

SWT Corporate Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday, 2nd February, 2022,
6.15 pm

The John Meikle Room - The Deane
House



Somerset West
and Taunton

[SWT MEETING WEBCAST LINK](#)

Members: Gwil Wren (Chair), Nick Thwaites (Vice-Chair), Ian Aldridge, Benet Allen, Marcus Barr, Sue Buller, Norman Cavill, Simon Coles, Habib Farbahi, Ed Firmin, Barrie Hall, John Hassall, Libby Lisgo, Danny Wedderkopp and Loretta Whetlor

Agenda

1. Apologies

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. Minutes of the previous Corporate Scrutiny Committee

To approve the minutes of the previous meeting of the Committee held on 5th January 2022.

(Pages 5 - 10)

3. Declarations of Interest

To receive and note any declarations of disclosable pecuniary or prejudicial or personal interests in respect of any matters included on the agenda for consideration at this meeting.

(The personal interests of Councillors and Clerks of Somerset County Council, Town or Parish Councils and other Local Authorities will automatically be recorded in the minutes.)

4. Public Participation

The Chair to advise the Committee of any items on which members of the public have requested to speak and advise those members of the public present of the details of the Council's public participation scheme.

For those members of the public who have submitted any questions or statements, please note, a three minute time limit applies to each speaker and you will be asked to speak

before Councillors debate the issue.

Temporary measures during the Coronavirus pandemic

Due to the temporary legislation (within the Coronavirus Act 2020, which allowed for use of virtual meetings) coming to an end on 6 May 2021, the council's committee meetings will now take place in the office buildings at the John Meikle Room, Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton. Unfortunately due to capacity requirements the Chamber at West Somerset House is not able to be used at this current moment.

Following the Government guidance on measures to reduce the transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19), the council meeting rooms will have very limited capacity. With this in mind, we will be requesting that members of the public who have registered to speak attend the meetings in person at the office buildings, if they wish. (We will still be offering to those members of the public that are not comfortable in attending, for their statements to be read out by a member of the Governance team). Please can we urge all members of the public who are only interested in listening to the debate to view our live webcasts from the safety of their own home to help prevent the transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19).

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| <p>5. Corporate Scrutiny Request/Recommendation Trackers</p> <p>To update the Scrutiny Committee on the progress of resolutions and recommendations from previous meetings of the Committee.</p> | <p>(Pages 11 - 28)</p> |
| <p>6. Corporate Scrutiny Committee Forward Plan</p> <p>To receive items and review the Forward Plan.</p> | <p>(Pages 29 - 30)</p> |
| <p>7. Executive and Full Council Forward Plan</p> <p>To review the Forward Plans.</p> | <p>(Pages 31 - 34)</p> |
| <p>8. To Consider Reports from Executive Councillors - Councillor M Kravis</p> <p>To consider reports from Executive Councillors on their respective Portfolios;</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">i. Councillor Marcus Kravis – Economic Development & Asset Management</p> | <p>(Pages 35 - 42)</p> |

3.2 of the Scrutiny Terms of Reference state that the Scrutiny Committee may review and scrutinise and ask questions of the Leader, lead Councillors, the Executive in relation to their portfolios.

**9. To Consider Reports from Executive Councillors -
Councillor M Rigby**

(Pages 43 - 48)

To consider reports from Executive Councillors on their respective Portfolios;

- i. Councillor Mike Rigby – Planning and Transport

3.2 of the Scrutiny Terms of Reference state that the Scrutiny Committee may review and scrutinise and ask questions of the Leader, lead Councillors, the Executive in relation to their portfolios.



**ANDREW PRITCHARD
CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

Please note that this meeting will be recorded. You should be aware that the Council is a Data Controller under the Data Protection Act 2018. Data collected during the recording will be retained in accordance with the Council's policy. Therefore unless you are advised otherwise, by taking part in the Council Meeting during Public Participation you are consenting to being recorded and to the possible use of the sound recording for access via the website or for training purposes. If you have any queries regarding this please contact the officer as detailed above.

Following Government guidance on measures to reduce the transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19), we will be live webcasting our committee meetings and you are welcome to view and listen to the discussion. The link to each webcast will be available on the meeting webpage, but you can also access them on the [Somerset West and Taunton webcasting website](#).

If you would like to ask a question or speak at a meeting, you will need to submit your request to a member of the Governance Team in advance of the meeting. You can request to speak at a Council meeting by emailing your full name, the agenda item and your question to the Governance Team using governance@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk

Any requests need to be received by 4pm on the day that provides 2 clear working days before the meeting (excluding the day of the meeting itself). For example, if the meeting is due to take place on a Tuesday, requests need to be received by 4pm on the Thursday prior to the meeting.

The Governance and Democracy Case Manager will take the details of your question or speech and will distribute them to the Committee prior to the meeting. The Chair will then invite you to speak at the beginning of the meeting under the agenda item Public Question Time, but speaking is limited to three minutes per person in an overall period of 15 minutes and you can only speak to the Committee once. If there are a group of people attending to speak about a particular item then a representative should be chosen to speak on behalf of the group.

Please see below for Temporary Measures during Coronavirus Pandemic and the changes we are making to public participation:-

Due to the temporary legislation (within the Coronavirus Act 2020, which allowed for use of virtual meetings) coming to an end on 6 May 2021, the council's committee meetings will now take place in the office buildings within the John Meikle Meeting Room at the Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton. Unfortunately due to capacity requirements, the Chamber at West Somerset House is not able to be used at this current moment.

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Full Council, Executive, and Committee agendas, reports and minutes are available on our website: www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk

For further information about the meeting, please contact the Governance and Democracy Team via email: governance@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk

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SWT Corporate Scrutiny Committee - 5 January 2022

Present: Councillor Gwil Wren (Chair)

Councillors Ian Aldridge, Benet Allen, Sue Buller, Norman Cavill, Simon Coles, Habib Farbahi, Ed Firmin, Barrie Hall, Libby Lisgo, Loretta Whetlor and Steve Griffiths (In place of John Hassall)

Officers: Paul Fitzgerald, Kate Murdoch, Alison Blom-Cooper, Chris Hall, Joe Wharton, Jess Kemmish, Samantha Murrell, Rebecca Staddon and Andrew Pritchard

Also Present: Councillors Janet Lloyd, Dixie Darch, Dave Mansell, Francesca Smith, Vivienne Stock-Williams, Andrew Sully, Ray Tully, Sarah Wakefield and Brenda Weston

(The meeting commenced at 6.15 pm)

73. **Apologies**

Apologies were received from councillors Nick Thwaites, Danny Wedderkopp, John Hassall for whom Stephen Griffiths attended as a substitute, and Mike Rigby who was due to speak on agenda item 12. Item 12 was therefore deferred to a future meeting of the committee.

74. **Minutes of the previous Corporate Scrutiny Committee**

The committee resolved to approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on 1st December 2021.

75. **Declarations of Interest**

Members present at the meeting declared the following personal interests in their capacity as a Councillor or Clerk of a County, Town or Parish Council or any other Local Authority:-

Name	Minute No.	Description of Interest	Reason	Action Taken
Cllr N Cavill	All Items	West Monkton	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr S Coles	All Items	SCC & Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr L Lisgo	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr J Lloyd	All Items	Wellington & Sampford Arundel	Personal	Spoke
Cllr D Mansell	All Items	Wiveliscombe	Personal	Spoke
Cllr F Smith	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke

Cllr V Stock-Williams	All Items	Wellington	Personal	Spoke
Cllr R Tully	All Items	West Monkton	Personal	Spoke
Cllr B Weston	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke
Cllr L Whetlor	All Items	Watchet	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr G Wren	All Items	Clerk to Milverton PC	Personal	Spoke and Voted

76. **Public Participation**

There was no public participation.

77. **Corporate Scrutiny Request/Recommendation Trackers**

Councillor Buller raised that an answer to a question about the Quarter 1 Finance Report had not yet been provided. It was agreed that Councillor Buller would work with the Chair and officers to obtain a response. The Chair noted the trackers.

78. **Corporate Scrutiny Committee Forward Plan**

The Chair noted the forward plan.

79. **Executive and Full Council Forward Plan**

The Chair noted the forward plans.

80. **Annual Infrastructure Funding Statement**

The Assistant Director for Strategic Place & Planning introduced the report and raised the below points:

- The report came based on the current Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) regulations whereby authorities who receive Section 106 (S106) contributions or CIL must publish an infrastructure funding statement annually. This was a new requirement last year. This infrastructure funding statement was for 1st April-31st March 2021 and had been published on the council's website. It sets out the CIL funds which were collected and spent in that period.
- Officers explained the difference between CIL and S106. S106 agreements were a legal mechanism to make developments acceptable in planning terms which would otherwise be unacceptable. Developers could also be asked to contribute to infrastructure by CIL which was a fixed charge.
- Funds from both CIL and S106 could be used for infrastructure.
- Parish councils in receipt of CIL also needed to produce a report for each financial year they received CIL. This information was included in the report for this committee as an appendices.

- The Funding Statement included information on the infrastructure project the authority intended to be funded at least in part by CIL, the amount of money spent on administration, details of the funds passed onto parish councils, summary details of receipt and expenditure of CIL used in the period. It also needs to contain a S106 report which sets out the obligations entered into, the funds received, allocated and spent.
- The Council uses the IT system to record all S106 and CIL charges as well as the collection and spend.
- All parish councils were notified of CIL and S106 funds collected in their area.
- CIL tariffs were introduced in what was formerly Taunton Deane in 2014. Tariffs were only charged on particular types of development.
- There would be a review of CIL and S106 as part of creating a new local plan for Somerset however this would not disadvantage West Somerset as many authorities had decided not to use CIL. Although South Somerset and Sedgemoor had adopted CIL, Mendip had not.
- The government was reviewing CIL and were considering introducing a national levy.
- As of 31st March 2021 the Council had collected £7.58m in terms of CIL.
- CIL funding had been allocated to the delivery of infrastructure projects based on the CIL allocation principles approved by Full Council. There would be a review of allocations as part of the budget discussions which were upcoming.

During the debate on the report the following points were raised:

- It was questioned why a council would not opt to use CIL. Officers responded that there was only one pot of money for each development, if CIL was used then there would be less S106 funding. CIL did not cover affordable housing so many authorities had opted to use only S106 to allow them to more easily fulfil their affordable housing requirements.
- It was asked if there was a risk of losing the CIL funds collected since a significant amount had not yet been spent. Officers responded that CIL payments would not be lost but would roll over to the next year as they were allocated to specific developments.
- It was questioned whether, at the point that the new unitary council was formed in Somerset, the CIL funds would end with the existing councils or whether deliberate action would need to be taken to dismantle CIL by the new unitary authority. Officers responded that a decision about what to do with CIL would need to be taken by the new authority and the current systems would remain in place until the new authority made a decision. Officers noted that it was advised that CIL was reviewed regularly.
- It was suggested that CIL arrangements should be reviewed to see if S106 only would be better and more flexible.
- It was questioned about returned funds which were not spent and whether this was a result of the issues the Council previously had with tracking CIL and whether the new system was up to standard to ensure no funds would have to be returned. It was responded that the payments returned were historic S106 payments where the funding had not been spent within the designated time

period. The new clear monitoring system and dedicated officers would help to mitigate the risk of further payments being returned.

- It was raised that there was a technical issue with moving from one system to another in the transition from Taunton Deane to Somerset West and Taunton.
- It was suggested that having information for each parish council who had received S106 funds and how they had spent it would be useful.
- It was asked how the risk of funds being returned was being mitigated and concerns were raised about funds not being invested back into the community.
- Officers informed that when a planning application was submitted to the Council interested parties were consulted if a S106 agreement was going to be drawn up and then the agreement would be made between the developer and planning officer. Many of these would then go to planning committee to be approved. Some agreements were straight forward and some took many months.
- It was asked what the process of an infrastructure development coming forward and then being considered for S106 was. Officers responded that there were a number of things which determined qualification for S106, including the local plan, planning policy or through consultation with statutory consultees.
- It was asked what determines the overall amount of S106 money and what determines how it is split up between different areas such as highways, healthcare and education. It was responded that statutory consultees, such as the County Council had approximate tariffs such as a certain amount being provided for education per house. However, discussions would take place with developers to identify what would be viable.
- It was asked about transport being funded out of S106. Officers responded that the Council often sought transport improvements and payments as part of S106 requirements.
- It was raised that historically the criteria for CIL was more flexible than S106 but that this had now been altered.
- It was questioned whether the new unitary authority could spend CIL funds anywhere they would like to once it came into existence or whether they would have to uphold existing allocations. Officers responded that the new unitary would only be able to spend the CIL funds within the same geographical area.
- Officers agreed to update members after the meeting regarding what would happen to CIL funds if parish councils were taken over and whether the CIL funds could be ringfenced to be spent on certain projects.
- It was raised that in the new unitary the LCNs would be likely to play a role in CIL allocations.
- It was raised that when CIL was allocated regular reminders were given about when funds must be spent by. For S106 agreements officers provided information on what the funds were for when requested.
- It was raised that dependent on the areas the LCNs covered once the new authority was formed it may change the CIL allocations.
- It was asked if additional support could be given to parish councils on what their funding could be spent on and the process for S106 funds.

- The Chair put forward as comments of the committee that the committee was of the view that the system needed to be reviewed, both the principles of S106 and CIL, and that leaving this to the new unitary would cause a significant delay. The Chair, on behalf of the committee, urged that the review of the system take place as soon as practicable and be accelerated to take place during the setting up arrangements for the new authority if possible.
- The Council was holding significant sums of money as pledges. The committee had heard about some sums being returned and it would be useful to have a simple guide for councillors as to how the system works.
- The information in the annual report is very detailed but it would be helpful if all locations could be identified in the report.

The Corporate Scrutiny Committee resolved to note the report and approved the comments put forward by the Chair.

Councillors Firmin and Hall left the meeting following this item. Rebecca Staddon and Kate Murdoch also left the meeting.

81. **Access to Information - Exclusion of Press and Public**

Resolved that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the next item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 respectively of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, namely information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

82. **Commercial Property Investment Strategy, Six Monthly Performance Review and Asset Management Strategy**

The Corporate Scrutiny Committee resolved to note the recommendations contained in the report:

2.1 Full Council is requested to support the following recommendations: -

- a) Note the six-monthly update information.
- b) Adoption of the revised Commercial Investment Strategy at Appendix 2.
- c) Adopt the Asset Management Strategy as an interim document pending transition to a Unitary authority (Appendix 3).

83. **Re-admittance of the Press and Public**

84. **To consider reports from Executive Councillors - Cllr Mike Rigby**

Item 12 on the agenda was deferred to a future meeting of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee.

(The Meeting ended at 8.42 pm)

SOMERSET WEST AND TAUNTON COUNCIL
CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION TRACKER 2021/22

Date of Cttee	Scrutiny Recommendation	Decision Maker /Directorate Responsible	Final Decision/ Response to recommendation/	Date of response	Implemented?	Officer Comments/Update
01/12/21	<p>Recommended:- The Corporate Scrutiny Committee recommended to the Executive;</p> <p>1) Clarify why a small part of the district with little infrastructure is taking precedent to the County Town of Somerset.</p> <p>2) Clearly identify the costs both in terms of revenue and capital associated with these feasibility studies or business case studies in Minehead and West Somerset and future ones before January 2022.</p> <p>3) Which sites in Minehead and West Somerset are being considered and where will it fit within the overarching plans for Somerset West and Taunton.</p>	The Executive	<p>In consultation with the Portfolio Holder, Chris Hall (Director of Development and Place) prepared a set of responses which are as follows:-</p> <p>1) Clarify why a small part of the district with little infrastructure is taking precedent to the County Town of Somerset.</p> <p>Response – Specific activity around the Minehead and West Somerset geography has evolved in response to known demand and a long standing issue in finding available employment land opportunities. In particular, finding space to support local businesses seeking to grow, create new jobs and remain in the area. The 2021 Somerset West and Taunton Economic Development Needs Assessment report highlighted that between 2009 and 2018 little employment land was developed in West Somerset.</p>	15 th December 2021		

This action was incorporated into the annual plan approved by Full Council, this establishes areas of particular focus that services are then held accountable for the delivery of. The development of commercial units on Seaway Way, by the Council's development team, further evidenced the need for additional units and provides an opportunity for the Council to invest and therefore have a direct impact on employment land options, and opportunities.

The activity identified in the plan is in recognition of the difficulties faced by these areas, these are not the same across all areas of the district, but this is not an either or scenario, none of this work to build a development business case is detrimental to Taunton or other areas of the district. This delivery business case should also not be confused with any high level feasibility work on innovation district matters. This business case is specific with options for investment and potential returns to the Council. Overall, the project fits with the strategic ambitions of the SWT Economic Development

Strategy 2021-24, which specifically identified the need for new employment land sites across the district as one of eight key priorities to resolve going forward.

- 2) Clearly identify the costs both in terms of revenue and capital associated with these feasibility studies or business case studies in Minehead and West Somerset and future ones before January 2022.

Response - The cost of developing the WS Employment Feasibility Study was £27,450, and paid for using Hinkley Point C S106 allocations to support businesses in the West Somerset area.

A second phase of work was then carried out recently to explore each site in detail. This involved looking at key engineering issues (e.g., land clearance, construction, planning, highways, utilities), developing layouts and concept designs, and starting landowner discussions. This led to a comprehensive understanding of costs and the development of financially viable business cases.

£45k was made available to support this second phase of work from allocation towards employment site enabling schemes, which was recommended by Scrutiny in November 2020. To date £18,341.25 has been invoiced for by contractors working on the project.

This will lead to business cases for two potential employment land opportunities involving both pre-lets and speculative units for 11 businesses, delivering 65,000 square feet of premises and 175 new or safeguarded jobs.

Future costs will depend on any business case being brought through the democratic process for approval. Any report on this would be provided to Members on a confidential basis as it will contain land acquisition and development cost options.

- 3) Which sites in Minehead and West Somerset are being considered and where will it fit within the overarching plans for Somerset West and Taunton.
Response - We are not able to disclose this whilst commercial

			<p>negotiations are underway as this may prejudice those negotiations and impact on our ability to secure either than land or a development contract at an affordable rate. Current land negotiation are off market.</p> <p>When the business case is ready to be presented, and we have a clear decision making route in light of the financial impact on Somerset Council, this will be provided to Members as a commercially confidential paper.</p>			
<p>03/11/21</p>	<p>Recommended:- SWT Corporate Scrutiny Committee Recommended to the Executive that; A feasibility study is undertaken for the provision of an innovation hub based in Taunton and that the Council brings the results of such a study back through the democratic path when completed. The funding for this proposal is to be found within existing 2021/22 budgets where possible.</p>	<p>The Executive</p>	<p>Executive – 17th November 2021</p> <p>2.1 That the Executive resolve to progress the work identified in the ‘Developing the Innovation Ecosystem in Somerset West and Taunton – Framework for Action’ report and not to carry out an additional feasibility study for an innovation hub in Taunton, however,</p> <p>2.2. As part of SWT’s role as an enabler to deliver the space necessary for research and innovation within the district, the council will as part of the work of enabling the development of innovation assets to the next level, will finance and host a R&I conference in Taunton by or during the summer 2022, bringing together business, academia,</p>	<p>17th November 2021</p>		

			developers, investors and the wider industries in order to progress development of R&I assets in Taunton and the wider district			
2/06/21	<p>Recommended:- The Corporate Scrutiny Committee reviewed performance against the Commercial Property Investment Strategy (CPIS) and supported the following recommendations to the Executive;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. For transparency, gross and net income from the commercial investments to be made more readily available from the six monthly reviews with a link to be provided in future reports to the SWT website where this information is posted. 2. The communications underpinning the CPIS both internally and externally need to be improved upon considerably, as it was considered important that people understood what the Council 	Full Council - Cllr R Henley – PFH Corporate Resources	<p>Full Council – 7th September 2021 –</p> <p>The Corporate Scrutiny Committee reviewed performance against the Commercial Property Investment Strategy (CPIS) and supported the following recommendations to the Executive; [NB this paper did not go to the Executive - therefore these recommendations will be considered by the Commercial Investment Board]</p> <p>For transparency, gross and net income from the commercial investments to be made more readily available from the six monthly reviews with a link to be provided in future reports to the SWT website where this information is posted. The communications underpinning the CPIS both internally and externally need to be improved upon considerably, as it was considered important that people understood what the Council was trying to do and why, and how this work inter-linked with the Corporate Priorities of the Council. The Corporate Scrutiny Committee was pleased to be informed that the legacy commercial properties will be incorporated in the next scheduled review paper that is to go to Full Council in December, but in</p>	7 th September 2021	Not clear if CIB has considered these recommendations have been adopted.	Report not planned to go to Executive – response to be reported in Full Council report and in introduction by PFH which has indicated the recommendations will be considered by the Commercial Investment Board in due course.

	<p>was trying to do and why, and how this work inter-linked with the Corporate Priorities of the Council.</p> <p>3. The Corporate Scrutiny Committee was pleased to be informed that the legacy commercial properties will be incorporated in the next scheduled review paper that is to go to Full Council in December, but in advance of this, a light-touch document is requested to be circulated to the Committee.</p>		<p>advance of this, a light-touch document is requested to be circulated to the Committee.</p>			
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Total Recommendations for 21/22:

Agreed:

Agreed in Part:

Not Agreed:

TBD:

SOMERSET WEST AND TAUNTON COUNCIL
CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WRITTEN ANSWERS TRACKER 2021/22

Date of Cttee	Scrutiny Cttee Request for information	Decision Maker /Directorate Responsible	Response to request for information	Date response of	Scrutiny Officer Comments/Update
07/07/21	Q) <i>Outturn Report - Can the Finance team provide a comparison with this year's outturn and last years on debts written off?</i>	Cllr Ross Henley/Finance			Understood this information can be provided.
07/07/21	Q) <i>Performance Report – Extensions to Planning applications due to phosphates – further detail on how many had had multiple extensions?</i>	Cllr Mike Rigby / Planning	We don't hold that information and I am not clear of the relevance of whether they have had multiple extensions. The more pertinent information is the number of applications which are currently held in abeyance due to the need to provide measures to mitigate the impact of development on the Somerset Levels and Moors Ramsar site. As Rebecca reported to Planning Committee we currently have approximately 100 applications equating to approximately	01/09/21	A verbal update was given to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee by Alison Blom-Cooper during the committee meeting on 3/11/21.

			2,300 dwellings and 13 sites awaiting the discharge of conditions equating to approximately 450 dwellings.		
01/09/21	<i>2021/22 General Fund Financial Monitoring as at Qtr1</i> Q) Collation of parking income was requested along with the projected shortfall with comparison to pre pandemic levels.	Cllr R Henley & Cllr M Rigby / Finance/ Parking	Awaiting response. (<i>Check details of Qtr2 monitoring</i>)	10/11/21	Finance Business Partner currently checking with Stuart Noyce (may be a delay due to leave commitments)
01/09/21	<i>2021/22 General Fund Financial Monitoring as at Qtr1 –</i> Q) Appendix A compared to the budget agreed in February was considered, with a requested for further information in comparison to the detail of the variances.	Cllr R Henley / Finance	Paul Maclean has asked Cllr Buller to contact him direct so that he can fully understand the query and provide a satisfactory response. - First email was 07/09/21 - To be followed up.		Paul Maclean – can provide a detailed written response. Email fwd on. Emily Collacott and Paul Maclean.
01/09/21	<i>2021/22 – HRA Financial Monitoring as at Q1</i> - There had been a revenue forecast overspend of £610k, with the recommendation setting out £869k, information relating to the variance in the figures was requested.	Cllr F Smith / Housing	The amount of £869k has been moved from HRA earmarked reserves to the HRA general reserves therefore increases the level of general reserves – this figure is not included in the Q1 year-end forecast	10/11/21	Information provided by Emily Collacott and confirmed by Kerry Prisco. Email dated 10/11/21

3/11/21	<i>Innovation District Update</i> – A request was made for the full report from the EIBC study. During the meeting Chris Hall agreed to supply a redacted version due to commercial sensitivity.	Cllr M Kravis/ Development & Place	Chris Hall will redact the report and then make it available to members.	8/11/21	The redacted version of the report was published as part of the Executive Committee report for the Executive meeting held on 17 th November.
01/12/21	<i>Corporate Performance Report Q2</i> – QA) It was questioned whether an ecologist had been appointed to work on phosphates. QB) It was questioned how soon it is possible for an incoming call to be answered whether the wait time for calls to be answered included the automatic messaging at the start of the call.	Cllr R Henley / Various Officers	We advertised and failed to fill the agreed post of Nutrient Neutrality Officer and so we have a secondee from Arup on a part-time basis on a years contract to support the phosphates project. She is an ecologist. We do not currently include the time taken to listen to the messages and options at the beginning of the call. The benchmarking undertaken when the team was created found that most other organisations measure answering times from the same point (as all have statements about calls being recorded, GDPR etc). For SWT, the average time spent in the call routing process is around 80 seconds but this	10/12/21	Questions sourced as part of the Qtr 2 performance report by Malcolm Riches

	<p>QC) It was questioned how many quality employment opportunities had the Council attracted in the last few years, in terms of productivity what was the percentage increase and in which sectors.</p>		<p>depends on the customer's choices on each call.</p> <p><i>Awaiting updated response from Lisa Tuck</i></p> <p>The target of 44 days was set in December 2020 for the current financial year and was based on Quarter 2 Housemark metrics that showed a median performance of 44.5 days for District Councils that held housing stock at that time. In practice, meeting this target has been an enormous challenge both for us and across the Housing sector and we are currently falling short, as are most other Housing Providers. To illustrate this, Housemark data showed that the District Council average void turnaround time had increased to 49.8 days by Quarter 4 of 2020/21 (and no doubt has continued to further</p>	<p>04/01/2021</p>	<p>Simon Lewis</p>
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	<p>QD) It was questioned whether the average relet time of 44 days under homes and communities was normal.</p>		<p>increase this year). Key factors that have affected turnaround time in this financial year have been:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Loss of trades-staff due to Covid• Trades staff being re-prioritised onto repairs work to clear the backlog built up during Covid lockdown (when we only undertook emergency repairs to minimise the risk of transmission and in line with government guidance).• Inability to recruit skilled trades staff, due to a very competitive market, including the impact of the Hinkley project attracting workers to EDF.• Delays in receiving a range of materials to complete Voids works, due to Covid, Brexit and other external factors. <p>This issue is not unique to SWT Council and is being experienced right across the Housing Sector. The Housing Directorate has an established</p>		
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			<p>plan to improve our Voids turnaround times that focuses on a number of areas of potential improvement and we are meeting regularly to ensure that progress is made on bringing average times down.</p> <p>As a Housing Management team, we also review our performance indicators as part of a wider suite to give us a rounded view of performance with respect to letting of properties. The Pulse statistical data for September 2021 does show us in the top quartile for the indicators “Proportion of dwellings vacant, but available to let”, and only marginally outside of top quartile performance for ‘Proportion of social homes let’, so our performance overall does give us some confidence that although improvement is required, we are not significantly out of step with other Housing Providers.</p>	<p>04/01/2021</p> <p>04/01/2021</p>	<p>Malcolm Riches</p> <p>Malcolm Riches</p>
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	<p>QE) It was asked whether the asset management and completion of leases earlier than expected could be elaborated upon and clarification given.</p> <p>QF) Fly tipping was raised as being a big issue and it was questioned what was being done to address this.</p>		<p>This relates to the General Fund monitoring report, Table 3 on p52. It is an improved position on asset management income compared to last year by c£150k. This is due to leases completing earlier than expected for units at Seaward Way and Lisieux Way.</p> <p>At the end of September, performance for the year-to-date is 81% which is exceeding the target of 80%. Fly-tipping is dealt with by an external contactor and performance has improved during the year. Following a drop in performance in the first few months of this year, partly driven by a rise in the amount of fly-tipping, we continue to work closely with the contractor to closely monitor performance and drive improvement. It is important to note that the target relates to the speed of response rather than a failure to respond.</p>	04/01/2021	<p>Malcolm Riches</p> <p>Chris Hall issued response in</p>
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	<p>QG) Planning applications had been delayed due to phosphates, there were over 120 applications waiting to be decided so why does the report claim a high level of success. It was asked if officers could give a date for when these applications would be coming forward and say how many of the applications waiting were likely to go forward.</p> <p>QH) It was raised that a feasibility study for Employment Land in West Somerset was mentioned in the report, and it was asked why a feasibility for the whole of the district was not being undertaken. It was asked</p>	Cllr Marcus Kravis	<p>The national performance indicator which looks at the Council's performance in determining planning applications (major, minor and other) looks at the speed with which applications are dealt with within the statutory time period or an agreed extended period. Those applications which are held in abeyance as a result of the need to provide mitigation to ensure nutrient neutrality and ensure there is no impact on the Somerset Levels and Moors Ramsar site have not yet been determined and so would not be included in these figures. Most of these applications have an agreed extension of time so if they are determined in line with this agreement they will meet the targets.</p> <p><i>Answer listed under Recommendation Tracker as taken to Executive on 15 December 2021</i></p>		consultation with the PFH – Marcus Kravis
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	where the budget for this study was coming from and whether it was revenue or capital funds.				
01/12/21	<p><i>2021-22 General Fund Financial Monitoring as at Q2 - Q)</i> An update was requested on how well asset management under External Operations and Climate Change was performing compared to previous years.</p>	Cllr R Henley / External Operations			
5/1/22	<p><i>Infrastructure Funding Statement</i></p> <p>Q) Officers agreed to update members after the meeting regarding what would happen to CIL funds if parish councils were taken over or split as part of a new town or parish council was formed and whether the CIL funds could be ringfenced to be spent on certain projects.</p>	Cllr M Rigby / Development and Place			

CORPORATE SCRUTINY

Meeting	Draft Agenda Items	Lead PFH/ Lead Officer
2nd February 2022	Reports from Executive PFH - Cllr M Rigby	Cllr M Rigby
SRD = 21 January	Reports from Executive PFH - Cllr M Kravis	Cllr M Kravis
Exec RD = 4 February		
Informal Exec RD = 4 Jan		
SMT RD = 8 December		
2nd March 2022	Financial Performance 2021/22 Q3	Cllr R Henley / P. Fitzgerald
SRD = 18 February	Capital Investment and Treasury Strategy 2022/23	Cllr R Henley / P. Fitzgerald
Exec RD = 4 March	Corporate Performance Report Q3	Cllr R Henley / M.Riches
Informal Exec RD = 1 Feb	Corporate Scrutiny Chair's Annual Report	Chair of the Committee
SMT RD = 19 January		
6th April 2022	Public Transport Task and Finish Report	Cllr L Whetlor / M Prouse
SRD = 25 March		
Exec RD = 6 April		
Informal Exec RD = 8 March		
SMT RD = 23 February		
4th May 2022		
SRD - 21 April (BH)		
Exec RD - 6 May		
Informal Exec RD - 5 April		
SMT RD - 23 March	Reports from Executive PFH - tbc	
1st June 2022		
SRD - 20 May		
Exec RD - 3 June		
Informal Exec RD - 4 May		
SMT RD - 20 April	Reports from Executive PFH - tbc	

EXECUTIVE

Executive Meeting	Draft Agenda Items	Lead Officer
19 January 2022	Housing Revenue and Capital Budget Setting 2022/23 including Dwelling Rent Setting 2022/23 and 30 Year Business Plan Review	Paul Fitzgerald
venue =	SWP Business Plan	Stuart Noyce/Mickey Green
Exec RD = 7 January	Litter Strategy	Vicky Lowman/Stuart Noyce
Informal Exec RD = 30 November	External Litter Enforcement One Year Trial	Vicky Lowman/Stuart Noyce
SMT RD = 17 November	Taxi Fares	John Rendell
Budget - 9 February 2022	General Fund Revenue Budget and Capital Estimates 2022/23	Paul Fitzgerald
venue =	Special Meeting	
Exec RD = 28 January		
Informal Exec RD = 4 January		
SMT RD = 8 December		
16 February 2022	Cancellation due to lack of business	
venue =		
Exec RD = 4 February		
Informal Exec RD = 4 January		
SMT RD = 8 December		
16 March 2022	GF Financial Performance 2021/22 Q3	Emily Collacott
venue =	HRA Financial Performance 2021/22 Q3	Kerry Prisco
Exec RD = 4 March	Capital, Investment and Treasury Strategy 2022/23	Paul Fitzgerald
Informal Exec RD = 1 February	Corporate Performance Report Q3	Malcolm Riches
SMT RD = 19 January	Wellington and Cullompton Stations - project governance arrangements	Sarah Povall
	SWT Pay Policy	Nicky Rendell
	Wordsworth Drive and Coleridge Crescent Regeneration	James Barrah/Chris Brown
	NO MORE ITEMS	
20 April 2022		
venue =		
Exec RD = 6 April		
Informal Exec RD = 8 March		
SMT RD = 23 February		
18 May 2022		
venue =		
Exec RD = 6 May		
Informal Exec RD = 5 April		
SMT RD = 23 March		

15 June 2022	GF Financial Performance 2021/22 Q4	Emily Collacott
venue =	HRA Financial Performance 2021/22 Q4	Kerry Prisco
Exec RD = 3 June	Corporate Performance Report Q4	Malcolm Riches
Informal Exec RD = 4 May	CCTV	Sally Parry/Scott Weetch
SMT RD = 20 April		

FULL COUNCIL

Meeting	Report Deadline	Draft Agenda Items	Lead Officer
8 February 2022	27 January 2022	Housing Revenue and Capital Budget Setting 2022/23 including Dwelling Rent Setting 2022/23 and 30 Year Business Plan Review	Paul Fitzgerald
		External Audit Arrangements	Paul Fitzgerald
		Statement of Licensing and Gambling Policy	John Rendell
		Community Governance Review - Options	Kevin Williams
		Constitution Update	Kevin Williams
24 February 2022	14 February 2022	General Fund Revenue Budget and Capital Estimates 2022/23	Paul Fitzgerald
Budget Only		Council Tax Setting 2022/23	Paul Fitzgerald
Special Meeting		Business Rates Retention Pooling 2022/23	Paul Fitzgerald
		Commercial Investment/Asset Management Strategies	Chris Hall/Joe Wharton
		NO MORE ITEMS	
29 March 2022	17 March 2022	Capital, Investment and Treasury Strategy 2022/23	Paul Fitzgerald
Page 33		Wellington and Cullompton Stations - project governance arrangements	Sarah Povall
		SWT Pay Policy	Nicky Rendell
		Decision taken under the urgency rule in relation to ARG Payments	Gordon Dwyer
		Wordsworth Drive and Coleridge Crescent Regeneration	James Barraah/Chris Brown
		Scrutiny Annual Reports x 2	
		Audit Annual Report	
		NO MORE ITEMS - Purdah (21.03.2022)	
10 May 2022	27 April 2022	Annual Council Meeting	
		Council Committees for 2021/2022 and their Terms of Reference	Amy Tregellas
		Appointment of Representatives on Outside Bodies	Amy Tregellas
		To authorise the sealing or signing of documents to give effect to any decisions taken	Amy Tregellas
		NO MORE ITEMS - Purdah (21.03.2022)	
05 July 2022	23 June 2022	CCTV	Sally Parry/Scott Weetch

Full Council Meeting – 7 December 2021

Report of Councillor Marcus Kravis – Asset Management and Economic Development

Major and Special Projects Update

Coal Orchard

Good progress is again being made at Coal Orchard to complete buildings and public realm areas. Block A – The Quay – which faces onto St. James St is now complete and was handed over to the Council during the week of 15 November 2021. The Wharf which faces onto the car park area should be complete in early December, whilst The Jetty and remaining public realm areas are currently planned for completion in February 2022.

Following nationwide materials and labour shortages, which caused delays to progress on site, things are gradually returning to normal, but uncertainty remains within supply chains and the contractor Midas are constantly reviewing availability of site labour, logistics and deliveries. There are plans to create a temporary fenced off footpath through the site from early December and through the Christmas period to help support local traders in the Independent Quarter. Lights, Christmas trees, maps and signage are all being put in place to help encourage footfall to all areas.

Marketing of the residential properties and commercial units began in the Summer and at the time of writing 27 of the 40 apartments are either reserved or let. With the handover of The Quay contracts can now be exchanged, and we hope to see the first owners moving in early in the New Year. Work is progressing to increase interest in the 8 commercial units, with a renewed emphasis on promoting the units as the scheme nears completion

Firepool

NHS Vaccination Centre move to Firepool

The NHS have now commenced vaccinations from the Firepool site, having successfully mobilised and assembled modular buildings in August and September. The site is expected to be used until March 2022.

GWR building / cycle path

The GWR Building is now being used as a site office by the Innovation Centre contractor site management team. As significant civil works are now underway, the temporary cycle path has been closed in order to maintain safe working distances from machinery and material movements. The path will be re-opened whenever it is possible to do so for significant periods.

Digital Innovation Centre

SWT are continuing to work in collaboration with SCC on delivery of a 2400m² Digital Innovation centre on the Firepool site, with construction activity now in progress. Civil and decontamination works started in October 2021, with a delivery programme of circa 18 months.

Special Purpose Vehicle

SWT have been exploring the most efficient delivery route for large projects such as Firepool and a dedicated development arm which will be solely focussed on delivery

of key regeneration projects was approved by Full Council on 3 November 2020. The detailed work on this key component has progressed but the impact of phosphates on the ability to commence construction of residential units limits the scope and efficiency of a separate delivery arm at this time, therefore any formation will be delayed until a resolution is available.

Infrastructure, Utilities and Flood work

In response to the constraints of the Phosphate issue on submission of a site wide LDO, officers have agreed a Planning Performance Agreement (a project management tool) between the Council as Local Planning Authority and the Council as Developer to progress a masterplan which will be subject to public consultation and approval as a material planning consideration. This will set out the proposals for delivering the Firepool scheme.

Detailed applications for access and infrastructure have been submitted, with the aim of works starting on site as soon as the NHS Vaccination Centre has demobilised. Ecological surveys continue on the green space between the canal and river up to Obridge, which will feed into any design work on the flood mitigation works, which will seek to find the appropriate balance between flood mitigation, existing habitat retention and opportunities for enhancement and promotion of wildlife.

Future High Streets Fund

The first payment of £4.75m was made to the Council in June 2021. £1m has been used to support the Coal Orchard project. £3m has been allocated for Firepool and £750k to cycling improvement schemes in Taunton. Procurement work has started on the cycling and walking schemes, that will see the creation of a continuous route from Taunton Train Station to Vivary Park, via Firepool, Coal Orchard and the High Street. The project has also secured £1.13m in match funding from CIL and SCC, which provides an overall budget of £3.43m including Future High Street contributions. The work involves making improvements to junctions at North St. High St, St James St, and bridge development work across the river. The contract will be in place to begin work in Spring 22

Bus Station

Work is continuing to build a business case for re-developing the Bus Station site. Surveys to identify key issues and work to understand the costs of refurbishing the buildings have been completed. Proposals have been submitted for pre-application advice has been submitted for a change of use for the hard standing area of the site, for the Council to turn it into a temporary car park, which will inform any future planning application in the future. The Major Projects Team are engaging with the Somerset County Council bid to the Department of Transport for grant funding to improve bus services in the County. This includes a proposal for bringing at least part of the current site back into use as a bus station. The proposals also allow for SWT plans for utilising some of the buildings for commercial uses and providing support for key local services, including a Changing Places facility

West Somerset Employment Land Sites

A feasibility Study was carried out in Summer 2021 to review demand and assess a range of potential sites for Employment Land use in the West Somerset area. Three sites were identified as potentially being viable for the Council to invest in and develop. Since September, more work has been carried to assess each site in more

detail. This has included looking at access and engineering issues, reviewing all potential costs, starting talks with prospective tenants and landowners, and developing concept drawings. This work is leading to the development of development appraisals being carried out on three options for two different sites. One of these appraisals has now been completed, revealing that we have one good financially viable option in the centre of Minehead. A Council report is now being put together, which will be presented to Scrutiny on 5 January 2022, Executive on 19 January 2022 and Full Council on 8 February 2022.

Heritage

Tonedale Mill

The S48 Repairs notices have been served and discussions continue with the owners on their response to the notices and the emergency works required on site.

Toneworks

Following completion of the first phase of repair works, SWT have been successful in securing further grant funding from Historic England to enable the next stage of targeted works that will bring Toneworks back into use for community and cultural purposes. Procurement for the contractors to carry out these works is underway and it is anticipated that works will begin in the new year.

Fox's Field

Lease discussions have progressed with the WMCIC for the site at Fox's Field to deliver community amenity space as a community forest garden. The WMCIC have already undertaken some work on the field to cut the grass and create a better walking space for the community as well as planning and securing trees for the forest garden, which they will start planting from December.

Dulverton Weir

SWT continues to work with the Dulverton Weir and Leat Conservation Trust and other stakeholders to investigate future options for the repair and long-term future of the site. We received SRA funding for technical work and the Trust have organised and number of community events including an archaeological dig and garden party.

Norton Hillfort

The site has now been transferred to the South West Heritage Trust for long term guardianship. The site was formally removed from the Heritage at Risk Register at the start of November and was featured prominently in Historic England's press release. A number of successful volunteer events have already taken place.

Hinkley Point C

Of the £22.5m that the Councils have received via S106 agreements approximately £19.5m is left to spend. All these funds are committed to specific projects or areas of work. Under the current agreement the funding for the majority of posts will end in March 2023, with some funds remaining to maintain planning posts in 2023/24 and 2024/25. However due to the HPC project being behind time and EDF wishing to increase its workforce by 55%, the Councils have now secured some additional funding (£250k plus inflation) for specific posts past March 2023. This includes

additional support for Economic Development and finance roles until 2024/25, and planning and project management until 2025/26.

In addition to this the Councils have now reached agreement with EDF on a comprehensive package of mitigation measures to manage the impacts of the workforce uplift. This includes an additional payment of £390k to the Council to extend some of the Hinkley Housing initiatives and the Housing post. It also includes funding for the joint Community Safety Officer with Sedgemoor District Council until 2026. The whole package also includes significant spend on measures by EDF and support to the other local authorities involved.

Overall, and although a good package of measures has been agreed, there remains concern about whether all activity can successfully be delivered in the next 12 months before the new peak of construction in early 2023. Significant management and monitoring plans are required to stay on top of issues. Members and communities were given briefings on the uplift situation on 15 November and 18 November 2021. Agreements will be finalised in the coming weeks and new management plans put in place by February 2022.

Economic Development update

Town Centre Resilience and Transformation

The Economic Development team continue to work with Town and Neighbourhood Centre working groups across the District to distribute the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) Welcome Back Fund allocated to SWT, and the SWT Town Centre Recovery Fund. The projects funded are achieving the aims of drawing people to our high streets, improving the vibrancy in the public realm, providing events and attractions, and increasing footfall.

- 52 projects are planned across the District of which 28 have been actioned and are in progress.
- Over the summer the Towns and Neighbourhood Centres had a wide variety of events, activities, festivals, and street entertainment. More is planned to encourage shoppers and visitors over the festive period.
- Equipment such as additional benches and bins have been installed with additional cleaning.
- Streets have been lined with flags, bunting, hanging baskets and colourful window displays in empty units.
- Regular engagement with Town and Neighbourhood Working Groups have ensured that the projects are community designed and led, and a forum is in place for the groups to share their ideas and best practise.

Winterfest in Taunton Town Centre is planned and the Christmas tree was ready for the 21 November light switch on, with a packed programme of activities to delight the community and to ensure the businesses in the Town Centre benefit from a wide range of customers over the festive season. During the Christmas period there will be street entertainment, log cabins and markets to encourage visitor numbers to the Town.

Visitor Economy Recovery and Growth

Phase 2 of the county wide Visitor Economy Support Programme (VESP) to aid the recovery of the visitor economy continues with ongoing activity planned until end of 2022.

The Hinkley Tourism Action Partnership (HTAP) continues to support the Visitor economy with activity including:

- HTAP Tourism Innovation Grant Scheme (supporting SMEs) has awarded grants to support 14 businesses projects across the Western area of SWT and Sedgemoor as most impacted from the Hinkley Point C development. 9 projects were supported within Somerset West, 1 joint project covers both areas and 4 projects are within Sedgemoor District.
- Free Digital online business support workshops (supporting SMEs) –
 - 6 ‘BOOST’ Tourism Toolkit workshops running Oct – Dec 2021 with 126 businesses booked to date
 - 6 England Coast Path and walking workshops running Oct – Dec 2021 with 70 businesses booked to date

The contract to refresh the Minehead Economic Plan on behalf of Minehead & Coast Development Trust (MCDT) has been delivered and the ‘Minehead Plan - Inspiring People and Place’ final plan has been published. Delivery of the plan will see the MCDT, Minehead Town Council, Minehead Bid, Training and Education Providers, SWT, SCC and various other agencies working together to deliver activity that supports the vibrancy of Minehead.

Through the ERDF Welcome Back Fund contracts have been issued to deliver:

- A sustainable central event web portal (one stop shop) that will enable local people and visitors to find out about the events, what’s on and things to do in the district, and for organisers to promote their events.
- A Marketing Campaign including the development of a suite of marketing products to market and promote the area as a whole to local people and visitors, this will develop and promote the work of the Town Centre Working Groups to boost visits to our Town Centre.

Additional Restrictions Grant Funds

A further £184,000 of ARG funding was distributed in early November which targeted funds toward businesses which support a significant number of employees. Of the £5.76m of ARG funding received by the Council, £696k remains to be distributed. With the remainder of the funds, the focus is now on steering support toward future business resilience and schemes are being worked up which incorporate innovation and carbon reduction criteria.

West Somerset Employment Site Feasibility complete

The initial feasibility study has identified two potentially viable sites in the Minehead area (see above). A proposal is scheduled to be presented to Council in February 2022.

Inward Investment

A Marketing and Communications plan for Inward Investment has been drafted. A key piece of work will focus on developing content for a campaign to launch next year aimed at greater engagement of potential investors.

A358 consultation

The Strategic Economic Development Lead has been involved in the business working group with the National Highways alongside Business West and the HoSWLEP as well as ensuring that Taunton Chamber of Commerce been

involved in the current round of consultation. The Economic Development perspective, including impacts and opportunities for local business have been included in SWTs consultation response.

Community Renewal Funds

Somerset has recently had some success in the Community Renewal Fund bid process with £700k secured for a programme linked to further development of the innovation ecosystem through establishing a further round of a high growth bootcamp for businesses looking to secure investment. The programme also includes AI/Big data training from Exeter University which will help support digital business in Somerset. There was positive news from the Autumn statement that there will be a £200m regional investment fund established for the South West for businesses looking to secure early stage investment.

Innovation District

The team continue to progress activity that will secure SWT as a key location for Innovation and Digital sector growth, the team are working closely with County and district colleagues to join up and align the growth sectors and assets linked to the knowledge economy.

Nuclear Decommissioning Agency

The team are working to secure project funding, resources and expertise from the Nuclear Decommissioning Agency as a result of the decommissioning of Hinkley Point B. Working with Sedgemoor District Council and SCC to work up proposals for investment in the area.

Employment and Skills

SWT Community Employment Hubs

The new SWT Community Employment Hub volunteer policy has been approved by Full Council. The volunteer handbook has been completed along with the volunteer application form to enable recruitment of volunteers who will perform an intrinsic role in the delivery of employment and skills advice at the community hubs across the District. Training is now being delivered to newly recruited and existing volunteers by the 2 Hub Co-ordinators in preparations for the hub openings. A professional volunteer training orientation plan/manual has been developed to support this work. A bespoke client management system is nearing completion. This will greatly enhance the reporting capabilities of the Hubs and provide evidence to support further funding bids.

Virtual support through the Employment Hubs continues via teams/zoom and phone calls. Referrals to partner organisations continue ensuring robust and bespoke individual support for those looking for education, training or work.

The following provides a breakdown of the achievements of the hubs between January and November 2021:

Total of clients contacting the service: 65

Live cases: 34

Current status of the Hubs

Hub	Venue	Day	Time	Operation	Update status
Watchet	The Sanctuary, Swain St, Watchet	Thursday	10:00 – 1:00	Weekly	Open
Minehead Youth Hub	Minehead Eye	Thursday	13:00 – 15:00	Weekly	Open
Minehead Hub	@The Hub, Alcombe, Minehead	Tuesday	10:00 – 12:00	Weekly	Volunteers recruited/training in progress
Williton	Williton Children's centre	Tuesday	10:00 – 12:00	Weekly	Recruiting volunteers
Stogursey	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	Recruiting volunteers
Dulverton	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	Recruiting volunteers
Taunton	United reformed Church	Wednesday	10:00 – 12:00	Weekly	Volunteers recruited/training in progress
Taunton	Halcon, Links Power	TBC	TBC	TBC	Recruiting volunteers
Taunton	Priorswood Community Centre	TBC	TBC	TBC	Recruiting volunteers
Taunton youth Hub	Bold & Brave	TBC	TBC	TBC	Recruiting volunteers
Wellington	Where Centre	TBC	TBC	TBC	Recruiting volunteers

West Coast 360

West Coast 360 is a partnership of local businesses and employers, training providers, statutory agencies, community organisations and the local community college. The Partnership has come together to provide skills and development opportunities for the hospitality and leisure industry, with the aim of raising skills levels and prospects for individuals.

We are currently looking at commissioning a short film to promote different careers paths and **inspire** both young people and adults in **West Somerset** to work in the **hospitality and leisure sectors**. This video would then be used across various digital platforms

Linked with Skill Up and Secro – skills for the workforce to enhance training opportunities for this sector: [Training support for business and individuals | West Coast 360 - Your pathway to Hospitality & Leisure excellence](#)

In partnership with Skill Up, WC360 offers free training to anyone connected to the hospitality and leisure industry. Currently 221 short online courses have been delivered.

Support for those Not In Education Training or Employment (NEETS)

A contract has recently been signed with the Quantocks AONB to deliver a range of practical land management courses to NEETS. The programme will commence early in 2022.

Recruitment and Retention

Two 'Meet the Employer' events have been held with SUEZ, along with bimonthly HPC Virtual Drop In recruitment events.

The Skills and Employment team have worked in partnership with other district local authorities and SCC to create a 'Step into Jobs' event (local jobs for local people). The team have also created a 'Guide to good recruitment and employment practices' to help local businesses to attract and retain employees in response to local labour shortages in key sectors. The team are also working with NHS Foundation Trust to support crisis in the Care sector.

Business Communications

The team continue to send out frequent newsletters to businesses across the District, sharing news, information on support and training available, signposting to grants and providing opportunities for feedback. Subscription to these emails is available on the SWT website.

Full Council Meeting – 7 December 2021

Report of Councillor Mike Rigby – Planning and Transportation

Quality Review Panel

As set out in the Districtwide Design Guide SPD due to be adopted at Full Council on 7 December 2021 the Council has established a Quality Review Panel to be externally managed. The Panel has been established to support the achievement of high quality, innovative and sustainable placemaking.

Applicants are encouraged to make use of the panel at an early stage in the design process to identify and test the proposed design's key objectives and assumptions. The Council will generally expect schemes of more than 50 homes or 5,000 sq metres of commercial/other floorspace to be informed by review. Other smaller complex schemes may also be appropriate for review.

The panel's advice to the applicants and to the Local Planning Authority will support sound planning decisions in respect of design quality and the advice provided will be a material planning consideration in the determination of planning applications. It is intended to assist Council officers and applicants to achieve design improvements and support planning committee decisions, where design quality is a key consideration.

The Quality Review Panel provides independent, objective, expert advice on development proposals. Generally, schemes benefit most if they are referred to the panel at an early stage to identify and consider the key assumptions of the proposed design as the advice given by the panel is likely to be most effective when given before a scheme becomes too fixed. Early engagement with the Quality Review Panel should reduce the risk of delay at application stage by ensuring that designs reach an acceptable standard. The panel brings together leading professionals with a broad range of expertise so that its remit is much wider than pure 'design'. More details can be found at

<https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/planning/quality-review-panel/>

A358 Taunton to Southfields dualling scheme National Highways Consultation

The Council has submitted its formal response to the recent 6 week public consultation exercise (deadline for comments was 22 November 2021) undertaken by National Highways on their proposal to improve and dual the A358 between the Southfields Roundabout in Ilminster and junction 25 of the M5 motorway.

The Council continues to support improvements to the A358 between Taunton and Southfields. The Council's existing statutory planning policy, Taunton Deane Core Strategy Policy SP2 (Realising the Vision for Taunton), supports the provision of: "...a Henlade Bypass, traffic calming and improved junctions as part of A303/A358 improvement package..." as part of the infrastructure provision which would help the town to realise its potential.

It is recognised that the economic benefit for the wider south west peninsula remains well established and the Council continues to welcome the fact that National Highways is bringing forward plans for improvements following Government's announcements in 2014. The improvement of the A358 should provide important improvements to the accessibility of Taunton as a high quality multifunctional sub-regional service centre and thereby further enhance its attractiveness and success.

It is the Council's view that the scheme does not adequately demonstrate how it is responding to the climate emergency and the Climate Change Act and further consideration should be given to opportunities to reduce, mitigate and offset emissions; as well as deliver a fast and direct strategic cycle route.

The public consultation documents are not the final version. The plans and the detail are likely to be altered in the light of public comment and there will be a public inquiry into the proposals later next year.

Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan

The Taunton Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) has now been published on the Somerset County Council website. It is intended to be regularly updated. SWT continue to work with colleagues in Somerset County Council on refining and prioritising schemes within the LCWIP with the intention of developing detailed project delivery proposals. Work is now beginning to scope out how the garden communities will link into the strategic routes prioritised in the LCWIP and how other missing links can be delivered.

Phosphates Budget Calculator

The Phosphate Budget Calculator is complete and is available on the Councils website, it has been approved by Natural England. It is a tool that can be used by developers across Somerset to provide a standardised and transparent decision-making tool for the Local Authority and developers. It will be updated shortly.

Strategic Solution to Phosphates

The wider project is being led by policy officers in SWT on behalf of the Somerset authorities and in collaboration with other partners. As previously advised, consultants were appointed in March 2021 to support the work there are a number of elements to this project.

The complexities of water movement on the Levels have led to delays on producing a definitive map. It affects land north east of Bridgwater and land around Glastonbury (i.e. land beyond SWT). The consultants are awaiting a response from the Internal Drainage Board before sending the final boundary to Natural England for sign off. Along with addressing a number of other matters raised during the stakeholder briefing events in August, this has caused delay in the production of the strategy document. This work is expected to be completed by January 2022.

In the meantime, as Members are aware, on 5 October 2021, Full Council approved a [Phosphorus Mitigation Programme of Interim Measures](#) which includes: a £2million budget for the creation of phosphate credits on a financially recoverable basis. This interim programme aims to unlock between 700 to 1,350 homes in the River Tone Catchment area and a planning phosphates sub-committee is presently being set up to manage this programme. The Council sought to recruit a phosphates planner and nutrient neutrality officer but was unsuccessful. Additional resource and expertise has therefore been seconded into the team from Arup to assist with moving forward the work programme.

Neighbourhood Planning

West Monkton & Cheddon Fitzpaine (WM&CF) parishes have submitted a revised Neighbourhood Plan to the Council. This has been published for consultation from 5 November until 17 December 2021 and is an update to their current Neighbourhood Plan. The Plan is scheduled to go to examination in early 2022 and revises a

number of policies in the Plan with the aim of: increasing the climate and ecological robustness, conforming with Taunton Garden Town Vision, supporting the Declarations of Climate and Ecological Emergency, and updating Local Green Space designations.

Planning Policy Updates

Recruitment

The following roles have been filled to provide additional capacity for planning policy and implementation including:

Garden Town Implementation Manager - Jenny Clifford

Green Infrastructure Officer – Omri Ben-Chetrit

Infrastructure Planner - James Holbrook

Planning Policy Officer - Sophie Jones

SWT Local Plan 2040

In light of the timetable for the new unitary proposals, the Council has not progressed work which could be abortive or a waste of money. The focus has therefore been on evidence-based studies and elements of the future preparation of the Local Plan which will also help inform a new Unitary Development Plan. The timetable and future progress of any new Unitary Plan will need to be considered as part of the transitional arrangements for the new unitary council and the structural changes order which will set out the timescale. The new Unitary Plan will also need to be considered in the context of the forthcoming Planning Bill.

The team has been focussing on the implementation of a number of placed based and other priority projects including phosphates work, Wellington Station project, Firepool, climate change and funding bids. The team has also been reviewing where each of the Somerset district councils are in terms of their existing and in-progress evidence base.

Current work areas

- Site assessments (~128 no.) these are considered essential to improve our evidence base for maintaining a 5-year housing land supply. This has become a more critical issue because of the impact of phosphate requirements on sites coming through the planning system. The site assessment work should support our 5-year housing land supply as well as being critical for the preparation of a new Local Plan (regardless of geographical scope following the Unitary authority decision).
- Progress Conservation Area Appraisals from SW Heritage Trust.
- Local Housing Need Assessment – Completed. Published October 2021.
- Economic Development Needs Assessment – Completed. Published October 2021.
- Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment - commissioned jointly with Somerset Authorities. Due for completion during 2021.
- Renewable Energy Feasibility Study - Council priority project hoping to be commissioned jointly with SCC and Somerset Authorities.

Town Centres health check

To provide evidence for Plan making, we will be going out to tender during November 2021 for consultants to produce:

A report on Town Centre Health Checks, Retail Area Boundary Reviews and consideration as to whether an Article 4 Direction should be made. This commission will comprise:

- Town Centre Health Checks for Taunton, Wellington, Minehead, Williton and Watchet
- Retail Area Boundary Reviews for the town centres of Taunton, Wellington, Minehead, Williton and Watchet
- A Recommendation Report on whether an Article 4 Direction to remove permitted development rights regarding the change of use from class E use (commercial, business and service uses) to C3 use (dwelling houses) should be made by the Council for any or parts of Taunton, Wellington, Minehead, Williton and Watchet town centres and define its extent

Should the Council decide following the report to make an Article 4 Direction (s) for any of the town centres, the consultants would lead on the public consultation process.

Taunton Garden Town Infrastructure Delivery Plan

Following procurement Ove Arup and partners were commissioned in October 2021 to produce three outputs:

1. The Production of an Infrastructure Delivery Plan for Taunton Garden Town - The IDP will explain how the Council will deliver on its strategic ambitions. It will set out the necessary governance, partners, funding, and a programme of projects and initiatives to implement the ideas set out within the Garden Town Vision. It will also establish the mechanisms by which the progress and success of the Garden Town can be measured. It will be designed as a living document.
2. The Production of a Stewardship Report - The report is to advise on options for the ongoing long-term management and maintenance of community facilities and open space within Taunton Garden Town.
3. The delivery of an Online Infrastructure Engagement Platform - The online infrastructure engagement platform is seeking to provide up-to-date information about strategies, projects and activities and allow the public to identify, suggest and comment upon new infrastructure.

Completion is anticipated for March 2022.

Wellington Station

The Government's autumn budget sets out £5 million of funding to develop new railway stations at Wellington and Cullompton. This funding will enable the project to advance to the next stage of development and follows the submission of a business case to the Department for Transport earlier in the year.

The funding announcement is preceded by months of hard work, research and partnership building to develop the case for the proposed new train stations at Wellington and Cullompton by the Steering Group and WSP Consulting.

Firepool

The Planning Performance Agreement for Firepool has now been signed between the Council as Local Planning Authority and the Council as Developer, in the interests of improving transparency and certainty and moving the project forwards. It is intended that this will lead to public consultation on a well-evidenced and justified Draft Firepool Masterplan and Design Guidance document in spring 2022, and subsequent approval by the LPA as a material consideration in the assessment and determination of relevant planning applications. The LPA and Developer teams are meeting regularly to resolve key issues and move things forward. A series of workshops with key stakeholders are currently in train to help support refinement of the Draft Masterplan which will be reported to members in due course ahead of public consultation. Planning applications for Block 3, levels and drainage across the site, and for the Trenchard Way access have now been validated and planning officers are considering them.

5 Year Housing Land Supply (5YHLS)

On 23 November 2021 SWT will publish an addendum to the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) stating the former West Somerset Council area has a 10.1 years of housing land supply.

On 23 November 2021 the West Somerset Local Plan to 2032 (WSC LP) will be five years old. From this date the Council can use the Governments Standard Method (SM) for calculating the housing requirement instead of the housing figures in WSC LP. Under the SM, which is calculated annually, the local housing requirement will be 99dw per annum (94dw + 5% buffer) as opposed to 199dw per annum (155dw WSCLP + previous years shortfall + 5% buffer). The buffer figure is set by the Housing Delivery Test Measurement (HDT) published in February; in 2021 it was a "pass" at 107% so a 5% buffer is added. Information on the large sites (10+ dwellings) that SWT consider to be deliverable and developable has been updated for the addendum. The total supply of deliverable plots is 1,000 over 5 years providing 10.1 years housing land supply.

These figures will be recalculated in March 2022. It is proposed to keep the calculations separate for the two former authorities. We currently estimate that the former West Somerset area will have in excess of 5 years, but the former Taunton Deane area may drop below 5 years. A factor will be the Housing Delivery Test (HDT) figures due to be published by DLUHC in February 2022. A HDT Measurement above 85% is a 5% buffer on the local housing need figure; below 85% is a 20% buffer and below 75% is presumption in favour of sustainable development. The past three years have seen a significant decline in delivery of sites across SWT primarily as a result of the phosphates issue and there is therefore a risk that the next HDT Measurement will be below the 75% threshold.

Net Zero Carbon Toolkit

Work has begun on adapting a Net Zero Carbon Toolkit originally published by Cotswold, West Oxfordshire and Forest of Deane Councils for use as an SWT document. The Toolkit is intended to help communicate what is entailed in both delivering new net zero compliant buildings and retrofitting existing buildings in striving towards Net Zero and make knowledge on these issues more accessible. It is aspirational and a guidance and communication tool, rather than a policy position. The new build element aligns well with and would neatly complement the aspirational standards included in the Districtwide Design Guide SPD due to be adopted by Full Council on 7 December 2021. Retrofit is an area where we have far less influence

(beyond our own stock). The Toolkit could help us in responding to community retrofit and communication actions in the CNCR Action Plan. It is intended that the Toolkit will be ready for publishing in early 2022 alongside potential updates to Climate Positive Planning.

Development Management Update

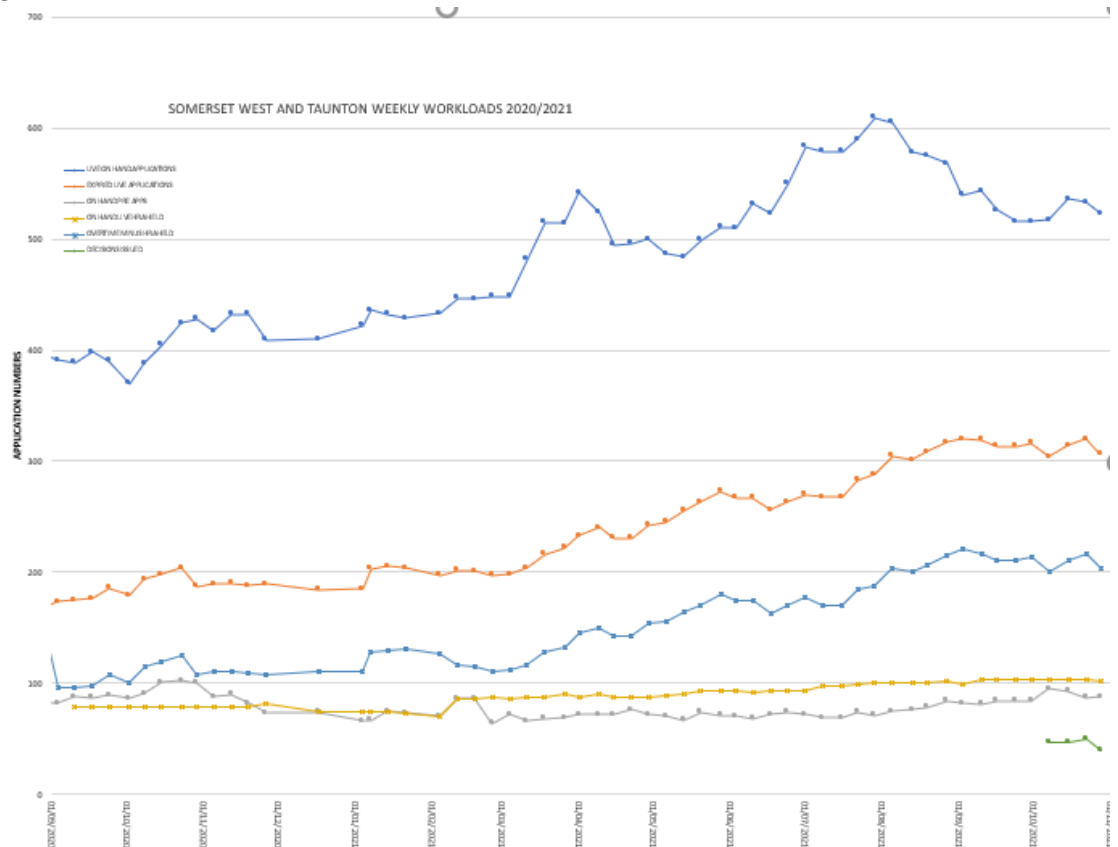
Recruitment

The Planning Specialist vacant post has been filled and a new officer will join the team in January 2022. However, another Planning Specialist has recently handed their notice in and their role is currently being advertised.

Planning Enforcement Officers have been appointed and both will be in post by mid December 2021. There will be a short handover period from the current contractors before they leave to ensure that the new officers are fully briefed on existing cases. A Phosphate Planning Specialist and a Nutrient Neutrality Officer have joined the team on secondment.

Performance

Workloads remain high due to the change in officers and increased amount of applications being submitted. An agency planning officer will be recruited to help reduce backlogs.



The graph above provides an overview of applications and pre-apps on hand.