

**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><b>Recommended:-</b> 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 <sup>th</sup> 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>			
03/11/21	<p><b>Recommended:-</b> 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>	The Executive	<p>Executive – 17<sup>th</sup> 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&amp;I conference in Taunton by or during the summer 2022, bringing together business, academia,</p>	17 <sup>th</sup> November 2021		

			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><b>Recommended:-</b> 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"> <li>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.</li> <li>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</li> </ol>	Full Council - Cllr R Henley – PFH Corporate Resources	<p>Full Council – 7<sup>th</sup> 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 <sup>th</sup> 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:**