

Achievements and Delivery List - SSDC's Environment Strategy (2019-21)

Date	Achievement / Delivery	Summary of achievement / Progress
May 2019	Recognition of a climate emergency	SSDC formally recognised a climate and ecological emergency in May 2019.
Summer 2019	Environment team formed	Environment team formed consisting of: Environment Lead Specialist, Environment and Recreation Manager; Living Environment Case Officer and Environmental Communications Lead. <i>Team profiles can be found on the Environment Website: www.southsomersetenvironment.co.uk</i>
Summer 2019	SSDC's carbon footprint benchmarked	SSDC's carbon footprint was calculated for the first time. The baseline calculation was used to help produce reduction targets to 2030. A 10% year on year reduction will be required to achieve Net Zero by 2030. Our baseline year was 2018-19, and net emissions were 1650.42 tonnes CO2 equivalent (tCO2e), which equates to 4.68 tonnes CO2e per FTE staff member.
July 2019	Engagement and consultation activities to develop an Environment Strategy	Three engagement activities were undertaken aimed at helping to identify key priorities for the Environment Strategy. Working with a range of stakeholders, SSDC held a school workshop, three stakeholder workshops with local interest groups and local representatives from regional and national organisations, as well as email engagement with Parish, Town and District Councillors and SSDC staff.
September 2019	Engagement Report for Draft Environment Strategy published	A stakeholder workshop was conducted to review the draft Environment Strategy and share views; a number of outcomes came out from the engagement activities, which were compiled into an Engagement Outcomes report.
October 2019	Environment Strategy - Formally adopted	The South Somerset Environment Strategy was formally adopted and approved by SSDC's Councillors in October 2019.
November 2019	Environment Community of Practice (CoP)	The Environment CoP was set up to facilitate the roll out of the Environment Strategy. This includes an internal network of officer champions representing SSDC's Service Areas.
November 2019	Environment Strategy Delivery Plan	The Environment Strategy Delivery Plan was created and will be used as the delivery plan for the Environment CoP.

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December 2019	Somerset's Climate Emergency Framework	The Somerset Climate Emergency Framework was agreed countywide by Somerset's five councils, who agreed that collaborative action needs to be taken with the aim of producing a detailed Climate Emergency Strategy county-wide.
December 2019	Somerset Pollinator Action Plan	SSDC supported the delivery of a county-wide pollinator action plan.
Winter 2019 / 2020	The Great Parish Tree Giveaway	The Great Parish Tree Giveaway event was set up. This provided free trees to parishes and groups giving them a way to carry out active improvements to their areas. Tree packs were given to local Parish Councils in South Somerset; 61 parishes requested tree packs, with 3,100 trees provided.
Winter 2019/ 2020	Tree planting across the SSDC estate	Further tree planting was completed across the SSDC estate including at Yeovil Recreation Centre (YRC), Ham Hill, Ninesprings and Chard Reservoir. There were 2,700 trees planted at YRC with the help of Cambian College, Yeovil. A further 1,300 trees were planted at locations including Ham Hill, Ninesprings and Chard reservoir.
February 2020	Environment Team - Recruitment to new posts	Built Environment Case Officer recruited; project themes include: electric vehicles (EV), energy reduction, a switch to green energy, and water and recycling amongst a range of other things. The role sits alongside the Living Environment Case Officer and Communications Case Officer to deliver against the Environment Strategy Delivery Plan.
February 2020	Parish Environment Champion (PEC) network formally set up	The PEC network was set up and Parish Environment Champions from the local Parish Councils were recruited. At this stage, Environment Champions had been nominated in 26 parishes from across the District. Communication materials were developed to encourage further involvement.
March 2020	Waste and Recycling Review – SSDC estate	A waste and recycling review was compiled to collate information about the various recycling activity taking place across SSDC's estate. Discussions are taking place with SWP and county partners to establish the best procurement options for recycling contracts across the authorities.
March 2020	EV Charging Points – installation of three rapid EV charging points	Funded by Highways England and installed in Ilminster, Ilchester and Wincanton. Following this, a project team was set up to progress the business case for a wider network of chargers across SSDC's car parks. A draft specification for an <i>EV Network Development</i> partner was finalised.

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March 2020	Review of the Great Parish Tree Giveaway	The first Great Parish Tree Giveaway was a success and feedback was positive. Potential new planting sites were identified for Winter 2020/21, as well as grant income opportunities. SSDC Officers held a meeting with an advisor from the Woodland Trust to get advice on larger scale plantings and funding opportunities to help plan for the next instalment of the Tree Giveaway.
March 2020	Local Nature Partnership launched	SSDC officers attended the launch of the Local Nature Partnership and provided support on the <i>Nature Recovery Network</i> mapping work. The emerging maps will be essential to support our parishes in targeted biodiversity enhancement works that they can deliver in their area.
April 2020	School Engagement	Undertook dialogue with schools, which showed that the best way to support them is through providing materials and training to support ongoing activities that can lead to eco-schools status. Proposed creating a School's Pack to complement the existing materials available to our schools.
April 2020	Parish Environment Champions – Launch event	Numbers have grown to 54 Environment Champions representing our parishes. The first forum took place on Wednesday 22nd April 2020 - <i>World Earth Day</i> . The launch event aimed to start the exchange of materials and support with our communities, including examples of best practice.
May 2020	Development of a Procurement Strategy – Social Value	Contract signed with Social Value Portal (SVP) for developing a procurement strategy that attaches social value to carbon reduction, using the National Scheme for assessing Themes, Outputs and Measures (TOMs). For example, SVPs will be applied to Leisure Centre Operator Procurement.
May 2020	Carbon calculator (2019/20)	The authority's carbon footprint was calculated for the first time since it was benchmarked in 2018/19. A +10% reduction was recorded, which showed tangible improvements had been made. The 2019-20 total was 1471.98 tonnes CO ₂ e, equating to 3.94 tonnes per FTE staff member (compared to 1650.42 tCO ₂ e and 4.68 tCO ₂ e per FTE staff member in 2018/19).
June 2020	Energy Audit of SSDC's Properties	To enable SSDC to make informed decisions about energy reduction across our estate, we appointed Engie Consultants to carry out a detailed energy audit of our top 10 energy use sites. Discussions were then held with Engie and our property team to consider next steps and initial business cases.

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June 2020	Tree planting review – Year 1 (2019/20)	Tree planting across the district exceeded our 1000 per year target with SSDC planting approximately 4,000 trees on our own estate, and a further 3,000 planted by parishes as part of the Great Parish Tree Giveaway. Grant funding applications were submitted for the winter 2020/21 planting season including four applications to the Urban Tree Challenge totalling 900 trees (<i>Martock, Yeovil Arnewood Gardens, and Chard Redstart Park and Mitchell Gardens</i>), as well as confirmation of a £7,000 grant for planting at Yeovil Country Park in partnership with Friends of the Country Park.
July 2020	EV Charging – Partnership agreed with DELETTI	A partnership was formed with the Devon Low Carbon Energy & Transport Technology Innovator (DELETTI) project to deliver a network of EV charging points across the district in SSDC car parks and estate. Funding was approved by SSDC’s District Executive in July 2020.
July 2020	Environmental newsletter “Get SuSSed” – First Issue	Our environment e-newsletter “Get SuSSed” was issued for the first time; this was a key part of the communications plan for the Environment Strategy. The monthly newsletter provides details on SSDC projects, best practice case studies both locally and nationally and public consultation events. The newsletter will be issued to Parish Environment Champions, Parish Clerks, internally to SSDC staff, and all Members for information.
August 2020	Parish Environment Champion network - Survey	As part of our engagement with our Parish Environment Champion network, we issued a survey to gauge feedback. We received a great response and the results were used to steer the guidance and support we provide to the network.
August 2020	Battery Energy Storage Site (BESS) – Fully Energised	30MW Battery Energy Storage (BESS) facility fully energised.
September 2020	E-Scooter Trial	We were successful in our application to take part in a Department for Transport (DfT) trial allowing the use of e-scooters in our community. Currently e-scooters are not widely permitted and this is a national trial to assess whether they are a useful mode of low carbon transport. The trial will allow SSDC to research and develop a broad portfolio of active and electric travel options as we seek to provide alternative non fossil fuel modes of transport.

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October 2020	EV Charging Strategy – County wide	The county-wide Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Strategy was published by Somerset County Council. The report was a collaborative effort with SSDC feeding into the drafting of the report via a series of workshops. The EV Strategy describes how the use of conventional fuelled vehicles must transition to ‘Zero Emission’ Electric vehicles.
October 2020	Energy Audit Report – Final version received from Engie	In order to continually drive down our carbon emissions we will need to find ways to cut our energy use. We received the final Energy Audit report from Engie on some of our buildings in October 2020.
October 2020	Parish Environment Champion network - Update	The Parish Environment Champion network now includes representatives from 50 parish councils. The majority of champions are nominated on a parish basis, but some are independent of parishes. The team (after issuing a GDPR survey) have started linking up champions to help projects on the ground. A series of networking events will be set up, including talks by groups such as Reimagining the Levels to offer knowledge sharing opportunities.
October 2020	E-Scooter Trial – First Phase Launched	The E-Scooter trial was launched in Yeovil in October 2020; in the first ten days, approximately 900 people signed up and made 925 journeys using a small fleet of e-scooters. Further data from December 2020 shows that the E-Scooter trial has been a success, with users having taken approximately 8,500 journeys across Yeovil.
November 2020	The Somerset Climate Emergency Strategy	The Somerset Climate Emergency Strategy was formally adopted and approved by SSDC’s Councillors in November 2020.
November 2020	Great Parish Tree Giveaway 2020/21	The Great Parish Tree Giveaway was held again following a successful first year. 15 parishes took part and approximately 800 trees were planted. A further 2,225 trees were handed out to community groups, local farmers and our own Environment Services team for a range of projects, including woodland planting in Ilminster and for hedgerow enhancement across the district.
December 2020	Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme	A successful application was made for a grant under the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS). We submitted a bid in partnership with Engie for energy improvement measures across our own estate. We were successful in securing approximately £4 million in grant funding.

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Winter 2020/2021	Partnership working – Local Nature Partnership	Worked on the <i>Nature Recovery Network</i> and tree planting opportunities alongside partner organisations. Engagement with a wide range of partners with the aim of developing a more resilient district against the impacts of climate change and species decline. Organisations and groups include <i>Re-imagining the Levels</i> , <i>Somerset Wildlife Trust</i> , <i>the Local Nature Partnership</i> , <i>Somerset County Council</i> and the <i>Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty</i> teams. Detailed maps to be produced and shared to identify high quality biodiverse areas of nature conservation priority, as well as spaces that could provide important links or extensions, thus creating the desired networks for nature.
Winter 2020/2021	Partnership working – Energy Efficiency	SSDC engaged with partners around the built environment, including the Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE), to look at energy efficiency measures and addressing fuel poverty across the district.
January 2021	Local Authority Delivery (LAD) – Green Homes Grant	As part of our work to support our community to become more carbon neutral, we submitted an application to the Local Authority Delivery Green Homes Grant. We were awarded a grant of £803K to deliver retrofit insulation to hard to treat park homes across the district.
February 2021	SSDC Community Grants Scheme – Environmental Projects	Following targeted communications, the South Somerset Community Grants scheme saw an increase in applications across a range of environmental themes including support for land purchases where it is of nature conservation importance, supporting work on threatened species, as well as green energy. In 2020/21, approximately £30,000 was awarded to help towards the realisation of 7 local community-led environment projects (total cost of projects £266,478).
February 2021	Grant Application – Green Recovery Fund	SSDC officers led on the coordination and submission of a grant application to the Green Recovery Fund in partnership with the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG). The project sought £250,000 to install nature based solutions e.g. tree planting, to mitigate flooding and nutrient run off from higher ground in various areas of the district.
March 2021	E-Scooter trial – Second Phase - Extended to Crewkerne and Chard	Data showed that the e-Scooter trial had been a success. The scheme was extended to Crewkerne and Chard in March 2020, with initial data showing the scooters were used for more than 25,000 minutes, or more than 18 full days during the first month.
March 2021	Energy Supply - Switch SSDC to a Renewable Energy supplier	Research was undertaken on how to switch our energy contract to a renewable supplier (to help meet our carbon reduction target and move away from gas use). A Scrutiny Task and Finish group was set up to assess the available options and make recommendations.

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April 2021	EV Charging project with DELETTI – Main Contractor appointed	Work continued on the DELETTI EV Charging Network project to deliver 27 charging sites for EVs across the district. Work was delayed due to Covid-19 but the main contractor was appointed in Spring 2021 (Scottish Power). Details of the installation programme and the contract and concession agreements are to be finalised in Autumn 2021, with project completion expected by March 2022.
April 2021	Co-Cars survey – Community-led Electric Car Club	In association with Co-Cars, an online survey was completed to gauge interest on establishing a community-led electric car-share scheme for South Somerset. The results showed there is a desire for such a scheme but as it would require on-street charging this would need support from SCC's Highways team. The results were shared with SCC but there is no programme to deliver this at present. Data was also gathered on the interest in an e-Bike share scheme, which has prompted a county-wide feasibility study into an e-Bike Strategy being drafted by SCC.
April 2021	Spring Resource Pack – Guidance for Parish Council	A ' <i>Spring Resource</i> ' pack was produced, providing the basic principles of ecological management and guidance on how to start surveying and monitoring habitats and species. The pack was issued to all Parish Clerks and Environmental Champions across the district, as well as shared within 'Get SuSSed' and other social media channels.
April 2021	Tree Planting – Year 2 (2020/21)	A total of 2,300 trees have been planted on SSDC land with a further 3,300 enabled on community land. This brings the total since the adoption of the Environment Strategy (2019) to 7,266 on SSDC land and 6,360 community plantings. Off-site projects included 570 trees planted at Wyndham Hill in Yeovil (funded by the Postcode Local Trust and delivered in partnership with the Friends of Yeovil Country Park), as well as 900 trees planted across three <i>Urban Tree Challenge</i> sites in Martock and Chard, following successful applications for funding.
Spring 2021	Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme – Project Phase	Detailed design undertaken to look at decarbonisation opportunities across the estate, in line with the Energy Audit report. Work was scheduled for Summer 2021 with a completion date of September 2021. Works include solar PV installation, decarbonising heating equipment to ground or air source heat pumps, LED lighting and some insulation work.
May 2021	EV Charging Strategy – Formally adopted by SSDC	The Somerset EV Charging Strategy was formally adopted and approved by SSDC's Councillors in May 2021. Commitments include cutting SSDC's fleet emissions and delivering EV charging infrastructure across the district.

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May 2021	Parish Environmental Champions Network – Community Engagement / Events	The team continued to engage with the growing network of Parish Environment Champions, which has grown to approximately 70. Online networking events were successfully run covering the topics of Nature Recovery, Wildflower planting, Community Energy, and <i>Recycle More</i> with Somerset Waste Partnership. The team have developed working relationships with the Champions to provide bespoke support across the district, i.e. focusing on waterway management or EV charging points.
June 2021	Recruitment to new posts – Environment Team	Climate Change Resilience Case Officer recruited, which has brought new capacity to the team. The role sits alongside the Living Environment Officer, Built Environment Officer and Communications Officer to deliver against the plan.
June 2021	Environment e-newsletter “Get SuSSed” – circulation expanded	The monthly e-newsletter “Get SuSSed” has grown and evolved as a publication and feedback remains positive. The team promoted ‘Get SuSSed’ to the wider community and local groups, which included a press release, PR and social media posts, as well as email invitations to all Parish Clerks. Circulation has subsequently increased to just under 1,000.
Summer 2021	Environmental communications plan – Progress update	The communications plan continued to deliver a range of environmental messages on a weekly, seasonal and thematic basis. This included social media posts and press releases across a range of subjects including the e-scooter roll out and usage data, energy switch campaigns, the Solar Streets project, tree planting opportunities and the SCC Climate Emergency Carbon Reduction Grants.
July 2021	REGO Energy Supply - Switch SSDC to a Renewable Energy supplier	The Scrutiny Task and Finish Group identified an easy win within our existing energy contract allowing us to switch the electricity supply to the suppliers Renewable Energy Guarantees of Origin (REGO) scheme via EDF. The EDF tariff is only from energy derived from wind, solar and biomass, which are all renewable energy sources. The Task and Finish group are still looking at the gas supply, which is still sourced from non-renewable supplies.
July 2021	South Somerset Environment Website Launched	The new South Somerset Environment website launched. This is an important communication tool, providing information on what we're doing to deliver the Environment Strategy, as well as information about grants, community projects, energy, waste and recycling schemes etc. There is also a forum for our community to engage on environmental topics.
July 2021	Great Green Directory launched	The Great Green Directory was launched and is held online on the South Somerset Environment website. This showcases local eco-businesses and it will be updated as new opportunities emerge.

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July 2021	Yeovil Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan	This is a 10-year plan for developing a cycle and walking network in the Yeovil area. SSDC will now look to progress a LCWIP for Chard and Wincanton, funding dependent.
August 2021	Carbon calculator - Second issue (2020/21)	The authority's carbon footprint was calculated for the second time since it was benchmarked in 2018/19. A +6% reduction was recorded, which was below the +10% year on year target. The 2020-21 total was 1366.14 tonnes CO ₂ e, equating to 3.56 tonnes per FTE staff member (compared to 1650.42 tCO ₂ e and 4.68 tCO ₂ e per FTE staff member in 2018/19). The pandemic saw most staff working from home; which led to a reduction in carbon emissions. However, there was an increase in energy use at our crematorium site and Lufton Depot, where work teams were required to travel separately increasing travel and fuel usage. It is expected that emissions reductions will be realised next year by continuing to use virtual meetings, as well as the energy efficiency improvements being installed via the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme Funded project.
August 2021	Yeovil Recreation Centre – Case study on environmental improvements	Case study produced to highlight the sustainable land management practices at Yeovil Recreation Centre. Key highlights include planting over 2,500 trees, wildflower planting on marginal areas of the site, no-mow areas on amenity grass, the creation of a bug hotel, as well as the use of natural seaweed fertiliser instead of conventional chemical fertilisers. The aim is to demonstrate that recreational facilities can go hand in hand with nature conservation. The case study was shared with Parish Council's, Environment Champions and across our communication channels.
August 2021	Research on creating a Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)	Research undertaken on creating a Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), in line with other Local Authorities. This would include creating a checklist as part of the planning validation process to ensure climate impacts are considered on new developments. Initial meetings were undertaken with the planning team (including on revisions to the Local Plan); however, this work has been put on hold at this stage.
September 2021	No Mow 'Conservation Verge' Trials	The No Mow 'Conservation verge' trials were successfully completed. The 15 selected sites (Ilminster (6), Castle Cary/Ansford (4), Cucklington (1) and Milborne Port (4)) saw observational increases in invertebrate numbers and flowering species in all no mow areas. The intention is to increase participation in 2022 alongside targeted communications. Generally, feedback has been good, and Cllr Sarah Dyke, Portfolio Holder for Environment spoke at a CPRE/ PlantLife seminar in November 2021 to share the positive outcomes.

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September 2021	SSDC Open Spaces Strategy	Officers are drafting the Open Spaces Strategy, which will ensure key elements like climate change and nature recovery are considered in our future management of spaces. The strategy was delayed due to officer availability at the beginning of 2021, as well as awaiting data on tree canopy cover and play facilities. Consultation on the draft strategy is planned for 2022.
September 2021	Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme – Project Update	The deadline for the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme project was extended to the end of March 2022. SSDC secured £4 million to decarbonise heating and provide additional energy savings measures across its own estate. Supply chain issues have caused delays and the detailed design work has taken longer than was anticipated. Works are planned to start in Autumn/ Winter 2021. This project will have a large impact on reducing our carbon emissions and energy costs.
September 2021	Local Authority Delivery – LAD2 Energy Project	Partnership with SW Energy Hub, who have secured £1.2 million to improve energy efficiency in homes across South Somerset. EON and Happy Energy have been appointed to provide this work. This fund also allocated money to support capacity building and we are currently awaiting the outcome of an application to appoint county-wide officers who can support these projects.
September 2021	Somerset e-Bike Strategy – Scope	Collaborated with SCC to set out the scope of works for the countywide e-Bike Strategy. The e-Bike Strategy will sit under the countywide EV Strategy, which was adopted by SSDC in May 2021.
October 2021	Parish Wildflower Giveaway	We will run a Wildflower Giveaway for local Parishes to complement the No Mow Trials. Guidance will be provided on how grasslands can be improved and our parishes and Environment Champions will be invited to attend short practical workshops on ground preparation. A communications pack will also be shared to help parishes communicate what is happening and why. Floral survey training will also be offered to each group so they can map the progress of their spaces.
October 2021	Sustainable Warmth Fund – County-wide Consortium	SSDC are part of a consortium bid to the Government’s Sustainable Warmth Fund. This is being led by Sedgemoor District Council, with all districts part of the consortium. If successful, this will provide over £2million across the County for similar improvements to the LAD2 funding. SSDC are also in talks with partners with a view to submitting a bid to the <i>Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund</i> .
October 2021	E-Scooter Trials – Extended to March 2022	The DfT e-scooter trials were extended to March 2022 to capture further user data. The latest data shows 22,000 rides over a distance of more than 78,000 km with an average ride of 3.51 km. The SSDC trials are important as they are showing rural data; evidence suggests that the scooters are being used for a higher average distance than has been shown elsewhere.

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October 2021	Tree Canopy Strategy – SCC led	SCC drafting a <i>Tree Canopy Strategy</i> at a county level with targets for canopy cover to be increased across the district. SSDC Officers providing input into this strategy.
October 2021	Woodland Creation Offer – Planting at Ham Hill	Application for funding to plant 6,500 trees across 5.82 ha of land at Ham Hill. This will link two areas of woodland currently isolated in Witcombe Valley.
October 2021	Green Business Survey – Addressing the Climate Emergency	In collaboration with the Economic Development team, we have issued a Business Environment Survey to understand what our business community are in respect of their response to the climate and ecological emergency. Our business sector plays a critical part in our ambition to achieve a significant reduction in emissions across the geography of South Somerset.
October 2021	Thermal Imaging and Insulation Project - Retrofit	Purchased two thermal imaging cameras for communities to use (on a loan basis) to help homeowners to identify where insulation and draught proofing is required. This is being launched in partnership with the Retrofit Bruton and Cary project and the trial will run over Winter 2021/22.
November 2021	Carbon Literacy Training	Carbon literacy is the <i>‘awareness of the carbon costs and impacts of everyday activities and the ability and motivation to reduce emissions, on an individual, community and organisational basis.’</i> The Centre for Alternative Technology (CAT) will deliver training to staff from all SSDC service areas; cascade training will be undertaken over Winter 2021/22 to embed throughout the organisation.
November 2021	Treescaping Fund – Partnership with SCC	Successful Treescaping funding application (£180,000). District tree officers were involved, and the <i>funding</i> will be available across the county. This will include production of a Somerset Tree Strategy.
Winter 2021	Community Environment Toolkit	Production of a Community Environment Toolkit focusing on nature conservation, including local authorities’ obligations under the Environment Act to protect and enhance nature. This will provide sign posting, support and local case studies on best practice.
Winter 2021	Environment Strategy – Action Plan Review 2022-23	The current Environment Strategy was adopted in October 2019 and committed to a review after two years. We have achieved numerous projects including managing our carbon footprint, securing funds for decarbonisation, exceeding our tree planting targets and progressing a community champions scheme. Our review will be completed over Winter 2021/22 and the updated action plan for 2022-23 will be published in Spring 2022.