

Somerset Waste Partnership Annual Action Plan & Business Case

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Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to approve the draft Business Plan 2022-2027 and draft budget 2022-2023 for the Somerset Waste Partnership (SWP).
2. To update the Executive on progress on the rollout of Recycle More across the county.

Forward Plan

3. This annual report appeared on the District Executive Forward Plan with an original anticipated Committee date of January 2022, but this report was delayed until February 2022.

Public Interest

4. The report explains the priorities for Somerset Waste Partnership (SWP) over the next five years with a particular emphasis on activities in the next year. The partnership manages waste collection and disposal across Somerset and is accountable to the Somerset Waste Board. Approval of the Business Plan and budget is a constitutional requirement of the Board.

Recommendations

5. That District Executive recommend that the Chief Executive:-
 - a) Approve the Somerset Waste Partnership's (SWP) Draft Business Plan 2022-2027 and draft Budget 2022-23 (see Appendix A);
 - b) Recommend to Full Council at its meeting on 28th February 2022 to approve an increase to the 2022-23 revenue budget of £235,120 that will arise from approving the Business Plan;
 - c) Note the progress of the continued implementation of Recycle More across the county.

Background



6. SWP manages waste and recycling services on behalf of all local authorities in Somerset. The partnership is governed through a Joint Committee known as the Somerset Waste Board. It is required to prepare a draft Business Plan and budget with an accompanying Action Plan on an annual basis. The Board then approves a draft for consultation with the partners, so that each partner authority has the opportunity to comment on the plan.
7. The Board, can, by majority vote, amend the Business Plan in order to accommodate any unforeseen circumstances and to assist the Board to achieve the Aims and Objectives. Any partner council can request as an amendment at any time.
8. The Board's business planning cycle requires a draft report to be approved by the Board in December and circulated to partners for comment prior to the adoption of the Board's Annual Budget the following February. The Draft Business Plan was approved for consultation by the Board at their meeting on 10th December 2021, and the final Business Plan will be considered by the Board on 11th February 2022. Once approved or noted by all partners, the plan and the budget will be formally adopted by the Board to provide a framework within which the Board can make decisions and steer the delivery of Waste Partnership services.

Current Position – Draft SWP Business Plan 2022 - 2027

9. With the creation of a new Unitary Authority in 2023, this may be the last year of a SWP Business Plan in this format. The activity required to smoothly transition to a new Unitary Authority is reflected at a high level in the business plan, but as this actively revolves, it may affect other activities within the plan.
10. The budget for 2022-23 will see a significant increase of 10%. This is due to several factors including the current high rates of inflation.
11. The Recycle More scheme was rolled out to South Somerset at the end of June 2021. The launch and initial embedding of Recycle More in South Somerset was significantly hampered by the nationwide driver shortage, a situation that has been exacerbated by pandemic delays to driver training, Somerset's challenging labour market and the strain on crews who have been coping with increased tonnages for a sustained period.
12. These pressures saw poor collection performance in the early stages of the rollout and in the delivery of Bright Blue Bags ahead of service launch, but the situation has improved as intense work by SUEZ saw staffing numbers and services get back on track.
13. In the autumn operational changes at the Lufton depot (recycling and garden waste collections now running from the site as well as refuse) had affected collection reliability in some localised areas last month. Additional staff and management support is now in place to address these issues, with the early signs of improvement being encouraging. A presentation to District Executive will update on service stability and the significantly increased recycling tonnages achieved through the Recycle More rollout in South Somerset.
14. SWP have carefully reviewed their Business Continuity arrangements to ensure they can



South Somerset

District Council

keep moving forward with the Recycle More programme, but they continue to operate in a high-risk environment particularly due to the impact of Covid and the national driver shortage.

15. SWP remain focussed on three outcomes as last year, and under each of these outcomes sit linked activities structured into themes. The plan this year has reflected on the service disruptions in 2020/21, the ongoing impacts of national driver shortage, the continuing pandemic and the pressure this has put on staff from SWP, SUEZ and partners. Delivering a stable service and rebuilding trust with the public is critical to next year's activity.

16. Key areas of activity for next year are:

	Area of activity	Content
1	Waste reduction	Focusing on food waste and plastic, signposting to zero waste shops, reusable nappies
2	Promoting Reuse	Implementing the reuse strategy agreed by the Board in September 2021
3	Recycling	Bedding in the recycle More roll-out, ensuring homes are built with recycling in mind, food waste in communal properties, tackling hard to treat waste streams (e.g., soft plastics), HWRCs, composition and participation analysis, recycling A-Z guide, targeted campaigns
4	Decarbonising residual waste	Heat offtake, carbon capture and storage, education
5	Decarbonising our operations	Electric supervisors' vans, green depot infrastructure, pilot alternative fuels, drive down carbon intensity of day-to-day operations, partial re-fleet of refuse vehicles
6	Tackling non-household waste	Schools, public sector estate, business waste
7	Working with others	Parish Councils, local data and engagement, developing partnerships, community action groups, engagement with front-line staff
8	Improving the customer experience	In-cab technology, innovation, website, improving complaints management, GDPR, assisted collection review, processes around new home occupation, enforcement, supporting the most vulnerable
9	Supporting wider goals in Somerset	Tackling waste on the go, tackling fly-tipping, supporting local businesses and those far from the labour market
10	Enabling activities	Depot infrastructure, health and safety, contract management, service reviews, influencing national policy, long term strategy, behavioural insights, business continuity planning, preparing for Unitary

17. The business plan attached in Appendix A, details the action plans in place for the next 5 years and the roll out of recycle more. The financial details have been discussed with all Section 151 officers and they are based on robust assumptions and timescales.



South Somerset District Council

18. The savings figure included for SSDC of £169,573, which is included in the draft business plan in 2022-23, reflects the savings to all partner authorities once Recycle More breakdown point is achieved. Breakeven point continues to be reviewed by SWP, partner offices and the Board. However, it should be noted that there is an increase in cost of £505,219 after taking this saving into account.
19. The figures provided for Covid and savings have to be caveated that depending on what happens with the Covid 19 pandemic there could be a further delay with the timescales for the roll out of Recycle More, which in turn could effect on the timing of the savings built into the budget figures. The inflation figure for the County Council will increase significantly as the contract inflation figure is finalised in March – this is reflected in Somerset County Council's budget and is highlighted for information only as it has no impact on SSDC's costs.

Financial Implications

20. The budget increase has been added to the 2022-23 waste and recycling revenue budget, the revenue budget is recommended for approval by SSDC Full Council at the end of February 2022.
21. An element of the budget increase will be funded by a proposed transfer from an earmarked reserve, which was created to fund additional pressures on the waste and recycling budget.
22. It should be noted that the increase to the 2022-23 revenue budget of £235,120 differs from the increase included in the draft business plan. This is partially due to the proposed transfer from the earmarked reserve to fund an element of the increase and the 2021-22 base budget figures for SWP and SSDC being different.
23. The SWP constitution requires the annual draft business plan to be shared with the Council for comments prior to the adoption of the final business plan by the Somerset Waste Board. The report therefore provides the opportunity for members to comment on the draft business plan.

Legal implications (if any) and details of Statutory Powers

24. No legal implications.

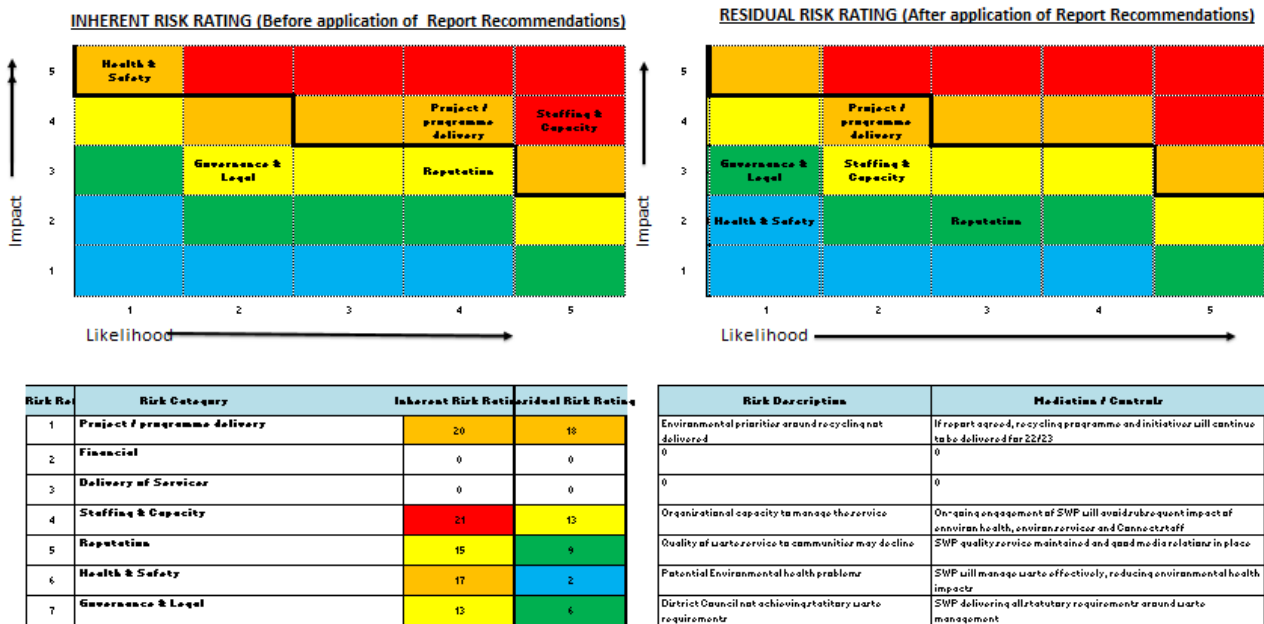
Risk Matrix

25. Failure to approve a Business Plan (a constitutional requirement) will affect the ability of the Somerset Waste Partnership to effectively deliver the board's vision and hence its contribution to SSDC's priorities. As set out in the Business Plan (appendix A) section entitled 'Key Challenges and Opportunities' there are considerable risks at the moment for SWP – including those inherent to the waste sector and those resulting from the impact of Covid-19 and the National Driver Shortage. Cumulatively these mean that cost remain volatile and the pressure on staff remains high.



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26. South Somerset District Council have completed an internal risk assessment for this report against the council's risk register. The results of this assessment can be seen in the table below:



Council Plan Implications

27. The business plan plays a central point in working towards the Councils' aim to keep South Somerset clean, green and attractive and respond to the climate emergency and working in partnership to:

- Promote recycling and minimise waste

28. Waste and recycling collections are two of the highest profile and most expensive services funded by the Council, and these services are always ranked by the public as two of the most important and highly value services.

Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications

29. Somerset Waste Partnership is one of the Council's Key Partnerships and delivers client and operational responsibilities for delivery of recycling and waste reduction priorities. This item links to the Council's Environment Priority and the Climate Change agenda.

Equality and Diversity Implications

30. Many of the actions in the business plan relate to the implementation of decisions already taken by the Somerset Waste Board and Equalities Impact Assessments were undertaken at the time.

31. EIA's will be carried out as appropriate as future review and actions arise. SSDC have also completed a Equalities Relevance Assessment for this report too (Appendix B).



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32. The decision to carry out an EIA in most cases will be delegated to the SWP's Managing Director, or if significant, then they will be returned to the Somerset Waste Board prior to commencing development.

Privacy Impact Assessment

33. Personal Data held by the SWP is fundamentally the same as currently managed and used. As technology is developed and used to assess customer behaviour to reduce waste and improve recycling, then impact assessments will need to be carried out by the SWP to ensure compliance with data protection regulations.

Background Papers

- SWP Annual Report and Draft Business Plan – District Executive 20th Jan 2020
- SWP Business Plan 2019 - 2024
- SWP Business Plan 2021 – 2026