851</b>	<b>2,384</b>	<b>2,242</b>	<b>2,890</b>	<b>-32%</b>
<b>Total Scope 1 and 2</b>	<b>8,838</b>	<b>8,165</b>	<b>6,261</b>	<b>6,636</b>	<b>6,645</b>	<b>-25%</b>
<b>Scope 3</b>						
Buildings	3,758	3,877	3,401	3,439	3,570	-5%
Transmission & distribution	288	260	176	155	194	-33%
Business travel	138	162	150	225	217	57%
Outsourced activities	770	768	673	770	769	0%
Employee commuting	733	699	174	421	556	-24%
Water	57	53	34	15	13	-78%
<b>Total Scope 3</b>	<b>5,744</b>	<b>5,819</b>	<b>4,608</b>	<b>5,025</b>	<b>5,319</b>	<b>-7%</b>
<b>Total Gross Emissions</b>	<b>14,582</b>	<b>13,985</b>	<b>10,869</b>	<b>11,661</b>	<b>11,964</b>	<b>-18%</b>
<b>Organisation target</b>	<b>6,448</b>	<b>4,134</b>	<b>3,508</b>	<b>4,150</b>	<b>4,461</b>	<b>-31%</b>

The table above demonstrates the following changes:

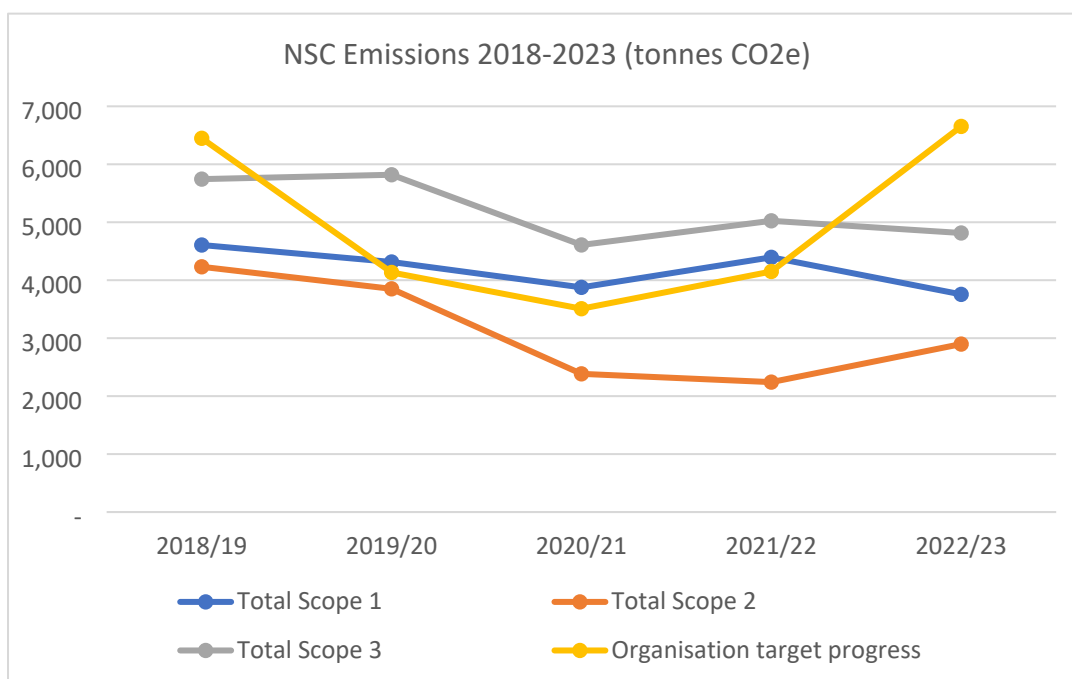
- Overall emissions decreased from the baseline year by 18%, however, there is a slight increase from 2021/2022.
- The significant drop in emissions in 2020/21 was associated with the Covid-19 pandemic and the necessity to minimise service delivery and shift to remote working. The increase in the current year demonstrates that a percentage of the workforce is coming back to the offices, therefore increasing the energy use of the council's building.
- Decrease in Scope 1 (gas usage) is associated with:
  - Installation of air source heat pumps in Clevedon Library
  - Closure and refurbishment of the Carlton Centre
  - Heating issues in Castlewood.
- Increase in Scope 2 (purchased electricity) for own buildings, street lighting and leisure centres is associated with the increased usage of council's facilities.
- Four of the council's maintained schools have become academies (Burrington, Churchill, Golden Valley, Wrington). The emissions from the four schools have been moved to Scope 3. The baseline year was adjusted accordingly to monitor the change in line with the Greenhouse Gas Emissions protocol.

The charts below show council's emissions across three scopes and overall trend from the baseline year.

**Figure 2. North Somerset Council's scope 1-3 emissions.**



**Figure 3. North Somerset Council's emissions 2018-2023.**



The table below shows that given our current carbon emissions we would need to reverse the current trend of increased emissions, and instead reduce our emissions by an average of 558 tonnes every year to hit our net zero target of 2030.

**Table 2. North Somerset Council's organisational target.**

2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031
2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31
6,448	4,134	3,508	4,150	4,461	3,903	3,345	2,788	2,230	1,673	1,115	558	0
	-2314	-626	642	310	-558	-558	-558	-558	-558	-558	-558	-558
		-15%	18%	7%	-13%	-14%	-17%	-20%	-25%	-33%	-50%	-100%

## Climate change adaptation

### Why we need adaptation

Despite our efforts to reduce carbon emissions, climate change has and will have significant impacts on North Somerset, and it is important that we prepare for these.

Adaptation is a key part of the NSC's Climate Emergency Action Plan which identifies that North Somerset can expect to experience more regular flooding, higher temperatures, and more regular instances of extreme weather over the coming years. Climate change is also likely to increase water insecurity and worsen air quality in North Somerset. We need to ensure that our climate emergency response is not just about reducing emissions but also about preparing our businesses and communities to be more resilient to a changing climate.

We need adaptation to first and foremost protect our residents but also ensure that as a council we can continue to deliver our services and ensure the area continues to thrive. Therefore, the Climate Change Adaptation Plan will aim to be a source of information for residents, businesses, and the council. It will contain a comprehensive overview of how different aspects of North Somerset are at risk and what adaptation actions are already

in place and what is being done by North Somerset Council. The Adaptation Plan will draw on strategies and policies that are already in place too such as the recently passed Flood Risk Management Strategy. The identified actions will then need to be internally monitored on a regular basis.

#### What we already have (internal and external consultation and coproduction)

We have used the UK's Climate Change Risk Register which has identified the key risks which are specific and unique to North Somerset's physical, social, and economic environment.

We have already carried out internal workshops with key service areas including workshops on health and wellbeing, local economy, heritage and buildings, infrastructure, natural environment and emergency management and flooding. These workshops used the Risk Register identified risk areas and involved officers suggesting adaptation actions.

There are also national tools which have helped inform this work including the Local Climate Adaptation Tool (LCAT) which is due to be released later in 2023 and will offer effective monitoring guidance for adaptation strategies. This tool would look to create a consistent and comparable framework for council's creating their climate adaptation strategy.

The National climate scorecards have also provided criteria which Local Authority adaptation has been assessed against. Currently our score stands at 6 out of 18 for adaptation and mitigation.

#### What are the key focus points for North Somerset Council's Climate Change Adaptation

Key areas which have been focused on through the workshops:

- Buildings and Heritage
- Local Economy
- Natural Environment
- Infrastructure
- Health and Wellbeing
- Emergency Management and Flooding

They represent key service areas and areas of the council which face complex climate change risks and need adaptation actions. Splitting the adaptation actions down through these themes allows for the existing policies and work to be identified. By breaking the adaptation response into these themes, it is also easier to identify gaps in our adaptation measures within our existing work.

#### Next steps

We are anticipating that the imminent release of the Local Council Adaptation Tool will be of great use to the development of the adaptation strategy. It will likely shape the format of this piece of work and so when it has been released, we will be able to apply our current information and work to their suggested format.

## **Climate emergency action plan project updates**

This section provides updates on delivery of projects identified within the Climate Emergency Action Plan that will help in reducing carbon. Full update on the plan can be found by visiting our electronic dashboard [Microsoft Power BI](#).

### **Become a net zero carbon council**

#### ***Carbon Literacy***

The Climate Emergency Action Plan states that the council needs to take a leadership role across the area to encourage, support and enable others to reduce carbon emissions. Carbon literacy training is an effective tool to raise the awareness of risks and opportunities related to climate change across organisation. In July 2022 North Somerset Council was awarded a Carbon Literacy Silver award. To date we have trained 337 members of staff which equals 24% of our workforce.

To achieve a Gold Award, the council will require to train 50% of all employees. To achieve this target the Council has agreed to participate in World's Carbon Literacy Day on 4<sup>th</sup> of December, with an ambitious plan to train 350 people in one day. The training day will be funded through UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

#### ***Own estate***

The council has appointed new staff within its Property and Projects Team who are working on developing a Net Zero Estate Plan. The purpose of the plan is to assess, develop and deliver investments across the range of council-owned assets to enable achievement of net zero, aligning this with other planned capital maintenance where possible. The plan will allow NSC to identify opportunities for solar panels installations and energy efficiency measures.

In addition, other successes include:

- In January 2023 NSC has been awarded £886,000 from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) to proceed with decarbonisation works at the Campus building. The project work started in April 2023 and is due to be completed in October 2024. The project is forecast to deliver 120 tonnes of annual CO2 savings.
- In March 2022 North Somerset Library Service has been awarded a grant of £215,900 by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sports, delivered by Arts Council England. The grant allowed the council to perform capital works that contributed to libraries carbon footprint reduction.
- In December 2022 the council has been awarded the £20m through the Levelling up Fund for a range of regeneration and placemaking initiatives across Weston. Where appropriate these will include energy efficiency and decarbonisation improvements.

#### ***Own fleet***

Council is delivering the Accommodation Strategy that supports flexible working for the staff and contributes to emissions reduction. Travel and Parking workstream is identified as part of strategy development and is looking into changing staff behaviours for more sustainable and active travel. For more details see [Committee Report NSC \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#).

### **Decarbonise transport**

## ***Bus Service Improvement Plan***

The Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) outlines a major investment programme by North Somerset Council in partnership with the West of England Combined Authority. The ambition is to improve the quality and provision of bus services to a level that creates an attractive alternative to the use of private vehicles. It will also accelerate the decarbonisation of transport which is a key priority for the council as part of its commitment to tackle the climate emergency.

To achieve this ambitious programme, council identified a significant number of opportunities to introduce bus priority measures on key areas. Council plans to redesign over 18 junctions and routes which are known to cause delays to services.

The first package of schemes are set for construction beginning in 2023. There are seven currently planned:

- A38 at Barrow Gurney
- A370 Long Ashton bypass
- A370 at Brockley Combe
- A370 at Wood Hill
- A370 at Congresbury Smallway junction
- A369 at Beggar Bush Lane
- A369 Martcombe Road

For more information visit [Bus service improvement plan | North Somerset Council \(n-somerset.gov.uk\)](https://www.n-somerset.gov.uk).

## **Decarbonise the built environment**

### ***Thermal images cameras***

North Somerset Council is funding the Thermal Images Camera Loan scheme to assist people in identifying areas of their homes where heat is being lost. The thermal imaging camera service is designed to allow homeowners to do a basic heat loss survey on their homes to identify if and where heat loss is occurring. North Somerset residents will have an idea of what changes they can make to save energy, carbon emissions and money. The scheme will go live in Autumn 2023.

### ***Bright Green Homes***

For the Bright Green Homes project, North Somerset Council has partnered with Bath and North East Somerset Council and Bristol City Council to provide grants to help low income households install technologies which reduce carbon emissions and lower energy costs. To qualify for the funding, applicants must live in North Somerset and:

- be the owner, landlord or private rented tenant of the property.
- have a combined annual income of £31,000 or lower.
- do not have gas central heating.

Together with the other councils, we successfully bid for £11m of funding from the government's Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ). The eligibility criteria were set by DESNZ.

To date 34 North Somerset based homeowners were successful for the scheme.

### ***Social Housing Decarbonisation grant***

£1.1m was awarded to Alliance Homes to upgrade homes and off-grid households with energy efficiency measures through Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund and Home Upgrade Grant. The money will go towards improvements to vulnerable households and off-gas grid homes with an EPC rating of D or below and could save tenants between £220 and £400 a year on energy bills. These schemes could also support around 20,000 jobs in the construction and home retrofit sectors, helping to deliver on our promise to grow the economy and create better paid jobs, whilst supporting families across the country.

### **Low carbon business and skills**

#### ***Net Zero Business support grants programme***

North Somerset Council launched the Net Zero Business support grants programme funded through UK Shared Prosperity Fund. The programme aims to support Small and Medium Size Business in the region by providing access to capital grants aimed at decarbonisation of the business premises. The total value of the scheme is £255,000 spread across 2 financial years.

Round 1 – April 2023 - March 2024 - has an allocation of £105,000. The applications received from 11 business and are being assessed. The proposed projects through round 1 can save approximately 50 tonnes CO2 per annum.

Round 2 – April 2024 - March 2025 will go live in winter 2023. In preparation of the grants application businesses will be able to apply for the free carbon survey through appointed contractor. Details to follow in August 2023.

### **Renewable energy generation**

#### ***Solar Together Round 2***

The West of England Combined Authority has an agreement in place (August 2021- August 2025) with iChoosr administers of the Solar Together scheme. A turn-key collective buying scheme for owner/occupiers wishing to invest in a solar panel system on their home, with the option of adding a battery. 'Solar Together - West of England' Round 1, delivered in 2021 and achieved 842 solar PV installations and 105 batteries equating an estimated carbon reduction of 18,000 tonnes over 25 years.

The Regional Low Carbon Delivery team propose working with iChoosr to run a second round of Solar Together - West of England by joining Cohort 4 along with seven other authorities across England. This proposal is being discussed with the Local Authorities on 23 June at the Climate Working Group. North Somerset Council is considering participation in the scheme following the success of the Round 1.

### **Resources and waste**

We are the best performing authority in the South West and second highest unitary authority in England. We continue to work with our NSC waste and recycling team and local community groups and organisations to maintain our high recycling rate of 60.4%, which placed us 7th out of 341 English local authorities in the overall recycling performance league table.

### **Adaptation and resilience**

## **North Somerset Flood Risk Management Strategy**

In June 2023 North Somerset Council adopted the Flood Risk Management Strategy that focuses on managing the risk of flooding to people and property due to surface runoff, ordinary watercourses and groundwater, in line with our responsibilities. The Strategy identifies communities in North Somerset which are considered to be most vulnerable to flooding from surface runoff, ordinary watercourses and groundwater. It identifies the measures we propose to take in these communities to reduce flood risk, subject to sufficient funding and resource availability. More information can be found here [20.8 Local Flood Risk Strategy Summary - Local Flood Risk Management Strategy for North Somerset.pdf \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](#).

### **4. Consultation**

The report was developed in consultation with the Climate Emergency Project Officer group.

### **5. Financial Implications**

The recommendations of this report do not in themselves have direct financial implications. The Action Plan includes a section on financial considerations and existing and potential funding support for initiatives.

To deliver net zero carbon and to transition to a low emissions area, additional funding will be required. Where this requires funding from council budgets, proposals will be subject to normal financial governance and decision-making, including the preparation of costed business cases. The business cases will also need to consider the potential costs of inactivity on climate change, including lost revenue and impact to life.

### **Costs**

There are no costs associated with this report.

### **Funding**

The report doesn't identify any costs or funding.

### **6. Legal Powers and Implications**

The recommendations of this report do not in themselves have legal implications. As initiatives within the Action Plan are further developed, there may be legal implications for the council. These will be considered through formal governance arrangements and decisions as required by the council's constitution.

### **7. Climate Change and Environmental Implications**

The aim of this report is to address the Climate Emergency and deliver a net zero council and area by 2030.

### **8. Risk Management**

The Climate Emergency is recognised as a key corporate risk which the Strategy and Action Plan will help to address.

### **9. Equality Implications**

No specific Equality Impact Assessment has been completed for this progress update. Individual projects will be subject to EIAs as required.



## **10. Corporate Implications**

The climate emergency is a cross-cutting issue and a corporate priority; all services will be required to assist in delivery of the Strategy and Action Plan.

Directorate Action Plans for the Climate Emergency are in place across all services.

## **11. Options Considered**

The report is for information only.

### **Author:**

Victoria Barvenova, Climate Emergency Project Manager

### **Appendices:**

N/A

### **Background Papers:**

Climate Emergency Action Plan [n-somerset.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-03/31208  
Climate Emergency Action Plan ACC.pdf](https://www.somerset.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-03/31208_Climat_Emergency_Action_Plan_ACC.pdf).

This page is intentionally left blank