



Wells City Council

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Presented By (if different)	Cllr Denise Denis
Subject	Draft Climate Adaptation Plan for Wells
Date of report	26.06.2025
For consideration at	Full City Council
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Background

It is important to note that the draft plan is a conceptual document which offers vision on the topic of Climate Adaption, it is not in any way a decision document. Any projects noted within which require resource, or funding will be required to go through due process of the City Council, with a business case, cost appraisal and be considered through the relevant committee.

The draft plan attached in Appendix A, has been developed alongside the Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA) and Somerset Wildlife Trust (SWT) as a partnership arrangements to support communities across Somerset to adapt to climate change through a series of collaborative events. Taking the following steps, communities are creating and implementing climate adaptation plans, proactively responding to climate threats in their local area whilst simultaneously building community, supporting local wildlife, and increasing wellbeing. This is directly in line with the SRAs own Strategy 2024-34, which holds a specific objective of 'increase the resilience of people, places and the environment to flooding, while adapting to climate change'.

The development of the Plan has been funded by Somerset Rivers Authority SRA, as part of its Adaptations and Associations project. With support from SWT to deliver a formal launch of the plan in line with Eco Week in October 2025, to date, there has been no cost to Wells City Council (WCC) for the production of the plan.

If adopted by WCC, the Council will be awarded £1000 from SWT/SRA to facilitate Act To Adapt in whatever way WCC wishes.

With that said, the plan makes references to the four key themes (running through plans for other Councils/areas also), which are:

1. Improving and Increasing Green Spaces
2. Adapting to flooding
3. Encouraging Community Driven Climate Action
4. Co-ordinating Emergency Plans

Somerset Wildlife Trust is also currently working on Act to Adapt initiatives in:

- Burnham-on-Sea & Highbridge
- Minehead
- The Polden Hills
- Glastonbury - Adopted
- Spaxton
- Frome

Key Considerations for Wells City Council

Priority 1 – Improving and Increasing Green Spaces

There is a specific focus on tree planting within this priority. Some elements are already referenced within other corporate documents such as the Neighbourhood Plan. WCC's responsibility within this area would be considered to be education and encouragement, as well as consideration under local policy for WCC owned land.

Opportunities	Perceived Risks
Duplication of other local policy which reiterates the need to Members of the Public.	Limited ability to plant trees on the land owned by WCC – Right tree, right place.
One view of the open spaces within the City, in terms of tree stock, management and protection.	Duplication of other Council plans, which may cause confusion.
Increased awareness raising within the city of the importance of tree stock management for flooding mitigation.	Surveying and protecting trees is not currently budgeted for within WCC budget, consideration should be given to the role of WCC in committing to this action (page 8)
Identified planting in the right locations offers reduction in flooding risks within the city.	References for working with WCC to scope opportunities and engagement, but no current resource to support this commitment (page 9), therefore unbudgeted for.
Bringing the community together to deliver initiatives will create additional bonds that will see the wider City benefit.	Section 1.2 References to Tor Lane as a specific location for consideration, ahead of community consultation, it would be prudent to reference "Land Owned/Managed by WCC/SC following appropriate assessment". Equally, development of this space hasn't been costed to date.
Supporting and hosting events from the most appropriate building of the Councils estate can aid wider understanding of Council services and maximise community use.	Section 1.3 Reference to support from WCC associated with community events, planning and organising. At present, WCC has no resource to support this action.
Wells in Bloom (Page 17) references to change in the programme of delivery, are already being delivered against.	

Priority 2 – Reducing Flooding Risks

WCC responsibility or delivery within this priority is considered to be addressing issues on owned land and community engagement and education alongside other suppliers.

WCC is listed as a delivery body under section 2.3, however, in all instances of this priority reference, WCC could only look to apply solutions to their own estate, or communicate and encourage residents.

Opportunities	Perceived Risks
Lobbying to amend design guides in the context of Planning Advisory Committee could be achieved without cost.	Costs for installations within our estate are currently unbudgeted for.

Priority 3 – Encouraging Community – Driven Climate Action

Partnership working across agencies to deliver meaningful change within the city. Whilst WCC is referenced within this priority, Wells Environment Network (WEN) would likely be heavily utilised to deliver the objectives.

Opportunities	Perceived Risks
Greater use and exposure of Wells supporting agencies such as WEN.	This objective needs to be cross referenced to WCC local policy of volunteering to ensure compliance.
Section 3.4 (page 43) makes specific reference to making Climate Adaptation a standing item. This has already been delivered through amendments to reporting headlines.	

Priority 4 – Co-Ordinating Emergency Plans

Specifically, within this section, WCC would be seen to take a lead role in the event of an emergency, something which is being managed through the creation of a Community Resilience Plan, and the Councils own Business Continuity Planning, which is scheduled to be presented to Council in July 2025.

Opportunities	Perceived Risks
Community Resilience plan in draft to be provided to next Full City Council.	Creation of aids, workshops and information packs not currently budgeted for.

Public Engagement

As previously referenced to Full City Council, community engagement was completed in partnership with Wells Environment Network, which saw 114 responses, equating to approximately 1% of the electorate of Wells.

It is not consider prudent to consult again, given the actions already undertaken and the limited feedback received.

Recommendations

Council is asked to:

1. Note the draft Climate Adaptation Plan and that any provision from Council will be sought for any specific projects.
2. Delegate authority to the Cllr Denise Denis to make any minor formatting or presentation changes alongside colleagues of Wells Environment Network (WEN).
3. Note the previously delivered public consultation.
4. Assuming item 1 is noted, agree to ringfence the noted funding of £1,000 for the purpose of this plans delivery and publication.

Appendices:

- Appendix A: Climate Adaptation Plan - Draft