

# South Somerset Environment Strategy



Engagement Outcomes Report

October 2019

## Our Vision for South Somerset:

'We wish to be a leading Council in developing and adopting a Green Agenda to promote sustainable environment, economy and communities'

**South Somerset Council Plan 2018/20**



**South Somerset**  
District Council

This report provides information on the approach and outcomes of a series of engagement activities undertaken with a sample of stakeholders from within South Somerset and beyond, to help shape the development of the Council's Environment Strategy.

## The approach: engagement activities undertaken

A number of initial community engagement activities were undertaken during July and September 2019. This included workshops, meetings and remote email engagement.



### School Workshop

50 children from five local primary schools in the district were invited to attend a workshop at the Council Chamber on Monday 1st July. In advance, each school was asked to consider a theme and produce a display to present on the day along with some ideas about what they think the 'Council' should do in their theme.

The topics being covered by the schools included:

- Natural Environment (includes Ecology, tree canopy & open spaces)
- Waste, Recycling and Resource Management (includes single use plastics)
- Built Environment
- Travel and Transport
- Energy

The event was facilitated by Jan Gamon (Lead Specialist Strategic Planning) and Katy Menday (Leisure and Recreation Manager) with support from Strategic Planning Specialists and Case Officers.

The event also gave children the opportunity to vote on what they think are the most important things for the Council to do, from all the ideas put forward from the different schools.



### Stakeholder Meetings

Three stakeholder meetings were held in July: With representatives from local interest groups and regional and national organisations on Tuesday 2nd and Thursday 11th July. With representatives from Extinction Rebellion on Friday 5th July. The events were facilitated by either Jan Gamon (Lead Specialist Strategic Planning) or Katy Menday (Leisure and Recreation Manager) with support from other specialists who also contributed to discussions. The stakeholder meetings gave people the opportunity to share their views on environmental issues and opportunities that could help to shape our future plans through the environment strategy.

The objectives of the stakeholder meetings:

- To understand the perspectives of a range of people who are engaged in the environment and climate emergency issue and that might help to shape our future plans.
- To understand some of the issues that people feel are important to address, and of those to get a sense of those which might be easier to address, those which are more difficult, and, what, if any, barriers to addressing these issues.
- To understand where people feel we are damaging the environment (as in the wider community, not just the Council) and thoughts on what the Council could be doing itself (operations / buildings) and what we could be doing for the District (to support and encourage position action/behaviour changes).
- To understand any good examples of actions being taken elsewhere that people think we should be aware of.
- To strengthen relationships between the Council and stakeholders in addressing issues around the environment and climate change.

## Stakeholder meeting to review draft Strategy – 17th September

Following the writing of the draft strategy over the summer, a further stakeholder meeting was held on the 17th September with those who had attended earlier stakeholder meetings. The purpose of this session was to give people advance sight of the drafted strategy and provide an opportunity for them to raise any final comments before it was finalised and circulated to Committee Members for approval in October.

Email engagement consisted of...



### Parish and Town Councils

Emails were sent out to Parish and Town Council Clerks inviting email responses to understand some of what the Councils might already be doing related to the environment and their aspirations and thoughts on priorities for addressing climate change and the wider environmental issues.

Clerks were provided with some broad questions to consider, based around the five broad themes; Waste, Recycling & resource Management, Natural Environment, Built Environment, Energy (efficiency and renewable), Travel and Transport:

Q1 - What do you think are the key environmental issues / concerns for your Parish or Town and District?

Q2 - What are you already doing within your Parish or Town to address the environmental issues?

Q3 - What are the top three things we should aim for (in terms of desired outcome) ?

Q4 - What are the key things we could do to achieve these desired outcomes?



### Elected Members

Emails were sent out to all Ward Members inviting email responses to understand some of what they Councils might already be doing related to the environment and their aspirations and thoughts on priorities for addressing climate change and the wider environmental issues.

Members were provided with some broad questions to consider, based around the five broad themes identified; Waste, Recycling & resource Management, Natural Environment, Built Environment, Energy (efficiency and renewable), Travel and Transport:

Q1 - What do you think are the key environmental issues / concerns for the District ?

Q2 - What are the top three things we should aim for (in terms of desired outcome) ?

Q3 - What are the key things we could do to achieve these desired outcomes ?

The feedback from Members was also reviewed by a Scrutiny led Task and Finish Group who considered the responses and further considered:

- Which of the subjects are district wide and those that may be specific to a location or category of land, types of facilities etc.
- How the subjects fit into themes and reviewed the themes
- The role of SSDC in terms of delivery, shared responsibility with partners, support the community to enable.



### Officers employed by SSDC

An email was sent out to all staff inviting them to share thoughts and ideas what they felt are important environmental issues and what the Council could consider delivering through the Environment Strategy. Either in terms of the Council's own operations, or what it can do for the wider District to address the issue, or both.

Staff were made aware of some broad themes that had been identified that the strategy is likely to consider, to help shape any thoughts:

- Recycling & Resource Management
- Natural Environment
- Built Environment
- Energy (efficiency and renewable)
- Travel and Transport
- Green Economy
- Raising Awareness and Engagement

## School Workshop Outcomes

A total of 49 children attended the session from five primary schools in the district.

The outcomes of the school workshop are detailed in Appendix A however the top ten ideas ranked as the most important by the children through the voting activity are show in Figure 1. There were also a few common themes running through the ideas presented by the schools, summarised below:

- The Council's role as a leader for change through greater promotion and education;
- More greening of the district, primarily through trees;
- Educate on the dangers of single use plastics and the need to stop using them and find alternatives;
- More green infrastructure on new homes and buildings to reduce energy consumption and reuse/ recycle waste;
- More infrastructure and incentives to get people out of cars and into walking, cycling and public transport.
- Smart incentives for business and residents to be more energy efficient and environmentally friendly.

Ideas for action	Number of Votes
Council buildings and new housing to have green or blue roofs and to use less energy	18
Reusing energy from gym equipment (to power community facilities e.g. swimming pool)	17
More education on dangers of plastic use	12
Free water fountains (in public places to reduce demand for single use plastics)	9
More trees in towns	8
Eco-rating scheme (and discounts) to encourage energy saving for businesses and homes	7
More cycle routes and cycle hire apps	6
More local community shops (to reduce demand for car travel)	4
More electric transport options	4
LED, Solar lamp-posts (with charging facilities)	4

## Stakeholder Outcomes

Feedback from the three stakeholder meetings in July indicated that overall people felt strongly that urgent action is required to reduce carbon emissions at a local level, to reduce use of fossil fuels and that there is a lot that the District Council can do on climate change and to address this.

A number of common themes emerged from the issues and concerns raised at the three events and these are detailed in the following sections:

Summary of responses from local interest groups and representatives from regional and national organisations (a total of 18 people attended the two meetings).



### Leadership and setting the right example

The Council has a major role in leading and influencing others to make positive changes to address / combat climate emergency issues. However, the Council should lead by example. Make changes to Council's operations and facilities to reduce carbon footprint as well as offset the carbon it creates. Sign up to a green charter.

Some of the suggested actions included: all existing council owned properties retrofit to be energy efficient (EPC c or higher); understand how operations impact the environment and set realistic targets; reduce energy consumption; buy green energy where it is not sufficiently generated via solar thermal, PV or heat pumps; ensure any LA developments use renewable energy sources; reduce business mileage; increase car sharing; reduce waste in all aspects, not just what goes to landfill; divest from fossil fuels and reinvest in green energy; shift to electric fleet and power tools; make sustainable procurement choices.



### Education and promotion

While the Council should lead by example by what it does, the biggest change of behaviour and carbon reduction needs to be in the wider district where environmental impact is far more significant. Develop a strategy to effectively engage with the wider community on climate change matters and educate on the potential impacts and risks. Work with existing networks and expertise to maximise efforts and impact; campaign hard.



### Single use and micro plastics

The messages about dangers of plastics are still not making a big enough difference and need more campaigns to educate and encourage changes in behaviour. Campaign with industry to stop production of single use plastics at source.



### Greening the district to off-set carbon

Significant tree planting in the district is considered one of the biggest actions to offset carbon, as well as increasing the green spaces including wild-flowering of verges and small patches of land between houses and around parks, instead of grass cutting. More green spaces also helps reduce flood risks. Sign up to a tree canopy action plan to set out how to bring more trees into the entire landscape; working with key stakeholders (including landowners) to increase tree canopy and woodlands in the appropriate places.



## Getting planning policy right

The Local Authority has the power through the Local Plan to set higher standards than current national standards for new build, to be more energy efficient and to integrate climate adaptation measures such as green space and green infrastructure.

The Local Plan review is a golden opportunity to review policies in light of climate emergency however what is proposed is not considered ambitious enough and does not address the issue sufficiently.

Consider a brownfield first policy and lobby government to incentivise and increase the use of brownfield sites. It is too easy to develop on green sites.

Setting policy isn't just the solution and more needs to be done to enforce building standards through planning and building conditions and to monitor that developers are meeting the energy efficiency targets they agreed to.

Bring redundant buildings back into use, especially where listed. Protect the historic buildings but don't let conservation constraints prevent properties from being brought up to living day standards for energy efficiency and climate resilience.



## Reduce consumption of water & encourage rainwater harvesting

Demand for water is increasing rapidly and water supplies are under increasing stress. Reduce water consumption and efficiency in council buildings and operations and raise awareness and encourage behaviour change of wider community, including business, through educational campaigns. Design-in ecology to clear up water systems and build into planning the need for rainwater harvesting and permeable surfaces.



## Reduce the amount of waste created and increase re-use and recycling of waste

Reduce consumption that creates waste, look at how waste can generate energy, reduce waste going to landfill. There is still not enough participation with re-use and recycling, especially with businesses. Make it easy for people to recycle, educate them how to do it. work with partners and local network experts to maximise the opportunities and impacts of doing something.



## Reduce transport emissions

Transport is a big source of pollution and Co2 emissions, as well as contributing to air quality and noise pollution. Need to shift people from fossil fuelled vehicles to electric but there are barriers. Actions are required to reduce the demand of car travel however public transport options are limited in rural communities. Better public transport network required. Walking and cycle infrastructure is also not joined up within local neighbourhoods, or across the district and needs to be designed into new and existing communities. For electric vehicles to be attractive option sufficient infrastructure (EV car chargers) is required in local communities, new builds and at council owned locations. Council to move to electric fleet.



## Maximise opportunities to promote growth in the renewable energy / green sector

There is economic value in the environment in terms of jobs and prosperity and the district's character and landscape also provides opportunities to increase tourism.



## Address the climate emergency

The impacts of climate emergency are already being felt. Take immediate action to address the impact of the climate emergency and support the community in being resilient to these changes. Make sure that all future Council decisions, policy and projects takes account of the climate emergency. Produce a carbon footprint report to provide a baseline to measure and manage carbon emissions.



## Work in Partnership

A lot of good work is already underway to tackle climate change and protect the environment and more could be achieved by working with others to collaborate or share resources with Partners across the county. Don't try to reinvent the wheel.



## Engage with agricultural industry to reduce negative environmental impacts

South Somerset is a rural district with a large agricultural economy. The environmental impacts of agricultural practice are well known e.g. over-fertilised fields, water erosion, pesticides / herbicides. Work with the industry to raise awareness, promote sustainable alternatives, lobby central government, use planning policy to reintroduce traditional meadow management, hedgerows, create more open areas for water.

## Extinction Rebellion meeting outcomes

Five representatives from Extinction Rebellion attended the meeting. Jan Gamon facilitated the discussion. Sarah Dyke attended as portfolio holder for Environment and other specialists and case officers attended.

The key messages from Extinction Rebellion were based on the motion put forward to Full Council on the 21st May 2019 and provide the structure for summarising the key points raised:



### People Power

Increase public participation in everything we do to keep spreading the message about climate emergency and changes needed to reduce carbon emissions, but to also bring in local expertise to be part of the solutions and not just as engagement. Consider people assemblies for local action and support citizens assembly for County based action.



### Strategy approach

Tell the truth about climate emergency and what it means for communities within the preface of the strategy. Highlight that the change needs to come from the district, not just the council.

Set out smaller immediate actions to be taken as well as a longer term plans. The emergency requires action, not just plans.

Talk about issues and limitations including what the Council can't do and what it could do without restrictions. Through identification actions groups can lobby central government for action to address this.

The Strategy should be focused on carbon neutrality for the whole district, not just the Council's operations/ buildings.

Representatives also raised the importance of divesting from fossil fuels, reducing single use plastics and tackling issues around micro-plastics in water.



### Make climate emergency the forefront of all decision making

Every Council decision should in future reflect the position of a climate emergency and actions to be reframed within the context of a climate emergency.



### Offset carbon by greening our District

Tree planting is hugely important in decarbonising / off setting carbon. While the Council may not have the land to plant and maintain 100,000 trees in the district, it should take a lead in campaigning and working with other landowners to meet that target.



### Leadership in making change

The environmental impacts and contribution to carbon emissions of the Council's operations and buildings is small compared with that of the wider district. The Council should lead by example by what it does but the biggest change needs to be in the wider district. The Council should be a leader, and use its position to mobilise its community / industry to reduce emissions and respond to the climate emergency, through significant campaigns and partnership work.



## Written responses from Parish and Town Councils

11 responses were received and a summary of the key messages are detailed in Table 1. The responses also highlighted that a number of Parish and Town Councils are already doing a lot of work to address environmental issues in their localities. Some have declared climate emergencies and are in the process of developing plans to take action, and looking at ways in which they can be greener and / or support their communities to do the same.

There were also some overarching points raised including the role of the Council to demonstrate good practice and lead by example, the desire for more engagement with Parish and Town Councils in how to take actions forward, and consideration of existing models and frameworks for developing environmental strategy, including the One Planet Living.

## Stakeholder meeting to review draft Strategy

11 people attended the meeting and 4 provided email responses as they were not able to attend on the day.

A range of comments were raised about the draft strategy but there were some broad issues around the following where it was felt more emphasis should be given in the context setting or with actions that should be taken:

- Transport and rural isolation
- Ecology, biodiversity and nature recovery networks
- Sustainable drainage
- Tree planting and carbon absorption
- Communication and engagement with district
- Wetlands

## Written responses from Members

9 Members responded via email and the suggested issues and actions were then considered by a Scrutiny led Members Task and Finish Group, which consisted of 8 Members. Member responses are summarised in Table 2.

The task & finish group considered the broad theme headings that were initially identified as a potential framework for developing the strategy and felt that there were some additional aspects to consider, including health and wellbeing, agriculture and local food economy and resilience to climate change. Members grouped the issues and ideas raised under a wider set of theme headings and gave consideration to whether suggested actions were something that the Council had direct control or influence over or where it might only have a supporting role to help deliver.

The group also felt that consideration should be given to opportunities to further enhance the district as a place for 'green' industry, commerce, research and development, eco-tourism.

## Written responses from staff

14 members of staff responded via email and the suggested issues and actions are summarised in table 3.

The responses reflect a number of common issues and ideas raised through other engagement activities, as well as a willingness by some to be more actively involved in future initiatives.

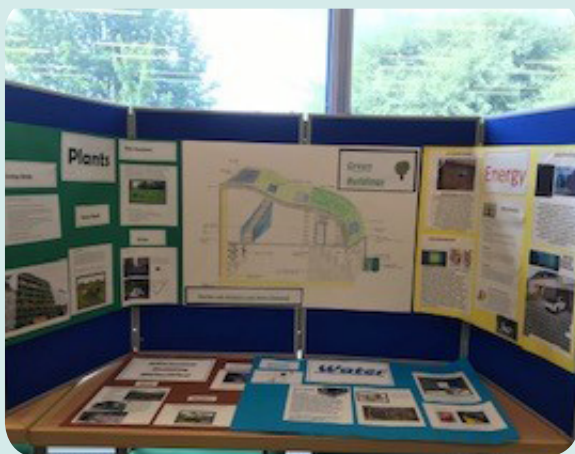
## Schools engagement workshop - 1 July 2019



### The Built Environment Norton and West Chinnock

#### Priority issues/recommendations:

1. More trees in towns
2. Rain gardens to reduce run off/flood risk from new housing
3. Council buildings and new builds to have green or blue roofs and to use less energy
4. Eco-friendly building materials i.e eco-bricks



### Travel & Transport Castle School



#### Priority issues/recommendations:

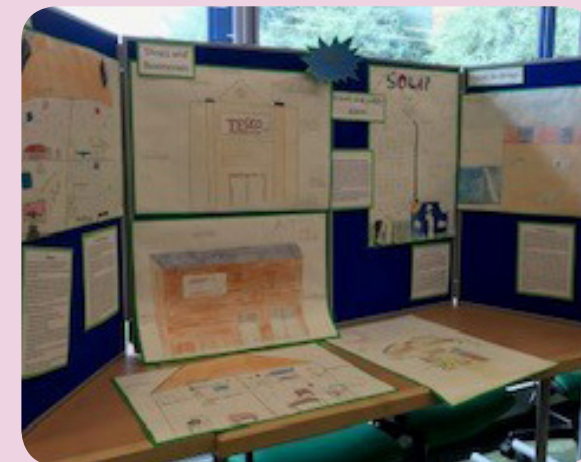
1. More train stations and bus stations
2. Cycle hire app and more cycle routes
3. Cheaper and more accessible bus services
4. More local community shops
5. Car share app
6. More electric transport options



### Energy Ilchester

#### Priority issues/recommendations:

1. Eco-rating scheme to encourage energy saving for businesses and homes
2. Shops and businesses to use renewable energy
3. LED, Solar lamp-posts
4. Free of charge solar charging points in town centres
5. Energy saving in new and existing homes
6. Public buildings to generate their own energy and re-use water.



## Schools engagement workshop - 1 July 2019



### Waste, Recycling & Resource Management South Pethereton Junior School

#### Priority issues/recommendations:

1. Reduce use of plastic packaging and find alternatives
2. Reduce laminating in schools and businesses
3. Information on litter bins to educate
4. More alternatives to plastic products
5. More education on dangers of plastic use



### Natural Environment All Saints

#### Priority issues/recommendations:

1. Free water fountains
2. Cycle Lanes between Lufton and Montacute
3. More roadside collections
4. Local environmental signage
5. Reusing energy from gym equipment
6. Wild flowering gardens and verges



## Schools engagement workshop - 1 July 2019






Results of the voting activity are detailed below.

	Ideas for action	Number of Votes
	Free water fountains	9
	Cycle Lanes between Lufton and Montacute	1
	More roadside collections	2
	Local environmental signage	3
	Reusing energy from gym equipment	17
	Wild-flowering gardens and verges	4
	More train stations and bus stations	3
	Cycle hire App and more cycle routes	6
	Cheaper and more accessible bus services	2
	More local community shops	4
	Car share app	3
	More electric transport options	4
	More trees in towns	8
	Rain gardens to reduce run off/flood risk from new housing	3
	Eco-friendly building materials i.e eco-bricks	5

	Council buildings and new housing to have green or blue roofs and to use less energy	18
	Reduce use of plastic packaging and find alternatives	5
	Reduce laminating in schools and businesses	3
	Information on litter bins to educate	1
	More alternatives to plastic products	2
	More education on dangers of plastic use	12
		Eco-rating scheme (and discounts) to encourage energy saving for businesses and homes
Shops and businesses to use renewable energy		1
LED, Solar lamp-posts		4
Free of charge solar charging points in town centres		2
Energy saving in new and existing homes		1
Public buildings to generate their own energy and re-use water		2

**Table 1**

Provides a summary of the key points raised for each of the identified these. There were also some overarching points around consideration for existing models and frameworks for developing environmental strategy, including the One Planet Living.

	 <b>Waste, Recycling &amp; Resource Management</b>	 <b>Natural Environment</b>	 <b>Built Environment</b>	 <b>Energy (efficiency and renewable)</b>	 <b>Travel and Transport</b>
<b>What do you think are the key environmental issues / concerns for your Parish?</b>	Lack of kerb-side plastics recycling. Business waste. Fly tipping. Single use plastics. Waste from tourism.	Litter and fly-tipping. Reduction of natural species and habitats. Air and noise pollution. Lack of local area specific data re: carbon emissions. Dog fouling.	Over-development of rural area given lack of facilities and consequential destruction of natural habitats.	Lack of advice/info on what can be easily and effectively done.	Heavy vehicles on lanes and through village centre. Speeding. Infrequent and expensive bus service. Over-use of private vehicles.
<b>What are you already doing within your Parish to address the environmental issue?</b>	SWP info promulgated in newsletter every 2 months. Working groups/climate change groups. Parish own green policies. Local litter picking policies.	Litter-picking team. Reporting fly-tipping. Conservation of wild flowers in liaison with SSDC grass-cutting team.	Taking a more objective view to planning applications.	Councils own buildings reduced energy usage.	Liaison with Highways to control/moderate speeding and HGV movements.

## Waste, Recycling & Resource Management

## Natural Environment

## Built Environment

## Energy (efficiency and renewable)

## Travel and Transport

### What are the top three things we should aim for (in terms of desired outcome)?

Increased % recycled.  
Less packaging.  
Engage with communities to educate and raise awareness of waste.  
Promote sustainability.  
Make businesses more accountable for waste.  
Pressurise industry to take responsibility and positive action.

Reduce litter and fly tipping.  
More undisturbed natural areas.  
Protection of local AONS's/ woodlands.  
Tree / wildflower planting.  
Reduce pesticide /chemical use.  
Wildlife net gain.

Eco-friendly buildings with natural surrounds.  
Neighbourhood plans.  
Give Parishes more autonomy on planning policy.  
Reduce approval of new housing developments.  
Reduce number of disused buildings.

Reduced usage.  
More renewable sources.  
Local energy storage

Reduce car usage.  
Improve public transport options.  
Reduce car dependence and the need for daily travel.  
Make it easy and attractive for people to walk and cycle.  
Promote car-sharing and public transport.  
Promote low / zero carbon vehicles including electric cars, and electric vehicle charging infrastructure.  
Raise awareness of the impacts of, and promote alternatives to, air travel.

### What are the key things we could do to achieve these desired outcomes?

Promote and educate on reduce, recycle, reuse.  
Improve range of kerb collection options.  
Local micro-recycling stations and community recycling projects.  
Promote use of eco-alternative products, packaging and refills.  
Lobby central government to reduce plastics at source.  
Make all recycling centres free.

Increase community allotments and wild areas.  
Rewilding public spaces.  
More rain capture techniques and better water management.  
More local food markets.  
More waste bins (including dog waste) in public spaces.  
Protection and enhancement of existing habitats and sites important for nature.  
Create a Nature Recovery Network.  
Create a Natural Capital inventory.  
Ensure that the land-take for the creation of new wildlife habitat is at least as much as the land-take for new development.  
Identify areas for reforestation, community tree planting and protect existing trees.  
Identifying areas for natural flood management.




Heavier penalties for developer non-compliance.  
Restrict building in rural areas especially where a Green site will be destroyed.  
More PV's and solar panels on rooves.  
Improve housing quality and sustainability; lobby central government.  
Enable more developments on brownfield sites/ land.  
Require nature to be built into all developments; include exemplary features for biodiversity and achieve 25% net gain in biodiversity.

More renewable energy options.  
Encourage Smart Meters to reduce domestic consumption, and to improve planning and integration of renewable sources.  
Insulate all buildings.  
Aim for carbon neutrality.  
More investment in sustainable energy generation.  
Explore community energy groups.

EV charging points.  
Transport schemes.  
Reduced public transport fares.  
Traffic calming.  
More cycle paths and bike racks.  
Pedestrianise highstreets.  
More local food markets to reduce travel.  
Council to move to completely electric fleet.  
Increase railway connectivity in rural areas.

**Table 2**

9 Members responded via email and the suggested issues and actions were then considered by a Scrutiny led Members Task and Finish Group, which consisted of 8 Members. This table provides a summary of the responses.

	What do you think are the key environmental issues / concerns for the District?	What are the key things we could do to achieve these desired outcomes?
 <p><b>Waste, Recycling and Resource Management</b></p>	<p>Lack of plastics collection.</p> <p>Not enough 'local' recycling centres to encourage more participation.</p> <p>Inefficient waste collection.</p> <p>Littering, prevention of and clearing away/fly tipping, removal.</p>	<p>Ensure that SWP delivers its plan for more recycling. Increase campaigns to promote the roll out of the 'recycle more' scheme</p> <p>Encourage SWP to use low pollution collection vehicles.</p> <p>Greater campaigns to promote roll out of 'recycle more'.</p> <p>Lobby businesses to play their part in recycling and reducing waste and energy consumption</p> <p>Keep educating the public to take litter home and recycle.</p> <p>Remove public litter bins.</p>
 <p><b>Natural Environment</b></p>	<p>Low tree canopy cover.</p>	<p>Review best practice environmental focused land management (council owned) to set example.</p> <p>Plant more trees and use policy review to make developers do more.</p> <p>Undertake a tree canopy survey.</p>
 <p><b>Built Environment</b></p>	<p>Market towns listed buildings in need of care and restoration for a productive future.</p>	<p>Encourage developers to design sites around and using existing hedgerows and trees.</p> <p>Brownfield First policy – increase use of brownfield sites and redundant buildings bought back into use, especially where listed.</p> <p>Improve protection of our listed buildings and heritage sites.</p> <p>Review policies to encourage reuse of historic buildings for 21st century living but retain the history and the basic environment.</p> <p>Raise expected standards on developers to provide green infrastructure, make more energy efficient homes, install solar panels, manage rainwater run-off and offset their carbon footprint by building features in to enhance the environment.</p>

## What do you think are the key environmental issues / concerns for the District?

## What are the key things we could do to achieve these desired outcomes?

### Built Environment

Tougher, swifter enforcement action against developers and others who carry out work without permission or against regulations/ conditions.  
 Council buildings to have green / blue roofs.  
 More local community shops, less travel less packaging. Community hubs.



### Energy (efficiency and renewable)

Fuel poverty in households.

Council to lead by example and encourage others through education.  
 Invest in lots of charging points, including in outlying rural areas.  
 Ban wood burning of all kinds, including open fires, bonfires and stoves.  
 Put solar on Council owned car parks and more buildings to generate electricity from our assets.  
 Promoting solar PV, thermal and storage to industry / business and explore ways to encourage carbon footprint reduction.



### Travel and Transport

Isolation due to lack of rural transport to key services and town centres, and centralising or outsourcing of services –digital channel shift  
 Difficulty changing fuel consumption levels within industry.  
 Lack of electric vehicle charging points.  
 Lack of infrastructure to encourage walking and cycling.  
 Transport consumption of petroleum products.

Lobby for more rural bus routes and branch lines to get people out of cars and also reduce isolation.  
 Review cycle to work scheme - e-bikes.  
 Fleet to become carbon neutral.  
 Use planning policy to increase electric vehicle charging infrastructure and explore ways to encourage businesses and communities to increase the network provision.  
 Reduce parking charges for electric vehicles.  
 Providing new infrastructure to support walking and cycling to reduce need for travel by car.  
 Addressing isolation, community hubs  
 Lobby for the reopening of Chard Junction.  
 Where county permits, set up bus lanes.  
 Install particle pollution monitors at key traffic bottleneck points, and educate public.



## What do you think are the key environmental issues / concerns for the District?

## What are the key things we could do to achieve these desired outcomes?



### Planning/Strategy

Need planning team / policy to ensure future developments have built-in recycling facilities and top rate energy reduction/ renewal systems in place.

Reduction in green space due to over development in rural locations.

Engage with SWP strategies and business planning.

Partnership working with others to achieve greater benefits.

Work with developers to produce zero carbon, low impact housing.

Use review of local plan – golden opportunity to review policies in light of climate emergency.

Re-visit the regulations on solar panels for domestic use, to enable greater uptake.

Work with Parish / Towns to identify community solutions for recycling banks to encourage greater participation with recycling.



### Agriculture and Local Food Economy

Methane issues from agricultural economy.

Impacts of farming and large-scale operations on local landscape.

Need to reduce food miles.

Need more sustainable food growth /produce.

Develop and promote local food networks / community hubs.

Facilitate lines within local supply chains.

Ensure rural communities and agriculture are not forgotten, reach out to stakeholders and make full use of RSN.

Promote / support development of green tourism

Look at opportunities for supporting job creation and business growth within the green industry.

### Resilience to climate change



Proactively seek out grant funding and associated opportunities, including Wessex Investments fund.

Education to raise awareness

Continual carbon management

**Table 3**

14 members of staff responded via email and the suggested issues and actions are summarised in table 3.

	<b>Key issue identified</b>	<b>What we should do with Council's own operations /estate</b>	<b>What we should do to enable change across the wider district</b>
 <p><b>Waste, Recycling and Resource Management</b></p>	<p>Reduce use of single-use plastics. Sustainable procurement policy. Increase recycling and bin provision. Reduce paper use.</p>	<p>Challenge our suppliers and question how they package supplies that we use. Reduce the amount of paper used year on year. More recycling in councils own operations i.e food and recyclables collected in all premises. Donate food waste to charities. Be an eco-brick drop off point at all council offices. Reduce plastic in the canteen</p>	<p>Install water refill stations in public spaces Bigger fines (naming and shaming) for fly tipping. Provide different bins for sorting rubbish in the District so that people get used to recycling. More recycling bins in busy locations / attractions across the district e.g. Cartgate picnic area. More community recycling hubs. Lobby government and industry to reduce single use plastic at source. Encourage takeaways/ business to use less plastic packaging and be more responsible for waste generation.</p>
 <p><b>Natural Environment</b></p>	<p>Increase tree planting. Improve access to green spaces and infrastructure.</p>	<p>Rainwater Harvesting on SSDC land. A commitment to create wildlife corridors on SSDC land where possible, including small holes in fences to allow Hedgehogs to forage. Commit to ensuring peat based products in whatever form, are not used on SSDC land.</p>	<p>Plant more trees but with appropriate maintenance / management plans. Plan for more green spaces in deprived parts of the District. Support planting and rewilding in public spaces. Free water butts for all households. Encourage the installation of owl, bird and bat boxes, woodpiles and restoration of ponds in the district to create homes for wildlife and assist in flood prevention.</p>

	Key issue identified	What we should do with Council's own operations /estate	What we should do to enable change across the wider district
<p><b>Built Environment</b></p>	<p>Green Planning policies.</p>	<p>Green walls and roofs at the council offices and all new builds.</p> <p>Enforce section 106 agreements that specify walking/cycling routes</p> <p>Review local plan policies.</p>	<p>Encourage housing providers and builders to install solar panels and great insulation in all new and existing housing stock.</p>
<p><b>Energy (efficiency and renewable)</b></p>	<p>Renewable energy.</p> <p>LED lighting.</p>	<p>Is all SSDC lighting LED?</p> <p>Be self-sufficient by generating enough of our own electricity or source it via sustainable means.</p> <p>Generate electricity from dog waste.</p> <p>Solar panels on all SSDC offices and buildings.</p> <p>Review energy tariff for each SSDC building and opt for a fixed tariff which maximises the % of energy from renewable sources.</p>	<p>Support renewable energy schemes.</p>
<p><b>Travel and Transport</b></p>	<p>EV charging points</p> <p>Reduce travel</p> <p>Public transport</p> <p>Cycle paths</p>	<p>Order centrally to reduce travel miles.</p> <p>Travelling to meetings – encourage more people to use Skype if face to face meetings aren't required.</p> <p>Enable more people to work from home on a regular basis.</p> <p>Move to Electric fleet.</p> <p>Buses / fleet to be run on human/food waste.</p> <p>Showers at Petters Way to encourage cycling/walking.</p> <p>Employee Initiatives to encourage walking/cycling to work.</p> <p>Electric pool cars for employees.</p>	<p>Investigate funding/grants to install more EV charging points in the district.</p> <p>What plans are there to improve the public transport system (bus and rail) to encourage people to leave cars at home?</p> <p>Improve promotion of existing cycle / walk routes.</p> <p>Introduce car sharing scheme.</p> <p>Campaign to rail operators to improve services.</p>

## Key issue identified

## What we should do with Council's own operations /estate

## What we should do to enable change across the wider district



### Green Economy

Green business

Work with and encourage local businesses to achieve carbon neutrality .i.e incentives, reduced rates, schemes.  
Review Council investments on the stock market and prioritise investments in companies with green credentials.  
Become cleaner, leaner and greener.

What green businesses are being encouraged via the Innovation Centre – are these being publicised enough?  
Are local businesses embracing more sustainable practices and should these be celebrated?  
Subsidise eco-friendly shops.



### Awareness and Engagement

Digital technology  
Education on litter and  
Education on rewilding private and public spaces  
Environmental awareness events

Encourage more people to use digital services and reduce need for travel to access services that are available online.  
Online voting?  
Work with other interested parties to increase awareness and promotion of environmental issues.  
More engagement with local action groups. i.e XR.  
Encourage colleagues to make more environmentally friendly decisions i.e electric vehicle charging points at SSDC

Are we supporting local environmental charities and organising litter picks and promoting wildlife gardening?  
Environmental Awareness Festival to encourage residents to do things differently and save money.  
More education on how and what to recycle.  
More education on plant based diets to reduce emissions from animal agriculture.  
Engage with public to educate on climate crisis.