

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.

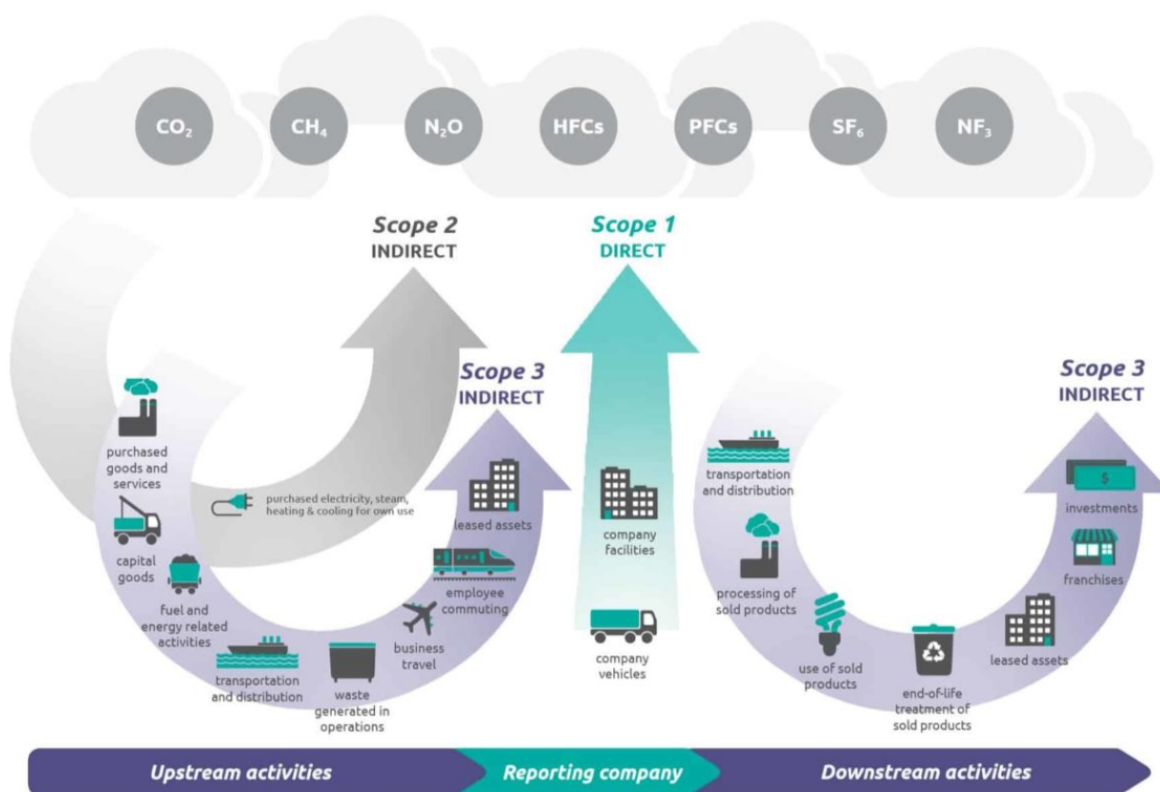
Emissions are categorised within the following groupings (further illustrated in the diagram below):

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/n-somerset-council-climate-emergency-report-on-baseline-emissions).

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
Scope 1						
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%
Total Scope 1	4,607	4,314	3,877	4,394	3,755	-18%
Scope 2 (Purchased Electricity)						
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%
Total Scope 2	4,231	3,851	2,384	2,242	2,890	-32%
Total Scope 1 and 2	8,838	8,165	6,261	6,636	6,645	-25%
Scope 3						
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%
Total Scope 3	5,744	5,819	4,608	5,025	5,319	-7%
Total Gross Emissions	14,582	13,985	10,869	11,661	11,964	-18%
Organisation target	6,448	4,134	3,508	4,150	4,461	-31%

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.

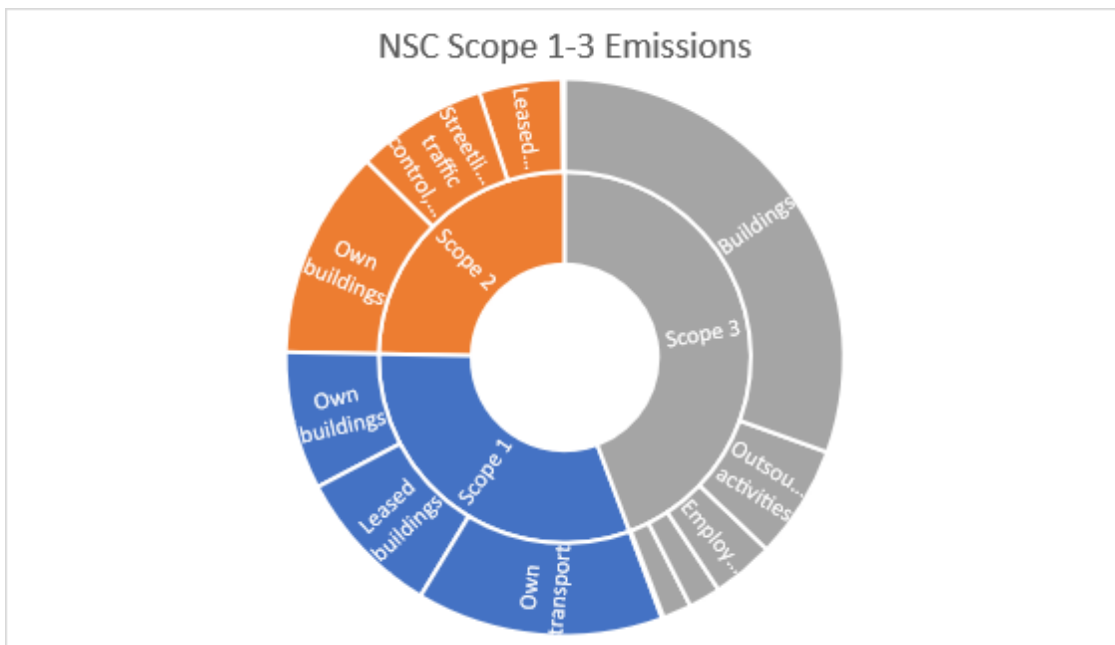
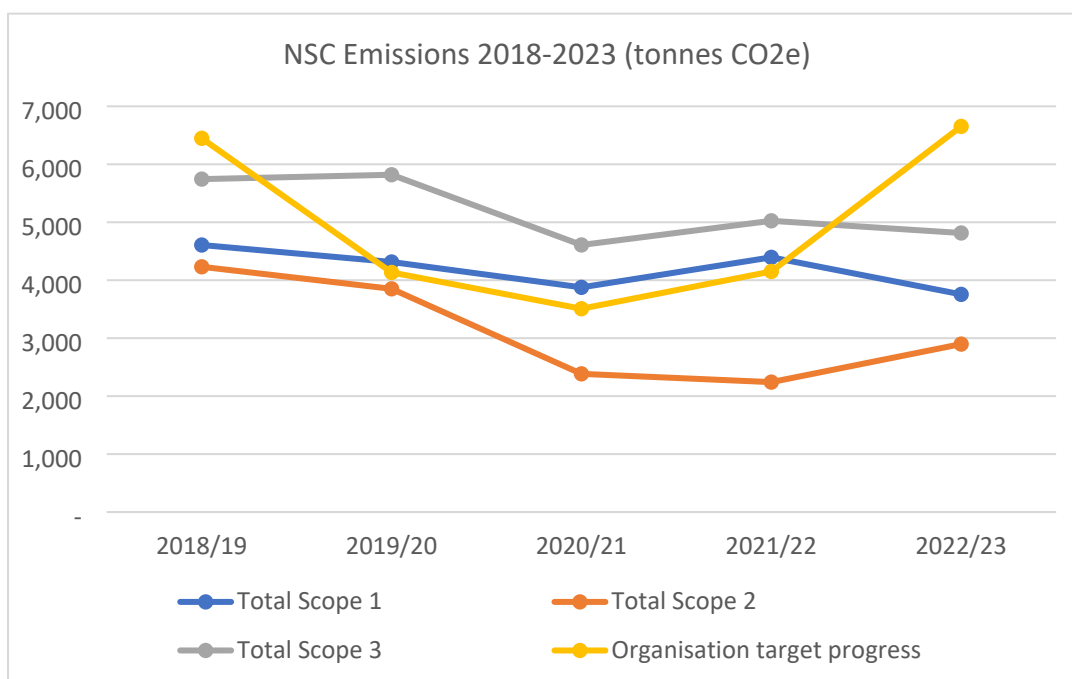


Figure 3. North Somerset Council's emissions 2018-2023.



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 4th 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:

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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).