

Scrutiny for Policies and Place Committee

Tuesday 22 May 2018

10.00 am Luttrell Room - County Hall,
Taunton



To: The Members of the Scrutiny for Policies and Place Committee

Cllr T Lock (Chairman), Cllr M Lewis (Vice-Chair), Cllr P Ham, Cllr T Napper, Cllr A Wedderkopp, Cllr B Filmer, Cllr John Hunt, Cllr J Thorne and Cllr G Noel

All Somerset County Council Members are invited to attend meetings of the Cabinet and Scrutiny Committees.

Issued By Julian Gale, Strategic Manager - Governance and Risk - 11 May 2018

For further information about the meeting, please contact Lindsey Tawse on 01823 355059, ltawse@somerset.gov.uk or Jamie Jackson on 01823 359040, jajackson@somerset.gov.uk

Guidance about procedures at the meeting follows the printed agenda.

This meeting will be open to the public and press, subject to the passing of any resolution under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972.

This agenda and the attached reports and background papers are available on request prior to the meeting in large print, Braille, audio tape & disc and can be translated into different languages. They can also be accessed via the council's website on www.somerset.gov.uk/agendasandpapers



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AGENDA

Item Scrutiny for Policies and Place Committee - 10.00 am Tuesday 22 May 2018

****Public Guidance notes contained in agenda annexe****

1 **Apologies for absence**

2 **Declarations of Interest**

Details of all Members' interests in District, Town and Parish Councils will be displayed in the meeting room. The Statutory Register of Member's Interests can be inspected via the Community Governance team.

3 **Minutes from the previous meeting held on 24 April 2018** (Pages 7 - 12)

The Committee is asked to confirm the minutes are accurate.

4 **Public Question Time**

The Chairman will allow members of the public to ask a question or make a statement about any matter on the agenda for this meeting. **These questions may be taken during the meeting, when the relevant agenda item is considered, at the Chairman's discretion.**

5 **SCC Draft Business Plan** (Pages 13 - 32)

To receive the report.

6 **Passenger Transport Strategy** (Pages 33 - 74)

To receive the report.

7 **Highways Maintenance Contract** (Pages 75 - 96)

To receive the presentation.

8 **Parking Services Update** (Pages 97 - 108)

To receive the report.

9 **Connecting Devon & Somerset Broadband Programme Update** (Pages 109 - 116)

To receive the report.

10 **Scrutiny for Policies and Place Committee Work Programme** (Pages 117 - 128)

To receive an update from the Governance Manager, Scrutiny and discuss any items for the work programme. To assist the discussion, attached are:

- The Committee's work programme
- The Cabinet's forward plan

Item Scrutiny for Policies and Place Committee - 10.00 am Tuesday 22 May 2018

11 **Any other urgent items of business**

The Chairman may raise any items of urgent business.

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Agenda Annexe

Guidance notes for the meeting

1. Inspection of Papers

Any person wishing to inspect Minutes, reports, or the background papers for any item on the Agenda should contact the Committee Administrator for the meeting – Lindsey Tawse on Tel: (01823) 355059 or 357628 or Email: ltawse@somerset.gov.uk They can also be accessed via the council's website on www.somerset.gov.uk/agendasandpapers

2. Members' Code of Conduct requirements

When considering the declaration of interests and their actions as a councillor, Members are reminded of the requirements of the Members' Code of Conduct and the underpinning Principles of Public Life: Honesty; Integrity; Selflessness; Objectivity; Accountability; Openness; Leadership. The Code of Conduct can be viewed at: <http://www.somerset.gov.uk/organisation/key-documents/the-councils-constitution/>

3. Minutes of the Meeting

Details of the issues discussed and recommendations made at the meeting will be set out in the Minutes, which the Committee will be asked to approve as a correct record at its next meeting.

4. Public Question Time

If you wish to speak, please tell Lindsey Tawse the Committee's Administrator - by 12 noon the (working) day before the meeting.

At the Chairman's invitation you may ask questions and/or make statements or comments about any matter on the Committee's agenda – providing you have given the required notice. You may also present a petition on any matter within the Committee's remit. The length of public question time will be no more than 30 minutes in total.

A slot for Public Question Time is set aside near the beginning of the meeting, after the minutes of the previous meeting have been signed. However, questions or statements about any matter on the Agenda for this meeting may be taken at the time when each matter is considered.

You must direct your questions and comments through the Chairman. You may not take direct part in the debate. The Chairman will decide when public participation is to finish.

If there are many people present at the meeting for one particular item, the Chairman may adjourn the meeting to allow views to be expressed more freely. If an item on the Agenda is contentious, with a large number of people attending the meeting, a representative should be nominated to present the views of a group.

An issue will not be deferred just because you cannot be present for the meeting. Remember that the amount of time you speak will be restricted, normally to two minutes only.

5. Exclusion of Press & Public

If when considering an item on the Agenda, the Committee may consider it appropriate to pass a resolution under Section 100A (4) Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 that the press and public be excluded from the meeting on the basis that if they were present during the business to be transacted there would be a likelihood of disclosure of exempt information, as defined under the terms of the Act.

6. Committee Rooms & Council Chamber and hearing aid users

To assist hearing aid users the following Committee meeting rooms have infra-red audio transmission systems (Luttrell room, Wyndham room, Hobhouse room). To use this facility we need to provide a small personal receiver that will work with a hearing aid set to the T position. Please request a personal receiver from the Committee's Administrator and return it at the end of the meeting.

7. Recording of meetings

The Council supports the principles of openness and transparency. It allows filming, recording and taking photographs at its meetings that are open to the public - providing this is done in a non-disruptive manner. Members of the public may use Facebook and Twitter or other forms of social media to report on proceedings and a designated area will be provided for anyone wishing to film part or all of the proceedings. No filming or recording may take place when the press and public are excluded for that part of the meeting. As a matter of courtesy to the public, anyone wishing to film or record proceedings is asked to provide reasonable notice to the Committee Administrator so that the relevant Chairman can inform those present at the start of the meeting.

We would ask that, as far as possible, members of the public aren't filmed unless they are playing an active role such as speaking within a meeting and there may be occasions when speaking members of the public request not to be filmed.

The Council will be undertaking audio recording of some of its meetings in County Hall as part of its investigation into a business case for the recording and potential webcasting of meetings in the future.

A copy of the Council's Recording of Meetings Protocol should be on display at the meeting for inspection, alternatively contact the Committee Administrator for the meeting in advance.

SCRUTINY FOR POLICIES AND PLACE COMMITTEE

Minutes of a Meeting of the Scrutiny for Policies and Place Committee held in the Luttrell Room - County Hall, Taunton, on Tuesday 24 April 2018 at 10.00 am

Present: Cllr T Lock (Chairman), Cllr M Lewis (Vice-Chair), Cllr T Napper, Cllr A Wedderkopp, Cllr B Filmer, Cllr John Hunt, Cllr J Thorne and Cllr G Noel

Other Members present: Cllr C Aparicio Paul, Cllr S Coles, Cllr H Davies, Cllr A Groskop, Cllr D Hall, Cllr L Leyshon, Cllr J Lock, Cllr T Munt, Cllr L Redman and Cllr J Woodman

Apologies for absence: Cllr P Ham

78 Declarations of Interest - Agenda Item 2

There were no declarations of interest.

79 Minutes from the previous meeting held on 06 March 2018 - Agenda Item 3

The minutes of the meeting on 06 March 2018 were accepted as being accurate by the Committee.

80 Public Question Time - Agenda Item 4

There were 3 Public Questions with regard to Item 6.

Trevor Tuck, Vice- Chairman, Sparkford Parish Council

Sparkford Parish Council has concerns over the design of the Hazelgrove Junction and associated slip roads for the east and west bound carriageways of the A303, and the raising of the A303 on an embankment through Hazelgrove Park to enable an under pass to be built to access and egress the east bound carriageway of the A303.

The design and layout of the Hazelgrove Junction is crucial to make access and egress from the A303 easily accessible and not protracted. At present, we have speeding traffic through the High Street, especially when the A303 is congested, to gain access to the east bound carriageway via the A359 slip road at Sparkford Sawmills rather than negotiating a very congested Hazelgrove round-a-bout.

We wish to ensure the long term future of Sparkford Services who employ over 100 staff between the Petrol Station and the restaurant. The Petrol station also provides a Spar shop which is the only shop in the village of Sparkford.

We also have concerns over noise levels if the A303 is constructed on an embankment as there is very little natural screening to the south of the proposed embankment.

Following a joint letter sent by West Camel, Queen Camel and Sparkford

Parish Councils to Highways England we wish to be given the opportunity of viewing and commenting on the improvement scheme before the development consent order (DCO) is submitted.

John Brendon, Chairman, Queen Camel PC

General support for A303 dualling and the efforts by SCC to make sure there is sound design and implementation of this section of the improvement with points of emphasis on:

1. Sharing SCC's concerns on junctions
2. Share West Camel's concerns regarding risk of more traffic, but other parishes must not lose benefits
3. Consider retaining a parallel old A303 local road to help local and NMU traffic
4. Need for a very rigorous traffic management measures during construction

Need for open dialogue in remaining stages of planning so that local issues are mitigated and opportunities maximised in the DCO.

Barry Gadsen

- 1) Will SCC support the proposal of West Camel Parish Council for a local roadrunning alongside the proposed A303 as outlined in the WCPC A303consultation response and support us to ensure that junction design doesnot encourage the fast moving through-traffic to use unclassified roadsthrough West Camel village, as per the current proposal.
- 2) The document from Mike O'Dowd Jones is comprehensive, but surely somewhere near the top of the SCC's concern list should be to consider thefuture impact on local roads and communities of the upgrade no matter how many junctions are provided at the start.

The members of the public received a brief verbal response from the Strategic Commissioning Manager – Highways and Transport and will receive a written response.

81 Local Transport Plan (LTP) Implementation Plan - Agenda Item 5

The Committee received a report outlining the draft Local Transport Plan (LTP) Implementation Plan 2018/19. Statutory requirements for transport plans require a long-term Local Transport Plan Strategy complemented by shorter term LTP Implementation plans which set out how funds will be used to implement schemes on the ground.

In March 2011, Somerset County Council (SCC) adopted its current LTP covering the period from 2011 to 2026. The Committee was asked for their views on the draft LTP Implementation Plan 2018/19 prior to it being taken to Cabinet in May. The document is a statutory requirement of the LTP process

and replaces the current plan that covered until the end of 2017. The plan is short term (2 years), to allow a review of the longer-term LTP Strategy during its implementation period.

The Implementation plan includes an update on progress since 2013, delivery against key priorities and gives an update on Major Schemes. The document also looks at how the Council might make the best of the opportunities currently available, what we plan to deliver in the near future, and at the challenges and risks involved. It was highlighted to members that £1.5m has been allocated to Small Improvement Schemes.

Full consultation was undertaken for the LTP strategy when it was developed and it is intended that further consultation will be undertaken next year as part of the planned refresh of the long-term LTP Strategy.

Committee Members expressed concern over the lack of funds over the lack of funds available for the central Somerset areas, particularly Glastonbury, Street & Frome. Members reported transport problems and were concerned that these areas were not benefitting from the infrastructure mitigation provided through the Hinkley Point C project. Members were reassured that central Somerset is a key area for SCC to bid for additional government funding and that all opportunities will be explored. Routes in those areas will be improved should funding arise but funding mechanisms recently have favoured larger urban areas. The Small Improvement Scheme will also provide opportunities and conversations are on-going with developers around Section 106 agreements supporting local road networks. If there is a strong case that Hinkley Point C has had a significant impact in an area, there is a route for making a case to channel funds into mitigating those problems.

There was a lengthy discussion about potholes and it was clarified that there is no intention to change the current intervention methods used. However, if a number of defects emerge the route will be looked at carefully and alternative treatments considered in order to reduce repeat problems. Members were encouraged to report any pothole defects so that these can be followed up with the contractor.

Members questioned whether there was sufficient resources and capacity to deliver the major projects. Capacity has been identified as a risk and there are joint discussions taking place between SCC and District Councils about how to structure resources. However, SCC is confident that it will be able to deliver and has no major concerns over non-delivery.

Members registered their on-going support for the Small Improvement Scheme which is considered to be very successful and well-received by residents. It was clarified that there are already enough schemes for a 3 year programme so it is unlikely that a new window for submissions will be opened over the next two to three years.

It was clarified that CIL funds are managed by District Councils and that SCC understands that there is around £2.5m in the Taunton Deane Borough Council pot. There is no agreement yet on how this will be spent and there is on-going dialogue on the governance arrangements around this. The funds may be

aligned to other developer funding pots but this will be addressed on a case-by-case basis as agreements are arranged. It is a statutory requirement for district councils to publish CIL figures.

A member raised concern over damage to the railway in West Somerset. It was confirmed that the Blue Anchor to Watchet route is at risk of coastal erosion. A Group is assessing and reviewing the route and the risks associated with this, including the railway. West Somerset District council are chairing this Group.

The Committee noted the report and the Major Schemes in place but expressed concern about funding for future schemes and about the resources of the authority to deliver the Schemes.

82 A303 Sparkford to Ilchester Response to Statutory Consultation - Agenda Item 6

The Committee received a report and presentation regarding the SCC response to the Highways England (HE) public consultation on the proposed A303 Sparkford to Ilchester dual carriageway improvement scheme. The public consultation precedes the formal process of seeking consent to construct. There is a strong business case as to the benefits of the scheme for the economic growth of the south West and the UK, increasing safety and improving connectivity and resilience.

As a nationally significant infrastructure project, the scheme will be dealt with under the Development Consent Order (DCO) process. The Committee were informed that the scheme will be delivered and operated by HE. SCC is a statutory consultee and has a limited role in the process. The consultation provides the last opportunity to influence the design of the scheme before it is submitted for DCO. Once in DCO it is difficult to vary.

The Committee heard that the key concerns raised by SCC in its response broadly echo those of the community with some concerns regarding safety and some regarding the traffic impact and lack of evidence based traffic modelling. HE are continuing to evolve the technical design and are in on-going dialogue with SCC. SCC have asked HE to take steps to mitigate the impact on local communities and have also asked for a mechanism for on-going dialogue with those communities directly affected. No commitment regarding this has been received from HE to date.

Members expressed concern over the lack of information provided by HE and questioned whether this is normal practice. This is a continuing concern and there is a similar picture on a national level. There are tensions between DCO applications and the need for communities to be well-informed. SCC continues to lobby about this and we have informed HE that we need more information earlier in the process.

Members raised the need to consider local road networks as well as highways. It was clarified that HE is trying to create expressways for high volume traffic and is not necessarily focussed on the local road network.

There was also concern expressed over lengthy disruption and negative impact on local communities. It was suggested that a liaison officer could be used to engage with local communities. There was support for the suggestion of Community Forums so long as they have the ability to influence decisions.

The Committee noted the report.

83 **Award of Contract for the provision of Temporary Labour - Agenda Item 7**

The Committee received a report outlining the proposal to award the contract for the provision of temporary labour to SCC.

The current contract is due to expire in December 2018 and a comprehensive review of the options available for supplying a cost-effective service for delivering temporary labour has been conducted in consultation with current users.

The current contract is with Reed and is provided via a master vendor solution and that model provides benefits to SCC through a single point of contact for the authority, reduced supplier margins, increased contract governance, improved performance of the supplier, transparent management information and process efficiencies in terms of the end to end booking process and P2P process.

The contract categorises temporary labour into a number of distinct groups including Admin & Clerical, Engineering & Surveying, HR, IT, Management, Procurement, Social & Healthcare (qualified and non-qualified)

Reed's agency fee within the current contract is charged according to a pre-determined rate for each category as a fixed £ per hour worked by the candidate which is aligned to SCC Spinal Column Points. Under MSTAR2 the rates remain as a fixed £ per hour but vary by wage rates within bands, job category and whether the worker is supplied from Reed's own workers or has been sourced from a third party through Reed as managed vendor.

There are no current concerns regarding the service from Reed. There have been difficulties at times in securing sufficient acceptable Qualified Social Work candidates. Reed have augmented their second tier support suppliers in an effort to resolve this but it is known that this is a marketplace with a high demand at the moment and resource is scarce within the region.

The Committee were informed that spend on temporary labour is reducing and this reduction is expected to increase. Temporary Labour adds flexibility to the workforce but is generally more expensive than the overall cost of a permanent employee. As an example, a temporary social worker costs c£80k pa whilst a permanent employee would be c£60k pa. There is a desire to reduce the reliance on temporary staff in this area and move to a permanent workforce but there is a shortage of supply in the region which impacts on our ability to transition workers to permanent.

The Committee questioned whether the social worker recruitment service could be provided in-house but it was clarified that this would not be cost effective. SCC has a number of graduates qualifying in the autumn so it is anticipated that the number of permanent social workers will increase which will in turn decrease the need for temporary social workers.

Members questioned what was being done to improve social worker retention and were reassured that there has been a big focus on this. Surgeries have been held to talk to staff at an early stage and discuss why people joined and why people might wish to leave. It is recognised that there has been increased pressure to address the Ofsted judgement but that feedback received suggests that social worker morale has improved.

The Committee noted the report but requested an interim report 12 months after the start of the new contract to review performance and staff morale.

84 Scrutiny for Policies and Place Committee Work Programme - Agenda Item 8

The Committee considered and noted the Council's Forward Plan of proposed key decisions.

Following debate, the Committee requested the following addition to the work programme:

- An interim report to review the performance of the Temporary Labour Contract and impact on staff moral (Dec 2019, 12 months from start of contract)
- Hinkley Point C update (Sept)
- County Farms Disposals update
- Registration Service (July/Sept)

85 Any other urgent items of business - Agenda Item 9

A Committee Member asked that abbreviations and acronyms be expanded in future reports.

(The meeting ended at 12.30 pm)

CHAIRMAN

Somerset County Council Business Plan 2018

Lead Officer: Vikki Hearn & Alastair Higton

Author: Alastair Higton

Contact Details: 07977 410446 or ARHigton@somerset.gov.uk

Cabinet Member: Leader of the Council

Division and Local Member: All

1. Summary

1.1. Our County Council Vision is:

- A thriving and productive County that is ambitious, confident and focussed on improving people's lives.
- A County of resilient, well-connected and compassionate communities working to reduce inequalities.
- A County where all partners actively work together for the benefit of our residents, communities and businesses and the environment in which we all live.
- A County that provides you with right information, advice and guidance to help you help yourself and targets support to those who need it most

1.2. Somerset County Council's Business Plan for 2018 says what the County Council will aim to do over the coming year with our partners and communities to deliver the County Council Vision in the most efficient way possible for Somerset's taxpayers.

1.3. The Business Plan will be web-based. The attached Business Plan document should therefore be viewed as a 'text' version rather than a proposed design for a completed Plan. The website will be demonstrated at the Committee meeting.

2. Issues for consideration / Recommendations

2.1. Members are asked to consider and comment upon the draft Business Plan as the council's mechanism for delivering the Council's Vision.

2.2. Members are asked to note that the Business Plan will be made available online in an interactive format.

3. Background

3.1. The Business Plan contains 4 'strategic outcomes' that translate the Vision. Beneath each strategic outcome are 4 key priorities for the council. Each priority is proposed to be delivered by a range of activities.

3.2. The Business Plan is designed to provide information to the public, Members, partners and stakeholders on the business of the Council, however we envisage it being of greatest value to staff in service planning, performance management and financial management.

3.3. The interactive website being created to host the Business Plan will allow users

to read the document but also 'click through' to additional information and resources. This will also show how priorities and activities link together and provide performance information.

- 3.4.** The staff function will only be visible through the Council's IT network, which will integrate the Business Plan with Service Planning, and deeper levels of performance reporting and finance management.

This 'golden thread' will also show connections between the Council's service plans so teams and managers can see how they deliver the Vision and how their work links with that of other teams.

It is anticipated that this functionality will improve working across the council by:

- Allowing teams to develop and deliver their work more easily.
- Help teams manage their budgeting, performance management and financial management in a more joined up way.
- Enabling greater collaboration across the council (and with partners)
- Make tools and techniques easier to access and use.
- Create a greater focus on what the Council will do, avoid duplication and unnecessary work.

- 3.5.** The new Business plan has a 3-year lifespan and will be refreshed annually to keep it up to date.

4. Consultations undertaken

- 4.1.** Consultation with staff and senior managers, including 1-2-1s with Directors have been carried out to develop the draft Plan.

5. Implications

- 5.1.** The Business Plan is a forward-looking document. By its nature therefore, some activities require further work to define scope, funding and resource requirements. Where this is the case delivery will be subject to the Council's decision-making processes and MTFP requirements.
- 5.2.** Furthermore, successful delivery of the Business Plan requires the County Council to work in partnership. In the case of forward-looking activities delivery will be subject to the policy, financial and decision-making frameworks in which partners operate.
- 5.3.** The Equalities Manager has confirmed that no Equalities Impact Assessment is necessary for the Business Plan.
- 5.4.** The projects, programmes and activities referred to in the Business Plan will be subject to appropriate impact assessments on an individual basis.

6. Background papers

- 6.1.** Appendix A - (Draft) Business Plan 2018-19

Note: For sight of individual background papers please contact the report author



Somerset County Council
Business Plan 2018
(Draft)

Welcome to our Business Plan for 2018

This is Somerset County Council's Business Plan for 2018. It says how we will work with partners and communities to deliver the County Council's "Vision for Somerset" in the most efficient way possible for Somerset's taxpayers.

The County Council Vision

Our Vision is all about improving lives by creating:

- A thriving and productive County that is ambitious, confident and focussed on improving people's lives.
- A County of resilient, well-connected and compassionate communities working to reduce inequalities.
- A County where all partners actively work together for the benefit of our residents, communities and businesses and the environment in which we all live.
- A County that provides you with right information, advice and guidance to help you help yourself and targets support to those who need it most.

Our Business Plan explains how we will work towards this Vision over the next three years. We will review the Plan every year to keep it to date.

Delivering the County Council Vision

What the Council does is about making the most of the County's strengths, working together, and being prepared to do things in different ways: we don't just 'fix problems'.

To deliver the Vision, we will:

- Help people to help themselves.
- Target our resources to where they are needed most.
- Work with all our partners.

The people of Somerset have also told us what our priorities should be, which are reflected in the Vision and Business Plan:

- Helping vulnerable and elderly people.
- Investing in Somerset's economy and infrastructure.
- Attracting jobs and more apprenticeships.

Our strengths: what Somerset has to offer

Somerset boasts significant strengths. These are a strong foundation on which to improve lives in the county:

- Our economy is worth £11bn, the same size as Liverpool or Sheffield
- Somerset has low unemployment and a mixed economy.
- We have good performing schools.
- We work well with our partners. They consider us a 'partner of choice'
- We have a fine natural environment and rich cultural heritage.

- A wide range of voluntary and community organisations contribute immensely to resident's wellbeing.

Somerset's challenges

Despite our strengths Somerset has challenges to overcome:

- Economic productivity that remains low
- Poorer levels of public sector funding compared to other areas
- Meeting the needs of a growing and ageing Somerset population.
- Inequalities in:
 - Educational outcomes
 - Economic opportunity
 - Access to services
 - Life chances and aspirations.
- The need for more housing and infrastructure.
- Many people and communities remain digitally excluded or unable access fast and reliable broadband coverage.
- Many people suffer from physical and mental health and wellbeing.

The Council's own challenges and drivers

To be properly equipped to deliver, the Council has to understand its own drivers:

- We must always put our residents at the heart of everything we do
- We have responsibilities across a range of partnership strategies:
 - Health and Wellbeing Strategy
 - HotSW Productivity Strategy
 - Somerset Health and Care Strategy
 - Adults Promoting Independence Strategy
 - Children and Young People's Plan
 - Somerset Growth Plan

And challenges...

- Continued austerity means that we further reductions in funding in future.
- We have significant funding pressures in key services, such as Children's Services and its journey to 'good'.
- The Council has a wide range of statutory responsibilities which we must meet.

Why a Business Plan?

The Business Plan says what the Council will do to deliver its Vision. Key to success is working with all our partners and making use of the county's many strengths and assets.

- It will focus our work on achieving better outcomes for our residents and communities
- It helps us make difficult choices at a time when we have fewer resources than ever before and increasing demands on our services.
- It shows our partners precisely what our objectives are and what we are doing to achieve them.

The Business Plan also says how we will develop the capacity and capability we need to deliver.

To make the most of Somerset's strengths we will:

- Work together to achieve 'more with more' with individuals, communities, providers, businesses, other public, voluntary and community sector organisations. We want to be their 'partner of choice'.
- Work to retain the talent that we have in the County whilst attracting the additional expertise and resources that our economy needs.
- Work with businesses to grow and develop our economy.
- Promote Somerset as a great place to live and work.

To address Somerset's challenges, we will...

- Continue to focus on prevention and early intervention
- Work across health and care to promote people's independence and reduce unnecessary demand on services.
- Protect vulnerable children and adults and support them to reach their potential.
- Work with our partners to provide the physical, digital and employment infrastructure that our economy and communities need.
- Work to create a county where people can aspire and achieve without being held back by their background or circumstances.
- Work with health partners and the police to tackle mental and emotional wellbeing issues and the harm they cause.
- Demonstrate Social Value and Value for Money in all that we do.

Meeting the Council's challenges

The Council must be confident, capable and financially sustainable if it is to deliver the Business Plan. So that we are equipped to deal with the challenges and grasp the opportunities ahead, we will:

- Address our financial challenge.
- Focus on 'getting to good' in Children's Services.
- Continuously develop and improve the way we work, find new ways of doing things and embrace technology.
- Work with partners and communities.
- Make sure our internal financial and decision-making processes continue to be strong.
- Focus on outcomes, making use of high-quality information and data.

To achieve this the Business Plan sets three organisational development priorities for the Council.

- Our culture and approach.
- A digital- and technology-enabled council.
- Effective and resilient delivery.

Everyone in the Council has a responsibility to consider and reflect the Business Plan in their service planning, budget setting and performance management.

Delivering the County Council Vision: our Plan for 2018

The Business Plan will be updated every year to take account of changing needs and new challenges. It contains four strategic outcomes that show what the Council will focus on to deliver its Vision and improve lives. Beneath each strategic outcome sits four key priorities and a range of activities. By lining up these activities, priorities and strategic outcomes with the Vision we can plan ahead, monitor progress and above all ensure that we are working within our financial means.

A county infrastructure that drives productivity, supports economic prosperity and sustainable public services	Safe, vibrant and well-balanced communities able to enjoy and benefit from the natural environment	Fairer life chances and opportunity for all	Improved health and wellbeing and more people living healthy and independent lives for longer
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enable economic and housing growth by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Improving transport infrastructure and digital connectivity. ○ Working more effectively with developers and District Council planning colleagues. 2. Create the climate for enterprise and innovation that businesses need to grow and collaborate. 3. Deliver the Heart of the South West Productivity Strategy and influence the local Industrial Strategy for the benefit of Somerset. 4. Ensure all our services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Are financially sustainable. ○ Make decisions based on evidence ○ Have the organisational, people and digital capacities and capabilities to deliver effectively. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support development of stronger communities including working with them to increase their resilience. 2. Work with partners and communities to protect and enhance the environment, manage our water better and produce less waste. 3. Make sure that Somerset remains a safe place to live, work and visit. 4. Support and promote enjoyment of Somerset’s heritage, culture and natural environment 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tackle inequalities and poor social mobility across Somerset so everyone can realise their potential and give more to our economy and society. 2. Maintain the Council’s focus and commitment to make Somerset a place where all children are healthy, safe, and have good physical and emotional wellbeing. 3. Ensure all children in Somerset have access to high quality schools, high quality educational, professional and support services, teachers and leadership teams. 4. Equip Somerset’s workforce of the future with the skills they need, and enable them to aspire and achieve in Somerset’s economy. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explore, define and implement robust health and social care integration 2. Focus efforts towards improving health and wellbeing outcomes, especially for those in greatest need. 3. Foster an environment which promotes healthier choices and support people to take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing. 4. Support people to remain independent and within their homes and communities, without formal social care support wherever possible and for as long as possible.

Strategic Outcome

A county infrastructure that drives productivity, supports economic prosperity and sustainable public services

Priority

- 1. Enable economic and housing growth by:**
- Improving transport infrastructure and digital connectivity.
 - Working more effectively with developers and District Council planning colleagues.

To do this we will

Deliver phase 2 of the Connecting Devon and Somerset Programme to roll-out of superfast broadband to more homes and businesses.

Deliver highways improvements including:

- Colley Lane in Bridgwater.
- Junction 25 of the M5.
- Western Corridor, Yeovil.

Continue to press for improvements to the A303/A358 and rail services to and from Somerset.

Work with the rail sector to deliver improvements to stations including at Taunton and Bridgwater.

Enable delivery of infrastructure that supports economic and housing growth and community wellbeing.

Work with our District Council partners to deliver the access improvements funded by the Housing Infrastructure Fund.

Work with the Somerset Rivers Authority on new or improved infrastructure for economic benefit.

Establish a Sub-Regional Transport Board for the south west peninsula to lead on strategic transport issues that improve regional productivity and drive economic growth.

Priority

- 2. Create the climate for enterprise and innovation that businesses need to grow and collaborate.**

To do this we will

Deliver enterprise and innovation space for new and growing businesses to develop, including:

- New enterprise Centres at Bruton, Wiveliscombe and Wells.
- Phases 2 and 3 of the Somerset Energy Innovation Centre.
- Taunton Geovation Hub / Digital Innovation Centre.
- The Somerset Grow-on Programme.

Working with partners to deliver the Huntspill Enterprise Zone and Energy Centre.

Deliver the iAero centre in Yeovil to drive innovation in the south west's aerospace industry

Priority

3. Deliver the Heart of the South West Productivity Strategy and influence the local Industrial Strategy for the benefit of Somerset.

To do this we will

Work with partners to create a delivery plan for the Productivity Strategy that drives strong outcomes for people, places and businesses in Somerset.

Work with partners and MPs to lobby government to make the Heart of the South West an early adopter of the Local Industrial Strategy initiative.

Priority

4. Ensure all our services:

- **Are financially sustainable.**
- **Make decisions based on evidence**
- **Have the organisational, people and digital capacities and capabilities to deliver effectively.**

To do this we will

Develop and implement a Medium Term Financial Plan, that also responds to Peer Challenge recommendations regarding financial sustainability.

Define and implement a robust financial plan for Children's Services including:

- Developing a strategy for managing demand in high-cost services, as a top priority.
- Developing a model to fund the continuing improvement journey for Children's Social Care through all-service budget management, communicated to all staff.

Commence discussions on local government review for Somerset.

Embed our People Strategy to improve the way we work with stakeholders.

Support new business start-ups for economic growth, which in turn will increase Business Rate income.

Provide Business Intelligence and other management information to support better outcomes through:

- Effective commissioning and delivery of services based on need.
- Effective management information to monitor performance.

Ensure our ICT systems promote and enhance collaborative working and data sharing with public sector and other partners.

Develop and embed a Data Strategy that works in common with our partners.

Find new ways to map data at levels that support better, more focussed commissioning and decision-making.

Continue to work with our partners to share and use our assets more effectively.

Strategic Outcome Safe, vibrant and well-balanced communities able to enjoy and benefit from the natural environment

Priority

1. Support development of stronger communities including working with them to increase their resilience.

To do this we will

Increase the effectiveness of the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector, by:

- Identifying and supporting new volunteer opportunities.
- Launching the Somerset Fund.
- Working with and support a greater role for the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector.

Work with partners and communities to make Somerset a more inclusive county for vulnerable children and adults.

Work with partners to improve practice and outcomes in our early help work.

Complete our library redesign programme to provide a modern and sustainable libraries service.

Work with partners to develop and enhance the Community Connect approach:

- Promote independence, empower communities and ensure people can be supported in their community wherever possible.
- Make sure all conversations are person-centred, asset-based, prevention-focused, maximise personal capability, and look at existing resources and community solutions before funded solutions.

Work with partners and communities to improve outcomes at Early Years Foundation Stage.

Develop stronger, more resilient communities by building on local resources:

- Through integration of Family Support services.
- Community Connect.
- Village Agents.

Work with communities to increase community transport options.

Priority	
2. Work with partners and communities to protect and enhance the environment, manage our water better and recycle more waste	
To do this we will	
Continue to support the work of the Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA) to reduce the impact of flooding in Somerset.	
Continue to lobby Government to put the SRA on a sustainable financial basis.	
Through the Somerset Waste Partnership deliver the Recycle More Project increase the opportunities for residents to recycle plastics and other materials.	
Ensure the impacts of minerals and waste developments on our environment are properly mitigated through the planning system.	
Co-produce a strategy and timetable for Somerset to become a single-use plastic authority.	

Priority	
3. Make sure that Somerset remains a safe place to live, work and visit.	
To do this we will	
Ensure that partners, especially Health and Police, to work effectively together to secure improved safeguarding outcomes for children.	
Work with the Safer Somerset Partnership and Police and Crime Commissioner to reduce crime, disorder, antisocial behaviour and reduce re-offending in Somerset.	
Work with communities and partners to reduce exploitation of vulnerable residents, especially frauds and scams targeting the elderly and vulnerable.	
Deliver high-quality commissioned services that help people stay and feel safe, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road Safety • Domestic abuse 	
Work with partners to protect Somerset and its residents from the risks of extremism and radicalisation.	
Work with partners to protect the population from risks to public health.	

Priority	
4. Support and promote enjoyment of Somerset’s heritage, culture and natural environment	
To do this we will	

Encourage individuals and communities to get involved in Somerset's heritage.

Support community and cultural activities and events, to improve quality of life and people's enjoyment of their free time.

Support and promote the leisure, health and wellbeing value of our natural environment and make it accessible to all.

Consider social value across all commissioning, procurement and partnership activity.

Use Council assets to facilitate enjoyment of the County, such as:

- Libraries.
- Dillington House.
- Kilve Court.

Provide opportunities for vulnerable groups through the services we provide.

DRAFT

Strategic Outcome Fairer life chances and opportunity for all

Priority	
1. Tackle inequalities and poor social mobility across Somerset so everyone can realise their potential and give more to our economy and society.	
To do this we will	
Redefine our vision for children’s and lifelong learning to reduce gaps in educational attainment.	
Work with institutions and stakeholders to focus on increasing educational achievement of children in Somerset.	
Improve educational attainment of all vulnerable groups.	
Increase the proportion of children who are ‘school ready’.	
Support the West Somerset Opportunity Area Action Plan to improve social mobility and opportunity in the district.	
Promote and support digital inclusion throughout the County and within the County Council.	
Work with EDF Energy and the Hinkley Point Training Agency to ensure that the Hinkley Point C project delivers opportunities for local people.	
Establish an Education and Business Partnership with the Somerset Chamber of Commerce.	
<p>With partners, enhance the ability of individuals to make the best use of opportunities available to them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The South West Heritage Trust. • Libraries. • Schools (including Independents). • Carers and care providers. 	
Encourage gender-pay gap transparency amongst partners and providers.	

Priority	
2. Maintain the Council’s focus and commitment to make Somerset a place where all children are healthy, safe, and have good physical and emotional wellbeing.	
To do this we will	
Improve the emotional wellbeing and mental health of children and young people, in particular: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the Clinical Commissioning Group’s review of CAMHS service. 	
Implement the new Working Together guidance and reconstitute the Children’s Safeguarding Board.	
Improve the consistency of social work practice.	
Increase the capacity of the Children’s Services leadership team to accelerate the pace of change.	
Improve the resilience of parents and carers through provision of advice, guidance and support.	
Through our Sufficiency Statement, increase the range and quality of local care placements for Children Looked After.	
Develop a new integrated family support service.	
Promote healthier lifestyles for children.	

Priority	
3. Ensure all children in Somerset have access to high quality schools, high quality educational, professional and support services, teachers and leadership teams.	
To do this we will	
Renew our 0-25 SEND Strategy, including a strong approach to transitions.	
Manage and deliver the schools and early-years building programme over the next five years.	
Develop support for schools to promote the health and wellbeing of children and young people	
Improve transitions for children going through the education system.	
Build on the existing programme of teacher training and apprenticeships to deliver a high-quality education workforce that meets the needs of Somerset’s early years settings and schools.	
Coordinate and monitor school improvement arrangements in Somerset.	
Increase leadership capacity in the education system.	
Support schools to provide effective careers advice.	

Priority	
<p>4. Equip the workforce of the future with the skills they need, and enable them to aspire and achieve in Somerset's economy.</p>	
<p>To do this we will</p>	
<p>Ensure that all children, especially vulnerable children, have pathways into employment, further education or training, including through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education Business Partnership. • Other social value and work experience schemes. 	
<p>Provide more key skills training, particularly for young people and adults.</p>	
<p>Work with partners to create of a University of Somerset.</p>	
<p>Work with our partners to increase in apprenticeship numbers across Somerset</p>	
<p>Work with partners to develop Productivity Strategy programmes around skills and workforce development.</p>	
<p>Develop our apprenticeship and graduate offer and increase the number of apprentices at Somerset County Council.</p>	

Strategic Outcome	Improved health and wellbeing and more people living healthy, safe and independent lives for longer
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Priority	
1. Explore, define and implement robust health and social care integration	
To do this we will	
Further develop joint commissioning arrangements between the council, CCG and NHS England, to provide more effective and joined-up health and social care.	
Develop a joint Health and Care Strategy, focussing on prevention and offering people the care they need closer to their homes.	
Examine how health and care integration can improve the way we tackle mental health issues.	
Develop a children's commissioning approach across health, education and social care.	
Develop and agree a robust financial and transformation journey for Adult Social Care.	
Continue to provide leadership to organisational change and development in children's social care, education and social care for adults.	

Priority	
2. Focus efforts towards improving health and wellbeing outcomes, especially for those in greatest need.	
To do this we will	
Take full advantage of opportunities to support vulnerable young people and adults' access to employment, housing and leisure.	
Develop the 'Team Around the School' model to provide a consistently high quality of provision.	
Improve schools' commissioning capacity and capability.	
Promote healthier transport options and smarter travel choices.	

Priority	
3. Foster an environment which promotes healthier choices and supports people to take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing.	
To do this we will	
Work with partners and stakeholders to develop a long-term Health and Wellbeing Strategy.	

Continue to work with partners, to tackle health inequalities.
Support children and young people to make informed life choices.
Maintain a focus on high-performing drug and alcohol treatment services, and other action, to tackle the harm caused by substance misuse.
Embed a multiagency approach to tackling self-harm.
Work with Discovery to embed the social enterprise offering for people with learning disabilities and deliver good quality, personalised services alongside a sustainable funding solution.
Work with partners to develop the Somerset Strategic Housing Framework.

Priority	
4. Support people to remain independent and within their homes and communities, without formal social care support wherever possible and for as long as possible.	
To do this we will	
Work to ensure that people have easy access to solutions to their problems and can achieve good outcomes without needing formal care.	
Work with health partners to enable the speedy discharge of patients from hospital and ensure that	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They achieve the best possible outcomes. • Are supported by timely, targeted and effective reablement 	
Improve the Local Offer for young people 18-25 (SEND and leaving care).	

Meeting the Council’s challenges: sustainability, quality and focus

Council must be confident and capable if it is to deliver the Vision and Business Plan. These organisational priorities fall into three broad categories and a set of activities that will equip it to deal with the challenges, and grasp the opportunities, ahead. The Council will use them to develop and deliver service plans.

Our culture and approach

To do this we will
Communicate our People Strategy across the Council and with the communities and organisations we work with.
Embed the Commissioning Operating Model and commissioning approach across the council and with partners, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing and implementing the Commissioning Gateway. • Delivering Somerset Academy Cohorts 2 and 3. • Commissioning learning and development activity.
Embed an evidence-led approach to commissioning and decision-making across the council, supported by effective performance management.
Retain a positive reputation for the Council and good customer satisfaction.
Communicate and campaign with the public to deliver the County Vision.
Communicate, engage and consult with the public on our plans, especially those with protected characteristics.
Provide class-leading customer services.
Build positive relationships between Councillors and officers

A digital- and technology-enabled council

To do this we will
Roll-out our Technology and People Programme to enable workforce productivity and efficiency improvements, increase resilience and provide better data security.
Deliver next phase ICT capability linked to the County Vision and Business Plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connected ICT (co-production and partnership working). • Data Insight (Information sharing, reporting and analytics). • Integration of ICT systems.
Develop a Digital Strategy to lead transformation across the council.

Effective and resilient delivery

To do this we will

Retain and improve financial management including:

- Avoiding and addressing overspend
- Dealing with third party spend through effective procurement and contract management including:
 - Proactive management of significant supplier relationships
 - Pursuing opportunities for collaborative procurement with partners.

Free the Council from internal process and burdens that are not sustainable, serve little purpose or do not support outcomes.

Define and implement the next phase of our Core Council Transformation Programme.

Implement and deliver our commercial approach to asset management. Specifically:

- Exploit commercial investment and revenue generating opportunities.
- Maximise income from selling assets, including for development purposes.

Work with members of the Somerset Local Authorities Civil Contingencies Unit to increase partners' overall resilience.

Meet our Constitutional and statutory requirements for reporting, decision-making and transparency.

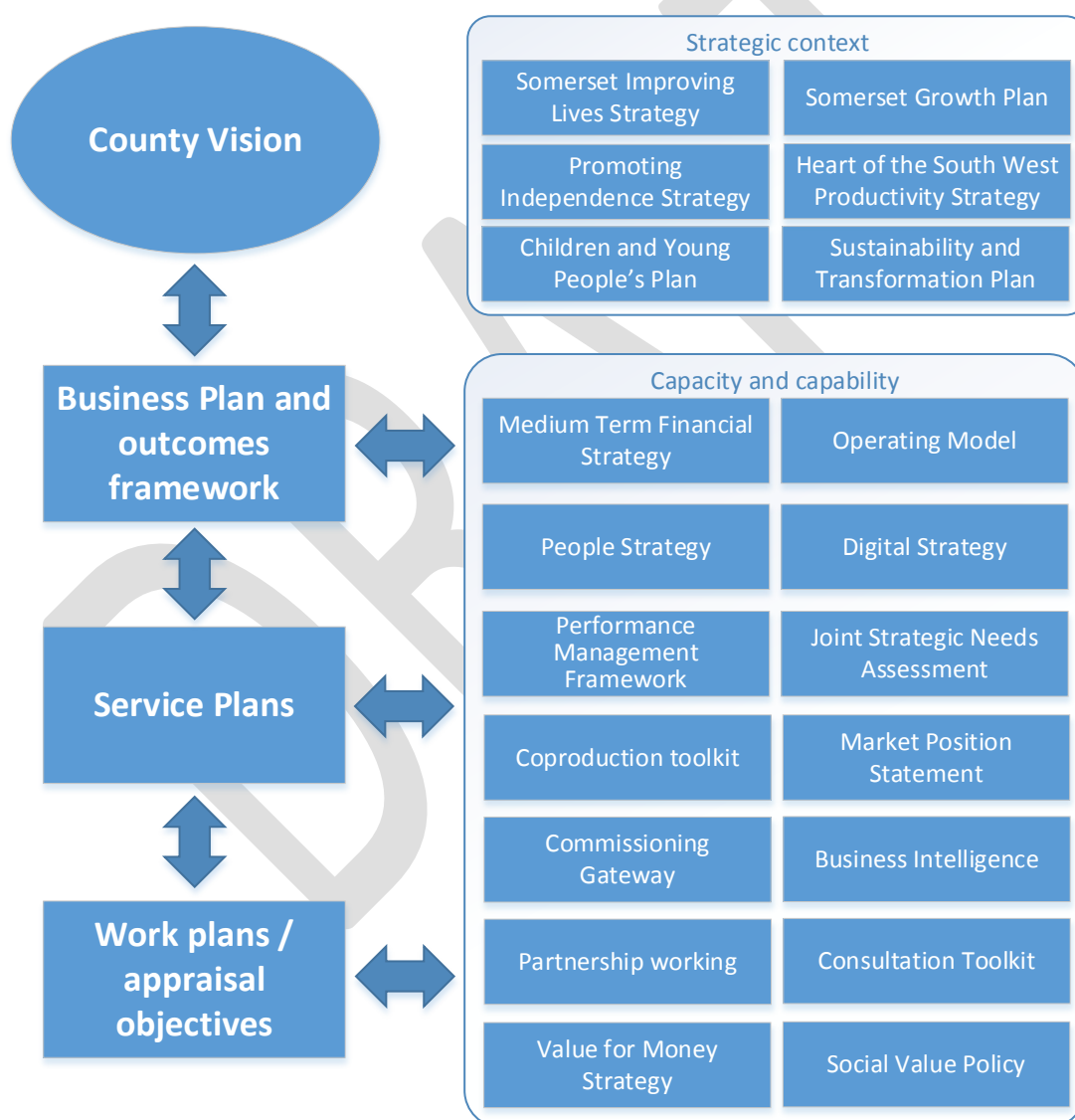
Delivering the Business Plan

Unless our work supports delivery of the activities, priorities and strategic outcomes in the Business Plan we must ask whether what we are doing is necessary.

Service Planning

The Business Plan has a key role in Service Planning. It creates a ‘golden thread’ from the Vision to individual Service Plans and performance management.

High-level measures for each priority will show how success will be seen at a strategic outcome and priority level. Service Plans identify specific metrics for each activity or intention. The diagram below shows the relationship between the Business Plan, performance management and service planning.



Using the tools available to us

There are a wide range of strategies, tools and approaches that support and guide all that we do. This diagram shows the strategic context that we work in, and the key capacity and capability tools that should be used to design and deliver the most appropriate services – including finding ways for a service to be provided in the community.

Somerset's Passenger Transport Strategy

Lead Officer: Mike O'Dowd-Jones

Author: Lucy Bath

Contact Details: lbath@somerset.gov.uk

Cabinet Member: John Woodman

Division and Local Member: All members

1. Summary

- 1.1. The current Passenger Transport Strategy was developed as part of the Local Transport Plan for Somerset (2011-2026) which we call the 'Future Transport Plan'. The Strategy was developed to be a living document and updated and reviewed when needed.

This report seeks the views of the Scrutiny Committee on a new draft Passenger Transport Strategy 2018 to 2026, before it is taken to public consultation

- 1.2. The document links to the 2018 County Plan and Business Plan outcomes of:
- A county infrastructure that drives productivity, supports economic prosperity and sustainable public services.
 - Vibrant and well-balanced communities able to enjoy and benefit from the natural environment.
 - Fairer life chances and opportunity for all.
 - Improved health and wellbeing and more people living healthy, safe and independent lives for longer.

2. Issues for consideration / Recommendations

- 2.1. The Committee are asked to consider and comment on the document prior to taking for public consultation.

3. Background

- 3.1. Somerset is a challenging area in which to provide viable and sustainable passenger transport services. Owing to its rural aspect it has high car ownership and usage, which leads to congestion 'hot spots' at peak hours. The diverse array of settlements, ranging from small rural villages to the densely populated urban areas of Bridgwater, Taunton and Yeovil; and the dispersed population mean that commercial bus operation is extremely marginal or non-viable in many areas. However, Somerset County Council strives to deliver an integrated quality bus, community transport and rail network by working with public service operators, community transport groups and other transport providers within the County and where possible to promote sustainable community solutions to enable improved access in rural areas.
- 3.2. This Passenger Transport strategy forms part of the Local Transport Plan for Somerset (2011-2026) which we call the 'Future Transport Plan'. Passenger transport is defined as all modes where passengers do not rely on their own transport. This includes bus, coach and rail services, and other forms of transport

such as private coaches, school buses, taxis, Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) and Community Transport (CT). The principle underpinning this strategy is to provide services and develop infrastructure that meets the needs of our customers: the residents of, employees based within, and visitors to Somerset. An effective passenger transport network is essential in order to give people, in both the urban and rural areas of Somerset, access to the opportunities and benefits that contribute to the enjoyment of a better quality of life.

- 3.3.** Developed at a time of severe financial restraint and economic uncertainty, this strategy sets out the issues that have influenced the present service and proposes an outline strategy for the future direction of service delivery. It will provide guidance for developers and assist the Council in assessing various schemes. It will also be used to inform Somerset County Council funding bids to Central Government, or other relevant funding opportunities and to inform conversations with government departments, operators and other stakeholders about the issues faced in our area. Most importantly it will inform residents of Somerset of the strategic direction for public transport in Somerset.
- 3.4.** The council has been successful in managing a severe reduction in the grant funding available to deliver the full range of services that it has a duty to provide, and has worked closely with bus operators and communities to reduce cost in this area in line with financial constraints; whilst ensuring the available budget continues to support those services that are most essential in meeting transport needs that would otherwise be unmet by the commercial market. The Council has worked closely with operators and communities to find alternative solutions where Council subsidies have had to be reduced.

We have also formed successful alliances with other authorities in the area and the rail industry to develop ambitious plans and proposals for improvements to the rail network in the form of the Peninsula Rail Task Force 20 year strategy 'closing the Gap'.

- 3.5.** This refresh of the passenger transport strategy sets more ambitious aims for bus and rail travel whilst still reflecting the current financial realities.

The aims for the Passenger Transport Strategy (2018-2026) are:

- Bus Strategy: Maintain services that are most essential in meeting transport needs where the commercial market is unable to provide viable services; and work closely with communities, operators and Government to change established models of rural bus service provision for the benefit of our communities.
 - Rail Strategy: Work closely with other local authorities and the rail industry to achieve greater resilience, faster journey times and more capacity and connectivity in the rail system.
- 3.6.** In order to achieve this, the authority will undertake to continue to offer the best possible passenger transport service and passenger network throughout Somerset, deliverable within the financial constraints of the current economic climate.

Summary of the key elements of the Bus Strategy:

- **Network strategy and integration:** Building on our well-established bus network strategy to develop new and innovative solutions which improve access for our communities, including more community based options.
- **Total Transport- information and access:** Improving information and technology for users of public transport based on our emerging Total Transport web portal.
- **Assessment of need and financial support:** Ensuring that we direct our available financial resources where they are most needed in line with a clear understanding of our communities' transport needs.
- **Market stability and stimulation:** Ensuring that existing operators maintain essential services on a commercial basis where possible and encouraging new entrants to the local public transport market.
- **Bus Infrastructure and Services for new housing and economic development:** Ensuring that new developments have good public transport access from the outset and that bus infrastructure and services needed to support development is put in place.
- **Partnership for innovation:** Developing partnerships with operators to take forward joint proposals to overcome rural transport challenges.

Summary of key elements of the Rail Strategy:

Working with other local authorities to ensure the rail industry delivers the Peninsula Rail Task Force 20-year strategy and other important investments outside the direct scope of the PRTF strategy:

- **A Resilient Network:** Rail studies, infrastructure and services needed to improve the resilience of the rail network.
- **Journey time improvements:** Rail studies and infrastructure improvements needed in the short, medium and long term to reduce journey times to and from key destinations.
- **Increased Capacity and Comfort:** Enhanced passenger facilities required to create a productive working environment and infrastructure enhancements needed to provide additional capacity on the network in the short, medium and long-term.
- **Rail Station Improvement Projects:** Improvements to Taunton and Bridgwater rail stations and approach to securing improvements at other stations.
- **New Stations and lines:** Our approach to providing advice to communities seeking to open new rail stations and lines; including new stations at Wellington, Langport/Somerton and Chard Junction; and introducing main-line passenger services onto the West Somerset Railway.
- **Community Rail Partnerships:** Partnerships which involve communities in developing and promoting particular lines including the Severnside and Heart of Wessex Partnerships; and aspirations for new community rail partnerships

4. Consultations undertaken

- 4.1. Through our ongoing partnership working the views of partners have been considered when completing this strategy. However a full public consultation will

be undertaken following consideration of the Scrutiny Committee.

5. Implications

- 5.1. **Financial:** There are no financial implications at present. The Passenger Transport Strategy sets out how we intend to utilise funding that the Council has been allocated. Any activity taken forward as part of the strategy that requires additional funding will be subject to further decisions at the time.
- 5.2. **Legal:** Publication of a Passenger Transport Strategy, or bus and rail strategies is not a specific statutory requirement; but The Transport Act 2000 requires local transport authorities to develop policies for the promotion and encouragement of safe integrated efficient and economic transport to, from and within their area.
- 5.3. **Business Risk:** There is no business risk in adopting the proposed strategy.
- 5.4. **Due Regard Implications:** The needs of people with protected characteristics have been considered in preparing the Passenger Transport Strategy. Programmes developed through the strategy will help meet the needs of people with poor mobility, people with disabilities, younger and older people who may be vulnerable road users or suffer from isolation. The Strategy also aims to provide improved services that promote more sustainable travel and associated health & wellbeing through physical activity.

6. Background papers

- 6.1. Appendix A - Somerset's Passenger Transport Strategy 2018-2026

Note For sight of individual background papers please contact the report author

Updated by	Date	Version	Comments
Jane Newell	2017		Original version.
Lucy Bath	29/11/2017	v1	Reviewed and added comments.
Lucy Bath	25/04/2018	v2	Formatted and added some rail narrative.
Mike O'Dowd-Jones	29/04/2018	v3	Review and update. Distributed for comment.
Mike O'Dowd-Jones	1/5/2018	v4	Updated rail elements.
Mike O'Dowd-Jones	8/5/2018	v5	Updated objectives and completed missing information for scrutiny publication.

NB: this document is not fully formatted as it is intended to be published in Publisher. Infographics may be subject to change.

Somerset County Council

Passenger Transport Strategy 2018 - 2026

Draft Strategy for Consultation: May 2018

Executive Summary

Somerset is a challenging area in which to provide viable and sustainable passenger transport services. Owing to its rural aspect it has high car ownership and usage, which leads to congestion ‘hot spots’ at peak hours. The diverse array of settlements, ranging from small rural villages to the densely populated urban areas of Bridgwater, Taunton and Yeovil; and the dispersed population mean that commercial bus operation is extremely marginal or non-viable in many areas.

Somerset County Council strives to deliver an integrated quality bus, community transport and rail network by working with public service operators, community transport groups and other transport providers within the County and where possible to promote sustainable community solutions to enable improved access in rural areas.

This Passenger Transport strategy forms part of the Local Transport Plan for Somerset (2011-2026) which we call the ‘Future Transport Plan’. Public transport is defined as all modes where passengers do not rely on their own transport. This includes bus, coach and rail services, and other forms of transport such as private coaches, school buses, taxis, Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) and Community Transport (CT).

The principle underpinning this strategy is to provide services and develop infrastructure that meets the needs of our customers: the residents of, employees based within, and visitors to Somerset. An effective passenger transport network is essential to give people, in both the urban and rural areas of Somerset, access to the opportunities and benefits that contribute to the enjoyment of a better quality of life.

Developed at a time of severe financial restraint and economic uncertainty, this strategy sets out the issues that have influenced the present service and proposes an outline strategy for the future direction of service delivery. It will provide guidance for developers and assist the Council in assessing various schemes. It will also be used to inform Somerset County Council funding bids to Central Government, or other relevant funding opportunities and to inform conversations with government departments, operators and other stakeholders about the issues faced in our area. Most importantly it will inform residents of Somerset of the strategic direction for public transport in Somerset.

The target audience for this strategy includes a wide range of stakeholders, including:

- Existing or potential customers of publicly-available passenger transport services.
- Businesses.
- Community organisations and voluntary groups.
- Town and parish councils.
- Local transport operators and Network Rail.
- Healthcare service providers.

- Other service areas provided by Somerset.
- Schools and Colleges.
- The Department for Transport and other Government departments.
- The Local Enterprise Partnership and other funding bodies.

Updated periodically, it forms the basis for the current and future implementation plans for the Local Transport Plan period to 2026. Whilst the strategic policies and aspirations cover a 15-year timescale, the Strategy sets out a realistic and achievable vision for the shorter/medium term.

The current aims for passenger transport in the FTP (2011-2026) are:

“To do what we [the Council] can to maintain essential services in the early years of this plan and work to improve the way services work together and provide better information during its later years”

“We will work in partnership with the rail industry and other stakeholders to encourage more people to travel by train. We will support better services, facilities, security, integration and improvements in the way people see train travel.”

The council has been successful in managing a severe reduction in the grant funding available to deliver the full range of services that it has a duty to provide, and has worked closely with bus operators and communities to reduce cost in this area in line with financial constraints; whilst ensuring the available budget continues to support those services that are most essential in meeting transport needs that would otherwise be unmet by the commercial market. The Council has worked closely with operators and communities to find alternative solutions where Council subsidies have had to be reduced.

We have also formed successful alliances with other authorities in the area and the rail industry to develop ambitious plans and proposals for improvements to the rail network in the form of the Peninsula Rail Task Force 20-year strategy ‘closing the Gap’.

This refresh of the passenger transport strategy sets more ambitious aims for bus and rail travel whilst still reflecting the current financial realities.

Aims

The updated aims for the Passenger Transport Strategy (2018-2026) are:

- **Bus Strategy:** Maintain services that are most essential in meeting transport needs where the commercial market is unable to provide viable services; and work closely with communities, operators and Government to change established models of rural bus service provision for the benefit of our communities.

- **Rail Strategy:** Work closely with other local authorities, community partnerships and the rail industry to achieve greater resilience & reliability, faster journey times and more capacity and connectivity in the rail system.

Objectives

- Improve accessibility to services by enabling informed transport choices and linking transport options for easier multimode journeys.
- Enable sustainable passenger transport services through encouraging more viable commercial services and supporting communities to meet their own local transport needs.
- Work with partners to help provide a better passenger transport experience and improve connectivity to locations outside Somerset.

To achieve this, the authority will undertake to continue to offer the best possible passenger transport service and passenger network throughout Somerset, deliverable within the financial constraints of the current economic climate.

Summary of the key elements of the Bus Strategy:

- **Network strategy and integration:** Building on our well-established bus network strategy to develop new and innovative solutions which improve access for our communities, including more community based options.
- **Total Transport- information and access:** Improving information and technology for users of public transport based on our emerging Total Transport web portal.
- **Assessment of need and financial support:** Ensuring that we direct our available financial resources where they are most needed in line with a clear understanding of our communities' transport needs.
- **Market stability and stimulation:** Ensuring that existing operators maintain essential services on a commercial basis where possible and encouraging new entrants to the local public transport market.
- **Bus Infrastructure and Services for new housing and economic development:** Ensuring that new developments have good public transport access from the outset and that bus infrastructure and services needed to support development are put in place.
- **Partnership for innovation:** Developing partnerships with operators to take forward joint proposals to overcome rural transport challenges.

Summary of key elements of the Rail Strategy:

- Working with other local authorities to ensure the rail industry delivers the Peninsula Rail Task Force 20-year strategy and other important investments outside the direct scope of the PRTF strategy:
- **A Resilient Network:** Rail studies, infrastructure and services needed to improve the resilience of the rail network.

- **Journey time improvements:** Rail studies and infrastructure improvements needed in the short, medium and long term to reduce journey times to and from key destinations.
- **Increased Capacity and Comfort:** Enhanced passenger facilities required to create a productive working environment and infrastructure enhancements needed to provide additional capacity on the network in the short, medium and long-term.
- **Rail Station Improvement Projects:** Improvements to Taunton and Bridgwater rail stations and approach to securing improvements at other stations.
- **New Stations and lines:** Our approach to providing advice to communities seeking to open new rail stations and lines; including new stations at Wellington, Langport/ Somerton and Chard Junction; and introducing main-line passenger services onto the West Somerset Railway.
- **Community Rail Partnerships:** Partnerships which involve communities in developing and promoting particular lines including the Severnside and Heart of Wessex Partnerships; and aspirations for new community rail partnerships.

1. Introduction

This Passenger Transport Strategy forms part of Somerset's Local Transport Plan known as the Future Transport Plan 2011-2026 (FTP). For this document public transport is defined as all modes of road transport where passengers do not rely on their own transport. This includes bus and coach services, rail services and other forms of transport such as private coaches, school buses, taxis, Demand Responsive Transport (DRT), Community Transport (CT) and Community Car Schemes.

Passenger transport can make a huge contribution to the sustainable transport networks that are needed to deliver objectives supporting the economy, accessibility and quality of life. At the same time, it can help minimise transport's adverse environmental impacts, reducing Somerset's carbon footprint.

Historically health, education, social care and public bus routes have developed independently and thus can suffer from a lack of co-ordination. Somerset has been successful in achieving a more integrated approach through its integrated passenger transport unit 'Transporting Somerset' and is continuing to improve the level of integration and efficiency to make the best use of the resources available across the different areas of transport.

Developed at a time of financial restraint and economic uncertainty, this strategy sets out the issues that have influenced the present service and proposes an outline strategy that will help us deliver the most robust public transport service under the existing circumstances

2. Context

It is important to see passenger transport as a part of the Council's overall transport strategy in the context of what it contributes to wider agendas. A summary of the National and Local context is described below.

2.1 National Context

2.1.1 Transport Act 1985, Transport Act 2000 and Local Transport Act 2008

The Transport Act 1985 includes a duty for local transport authorities to secure such public transport services as they consider appropriate to meet the requirements of the local area where these would not otherwise be met; and to have regard to the transport needs of members of the public who are elderly or disabled.

The Transport Act 2000 requires local transport authorities to develop policies for the promotion and encouragement of safe integrated efficient and economic transport to, from and within their area; namely a Local Transport Plan (LTP); and to carry out their functions to implement the policies of their LTP.

There used to be a separate obligation to prepare a 'bus strategy' under the 2000 Act but this was repealed by the Local Transport Act 2008 which also removed previous requirements to replace plans every five years and enabled transport policies to be published separately from the proposals to implement those policies (implementation plans).

2.1.2 Guidance on Local Transport Plans 2009

The Guidance on Local Transport Plans (Department for Transport (DfT), 2009) sets out the five overarching national transport goals:

- Support economic growth.
- Reduce carbon emissions.
- Promote equality of opportunity.
- Contribute to better safety, security and health.
- Improve quality of life and a healthy natural environment.

In addition, the current government has highlighted its key overarching transport priorities as helping economic growth and tackling carbon emissions. These sit alongside other priorities such as equality, affordability, accessibility and health & wellbeing.

2.1.3 The Equality Act 2010

This Act introduced a duty on public authorities to consider reducing socio-economic inequalities through strategic planning decisions on spending and service delivery. This involves tackling any gaps in the provision of public transport between low income areas and key public services. The Act also includes provisions that specifically aim to improve the accessibility of public transport for disabled people.

2.1.4 Creating Growth, Cutting Carbon¹ 2011

Following the change of government in 2010, a White Paper was published by the DfT which sets out the need to focus on low-cost, high-value interventions. A package approach is advocated, giving people choice at a local level for short trips and ‘nudging’ them towards sustainable choices. The Government challenges the bus companies to consider what improvement measures they can put in place to enhance the whole journey experience for users. The paper goes on to suggest that more needs to be done to enable partnership working between bus operators and local authorities as this has improved services for passengers in several locations. The document states that it has protected concessionary travel schemes in the Spending Review and is supporting low carbon buses through the Green Bus Fund.

2.1.5 A Green Light for Better Buses² 2012

The document sets out a series of reforms to improve local bus subsidy and regulation in England. The proposals have been formulated to attract more people onto buses, to ensure better value for money and to give local transport authorities more influence over their local bus networks.

2.1.6 Door to Door³ 2013

Door to Door sets out a strategy for improving sustainable transport integration allowing people to get from A to B using more than one mode of transport through integration of buses, rail, ferries and community schemes.

2.1.7 UK Industrial Strategy 2017⁴

The Government’s strategy to create an economy that boosts productivity and earning power throughout the UK. The Strategy is based on five ‘foundations of productivity’; Ideas, People, Infrastructure, Business Environment, and Places. The strategy also sets ‘Grand Challenges’ including the future of mobility seeking to become a world leader in the way people, goods and services move; and helping meet the needs of an ageing society. Passenger transport will play a key role in delivering the strategy, and local areas will be required to prepare local industrial strategies.

The industrial strategy comes at a time of increasing focus on innovation and investment in automation of road vehicles and in the modernisation of rail services to deliver higher capacity, speed and connectivity. New market entrants and new business models, such as ride-hailing services, ride sharing and ‘mobility as a service’, are challenging assumptions about how people travel, and new technologies will soon have the potential to transform public transport.

¹ Creating Growth, Cutting Carbon Making Sustainable Local Transport Happen, DfT January 2011.

² A Green Light for Better Buses (DfT March 2012 – only published on line)

³ Door to Door - March 2013

⁴ Industrial Strategy: building a Britain fit for the future, November 2017

2.1.8 Bus Services Act 2017⁵

The aim of the Act is to improve bus services for passengers by providing local authorities, the Secretary of State and bus operators with a new toolkit to enable improvements to be made to bus services in their areas.

The 2017 Act:

- Strengthened arrangements for partnership working between bus operators and local authorities in England, introducing new Advanced Quality and Enhanced Partnership schemes;
- Introduced, in England, bus franchising powers to replace previous Quality Contract Schemes;
- Modernised previous ticketing legislation and
- Provided the powers necessary to improve the information available to passengers through audio and visual on-board information (across Great Britain) and through the provisions of open data on timetable, fares and bus service arrival times (in England).

2.1.9 UK Strategic Vision for Rail 2017⁶

This document sets out the Government's vision for the railways including:

- A more reliable railway, rolling out joint teams for running day to day track and train operations;
- An expanded network, expanding commuter routes, opening routes to unlock housing and development and building a new generation of high capacity railways;
- A better deal for passengers, including smart ticketing, extending discounts, improving compensation arrangements, improving accessibility and wifi connectivity, consulting on the future of community rail, implementing new models for passenger services with long-term integrated partnerships between track and train;
- A modern workforce, with improved skills, diversity, training and development;
- A productive and innovative sector.

The vision 'challenges' partners to work with Government and the industry to develop compelling proposals for the next generation of rail schemes, identifying the places where rail is the right answer for local transport needs. The vision seeks to reduce the call on taxpayers by building commercially successful rail businesses and routes.

⁵ The Bus Services Act 2017 Commenced 27 June 2017

⁶ Connecting People: A Strategic Vision for Rail, DfT November 2017.

2.2 Local Context

2.2.1 Local Enterprise Partnership Productivity Strategy 2018

LEPs have been set up by the government to allow local areas to set up regional partnerships to plan and deliver economic growth in the region, working together to ensure economies of scale, joined up thinking and economic development.

The Heart of the South West LEP has recently published a 'productivity strategy'⁷ based on three themes: Leadership and Ideas; Housing, Connectivity & Infrastructure; and Employment, Skills & Learning. Poor transport links to education and work opportunities are noted as a barrier to social mobility. The strategy aims to secure a bigger proportion of national investment in transport infrastructure and to work more cohesively as an area to agree priorities that will unlock growth.

2.2.2 The Local Transport Plan 2011-2026

There are a variety of planning and strategy documents which form part of the Council's Local Transport Plan which we have called the 'Future Transport Plan' (2011-2026). These plans set out the Council's transport policies. These include the Bridgwater, Taunton and Wellington Transport Strategy, The Yeovil Transport Strategy, the Active Travel Strategy all of which have clear transport objectives and policies. The FTP and its supporting policies were developed as live documents however, and it is recognised that a review and update is now required and is scheduled during the timescale of this strategy and associated Implementation plan.

2.2.3 Somerset County Council County Plan and Business Plan 2018

This sets out the Council's emerging plans across four strategic outcomes as follows and this Passenger Transport Strategy aligns closely with these outcomes.

- A county infrastructure that drives productivity, supports economic prosperity and sustainable public services.
- Vibrant and well-balanced communities able to enjoy and benefit from the natural environment.
- Fairer life chances and opportunity for all.
- Improved health and wellbeing and more people living healthy, safe and independent lives for longer.

2.2.4 Somerset Growth Plan 2017-2030

The Plan aims to:

- Create a shared ambition and vision for sustainable and productive growth
- Support the delivery of infrastructure and housing to enable growth to take place

⁷ Stepping up to the Challenge – Heart of the South West Productivity Strategy, January 2018

- Increase the scale, quality and sustainability of economic opportunity in Somerset
- Ensure participation and access to these opportunities for local residents

The growth plan objectives are for a productive and innovative business community and economy; a labour force with the skills that businesses need; and infrastructure to support productivity and innovation.

One of the key aims is that “*Strategic connectivity into Somerset, including road, rail and public/community transport, will be improved.*”

With regard to labour force and skills, the plan notes the difficulties experienced by young people travelling from rural areas to training and employment opportunities, given the rural nature of the County and the limited provision of public transport; and notes the importance of community transport solutions.

Somerset is a popular tourist destination. There is a need to ensure that there is appropriate transport in place to serve both tourists and employees during the tourist seasons.

The plan also notes the importance of improved rail services on the main lines to Bristol and London; improvements to rail stations and building the case for train service enhancements. Reducing journey times to London Paddington to 90 minutes or less from Taunton, and London Waterloo to under 120 minutes from Yeovil will support economic growth. North-south links are equally as important. More frequent services from Taunton and more frequent, faster services from Bridgwater will deliver improved sub-regional connectivity whilst supporting the significant housing and employment growth along the Bristol, Bridgwater, Taunton and Exeter corridor.

2.2.5 Peninsula Rail Task Force 20-year strategy

The Peninsula Rail Task Force (PRTS), is a partnership of local authorities including Somerset, LEPs and Stakeholders, that has developed “Closing the Gap” a twenty-year strategic plan for the development of the South West rail network.

The three key aims of the plan are:

- Resilience and reliability
- Faster journey times
- Improved connectivity with sufficient capacity and comfort.

After carrying out extensive research and study with the rail industry, ‘Closing the Gap’ sets out a long-term cascade of improvements needed to close the growing gap between the South West and the rest of the UK in terms of rail funding and improvements. Investment is expected to deliver over £8.4 billion in economic benefits over the next 20 years.

3. Aims and Objectives of this Strategy

3.1. Aims

The aims for the Passenger Transport Strategy (2018-2026) are:

- **Bus Strategy:** Maintain services that are most essential in meeting transport needs where the commercial market is unable to provide viable services; and work closely with communities, operators and Government to change established models of rural bus service provision for the benefit of our communities.
- **Rail Strategy:** Work closely with other local authorities, community partnerships and the rail industry to achieve greater resilience & reliability, faster journey times and more capacity and connectivity in the rail system.

3.2 Objectives

The strategy has the following overarching objectives which guide the actions and initiatives set out in this document:

- Improve accessibility to services by enabling informed transport choices and linking transport options for easier multimode journeys.
- Enable sustainable passenger transport services through encouraging more viable commercial services and supporting communities to meet their own local transport needs.
- Work with partners to help provide a better passenger transport experience and improve connectivity to locations outside Somerset.

5 Bus Strategy

5.1 Background

Bus services across Somerset are provided by small, medium and large bus companies with First Group being the dominant provider. Due to the rural nature of Somerset a large proportion of the bus routes currently receive financial support for some or part of the route and are therefore run under contract to the Council.

5.1.1 Integrated Passenger Transport Unit

The Council set up an integrated passenger transport unit (Transporting Somerset) in 2003 to ensure that transport demands from several client groups are coordinated in the most efficient way. Transporting Somerset arranges and contracts transport for eligible social care clients and eligible health patients daily using a mixture of minibuses, taxi and voluntary drivers, as well as coordinating home to school transport, public and accessible transport, park and ride, and the concessionary fare scheme.

5.1.2 Dynamic Purchasing

The Council introduced dynamic purchasing in 2014 as a procurement mechanism to improve ease of access to Council contracts for operators of all sizes and to improve the efficiency and transparency of the tendering process for all parties.

5.1.3 SMART Ticketing

The Council has, over the past few years, worked closely with local bus operators to introduce SMART ticketing for concessionary travel and Further Education students. This has been challenging but is now completed. The Council is currently working with operators to roll out contactless payment on buses to improve loading times and provide ease of boarding for customers; and has provided a grant scheme to assist operators with the provision of necessary ticketing equipment.

5.1.4 Concessionary Travel Scheme

Somerset County Council administers the National Concessionary Travel Scheme across Somerset. This scheme allows for free travel for elderly and disabled pass holders on public buses. The bus operator provides the journey free of charge and the Local Authority reimburses the average return fare for the journey.

5.1.5 Park & Ride

Somerset currently has two Park & Ride sites to the east and west of Taunton. Silk Mills to the west can accommodate approximately 600 cars, and the Gateway site to the east has parking for approximately 1000 vehicles. A figure of eight service is run into the town centre and between sites every 12 minutes during peak time and 15 minutes off peak. Over 300,000 single passenger journeys are undertaken each year. Smart Ticketing on this service and card top ups to save handing over cash is

being introduced to improve boarding times. The level of patronage on the service remains insufficient to enable sustainable operation without financial support from the Council. Additional 'park and bus' sites (edge of town car parks on existing bus routes) are being considered in association with new 'garden community' development areas to the South West and North East of Taunton.

5.1.6 Demand Responsive Transport

Somerset financially supports a number of 'Demand Responsive' services across the County branded as 'Slinky'. These minibuses are run under contract by, in the main, community transport groups. These have been introduced to service communities and villages where there are no or few conventional buses. A fully demand responsive service was expensive to operate and under-utilised; so was changed to a semi-routed service, serving specific communities on set days of the week. This ensures coverage in areas where there is no longer a conventional bus service and improved patronage on each journey. The fare structure was also reviewed to ensure affordability for customers. Concessionary pass holders can use this service free of charge in line with conventional bus services as a discretionary policy in addition to the National Concessionary Scheme.

5.1.7 Community and Voluntary Transport

Community transport is defined here as transport that is operated by a community or voluntary organisation and not funded by The Council. There are currently two main types of scheme in Somerset:

- Community transport minibus schemes which are run by larger voluntary organisations and who usually employ drivers and office staff to run the scheme, and
- Community car schemes where volunteers provide lifts for people in need using their own private car.

There are currently 10 community minibus schemes in the county, undertaking approximately 130,000 trips per annum. The majority are small scale and locally based, providing a service predominantly for older and less able residents, including those who have to travel in a wheelchair, who cannot, or who find it difficult to, use ordinary public transport. Typical services are 'group hire', taking groups of residents to various activities such as luncheon clubs or days out, and regular shopping excursions to local towns along with provision to day care and health services. A few of the minibus schemes provide school bus services (mainly special educational needs students) under contract to the County Council (these have been allocated through the standard tendering process as are all services).

There are also 30 community car schemes operating across Somerset. These local village schemes provide access to services for residents. The schemes are run by volunteers who use their own cars to transport individuals to health appointments, shopping and a variety of other services.

5.1.8 Education, Social Care and Health Transport

Free home-to-school transport is provided for approximately 9,200 entitled children, including about 600 pupils with special educational needs, in accordance with statutory requirements. This is provided through contracts with a range of providers from large coaches to taxis. In addition, approximately 2,000 college students take advantage of the council's post-16 transport scheme, the County Ticket.

Home to school and college transport requirements are closely integrated with public transport where possible through the purchase of bus tickets for entitled students, this maximises resources and provides an efficient cost effective transport solution. Public transport bus services are also widely used by school children who are not entitled to free transport.

5.1.9 Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles

Taxis and private hire vehicles are an important part of the public transport network, playing a variety of roles in an integrated transport system. They can be particularly important in providing a flexible, demand responsive service at times or in places where a conventional bus is not available; acting as feeder services to the rail and bus networks, and providing door-to-door transport for people with mobility impairments or who need to carry heavy or bulky luggage. The Council also makes extensive use of them to transport school children, social care clients and eligible health patients.

5.1.10 Total Transport

The Council has largely completed development of a 'Total Transport' web portal and travel planning tool in partnership with Gloucestershire Council that will allow journey planning from origin to destination that includes all types of transport available; including community transport journeys and car schemes. The project will result in an online one-stop-shop and will eventually include the ability to pay for the journey online. The portal will also provide a 'noticeboard' facility which will allow individuals to offer lifts to others, join together to lift share or procure a taxi or bus to facilitate access to education, health and other services.

5.1.11 Publicity and Information

The council is an active member of the regional partnership that provides the 'Traveline' telephone enquiry service and travel information website. Printed timetable booklets are no longer provided in Somerset but information is available to download or can be requested should passengers not have access to a computer terminal.

Timetables are displayed at over 3000 bus stops, to complement the information provided by the commercial operators and to fulfil the Council's obligation to make sure that adequate local bus service information is available.

Somerset also has a website, Travel Somerset <https://www.travelsomerset.co.uk/> which in addition to providing live travel updates, also provides information on bus

services, community transport, car schemes and minibus services. This information will be reviewed once the Total Transport portal is fully up and running.

The Council has published a community car scheme toolkit to assist communities in setting up their own car schemes; using volunteer drivers and their cars provide a taxi-style, door-to-door service for residents who do not have access to their own or public transport. <https://www.travelsomerset.co.uk/community-car-schemes/>

5.1.12 Bus Buddies

Somerset County Council currently has a training programme for children and adults with learning or physical disabilities to help them use public transport. Training is undertaken over a period of weeks or months to train individuals on safety, boarding and disembarking the bus, ticketing and general awareness of situations. This programme reduces social exclusion but it is not a statutory requirement and is fully funded by Somerset County Council.

5.2 Key Challenges Opportunities and Risks

The Council is currently facing challenging times with reduced funding, increased population and more demand for individual, local services such as social care. The tension between increasing expectations, more choice for services i.e. the NHS 'Choose and Book' service and Social Care Person Centred Planning means rising costs and demands whilst funding diminishes.

The council has undertaken several major strategic reviews over the last few years, challenging how passenger transport services are delivered. A major review in 2002 led to the implementation of the Integrated Passenger Transport Unit; a passenger transport strategy review in 2005 formalised the core network and rural demand responsive/ community transport operations model; a strategic review in 2012 resulted in a wide range of outcomes driving greater commercialisation and procurement efficiency; a cross-cutting review is currently underway as a key theme within the corporate Medium Term Financial Planning (MTFP) process, establishing a corporate response to the need to reduce demand for transport focusing particularly on changes in policy and practice in adults and children's social care and opportunities to provide transport to mixed client groups.

The table below summarises the key challenges, looks at the opportunities these may bring and identifies some of the risks relevant to developing the public transport strategy.

Figure 5.1 Key Challenges, Opportunities and Risks

Challenges	Opportunities	Risks	How do we maximise the opportunities?
Maintaining adequate levels of service with reduced funding.	Work with operators and 3 rd sector partners to develop new, innovative services, stimulating demand for commercial services	Transport operating costs continue to rise therefore reducing the appetite for innovation amongst operators.	Develop enhanced partnership to improve bus services whilst working with our own fleet and community services to create

	which are sustainable for the future.		'feeder services' into the main bus routes.
Viability of the bus market. Despite a buoyant taxi market in Somerset the bigger coach and bus market has dwindled.		Increased cost through changes to bus service operators grant; increasing accessibility and emissions requirements; driver training requirements, maintenance and licencing requirements, running costs and driver availability.	The Council has undertaken a great deal of work to encourage new entrants onto our dynamic purchasing system, but there appears to be a genuine lack of operators in the market locally.
The number of paid passengers on public transport has diminished with approximately 75% of trips now being undertaken by concessionary pass holders.	Many concessionary pass holders have commented in local consultations that they may be prepared to pay a proportion of the cost of travel in order to ensure that a service is available to their local community.	This cost pressure has the unintended consequence in the current economic climate of contributing to the difficulty in maintaining the frequency and convenience of services that customers would prefer.	Pressure will remain unless the Government changes national policy.
All public service buses should be accessible to people with disabilities including those who need to remain in wheelchairs.	Requirements have been introduced to various classes of vehicle over the last few years, with coaches remaining the only remaining class requiring compliance by January 2020.	In a rural bus market where margins are low these requirements may unintentionally reduce the number of available bus services as operators reduce frequency and number of routes to reduce costs. May reduce flexibility to utilise a range of vehicle types to provide socially necessary transport services.	Seek freedoms and flexibilities in order to maintain services for some members of the community where there would otherwise be no transport option even if not fully accessible.
Potential changes to section 19 & 22 permits issued to 'not for profit' community transport organisations that use these permits to undertake transport contracts following concerns that current approach is not compatible with EU legislation on competition & PSV license requirements.	Since 1985, all community transport groups that are operating on a not-for-profit basis have been able to apply for permits to carry passengers in a bus or minibus without first holding the Public Service Vehicle operator's licence (PSV licence) that would otherwise be required. Many of Somerset's community transport providers rely on a proportion of contracted	Likely to result in increased costs for CT groups and a much-reduced volunteer driver pool due to enhanced training requirements. CT groups may struggle to remain viable and their withdrawal from the Market is likely to lead to significantly increased costs for delivery of statutory school and social care transport services.	Respond strongly to Government consultation setting out likely impacts of proposed changes.

	work to enable them to deliver wider community transport services.		
Meeting the transport access needs of an increasing elderly population.	Working in partnership with bus and community operators to increase the use of public transport services. Increase the number of sustainable community car and minibus schemes across Somerset	Lack of funding and staff time which could limit the ability to improve quantity and quality of service.	This would improve the sustainability of bus operators and help to improve access for rural opportunities.
Reducing car use/dependency to improve public transport sustainability.	Increases in fuel and insurance costs may help to influence travel change.	Public transport network not comprehensive enough to ensure change.	Total transport web portal will provide better information on options for travel including car sharing.
Improving punctuality and reliability of bus services as car ownership continues to grow.	Higher fuel costs and growing environment issues may increase more use of public transport. SCC will work closely with operators to review networks and develop services in areas of high demand	Disability requirements compliance and legislation relating to wheelchair access could make less well used routes financially unviable for operators.	Enhanced partnerships will encourage operators to improve on board ticketing, introducing contactless payments and real time information through ticket machines to improve boarding times.
Maintaining/ improving public transport infrastructure with reduced funding.	Ensure developer contributions to public transport through planning obligations. (Community Infrastructure Levy and S106). Develop business cases for infrastructure that benefits public transport journey times. New funds such as Housing Infrastructure Fund.	CIL funding limited to general infrastructure, limited funding available through 106 agreements for buses.	Employ 'smarter' processes to ensure passenger transport is considered on major developments linking to Garden Town Plans for Taunton and District Strategic Transport Policies.
Creating cost effective transport to meet demands which are increasingly dispersed i.e. individual care plans for social care clients.	New legislation allows for more flexibility in operating community transport services New public health awareness of the need for good public transport.	Further requirements for individual services could outstrip the transport available.	The Total Transport portal will enable users to see transport options and allow individuals to connect through the notice board.

Finding new funding streams to maintain a public transport network when local government funding is reduced.	Working with other Authorities to share best practice, work together to reduce costs and bid for funding at a regional level. Working with District Councils and developers to raise awareness of transport issues and bid for developer funding.		Working closely with DfT, other Local Authorities and Districts to prepare and bid for resources along with improved marketing of services through incentivising systems and ticketing offers. Seek freedoms and flexibilities from Government within a partnership for innovation.
Improve information and technology on and off bus to improve the users experience and reduce boarding times.	Working with operators to ensure a consistent approach to allow interoperable ticketing on journeys across Somerset. Creation of a web portal for travel information across a range of public transport services	Operators may not work together to share information and revenue. IT infrastructure unable to provide a stable environment to enable a variety of travel modes to be shown in a clear, readable format.	Implementation of contactless payments of bus and smart card top-up off-bus. Through EP's improve next bus and stop time technology on and off bus. Total Transport provision for ticket options an information.
Ensuring adequate access to Further Education as the school participation age rises with no additional funding provided.	Review and implement changes in policy and provision, equalising charging across FE provision.	Several FE SEN students may choose adult social care services rather than remaining at school/college.	Undertake a review of commercial and supported provision to ensure access to education and implantation of a fair charging policy for all.
Managing Policy and organisational change within the organisation.	Structural change within the Council could lead to a transformational review of transport provision.	Speed of change could increase costs in the short term i.e. some individuals receiving direct payments could leave space seats on previously full buses.	

5.3 Proposed Bus Strategy

5.3.1 Network strategy and integration

The Council intends to continue to develop the current strategic approach which is to promote a core network of commercial or semi-commercial services linking the major settlements with fixed route operations, and to fill in the gaps with demand responsive services, community & voluntary transport and community car schemes.

Due to the challenges in achieving commercial operations the Council's funds for supported services are likely to continue to be utilised in supporting many of the semi-commercial core routes and the demand responsive network.

We will actively work with public transport operators and community groups to encourage joint working to create a 'hierarchy' of vehicles to match the service provision to the demand and social need.

We will explore the role of smaller market towns as interchange locations to allow rural villages to be served, where possible, by sustainable community transport schemes such as community car schemes, community transport and car sharing. Larger buses would then provide an onward journey along the main corridors into the larger conurbations. This solution would improve the sustainability of larger public vehicles, reduce journey times and improve punctuality.

We will work with Community Transport organisations to explore areas where schemes can be changed or enhanced to deliver more provision across the County

We will work with communities and Parishes to explore car scheme, car sharing and car club opportunities. We will continue to enhance our current car scheme 'toolkit' to assist in the development of new schemes.

A longstanding network of services providing access to Further Education Colleges continues to be provided, funded through provision of the County Ticket which offers student's a negotiated rate and access to services provided by several operators. FE services are subsidised by the Council and Colleges.

The public transport network is not sufficient to meet home to school transport needs, so a home to school transport network is funded by the County Council through tendering individual routes based on demand driven by pupils' legal entitlement to free transport. Spare seats on home to school transport are offered if available as pay seats for those who do not have a legal entitlement to free transport.

Opportunities to achieve a greater level of integration between public and school transport services are being considered and will be further developed as part of this strategy.

We will work with Health, Social Care and Education providers to try reduce the 'peak' times for transport. Facilitating discussions around changing school times, changing care times and providing health clinics which service set geographical areas at certain times.

We will work towards a more integrated passenger network to allow people options for transport, reducing downtime of vehicles and improving patronage on bus services and community transport. We will work with bus and coach operators to explore utilisation of school buses outside of peak school times, allowing public access on contracted vehicles and making use of the DfT's relaxing of legislation on permit vehicles.

In the mid to longer term we will work with rail and railway stations to promote joined up interoperable services to link workers and tourist to town centres

5.3.2 Total Transport- information and access

We will launch our Total Transport web portal as a one-stop shop for travel information and passenger transport journey planning, and will continue to build and develop the portal to improve the way people access transport in Somerset. We will also use intelligence from the portal to inform our assessment of transport need.

We will provide access to information via mobile devices which will allow the same information to be visible on a mobile phone for those who do not own or have access to a computer.

We will work with operators, other Local Authorities and smart ticketing companies to continue the roll out of Smart Ticketing across Somerset. In recent years we have implemented smart ticketing for concessionary travel and more recently for our further education student ticket. We plan to develop this further to encourage

- Smartcards for the Park & Ride service, allowing on line top up tickets or on line purchase and top up on site
- Interoperable smart tickets on public transport services across the County allowing individuals to change buses using one ticket

Our longer-term aim is to facilitate rail and public transport operators to work together to develop an interoperable ticket to make it easier for individuals entering Somerset or travelling across Somerset to use the network of services.

We will also where possible improve bus stop information with next bus texting and clear information of services.

We will introduce 'real-time' information boards in urban areas and work with public transport operators to introduce on bus stop and fare information.

5.3.3 Assessment of need and financial support

Ongoing reductions in the Council's overall funding settlement from Government have led us to adopt a strong commercialisation strategy with operators. Over the last 5 or 6 years we have engaged in an annual process of rebalancing our budgets in the context of the full range of statutory services and competing duties/ risks that we are required to fund, resulting in a reduction in funding available for supported public transport services.

We have managed this reduction through an annual conversation with communities and operators to identify where our available financial support is most needed based on the likely availability of other transport choices for communities. Our withdrawal of financial support for individual routes has often resulted in services continuing to operate but on a more commercial basis, or through support from other bodies such as town and parish councils.

We will continue to update our information on the public transport needs of our communities in the light of available commercial provision and other transport opportunities before making any changes to the supported transport network. We will map the network of current services against the needs of the community to ensure the best coverage possible across Somerset within the resources we have available; and will consult with communities to ensure that the potential impact of any changes to Council funded services are fully understood and inform our choices about where to utilise our available resources.

5.3.4 Market stability and stimulation

We are currently in dialogue with bus operators to review the stability of the bus market considering the issues and risks discussed in section 5.2 above; and to discuss mechanisms which will enable sustained and stable commercial operations to continue.

We will work to stimulate new entrants into the passenger transport market in Somerset to ensure the existence of a competitive market for cost effective transport service provision.

5.3.5 Bus Infrastructure and Services for new housing and economic development

The Development Planning Process

Only a small proportion of the journeys to work in Somerset are currently made by public transport with 3 out of 5 residents using a car or van to access employment⁸. In areas where new development is proposed it will be essential to ensure that these areas are fully served by accessible bus services and attractive facilities for bus users. These may include park and ride services and should be supported, where appropriate, by bus priority schemes and parking restraints.

⁸ <http://www.somersetintelligence.org.uk/transport-statistics-briefing-paper-2013.pdf>

We will work with developers and planners to ensure access to and from services for new housing and commercial developments is discussed at an early stage of the planning process. Where appropriate we will secure such planning obligations or contributions for public transport infrastructure and services as are necessary to ensure the development is acceptable in planning terms with regard to its accessibility and congestion impacts.

Our transport requirements in the context of the development planning process are set out in our 'Transport and Development' policies 2011 (accessed from <http://www.somerset.gov.uk/policies-and-plans/plans/future-transport-plan>) including assessment of development impacts, operational design and layout to facilitate bus access and bus priority, and safeguarding routes.

Travel plans offer opportunities to increase the proportion of journeys to work and business trips made by public transport. These are usually a blend of physical measures (e.g. enhanced services and facilities) and soft measures (e.g. information, leaflets and marketing). Travel plans also encourage developers and employers to adopt a supporting set of travel policies and targets for increasing the use of public transport for commuting and business travel.

Our guidance to developers preparing travel plans as part of the development planning process can be accessed from <http://www.somerset.gov.uk/policies-and-plans/plans/new-developments/planning-guidance>

A38 Bus Priority Corridor

The A38 corridor between Bridgwater, Taunton and Wellington is a particularly important link in supporting the growth and development of the County. Significant levels of employment, retail and residential development are proposed along this corridor within the three towns including urban extensions at Comeytrove, Monkton Heathfield, South Bridgwater and North East Bridgwater. Congestion is already an issue along sections of the corridor and it will be important to increase the proportion of people who travel to and from the new development areas by public transport compared to current typical travel choices if severe congestion is to be avoided; and to enable the development areas to be fully built-out in due course.

We will therefore progress proposals for a bus priority corridor on the A38 initially focusing on a first phase between Monkton Heathfield and Taunton town centre.

The bus priority corridor is identified in Taunton Deane Borough Council's core strategy and infrastructure delivery plan as well as the Bridgwater/ Taunton/ Wellington transport strategy and the emerging Taunton Transport Strategy refresh.

Early feasibility studies have been undertaken to consider the routeing options and broad nature of the works that will be needed to enhance the existing roads to provide faster bus journeys and better passenger facilities to ensure that bus

services maintain an attractive journey time compared to other traffic as congestion grows. More detailed feasibility studies are shortly to be commissioned.

We will continue explore opportunities to secure the funding needed to design and construct the bus priority scheme and are currently pursuing a grant under the Housing Infrastructure Fund for construction of the first phase of the scheme.

5.3.6 Partnership for innovation

We will initially seek to develop an informal bus partnership to work with the main bus operators and Government to develop a more sustainable model of rural bus service provision for the benefit of our communities. We will then consider whether provisions for more formal partnership arrangements under the Bus Services Act 2017 would be an appropriate mechanism to secure improved services.

We will actively engage in bidding for new monies, when they are available, to enhance connectivity and access, and when suitable work with other local authorities to bid jointly for funding across the South West.

6 Rail Strategy

6.1 Background

Although Somerset County Council does not provide rail services itself it does have a role in helping to improve services through partnership working with rail providers and interest groups and in communicating the case for rail investment in the area to Central Government and the rail industry.

Somerset has four rail lines (excluding heritage and private freight lines), served by three Train Operating Companies; each of these lines are described below.

6.1.1 Bristol to Exeter & Penzance Line

Services between Taunton and Bristol Temple Meads also serve Bridgwater, and Highbridge and Burnham-on-Sea. Great Western Railways (GWR) run a local stopping service and some older trains are used, but are being replaced as GWR upgrades its fleet. The line is supported by the Severnside Community Rail Partnership and the Council provides financial support towards this group.

Cross Country run longer distance services between Penzance and Edinburgh, calling at Taunton between once and twice an hour, offering a faster service to and from Taunton.

6.1.2 London Paddington to Penzance - Great Western Main Line & Reading to Taunton (Berks and Hants Line).

GWR runs services approximately once an hour between Taunton and Paddington, with two services per hour to London in the morning and from London in the evening. Services call at Castle Cary around once an hour during these peak periods but are less frequent at other times. One service in each direction calls at Frome per day. The line is not supported by a specific stakeholder group.

6.1.3 London Waterloo to Exeter – The West of England Line

South West Trains operates services between London Waterloo and Exeter, serving Templecombe, Yeovil Junction and Crewkerne in Somerset. The line has an hourly frequency, running a clockface timetable⁹. The section of the line in and around Somerset is supported by the Salisbury to Exeter Lineside Consortium of Authorities (SELCA) although the Council does not provide financial support towards this group.

6.1.4 Bristol to Weymouth – The Heart of Wessex line

⁹ In a clockface timetable services run at a consistent time throughout the day, for example at twenty minutes past the hour. for much of the day

GWR operates services between Bristol and Weymouth calling at Frome, Bruton, Castle Cary and Yeovil Pen Mill in Somerset. Trains tend to run every two to three hours, although they run more frequently at certain times of day. Some older trains are used, but these are due to be replaced. The line is a designated community railway supported by the Heart of Wessex Community Rail Partnership, and the Council provides financial support towards this group.

6.1.5 Peninsula Rail Task Force 20 Year Strategy and ‘Speed to the West’ study

The Peninsula Rail Task Force (PRTS) was set up by several local authorities across the South West Peninsula to develop a long-term rail investment plan for the area with the rail industry and to press for increased levels of investment. Somerset has been a member since its inception and is joined by Cornwall Council, Devon County Council, Plymouth City Council, Torbay Council, Cornwall and Isle of Scilly LEP and Heart of the South West LEP. In November 2016, the group published “Closing the Gap” a strategic plan for the development of the South West rail network where it outlined the long-term aspirations for rail in the South West Peninsula.

<https://peninsularailtaskforce.files.wordpress.com/2016/11/prtf-closing-the-gap.pdf>

A key evidence base for the PRTF strategy is the ‘Speed to the West’ study undertaken by GWR to examine in detail the opportunities to improve journey times on various sections of the line between London and Penzance. This demonstrates that there are significant opportunities for valuable ‘marginal’ journey time gains to be achieved through incremental renewals programmes as well as larger journey time savings from major infrastructure enhancement.

6.1.6 Rail Re-franchising

The Department for Transport (DfT) determines the specification for train services in the UK and awards franchises to train operating companies to run services in line with the required specification. Franchises are often awarded for long periods of time and re-franchising processes are a significant opportunity to influence the specification of rail services operated. The specification can include a range of outputs including timetables, requirements for rolling stock, car parking and many other matters.

In late 2017 the Government decided to extend the current franchise for the Great Western franchise which covers a many of the services used by Somerset Communities with the current operator GWR, until March 2020 (and may further extend this to 2022 via a direct award), while several upgrades are being undertaken on the service. The DfT recently consulted on several matters related to a replacement franchise, including whether to split the franchise into smaller areas.

The Council’s consultation response noted that it was not apparent what the passenger benefits of small franchise areas would be and that this would introduce problems with potentially fragmented journeys and difficulties with interoperability of ticketing.

We will continue to respond to franchise consultation processes to influence the franchise specification.

6.1.7 Network Rail Strategic Business Plans

In February 2018 Network Rail published its strategic business plans for Control Period 6 – 2019 to 2024. This comprised a family of documents, including thematic plans, individual route plans, and a system operator plan. They are all available on the Network Rail web site; the plan for the Western Route can be found at:- <https://cdn.networkrail.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Western-Route-Strategic-Plan.pdf>

6.1.8 Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline (RNEP) Framework

The Department for Transport issued the RNEP framework as a ‘New approach for rail enhancements’ in March 2018 to move away from the previous rigid five-year cycle towards a rolling programme of investment for enhancements to the railway. This will not affect the current investment cycle for operations, maintenance and renewals activities carried out by Network Rail to keep the existing railway running. Government’s intention is for more enhancements to be promoted, funded and/or financed by a range of parties, for example the Transforming Cities Fund, Local Enterprise Partnerships, Sub-national Transport Bodies, Local Authorities, Metropolitan Mayors, and the private sector.

Enhancements must provide outcomes that meet one or more of the following priorities:

- Keeping people and goods moving smoothly and safely.
- Delivering the benefits from committed programmes and projects already underway.
- Offering more: new and better journeys and opportunities for the future.
- Changing the way the rail sector works for the better.

The case for all enhancement schemes will need to be supported by a robust business case including value for money and affordability, a focus on the outcomes for rail users and the taxpayer, impact on the existing network, demand, balance of the portfolio & opportunities for private investment.

Development of the pipeline of enhancements will follow five stages of activity separated by formal investment decision gateways. The first three stages, “Determine”, “Develop” and “Design” are characterised by increasing levels of detail and understanding. The final two stages are, “Deliver” and “Deploy.” By the time these latter stages are reached, all investment decisions have been taken and the focus is on building and operating the Enhancement and realising the benefits that are anticipated.

6.1.9 Partnership Plan for the West

In March 2018, the rail industry partners published a plan entitled “In Partnership for Britain’s Prosperity – The West of England”. This outlines four commitments for change along with a detailed narrative on the current and planned investment in improved infrastructure and services:

- Strengthening the partnership railway’s contribution to the economy in the West of England
- Increasing customer satisfaction by creating better journeys
- Boosting our communities through localised decision making and investment
- Attracting diverse talent and providing rewarding careers

6.2. Proposed Rail Strategy

Somerset’s aims for rail improvements follow those set out in “Closing the Gap”¹⁰ with the addition of other localised aims which are equally important for Somerset but fall outside of the direct scope of the PRTF strategy.

We will continue to work with our partner authorities, the rail industry and other stakeholders to press for improvements to rail service and infrastructure which will benefit Somerset communities and the South West as a whole.

6.2.1 A Resilient Network.

The South West is dependent on a limited strategic transport network, and this is particularly so to the west of Taunton. The network suffers from deteriorating infrastructure resulting from a history of underinvestment and damage caused by extreme weather such as the flooding on the Somerset levels.

Network Rail warns that there will be an increase in disruption and closures while the south west already suffers from fewer than 50% of long distance trains arriving on time⁴. The network currently has no alternative route in the event of the mainline west of Exeter being closed for maintenance. Improvements to the diversionary route between Exeter and Castle Cary, allowing both London and local services could create economic benefits of £50m over 30 years⁴.

The development of future freight, distribution and of logistics hubs such as seen in Bridgwater, and indeed the continuation of existing activity, can only occur if the network is resilient.

The PRTF strategy outlines the following requests for rail industry investment in Somerset:

Improvements requested by 2019:

- Completion of flood resilience works on the Somerset Levels, building on existing schemes such as those in the Somerset Flood Action Plan.

¹⁰ <https://peninsularailtaskforce.files.wordpress.com/2015/11/prtf-report-document-final.pdf>

- Completion of Exeter – Yeovil – Castle Cary route development study to conclude how best to improve the resilience of route which plays an important role as a diversionary route for the Berks and Hants line. We are seeking journey time improvements and the ability to maintain an hourly service between Yeovil and Bristol whilst accommodating the diversionary role.

Improvements requested by 2029:

- Castle Cary to Exeter capacity upgrade: Additional double track sections on the routes between Castle Cary and Yeovil and Yeovil and Exeter St Davids.

Requests for rail industry investment in resilience which fall outside the direct scope of the PRTF proposals:

- Improved connectivity between the West of England Line and the Heart of Wessex Line (and improved connectivity between Yeovil Pen Mill and Yeovil Junction stations); including consideration of a Yeovil South Chord which provides potential for increased train frequency and greater passenger volumes as well as relieving congestion on the Heart of Wessex line during Great Western diversions.

6.2.2 Journey time improvements

Journey time improvements, in particular to London but also to Bristol and the Midlands, have a huge potential to improve connectivity and productivity and therefore are key to increasing economic growth. Work undertaken by PRTF demonstrates a decrease of 6% in productivity for every addition 100 minutes travel time from London.

The South West suffers from poor earliest arrival and average journey times from London compared to many destinations in the UK. Within the peninsula economy Gross Value Added (GVA) per head is significantly below national average and is over-reliant on public sector and seasonal employment. It is estimated that a journey time improvement of 15 minutes can lead to an increase of £300 million in GVA and additional 1500 jobs.

Improved connectivity and faster journeys provide an opportunity to enable modal shift to rail and its connecting services (such as buses) and relieving congestion on the roads.

The PRTF strategy outlines the following requests for rail industry investment in Somerset:

Improvements requested by 2019:

- Development of the Paddington route infrastructure schemes with strong business cases to a feasibility design stage, covering Paddington to Penzance.

- Exeter-Waterloo timetable study and infrastructure development to feasibility design stage for redoubling of track and passing loops between Salisbury and Yeovil.
- Exeter-Bristol timetable study and initial options appraisal to identify specific infrastructure and service improvement proposals on this section of the line including options for improved connectivity at Bridgwater.
- Intercity express trains introduction, sleeper upgrade and major frequency improvements supported by depot and station capability works.
- 2 direct trains per hour between London and Plymouth, Major service improvements through hourly semi-fast services supported by electrification to Bedwyn and major capacity and linespeed improvements between Newbury and Westbury (Forecast to reduce journey times to Taunton by 4 minutes).

Improvements requested by 2029:

- Further infrastructure improvements to save a further 7 minutes to Taunton as set out in the PRTF 20 year strategy and speed to the west study.
- Implement proposals for improved journey times and connectivity on the Exeter – Bristol- Birmingham rail line including improved connectivity at Bridgwater to support Hinkley Point and housing growth.

6.2.3 Increased Capacity and Comfort

Passenger growth within the Peninsula over the last 21 years is twice the national average at 128%. In the last 15 years passenger numbers at Taunton have increased by 114%. Growth has continually been greater than the industry forecasts and this has resulted in over capacity on rail services.

The average age of trains is over 32 years old and is the oldest high speed and regional fleet in the UK. Rolling stock is unable to meet equality regulations required by 2020 making it unsuitable for passengers with disabilities.

The development at Hinkley provides an opportunity for rail to improve supply chain links which also helps to provide improved sustainability.

The PRTF strategy outlines the following requests for rail industry investment in Somerset:

Improvements requested by 2019:

- Improved customer experience facilities on trains and at stations including major Wi-Fi capability upgrade and on-board entertainment, as a minimum standard.
- Development and enhancement of connections and services to the Midlands and Bristol.

Improvements requested by 2024:

- Improvement to Cross-Country services between Bristol and west of Exeter. Timetable to deliver 2 trains per hour to meet passenger growth.
- Further capacity upgrades Newbury to Westbury.

Improvements requested by 2029:

- Castle Cary to Cogload Junction capacity upgrade. Additional signal sections to increase capacity by reducing headways.
- Exeter to Waterloo line redoubling of track and passing loops between Salisbury and Yeovil.

Improvements requested by 2030 and beyond:

- Inclusion in the long-term rail industry electrification programme to the South west peninsula.

Requests for rail industry investment in resilience which fall outside the direct scope of the PRTF proposals:

- Additional train sets to increase the frequency of service on the Heart of Wessex line to achieve a 'clockface' departure pattern, hourly at peak times and two-hourly off-peak. This will provide improved arrival and departure times for Yeovil bound commuters and students from North and South and deliver much needed additional capacity at Bristol, Cardiff and Westbury.
- The Government consulted recently on potential of further Community Rail Partnerships which have proved very effective in other rural communities. Much of the existing main-line rail network operates to connect Somerset outwardly with the wider region with very limited rail connectivity within the county connecting the more rural parts of Somerset. There may well be future opportunities for new Community Rail Partnerships within Somerset. In the context of this Strategy, the County Council would support further exploration if the Government come forward with more detailed proposals in the future.

6.2.4 Rail Station Improvements

We will progress rail station improvement projects where funding packages have been secured by the Council or partners; and will continue to provide advice to communities seeking to secure securing the necessary funds for early-stage feasibility and development of improvements rail station improvement projects.

Taunton Station: In early 2015 the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) approved £4.6M from the Local Growth Fund to match-fund sums of money allocated to the Great Western franchise to improve Taunton Train Station. The planned improvements include:

- Building a 400 space multi-story car park;
- Changing the location of the main entrance to better integrate with the town centre and routes through the new Firepool development;

- Forecourt enhancements to improve the quality and functionality of the public space; and
- Improved transport interchange.

The Council are working closely with Great Western Railway (GWR) who are delivering the project which is scheduled to be complete by mid-2019.

Bridgwater Station: Funding, including £800,000 from the Department for Transport and £400,000 from a developer funding agreement with EDF Energy, has also been secured for Bridgwater Station rail improvements. These include:

- Public realm enhancement
- Car parking, and
- Public transport interchange.

The Council has a funding agreement with GWR to deliver the improvements.

Castle Cary Station: This station is a key rail head for eastern Somerset and the Somerset levels providing connectivity to London and the South East with a journey time of less than 2 hours to London Paddington provided by 8/9 trains in each direction per day. Lack of parking capacity is a key constraint on use of the station and may be discouraging potential passengers from using the station. GWR are concerned that an increasing number of potential new passengers will be lost as they cannot be accommodated in the existing car park creating a gap in demand and supply of around 20% by 2020. GWR have submitted funding bids (for instance to the LEP Local Growth Fund) to increase the car park by 100 spaces but have so far been unsuccessful. We will continue to work with GWR to explore funding opportunities for provision of additional parking space.

Other station improvements: A range of rail station facilities require improvement at each of Somerset's stations including parking, cycle parking, step free access to platforms and a range of other facilities. We will continue to bid for funds for improvements to rail station facilities where opportunities arise, where the bidding process is affordable, and where we consider that bids are likely to successfully meet the funding criteria.

6.2.5 New Stations and lines.

Several communities are actively promoting opening or reopening rail stations in Somerset. In line with the Government's approach to new rail investment set out in 6.1.8 above; The Council supports the principle of reopening stations where there is sufficient demand to make the service viable and where the necessary timetable changes can be accommodated without detriment to existing services or desired future service enhancements.

Business cases following rail industry requirements are necessary to demonstrate the feasibility and economic benefit of any proposals. The first step would be to understand what the demand/ market and potential patronage is for a new rail

service, and the second step would be to undertake a timetable study to see if the desired service can be accommodated before progressing and detailed engineering feasibility activity.

The Council is currently unable to provide funds towards feasibility studies and business cases of this nature for new rail stations or lines; but will insofar as we are able, continue to provide advice to communities seeking to secure the necessary funds for early-stage feasibility and development of improvements rail station improvement projects.

Current proposals which are known to be promoted locally are highlighted below although other opportunities may also arise in the future:

Wellington Station: The Council supports the proposal to reopen a rail station at Wellington (in conjunction with a station at Collumpton). Early stage feasibility work including a demand and timetable study have been progressed largely funded by the District Councils. The next step is for the funding partners to commission the production of a Strategic Outline Business case for each station, including desk top initial feasibility studies to meet the requirements of the new DfT Rail Enhancements process. The Council will continue to dedicate officer time to working with the rail industry, local authority colleagues and communities to help them move proposals forward.

The Council's recent response to the Great Western Franchise consultation (February 2018) requested that the new franchise further develop the business case for reopening a station at Wellington. Our response urged DfT to make available development funding for the required early stage feasibility studies to enable bids into capital funds such as new stations fund.

Langport/ Somerton Station: The Council is supportive of the proposal to open a new rail station between Castle Cary and Taunton noting that there is a 28 mile stretch of line without a rail station with significant travel distances by car for local communities to access their nearest station; and has facilitated positive talks between the local community and the rail industry.

Current signalling constraints mean there is insufficient capacity to accommodate stops between Castle Cary and Taunton. Fast trains are often delayed by slower trains on this section of the line, and timetabling associated with introducing a stop would need careful consideration to avoid worsening the situation. A potential service strategy would be to introduce a new local stopping service in addition to the current hourly fast intercity service and semi-fast stopping service (every 2 hrs from Dec 2018) that stops at Castle Cary. Considering the geometry and gradient of the existing line a new station at Langport East may be feasible rather than at Somerton which has more constraints.

Early stage passenger demand and timetable studies are now needed to move the proposal forward.

The Council's recent response to the Great Western Franchise consultation (February 2018) requested that the new franchise further develop the business case for reopening a station at Langport. Our response urged DfT to make available development funding for the required early stage feasibility studies to enable bids into capital funds such as new stations fund.

Chard Junction Station: The Council is supportive of the proposal to open a new rail station at Chard Junction and has provided advice to local communities who are actively promoting the proposals. As with other proposals early stage passenger demand and timetable studies are now needed to move the proposal forward.

The Council's response to the Network Rail Wessex Route Study draft for consultation (2014) supports Devon County Council's case for extending trains to Axminster and the associated proposal to provide a new loop at Whimple. As this would necessitate expensive construction of turn-round facilities at Axminster, we requested that Network Rail explore a potential extension to Chard on the basis that it may be more cost effective to re-instate a platform at Chard Junction rather than new infrastructure at Axminster with added benefits for communities in South Somerset.

West Somerset Railway: The Council is supportive of community proposals to introduce non-heritage rail services running between Taunton and Bishops Lydeard; and potentially to Minehead. Whilst main-line services have run on the line from time-to-time, it is not clear whether a regular service is feasible, viable or sustainable given the engineering constraints and uncertainty over commercial demand.

The service would need to run without negatively affecting the operations of the West Somerset Railway and the Council would also wish to ensure that any services were not detrimental to plans for improving journey times on the main line. In addition, any service would need to be commercially viable.

Detailed studies are needed to explore these issues and develop firm proposals.

The Council's recent response to the Great Western Franchise consultation (February 2018) requested that the new franchise explore opportunities to introduce regular mainline services utilising the West Somerset Railway between Taunton, Bishops Lydeard and Minehead.

Shepton Mallet Parkway: Mendip District Council is in the early stages of exploring the feasibility and long-term potential of utilising existing freight lines re-connecting Shepton Mallet in the heart of the district to Frome, London, the South Coast, Bristol and beyond, bringing the opportunity for residents in a significant part of the District to access the rail network via a parkway station.

6.2.6 Community Rail Partnerships

Community rail lines are local railways supported by a local partnership organisation who work with and engage local people, public authorities, volunteers and the rail industry in the development and promotion of rail services and stations.

The Government is currently reviewing the role of community rail partnerships and launched a consultation in 2017 to inform updated policy in this area, further details of which are expected later in 2018.

There are currently two community rail partnerships in Somerset covering the Severnside and Heart of Wessex lines. Currently only the Heart of Wessex line is formally designated by the Department for Transport as a community rail line. Other opportunities may also emerge, especially in the east of the County which is currently poorly served by rail transport.

The Council will maintain existing financial contributions to support the work of these partnerships.

Severnside Community Rail Partnership: This is a community interest group that works with local communities to encourage the use of local trains, ensure easy access to local stations and where possible enhance them. Somerset County Council is a principle partner and funder along with North East Somerset Council, Bristol City Council, North Somerset Council, South Gloucestershire Council, Great Western Railway and Cross Country Trains.

Heart of Wessex Community Rail Partnership: This partnership operates under a memorandum of understanding (from 2010) between Bath & North East Somerset Council, Bristol City Council, Dorset County Council, Somerset County Council, South Somerset District Council, West Dorset District Council, Wiltshire Council and Great Western Railways. The partnership aims to build the case for additional services on the line, promote use of the service, improve facilities, act as a community forum and involve communities in the provision and maintenance of facilities. This line is one of the 41 formally designated 'community railways' in the UK.

7. Monitoring the outcomes of the strategy

In order to monitor the outcomes of this strategy and ensure the aims and objectives are achieved, it is important to establish a means of measuring progress therefore:

- We will monitor the number of people using the passenger network through the collection of patronage data from the bus and rail companies, where available.
- We will monitor user satisfaction of services through the National Highways Transport satisfaction survey (NHT).
- We will monitor bus punctuality using figures collected by the Council.

- We will monitor the effectiveness of partnership working through the number and type of new community based transport operations and increased use of existing services.
- We will work with the Peninsula Rail Task Force to develop a set of metrics to monitor successful delivery of the PRTF 20-year strategy by DfT and the rail industry.

8. Conclusion

This document sets out the Council's overall passenger transport strategy including our strategic approach to working with transport operators, communities and other stakeholders to maintain and where possible improve access to basic services such as education, employment, healthcare and food shopping; and our strategic requirements and ambitions for improved rail connectivity, journey times, capacity and comfort.

The strategy reflects and responds to the challenges faced by a large rural area with dispersed communities, increasing demographic pressures and reducing financial provision from central government.

Accessibility in Somerset is constrained by limited public transport services as is the case in many rural areas, and a lack of comprehensive information about transport options. Better integration of services, whether between different modes or between towns and villages, has also been highlighted and is an area that this strategy needs to address to tackle rural exclusion.

The document sets out our current wide-ranging approach to operating, managing and co-ordinating a range of bus, taxi, and community-based accessible transport; and our approach to maximising investment in our bus and rail networks through engagement with new development proposals and working with partners to press for investment in key infrastructure projects.

Our aim is to maximise commercial provision, ensuring public bus subsidy is used where it is most needed. Our Network strategy is to further develop a hierarchy of solutions based on core commercial routes and feeder services, strengthening the coherence, coordination and interchange between the routes and building more community based solutions.

The strategy sets out how we will pursue funding opportunities, improve information and technology and look for new and innovative ways to support transport access in the future. We will do this in partnership with operators, community groups, businesses and Somerset residents.

Key initiatives are to explore how we can reduce peak demand and make better use of available vehicles, for instance by staggering start times for key services such as health and education, and through further integration between client groups.

Improving access to all transport options is an important strand within the strategy with a particular focus on our new 'Total Transport' one-stop-shop web portal which will enable people to view and book transport for a wide variety of purposes and also enable communities to organise their own transport solutions. Improving information about available services including real time information; and developing ticketing solutions such as interoperable tickets are other important initiatives.

The Strategy will ensure that we have an up to date view on the social need for transport to inform decisions about use of our financial resources on an ongoing basis so that we can respond effectively to changes in commercial provision and utilise our resources where they are most needed.

We will also work closely with planning authorities and developers to ensure that new development is suitably accessible by public transport, and critical bus infrastructure schemes are progressed.

Our strategy is to work in partnership with bus operators to ensure there is a stable commercial network and a joined-up approach to Government to make a case for innovation and flexibility in how bus services are delivered in a rural area for the benefit of our communities.

The strategy also discusses our four mainline rail connections and sets out our future rail investment needs to improve resilience, improve journey times and increase capacity and comfort in support of economic growth and increased productivity.

The strategy discusses our current rail station improvement projects, aspirations for further rail station investment and new rail projects being promoted by our communities.

We welcome comments on this consultation draft of the strategy prior to finalising the document later in the year.

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Highway Maintenance Contract

Policies and Place Scrutiny Committee

22nd May 2018

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Highways Maintenance Contract: Year 1

- Outcomes of the Contract
- Contract Governance
- Progress over Year 1
- Service delivery
 - Structural Maintenance
 - Routine Environmental
 - Winter and emergency
- Performance
- Social Value
- Improving communications

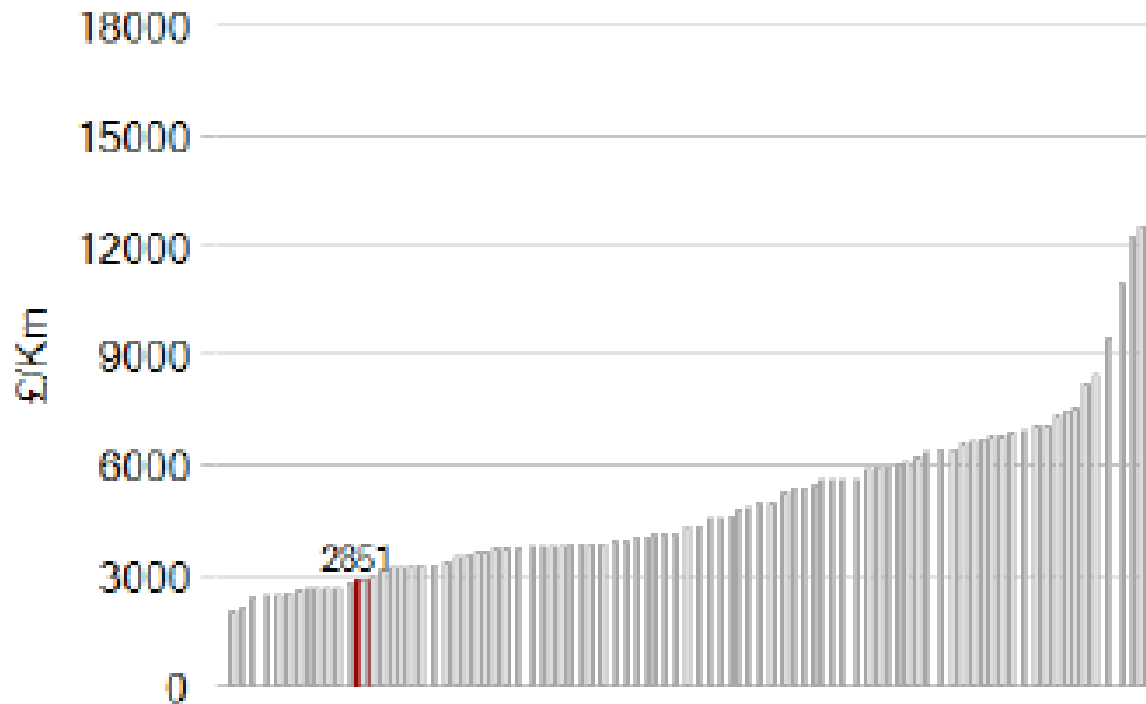
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Context - Highways Benchmarking Spend

£ PER KM OF ROAD NETWORK (TOTEX)

Average spend is £5,048 per km



Highways Maintenance

Outcomes of the Highways Term Maintenance Contract

Improve the Service

More agile/flexible to change

More open approach

Better information to affected stakeholders

Improved service through capturing of feedback

Reduce Costs

Innovation

Efficiency

Reduction of duplication

Add Value

Social value

85% of supply chain spend to remain in local economy

Self help for communities

Secure Funding

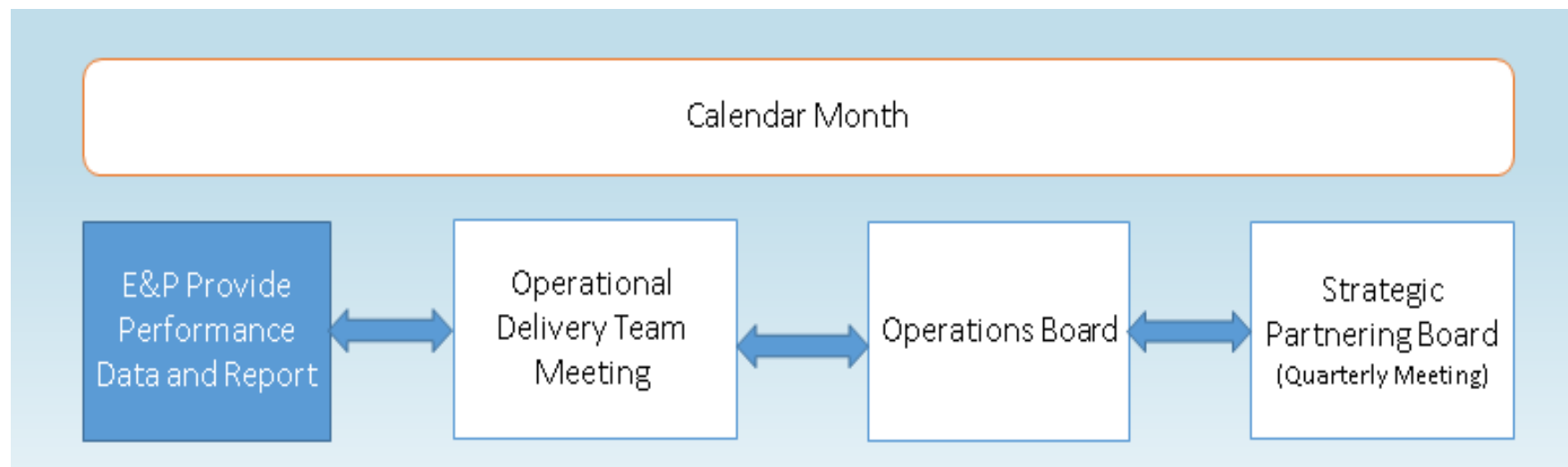
DfT self assessment

DfT challenge fund

Internal SCC investment

Contract governance

- Contract Governance meetings are undertaken in the following sequence each month:
 - Operational Delivery Meeting
 - Operations Board
 - Strategic Partnering Board (quarterly)



Progress over the first year

Structural maintenance (Capital funded)

- Principal resurfacing - £2,700,000 - 35 schemes
- Non-Princ - £2,200,000 – 85 schemes
- Drainage Schemes - £1,700,000 – 69 schemes
- Footway Schemes - £1,500,000 – 50 schemes
- Earthworks – £300,000 – 11 schemes
- Surface Dressing - £8,000,000
- SRA Schemes £392,000
- Surface Treatments - £250,000

Progress over the first year

Structural maintenance - innovation



Progress over the first year

Routine and environmental maintenance

Verge Maintenance		
Verge Cutting – Planned	Noxious & Invasive Weed Treatment - Planned	Hedge Trimming
£351,000	£48,000	£12,300
An annual , countywide programme. A' and 'B' network cut 2 x per year (inclusive of visibility splays). 'C' and Unclassified network cut 1 x per year (inclusive of visibility spalys). Sensitve Sites cut 1 x per year at the end of the season.	An annual programme of weed control was completed. Noxious Weeds (Common Ragwort) and Invasive Weeds, (Japanese Knotweed, Himalayan Knotweed, Himalayan Balsam and Giant Hogweed) are treated.	Orders raised on a reactive basis and predominantly driven by service request.
3,512 Km of 'A' & 'B' network cut	Noxious Weed (reactive removal) - 32 Sites countywide	56 sites countywide
7,662 Km of 'C' & 'Unclassified' network cut 1,834 Visibility Splay cut across the network.	Invasive Weeds (planned treatments) - 272 sites countywide	
Programme completed on schedule	Programme completed on schedule	

Progress over the first year

Routine and environmental maintenance

Routine Maintenance					
	Drainage Cleansing				Cattle Grids
Gully Cleansing (Planned)	Gully Cleansing (Reactive)	Ditches & Grips	Drain Jetting	Ploughing (Siding)	Cattle Grids
£392,100	£160,000	£97,900	£158,000	£68,000	£5,100
An annual, countywide, programme of cyclical gully cleansing. All known highway gullies are cleansed on a risk based approach. Gullies in flood susceptible areas will be cleaned every year. Gullies in rural non-flood susceptible areas will be cleaned every two years. Gullies in urban non-flood susceptible areas will be cleaned every four years.	Orders raised on a reactive basis and predominantly driven by service request.	Orders raised on a reactive basis and predominantly driven by service request.	Orders raised on a reactive basis and predominantly driven by service request.	Orders raised on a reactive basis and predominantly driven by service request.	Orders raised on a reactive basis and predominantly driven by service request. (Inspections, cleansing and minor repairs).
A programme of 66,911 gullies was issued for cyclical cleansing.	142 sites countywide	145 sites countywide	461 sites countywide	121 sites countywide	50 sites countywide
Storm Emma, and associated Q4 weather, impacted programme delivery. Programme completed 3 - weeks behind schedule.					

Progress over the first year

Winter and emergency service



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Winter service

- Throughout the winter there were 3-4 other localised snow events on the high ground of Exmoor and the Mendips which were treated by in-house resources and additional salting.
- In total there were 82 winter actions during the season, compared to a long term average of 65. In 2016/2017 there were only 52 actions.
- Overall salt usage was 10,167 tonnes compared to a stockpile of 6,850 tonnes

Performance

Key Performance Indicators (KPI)

- There are 23 KPIs contained in the contract and contract extension is dependant on a prescribed level of performance.



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Performance

Key Performance Indicators (KPI)

KCPI	Company	Question Group	Target Score
1.1 Contractor AIR Rating (Value 3.5)	Skanska	Monthly	0.0
1.2 Noticing Compliance (Value 3.5)	Somerset CC	Quarterly	90.0
1.3 Safety Defect Repair (Value 4)	Somerset CC	Monthly	96.0
1.4 Emergency Response (Value 3.5)	Skanska	Monthly	99.0
2.1 Defective Works (Value 3.5)	Skanska	Monthly	95.0
2.2 Defect Completion (Value 3.5)	Somerset CC	Quarterly	98.0
2.3 Data Integrity (Value 3.5)	Somerset CC	Monthly	1.0
2.4 Works programmes (Value 3.5)	Somerset CC	Quarterly	2.5
2.5 Minimise disruption (Value 3.5)	Somerset CC	Quarterly	0.0
2.6 Payment Applications (Value 3.5)	Somerset CC	Monthly	95.0
2.8 Audits (Value 4)	Somerset CC	Monthly	95.0
3.1 Provision of Public Information (Value 3.5)	Skanska	Monthly	85.0
4.1 Partnership Success (Value 10)	Somerset CC	6 Monthly	75.0

Performance

Key Performance Indicators (KPI)

KCPI	Company	Question Group	Target Score	2017 Apr	2017 May	2017 Jun	2017 Jul	2017 Aug	2017 Sep	2017 Oct	2017 Nov	2017 Dec	2018 Jan	2018 Feb	2018 Mar	2018 Apr
1.1 Contractor AIR Rating (Value 3.5)	Skanska	Monthly	0.0	-4.25	-4.31	-3.42	-5.55	-6.53	-6.96	-7.25	-3.77	-9.88	-5.61	-3.35	-6.57	
1.2 Noticing Compliance (Value 3.5)	Somerset CC	Quarterly	90.0			95.04			90.60			93.75			89.96	
1.3 Safety Defect Repair (Value 4)	Somerset CC	Monthly	96.0	96.06	99.62	97.78	96.09	98.19	99.21	98.66	98.10	96.59	88.87	91.59	84.68	
1.4 Emergency Response (Value 3.5)	Skanska	Monthly	99.0	98.33	94.00	98.00	95.79	97.65	97.14	90.28	95.83	94.62	94.53	85.87	85.34	
1.5 Winter Service	Skanska	Annual	100.0													
2.1 Defective Works (Value 3.5)	Skanska	Monthly	95.0	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00		
2.2 Defect Completion (Value 3.5)	Somerset CC	Quarterly	98.0			100.00			100.00			53.33			90.91	
2.3 Data Integrity (Value 3.5)	Somerset CC	Monthly	1.0													
2.3 Data Integrity (Value 3.5)	Somerset CC	Monthly	10.1													
2.4 Works programmes (Value 3.5)	Somerset CC	Quarterly	2.5			0.00			1.00			1.00			0.00	
2.5 Minimise disruption (Value 3.5)	Somerset CC	Quarterly	10.0			0.00			0.00			2.00			0.00	
2.6 Payment Applications (Value 3.5)	Somerset CC	Monthly	95.0	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	
2.7 Budget Management	Somerset CC	Annual	99.5													
2.8 Audits (Value 4)	Somerset CC	Monthly	95.0	98.81	98.84	99.15	98.29	99.04	100.00	100.00	95.74	100.00	98.18	100.00	100.00	
3.1 Provision of Public Information (Value 3.5)	Skanska	Monthly	85.0													
4.1 Partnership Success (Value 10)	Somerset CC	6 Monthly	75.0						83.04							
5.1 Partnership Principles	Skanska	Annual	0.0													
5.2 Adoption of Digital by Design	Skanska	Annual	0.0													
5.3 Community Engagement and Social Values	Skanska	Annual	80.0													
5.4 Delivering Integration & Service Efficiencies	Skanska	Annual	0.0													
5.6 Supply chain management	Skanska		50.0													
5.7 Innovation	Skanska	Annual	0.0													
5.8 Agility (Value 5)	Somerset CC	Annual	99.5												100.00	

Performance

Quality Performance Objectives (QPO's)

- The 28 QPO's are a contractual requirement that are intended to add value and reduce costs.
- The QPO's were submitted by the contractor as part of their tender bid and were considered as part of the evaluation process.

Performance

Quality Performance Objectives (QPO's)

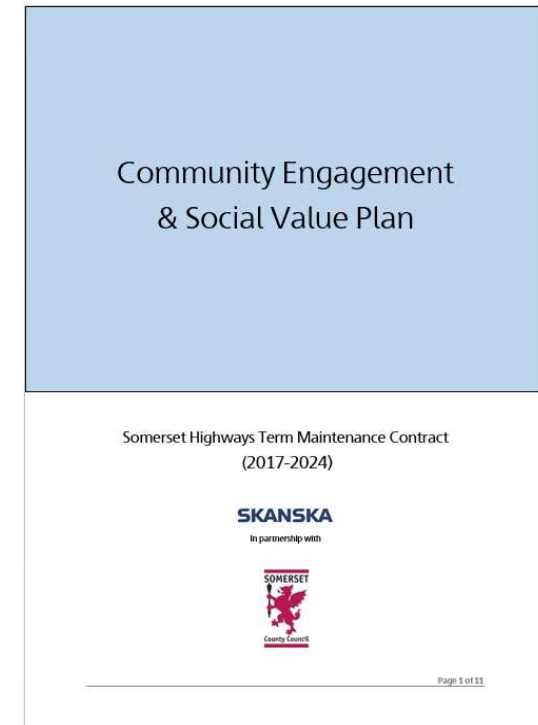
QPO/U	Description of Undertaking	QPO Performance RAG Status	QPO Performance Comments
1.1	Achieve BS11000	G	
1.2	Collaborative Planning	G	
1.3, 8.5	Collaborative Behaviours	G	
1.4, 6.2	Eliminate Duplication of tasks	R	Following completion of Systems Thinking training - both organisations have identified focus areas to target Initial Projects to start in May 18 Time taken to train all staff and establish the joint approach has meant first year targets have not been met
1.5	Upper Quartile Authority	G	
1.6	Asset Delivery Team (ADT)	G	
2.1	Reduce Highway Enquiries	G	Year 1 is setting baseline
2.2, 3.4	Digital Technology to increase defect reporting		Baseline established but don't have any data as yet for end of year
2.3	Eliminate double handling of data	A	Setting baseline by March - likely to be April
2.4	Assist Client in achieving BIM level 3	N/A	
3.1	Social Value for local communities	G	
3.2	Educational visits to Schools	G	
3.3	Support local communities	A	Meeting DH/DJ to discuss initiatives
3.5	Increase resident satisfaction with highways maintenance	A	SALC - survey being built next meeting planned April to issue
4.1	Assist SCC to develop areas of opportunity for commercialisation	R	Cross Contract Commercialisation Group established in March - initiatives and actions identified However, current proposals likely to fall short of targets

Performance

4.2, 8.2	Provide support to SCC regarding devolution	G	Initial engagement with SCC made - Skanska support provided - SCC to advise what support they require and when
4.3, 7.3	Create cross contract performance improvement teams	A	Until March Devon not in a position to engage - however we have are currently negotiating with other contracts to offer visits to observe good practice
4.4, 5.2, 7.4, 8.3	Deliver year-on-year cost savings using Systems Thinking processes	R	Efficiencies starting to be proposed by Project Teams and approved by ODT - Culture change across Service beginning to be established - However, value of Efficiencies approved to date short of 1st year target
4.5, 5.3, 6.3	Create a cross-contract Supply Chain Alliance	G	
5.1, 7.5	Reduction in all safety defects	G	1st year is setting the baseline - (3yr rolling measure)
5.4, 8.1	Undertake a joint contract affordability review every 3 years	N/A	Measured at year 3
5.5	Assist SCC to achieve 100% of available Dft incentive funding	G	
6.1	Select all Tier 1 Suppliers using value based assessment	G	
6.4	85% of supply chain spend to remain in local economy	G	
6.5	Provide Tier 1 & 2 supply chain with free sustainability training	G	This is to establish a training programme and make it available in year 1
7.1	Create a £10k contract innovation fund	G	
7.2	Provide all workers with access to Skanska's Ideas App	G	
8.4	Maintain Asset Management Group Meetings	G	

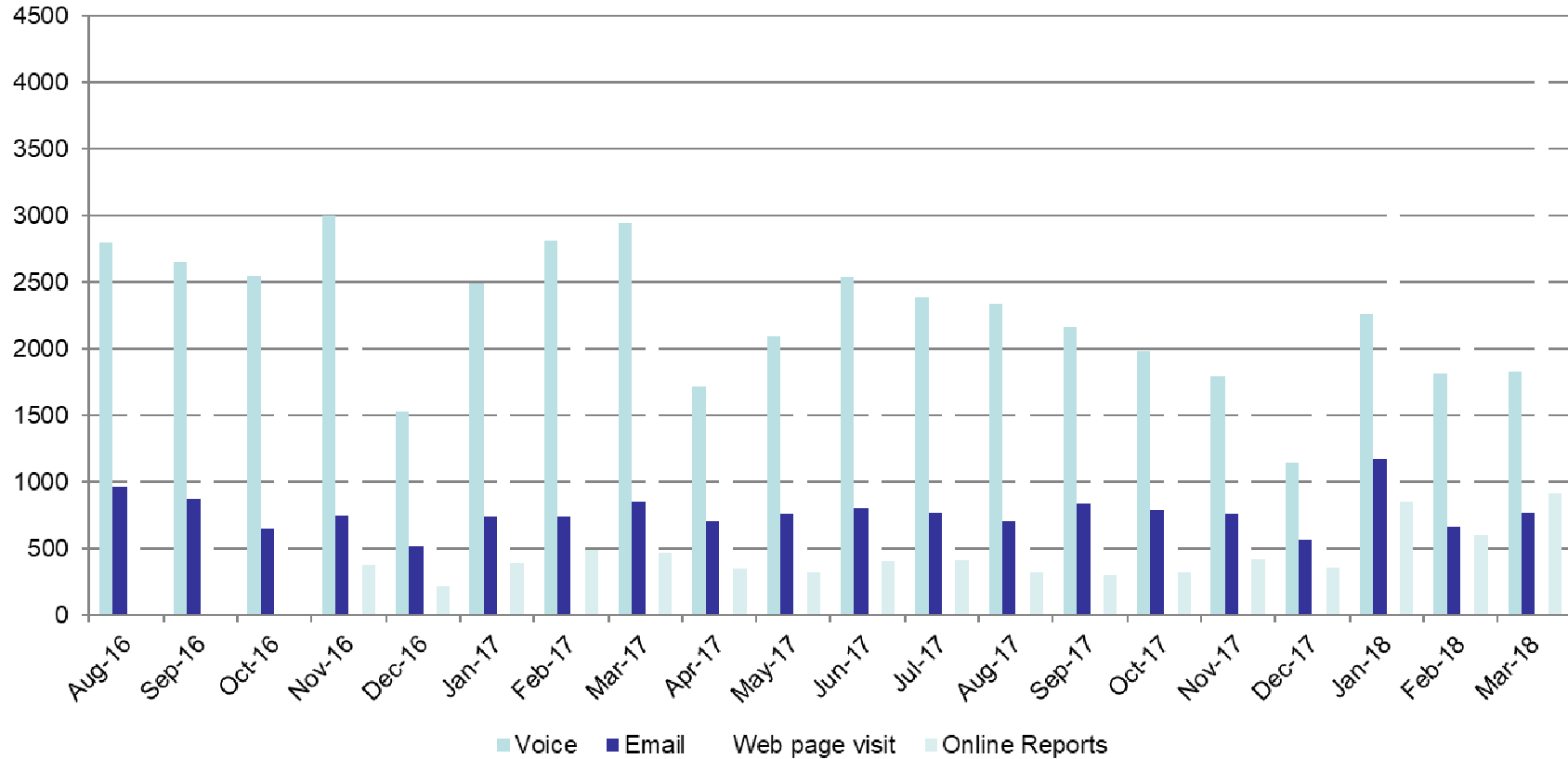
Social value update

- Development of a Social Value Plan is embedded in the Highways Contract.
- The Social Value Plan contains 10 Community Benefits identified for Year 1
- Good progress has been made.
- Work to date/planned work includes:
 - Care Leavers Programme has started
 - Insight day held on 12 March
 - 6 Care Leavers to be taken through to next stage
 - Learning week – Started 3 April 2018
 - 6 week placement – Starts mid/late April 2018
 - Employment review (potential permanent placements) at the end of the programme



Improving Communication

Combined View



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Improving Communication

Priorities for the short-term

- Calendar of Campaign
- Ongoing Focused Channel Shift Work
- Review of Email Address
- Auto-responses for online reports
- Review of Online Data
- Review of Opening Hours – discuss with Andrew how the existing Skanska contract may help with this.
- Ongoing Review of Data
- Quality Monitoring
- Review of Skanska Contract

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Parking Services Update

Lead Officer: Alyn Jones, Director, ECI Operations

Author: Steve Deakin, Parking Services Manager

Contact Details: scdeakin@somerset.gov.uk Tel 01823 355 137

Cabinet Member: Councillor John Woodman, Highways and Transport

Division and Local Member: All Divisions and Members

1. Summary

1.1. This report is submitted to update the Scrutiny committee on the following matters.

1. Update following the insourcing of the back office Notice processing and associated services
2. Update following the extension of the Enforcement Services contract with NSL
3. Update on the Parking Services Budget
4. Update following the introduction of the revised resident parking policy
5. Update on future initiatives

1.2. Parking Services supports Economic Development within the County Plan, by keeping the traffic moving and reducing congestion.

2. Issues for consideration / Recommendations

- 2.1. Members are requested to note the report and comment in respect of
- I. the changes made in how Parking Services is delivered within the County.
 - II. the use of surpluses of the parking account .
 - III. the introduction of the resident parking policy
 - IV. the future initiatives to assist with the development of the relevant contract specifications.

3. Background

3.1. Members will be aware from the previous report the delivery of the parking service across Somerset was subject to three changes.

I. Extension of parking enforcement contract

The parking contract that commenced in June 2012 for an initial period of 5 years to June 2017 contained options for extensions. Due to the performance of the appointed contractor NSL negotiations concluded with an agreement to extend the contract for a further two years.

II. Insourcing of back office processing and IT services

The original parking enforcement contract included the back office processing and provision of IT services. The back office processing which included telephone call handling was undertaken by NSL in the shared service centre

based in Oldham. The remote location had a number of challenges in terms of contract management and lack of local knowledge. The contract negotiations involved the agreement that NSL would no longer provide these services and they would transfer to Somerset County Council.

III. Revised resident parking policy

The revised policy had the aim of making the process to request that resident parking be considered easier. The new revised policy has been published on our website which has increased the level of enquiries.

3.2. Extension of the enforcement services contract

The contract with NSSL was extended for a further period to June 2019.

The negotiations resulted in a number of key outcomes.

- I. Relocation of the Taunton operational base to Taunton library (Somerset County Council premises)
- II. The agreement of a discounted sum in respect of amortised the original set up costs incurred by NSL.
- III. An increase in the level enforcement to improve coverage across the County.
- IV. The recruitment of home deployed civil enforcement officers.

The contract extension agreed to introduce home deployment of Civil Enforcement Officers CEO's. The primary benefit of home deployment was to reduce the amount of travelling time from the operational base to their patrol area.

Overall the home deployment has been considered a success. The innovation has been recognised by being shortlisted in the Parking Innovation category of the British Parking Awards 2018. Further details of the initiative have been reported in Parking News (March 2018), Appendix 1.

7 CEO's are now deployed from home in the following areas.

Frome	Mendip District Council
Minehead	West Somerset District Council
Burnham On Sea	Sedgemoor District Council
Chard	South Somerset District Council

Performance from the contractor has continued since the extension was agreed. The home deployed CEO's and an increase in annual hours of deployment has resulted in improved coverage across the County with activity remaining in line with expectations.

The extension negotiations agreed a robust matrix of performance management for both the contract as a whole and individuals civil enforcement officers. Weekly contract meetings are held to address any shortcomings in performance.

Agreement was also reached to introduce a number of service credits where performance fell below agreed thresholds. Since agreeing the extension it has not been necessary to invoke service credits as the overall performance has

been above the agreed thresholds.

NSL Initiatives

The contract negotiations agreed to investigate a number of options, overall the progress has been mixed as below.

CEO Uniforms

It has been agreed to 'soften' the uniform with individuals able to select a short 'blouson' type jacket rather than the traditional long coat. To avoid a significant cost the uniform will be replaced as and when existing clothing is changed. Smart shorts remain an option during warm weather.

Signs and lines

It has not been possible to progress NSL providing lining and signing services due to potential conflict with the County Council's highway maintenance contractor.

Environmental Enforcement Services

The provision of environmental enforcement services which is primarily a District Council function remains an option. Initial discussions have taken place with one of the District Councils with an initial proposal to undertaken enforcement for a short period. This did not progress primarily due to the overall costs; environmental enforcement is unlikely to be self-financing and the diversion from their primary role. Whilst the same individual can be authorised for both environmental and parking enforcement they are currently not permitted to undertake both activities at the same time.

Enforcement of persistent evaders

Research and discussions have identified three areas that require resolving before immobilisation or removal of evaders can be considered.

1. The storage of removed vehicles or immobilised vehicles not removed by the end of enforcement patrols (generally after 6pm)
2. The ability to effect release including payment after 6p
3. The difficulty of addressing persistent evaders parked in District Car parks. Whilst these are public areas, they are not considered as highway, immobilisation/removal is therefore more problematic.

Research and investigation into resolving these issues continues.

3.3. Insourcing of back office processing and IT services

The business case for the insourcing of back office processing identified a number of benefits to customers, members of the public and residents.

Trained Staff

The fully resourced and enlarged parking services team consists of 9 staff an increase of 5, 4 permanent and 1 apprentice. All new officers have completed their Level 3 Award in Notice Processing. In addition relevant training has been provided to the core staff within the Somerset County Council contact centre to enable a fully informed response to be provided to callers as the default service level, with only more detailed and complex cases transferred to parking services.

Flexibility

The provision of a new IT system and under the control of parking service has enabled changes to correspondence and processes to be made with the minimal of delay. This has ensured that residents are not inconvenienced when changes are needed to the permit system or by the delay of correspondence whilst changes are made to documentation.

Improved responses

The fully trained team are achieving the objective of improving correspondence; whilst the total number of penalties (including bus gates) has increased the trend for correspondence in relation to correspondence levels has decreased. Regular checks of correspondence has identified the standard of correspondence is at the required level and in accordance with the published guidelines.

Local Knowledge

With all parking services and contact centre staff based in Somerset complaints no further complaints are received about the lack of knowledge and understanding of locations.

The success of the insourcing project was recognised at the Staff Awards event when the project one the award for Creativity and Innovation

Statistical Analysis

Details of the analysis of performance between NSL and the insourced team are shown at appendix 2.

Overall the statistics show the insourcing team is handling higher levels of correspondence than the previous contractor with an improved quality. The improved quality is evidenced by a reduction in the ratio of representations received in relation to challenges. A representation is received after a challenge.

Performance Statistics to 31 March 2018

Penalties served	50,068
Enquires and telephone calls received	23,182
Annual visitor permits (paper)	747
Annual resident permits (virtual)	1,794
Daily scratch cards (paper)	57,520
Carer permits (virtual)	228
Items of correspondence sent by post	52,276
Responses sent by email	6,144
Penalty payments made online	26,205
	(£902,227)
Penalty payments made via automated telephone system	9,137
	(£316,162)
Challenges and representations via online portal	61%
Correspondence reply within 10 days	94%*
	*further investigation to be undertaken

3.4. Parking Services Account

Parking revenue associated from enforcement activities is governed by Section 55 of The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

Section 55 requires that all income is to be used for parking related activities any surplus not required for such matters can only be used for traffic or transport related initiatives.

Section 55 also states that parking charges cannot be used for the sole purpose of raising revenue.

Expenditure		2016/17	2017/18*	Variance
1	NSL Contract	1,705,667	1,515,934	-189,733
2	Notice Processing - Set Up	-	53,846	+53,846
3	Agency	-	-	-
4	Traffic Penalty Tribunal	7,848	25,120	+17,272
5	Council Officer Costs	159,510	258,816	+99,306
6	Advertising for Staff	-	-	-
7	Travel	- 904	1,805	+901
8	Training		5,056	+5,056
9	General Office & Stationery	1,376	7,445	+6,069
10	Cost of Meetings	158	473	+315
11	Subscriptions	644	805	+161
12	Professional & Legal	8,070	3,077	-4,993
13	Maintenance	2,735	-	-2,735
14	Cashless parking	-	7,067	+7,067
15	Premises	-	30,000	+30,000
16	Misc	-	1,581	+1,581
17	IT Systems	-	21,648	+21,648
18	Printing and Postage	-	32,097	+32,097
19	Traffic Enforcement Centre	-	20,000	+20,000
20	Central Services	61,513	115,486	+53,973
	Total Expenditure	1,946,617	2,100,256	
1	On Street P&D Income	373,506	371,049	
2	Off Street PCN Income	1,580	1,533	
3	On Street PCN Income	739,968	778,071	
4	Agency Income	655,936	679,516	
5	Bus Gate PCN Income	122,294	379,361	
6	Permit Income	220,110	203,423	
7	Dispensation/Suspension Income	20,550	23,475	
8	Misc	6,553		
	Total Income	2,140,497	2,436,427	
	*subject to confirmation			
	Surplus	193,880	336,171	

The surplus in respect of 2016/2017 and 2017/2018 has been allocated towards traffic management initiatives and reinvested into the service. The surplus is not being relied upon with initiatives identified as and when a surplus is reported towards the end of the year.

Within the above expenditure categories there are a number of new items of expenditure and large increases. These are directly related to the insourcing of the back office processing team.

In most cases the new expenditure would have been met by our contractor NSL.

The appropriate budget has been allocated to the relevant expenditure, i.e. additional staff recruited to “replace the staff who previously undertook the service remotely in Oldham”.

Additional specific expenditure is now reported to reflect the way the service is being delivered, e.g. use of the remote printing and postage service.

The overall NSL contract cost has not reduced on a “like for like” basis as the extension discussions agreed the overall level of chargeable enforcement (circa 7,000) would be increased.

The additional enforcement expenditure has been offset by increased revenues during the financial year 2017/2018.

3.5. Resident Parking Policy

Following the publication of the revised resident parking policy a number of requests have been received both direct from residents and with consultation with members.

The following requests have been received.

Location	Source	Status
St Cuthberts Street, Wells	Resident petition	Discussions with Councillor Munt to identify extent and content of consultation
Maxwell Street, Taunton	Resident petition in conjunction with Councillor Williams	Initial consultation being prepared to residents situated within agreed area
Malvern Terrace, Taunton	Resident petition in conjunction with Councillor Fraschini	Initial consultation being prepared to residents
Richmond Park, Taunton	Resident petition in conjunction with Councillor Hunt	Analysis of initial petition being assessed
Barclay Street, Bridgwater	Resident petition	Initial analysis indicated a shortfall in support.
Wells Road, Glastonbury	Resident petition	Analysis of initial petition being assessed
Frome, various locations		Informal meetings held with Frome Councillors and residents in conjunction with Councillor Clarke

Regular emails and calls are received from residents indicating that additional schemes are likely to be received.

3.6. Future Initiatives

During the coming year parking services will be undertaking two contract tenders.

- A. Re procurement of parking enforcement services. The extension agreed in June 2017 for the current NSL contract cannot be extended further, it will be necessary to retender the service for commencement from June 2019.
- B. The council's current pay phone service (mobile phone payment) is due to expire in October 2018.

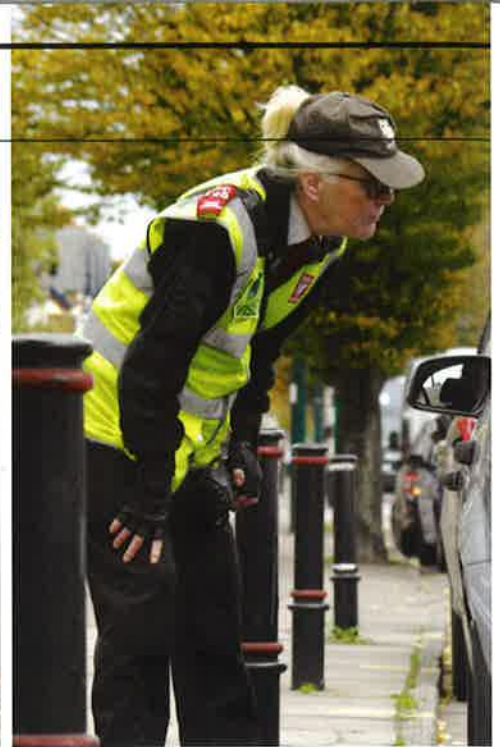
The service is currently used at all County Council on street locations and Taunton Deane, Mendip, Sedgemoor and West Somerset car parks.

During 2017 the total usage of the service amounted to:

588,347 transactions
£2,053,841 of parking revenue

4. Appendices

- 4.1. Appendix 1 – Parking News article regarding home deployment
Appendix 2 – Comparison of performance data post in-sourcing and extension



The home guard

How do you position enforcement officers to cut wasted travel time in areas where the population is widely dispersed? That was **Somerset County Council's** question – and **NSL** had an answer



A radical new approach has been brought in by a council that needed to drive efficiency in its deployment of civil enforcement officers (CEOs).

Working in partnership with NSL, Somerset County Council has adopted a new home-based model for its CEOs – one that has overcome the operational limitations presented by a finite

resource serving widely dispersed centres of population.

'We needed a more flexible and intelligent solution to minimise travel time and to cater for seasonal and fluctuating peaks in demand,' says Somerset County Council's parking services manager, Steve Deakin.

'Our shared priority was to ensure outlying areas, such as Minehead and the west Somerset coast – and inland areas, such as Shepton Mallet and Wells – received the same high levels of service at all times of the day and throughout the year. The areas around school entrances, at the start and end of the school day, posed particular challenges in these more remote areas. Until now, it had been very difficult to deliver an effective and consistent enforcement response for such hotspots.'

The parking services team at Somerset County Council and the account management team at NSL developed a new measure for benchmarking performance and deployment. Tested and evaluated alongside the existing arrangements, over several months, it provided valuable insight and intelligence.

Pete Harper, NSL's client account manager for Somerset, explains: 'We looked at the possibility of developing more flexible and improved contracts of employment that could offer potential for introducing a form of home-based deployment.'

'This would increase the scope for recruiting local people familiar with their immediate areas, and empower the CEOs with more direct responsibilities. However, there were challenges to overcome – not

least the requirements for additional training, remote management, reallocation of enforcement vehicles, and the functionality and reliability of mobile technology.'

After a detailed assessment of existing IT systems, to check the functionality of handheld terminals and the remote uploading of data, new contracts of employment were developed and the deployment model was introduced in March 2017.

Full training was given to recruits, including in enhanced customer service skills. The enforcement vehicles previously used to travel to more remote areas were now assigned, 'permanently, to the respective locations. This gave a more effective response to requests from police and headteachers to address serious cases of non-compliance around the entrances of schools.'

This approach represents a first for the parking sector and has paved the way for similar initiatives in other areas. [P](#)

About NSL

NSL helps government organisations and businesses to innovate and improve services. The company provides frontline, back-office and customer support services to design and manage places used by the public, and offers national enforcement expertise at borders. With more than 4,000 colleagues in 250 locations across the UK, NSL serves more than 150 clients and 20 million citizens.

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APPENDIX TWO - Comparison of Performance Data post In-Sourcing and Extension

		July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	Average
Enforcement Hours	Post-	4031	4,301	4,620	4,748	4,203	4,559	4,313	4,349	4,019		4,349
	Pre-	3893	3,896	3,840	3,837	4,080	3,827	3,674	3,014	3,998		3,784
PCNs Served (inc. bus gate)	Post-	4251	4,030	4,233	5,745	7,943	5,797	6,198	6,137	5,734		5,563
	Pre-	3777	3,908	3,642	3,746	4,037	4,100	3,597	3,412	4,102		3,813
PCNs Served (excl. bus gate)	Post-	4045	3,848	4,027	4,235	4,827	4,343	4,215	3,888	3,793		4,136
	Pre-	3335	3,572	3,277	3,345	3,674	3,832	3,312	3,167	3,800		3,479
PCNs Served in Bus Gates	Post-	206	182	206	1,510	3,116	1,454	1,983	2,249	1,941		1,427
	Pre-	442	336	365	401	363	268	285	245	302		334
PCN rate	Post-	1.00	0.89	0.87	0.89	1.15	0.95	0.98	0.89	0.94		0.95
	Pre-	0.86	0.92	0.85	0.87	0.90	1.00	0.90	1.05	0.95		0.92
Letters (excl. bus gate)	Post-	1,853	4,835	4,218	3,257	4,063	3,056	4,291	3,578	3,828		3,664
	Pre-	2,757	2,747	2,997	3,560	2,693	2,495	4,622	2,634	3,099		3,067
Correspondence in	Post-	1,296	1,664	1,325	1,500	1,910	1,597	1,848	1,671	1,737		1,616
	Pre-	1,540	1,895	1,788	1,557	1,889	1,570	1,915	1,512	1,748		1,713
Calls answered	Post-	714	937	867	899	1,159	860	1,177	1,036	985		959
	Pre-	892	910	843	812	974	700	909	783	974		866
Call length (seconds)	Post-	379	391	328	392	343	398	407	372	409		380
	Pre-	206	214	211	209	203	220	216	218	219		213
Online Challenge	Post-	733	657	604	734	768	649	700	588	619		672
	Pre-	405	446	423	381	448	413	378	379	480		417
Postal Challenge	Post-	199	246	225	260	248	195	244	213	184		224
	Pre-	204	162	187	198	83	311	180	153	204		187
Online Representation (excl. TOL & BG)*	Post-	6	67	46	55	47	33	49	34	44		42
	Pre-	23	10	14	11	13	15	21	14	12		15
Online Representation (Total)	Post-	7	101	59	82	158	118	114	100	128		96
	Pre-	29	14	17	14	17	17	23	16	15		18
Postal Representation (excl. TOL & BG)*	Post-	14	63	46	44	61	42	48	38	46		45
	Pre-	56	57	63	46	78	47	71	68	73		62
Postal Representation (Total)	Post-	53	203	155	118	325	337	364	359	390		256
	Pre-	179	159	157	143	183	174	235	157	170		173
Ratio of Representations/Challenge	Post-	2.15%	14.40%	11.10%	9.96%	10.63%	8.89%	10.28%	8.99%	11.21%		9.7%
	Pre-	12.97%	11.02%	12.62%	9.84%	17.14%	8.56%	16.49%	15.41%	12.43%		12.9%

* Transfer of Liability & Bus Gate

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Somerset County Council
Scrutiny for Polices and Place Committee
22 May 2018

Connecting Devon and Somerset Broadband Update

Lead Officer: Paula Hewitt

Author: Katriona Lovelock

Contact Details: 07977 401 921 / KLovelock@somerset.gov.uk

Cabinet Member: Cllr David Hall

Division and Local Member: All

Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS) Broadband Delivery Programme

1. Background to CDS

- 1.1. CDS is a local government-led partnership which is working to extend superfast broadband infrastructure in areas where commercial providers do not plan to deliver a Next Generation Access (NGA) broadband service. Next Generation Access (NGA) broadband service is a service capable of delivering download speeds of at least 30Mbps
- 1.2. The CDS region covers Somerset, Devon, N Somerset and BaNES, and to a lesser extent Plymouth and Torbay which have more commercial coverage than other parts of the region.
- 1.3. Funding for the CDS Programmes has come from BDUK, Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership, European Regional Development Fund grants (via MHCLG), SCC, DCC, N Somerset, BaNES and other contributing local authorities.
- 1.4. Somerset County Council is the Accountable Body for the CDS partnership. This report provides an update to the Scrutiny Committee on the CDS programme.

Delivery to date

2. Phase 1 the Superfast Broadband Programme.

2.1 Contractual delivery

- 2.1.1 This contract was awarded to BT in 2013 and build concluded in March 2017.
- 2.1.2 The Phase 1 programme was delivered by taking fibre from the telephone exchange to a local cabinet "Fibre to the Cabinet" (FTTC) from which the final connection to the premise was via existing copper network. In a few suitable areas fibre was taken directly to the premise – fibre to the Premise (FTTP).

2.1.3 The CDS programme exceeded its phase one target providing over 280,000 homes and businesses with access to superfast broadband speeds in excess of 24Mbps.

2.2 Contractual Take-up claw back

2.2.1 The Phase 1 contract was based on a gap funded model in which the public sector subsidises the difference between the level of commercial investment provided by the supplier and the cost of delivering the solution. The Phase 1 contract assumed that there would be a 20% Take-up of service. Where Take-up is higher than 20%, less public subsidy would be required. The contract provides that where there has been such an “over subsidy” this is “clawed back” by the public sector from BT. This is called Take-up Clawback.

2.2.2 Take-up Clawback is calculated at set times in the contract; at the Full Service Commencement Date then every 2 years after and a final review at the end of the 7 year post deployment phase of the contract.

2.2.3 The contract provides that the parties are to work together to agree on utilising the Take-up Clawback sums. It should be noted that contractually these sums are available to SCC, as the Accountable Body for CDS, to re-invest with BT to provide additional/ improved infrastructure. There are State Aid limitations about the amount of Take-up Clawback that can be used without running a new procurement.

2.2.4 As network build progressed Take-up levels were projected to be higher than the 20% baseline in the contract. BT offered to release some of the Take-up Clawback money early to local bodies including CDS. This early Take-up Clawback is referred to as “Gain share”. In 2016 the government had to re-negotiate the national State Aid Approval Scheme with the Commission and as part of agreeing a new National Broadband Scheme reached an agreement with the Commission that across the UK local bodies could reinvest up to £129 million of Take-up Clawback with BT without running a new open procurement. The sum offered to CDS was £4.8million.

2.2.5 In order to invest this early claw back State Aid rules require that CDS identifies areas which will not have Next Generation Access (NGA) broadband infrastructure delivering at least 30Mbps or where there are no plans to provide such infrastructure over the next 3 years.

2.2.6 The Gainshare open market review and public consultation with commercial broadband suppliers was issued on 26 March 2018 and ran for just over 1 month until 30 April 2018. Details including links to FAQ’s can be found on the CDS website at :

<https://www.connectingdevonandsomerset.co.uk/response-to-cds-gainshare-public-consultation/>

- 2.2.7** CDS is seeking to commit early Take-up Clawback to areas still experiencing very low speeds in areas with a significant degree of social deprivation. Social deprivation is measured using the English indices of multiple deprivation (IMD)
- 2.2.8** Once the consultation period has concluded CDS will take account of the responses to the Open Market review and following discussions with BT Openreach will submit its final proposals for the NGA white areas to BDUK's National competency centre for clearance.

3. Phase 2 Superfast Extension Programme Exmoor and Dartmoor

- 3.1.** This contract was awarded to Airband Community Internet Ltd in 2015. Airband is deploying a fixed wireless network delivering speeds of up to 30Mbps to homes and businesses across the National Parks in some of the hardest to reach areas in the UK.
- 3.2.** The build is almost complete with a final mast expected to be erected in May.
- 3.3.** The number of premises able to connect to an NGA service is expected to meet the contractual targets. These figures will be subject to a satisfactory assurance process.

Delivery to 2019/20

4. 2016 Phase 2 Superfast Extension Programme (SEP) Procurement

- 4.1.** The 2016 SEP procurement divided the CDS region into 6 lots, generating significant interest from the market. Following assurance by BDUK the National Competency Centre lots 1,2,3,5 and 6 were awarded to Gigaclear Plc and lot 4 was awarded to Airband Community Internet Ltd.
- 4.2.** Somerset is covered by Lots 2, 3 and part of Lot 5. Gigaclear is a fibre to the premise broadband provider giving symmetrical upload and download speeds of up to 1 Gbps.
- 4.3.** Following the award of contracts CDS secured an additional £4.6 million of European Regional Development Funding (ERDF) which was introduced into the contracts for each lot. There was also some residual funding from BDUK which was available to introduce into the contracts. The changes which were required to the contracts to introduce this funding required a more extensive re-design than had been anticipated and accordingly took longer than was expected.
- 4.4.** In January 2018 the construction company Carillion went into compulsory liquidation. Carillion was part of a joint venture partnership Carillion telent which provided civil engineering services to the telecom industry including Gigaclear for

its CDS Phase 2 contracts as well as other major telecoms providers such as Openreach.

- 4.5. Gigaclear had contingency plans in place to deal with the change in circumstances and these have been implemented. Telent has taken over from the Carillion telent partnership and Gigaclear has also introduced additional resource McNicholas part of the Kier group as well as other contractors.
- 4.6. As a result of the above factors the early part of the build has commenced more slowly than had been planned, but the additional resource is expected to enable the delivery to be completed within the contractual time frame.
- 4.7. Gigaclear is due to deliver a superfast service to 23,100 premises across Somerset.
- 4.8. Gigaclear provides a search facility on their website which is a quick way of checking where the company will be installing a fibre-to-the-premise network - <https://www.gigaclear.com/postcode-checker/>
- 4.9. Lot 4 (which broadly covers Northern Devon between Exmoor and Dartmoor) has been awarded to Airband Community Internet Ltd which will provide a wireless solution in that area. A share of the ERDF funding is being introduced into the Lot 4 contract and that has also taken longer and been more complex than was anticipated.

Other areas of interest

5. Voucher Scheme

- 5.1. To meet the government target of ensuring that all businesses and residents have access to at least 2 Mbps CDS created a broadband Voucher Scheme. This was open to anyone with a current broadband speed of less than 2 Mbps who would not be included in the main CDS or commercial programmes. Over 6,200 vouchers were issued and over 1900 installations have taken place.
- 5.2. The application process is currently paused whilst the scheme is reviewed but this is expected to be re-opened during the summer.
- 5.3. CDS is also planning to launch schemes to support community broadband solutions in the summer.
- 5.4. More details are found on the following CDS web page.
<https://www.connectingdevonandsomerset.co.uk/cds-broadband-voucher-scheme/>
- 5.5. It is possible to register on the mailing list for updates by emailing broadbandvoucher-mailbox@devon.gov.uk

6. Digital capabilities and skills

- 6.1. In addition to Broadband Infrastructure delivery CDS has received grant funding to run a digital awareness programme “Get up to Speed”. This programme provides training and raises awareness of the capabilities of digital technology to private individuals and to businesses across the CDS region.
- 6.2. To date this programme has delivered over 800 events; engaging with over 21,000 people to help boost digital skills and share the benefits of superfast broadband’
- 6.3. Further European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) grant funding is being sought to extend this approach further. If funding is secured it is proposed that digital support and capability building will be extended to many SMEs across the area to help to build their ability to utilise broadband to enhance their businesses and to promote growth.

7. FAQ’s

- 7.1. There is a range of issues which are of interest relating to the programme and the CDS website has a page which sets out a series of Frequently Asked Questions at <https://www.connectingdevonandsomerset.co.uk/faqs-2/>.

Some issues which have been queried include:

- 7.2. [Am I in Phase 2 and when will network build reach my area?](#)
- 7.3. To find out whether a property is in the build programme check on the Gigaclear website post code checker:

<https://www.gigaclear.com/postcode-checker/>
- 7.4. Details of the roll out schedule for Somerset County can be found on the Gigaclear website at <https://www.gigaclear.com/connecting-devon-and-somerset-rollout-schedule/>
- 7.5. This page provides links to each Lot (Somerset is found under Lots 2, 3, and part of Lot 5). The roll out schedule sets out the build start and complete dates for cab areas.
- 7.6. Government 95% target for England. The government set a national target that 95% of premises should be able to achieve a superfast broadband service by the end of 2017. This is an average for the UK and includes both rural and urban areas.
- 7.7. There appear to be some misconceptions about the national 95% target.
- 7.8. Central government targets are heavily dependent on commercial investment and these estimate that overall two thirds of all broadband infrastructure in rural England will be provided commercially.

7.9. In Somerset commercial providers have not reached these numbers.

Provider	Coverage to date	Planned coverage	Total anticipated coverage by 2020
Commercial sector	40%	2 %	42%
CDS	46%	8%	54%
total	86%	10%	96%

7.10. The government has never set % targets for publicly-funded local broadband programmes. However commercial providers have not realised governmental expectations for commercial coverage in rural areas. The figures above show that the CDS programme has already delivered the majority of the superfast coverage in the county of Somerset.

7.11. Given that broadband provision in Somerset was among the lowest in the country when the CDS programme began in 2013 the number of premises which will be achieved by 2020 represents significant progress.

7.12. Wholesale access. the CDS programme does not invest in retail services, it procures open access wholesale broadband infrastructure network. Contactors are required to provide an “Open Access” network under European State Aid regulation and to offer wholesale products on an equal basis to all retailers. The wholesale costs for set up, installation and monthly charges are considered as part of the assurance process and are bench marked in accordance with the contract.

7.13. Gigaclear is the provider in Somerset and its wholesale price has been assured and approved by BDUK (part of DCMS). Gigaclear bench marks against other competitors and its prices have been approved by DCMS and Ofcom.

7.14. Additional ISPs. Gigaclear has several retail ISPs connecting to its existing fibre network selling services to customers. Gigaclear has informed CDS that larger retail ISPs are not yet selling over the Gigaclear network because Gigaclear does not yet serve enough properties for the larger providers to justify the internal resources for connection to the Gigaclear network. Gigaclear has been advised that major ISPs require a minimum of 200,000 premises before they will consider connecting to the Gigaclear network. Gigaclear plans to reach this figure at some point in the next 2 years.

7.15. More information about the programme is available on the CDS website.

<https://www.connectingdevonandsomerset.co.uk/>

8. Looking forward

- 8.1. **Funding.** Whilst there has been significant investment in broadband services there are still premises that do not have a satisfactory broadband service. These premises are generally the more remote and difficult to reach given current technology constraints. Further funding will be required, both capital to build the infrastructure and revenue to pay for technical, project management and officer support.
- 8.2. CDS continues to seek grant funding from a range of sources to invest in infrastructure for the most difficult areas which are otherwise unlikely to be commercially viable for some time.
- 8.3. In addition to the ERDF funding which has been secured CDS has also submitted an application for funding for £5M from the Rural Development Agency to extend coverage in rural areas. The outcome of this bid is awaited.
- 8.4. SCC and DCC have continued to invest revenue resources to run the team and technical support to manage 8 Broadband infrastructure contracts as well as the voucher scheme and digital capabilities programme.
- 8.5. **Remaining premises.** In 2020 when the current CDS contracts conclude and provided that the commercial sector builds to the premises which it has proposed, it is expected that there will still be some premises which do not have a satisfactory broadband service. These are predominantly in the harder to reach areas to which it is usually more expensive to deliver.
- 8.6. The continuing challenge is to seek ways to extend coverage to all. Although CDS continues to apply for further grants, for the most remote and difficult to reach areas it may be some time before viable superfast solutions can be found for all. CDS is seeking to find ways to work with communities and commercial providers to extend broadband infrastructure to all.
- 8.7. In the meantime, CDS and stakeholders continue to lobby the commercial sector to extend its coverage and for further funding to try to extend coverage to as many as possible.

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Scrutiny for Policies and Place Committee Work Programme

Agenda item	Meeting Date	Lead Officer
	22 May 2018	
Highways Terms Maintenance Contract		Andrew Turner/Alyn Jones
Connecting Devon & Somerset Broadband Programme update		Katriona Lovelock
Parking Services update (to include data on the use of surplus)		Steve Deakin/Ollie Woodhams
SCC Draft Business Plan / County Vision		Alastair Higton
Passenger Transport Strategy		Mike O'Dowd-Jones/Lucy Bath
	19 June 2018	
Property Disposals update		Steve Gale
Revenue Budget Monitoring Report Q4 2017/18		Lizzie Watkin
Council Performance Monitoring report Q4 – 2017/18		Simon Clifford/ Louise Day
Flood and Water Management – regular LLFA update		Barry James
Flood and Water Management – Land Drainage Enforcement Policy		Barry James
Consultation on draft Somerset Air Quality Strategy		Stewart Brock/Trudi Grant
	10 July 2018	
Library Service Re-design – Consultation Outcomes TBC		Ollie Woodhams
Trading Standards		Barry James
Planning Control - Service Improvement Plan		Barry James
Rights of Way		Alyn Jones
Registration Service Update TBC		Genevieve Branch/Alyn Jones
	11 September 2018	
Library Service Re-design – Recommendations		Ollie Woodhams
Flood and Water Management - Service Improvement Plan		Barry James
Leisure Services Update		Barry James
Hinkley Point C Update -		Andy Coupe/Paula Hewitt

Scrutiny for Policies and Place Committee Work Programme

	09 October 2018	
Revenue Budget Monitoring Report Q1 +1 2018/19		Simon Clifford/Louise Day
Council Performance Monitoring report Q1 +1 – 2018/19		Emma Plummer/ Louise Day
Waste - Single Use Plastics		Barry James
	13 November 2018	
	11 December 2018	
Revenue Budget Monitoring Report Q2 2018/19		Simon Clifford/Louise Day
Council Performance Monitoring report Q2 – 2018/19		Emma Plummer/ Louise Day

Note: Members of the Scrutiny Committee and all other Members of Somerset County Council are invited to contribute items for inclusion in the work programme. Please contact Jamie Jackson, Service Manager Scrutiny, who will assist you in submitting your item. jjackson@somerset.gov.uk 01823 359040

To add: Income regeneration
Temporary Labour Contract Update (Dec 2019)

Somerset County Council Forward Plan of proposed Key Decisions

The County Council is required to set out details of planned key decisions at least 28 calendar days before they are due to be taken. This forward plan sets out key decisions to be taken at Cabinet meetings as well as individual key decisions to be taken by either the Leader, a Cabinet Member or an Officer. The very latest details can always be found on our website at:

<http://democracy.somerset.gov.uk/mgListPlans.aspx?RPId=134&RD=0&FD=1&bcr=1>

Regulation 8 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 defines a key decision as an executive decision which is likely:

- (a) to result in the relevant local authority incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the relevant local authority's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates; or
- (b) to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards or electoral divisions in the area of the relevant local authority.

The Council has decided that the relevant threshold at or above which the decision is significant will be £500,000 for capital / revenue expenditure or savings. Money delegated to schools as part of the Scheme of Financial Management of Schools exercise is exempt from these thresholds once it is delegated to the school.

Cabinet meetings are held in public at County Hall unless Cabinet resolve for all or part of the meeting to be held in private in order to consider exempt information/confidential business. The Forward Plan will show where this is intended. Agendas and reports for Cabinet meetings are also published on the Council's website at least five clear working days before the meeting date.

Individual key decisions that are shown in the plan as being proposed to be taken "not before" a date will be taken within a month of that date, with the requirement that a report setting out the proposed decision will be published on the Council's website at least five working days before the date of decision. Any representations received will be considered by the decision maker at the decision meeting.

In addition to key decisions, the forward plan shown below lists other business that is scheduled to be considered at a Cabinet meeting during the period of the Plan, which will also include reports for information. The monthly printed plan is updated on an ad hoc basis during each month. *Where possible the County Council will attempt to keep to the dates shown in the Plan. It is quite likely, however, that some items will need to be rescheduled and new items added as new circumstances come to light.* Please ensure therefore that you refer to the most up to date plan.

For general enquiries about the Forward Plan:

- You can view it on the County Council web site at <http://democracy.somerset.gov.uk/mgListPlans.aspx?RPId=134&RD=0&FD=1&bcr=1>
- You can arrange to inspect it at County Hall (in Taunton).
- Alternatively, copies can be obtained from Scott Wooldridge or Michael Bryant in the Democratic Services Team by telephoning (01823) 357628 or 359500.

To view the Forward Plan on the website you will need a copy of Adobe Acrobat Reader available free from www.adobe.com
Please note that it could take up to 2 minutes to download this PDF document depending on your Internet connection speed.

To make representations about proposed decisions:

Please contact the officer identified against the relevant decision in the Forward Plan to find out more information or about how your representations can be made and considered by the decision maker.

The Agenda and Papers for Cabinet meetings can be found on the County Council's website at:
<http://democracy.somerset.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=134&Year=0>

Weekly version of plan published on 3 April 2018

FP Refs	Decision Date/Maker	Details of the proposed decision	Documents and background papers to be available to decision maker	Does the decision contain any exempt information requiring it to be considered in private?	Contact Officer for any representations to be made ahead of the proposed decision
FP/18/03/07 First published: 20 March 2018	2 May 2018 Cabinet Member for Children and Families	Issue: New Bridgwater Special School - Bower Lane Site Decision: Approval to appoint consultancy services for RIBA Stages 0-7 for the delivery of the proposed new school	Bower Lane Special School, Bridgwater - Decision Report		Carol Bond, Project Manager, Property Programme Team Tel: 01823 355962
FP/17/01/04 First published: 11 January 2018	2 May 2018 Cabinet	Issue: Award of contract for the provision of Temporary Labour Decision: To approve the award of the temporary labour contract to the preferred supplier under ESPO MSTAR2 framework, as detailed in the appended confidential report		Part exempt	Paul Skuse, Service Manager, Commercial & Procurement - Business
FP/18/02/07 First published: 13 February 2018	2 May 2018 Cabinet	Issue: LTP Implementation Plan adoption and approval for publishing Decision: To agree to a 1 year LTP Implementation Plan to fulfil SCC's statutory obligations. The current one covers 2013-17.			Lucy Bath Tel: 01823 359465
FP/18/02/11 First published: 26 February 2018	2 May 2018 Cabinet	Issue: Capital Investment Programme 2018/19 + Decision: To report on Government grant announcements and recommend capital approvals for 2018/19 and subsequent years to deliver key capital projects			Elizabeth Watkin, Service Manager - Chief Accountant Tel: 01823359573

FP Refs	Decision Date/Maker	Details of the proposed decision	Documents and background papers to be available to decision maker	Does the decision contain any exempt information requiring it to be considered in private?	Contact Officer for any representations to be made ahead of the proposed decision
FP/18/03/05 First published: 12 March 2018	3 May 2018 Cabinet Member for Resources and Economic Development	Issue: Disposal of County Farms Decision: Authority to conclude negotiations for the disposal of surplus farm and lands including those disposals to be conducted via public auction as appropriate	County Farm Sales April 2018 Appendix A - Farm sales April 2018		Charlie Field, Estates Manager, Corporate Property Tel: 01823355325
NON-KEY DECISION First published: 28 December 2017	Not before 14th May 2018 Commercial & Business Services Director	Issue: Strategy for the Management of the County Farms Estate Decision: To approve the publication of the strategy for the management of the County Farms Estate in accordance with existing policies, taking into account the recommendations from Scrutiny Committee Policies & Place			Claire Lovett, Head of Property Tel: 07977412583
FP/18/02/08 First published: 13 February 2018	Not before 21st May 2018 Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport	Issue: Taunton Transport Strategy Decision: To agree to adopt the joint (with TDBC) Taunton Transport Strategy			Lucy Bath Tel: 01823 359465
FP/18/04/01 First published: 3 April 2018	Not before 21st May 2018 Commercial & Business Services Director	Issue: County Hall Priority 1 Enabling Works approval Decision: SCC Full Council approved funding for Priority 1 works at County Hall in Feb 18. This decision seeks the approval of the first tranche of this funding which ensures enabling works to unlock the full project proceed at the right time		Part exempt	Commercial & Business Services Director

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<p>FP/17/09/04 First published: 11 September 2017</p>	<p>Not before 21st May 2018 Director of Finance, Legal and Governance, Director of Commissioning and Lead Commissioner for Economic Community Infrastructure</p>	<p>Issue: iAero (Yeovil) Aerospace Centre (2,500 sq m) Acceptance of ERDF Funding Decision: The acceptance of the offer of ERDF funding (£3.5 million), for the iAero (Yeovi) Aerospace Centre</p>			<p>Lynda Madge, Commissioning Manager – Economy & Planning Tel: 01823 356766</p>
<p>FP/18/02/01 First published: 6 February 2018</p>	<p>Not before 21st May 2018 Director of Commissioning and Lead Commissioner for Economic Community Infrastructure, Director of Finance, Legal and Governance</p>	<p>Issue: Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS) Superfast Extension Programme (SEP) Phase 2: decision to accept further grant funding and introduce additional funding into the contract for Lot 4 Decision: To accept additional grant funding from DCMS to invest in broadband infrastructure in Lot 4. To introduce the additional funding into the contract for Lot 4 to deliver more broadband infrastructure in that area</p>			<p>Katriona Lovelock, Economic Development Officer Tel: 01823 359873</p>
<p>FP/18/01/03 First published: 5 January 2018</p>	<p>Not before 21st May 2018 Cabinet Member for Children and Families</p>	<p>Issue: Heathfield School, Taunton - Award of Contract for the Proposed ASD Base Decision: To seek approval to award the contract for the delivery of the propose dnew base</p>		<p>Part exempt</p>	<p>Carol Bond, Project Manager, Property Programme Team Tel: 01823 355962</p>

FP Refs	Decision Date/Maker	Details of the proposed decision	Documents and background papers to be available to decision maker	Does the decision contain any exempt information requiring it to be considered in private?	Contact Officer for any representations to be made ahead of the proposed decision
<p>FP/18/03/04 First published: 12 March 2018</p>	<p>Not before 21st May 2018 Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport</p>	<p>Issue: Procurement for the construction of traffic signals improvements at the Rowbarton junction in Taunton Decision: To commence the process to secure a contractor to deliver the scheme to improve the traffic signals at Rowbarton junction in Taunton</p>			<p>Sunita Mills, Service Commissioning Manager Tel: 01823 359763</p>
<p>FP/18/03/06 First published: 13 March 2018</p>	<p>Not before 21st May 2018 Cabinet Member for Corporate and Community Services, Cabinet Member for Resources and Economic Development</p>	<p>Issue: Community Leisure Services Post 2019 Decision: Agree that SCC does not extend or renew the current contract for community leisure provision. Sites will be made available for disposal to the schools were possible.</p>			<p>Barry James, Strategic Commissioning Manager – Community Infrastructure Tel: 01823 356659</p>
<p>FP/18/04/03 First published: 9 April 2018</p>	<p>Not before 21st May 2018 Commercial & Business Services Director</p>	<p>Issue: Insourcing and re-procurement of Hard FM arrangements for Corporate Estate only Decision: The Council is required to arrange replacement planned and reactive maintenance services (Hard FM) for when the current contract comes finishes at the end of September. The Council proposes to create an in-house team to deliver the core electrical, mechanical and fabric maintenance and procure a suite of contracts to cover specialist maintenance works.</p>		<p>Part exempt</p>	<p>Claire Lovett, Head of Property Tel: 07977412583</p>

FP Refs	Decision Date/Maker	Details of the proposed decision	Documents and background papers to be available to decision maker	Does the decision contain any exempt information requiring it to be considered in private?	Contact Officer for any representations to be made ahead of the proposed decision
FP/17/12/02 First published: 14 December 2017	Not before 28th May 2018 Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport	Issue: Contract for Provision of Bus Lane Enforcement Infrastructure Decision: To award the contract for the enforcement of bus lane enforcement infrastructure		Part exempt	Bev Norman, Service Manager - Traffic Management, Traffic & Transport Development Tel: 01823358089
FP/17/08/01 First published: 9 August 2017	Not before 4th Jun 2018 Cabinet Member for Resources and Economic Development	Issue: Disposal of Surplus Land at Castle Cary Decision: Authority to conclude negotiations for the disposal of surplus (former) farm land (13 acres, land only) at Castle Cary. Authority to conclude negotiations for the disposal of surplus (former) farm land (13 acres, land only) at Castle Cary.	Disposal of Surplus Land	Part exempt	Charlie Field, Estates Manager, Corporate Property Tel: 01823355325
FP/18/04/06 First published: 30 April 2018	Not before 4th Jun 2018 Director of Commissioning and Lead Commissioner for Economic Community Infrastructure	Issue: Procurement of the HotSW Growth Hub Service Decision: To undertake the procurement of a Business Support Service (Growth Hub) on behalf of the HotSW LEP			Melanie Roberts, Service Manager - Economic Policy Tel: 01823359209
FP/18/04/19 First published: 30 April 2018	Not before 4th Jun 2018 Cabinet Member for Children and Families, Commercial & Business Services Director	Issue: Creation of two New Academies in Somerset Decision:			Elizabeth Smith, Service Manager – Schools Commissioning Tel: 01823 356260

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FP Refs	Decision Date/Maker	Details of the proposed decision	Documents and background papers to be available to decision maker	Does the decision contain any exempt information requiring it to be considered in private?	Contact Officer for any representations to be made ahead of the proposed decision
FP/17/11/05 First published: 16 November 2017	13 Jun 2018 Cabinet	Issue: Customer Feedback Annual Reports 2017/18 Decision: Consider the annual customer feedback report and Ombudsman report for 2017/18			Rebecca Martin Tel: 01823 356257
FP/18/03/08 First published: 20 March 2018	13 Jun 2018 Cabinet	Issue: Somerset County Council Business Plan Decision: Agree the new Business Plan whihc outlines what SCC will do over the next 3 years to deliver the new County Vision			Alastair Higton, Executive Assistant - Policy and Research
FP/18/04/05 First published: 16 April 2018	13 Jun 2018 Cabinet	Issue: Consultation on draft Somerset Air Quality Statement Decision: To go out to public consultation on the draft Somerset Air Quality Statement			Stewart Brock, Public Health Specialist, Public Health Tel: 01823357235

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<p>FP/18/04/02 First published: 3 April 2018</p>	<p>Not before 25th Jun 2018 Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care</p>	<p>Issue: Shaping the future models for Support in Sheltered Housing in Somerset Decision: SCC's contract for support in sheltered housing schemes is due to end in October 2018, a consultation is taking place between 3rd April – 30th May to seek the view of a wide range of people to discuss the different way which the council could provide these services in the future. This decision is to agree the outcome of that consultation.</p>			<p>Vicky Chipchase, Senior Commissioning Officer Tel: 07775 406590</p>
<p>FP/18/04/04 First published: 16 April 2018</p>	<p>Not before 25th Jun 2018 Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care</p>	<p>Issue: Re-Provision of existing Learning Disability Service in Mendip Decision: To agree award decision for re-provision of a Learning Disability service in Mendip</p>			<p>Steve Veevers, Strategic Commissioning Manager Tel: 01823359155</p>
<p>FP/18/02/09 First published: 13 February 2018</p>	<p>9 Jul 2018 Cabinet</p>	<p>Issue: Road Safety Strategy Decision: Adoption of the Road Safety Strategy</p>			<p>Lucy Bath Tel: 01823 359465</p>
<p>FP/18/04/07 First published: 30 April 2018</p>	<p>9 Jul 2018 Cabinet</p>	<p>Issue: Children and Young Peoples Plan 2016-19 - Report on progress of year 2 Decision: Report on progress of year 2 (1 April 2017 - 31 March 2018)</p>			<p>Director of Children's Services</p>

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FP Refs	Decision Date/Maker	Details of the proposed decision	Documents and background papers to be available to decision maker	Does the decision contain any exempt information requiring it to be considered in private?	Contact Officer for any representations to be made ahead of the proposed decision
FP/18/05/02 First published:	9 Jul 2018 Cabinet	Issue: Decision to award contract for the provision of Somerset Specialist All Age Drug and Alcohol Treatment Service Decision: Cabinet to approve the award of contrac			Amanda Payne, Co-ordinator Somerset Drug and Alcohol Partnership, Public Health Tel: 01823357641
FP/18/05/01 First published: 9 May 2018	9 Jul 2018 Cabinet	Issue: Adoption of the 'Well-managed highway infrastructure' Code of Practice by Somerset County Council Decision: To agree SCC adopts the new CoP and its 'risk based' approach for the management of the highway network.			Neil Guild, Highways Asset Improvement Officer
FP/18/04/08 First published: 30 April 2018	Not before 3rd Sep 2018 Commercial & Business Services Director, Cabinet Member for Children and Families	Issue: Creation of two New Academies in Somerset Decision: King Alfred School and Pawlett Primary School			Elizabeth Smith, Service Manager – Schools Commissioning Tel: 01823 356260