

## **Environmental Assessment**

South Somerset District Council has recognised a climate and ecological emergency and undertaken to reduce its carbon footprint and that of the district to net-zero. Decisions that the council makes could have a positive, neutral or negative outcome on achieving this.

A positive outcome would see a decrease in greenhouse gases e.g. CO<sub>2</sub> as a result of the decision whereas a negative outcome would see an overall increase. A neutral outcome would mean that the decision does not involve any sort of implication or that there is no overall change. Similarly, a decision could have an impact that has a positive or negative effect on the ability to adapt to the impacts of climate change that are already locked into our planets climate system.

With respect to the wider environmental emergency, decisions could have similar impacts on the wider environment e.g. air quality, biodiversity, natural resources. These should also be assessed in a similar way to climate impacts.

In all cases be mindful of indirect impacts (either positive or negative) e.g. a policy to move towards teleworking might have a direct positive impact on GHG emissions by reducing commuting but might have an overall less CO<sub>2</sub> reduction impact if people have their heating on higher for longer hours.

Note: This assessment does not negate the need for appropriate permits and licenses to be completed where required e.g. water abstraction licences, discharge consents etc.

### **How to Complete the Assessment**

If you answer “yes” to the questions below, then it is likely that your decision is going to have a positive impact,

If you are answering any of the questions “no” then there are potential negative impacts which will need further consideration and you will need to consider alternatives and/or any mitigation/offsetting of those impacts. Please contact [ssdcenvironment@southsomerset.gov.uk](mailto:ssdcenvironment@southsomerset.gov.uk) if you need assistance in considering alternatives or thinking about how you can mitigate or offset impacts.

Some questions will not be applicable.

The questions are not an exhaustive list, but are meant to promote thinking around the relevant areas to help complete the summary section. There are some blank spaces in which you can add in additional considerations which may be of relevance to your report.

## Assessment questions

1	<b>What sort of impact does this decision have on Greenhouse Gas emissions e.g. CO<sub>2</sub>?</b>	Yes	n/a	No
	Does this reduce use of energy – opening times, equipment, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Does this encourage or allow use of renewable energy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Does this decrease the use of vehicles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Does this decrease business miles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Does this decrease use of fossil fuels	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Does this decision create more opportunity for the use of public transport?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	<b>What impact does this decision have on the ability to adapt to the impacts of climate change e.g. hotter, drier summers / warmer, wetter winters?</b>	Yes	n/a	No
	Does this decrease water use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Does this decision improve flood resilience / reduce flood risk?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Does the decision reduce urban heat island effects or prevent overheating e.g. by increasing shade availability?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	<b>What impact does the decision have on local air quality?</b>	Yes	n/a	No
	Does this decrease emissions of particulates (smoke / dust)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Does the decision promote the use of public transport?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Does this decision reduce vehicle congestion?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	<b>What impact does the decision have on the use of natural resources?</b>	Yes	n/a	No
	Are any discharges to watercourses avoided or adequately filtered to prevent contamination?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Are any structures planned to avoid disruption or restriction of water flow?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Does this minimise water use and/or encourage use of rainwater harvesting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Does this reduce waste and/or increase recycling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Does this decrease or reduce the use of single use plastic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Does this encourage the use of local and sustainable commodities? e.g. food	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	<b>What impact does the decision have on Biodiversity?</b>	Yes	n/a	No

	Does this support pollinator populations e.g. reduce verge cutting, wildflower planting?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Does this provide more opportunity for tree planting?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Are any operations likely to cause disturbance planned to be outside of nesting or breeding seasons?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Does the decision avoid causing habitat fragmentation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Does the decision create the potential for the creation, linking or expansion of habitats?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	<b>Other considerations?</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>No</b>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## FAQ

Q. How do I know if my proposal(s) / decision(s) are likely to have an impact on CO<sub>2</sub>?

A. For many decisions there may be no overall or minimal change, but for others there could be an implication. Areas to consider are whether there is likely to be an increase or decrease in energy consumption for example extending the opening hours of a building or facility could increase its energy consumption due to requiring more heating / lighting, whereas reducing opening hours may reduce the energy consumption. Similarly, where a decision might result in more miles being driven in vehicles either by staff or residents this too might result in an increase in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

Q. Can emission increases be mitigated against or “offset”?

A. The best way is not to cause the emissions in the first instance, but this may not always be possible and as an authority we have to be mindful of service delivery increasing in some areas where this causes a rise in emissions. The Council is investigating whether it can buy 100% green energy; in this case this would negate any issues over an increase in energy consumption causing an increase in CO<sub>2</sub> – although not increased costs. Similarly, the Council is investigating the options with regards to electric vehicles and electric vehicle charging infrastructure. As a last resort the Council is looking at offsetting CO<sub>2</sub> in order to reach its goal of net-zero carbon emissions, but this also carries a financial burden, so the less we have to offset, the better.

Q. I will have to undertake a procurement exercise to support the delivery of this decision, how will I know whether my provider once selected will be able to deliver in a “climate friendly” manner.

A. The Council is developing, Themes, Outcomes & Measures (TOMs) as part of its procurement processes. These will as part of that process look at measures related to delivering the net-zero carbon target, as well as other areas around sustainable procurement and social values. You should still consider the implications of the questions over impacts but reference how you will include this as part of the later procurement exercise in the supplementary questions.

Q. I am constrained by national legislation or another external factor over the nature of the decision that I am asking, what can I do about this?

A. You should note the impacts from the decision but explain the constraints in the supplementary questions.

Q. My decision report already deals with the questions in the main body of the report do I still need to fill this indicator out?

A. Yes. You can reference the relevant paragraphs of the report where this is discussed but please still fill in the relevant sections.

Q. What sorts of things might affect air or water quality?

A. There are many, but they could be simple things such as changing parking arrangements, road closures / diversions, bonfires, smoke free zones or drainage and discharge permissions, some commercial processes or other operations that take or discharge water. Many of these are also considered by other authorities or agencies but as a local authority we also have to make a decision on. As with other areas these matters may already be discussed in the main body of the report. If this is the case, then please still complete the indicators but also make reference to the paragraphs in the report where this can be found.

Q. What is a sustainable commodity?

A. You need to consider where the product and its component parts come from and how they are produced. Are they; organically produced/farmed, farm to fork certificated, ethically sourced/manufactured, local, made from renewable/recycled materials, recyclable themselves, FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) certified, rainforest alliance certified coffee, peat free etc.