

## SWT Executive

Wednesday, 17th November, 2021,  
6.15 pm



Somerset West  
and Taunton

The John Meikle Room - The Deane  
House

[SWT MEETING WEBCAST LINK](#)

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**Members:** Federica Smith-Roberts (Chair), Derek Perry (Vice-Chair),  
Chris Booth, Dixie Darch, Caroline Ellis, Ross Henley,  
Marcus Kravis, Mike Rigby, Francesca Smith and  
Andrew Sully

### Agenda

**1. Apologies**

To receive any apologies for absence.

**2. Minutes of the previous meeting of the Executive**

To approve the minutes of the previous meeting of the  
Committee.

(Pages 7 - 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 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.

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 only be allowing those members of the public who have registered to speak to attend the meetings in person in 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 Governance and Democracy Case Manager). 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).

- 5. Executive Forward Plan** (Pages 11 - 12)

To receive items and review the Forward Plan.
- 6. Review of Voluntary and Community Sector Grants** (Pages 13 - 32)

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor for Community, Councillor Chris Booth.
- 7. Somerset West and Taunton Districtwide Design Guide - Review of Public Consultation and Adoption as Supplementary Planning Document** (Pages 33 - 156)

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor for Planning and Transportation, Councillor Mike Rigby.
- 8. Public Realm Design Guide for Taunton Garden Town - Review of Public Consultation and Adoption as Supplementary Planning Document** (Pages 157 - 242)

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor for Planning and Transportation, Councillor Mike Rigby.
- 9. Access to Information - Exclusion of the Press and Public - appendices 3, 6 and 7 only**

During discussion of the following item (appendices 3, 6 and 7 only) it may be necessary to pass the following resolution

to exclude the press and public having reflected on Article 13 13.02(e) (a presumption in favour of openness) of the Constitution. This decision may be required because consideration of this matter in public may disclose information falling within one of the descriptions of exempt information in Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972. Executive will need to decide whether, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption, outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Recommend that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the next item of business (appendices 3, 6 and 7 only) on the ground that it involves 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).

**10. North Taunton Woolaway Project - Authorisation to make a Compulsory Purchase Order**

(Pages 243 - 318)

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor for Housing, Councillor Francesca Smith.

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

**12. Scrutiny Recommendations**

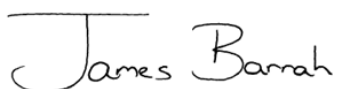
(Pages 319 - 414)

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.

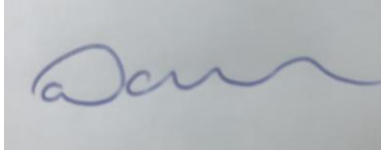
Proposed by Councillor S Coles and seconded by Councillor S Wakefield.



JAMES BARRAH  
DIRECTOR OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES



CHRIS HALL  
DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT AND PLACE



ALISON NORTH  
DIRECTOR OF INTERNAL OPERATIONS



ANDREW PRITCHARD  
DIRECTOR OF EXTERNAL OPERATIONS

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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](mailto: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](http://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk)

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

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**SWT Executive - 20 October 2021**

Present: Councillor Federica Smith-Roberts (Chair)

Councillors Derek Perry, Dixie Darch, Caroline Ellis, Ross Henley, Mike Rigby and Andrew Sully

Officers: Alison North, Andrew Pritchard, Paul Fitzgerald, Clare Rendell and Kevin Williams

Also Present: Councillors Simon Coles, Tom Deakin, Habib Farbahi, John Hassall, Libby Lisgo, Dave Mansell, Ray Tully, Sarah Wakefield, Brenda Weston, Loretta Whetlor and Gwil Wren

(The meeting commenced at 6.15 pm)

46. **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillors Chris Booth, Marcus Kravis and Fran Smith.

47. **Minutes of the previous meeting of the Executive**

(Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 15 September 2021 circulated with the agenda)

**Resolved** that the minutes of the Executive held on 15 September 2021 be confirmed as a correct record.

48. **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 S Coles	All Items	SCC & Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke
Cllr C Ellis	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr L Lisgo	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke
Cllr D Mansell	All Items	Wiveliscombe	Personal	Spoke
Cllr D Perry	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke
Cllr M Rigby	All Items	SCC & Bishops Lydeard	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr F Smith-	All Items	Taunton Charter	Personal	Spoke and Voted

Roberts		Trustee		
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
Cllr G Wren	All Items	Clerk to Milverton PC	Personal	Spoke

49. **Public Participation**

No members of the public had requested to speak on any item on the agenda.

50. **Executive Forward Plan**

(Copy of the Executive Forward Plan, circulated with the agenda).

Councillors were reminded that if they had an item they wanted to add to the agenda, that they should send their requests to the Governance Team.

**Resolved** that the Executive Forward Plan be noted.

51. **Establishment of a Joint Committee in Somerset for the implementation of Local Government Reorganisation**

During the discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Councillors agreed that the five councils needed to work together to get the best outcome.
- Councillors queried whether the Joint Committee meetings would be held in public session.  
*The Leader advised that the meetings would be open to the public to attend.*
- Councillors queried whether the Joint Scrutiny Committee, once established, would just carry on into the New Council.  
*The Leader advised that the joint committees being established would only be in operation until the New Council had been created.*
- Councillors highlighted that a resolution had been passed by Full Council to recommend that a committee system be used for the Unitary Authority and that they did not want to lose sight of that recommendation.  
*The Leader advised that the work carried out on the Constitution would be completed by the Shadow Council, so we could only recommend to that Working Group the adoption of a committee system.*
- Councillors were reassured that the vice chair of the Joint Committee would be a District Leader and that the quorate figures would include district members.
- Concern was raised that action was not being taken now.  
*The Leader advised that there were many different work programs being set up and that officers were carrying out work, but that it was still early days.*



- Concern was raised on the rumours that Somerset County Council would remain as the continuing authority and that there would be no Shadow Council and that the district councils would simply be abolished.
- Councillors wanted to work together to ensure that the best outcomes were achieved for the residents. Councillors also wanted to look after the officers throughout the process to ensure that they were best placed in the New Council.
- Councillors advised that the Leader of the County Council had publicly announced who the members of the Joint Committee were and that the vice chair would be a District Leader.  
*The Leader was glad that a public announcement had been made on the committee composition.*
- Councillors queried what would be included in the Structural Change Order (SCO) and what progress was being made on the Joint Scrutiny Committee.  
*The Deputy Monitoring Officer advised that the SCO would detail the composition of the Executive, who would replace the Joint Committee. The SCO would also extend the matters Executive dealt with within the Scheme of Delegations. He advised that work was being carried out to establish a Joint Scrutiny Committee and that a report would be brought through the democratic pathway soon.*
- Concern was raised that district councillors would not be involved in the process or have a voice on the decisions being made. They queried how the Leader would ensure that didn't happen.  
*The Leader advised that she was keen to continue with the Group Leader meetings and member briefings to ensure that as much information as possible was distributed to councillors.*
- Councillors queried how a continuing authority would work.  
*The Leader suggested a member briefing could be held to explain.*
- Concern was raised on the process and the lack of detail known until the SCO was released.  
*The Leader appreciated councillors concern and explained that the work being carried out was about protecting services, residents and officers and that she would do her best to give the District a voice in the process.*

**Resolved** that the Executive agreed to the establishment of a Local Government Reorganisation joint committee ( the LGR Joint Committee ) together with the county and district councils in Somerset constituted in accordance with, and having the functions set out in, the terms of reference attached at Appendix 1 (“Terms of Reference”).

(The Meeting ended at 7.00 pm)



EXECUTIVE

Executive Meeting	Draft Agenda Items	Lead Officer
<b>17 November 2021</b>	Voluntary and Community Sector Grants Review	Scott Weetch
venue =	Public Realm Design Guide for Taunton Garden Town – Feedback	Fiona Webb
Exec RD = 5 November	Somerset West and Taunton Districtwide Design Guide	Fiona Webb
Informal Exec RD = 5 October	North Taunton CPO	Chris Brown/Jane W/indebank
SMT RD = 22 September		
<b>15 December 2021</b>	GF Financial Performance 2021/22 Q2	Emily Collacott
venue =	HRA Financial Performance 2021/22 Q2	Emily Collacott
	Corporate Performance Report Q2	Malcolm Riches
Exec RD = 3 December	Housing Revenue Account 2022/23 Draft Budget Update	Emily Collacott
Informal Exec RD = 2 November	General Fund 2022/23 Draft Budget Update	Emily Collacott
SMT RD = 20 October	Lease of Monkton Heathfield Country Park Report	Sally Stark
<b>19 January 2022</b>	Housing Revenue and Capital Budget Setting 2022/23 including Dwelling Rent Setting 2022/23 and 30 Year Business Plan Review	Paul Fitzgerald
venue =	Longforth Masterplan	Sarah Povall
Exec RD = 7 January	Employment Land Feasibility Study in West Somerset	Robert Downes
Informal Exec RD = 30 November	SWP Business Plan	Stuart Noyce/Mickey Green
	Litter Strategy	Vicky Lowman/Stuart Noyce
	External Litter Enforcement One Year Trial	Vicky Lowman/Stuart Noyce
SMT RD = 17 November	<b>NO MORE ITEMS</b>	
<b>Budget - 9 February 2022</b>	General Fund Revenue Budget and Capital Estimates 2022/23	Paul Fitzgerald
venue =	Council Tax Setting 2022/23	Paul Fitzgerald
Exec RD = 28 January	<b>NO MORE ITEMS</b>	
Informal Exec RD = 4 January	<b>Special Meeting</b>	
SMT RD = 8 December		
<b>16 February 2022</b>	Tower Street	Natalie Kirbyshire
venue =	CCTV	Sally Parry/Scott Weetch
Exec RD = 4 February		
Informal Exec RD = 4 January		

SMT RD = 8 December		
<b>16 March 2022</b>	Financial Performance 2021/22 Q3	Emily Collacott
<b>venue =</b>	Capital, Investment and Treasury Strategy 2022/23	Paul Fitzgerald
Exec RD = 4 March	Corporate Performance Report Q3	Malcolm Riches
Informal Exec RD = 1 February		
SMT RD = 19 January		
<b>20 April 2022</b>		
<b>venue =</b>		
Exec RD = 6 April		
Informal Exec RD = 8 March		
SMT RD = 23 February		

# Somerset West and Taunton Council

## Executive – 17 November 2021

### Review of Voluntary and Community Sector Grants

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Member Cllr Booth

Report Author: Scott Weetch, Community Resilience Manager

#### 1. Executive Summary / Purpose of the Report

To report on the results of the Member's Working Group regarding the Annual Review for Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Grants and make future spending proposal.

#### 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To agree schedule of grants set out within the table 'Proposed Voluntary and Community Sector Grants 2022/23' in section 6.2 below

#### 3. Risk Assessment (if appropriate)

- 3.1 There is a risk of misuse of awarded funds by a third-party organisation or intended initiatives proposed not being successful or hitting issues during delivery. This is mitigated by existing monitoring arrangements.

#### 4. Background and Full details of the Report

- 4.1 A cross-party Members Working Group was established following a recommendation approved at Full Council on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2021. The remit of the group was to work with officers to ensure that clear funding criteria are in place for future work with the Voluntary and Community Sector beyond March 2022. This report and the findings of the Working Group fulfil the obligation created at Full Council.
- 4.2 The Members' Working Group met from late July until mid-September 2021. Details of the Terms of Reference and the Working Group Scoping Document are in the Appendices to this report.
- 4.3 The members of the Working Group were Cllr Booth (chair); Cllr Lisgo; Cllr Stock-Williams; Cllr Sue Lees; Cllr Wakefield; Cllr Johnson; Cllr Whetlor; and Cllr Blaker
- 4.4 The agreed aims of the group are set out in the Scoping Document which is appended but reproduced here:
- Seek to review current funding arrangements (i.e. understand what is currently funded and why)

- Set out objectives in new funding arrangements (i.e. set parameters for how the budget of £213,542 is to be used e.g. money and debt advice; geographic split
- Consider parity across geographic areas, not just monetarily but for example equal provision.

- 4.5 The Working Group was taken through the existing funding and recipient organisations. These are set out under the second table at 6.2 titled 'Voluntary and Community Sector Grants awarded 2021/22'.
- 4.6 The Group felt it would be beneficial to further understand the work of the recipient organisations and a number were invited to present to the Group to outline their work and the resultant benefits to the Council and wider community.
- 4.7 In addition, the Grants Case Manager provided information and overview of the organisations in receipt of funds, purpose of the funding, which of the Corporate Priorities were met, the award amount and the geographic area covered.
- 4.8 Existing grant agreements were outlined to Members including agreed end dates.
- 4.9 The Working Group further sought to understand the effects of short-term provision on funded groups and the need for longevity on funding where possible. In particular, it was felt the move to a Unitary authority could have a detrimental effect on funding if agreements were not in place to secure the future.
- 4.10 The Group concluded that although radical change was possible, in general, those in receipt of funding and the agreed outcomes were in line with both budget and community need, in particular around debt and benefit advice (Citizen's Advice Bureaux), support for ensuring the continued use of volunteers (the work of Spark) and wider community support.
- 4.11 Changes to the current levels of funding for many of the organisations that rely upon this support could have long lasting detrimental effects for the groups and the communities that they support.
- 4.12 Therefore the following options were considered:
- 1: Discontinue small grants scheme:** As there is already a small grants scheme available via Somerset West Lottery, the VCS small grants scheme could be discontinued saving £20,000.000.
- 2: Return Somerset West Lottery community fund to in-house management:** the Somerset West Lottery community fund could be brought back to be managed in-house by the Grants Case Manager saving £2,000.00 (at 2021/22 figures).
- 3: Return Partnership grants fund to in-house management:** This arrangement along with all the above were a three-year pilot from 2017 and are already out of contract so could be brought back in house to be managed by the Grants Case Manager saving £1,560.00.

For both options 2 and 3, the Grants Case Manager has expressed that there is a duplication of work in sending the work to Somerset Community Foundation and the same verification is being carried out on both sides of the coin. Often, it is the Council's

prompt that is ensuring adequate action is taken and therefore this work will be more efficient if returned to the Council.

In summary the Council could opt to save either a total of **£20,000** by discontinuing the small grants scheme, save a total of **£22,000** by also managing the SWL community fund or save a total of **£23,560.00** by opting for all 1, 2 & 3 options in this summary.

4.13 In addition, it was noted that £2,700 of the funding given to the Community Council for Somerset was to cover work relating to the Community Infrastructure Levy. It was understood that this work was now returning to an officer of the Council and therefore, this amount could produce a saving.

4.14 The Working Group agreed and recommended that

- all three options outlined at 4.11 be agreed – total £23,560
- additional work paid to Community Council for CIL be ceased – total £2,700
- following governance checks with grant recipients, any irregularities be further investigated, and an opportunity given to regularise the position. If, following this, concerns remained, then funds would no longer be allocated to any non-compliant scheme and consideration given to allocation elsewhere.

4.15 The net effect of the agreed changes was to increase the budget from £213,542 to £217,102. This is because the £20,000 small grants fund and £2,700 to Community Council for Somerset were already allocated within the £213,542. The additional £3,560 was raised from returning some administrative function carried out by Somerset Community Foundation in house as described.

4.16 Funds that now needed to be reallocated amounted to £26,260.

Recommended action	Rationale	Net effect on budget
Removal of £20,000 small grants scheme	There is provision within the Somerset West Lottery scheme for players to allocate their ticket price to local community schemes. In 20/21, this totalled in excess of £20,000.	£20,000 to be reallocated
Removal of £2,700 from grant to Community Council for Somerset	This funding was to cover Community Infrastructure Levy work. This will be brought back in house	£2,700 to be reallocated
Return Somerset West Lottery community fund to in-house management	Work carried out by Somerset Community Foundation but often duplicated and can be managed within existing resources.	£2,000 to be reallocated
Return Partnership grants fund to in-house management	As above	£1,560 to be reallocated
<b>Total</b>		<b>£26,260</b>

4.17 Proposals for reallocation were considered by the group and agreed that:

- An additional £4,000 be allocated to Homestart to take their total to £5,000
- An additional £4,000 be allocated to CLOWNS to take their total to £5,000
- The remaining £18,260 be allocated equally to Citizens Advice Bureau Taunton and West Somerset

Recommended action	Rationale	Net effect on budget
Additional £4,000 to Homestart West Somerset	Honours previous commitment that had been unable to be met in previous spending rounds	£4,000 allocated
Additional £4,000 to CLOWNS	As above	£4,000 allocated
Additional £9,130 to Citizens Advice Taunton	Support ongoing work for those with most complex needs.  Request from CAB for additional funds in line with last year's additional agreed amount (£22,500 each Bureau) was supported by Members if it could be agreed within budget. See 4.18 below.	£9,130 allocated
Additional £9,130 to Citizens Advice West Somerset	As above	£9,130 allocated
<b>Total</b>		<b>£26,260</b>

4.18 Members of the Working Group felt strongly that if any funds were freed as a result of continued due diligence work or if underspends were identified that could be allocated in this area, then they had a strong preference for allocating them to the two Advice Bureaus in the first instance.

## 5. Links to Corporate Strategy

5.1 Homes and Communities - Engage with the voluntary sector in their mission to help support our communities.

## 6. Finance / Resource Implications

6.1 Existing funding arrangements and agreements are in place until March 2023 unless varied by either party.

6.2 The table below describes the outcome of the Members' Working Group discussions and agreement as outlined in section 4. The budget will be subject to ongoing checks to ensure compliance within agreed parameters.



## Proposed Voluntary and Community Sector Grants 2022/23

Project	Amount
Citizen's Advice Taunton	£84,562
West Somerset Advice Bureau	£39,730
Wiveliscombe Area Partnership	£28,710
Spark	£23,500
Village Agents	£20,000
CLOWNS	£5,000
Homestart	£5,000
Community Council for Somerset	£2,700
Compass Disability Services	£2,700
North Taunton Partnership	£2,000
Taunton East Development Trust	£2,000
Fuse	£1,200
<b>Totals</b>	<b>£217,102</b>

6.3 The Table below describes the funding agreed by Full Council on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2021 for the 2021/22 financial year.

### Voluntary and Community Sector Grants awarded 2021/22

Project	General Fund
Citizen's Advice Taunton	£75,432
CLOWNS (WS)	£1,000
Community Council for Somerset	£5,400
Compass Disability Services	£2,700
Spark (TD)	£22,500
Spark (WS)	£1,000
Fuse	£1,200
Homestart (WS)	£1,000
North Taunton Partnership	£2,000
Taunton East Development Trust	£2,000
West Somerset Advice Bureau	£30,600
Wiveliscombe Area Partnership	£28,710
Village Agents	£20,000
VCS Small Grants Fund (SCF)	£20,000
Citizen's Advice Taunton and West Somerset (one off funding, 50/50 split)	£45,000
<b>Totals</b>	<b>£258,542</b>

6.4 The Table below describes the administration charges paid to Somerset Community Foundation in 2021/22 financial year. It is proposed to return the first two lines of administration in house to save £3,560 and reallocate to organisations as described in section 4 and table at 6.2.

## Administration and Monitoring Costs 2021/22

Project	Total Awarded
SCF administration of SLAs	£1,560
SCF administration of small grants	£2,000
Somerset West lottery admin fees*	£2,400
Licensing fees Gambling Commission	£350
<b>Totals</b>	<b>£6,310</b>

\*Does not impact on Council budgets as taken from Lottery ticket sales

### 6.5 Section 151 Officer Comments

The outcome of this work delivers on the scope of the working group, which was not targeted with delivering financial savings. The group and officers have clearly given good consideration to value for money in delivering the grants scheme and made good recommendations in terms of options for cost efficiency.

The Executive is reminded that whilst the recommendations of the Working Group is to consider options for reinvesting identified savings within the VCS grants scheme it is important that Members consider the Council's Financial Strategy and significant underlying budget gap as identified within the Medium Term Financial Plan for 2022/23 and beyond. The early draft budget estimates (see Financial Strategy report to Executive 21 July 2021) rely on planned use of one-off funds to balance the budget in 2022/23 (including £1m from General Reserves and £2.7m from Earmarked Reserves), which is not financially sustainable. There is also a risk the previously reported budget gap will grow for example with fees and charges income remaining below budget and therefore increasing financial pressures in 2022/23 and later years. The Executive may want to consider the opportunity through the budget process to use identified savings in this report as a sustainable contribution towards the significant budget gap next year.

### 7. Legal Implications (if any)

- 7.1 There are no legal implications if current funding is maintained. If funding levels are changed or removed, there are notice periods to be served on existing agreements. Notice will be served on those organisations who have a variation to their funding.
- 7.2 Existing funding agreements with individual parties are monitored and reported on a regular basis to ensure agreed standards are met.

### 8. Climate and Sustainability Implications (if any)

- 8.1 No anticipated impacts

### 9. Safeguarding and/or Community Safety Implications (if any)

- 9.1 None

### 10. Equality and Diversity Implications (if any)

- 10.1 A full EIA is not required because the recommendation is to maintain existing levels of service provision.

10.2 The support provided to the VCS by this funding helps to promote equality and diversity and increases social cohesion through the maintenance of social capital – i.e. it helps the community to grow together by connecting and improving existing links.

**11. Social Value Implications (if any)**

11.1 The Public Services (Social Value) Act came into force on 31 January 2013. It requires people who commission public services to think about how they can also secure wider social, economic and environmental benefits.

11.2 Clearly, the continued funding of the VCS Grants scheme will ensure that greater social value is gained through the nature, breadth and scope of the work that they are undertaking and the communities and individuals that they support.

**12. Partnership Implications (if any)**

12.1 None

**13. Health and Wellbeing Implications (if any)**

13.1 The VCS Grants scheme has far reaching consequences for health and wellbeing. This includes individual and families' ability to sustain tenancies; support for mental health; debt and benefit advice; employment and careers advice. The inability of an individual or family to secure and maintain work or a home with have impacts on their immediate health and wellbeing as well as the potential for a knock on into other areas of care and support such as GP surgeries, housing and homelessness if not addressed.

**14. Asset Management Implications (if any)**

14.1 None

**15. Data Protection Implications (if any)**

15.1 None

**16. Consultation Implications (if any)**

16.1 If the Council does not agree with the recommendations outlined, there will need to be a period of consultation and engagement with the beneficiaries of grants in line with contractual agreements, which states that a minimum of 3 months' notice of a termination of contract shall be given.

**17. Scrutiny/Executive Comments / Recommendation(s) (if any)**

17.1 Community Scrutiny met on 28<sup>th</sup> October 2021. The meeting were widely in agreement with the work and conclusions of the Members' Working Group. They particularly wished to highlight their concern for the future funding arrangements of these organisations as the authority move towards unitary status.

**Democratic Path:**

- **Scrutiny / Corporate Governance or Audit Committees – Yes**
- **Executive – Yes**
- **Full Council – Yes**

**Reporting Frequency: Ad-hoc**

**Contact Officers**

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SWT Member Working Group  
Scoping Document  
Voluntary and Community Sector Grants Review

July to September 2021

**NAME OF WORKING GROUP:** Voluntary and Community Sector Grants Review

**CHAIR:** Councillor Booth

**MEMBERS:**

The members of the Working Group were Cllr Booth (chair); Cllr Lisgo; Cllr Stock-Williams; Cllr Sue Lees; Cllr Wakefield; Cllr Johnson; Cllr Whetlor; and Cllr Blaker

**LEAD OFFICERS:**

Scott Weetch, Community Resilience Manager

Christine Gale, Case Manager, Grants

Tracey Meadows, Case Manager, Governance & Democracy

**SUBJECT TO BE REVIEWED:** Voluntary and Community Sector Grants

**REASON(S) FOR THE REVIEW:** Recommended and agreed by Full Council on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2021. Essential to keep grants under review, particularly understanding the effect of COVID on the Voluntary and Community Sector.

**IDENTIFY APPROPRIATE CORPORATE AIMS:**

Homes and Communities - Engage with the voluntary sector in their mission to help support our communities.

**TERMS OF REFERENCE:** Circulated with this document.

This Working Group will:

- Seek to review current funding arrangements (i.e. understand what is currently funded and why)

- Set out objectives in new funding arrangements (i.e. set parameters for how the budget of £215k is to be used e.g. money and debt advice; geographic split
- Consider parity between TD & WS, not just monetarily but for example equal provision.

SCOPE, AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF REVIEW: (Remember to consider what is NOT to be included in the review)

□ Purpose:

To ensure the most effective spend of budget and ensure that it aligns with Council priorities and objectives;

To ensure that it enables and prioritises COVID recovery work;

To agree EITHER a method for receiving and scoring of grants and to ensure that each application is considered on its own merits; OR a commissioning process and criteria; N.B. There is already a scoring process for partner grants which has been provided to SCF by SWTC and is used for this purpose.

To consider the merits of a geographic split of funding to ensure some equity in grant distribution or prioritisation of universal access services.

METHOD(S) OF REVIEW (HOW WILL THE REVIEW BE CONDUCTED?) :

A recap of how grant funding currently works, who benefits, the value of grants, etc to be undertaken as part of first meeting.

To review lessons learned from other grant schemes SWT run e.g. community chest

To discuss and agree principles of spend (e.g. financial help and advice services, mental health services, local public transport schemes)

To discuss and agree maximum and minimum levels of grants (granularity) and ability to resource those adequately.

To hear directly from beneficiaries of previous grants.

To discuss and revise any principles arising from presentation of previous beneficiaries.

Discuss whether to continue out-sourcing certain grant funds.

Draft report and conclusions

Final report and conclusions

BENEFITS TO THE COUNCIL AND LOCAL COMMUNITY:

Clarity over funding levels and principles applied.

Wider understanding of grant process, criteria and assessment

Partnership agreements almost at end of term; good opportunity to review what services belong in this funding stream.

#### KEY ISSUES AND RISKS:

Limited timescale for discussion.

Limited funding pot to meet aspirations of councillors and organisations.

COVID may be masking other issues/causing further problems as yet unidentified.

#### IMPLICATIONS:

(Financial and Legal implications particularly will need to be considered and signed off by the relevant officer)

Funding to be confirmed is in the region of £215,000 p.a.

Legal agreements are sent out as part of grants agreement process.

#### DOCUMENTARY RESEARCH AND EVIDENCE:

E.g. Is there any National or local guidance or research into this subject? Is there any best practice guidance available?)

There is no national best practice in this area but there is a great deal of information available from other councils. Nationally, the government support offer for the VCSE sector is set out here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/financial-support-for-voluntary-community-and-social-enterprise-vcse-organisations-to-respond-to-coronavirus-covid-19>

#### RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS OF REVIEW:

E.g. implications on officer resource or impact on the Council's budget.

Officer time plus the continued budget of £215k

#### EXTERNAL ADVISORS:

Does the Working Group wish to invite any involvement from external advisors?

It would be prudent to invite some current beneficiaries to a later meeting to understand what the funding allows them to do and any consequences arising from COVID and a lack of funding. E.g. Spark, CAB, Wiveliscombe Area Partnership

TIMESCALES: Completed by September 10<sup>th</sup> to meet with Committee cycles.

#### ESTIMATED REVISED

(include reasons) Meetings continued until 20<sup>th</sup> September to allow full discussion and presentations from appropriate organisations to inform decision-making.

#### ACTUAL

First meeting of Working Group – 12<sup>th</sup> July 2021

Milestone 1: Meeting agrees Terms of Reference and Scoping Document

Milestone 2: Meeting agrees outline parameters for funding scope.

Milestone 3: Meeting hears from current beneficiaries and ratifies parameters.

Draft Report: End August

Report: Completed by September 24<sup>th</sup> 2021

#### PROJECT OUTCOMES

The Working Group received documentation and evidence of organisations supported, objectives and outcomes as well as funding agreements.

The Working Group heard representations from a cross section of organisations who outlined their work and were able to answer Members' queries.

The following options were considered:

**1: Discontinue small grants scheme:** As there is already a small grants scheme available via Somerset West Lottery, the VCS small grants scheme could be discontinued saving £20,000.000.

**2: Return Somerset West Lottery community fund to in-house management:** the Somerset West Lottery community fund could be brought back to be managed in-house by the Grants Case Manager saving £2,000.00 (at 2021/22 figures).

**3: Return Partnership grants fund to in-house management:** This arrangement along with all the above were a three-year pilot from 2017 and are already out of contract so could be brought back in house to be managed by the Grants Case Manager saving £1,560.00.



For both options 2 and 3, the Grants Case Manager has expressed that there is a duplication of work in sending the work to Somerset Community Foundation and the same verification is being carried out on both sides of the coin. Often, it is the Council's prompt that is ensuring adequate action is taken and therefore this work will be more efficient if returned to the Council.

In summary the Council could opt to save either a total of **£20,000** by discontinuing the small grants scheme, save a total of **£22,000** by also managing the SWL community fund or save a total of **£23,560.00** by opting for all 1, 2 & 3 options in this summary.

In addition, it was noted that £2,700 of the funding given to the Community Council for Somerset was to cover work relating to the Community Infrastructure Levy. It was understood that this work was now returning to an officer of the Council and therefore, this amount could produce a saving.

Working Group agreed and recommended that

- all three options outlined above be agreed – total £23,560
- additional work paid to Community Council for CIL be ceased – total £2,700
- following governance checks with grant recipients, any irregularities be further investigated, and an opportunity given to regularise the position. If, following this, concerns remained, then funds would no longer be allocated to any non-compliant scheme and consideration given to allocation elsewhere.

The net effect of the agreed changes was to increase the budget from £213,542 to £217,102. This is because the £20,000 small grants fund and £2,700 to Community Council for Somerset were already allocated within the £213,542. The additional £3,560 was raised from returning some administrative function carried out by Somerset Community Foundation in house as described.

Funds that now needed to be reallocated amounted to £26,260.

#### CONCLUSIONS:

The Group concluded that although radical change was possible, in general, those in receipt of funding and the agreed outcomes were in line with both budget and community need, in particular around debt and benefit advice (Citizen's Advice

Bureaux), support for ensuring the continued use of volunteers (the work of Spark) and wider community support.

Changes to the current levels of funding for many of the organisations that rely upon this support could have long lasting detrimental effects for the groups and the communities that they support.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

Recommended action	Rationale	Net effect on budget
Removal of £20,000 small grants scheme	There is provision within the Somerset West Lottery scheme for players to allocate their ticket price to local community schemes. In 20/21, this totalled in excess of £20,000.	£20,000 to be reallocated
Removal of £2,700 from grant to Community Council for Somerset	This funding was to cover Community Infrastructure Levy work. This will be brought back in house	£2,700 to be reallocated
Return Somerset West Lottery community fund to in-house management	Work carried out by Somerset Community Foundation but often duplicated and can be managed within existing resources.	£2,000 to be reallocated
Return Partnership grants fund to in-house management	As above	£1,560 to be reallocated
<b>Total</b>		<b>£26,260</b>

Proposals for reallocation were considered by the group and agreed that:

- An additional £4,000 be allocated to Homestart to take their total to £5,000
- An additional £4,000 be allocated to CLOWNS to take their total to £5,000

- The remaining £18,260 be allocated equally to Citizens Advice Bureau Taunton and West Somerset

Recommended action	Rationale	Net effect on budget
Additional £4,000 to Homestart West Somerset	Honours previous commitment that had been unable to be met in previous spending rounds	£4,000 allocated
Additional £4,000 to CLOWNS	As above	£4,000 allocated
Additional £9,130 to Citizens Advice Taunton	Support ongoing work for those with most complex needs.  Request from CAB for additional funds in line with last year's additional agreed amount (£22,500 each Bureau) was supported by Members if it could be agreed within budget. See 4.18 below.	£9,130 allocated
Additional £9,130 to Citizens Advice West Somerset	As above	£9,130 allocated
Total		£26,260

Members of the Working Group felt strongly that if any funds were freed as a result of continued due diligence work or if underspends were identified that could be allocated in this area, then they had a strong preference for allocating them to the two Advice Bureaus in the first instance.

EXECUTIVE CONSIDERED: To be discussed at Executive on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2021  
as part of Report on VCS Grants

OUTCOME:

FOLLOW UP:

REVIEW OF PROCESS/COMMENTS:

SIGNED OFF BY CHAIR:

DATE:

## SWT Member Working Group Protocol Voluntary and Community Sector Grants Review

The following is adapted from the SWT Member Working group Protocol available from the Governance team [governance@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk](mailto:governance@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk)

It is intended to be used to guide the work of the Members' group formed as a result of the Full Council decision on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2021 to review the scope of voluntary and community sector grants. The full scope of the review is included in the Scoping Document circulated with this Protocol.

### 1.0 Introduction

1.1 There is no legal definition of a Member Working Group. SWT defines a Working Group as consisting 'of a small group of members (but with officers in attendance at meetings to provide support and advice) with the remit to consider policies and specific matters. They have a particular role in relation to projects which need to be completed within a specified time period'.

1.2 A Working Group conducts its business on a less formal basis than that of a committee. It does not have any decision-making powers and can only make recommendations to:

- The body from which it was formed (parent body);
- Such other body as the parent body decides; or
- An officer.

1.3 The term "Working Groups" refers to all informal bodies appointed by the Council, Executive, Scrutiny Committee and Audit, Governance and Standards Committee.

1.4 The purpose of this Protocol is to give guidance in relation to the operation of Working Groups.

### 2.0 Convening of, and appointment to Working Groups

2.1 The Council, Executive, Scrutiny Committee, Audit, Governance and Standards Committee and the Chief Executive may establish a Working Group or amend the Terms of Reference of existing Working Groups.

2.2 In establishing Working Groups, the appointing body or person will determine the precise Terms of Reference of the Working Group (having regard to the Terms of Reference of any other Working Groups) and (if appropriate) duration of the Working Group.

2.3 Where a report is taken through the democratic process to set up a Member Working Group, the Terms of Reference shall be drafted as part of the Committee Report. Where the resolution to set up a Member Working Group arises from a motion to Full Council, the Terms of Reference shall be drafted

by the relevant officer(s) and discussed and approved at the first meeting of the Working Group.

2.4 In exercising the powers under paragraph 2.1 above the appointing body or individual shall seek to ensure that member and officer time and the financial resources of the Council are used in such way as he/she/it considers to be in the best interest of the Council and local people.

2.5 Council Working Group

2.5.1 Where Council resolves to set up a Working Group, this will consist of the eight Members and be politically balanced.

2.5.2 Group Leaders will provide details of the Councillors to be on the Working Group.

2.5.3 The first item of business of the Working Group will be to nominate a Chair for the duration of the Working Group

2.5.4 The Working Group is not a decision-making body and recommendations will be made back to Council for consideration.

3.0 Agendas, Reports and Minutes

3.1 The agendas for Working Groups will be circulated 3 days before the meeting is scheduled to take place, along with any accompanying papers. The Governance Team will assist in the preparation and despatch of agendas and accompanying papers – and this will be available for Members on the Working Group through the private section of mod.gov.

3.2 Support for working parties will be provided by the appropriate professional officer(s) and the Governance Team.

3.3 Where possible, draft minutes of the meetings will be circulated within five working days of the meeting. They will be issued to the Chair for review before being circulated to the Working Group Members.

4.0 Working Group Meetings

4.1 Order of business for the first meeting of the Working Group

4.1.1 At the first meeting of the Working Group, the Order of Business shall be as follows:

- a) To elect the Chair of the Working Group (if appropriate)
- b) To appoint the Vice-Chair of the Working Group
- c) To receive any apologies for absence
- d) To review the Terms of Reference for the Working Group
- e) To complete the Working Group scoping document (Annex 1)
- f) To consider any other business set out in the agenda
- g) To determine the frequency of meetings (taking into account the workload of officers and Committees – which take precedence)
- h) To determine the date of next meeting

4.2 Order of business for meetings of the Working Group

4.2.1 At the meetings of the Working Group, the Order of Business shall be as follows:

- a) To receive any apologies for absence
- b) To approve the minutes of the last meeting;
- c) To receive an update on any action points arising from previous meetings
- d) To consider any other business set out in the agenda
- e) To determine the date of next meeting

## 5.0 Conclusion of the Working Groups

5.1 Once the work of the Working Group is drawing to a close, the appropriate officer(s) will draft the Working Group report. This will be taken through the officer process of consultation with, and comments from the relevant officer(s) where appropriate.

5.2 The draft report will first be discussed with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Working Group before being added to the agenda of the next available Working Group meeting.

5.3 The draft report and any recommendations, and the decision to agree to move the report along the appropriate democratic pathway, shall be decided by a simple majority of those Members present at the meeting.

5.4 Once the Working Group have agreed the draft report, it will then continue along the appropriate democratic pathway:

- Council Working Group – Report to Full Council

## 6.0 Quorum

6.1 For Council and Executive Working Groups with eight Councillors, the quorum will be a minimum of five Members. In the event of the absence of the Chair and Vice-Chair, a temporary Chair will be selected for the duration of the meeting only.

## 7.0 Location of Meetings

7.1 Meetings of all SWT Working Groups shall take place virtually.

## 8.0 Access to meetings by the Press and Public

8.1 As Working Groups are not public meetings the Press and the Public will not be able to attend.





# Somerset West and Taunton Council

## Executive – 17 November 2021

### Somerset West and Taunton Districtwide Design Guide – Review of Public Consultation and Adoption as Supplementary Planning Document

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Member Mike Rigby

Report Author: Fiona Webb - Placemaking Specialist

#### Executive Summary / Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval of the Somerset West and Taunton Districtwide Design Guide, prior to progressing to Full Council for formal adoption as a Supplementary Planning Document (“SPD”). The SPD has been produced to provide additional guidance to support policies DM4 of the Taunton Deane Core Strategy, D7 of the Taunton Deane Site Allocations and Development Management Plan, and NH13 of the West Somerset Local Plan to 2032 on how these and other relevant policies of the adopted development plan should be responded to in relation to securing high quality design.
- 1.2 The draft Design Guide was originally subject to consultation from 3 February to 30 March 2020. Due to the covid pandemic, a number of consultations were significantly delayed including Somerset County Council (SCC). Following representations from SCC Highways, detailed discussions took place between Somerset West and Taunton and SCC as the Highway Authority. As a result, a second formal consultation was carried out for the expanded section on Streets, Parking and Placemaking from 11 December to 5 February 2021. Following SWT’s approval of its Climate Positive Planning guidance, it was considered the Council were not going far enough in its response on climate change. As a result the Design Guide was further updated to provide a greater focus on the climate emergency and to provide *aspirational* guidance on how development proposals *could* go beyond policy requirements. This also coincided with the release by government of the National Design Guide 2021 and the National Model Design Code which also led to changes to be incorporated. For this reason, and in order to ensure that the Design Guide could be adopted as SPD, it was considered appropriate to carry out a third consultation which took place between 5 July and 16 August 2021.
- 1.3. Following the comments received on the draft design guide amendments are now proposed to the draft Design Guide SPD and it is now ready for adoption as an SPD and for endorsement as a material planning consideration for the preparation of masterplans, pre-application advice, assessing planning applications and any other development management purposes within the District.

#### Recommendations

## 2.1. Recommendations are that Executive resolves to:

- 1) Approve the Somerset West and Taunton Districtwide Design Guide to be taken to Full Council for adoption as a Supplementary Planning Document and for endorsement as a material planning consideration for the preparation of masterplans, pre-application advice, assessing planning applications and any other development management purposes within the District.
- 2) Note the outcomes of the public consultations on the draft Somerset West and Taunton Design Guide, undertaken 3 February to 30 March 2020, 11 December to 5 February 2021 and 5 July to Monday 16 August 2021 as set out in the consultation statement in Appendix 1 of this report.
- 3) Agree that the Director of Development and Plancem, in consultation with the Planning and Transport Portfolio Holder be authorised to approve and make minor amendments, prior to the final publication of the Somerset West and Taunton Districtwide Design Guide.
- 4) Agree the creation and launch of a Districtwide 'Quality of Place' award scheme. This would be linked to the Somerset West and Taunton Districtwide Design Guide, the Taunton Garden Town Vision, and the Taunton Garden Town Design Charter and Checklist.

## Risk Assessment

- 3.1 The SPD provides clear policy guidance for the local planning authority and developers which will support the delivery of sustainable development. The SPD will assist on the deliverability of development proposals, since it clearly sets out for developers' further guidance on the requirements of the Local Planning Authority. Similarly, the SPD clearly sets out Local Planning Authority's requirements for good design which will assist in officers making a balanced judgement against other policy and Council objectives, for example, affordable housing, infrastructure and achieving more energy efficient, climate resilient housing.
- 3.2 The Districtwide Design Guide SPD must be read in conjunction with the development plan as a whole. The planning system must balance multiple factors including the delivery of housing to meet the national housing crisis and the provision of infrastructure such as roads, schools and open space to meet the demands of new housing, together with the need to meet policy requirements and ensure that development remains viable. In this context it can be difficult to ensure that design issues are prioritised. However, high quality, sustainable design should not be seen as an obstacle to the achievement of these other aims, rather an improvement on the way that they are achieved. The Districtwide Design Guide addresses this by providing additional guidance to support the implementation of existing adopted design policies. It does not conflict with existing adopted policy or place new burdens on the viability of development as the requirement for high quality design is already enshrined in adopted policy. Higher quality design does not always have to mean higher development costs, though clearly sometimes it will lead to this. Where viability is a properly justified concern, the Council will need to consider the various policy requirements of the development plan, taken as a whole, to determine whether and how development can be brought forward in a viable way and still contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development. A nuanced and case-specific consideration will be required to understand what the correct balance of requirements should be to result in sustainable development.

- 3.3 The Corporate Risk Register contains a risk associated with failure to have an up-to-date Local Plan or to demonstrate that the district has a five-year land supply or sufficient Housing Delivery Test score. Failure of the above points could lead to housing policies of the district's local plans being considered out of date and application of / fall back on the presumption in favour of sustainable development. This would lead to unplanned development and likely less sustainable patterns of development. Therefore, careful consideration will be required in relation to these particular risks when implementing the SPD and determining planning applications, particularly where viability has been properly demonstrated as a justified concern. The weight to be given to a viability assessment at application stage is a matter for the decision maker, having regard to all the circumstances in the case.
- 3.4 Similarly, such costs associated with infrastructure and policy requirements must also be borne by our own developments. There will be a public expectation that we 'practice as we preach' with regards to issues like design, with a particular focus on developments in Taunton due to its Garden Town Status. That being the case, the Council must be cognisant of this, whilst also recognising that the risk is probably reasonably low as our own schemes are already aiming to be exemplars, particularly regarding environmental standards and sustainability.

#### Background and Full Report

- 4.1 The purpose of the Districtwide Design Guide is to seek a step change in the quality of new development in the district in support of adopted local plan policies. It aims to ensure that the significant level of housing growth needed in the district to meet future need is designed to create healthy, inclusive, sustainable places to live for everyone promoting a common approach to the main principles which underpin the various adopted Local Plans that are used for assessing planning applications. If adopted, the Design Guide will be a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and a material consideration in determining relevant planning proposals and applications.
- 4.2 This means that the SPD will be afforded weight in the decision-making process.

#### Policy Context

- 4.3 National planning and design policy underline the need for local authorities to ensure that the quality of the design of new development is both sensitive to the positive aspects of the character of local areas and to incorporate the principles of placemaking, to achieve viable resilient neighbourhoods. The National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF), the National Design Guide 2021 and the National Model Design Code all advocate that local authorities produce design guides and design codes as a means to achieve a higher quality of development which addresses the aims above. The NPPF recommends Design Guides should be adopted as Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) in order they are given as much weight as possible in the decision-making process,
- 4.4 Section 12 of the NPPF – Achieving Well Designed Places sets out the government's agenda for good design. Paragraph 126 states that 'The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential to achieving this'.

- 4.5 It should be noted that the NPPF was updated in July 2021. This now places the additional requirement for development to be ‘beautiful’ as well as high quality and sustainable. This update also emphasises the importance of guidance contained in the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code. In addition, there is new guidance for the requirement of street trees in Paragraph 131 which states ‘Trees make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments and can also help mitigate and adapt to climate change. Planning policies and decisions should ensure that new streets are tree-lined, that opportunities are taken to incorporate trees elsewhere in developments (such as parks and community orchards), that appropriate measures are in place to secure the long-term maintenance of newly-planted trees, and that existing trees are retained wherever possible.’
- 4.6 The emerging Districtwide Design Guide SPD (see Appendix 2) has been produced to support policies DM4 of the Taunton Deane Core Strategy, D7 of the Taunton Deane Site Allocations and Development Management Plan, and NH13 of the West Somerset Local Plan to 2032, which aim to promote high quality design in the district. From adoption, the SPD will provide additional guidance on how these and other relevant policies of the adopted development plan should be responded to.
- 4.7 The diagram 1.0c in the draft Districtwide Design Guide illustrates the relationship between national policies involving design, related national guidance, County Council standards (particularly regarding highways) and the local design policies and guidance in both the draft Districtwide Design Guide and the suite of documents regarding Taunton Garden Town.
- 4.8 Regarding public art, existing adopted planning policies in the former Taunton Deane area set out requirements for public art in policies D13 and D7 of the Site Allocations and Development Management Plan (SADMP), policies ED1 and ED2 of the Taunton Town Centre Area Action Plan (TCAAP) and DM4 of the Core Strategy. The policies all either refer to the Public Art and Design Policy adopted by the Council in 2007, the Public Art Code adopted in 2010, or otherwise refer to public art being provided at 1% of development costs either via commissioning and integrating public art into the design of buildings and the public realm, or by a commuted sum. Additionally, in the case of Taunton, they refer to the Town Centre Design Code SPD which includes specific codes relating to public art and which identifies specific art and design sites relating to the public realm areas. The Districtwide and Public Realm Design Guides refer to this existing policy context and recommend that public art is primarily integrated into the design of buildings and the public realm and is part of what constitutes good design.

## Consultation

- 4.9 A draft Districtwide Design Guide was considered by Members at their Executive meeting on 28 January 2020 and approved for public consultation. Public consultation originally took place on the draft Design Guide between Monday 3 February to Monday 30 March 2020. Due to the covid pandemic, several consultations were significantly delayed including that with Somerset County Council (SCC).
- 4.10 Following representations from SCC Highways to the original draft Design Guide, detailed discussions took place in a series of workshop sessions between Somerset West and Taunton and SCC as the Highway Authority. The concerns from SCC Highways were based on conventional highway practice for the provision of generous engineered highway solutions, rather than current good practice for reducing speeds in residential areas (20m/hr) through tighter street design, tighter road junctions and

reduced visibility splays. As a result, a second formal consultation was carried out for the expanded section on Streets, Parking and Placemaking from 11 December to 5 February 2021.

- 4.11 As a result of SWT approving the final version of Climate Positive Planning, there were a number of responses to this consultation that considered that the Council was not going further in its response on climate change. As a result the Design Guide was updated to provide a greater focus on the climate emergency and to provide *aspirational* guidance on how development proposals *could* go beyond policy requirements. This also coincided with the release by government of the National Design Guide 2021 and the National Model Design Code which also required an update of the draft Design Guide. For this reason, and in order to ensure that the Design Guide could be adopted as SPD, it was considered appropriate to carry out a third consultation which took place 5 July to Monday 16 August 2021.
- 4.12 During the three consultations carried out, the majority of the consultees welcomed the draft Design Guide SPD and were impressed with its attractive layout, illustrative material, and its ambition to improve the standard of design. It was particularly welcomed as some consultees considered that the standard of design in the district was generally mediocre and lacked local distinctiveness.
- 4.13 A total of 36 representations were received during the first consultation on the draft Districtwide Design Guide SPD, 7 during the second consultation and 31 during the third consultation. These consultation responses were from Councillors, members of the public, amenity bodies, parish councils, developers, and internal staff. A table showing all representations received is set out in the table in Appendix 1 of this report together with SWT's responses.
- 4.14 Consideration of representations received during the three public consultations on the Design Guide has resulted in the following proposed changes within the Design Guide, as summarised below:
- 4.15 First and Second Consultations (3 February to 30 March 2020 and 11 December to 5 February 2021)

Substantial Revisions and Additions:

- Section 4.4 – Streets, Parking and Placemaking were amended following a series of workshops resulting in the preparation of an expanded section based on more progressive approaches to street design as advocated in the original section of the Design Guide. SCC Highways were more willing to engage as their own 1991 'Red Book' standards were at that time being revised.
- Section 5.9 - Residential Alterations and Extensions was revised and expanded on both in text and illustrations to clarify the distinction between permitted development and those alterations which required planning permission..
- Section 5.10 on Shop front Design was expanded to include a response to the changing high street in terms of the conversion of retail premises to alternative uses.
- A new section under Part 5.0 Design Topics addressed the development of smaller sites. This showed how the principles of placemaking should be applied even at the scale of small developments (under 10 units).
- Section 4.3 on House Typologies was revised and expanded upon to clarify the recommendations and to improve the illustrations.

## Other Changes:

- The Introduction clarified the role of illustrations within the design guide and the fact that these are indicative only, not implying a preference for a particular architectural style.
- Section 3.1 on Context and Distinctiveness was revised to show the importance of promoting a design approach which is responsive to local distinctiveness without resorting to superficial stylistic treatments. This was also in response to a number of representations, both within this consultation period and other Garden Town events, where participants encouraged the Local Authority to ensure that all developments should reflect local distinctiveness.
- Additional clarification was applied throughout the text to reinforce the aims of the design guide that it should be relevant to considerations regarding:
  - a) the incorporation of modern methods of construction,
  - b) the inclusion of renewable energy sources,
  - c) the importance of landscape for tackling climate change and encouraging biodiversity and aiding a sense of wellbeing, and
  - d) the inclusion of active travel within developments.
- Updated policy and guidance e.g. change from Building for Life 12 to Building for a Healthy Life
- Expanded section 7.2 - References section included recent documents

4.16 Of the 36 respondents to the first consultation and 7 respondents to the second consultation, 4 were from volume house builders already developing major sites in Taunton. The detailed comments from the volume house builders (which often overlap) and SWT's responses to them are show in detail in the summary of consultations in Appendix 1. These can broadly be summarised under the following headings – a) Viability; b) Level of Prescription; c) Local Distinctiveness; and d) Relationship with SCC Highways and parking.

a) Viability – the house builders considered that the Design Guide should recognise the relationship between what is recommended and required against the financial viability of housing development. In response, the value of having Design Guides and Codes is that they provide a level playing field for developers to understand the costs which are likely to be incurred and to take this into account in their land valuations. The main thrust of the design guide is to make efficient use of sites and plots to ensure optimum utilisation of land; this is particularly so in advocating the reduction of land-take for highways. Moreover, all the planned footprints of the indicative schemes show very simple and therefore cost-efficient plan shapes. Additionally, the government commitments to early carbon neutrality and the climate emergency are creating significant challenges for the development industry and these are reflected in SWT's policies and consequently the Design Guide as SPD.

b) Level of Prescription – the house builders felt that the Design Guide should avoid being over prescriptive in terms of design and style. The challenge for any Design Guide is to strike a balance between seen to be vague in its requirements and on the other hand to be interpreted as being over prescriptive. The approach taken by the Design Guide is in all cases to show indicative illustrations which demonstrate how objectives might be encapsulated in built form. But at the outset of the Design Guide it stresses that alternative contemporary solutions would be valid if they demonstrate that the design process advocated has been thoroughly undertaken. Furthermore, the illustrations depict relatively style neutral built form in order to explain layouts/concepts.

- c) Local Distinctiveness – the house builders recommended that the advocacy of local distinctiveness should recognise interwar suburban forms of housing as a locally distinctive feature of Taunton. The advocacy of creating locally distinctive built environments has been a constant theme of planning legislation in the post war era and is reiterated in the NPPF and the National Design Guide. It is further reinforced in numerous places in the Local Plan. The Design Guide identifies aspects of local distinctiveness relevant in the SWT area. It avoids identifying styles and forms found in any urban location in the country as by definition these are not locally distinctive. Furthermore, in the case of interwar suburban development, this tends to be road dominated and low density and militates against active travel and the efficient use of land. The challenge for both the Design Guide and the developer is to identify aspects of topography, layout, and materials which are both relevant for good placemaking and which respond to but not mimic solutions to local contexts.
- d) Relationship with SCC Highways and parking – The developers raised the issue of the relationship of the Highway Authority and those of Planning and Placemaking. As part of preparing the Design Guide it has been recognised that there is a tension between the conventional highway prescriptions based on the 1991 Highway Authority Standards and those now advocated in Manual for Streets and the publications emanating from CIHT. As this latter approach is now advocated by the National Design Guide and is recognised by SCC in their proposed draft new highway standards, these differences should be minimised. Indeed, the Design Guide Team and a working party of SCC Highway officers embarked on a series of workshops to agree a common approach and design principles based on recently developed best practice. In regard to parking the developers urged that parking spaces should be located close to front doors; this is agreed, and the advocacy of parking streets and squares should ensure that parking spaces are close to and easily observed from nearby houses. The Highway Authority also advocates contextually based parking standards related to the varied location of developments within the district and the relative accessibility to facilities by active travel and public transport. This approach is endorsed by the Design Guide and should give developers appropriate flexibility.

#### 4.17 Third consultation - 5 July to Monday 16 August 2021

##### Substantial Revisions and Additions:

- The Design Guide has been updated to take into account of the new NPPF guidance on achieving 'Beauty' in new development as well as high quality and sustainability. Section 6.5 – Quality Review has been amended to clearly set out the Local Planning Authorities criteria for schemes where Design Review will be strongly encouraged as part of the authority's consideration of a development proposal. A bespoke Quality Review Panel is currently being set up for SWT district area and it is hoped that this will assist in making judgements on whether a scheme achieves high quality, beauty, and sustainability.
- Throughout the Design Guide, references and photographs have been expanded on to encourage the use of contemporary design solutions as well as traditional. The Design Guide emphasises that the guidance should be treated as a springboard for good design rather than a straitjacket for development.
- Design guidance for flood resilience has been expanded on in relation to the need for sustainable urban drainage, this is particularly in relation to recent guidance from the Construction Industry Research and Information Association. This publication is also included in the References section.

- An amended and revised section has been included on House Types to show the range and type of house types which are necessary as components to make successful streets and places (Section 4.3).
- A new Design Topic on Public Art has been included in the guidance. This subject was considered too light touch in the previous consultation drafts. This guidance corresponds to that contained in the Public Realm Design Guide for Taunton Garden Town. It emphasises that public art should not just be thought of as individual pieces of art but should also be integral to building design. It also emphasises the importance of achieving beauty in the built environment.
- The design guidance for achieving the urban block in a layout has also been expanded upon to reflect the density requirements and variations shown in the National Model Design Code.

#### Other Changes:

- The context and local distinctiveness of the architectural character of Taunton has been expanded upon to better reflect the predominant vernacular house types in the settlement.
- The guidance for shopfronts has been expanded upon particularly to include more guidance for signage and advertisements.
- Guidance on Taller Buildings has been expanded upon particularly to include SWT's requirements for assessing such proposals. The indicative drawing showing a taller building has also been amended to better reflect the height of proposed building anticipated within the larger settlements in the district.
- Greater guidance has been provided for agricultural buildings with their landscape setting, particularly regarding topography and the land profile of a site.
- Greater reference has been made to security and safety within layouts and the need to consult the Police Crime Prevention Officer.
- Guidance has been expanded on for the preparation of Heritage Statements in accordance with comments from Historic England.

4.18 Of the 31 respondents to the third consultation, 8 received were from volume house builders. A number of the comments were broadly similar to those expressed in the previous consultations, particularly on issues of the level of prescription and local distinctiveness. The comments from the volume house builders and SWT's responses to them are shown in the summary of consultations in Appendix 1. These can broadly be summarised under the following headings – a) Over Prescriptive, Stifling Innovation and Document Too Lengthy; b) Local Distinctiveness; c) Requirements of SCC Highways and EV Charging; d) Zero Carbon and Future Homes Standards; and d) Design Review.

- a) Over Prescriptive, Stifling Innovation and Document Too Lengthy – The house builders consider that the draft Design Guide is too prescriptive, will stifle innovative contemporary design and that the document is too lengthy. The issue of prescription was raised in the previous consultations. - In response, it is important for a design guide to strike a balance between policy requirements and to demonstrate through examples how these can be achieved in practise. The nature of the design process means that not everything can be clearly explained unambiguously in words, therefore diagrammatic illustrations of layouts and forms are required. These diagrams are illustrative, and it is made clear in the guidance that if an applicant can demonstrate that other solutions would achieve the stated requirements, then other such solutions could be a valid approach. The draft Design Guide clearly states (section 1.7) that the guidance should not be taken as a straitjacket but should act as a springboard for good design, and it sets



out the minimum standards from which good design is expected. It is accepted that the document is comprehensive given the ever-expanding agenda from government on design and the need to address all aspects of design relating to climate and ecological emergency both at the local and national level. However, the draft Design Guide is a manual requiring applicants to consider the relevant sections of the document to their application, i.e., the character area within their site is located, the design process, and the relevant design topic(s).

- b) Local Distinctiveness – this was mentioned by a minority of the developers as being an issue and was also raised in the previous consultations. The house builder's concerns relate to interwar suburban development not being recognised within the design guide as locally distinctive, that the distinctiveness of Taunton's vernacular is not sufficiently defined and that the section on distinctiveness over emphasises traditional built forms. – In response, interwar suburban development is universal throughout the whole country due to the standardisation of house types, layouts, road standards and density. These factors have resulted in uniform 'anywhere' character which is often at odds with the townscape and landscape of existing traditional settlements within the district. Furthermore, there is a need to make settlements walkable and to raise densities in areas which are most sustainable and nearest to facilities; this means that suburban low-density development is far less applicable than two generations ago. In regard to the Taunton's vernacular not being sufficiently defined, much of Taunton built form is 19 Century development with many characteristics that are common with building forms in other towns. There is however a palette of materials and a limited number of building details which are common to Taunton. On this point the house builders do not appear to appreciate that the guidance sets out pointers for applicants to make their own character appraisal of their site and its context. Regarding traditional building forms, the guidance is not suggesting that an applicant slavishly copies historic buildings found in the district. The Design Guide advocates that traditional buildings provide a sense of place and identity, through establishing a scale, form, layout, and palette of materials which should be recognised and used as a springboard for design interpretation in new development.
- c) Relationship with SCC Highways Guidance – The house builders raise the issue of the relationship of the Highway Authority and those of Planning and Placemaking. – In response, a series of workshop meetings have been held with SCC Highways to attempt to resolve differing approaches to streetmaking. Substantial progress has been made as is reflected in section 4.4. At the time of writing this report officers were still finalising the design guide to take account of SCC Highways comments. SWT officers are working to best practise contained in the NPPF, Manual for Streets, National Design Guide and National Model Design Code.
- d) Working Towards Zero Carbon Design and Construction – Several of the house builders raise the question of the degree to which the guidance on Towards Zero Carbon Construction (section 5.2) is mandatory. In addition, some house builders raise the question of the design guide's relationship to the Future Homes Standard. - In response, the design topic 'Towards Zero Carbon Design and Construction' sets out a design process to help move development towards delivering zero carbon buildings. Tackling carbon emissions and climate impact via such a design process is integral to good design and aligns with existing planning policies. The topic clearly differentiates between what is policy requirement and what is aspirational/illustrative as the document does throughout. Additional text is proposed to clarify the relationship with the Government's proposed interim update to Building Regulations Part L (due December 2021) and the Future Homes Standard (due 2025). However, it remains valid and reasonable to

illustrate how new development could and should be looking to push ambition in this regard in advance of and beyond these standards in order to deliver on the adopted target of working towards carbon neutrality by 2030. Regarding the Future Homes Standard, this was a government consultation and no additional regulations have currently been issued. However, the aspirations set out in Working Towards Zero Carbon Design and Construction (section 5.2) appear to be fully in line with the proposals. In response to the house builder's concerns at how to mitigate the effects of overheating in residential buildings, an additional illustrative diagram has been provided in the design guide.

- e) Design Review – Several of the house builders expressed concern at the status and need for Design Review (to be renamed Quality Review) – In response, Design Review Panels are a well-established feature of the planning process, and their use is advocated in the NPPF and Policy D7 of the Taunton Deane Site Allocations and Development Management Plan. They offer independent critical friend advice to both applicants and the local planning authority on the quality of a scheme and are best employed at the earliest stages of any proposals.. The criteria for triggering the need for design review relates to the significance of a proposal as well as its size. The number of likely applications received per year, triggering the need for design review, will be small in comparison to the total number of applications received.

#### Adoption as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

- 4.19 In order to be legally compliant, an SPD must be prepared, consulted upon, and adopted by resolution of Full Council in line with certain regulations as set out in the Town and County Planning (Local Plans) (England) Regulations 2012. A draft Adoption Statement (Appendix 4) and Consultation Statement (Appendix 3). Together, these documents set out how the SPD is legally compliant and comply with key regulations.

#### Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)/ Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening

- 4.20 Under the European Directive 2001/42/EC (SEA Directive) and associated Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (SEA Regulations), an SEA is required for all plans which may have a significant effect on the environment. In addition to this, under Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive and Regulation 61 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 an HRA is required when it is deemed that the implementation of the plan is likely to cause significant negative effects upon protected European Sites (Natura 2000 sites).
- 4.21 An SEA/HRA Screening Assessment has been undertaken to ascertain whether or not significant effects are considered likely to arise as a result of the District-wide Design Guide SPD, requiring full SEA/HRA. A draft Screening Assessment was consulted on with the statutory consultees, and the final report (see Appendix 5) takes account of comments received. The conclusion of the assessment is that the SPD does not require full SEA or HRA to be conducted.

#### 5. Links to Corporate Strategy

- 5.1 Theme 1 – objectives towards the District **Carbon neutral by 2030**'; clear vision and delivery plan for the Taunton Garden Town'; 'Provide and maintain green open spaces and parks, enhanced public spaces, as well as additional opportunities to safely walk or cycle in order to encourage active and healthy lifestyles'. Theme 3 – objectives to

‘Increase the number of affordable and social homes in our urban towns, rural and coastal communities; Facilitate the development of the residential blocks at Firepool, Taunton, in order to deliver new homes and public open spaces’; and ‘Seek additional funding for new strategic infrastructure and regeneration projects from developers, investors, Government and other funders, which support or enable existing or new communities within our district

## 6. Finance / Resource Implications

- 6.1 The cost of preparing the Districtwide Design Guide has been funded from the Local Plan budget. The cost of public consultation on the guide has also be funded by Local Plan budget.

## 7. Legal Implications

- 7.1 The preparation of the draft Districtwide Design Guide and the period of public consultation is in compliance with relevant legislation and guidance regarding supplementary planning documents including the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2012 and the government’s Planning Practice Guidance. A draft Adoption Statement (Appendix 4) and Consultation Statement (Appendix 3). Together, these documents set out how the SPD is legally compliant and comply with key regulations. If approved the SPD will be adopted by resolution by Full Council following which the Adoption Statement (Appendix 4) will be published.

The final draft Districtwide Design Guide has been prepared in line with the relevant planning regulations. The draft District-wide Design Guide SPD (see Appendix 2) is clearly identified as having been produced pursuant to policies DM4 of the Taunton Deane Core Strategy, D7 of the Taunton Deane Site Allocations and Development Management Plan, and NH13 of the West Somerset Local Plan to 2032, which aim to promote high quality design in the district.

The final draft Districtwide Design Guide SPD has been subject to consultation in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended). Following consultation and adoption, the SPD will be a material consideration in the determination of all relevant planning applications. However, the SPD will be without any prejudice to any decisions that the Council may take as Local Planning Authority in respect of individual site/s and any future planning applications.

## 8. Climate and Sustainability Implications

- 8.1 Completion, adoption and implementation of the Districtwide Design Guide and Public Realm Design Guide are identified in the Council’s Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience Action Plan as key actions. The Design Guide recognises that sustainable, energy efficient and climate resilient design is integral to what constitutes good design. It is considered that the Design Guide will have positive implications in terms of sustainability through guidance including the integration of placemaking and sustainability principles. This includes the following:

- Green Streets – requires streets to be designed to be greener which could include more street trees, swales, and planting/hedgerows for garden boundaries.
- Water – requires that priority is given to sustainable drainage processes and that a drainage strategy should help to shape the design of the open space, landscape and streets.

- Biodiversity – identifies how development can provide a net gain in biodiversity by including design features at the scales of neighbourhood, street and individual house.
- Air Quality – the issue of air quality is addressed throughout the document through requiring that developments: - Prioritise active travel (walking and cycling) and public transport. - Incorporate street trees, planting, open spaces and landscape. - Include EV charging points for vehicles.
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions - The draft guide should help to reduce greenhouse gas emission impacts through prioritising active travel and public transport over the car, making developments greener with more trees and landscape, requiring the provision of electric vehicle charging points and encouraging better energy efficiency in homes.

## 9. Safeguarding and/or Community Safety Implications

9.1 A priority of the Districtwide Design Guide is to create safe communities. They have been prepared in accordance with ‘Secure By Design’ principles and includes guidance on making inclusive places for people with safe streets and spaces and secure properties. The draft design guide and masterplan frameworks adhere to the principles relevant to crime prevention – natural surveillance (spaces around buildings open to public view from adjoining properties, front entrances clearly visible from the street, well used illuminated routes); access and movement (direct routes, choice of routes, clear routes, permeability); activity (levels of activity provide natural surveillance together with a mix of uses); sense of ownership (clear definition of public/private space, activity in public spaces, sociable places, perception of space); defensible space (buffer zones, spill out spaces, restricting access to private areas); physical protection (boundaries sensitive to context, building materials and security features); management and maintenance (allocated resources, design quality and detail, community management).

## 10. Equality and Diversity Implications

10.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out and is appended to the report at Appendix 6. Additionally extensive public consultation has taken place in accordance with the Council’s adopted Statement of Community Involvement. No representations were received from the community or from groups representing people with Protected Characteristics suggesting or requesting changes be made to the design guide.

## 11. Social Value Implications

11.1 The Districtwide Design Guide is intended to have a positive influence on the quality of life, resulting in economic, social value and environmental benefits for the community.

## 12. Partnership Implications

12.1 As part of the Duty to Cooperate requirement (Town & Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012), we will be expected to work with other public bodies, particularly neighbouring planning authorities and the County Council on any cross boundary issues. Close working has particularly taken place with SCC Highways through a number of workshop meetings.

13. Health and Wellbeing Implications
- 13.1 The Districtwide Design Guide is intended to have a positive influence on the quality of life, resulting in economic, social value and environmental benefits for the community.
14. Asset Management Implications
- 14.1 None at this stage, however the Council will consider opportunities for use of its assets to contribute to the delivery and promotion of high quality and sustainable built environments.
15. Data Protection Implications
- 15.1 None at this stage.
16. Consultation Implications
- 16.1 The consultations on this document have been in line with the SWT's Statement of Community Involvement and the Council's legal obligations. Following the consultation exercises, this report considers what modifications need to be made to the Districtwide Design Guide.
17. Scrutiny/Executive Comments / Recommendation(s) (if any)
- 17.1 Not applicable

**Democratic Path:**

- **Scrutiny / Corporate Governance or Audit Committees – No**
- **Cabinet/Executive – Yes**
- **Full Council – Yes**

**Reporting Frequency: X Once only**

**List of Appendices (delete if not applicable)**

Appendix 1	Schedule of Responses to Consultations
Appendix 2	<a href="#">Appendix 2 - Districtwide Design Guide.pdf (somerwestandtaunton.gov.uk)</a>
Appendix 3	Consultation Statement
Appendix 4	Adoption Statement SPD
Appendix 5	Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitat Regulations Assessment
Appendix 6	Equality Impact Assessment

**Contact Officers**

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	DISTRICT-WIDE DESIGN GUIDE CONSULTATION COMMENTS	3 FEBRUARY – 30 MARCH 2020	
Consultee	General Agreement/Disagreement	Detailed Comment Received	SW&TC Response
COMMUNITY & BUSINESS			
1. Creating Excellence - Southwest Design Review Panel	Agree that SW&TC needs a Districtwide Design Guide to help raise the quality of design of new developments is both sensitive to the positive aspects of the character of a local area and to incorporate the principles of placemaking to achieve viable resilient neighbourhoods.	<p>‘This all looks excellent – what a great initiative’.</p> <p>Include design review as part of the consultation process.</p> <p>P.17 might want to consider early DRP to establish design parameters at appraisal of site stage.</p> <p>P.115 need to mention site visits.</p> <p>P.115 the role of the panel manager is to maintain the panel’s independence.</p> <p>Glossary – add the Design Companion and Councillors Companion</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Agreed</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Agreed</p> <p>Agreed</p> <p>Noted</p>
2. South West Heritage Trust	Agree that SW&TC needs a Districtwide Design Guide to help raise the quality of design of new developments is both sensitive to the positive aspects of the character of a local area and to incorporate the principles of placemaking to achieve viable resilient neighbourhoods.	<p>‘SWHT warmly welcomes this Design Guide and its capture of current best practice. The illustrations are attractive and particularly helpful in conveying the advice’.</p> <p>P.15 diagram – setting could be considerably wider</p> <p>P.16 clarification of text on setting.</p> <p>P.17 wording to tally with NPPF and include areas of archaeological potential</p> <p>Change text from CA Character Statements to Appraisal Reference need to HER, Somerset Local Studies Library and Know Your Place Somerset</p> <p>Emphasis the use of local stone</p> <p>Guidance on taller buildings should reference key church towers and views from the hills.</p> <p>Make reference to Taunton Shop Fronts design guide</p> <p>Undesignated heritage assets not undesignated</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Agreed</p> <p>Agreed</p> <p>Agreed</p> <p>Agreed</p> <p>Agreed</p> <p>Agreed</p> <p>Agreed</p> <p>Agreed</p> <p>Agreed</p>

		<p>P.97 listing term needs clarification</p> <p>P.98 Reference needed to local list</p> <p>P.99 Modify and relocate topic of reversibility</p> <p>104 All building recording to be in line with Somerset Archaeological Handbook and deposits recorded with Somerset Heritage Centre</p> <p>P.112 When further archaeological information is needed that advise be sought from SWHT's Archaeological officer</p> <p>P.120 References – reference to be given for Somerset HER</p>	<p>Agreed</p> <p>Agreed</p> <p>Agreed</p> <p>Agreed</p>
<p>3. Langford Budville Parish Council</p> <p>Page 48</p>	<p>Agree that SW&amp;TC needs a Districtwide Design Guide to help raise the quality of design of new developments is both sensitive to the positive aspects of the character of a local area and to incorporate the principles of placemaking to achieve viable resilient neighbourhoods.</p>	<p>Strongly agree that local distinctiveness is important 'to keep harmony and keep the character of the local areas'</p> <p>Strongly agree that character areas are important and that their features need to be addressed in design and layout.</p> <p>Strongly agree that joint principles of placemaking and sustainability should influence design of development.</p> <p>Strongly agree on parking approach in the design guide.</p> <p>Strongly agree that neighbourhoods should be based on active travel.</p> <p>Glossary should include reference to Garden Town.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Agreed</p>
<p>4. Individual Submission</p>	<p>Agree that SW&amp;TC needs a Districtwide Design Guide to help raise the quality of design of new developments is both sensitive to the positive aspects of the character of a local area and to incorporate the principles of placemaking to achieve viable resilient neighbourhoods.</p>	<p>Strongly agrees with the broad aims of the design guide.</p> <p>Strongly agrees that new developments need to reflect the local distinctive character of the area reason: 'Much development within the Quantock Hills area has been of a rather poor standard of design over the last 40-50 years with little reference to local character, scale and materials. Kingston St Mary has suffered from lack of cohesion over this period. The design guide should help to improve that'.</p> <p>Local distinctiveness is important however 'There should be room for exceptional contemporary design,</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>



		<p>but this needs control to avoid a repeat of mediocrity'. Town centres could benefit much more from a very strong sense of local form than is currently seen. Shopfront signage could be better controlled'. Character areas – 'It's a useful guide to help applicants focus on key aspects of local design and layout. Will it be adopted by the volume house builder who tends to trot out their standard portfolio?' Much more use should be made of under building parking particularly on sloping sites. There needs to be more specific guidance on residential extensions and alterations. Boundaries and street scene is such an important area an so often overlooked; it would be good to see this area strengthened. Would like the requirements for planning applications to be detailed and adhered to by applicants.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Agreed</p> <p>Agreed</p> <p>Agreed</p> <p>Agreed</p>
5. Individual Submission	<p>Agree that SW&amp;TC needs a Districtwide Design Guide to help raise the quality of design of new developments is both sensitive to the positive aspects of the character of a local area and to incorporate the principles of placemaking to achieve viable resilient neighbourhoods.</p>	<p>Strongly agrees that applicants should follow the design process.</p> <p>Strongly agrees that new developments should reflect the local distinctive character of an area and considers local distinctiveness is highly important.</p> <p>Strongly agree that joint principles of placemaking and sustainability should influence design of development.</p> <p>Strongly disagrees that there should be a mixed approach to parking (no comments offered)</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>
6. Individual Submission	<p>Agree that SW&amp;TC needs a Districtwide Design Guide to help raise the quality of design of new developments is both sensitive to the positive aspects of the character of a local area and to</p>	<p>The key diagram on p.8 needs to place more emphasis on sustainability, particularly SUD's, rain gardens and little car dominance.</p> <p>Doesn't consider that the status of the design guide is clear or its links to the garden town or how the document should be used. 'The concept of the Garden</p>	<p>Agreed</p> <p>Agreed</p>

	<p>incorporate the principles of placemaking to achieve viable resilient neighbourhoods.</p>	<p>Town Vision and the link to the design guide is tenuous. The concept of why garden towns were created is not explained and is ignored. It is not just designers that should use this guide but general public who wish to develop their space thus making this document limited and unwelcoming to non-designers, talking down to them’.</p> <p>Strongly agrees that applicants should follow the design process.</p> <p>‘A theme that runs through the whole document is the lack of landscape character that relates to development’.</p> <p>‘Landscape – this has been totally ignored and all the local distinctiveness is detailed in depth in national character areas, district and local landscape types as well as AONB design guides’.</p> <p>‘There is a strong over emphasis on the use and design around the car, whereby in the future car usage will change and up to date reports state this. Place making is not just about street scene but how the community will use the space’.</p> <p>Section 5 – blatant lack of reference to landscape. Needs thought into future proofing and progressive design ideas.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Agreed</p> <p>Agreed</p>
7. Individual Submission	<p>Agree that SW&amp;TC needs a Districtwide Design Guide to help raise the quality of design of new developments is both sensitive to the positive aspects of the character of a local area and to incorporate the principles of</p>	<p>New developments must have foot/cycle ways that easily and directly link into existing communities to encourage integration. New homes should be built with Lifetime homes in mind and be easily altered to meet occupiers changing needs.</p> <p>Strongly agrees that applicants should follow the design process. ‘A standard process must be used so all</p>	<p>Agreed</p> <p>Agreed</p>

	<p>placemaking to achieve viable resilient neighbourhoods.</p>	<p>developers know what is expected from them during the planning process’.</p> <p>Strongly agrees that new developments should reflect the local distinctive character of an area and considers local distinctiveness is highly important. ‘New developments should blend in with the existing built and natural landscape’. ‘Local communities and new development must be distinctive to their own area and not appear to come from a national catalogue of ideas’.</p> <p>Strongly agree that character areas are important and that their features need to be addressed in design and layout.</p> <p>Strongly agree that joint principles of placemaking and sustainability should influence design of development.</p> <p>Strongly agrees that buildings should make good streetscapes.</p> <p>Strongly agrees that streets are designed for all users and are designed considering how vehicles and streets/junctions to determine their size.</p> <p>Strongly agrees that the design guide should be more specific on parking standards in the district.</p> <p>Disagrees that all parking bays should have kerbside electric charging points.</p> <p>‘These idea are good for development in an urban area but if applied to a rural village will detract from the uniqueness of the village. Many villages have narrow roads and cannot accommodate tow way traffic movement. If electric cars are to be encouraged then charging points must be available’.</p> <p>A portion of new homes must be Lifetime Homes.</p> <p>Properties should be built to be flood resilient.</p> <p>Glossary covers most points.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>
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8. Individual Submission	Agree that SW&TC needs a Districtwide Design Guide to help raise the quality of design of new developments is both sensitive to the positive aspects of the character of a local area and to incorporate the principles of placemaking to achieve viable resilient neighbourhoods.	<p>Considers that houses should be 'Homes for Life' and capable of adaption.</p> <p>When developers consult with local residents, this should be meaningful and take on board local views. Outline planning applications do not give sufficient detail for the consideration of the design of a development proposal and can be misleading. West Somerset had two consultants looking at characterisation, why is this information not being used?</p> <p>Concerns that proposals for the former Watchet paper mill site include high rise development.</p> <p>Hedges are important landscape consideration which should be respected in development proposals. Coastal characterisation needs to be considered Visitor parking is lacking in new developments Life time homes should be available not just in the Taunton Garden Town</p> <p>The design quality shown in outline applications is followed through which what is delivered on the ground. Design details are important. Glossary section is useful</p>	<p>Noted and already covered in design guide</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted, however we are unable to request more information at outline since this is establishing the principle of development. This information is incorporated into the new districtwide Design Guide.</p> <p>These proposals are yet to come forward; however pre-application has proposed no more than small town scale.</p> <p>Agreed</p> <p>Agreed</p> <p>Parking guidance has been developed in association with SCC Highways</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>
9. West Somerset Community Land Trust	Agree that SW&TC needs a Districtwide Design Guide to help raise the quality of design of new developments is both sensitive to the positive aspects of the character of a local area and to incorporate the principles of placemaking to achieve viable resilient neighbourhoods.	<p>WSCLT is concerned that the draft design guide relates mainly to Taunton and the Garden Town Vision.</p> <p>The degree to which the design standards can be enforced is unclear. The availability of Design Review at an early stage is very helpful.</p>	<p>Noted but not agreed. The West Somerset area is fully analysed in the character section and principles of placemaking are applicable throughout the Ditsrict. It is stressed in the design process section the importance of relating proposals to the context and the site.</p> <p>Noted. The status of the document will be further clarified once adopted as SPD.</p>

		<p>Strongly agree that applicants explain how their proposals follows the design process.</p> <p>Most potential development land in West Somerset already has outline permission so will not be affected by the design guide. Impact is limited unless sizeable rural exception sites become available.</p> <p>Design fashions change - some designs built 50 years ago are now considered acceptable. It is a question of good design.</p> <p>Local distinctiveness is important as long as sustainability and affordability are not compromised.</p> <p>Use of local materials is very significant.</p> <p>Strongly agrees in bringing together the principles of placemaking and sustainability for influencing the layout of new neighbourhoods and street making.</p> <p>Strongly agrees that active travel is important however this is difficult in rural areas when the availability of public transport is often lacking. Provision of cycle and footpaths with existing roads should create an integrated network.</p> <p>WSCLT is committed to flexible designs and life time homes to ensure that residents can live in their homes for as much of their lives as possible.</p> <p>Storage is very important especially for recycling</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>
10. House Builder (Cherwyn Developments)	Agree that SW&TC needs a Districtwide Design Guide to help raise the quality of design of new developments is both sensitive to the positive aspects of the character of a local area and to incorporate the principles of	<p>Agrees in the LPA's commitment to a healthy, distinctive and sustainable built environment.</p> <p>Considers that the status of the design guide is clear and how it should be used.</p> <p>Agrees that applicants should follow the design process. SCC currently will not accept the in formalisation of roads, verges, footpaths and parking. They need to</p>	<p>Noted</p>

	<p>placemaking to achieve viable resilient neighbourhoods.</p>	<p>change to allow the principles of the design guide to be delivered. I would question the ability to deliver electric charging points to all parking spaces. Do we think this is going to be the only form of energy to power cars? There will be alternatives. Design Topics – Whilst the design guide endeavours to promote good placemaking and the ideas are positive, SCC from my experience will not allow informal road layouts, shared space, green verges etc. Until they change we will not be able to accommodate some of the good ideas the design guide is promoting.</p>	<p>Noted and amended</p> <p>Noted</p>
<p>11. Individual Submission</p> <p>Page 54</p>	<p>Agree that SW&amp;TC needs a Districtwide Design Guide to help raise the quality of design of new developments is both sensitive to the positive aspects of the character of a local area and to incorporate the principles of placemaking to achieve viable resilient neighbourhoods.</p>	<p>Agrees in the LPA’s commitment to a healthy, distinctive and sustainable built environment. Considers that the status of the design guide is clear and how it should be used. Strongly agrees that applicants should follow the design process. Strongly agrees that local distinctiveness is important. Strongly agrees in bringing together the principles of placemaking and sustainability for influencing the layout of new neighbourhoods and street making. Strongly agrees that active travel is important. Strongly disagrees that all parking bays should have electric charging points. Considers that good walking and cycling infrastructure is key.</p>	<p>All noted</p>
<p>12. Individual Submission</p>	<p>Agree that SW&amp;TC needs a Districtwide Design Guide to help raise the quality of design of new developments is both sensitive to the positive aspects of the character of a local area and to</p>	<p>Agrees in the LPA’s commitment to a healthy, distinctive and sustainable built environment. Considers that the status of the design guide is clear and how it should be used. Agrees that applicants should follow the design process. Agrees that local distinctiveness is important.</p>	

	incorporate the principles of placemaking to achieve viable resilient neighbourhoods.	Agrees in bringing together the principles of placemaking and sustainability for influencing the layout of new neighbourhoods and street making. Strongly agrees that active travel is important. Considers that provision should be made for parking bays for car club vehicles.	All noted
13. Cycle Somerset		No responses given	
14. SW&T Affordable Housing Group	Agree that SW&TC needs a Districtwide Design Guide to help raise the quality of design of new developments is both sensitive to the positive aspects of the character of a local area and to incorporate the principles of placemaking to achieve viable resilient neighbourhoods.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agrees in the LPA's commitment to a healthy, distinctive and sustainable built environment.</li> <li>• Considers that the status of the design guide is clear and how it should be used.</li> <li>• Considers that clarity is required on how the design guide will be applied to smaller schemes as it appears to be aimed at large scaled developments.</li> <li>• Questions whether there is adequate resource within SW&amp;T Planning Dept to embed the design aspirations and engage in the proposed early consultations?</li> <li>• Questions whether this will result in more detailed pre-application advice which offers value for money and whose comments are respected through the planning determination process.</li> <li>• Questions whether there is capacity for the Design Review process to assess all these schemes and what size of scheme should be critiqued in this way.</li> <li>• Considers that time taken at pre-app and Design Review will put pressure on viability.</li> <li>• Agrees that applicants should follow the design process.</li> </ul>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Staff training already carried out for DM officers and further planned</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted see section on Design Review</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Considers that for the majority of the time that new developments should complement the existing built environment in a creative and innovative way, however that there will be times when a unique scheme may be required that may not directly correlate to the existing built form.</li> <li>• Disagrees that all parking bays should have electric charging points.</li> <li>• Flexibility to car parking layouts is welcomed, considers that the design guide should encourage car share opportunities.</li> <li>• Considers that SCC highway standards need to be aligned to ensure a clear a consistent approach, particularly on shared space.</li> <li>• Consideration should be given to other green car technologies not just electric charging points.</li> <li>• The main concern is the potential additional costs that these considerations will add to schemes and this may effect viability.</li> </ul>	<p>Noted. Design guide is a springboard for good design and not a straightjacket. It gives the agenda for good design.</p> <p>Agreed</p> <p>The LPA has been in active negotiations with SCC on parking and changing points etc.</p> <p>Noted however there is a surplus in the grid with a proportion of new homes with PV's feeding back into the local power grid. Noted, however when applicants know what is required upfront from the design guide, they can reflect this in the purchase price of land. The vast majority of requirements follow the requirements set out in the NPPF and MfS. In most cases a slight increase in density would be acceptable in sustainability terms and would help off-set the costs/unit. In general the design guide is advocating simple building shapes and forms, with simple construction and footprint; we are not advocating fancy finishes. We are also advocating that less space is taken up by highway layouts.</p>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whilst we welcome higher quality design, the potential increase in costs in an already financially challenging market must be considered. This is a real risk that potentially could prevent the delivery of affordable housing.</li> <li>• Adoption of open spaces and service charges is an issue. Clarity is required on who will pay for the on-going maintenance of the open spaces in new developments. Will SCC adopt street trees?</li> <li>• There is a risk of high unaffordable service charges for management and maintenance to cover estate management.</li> </ul>	<p>The LPA have been in active negotiations with SCC on parking, commuted sums and changing points.</p>
<p>5. Individual submission</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agrees in the LPA's commitment to a healthy, distinctive and sustainable built environment.</li> <li>• Considers that the status of the design guide is clear and how it should be used.</li> <li>• Comments that 'It's refreshing to see the introduction of a SPD, employed by other forward thinking authorities, to create a biodiverse and sustainable development, finally created for Taunton Deane after years of lost development opportunities'.</li> <li>• Strongly agrees that applicants should follow the design process.</li> <li>• Strongly agrees that local distinctiveness is important. Comments that 'What makes our part of the world unique and special is its distinctive character and preserving and enhancing this is vital'.</li> </ul>	<p>All Noted</p>

- Strongly agrees in bringing together the principles of placemaking and sustainability for influencing the layout of new neighbourhoods and street making.
- Strongly agree that character areas are important and that their features need to be addressed in design and layout.
- Strongly agree that joint principles of placemaking and sustainability should influence design of development.
- Strongly agrees that buildings should make good streetscapes.
- Strongly agrees that streets are designed for all users and are designed considering how vehicles and streets/junctions to determine their size.
- Strongly agree that neighbourhoods should be based on active travel. Comments that building capacity for cycling and walking and public transport is essential if we are to reduce the rate of global warming.
- Comments that 'This is a unique opportunity for the Council to create a watershed moment in the design of new building stock in Taunton and West Somerset'.
- Comments that 'Local people have tried to influence planning policy with little success – a SPD will make all the difference and allow greater jurisdiction over those developers who have seemingly been allowed by previous council's to fling houses down with little regard for the legacy they leave behind'.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comments that 'It's been disheartening to see bland and lifeless developments spreading across the area with little thought given to early wins for biodiversity, wildlife and ultimately human well-being'.</li> </ul>	
<p>16. Individual Submission</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agrees in the LPA's commitment to a healthy, distinctive and sustainable built environment. Diagram could mention cyclists.</li> <li>• Considers that the status of the design guide is clear and how it should be used.</li> <li>• Strongly agrees that applicants should follow the design process. Comments that the agenda for improved housing should include i) more sustainable requirements and adaptability to life styles.</li> <li>• Strongly agrees that local distinctiveness is important. Comments that 'Harmony between built environments and their settings is deeply satisfying it improves the quality of life for those who live there and retains the distinctive character that areas need, to continue being attractive tourist destinations. This doesn't mean slavishly copying existing building design in an area, but it does mean making use of traditional shapes, heights, materials, and colours in formulating new designs.'</li> <li>• Strongly agrees in bringing together the principles of placemaking and sustainability for influencing the layout of new neighbourhoods and street making.</li> </ul>	<p>Agreed</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Agree</p> <p>Noted</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strongly agree that character areas are important and that their features need to be addressed in design and layout.</li> <li>• Strongly agree that joint principles of placemaking and sustainability should influence design of development.</li> <li>• Strongly agrees that example sketches to show placemaking and sustainable principles should be used.</li> <li>• Strongly agrees that buildings should make good streetscapes.</li> <li>• Strongly agrees that streets are designed for all users and are designed considering how vehicles and streets/junctions to determine their size. Comments that cyclist safety is vital.</li> <li>• Comments that space standards are minimal in new development and that trees should be incorporated into new developments.</li> </ul>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Agree</p>
17. Councillor Nicholas Sloan, Stoke St Gregory Parish Council	Agree that SW&TC needs a Districtwide Design Guide to help raise the quality of design of new developments is both sensitive to the positive aspects of the character of a local area and to incorporate the principles of placemaking to achieve viable resilient neighbourhoods.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agrees in the LPA's commitment to a healthy, distinctive and sustainable built environment.</li> <li>• Not clear about the status of the design guide and how to use the document.</li> <li>• Comments that 'Generally an excellent well considered document, but how this translates into well designed buildings and environments will depend on the imagination with which it is interpreted. Judgement will need to be exercised between conflicting demands to achieve the better good'. Officer training should be provided in making nuanced judgements on design matters rather than</li> </ul>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted. Has been amended</p> <p>Agreed and DM staff and Member training will address these points.</p>

		<p>following formula in order to balance subjective and objective criteria’.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Agrees that applicants should follow the design process.</li><li>• Comments that ‘The design guide encourages respect for vernacular forms of building design and groupings, but the current Local Plan in its concentration on development boundaries discourages natural infill, even in areas that have traditionally been developed organically within loosely built rural areas. Provided that applications are sympathetic and well-designed we feel that the use of natural infill, particularly of back land plots which share existing highway entry points should be actively encouraged in rural contexts where it is an appropriate response to the local vernacular evolution.’</li><li>• Comments that ‘There is a passing reference to the acceptability of good contemporary design, but a heavy emphasis of blending with the local vernacular. A major issue with contemporary design is making a judgement on good or bad; a distinction in the recognition of which planning officers have not had a particularly good track record. We feel that an element of high quality modern architecture does enhance the area, but that the planning department should retain architectural consultants to advise them on the merits of contemporary projects. The implication is that larger developments at least will be assessed by Design Review Panels. It is to be hoped that creative architects will be well represented on such panels, but it is also to be</li></ul>	<p>Agreed and has been amended.</p> <p>Agreed and staff design training has been undertaken and more is planned.</p>
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<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 62</p>		<p>hoped that they will be called in to assess smaller developments where appropriate’.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strongly agrees in bringing together the principles of placemaking and sustainability for influencing the layout of new neighbourhoods and street making.</li> <li>• Disagrees that design guide should be more specific on parking standards</li> <li>• Comments that section 5 point 12 could include innovative flood resilient design solutions</li> <li>• Improve navigation between section in section 5 and the document overall</li> </ul>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Agreed. Contextual guidance on parking has been provided in association with SCC Highways</p> <p>Noted and will consider</p>
<p>18. Individual submission</p>	<p>Agree that SW&amp;TC needs a Districtwide Design Guide to help raise the quality of design of new developments is both sensitive to the positive aspects of the character of a local area and to incorporate the principles of placemaking to achieve viable resilient neighbourhoods.</p>	<p>Strongly agree that joint principles of placemaking and sustainability should influence design of development. Strongly agree that neighbourhoods should be based on active travel.</p> <p>‘All new housing developments should be carbon neutral and fit for a more sustainable future’</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Agreed</p>
<p>19. Forum 21 Community Group</p>	<p>Agree that SW&amp;TC needs a Districtwide Design Guide to help raise the quality of design of new developments is both sensitive to the positive aspects of the character of a local area and to incorporate the principles of placemaking to achieve viable resilient neighbourhoods.</p>	<p>Reservations that design guide relates mainly to Taunton and the garden town, while Forum 21 remit is to achieve a zero carbon economy in West Somerset.</p> <p>‘The rural nature of that area presents different problems especially connectivity’.</p> <p>Unclear how the design guide is to be used. Unclear about enforceability of the aims of the design guide. In view of climate emergency these must be non-negotiable. Is this the case?</p>	<p>Agreed and small scale developments has been included as a specific topic</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Will be a SPD and a material consideration</p>

Strongly agrees that applicants should follow the design process.

'It is not clear if this process (the design process) can be applied to the many development which have been approved, but not yet developed. In addition will the actual construction be sufficiently monitored to ensure that the aims are actually achieved with the benefits this will bring in the future. The current self-certificating building regulation system and lack of local government resources appear to be failing in this regard'.

'The issue of materials; which should be as low carbon and non-fossil fuel based as possible, appear to be towards the end of the process'.

'Modern designs should not be excluded. It is a question of good design rather than replicating older inefficient homes which make up about 60% of the stock in West Somerset'.

Agree that local distinctiveness is important 'as long as sustainability and affordability are not compromised. Some flexibility to enable the use of non-fossil fuel materials should be allowed and local distinctiveness could be achieved with cladding'.

Strongly agree that joint principles of placemaking and sustainability should influence design of development.

Strongly agrees that buildings should make good streetscapes

Strongly agree that neighbourhoods should be based on active travel.

Strongly agree that all parking bays should have access to kerb side changing points.

'Some developments could be made car free if public transport and safe walking and cycling is available'.

Noted

Agreed

Agreed

Agreed

Noted

Noted

		<p>Section 5 – agree that secure recycling and bike storage would encourage better use.  ‘There is no mention of energy efficiency standards and methods, including heat exchange systems and retro insulation of hard to heat homes. All these are needed in view of severely reduced national government standards and lack of enforcement of the current ones’.  The TGT Charter &amp; Checklist mentions this but not as a requirement.  Section 6 – little mention of renewables.</p>	<p>Agreed although solar and PV’s is already advocated but has been expended to include heat exchange</p>
<p>20. Resident (Ian Bright)</p> <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 64</p>	<p>Agree that SW&amp;TC needs a Districtwide Design Guide to help raise the quality of design of new developments is both sensitive to the positive aspects of the character of a local area and to incorporate the principles of placemaking to achieve viable resilient neighbourhoods.</p>	<p>The design guide has too many broad aims which may not be deliverable.  The design guide could be simpler for the general reader.  Doubts whether modern buildings are reflecting local character.  Strongly agree that local distinctiveness is important.  Height of buildings in Taunton should be restricted to 3 storeys.  Strongly agree that joint principles of placemaking and sustainability should influence design of development.  Strongly agrees that streets are designed for all users and are designed considering how vehicles and streets/junctions  Disagrees with a mixed approach to parking.  Strongly agree that neighbourhoods should be based on active travel.  ‘In line with the Council’s objectives regarding climate change and sustainable transport, far more needs to be done to discourage private car use. Far better infrastructure needs to be put in place in new developments to make walking and cycling for everyday</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Agreed</p>



		<p>activities...It is also very important that the paths and cycle ways are linked...This can only be achieved by more balanced funding for walking and cycling locally. Planners must be fully on board for this to happen’.</p> <p>Doubts whether tall buildings can be incorporated into the existing fabric of Taunton without adverse impacts on neighbouring buildings.</p> <p>Glossary – useful for reference</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>
21. Magna Housing Association	<p>Agree that SW&amp;TC needs a Districtwide Design Guide to help raise the quality of design of new developments is both sensitive to the positive aspects of the character of a local area and to incorporate the principles of placemaking to achieve viable resilient neighbourhoods.</p>	<p>Doesn't agree that the relationship of the design guide to the Garden Town guidance is clear</p> <p>Strongly agrees that applicants should explain how their proposal follows the design process</p> <p>‘Please review the planning pre-application process in light of this (the design process) so that it adds value, especially if there will continue to be a charge. It would be helpful to discuss financial viability issue in broad terms at this stage to assist feasibility studies’.</p> <p>Neutral as to whether local distinctiveness is important and that development should reflect local character.</p> <p>Disagrees that character areas are important.</p> <p>Regarding highways and transport ‘Somerset Highways need to be an integral part of this discussion both in policy and operation terms. The theory is laudable but a long way from the current practice. Consideration also needs to be given to the transport infrastructure, especially in rural areas where use of the car is current unavoidable for many journeys. Also it is not reasonable to expect developers to pay for the electric car charging infrastructure’.</p> <p>We support the principles and approach on the Design Topics with the following comments:</p>	<p>Noted however there are clear links to Garden Town Guidance</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Should modern methods of construction be mentioned; could this be incorporated in a pattern book approach to housing typology</li> <li>• Agree with statement on minimum space standards</li> <li>• Management of communal spaces must be considered, especially when LA's unwilling to adopt amenities and facilities e.g. service charge costs</li> <li>• Include other items for external storage e.g. pushchairs</li> <li>• More flexibility needed on backland site planning especially by SCC Highways</li> </ul>	<p>Agreed</p> <p>Agreed detailed discussions have been undertaken with SCC Highways</p>
<p>Page 66 2. Volume House Builder (Redrow)</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The designer should assess the client's budget and manage the development proposal cost accordingly.</li> <li>• Achieving design quality invariably requires an increased development cost.</li> <li>• The design guide should acknowledge economic viability as a key component of sustainable development</li> <li>• Increased development value can be created through careful design. The design guide should aim to encourage developers to assess which design interventions can be afforded and have the greatest impact.</li> <li>• There is no evidence to support the claim that from public opinion people want the design of new development to be locally distinctive</li> <li>• 'We agree that the design guide should reflect the desires of people likely to live in the new homes'.</li> </ul>	<p>Noted. However numerous respondents have raised this and with previous consultations carried out for the Garden Town.</p> <p>Noted</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Redrow market research shows that people buying a new home want spacious, practical homes designed for modern life styles with parking close to the front door. They prefer traditional styles of architecture, particularly Arts &amp; Crafts and detached homes.</li> <li>• Nation Design Guide statement that new development should be based on an understanding of the existing situation, including 'the architecture prevalent in the area, including the local vernacular', the respondent claims therefore that new development should respond to the architecture existing in the immediate locality, rather than seek to introduce vernacular styles which may be some distance from the site.</li> <li>• 'We agree that outdated approaches to highway design based on the needs for private cars have led to standardised streets. We support the creation of streets and spaces designed around the needs of pedestrians and cyclists'.</li> <li>• Response to local distinctiveness must be proportionate and appropriate to each place and be balanced with the tastes, needs and aspirations of new communities. If a development is adjacent to a conservation area, comprising a locally distinctive palette of materials it would be appropriate to reflect those in new design. If locally distinctive architecture is some distance from the site it is</li> </ul>	<p>It is agreed that in designing for urban/suburban contexts that the promotion of rural traditional vernacular would be inappropriate. However in these cases standard suburban status quo rarely achieves the objectives of good sustainable place making and efficient site planning. The effect is usually standard 'anywhere' housing and highway layouts. In these cases Manual for Streets and good placemaking should be essential. Architectural styles are secondary to these objectives.</p> <p>Agreed</p> <p>Local distinctiveness is not merely the application of copying local styles, it is about response to setting, topography and the creation of good streetmaking.</p>
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		<p>not appropriate to replicate that except in limited individual cases.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rural architecture vernacular precedent is inappropriate in Taunton urban settings.</li>   <li>• Responses include references to the NPPF guidance encouraging design to fit in to the existing built environment</li> <li>• No evidence from the community that new development should have regard to and reflect positive aspects of the character of the area</li>   <li>• The proposed house types are claimed to reflect the needs, tastes and lifestyles of the potential house buyers</li>   <li>• The design guide omits a typical housing typology of the interwar suburban areas and therefore a part of the character of Taunton</li>   <li>• Comments regarding car parking and street standards should be compliant with the requirements of SCC Highways</li> <li>• House typologies should include detached units</li> </ul>	<p>Noted. Taunton urban character comprises a number of distinct character areas ranging from higher density town centre to smaller settlements that have been absorbed in to the settlement boundary. Proper character appraisals need to identify this.</p> <p>Noted. Although the requirement is to have regard to the character and local distinctive of that architecture.</p> <p>The comment quoted refers to the extensive public consultation programme undertaken prior to the suite of design guidance which highlighted the need for new development to be locally distinctive.</p> <p>Noted. Studies show that house buyers also value distinctive building forms.</p> <p>Noted. The areas to which the respondent refers whilst having a faint reference to garden city architecture and layouts are not particularly distinctive to Taunton and are found many peripheral housing estates in towns through the country. We would welcome innovative thinking about garden city planning and design.</p> <p>Noted. We have had detailed discussion and agreement on this matter with SCC Highways.</p> <p>Agreed, see addition of 'villa' type.</p>
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<p>23. Volume House Builder (South West Taunton Comeytrowe Consortium)</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disagrees with key diagram which reflects the LPA's commitment to a healthy, distinctive and sustainable built environment. Not convinced it represents a Garden neighbourhood and that the zero low carbon aspirations are too specific and neglect scheme viability</li> </ul>	<p>Noted. This diagram represents the broad aims of sustainable residential development over the next 10 year period. It is presenting an agenda not totally specific to a Garden neighbourhood or particular house types.</p>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The status of the design guide and its relationship to the Garden Town Vision, Charter &amp; Checklist is unclear</li> <li>Design Guide is geared towards outline planning applications for green field sites, it gives little advice on the process to be carried out on reserved matters</li> <li>The Taunton character area section could be expanded to include other house typologies</li> <li>Many examples of what the LPA wants without the rationale for these. Can lead to DM officers misunderstanding the principles behind the illustrations.</li> <li>The viability of installing PV panels and charging points is not addressed</li> <li>Placemaking guidance should be extended towards lower density development</li> <li>Few references to innovation</li> <li>The case study showing the design process would be better located at the end of this chapter.</li> </ul>	<p>Noted. However the key diagram and the introduction do mention this.</p> <p>Guidance on making applications has been included.</p> <p>Noted.</p> <p>Noted. DM staff have undergone significant training on this and more is planned.</p> <p>Noted. These will be increasingly required over the design guide life period. It also good practise.</p> <p>Noted. This point could be given more emphasis although the principles of placemaking are applicable to all densities. Note. The introduction makes it clear that the guidance should be seen as a springboard for good design, not a straightjacket.</p> <p>Agreed. There is a slight change needed in the page ordering.</p> <p>Noted. Wide front types are appropriate in many situations but not all.</p>

- Advocating wide frontage typologies could be seen as the only solution
- Illustration showing countryside edge treatments, could be seen as specific for every scheme
- Section 3.2, key principles should be stated in relation to the examples shown
- Local paving materials are useful but difficult to deliver
- Vernacular building materials, should these be referred to in specific character areas?
- Nothing on Taunton vernacular other than on three storey buildings
- The consortium consider that the following proposals are too specific , untested and can effect viability:
  - a) 90% of house have PV panels on roofs
  - b) Bat, swallow and owl nesting encouraged in the design of some houses
  - c) Use of sedum planting on flat roofs and green walls
- Placemaking principles lack clarity regarding principles, instead there is a list of requirements and an indicative scheme
- The indicative scheme shows development forms which would be difficult to implement in developments such as Comeytrow. Particularly

Noted. The indicative illustration shows 4-5 edge conditions as examples.  
This is an indicative diagram.

Noted. The identification of local paving materials is intended to show i) they are important components of local distinctiveness, and ii) that they should be retained where ever they exist, and iii) sourcing of these materials is possible although limited.  
Each character area has a heading relating to materials.

Amended

These are all aspects of good practice which are already incorporated in some schemes. Given the climate emergency and the increasing emphasis on sustainable housing, these features will become significantly more common place over the life span of the design guide.

Noted. We will improve the statements on the emphasis on the principles.

This is an indicative scheme to show how places making principles could be achieved. The drawings show a mixture of individual

		<p>the types of perimeter block, predominantly terrace housing and extensive use of parking streets.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parking streets are shown as an alternative to on-plot and rear parking courts solutions. As not all developments can have on-plot parking, parking street are a more effective and user friendly than rear parking courts.</li> <li>• Would agree that housing typologies shown would achieve good streetscapes, although would not necessarily support all details.</li> <li>• Do not support the blanket inclusion of on-street charging points without understanding viability etc</li> <li>• Illustration on p.75 shows very car dominated environment with little planting.</li> <li>• Lifetime homes – unclear as to the principles to be followed. Street section very prescriptive, recommend that guidance on street sections and hierarchy be provided.</li> <li>• Bike and recycling storage – they support the objectives but would like flexibility to devise their own solutions</li> <li>• Boundaries – generally support the objectives and suggest there are more contemporary solutions</li> <li>• 6.1 – missing text</li> <li>• Confusion about the difference between a design guide and a design code</li> </ul>	<p>houses, semi-detached, short terraces and apartments. The principles are similar at whatever scale and density that is likely to be proposed.</p> <p>Parking streets are shown as an alternative to low density on plot parking solutions and are more effectively than rear parking courts which are often under used.</p> <p>Noted.</p> <p>Noted. We are exploring this issue.</p> <p>Disagree.</p> <p>Noted. We will consider these points.</p> <p>Noted. We would welcome innovative solutions. The diagrams are intended to stimulate good integrated design.</p> <p>Noted. We would welcome innovative solutions. The diagrams are intended to stimulate good integrated design. This will be provided.</p> <p>Noted. However the districtwide design guide is clear about the definition of a design guide and design codes.</p>
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<p>24. Volume House Builder (Redrow Planning)</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disagrees with key diagram which reflects the LPA’s commitment to a healthy, distinctive and sustainable built environment. The respondent agrees with the objectives but questions the depiction of the built form shown.</li> <li>There is no evidence to support the claim that from public opinion people want the design of new development to be locally distinctive</li> <li>National Design Guide statement that new development should be based on an understanding of the existing situation, including ‘the architecture prevalent in the area, including the local vernacular’, the respondent claims therefore that new development should respond to the architecture existing in the immediate locality, rather than seek to introduce vernacular styles which may be some distance from the site.</li> <li>The degree to which new development reflects local character depends on varying aspects such as the degree of local distinctiveness of the immediate context and the appropriateness of replicating certain individual features at a much larger scale of units</li> <li>New developments should respect the aspirations, lifestyles and tastes of people likely to live in them</li> <li>The design guide should draw lessons from much loved places and this should provide a framework for housing aimed at modern</li> </ul>	<p>Noted. This illustration is diagrammatic only. It would be counterproductive to show every types of development in what is a stylised diagram</p> <p>Noted. However this is based on responses to the design guide consultation and Garden Town workshops.</p> <p>It is agreed that in designing for urban/suburban contexts that the promotion of rural traditional vernacular would be inappropriate. However in these cases standard suburban status quo rarely achieves the objectives of good sustainable place making and efficient site planning. The effect is usually standard ‘anywhere’ housing and highway layouts. In these cases Manual for Streets and good placemaking should be essential. Architectural styles are secondary to these objectives.</p> <p>Agreed</p> <p>Agreed but this needs to be balanced with the wider objectives of planning policy including good placemaking, sustainability and wellbeing.</p>
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		<p>lifestyles and should not be subject to a design guide.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘We agree that outdated approaches to highway design based on meeting the needs of private cars have led to streets that area standardised and we support the creation of streets and spaces designed around the needs of pedestrians and cyclists’.</li> <li>• Distinctiveness should be measured in a number of ways (see previous Redrow response above)</li> <li>• The character of Taunton area is over simplified and focused on a narrow set of house typologies</li> <li>• The design guide omits the interwar suburban housing type which is attractive and popular</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whilst agreeing with the principles of good placemaking the guide underplays lower density housing typologies and street making.</li> </ul>	<p>Agreed. The design guide does not specify detailed house design. Individual lifestyle aspirations have to be balanced with the wider objectives of planning policy including good placemaking, sustainability and wellbeing. Noted. Agreed.</p> <p>Noted.</p> <p>There are few areas of suburban Taunton of the interwar period that can be distinguished from those in any other town and city. In particular garden city layouts and distinctive Arts &amp; Crafts houses are extremely limited. We would welcome innovative 21 Century thinking regarding garden city type layouts which are responsive to the local context. The placemaking principles shown are applicable at a range of densities. Very low densities are rarely conducive to active travel and the delivery of public transport. In deed a recent report has shown that most new garden city developments are highly car</p>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The design guide should encourage the use of house types that meet the tastes, aspirations and requirements of potential customers</li> </ul>	<p>dependent. This raises the question whether the original garden city principles can be adapted to sustainable placemaking. Perhaps a workshop between the developers and the LPA might explore this theme?</p> <p>The purpose of design guides is to recognise these factors whilst promoting national and local policies on placemaking, sustainability and wellbeing.</p>
<p>25. Volume House Builder (Persimmon Homes)</p> <p>Page 74</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unclear about relationship of the documents in the design guidance suite and their relatively weight and relationship to the emerging Local Plan. Concerned that the design guides are creating more bureaucracy in a highly bureaucratic system leading to delay.</li> <li>The design guide advocates certain housing types but there is little transparency as to the rationale for these. Interwar and post war housing has been discounted and thus heritage is emphasised over sustainability and modern design.</li> <li>Modern design should be promoted and can be more important than local distinctiveness.</li> </ul>	<p>The relationship of the design guides is shown in the diagram in policy context section. The role of the design guide will be SPD relating to the local plan. Central government advice in the NPPF and the National Design Guide both advocating producing design guides at the local level. Design guides have been a familiar planning tool since 1973 and are intended to coordinate design based policies with the authority.</p> <p>Noted. The rationale for the advocacy of housing types to create good streetscapes is we feel fairly clear. It is agreed that slightly lower density types could be included. We disagree that there is an emphasis on heritage over sustainable progressive modern design and argue that interwar and post war housing is neither substantially sustainable nor progressive. The guide emphasis that it is a springboard for good design, not a straightjacket.</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strongly disagrees that the design guide should be more specific on parking standards in the district.</li> <li>• Concerns that indicative drawings on parking could be used to force developers into specific 'unsaleable' solutions. Home owners prefer parking spaces near their homes. Many issues related to kerbside electrical charging points. On plot charging is preferred.</li> </ul>	<p>Noted. The guide welcomes innovative approaches to the sensitive response to context and sustainability. Response to site and local conditions is an essential ingredient of local distinctiveness. We would welcome innovative thinking in this respect. Noted and guidance provided on context related parking, see emerging SCC Highways guidance.</p> <p>The indicative parking diagrams show how cars can be parked very close to the fronts of houses where on-plot parking may not be achievable at medium to higher densities. This does not preclude other innovative solutions which can be demonstrated as achieving the same objectives. The LPA have been in extensive discussions with SCC Highways on parking and changing points etc.</p>
<p>26. Community Organisation (Arts Taunton)</p>	<p>Districtwide Design Guide to help raise the quality of design of new developments is both sensitive to the positive aspects of the character of a local area and to incorporate the principles of placemaking to achieve viable resilient neighbourhoods.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include easy access to arts and sport, regarding being connected</li> <li>• Emphasise how private sector house builders should use the design guide</li> <li>• Strongly agree that applicants should use the design process</li> <li>• Strongly agree that new development should reflect locally distinctive character. Use local design cues of distinctiveness including building materials and landscape features and unique features at the local level.</li> <li>• Strongly agree that local distinctiveness is important. The less dramatic and undesignated</li> </ul>	<p>Noted. We will consider as being part of the wellbeing agenda</p> <p>Noted. Although developers have not made this point.</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Agreed</p>

		<p>landscape is in many ways as important as AONB's.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strongly agree that character areas should be used to influence design.</li> <li>• Excellent knowledge of the area but could be illustrated better in some photographs</li> <li>• Strongly agrees with the principles of placemaking integrated with sustainability and wellbeing.</li> <li>• Strongly agrees with the approach of the integrated and inclusive street design</li> </ul>	<p>Agreed</p> <p>Agreed</p> <p>Agreed</p>
27. SCC Highways		<p>SCC Highways submitted a letter rather than completing the online survey (24/04/2020). Whilst SCC supports the broad purpose of the document in taking a strong lead in placeshaping to promote sustainability, quality and behavioural change, SCC has strong concerns on a number of matters of details. These are based on the clash that it sees between conventional highway engineering as exemplified in the 'Red Book' and the 'Design Manual for Roads and Bridges' and the type of street making solutions more akin to Manual for Streets and other current good practice advocated by the Chartered Institute of Highways &amp; Transportation. Specifically SCC consider that the road hierarchy and the split of responsibilities between district and county should be clarified.</p> <p>They raise a number of detailed points regarding safety and design and wish to clarify where SCC is a key consultee.</p> <p>Other matters concern detailed of road design and adoption.</p>	<p>Noted. Following consultation period LPA officers and their consultants have had an extensive period of negotiations with SCC Highways, especially as SCC are in the process of radically revision their 1991 standards. An enlarged section has been produced and key principles.</p>

28. SCC Ecology		SCC Ecology submitted a letter rather than completing the online survey (1/05/2020). Generally SCC considers that biodiversity is not well represented in the design guide and that more specific guidance should flow through many of the sections. This could also permeate the character area analysis section. SCC suggest that biodiversity should be specifically mentioned as a design topic due to its benefits and that consideration should be given to including a biodiversity checklist.	Noted.
29. Internal Staff	Districtwide Design Guide to help raise the quality of design of new developments is both sensitive to the positive aspects of the character of a local area and to incorporate the principles of placemaking to achieve viable resilient neighbourhoods.	Request for guidance on the design principles for change of use from commercial retail to residential.	Agreed and a new section has been provided.
30. Internal Staff	Districtwide Design Guide to help raise the quality of design of new developments is both sensitive to the positive aspects of the character of a local area and to incorporate the principles of placemaking to achieve viable resilient neighbourhoods.	Request that the current infill guidance is expanded to take into account tandem infill on suburban and rural plots. Also guidance could be given on the parameters used for determining where an existing open plot should remain undeveloped.	Agreed and appropriate amendments made.
31. Internal Staff	Districtwide Design Guide to help raise the quality of design of new developments is both sensitive to the positive aspects of the character of a local area and to incorporate the principles of placemaking to achieve viable resilient neighbourhoods.	Request that the existing guidance (Section 5.9 – Residential Alterations & Extensions) is considerably expanded to reflect the former West Somerset guidance on this subject.	Agreed and changes carried out.

32. Internal Staff	Districtwide Design Guide to help raise the quality of design of new developments is both sensitive to the positive aspects of the character of a local area and to incorporate the principles of placemaking to achieve viable resilient neighbourhoods.	<p>Request for the following changes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Household extensions needs to be expanded</li> <li>• Guidance required on the assessment of contemporary designs</li> <li>• Guidance required on the design of agricultural buildings</li> <li>• There is an apparent antipathy towards flat roofs in the design guide</li> </ul>	<p>See comments above. Agreed and wording clarifies this point.</p> <p>Noted and guidance carried out</p> <p>Noted. There are some instances where flat roofs are appropriate, e.g. on large span buildings. If flat roofs are used in more domestic circumstances it is not unreasonable to expect them to be 'green', i.e. to be sedum roofs, or to take the form of roof terraces. Roofs with a variety of pitches are efficient in water run-off, the integration of PV panels, increased insulation and the provision of storage space.</p>
33. Internal Staff	Districtwide Design Guide to help raise the quality of design of new developments is both sensitive to the positive aspects of the character of a local area and to incorporate the principles of placemaking to achieve viable resilient neighbourhoods.	<p>Section 1 – request for clarification in why the guide is necessary and how it should be used.</p> <p>Section 2.3.2 – add Scheduled Monuments and mention hedgerows and boundaries</p> <p>Section 2.4 – add more details about requirements</p> <p>Section 2.4 – emphasis the need to convert existing buildings rather than demolish</p> <p>Section 3 – a number of detailed observations</p> <p>Section 3 – more landscape consideration needed</p> <p>Section 4.2 – emphasise connectivity</p> <p>Request for guidance on conversion of buildings</p> <p>Request for guidance on lighting and signage of historic shop fronts</p> <p>Greater consideration needed on impact of development with the setting of conservation areas, including green corridors and hedgerows</p>	<p>Agreed</p> <p>Agreed</p> <p>Agreed</p> <p>Agreed</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Agreed</p> <p>Noted and agreed</p> <p>Agreed</p> <p>Agreed</p> <p>Agreed</p> <p>Noted although guidance does exist</p>

		<p>More guidance needed on pavements and treatment of new boundaries</p> <p>Emphasise the desirability of integrating renewables on roofs of retail developments and historic buildings</p>	Noted
34. Internal Staff	<p>Districtwide Design Guide to help raise the quality of design of new developments is both sensitive to the positive aspects of the character of a local area and to incorporate the principles of placemaking to achieve viable resilient neighbourhoods.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarify text on Garden Town designation and aims</li> <li>• Diagram showing sequence of design appraisal needs to consider landscape character, settlement development pattern and position in the landscape</li> <li>• Appraisal of context and setting – refer to minor comments in the text</li> <li>• Minor comments on scheme in design process</li> <li>• Confusion over character areas and character types</li> <li>• Map of character areas in the district needs to mention that this is only a summary and that more detail for both protected and unprotected landscapes can be referred to in districtwide landscape characterisation.</li> <li>• Clarity needed on vernacular stone distribution</li> <li>• Manage expectations of views to the sea against need for strong structural landscape treatment that may hinder views</li> <li>• Instead of Central West Somerset refer to this area as Doniford Valley</li> <li>• Central West Somerset landscape character area needs to mention that this landscape is visually vulnerable and need to protect views.</li> <li>• The Quantocks landscape character area – refer to minor comments in text. Refer to light pollution.</li> </ul>	<p>Agree</p> <p>Agree</p> <p>Agree</p> <p>Agree Has been clarified</p> <p>Agree</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Agree</p> <p>Will consider</p> <p>Will consider</p> <p>Will include points in text</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taunton landscape character area – refer to varied geology within the town and how this defines character areas.</li> <li>• Streets and placemaking – sufficient room required for tree planting in and around parking spaces</li> <li>• Taller buildings - rephrase to emphasise impact of building on wider landscape context</li> </ul>	<p>Noted, amendments carried out.</p> <p>Agree</p> <p>Agree</p>
35. Internal Staff		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘I think it is a great document and I really like the character area approach for the landscape and building materials. I was also pleased to see that sustainability and green infrastructure play a major role. I’m a keen advocate of GI and think it is an important tool in helping to layout masterplans.’</li> </ul>	Noted
36. Internal Staff	Districtwide Design Guide to help raise the quality of design of new developments is both sensitive to the positive aspects of the character of a local area and to incorporate the principles of placemaking to achieve viable resilient neighbourhoods.	<p>The design guide seems to be emphasising the need to fit in with the local context and traditional built form, perhaps ignoring contemporary solutions.</p> <p>Design process (section 2.1) and the design process at a glance should include more on sustainable and low carbon master planning and reconsider the example to include less car based solutions and higher density. General comments on the best use of open space and site capacity for higher densities. Active design principles need more emphasis. Refer to Somerset Waste Partnership’s developer guidance on waste and recycling</p>	<p>The importance of respecting character and local distinctiveness is a primary planning aim. The illustrative design process indicates that any design solution could be appropriate if it demonstrates that key contextual considerations have driven the design solution. The indicative drawings show generic forms and are for guidance only.</p> <p>Noted.</p> <p>Noted.</p> <p>Agreed</p> <p>Agreed</p>



		<p>Electric vehicle charging strategy is due in July-September 2020, please include in guidance. In 'fabric first', design concepts are missing</p> <p>Make it unequivocal that good design requires considerations of climate impact and resilience are critical.</p>	<p>Agreed</p> <p>Noted and amendments carried out.</p> <p>Agree and has been emphasised.</p>
	<b>STREETS, PLACES &amp; PARKING SECTION CONSULTATION COMMENTS</b>	<b>11 DECEMBER – 5 FEBRUARY 2021</b>	
Consultee	General Agreement/Disagreement	Detailed Comment Received	SW&TC Response
<p>Page 81</p> <p>1. Taunton Design Circle</p>	Districtwide Design Guide to help raise the quality of design of new developments is both sensitive to the positive aspects of the character of a local area and to incorporate the principles of placemaking to achieve viable resilient neighbourhoods.	<p>Welcome the approach for foregrounding street making and public realm.</p> <p>Masterplanning and design process explored in a very fluent manner.</p> <p>Excellent presentation.</p> <p>Very good didactic document.</p> <p>Good to have agreed an approach with SCC Highways to achieve a more joined up approach to street and place designed highways.</p> <p>Suggest new projects/applications be evaluated in short term to monitor how they have addressed the guidance.</p> <p>Suggest training to update officers and Members on latest highway thinking.</p> <p>Street parking and parking squares should provide for car club vehicles and some electric vehicles.</p> <p>Suggest some design criteria for car free areas in town centres.</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>Noted.</p> <p>Noted.</p> <p>Noted.</p> <p>Noted.</p> <p>We will consider this.</p> <p>Agreed</p> <p>Agreed.</p> <p>We will consider this.</p>

		Careful thought should be given to the location and type of shrubs in the public footway in terms of person safety.	Noted.
2. Carhampton Parish Council		<p>Street building standards and parking standards should differentiate between, neighbourhood, village and countryside only if planning enforcement is sufficiently staffed to pick up where the design matches the actual building.</p> <p>Compliance with 20mph designed speed of the street is impossible to achieve</p> <p>Designers and builders will have different perspectives regarding the proposal to create street hierarchy</p> <p>The section over focuses on parking for private cars, rather than public transport.</p> <p>Electric vehicle charging is difficult other than on-plot.</p> <p>Whilst the guidance proposes that street design takes into the needs of pedestrians and cyclists, few residents walk very far and cycling is not well used</p> <p>Regarding the inclusion of street trees, rain gardens, verges and SUDS, the question remains who is going to maintain these and how is the maintenance to be enforced?</p> <p>Questions whether designers and builders will be forced to use the proposed palette of materials and to replace those not in accordance</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>Noted however street design is more likely to achieve lower speeds than purely signage</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted. Agree that public transport provision should be increased but in most parts of the district reliance will be on private cars.</p> <p>Noted, however improvements in provision for on-street charging are being made all the time and technology moves on.</p> <p>Noted however active travel can be increased by improvements in provision</p> <p>This can be achieved through commuted sums, adoption and planning conditions</p> <p>Noted this can be conditioned and the usual enforcement procedures applied</p>
3. Active Travel Specialist		<p>Strongly agrees that streets in residential areas should be designed for 20mph</p> <p>Strongly agrees that the guidance proposes a street hierarchy</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>

		<p>Pleased to see the focus on a street hierarchy based on creating place character, especially as this prevents car users having the illusion of priority</p> <p>Welcomes the inclusion of tight junctions and constrained site lines and raised platforms at intersections.</p> <p>Concerned that cycles might be permitted anywhere there is a footway, causing conflict/confusion. Suggests providing segregated cycle ways in new developments.</p> <p>Strongly agrees that tracking should be a major determinant in street design.</p> <p>Strongly agrees that street design takes into account the needs of pedestrians and cyclists in the choice of lighting, signs and street furniture.</p> <p>Strongly agrees that street design should be as green as possible.</p> <p>Questions whether no priority junctions are safe for cyclists.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Agree that in all but minor routes segregation is desirable.</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted we will consider this point.</p>
4. Taunton Area Cycling Campaign		<p>Strongly agrees that streets in residential areas should be designed for 20mph</p> <p>Strongly agrees that street design takes into account the needs of pedestrians and cyclists in the choice of lighting, signs and street furniture.</p> <p>Strongly agrees that street design should be as green as possible.</p> <p>Supports 20mph in residential areas and the proposed design criteria. Likes the idea that intersections are places. Adds certain technical specifications</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>
5. Arts Taunton		<p>Strongly agrees that street building standards and parking standards should differentiate between town, neighbourhood, village and countryside</p>	<p>Noted</p>

		<p>Strongly agrees that the guidance proposes a street hierarchy</p> <p>Strongly agrees with the proposal for a range of parking solutions and that these should be integrated into street design</p> <p>Strongly agrees that street design takes into account the needs of pedestrians and cyclists in the choice of lighting, signs and street furniture.</p> <p>Strongly agrees that street design should be as green as possible.</p> <p>I concerned that the guidance could be avoided, compromised or abandoned by developers owing to lack of robust implementation.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Agreed. However SCC Highways guidance will need to coordinated in this matter.</p>
<p>6. Somerset Waste Partnership</p>		<p>Whether streets are designed for different contexts, it is important that parking does not impede access to bin stores and waste collection as this can be very disruptive.</p> <p>Whenever a street hierarchy is proposed, it is important that parking does not impede access to bin stores and waste collection as this can be very disruptive.</p> <p>Agrees that road design should use tracking however this should not impede access to bin stores and waste collection as this can be very disruptive.</p> <p>Agrees that a range of parking solutions is important however this should not impede access to bin stores and waste collection as this can be very disruptive.</p> <p>Strongly agrees that street design should be as green as possible.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>

7. SCC Highways		<p>P.75 – diagram could be clarified</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Red Book should be included in references as current guidance</li> <li>- Under scope, SCC Highways should be consulted with LPA and as early on in the design process</li> <li>- Questions optimum corner radii and raises questions of visibility at junctions</li> <li>- Suggests that tactile paving could be used at uncontrolled crossings</li> <li>- Note that DFT requests a pause for shared space design</li> <li>-Consideration should be given to The Equality Act 2010 regarding duties for LPA and LHA</li> <li>-Regarding hierarchy distributor road design this should be carried out in consultation with LHA and LPA from the outset to ensure it functions as intended</li> <li>-Secondary Street – courtesy crossings are not liked by Disabled Persons Advisory Committee and therefore are not accepted by the LHA. Any reference to courtesy crossings should be removed.</li> <li>- Peripheral Lane – corner radii should be 4m instead of 3m and visibility should not be obscured</li> <li>- Home Zones – request removal of reference to home zones as LHA currently does not have any in Somerset.</li> </ul>	<p>Noted. This sketch will be finalised.</p> <p>Noted. We recognise that the existing Red Book (1991) will be used in the short term until the new highway standards are adopted.</p> <p>Noted. Will add reference to early consultation with Highways Authority in this section</p> <p>3m radii are all standard stock items (not specials). Visibility at junctions will be provided in accordance with Manual For Streets.</p> <p>Accepted. This is a standard detail. Will include reference to DETR guidance.</p> <p>Noted. However this comment is based on a partial quotation of the government advice which refers mainly to non-residential shared spaces.</p> <p>Agreed. The Design Guide allows for inclusivity.</p> <p>Noted.</p> <p>Noted. We will replace reference from courtesy crossings to informal crossings in accordance with Manual For Streets (Fig 6.3.9)</p> <p>Noted. 3m radii are all standard stock items (not specials).</p> <p>Noted. Home Zones are a long established street design principle. Home Zones are the same as the Shared Surface Street as shown</p>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Entry Places – whilst principle is accepted, roundabouts do have a place in certain contexts</li> <li>- Courtesy crossing references should be removed. Raised crossing definitions should be clarified. If pedestrians are to have a right of way over traffic, then the intersection should be built as a vehicle crossover</li> <li>- Private drives – LHA requires amendments to state that private drives be set back 25m from junction with main highway</li> <li>- On street parking should be setback from private drive access</li> <li>- Parking spaces cannot be allocated on the public highway</li> <li>- Electric vehicle charging provision is welcomed by the LHA</li> <li>- With on-street and on-plot parking courtesy crossings should be replaced with uncontrolled crossings</li> <li>- Granite setts on ramps may not be appropriate as they cannot be painted with road marking requirements</li> </ul>	<p>on pages 19/20 on SCC’s new emerging guidance Noted</p> <p>Noted. We will replace reference from courtesy crossings to informal crossings in accordance with Manual For Streets (Fig 6.3.9)</p> <p>Agreed</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted. We will replace reference from courtesy crossings to informal crossings in accordance with Manual For Streets (Fig 6.3.9)</p> <p>In 20 mph zones no road marking are required therefore granite is acceptable in these areas. The Design Guide is based on 20 mph speed limits in residential areas.</p>
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	DISTRICT-WIDE DESIGN GUIDE CONSULTATION COMMENTS	5 JULY 2021 – 16 AUGUST 2021	
Consultee	General Agreement/Disagreement	Detailed Comment Received	SW&TC Response
Councillors			
1. Cllr Dave Mansell (Wiveliscombe)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- It should also be clarified that the Council has declared climate and ecological emergencies and adopted the Climate Positive Planning guidance.</li> <li>- The Towards Zero Carbon Design &amp; Construction topic is not clear enough, although, until a new Local Plan is adopted, it may be necessary to show both the policy requirement and aspiration. I would like to see it made clear that the Council encourages developers to adopt a full zero carbon approach or as close to this as possible. It should be stated that it is essential we all do what we can to move towards carbon neutrality as soon as possible and why (to reduce and avoid worsening impacts of global heating and climate change).</li> </ul>	<p>Noted. The declaration on climate and ecological emergencies will be reflected more accurately in the Design Guide.</p> <p>Noted. However, the SWT Climate Positive Planning guidance is not policy or SPD but at present reflects the Council's aspirations in this direction. Control regarding zero carbon requirements is exercised through the Building Regulations. It is hoped that this situation will change over the life of the Design Guide.</p>
2. Cllr Caroline Ellis		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-There is no reference to public art and its relationship to the Cultural Strategy or the Taunton Deane Public Art Code.</li> <li>- Suggestions are made regarding the definitions and guidance on public art.</li> <li>- It is suggested that the Design Guide refers to public art guidelines as in <a href="http://PublicArtOnline.org.uk">PublicArtOnline.org.uk</a></li> <li>- A design topic on public art is also suggested</li> </ul>	<p>Noted. This will be included in both the SWT Design Guide and the Taunton Public Realm Design Guide. It will also cross reference with the NPPF requirement to consider beauty as part of the design process. It is also suggested that this may be a criterion for consideration by the Quality Review Panel.</p> <p>Agreed</p> <p>Consideration will be given</p>
Town & Parish Council's			

3. Stogursey Parish Council		Stogursey Parish Council resolved at their August meeting, to support the draft Districtwide Design Guide	Noted
Amenity Bodies			
4. Canal & Rivers Trust		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Commented that canals and waterways are historic, natural and cultural assets forming part of the strategic and local green-blue infrastructure network. They contribute to well-being through active travel.</li> <li>- New development alongside the waterway should treat the canal as part of the development and address the waterspace.</li> </ul>	<p>Noted and agree</p> <p>Noted and agree</p>
Statutory Consultees			
5. Highways England		-Welcomes the council's intension to deliver sustainable development across the district by encouraging the development of sustainable transport opportunities, thereby the reducing the reliance on the private car.	Noted
6. Wessex Water		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Welcomes the promotion of early consideration of site appraisal where sustainable drainage measures are to be located.</li> <li>-Wessex Water supports the uses of sustainable drainage systems to manage flood risk, sewer flooding and the improvement of water quality and biodiversity.</li> </ul>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>
7. Avon and Somerset Police		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Stresses the need for security to be embedded in the design process.</li> <li>- Draws attention to the role of secure by design and crime prevention design advisors and their expertise.</li> <li>- Points out that government has placed obligations on police and local government to work together for dealing with crime and anti-social behaviour and that local planning policy, codes and legislation influence and address the need to design and crime and deliver safe and secure communities.</li> </ul>	Noted. The need for making places secure is addressed in the general design objectives, in the sustainable placemaking section and in Design Topic 5.6 – Privacy and Sociability. However, we will make reference to Secure By Design and the need to liaise with Crime Prevention Design Advisors.



8. Sport England		<p>- Suggests that the concept of active design be referenced as this relates closely to active travel and sustainable placemaking.</p> <p>- Suggest a number of references to support which could be consulted.</p>	<p>Noted. This closely relates to the objectives of active and healthy travel as advocated in a number of sections in the Design Guide, especially sustainable placemaking. Cross reference will be made to the Sport England Design criteria and the references will be included in the document.</p>
9. Office for Nuclear Regulation		<p>-Points out that ONR's land use planning processes may apply to some developments within the district and that development within a ONR consultation zone need to comply to requirements regarding hazards to the site and emergency planning.</p>	<p>Noted. This point will be incorporated under site appraisal.</p>
10. Environment Agency	<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 89</p>	<p>- Welcomes the flood resilience and sustainable urban drainage plus blue and green infrastructure recommendations in the Design Guide.</p> <p>- Makes specific recommendations regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Location of development</li> <li>• Flood risk assessments</li> <li>• Maintenance of water quality</li> <li>• Green and blue infrastructure detailing</li> <li>• Zero carbon design should include requirement to build at least to Level 4 in the Code for Sustainable Homes</li> </ul> <p>-Reference should be made to the CIRIA guidance on water sensitive urban design.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted all these points and will add and amend to the guidance as necessary</p> <p>Noted all these points and will add and amend to the guidance as necessary</p>
11. Historic England		<p>-Welcomes the preparation of the Guide as it is timely given the new NPPF etc. They commend its comprehensiveness and the design process and that it is clearly laid out, attractive to look at with many useful illustrations and signposts to useful information.</p> <p>-Some detailed comments include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Section 4 – could expand on how to design places where heritage assets are present</li> </ul>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted and additional points and amendments have been made</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Section 5 - some topics could include advice on historic environment aspects, e.g. in 5.2, 5.10 and 5.12.</li> <li>• Section 5.16 - Heritage Statements is welcomed, however there are numerous detailed comments regarding guidance</li> <li>• Section 6.4 – additional links are suggested</li> </ul>	
12. Natural England		We have no specific comments to make on the design guides. Natural England concurs with your findings that the design guides do not require SEA or Appropriate Assessment.	Noted
13. Somerset County Council		<p>On behalf of Somerset County Council, I have no further comments or suggestions towards the design plan for Somerset West and Taunton.</p> <p>We are in fact very much in support of this plan.</p>	Noted
14. Somerset County Council (Highways Authority)		<p>- Make a number of detailed technical points concerning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reference needs to be made to the need to consult with the Highway Authority</li> <li>• Corner radii</li> </ul>	<p>Agreed</p> <p>Agreement has been reached about the interpretation about minimum dimensions regarding widths of narrow streets and corner radii for speed reduction purposes. A limited range of dimensions has been agreed and these would be interpreted on a case by case basis. The Design Guide advocated that corners should be determined by tracking and context rather than being unnecessarily prescriptive.</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Width of street</li>   <li>• Street trees should not generally be located within the adopted highway limits</li>   <li>• Reference to Home Zones should be omitted and the term 'Shared Surface Streets' should be used instead</li>   <li>• SCC had some concerns regarding the design of entry places and had requested clarification on the approach to these spaces</li>   <li>• SCC had some concerns regarding the length of platform intersections shown since they felt this was too narrow</li> </ul>	<p>Rather than including a prescriptive text we suggest a range 3.5m – 3.9m depending on context is included.</p> <p>Amendments have been made to the document to reflect concerns over maintenance. This involves the designation of tree pits to be separately managed by management companies etc, so not included as part of the public highway. SCC have agreed that if no other option could be found, then street trees might be adopted subject to commuted sums covering the lifetime management costs.</p> <p>SCC highways have requested deletion of all reference to Homezones (despite this term being widely used by DfT, including in the latest cycle design guidance LTN 1/20). Reference to Home Zones have been reduced and where they are mentioned, they have been explained and put with the SCC Highways terminology 'Shared surface Street'. The term Home Zone is a nationally recognised term.</p> <p>Dimensions shown are compliant with Manual for Streets. A range of dimensions have been agreed with SCC Highways and the principle was established that radius would be determined by context and considered on a case by case basis.</p> <p>The document has been amended because of discussions with SCC Highways</p>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CCC had some concerns regarding the distance shown for private drives from main roads</li> <li>• SCC wanted assurance that parking on a main road would not obscure the entrance to private drives or visibility splays</li> <li>• SCC wished to have the term ‘courtesy crossing’ replaced with ‘informal crossing’</li> </ul>	<p>It has been made clear in the document that the maximum distance would be 25m. Agreed and drawings have been amended to exclude parking overlapping with a visibility splay.</p> <p>The document has been amended as suggested.</p>
Developers			
15. Vistry Group		<p>-Design Guide is too long and could benefit from being more succinct, clear and accessible and in its current form could hinder the audiences understanding of good design. The document is repetitive as National Design Guide defines the principles of good design.</p> <p>-There are a number of detailed points regarding Section 5.2 on zero carbon:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supports the overall vision of the document, but questions whether all the principles of zero carbon can be implemented in the immediate short term</li> <li>• Vistry is committed to the recent changes in Part L of the Building Regulations and that the development industry is on the start of the journey to zero carbon and urges SWT to work with them flexibly</li> <li>• Doubt is expressed regarding the differentiation between policy and aspiration</li> <li>• Suggests updating of certain targets in relation to Building Regulation updates</li> <li>• P.100 is too prescriptive and detailed and should be consistent with Future Homes Standard</li> </ul>	<p>Noted. Given the ever-widening agenda for design and the requirements of NPPF and National Design Guide that LPA’s should produce their own Design Guide’s, it is considered that the scope and content of this Guide is appropriate.</p> <p>The “Towards Zero Carbon Design and Construction” topic sets out a design process to help move development towards delivering zero carbon buildings. Tackling carbon emissions and climate impact via such a design process is integral to good design and aligns with existing planning policies. The topic clearly differentiates between what is policy requirement and what is aspirational/illustrative as the document does throughout.</p> <p>Additional text is proposed to clarify the relationship with the Government’s proposed interim update to Building Regulations Part L (due December 2021) and the Future Homes Standard (due 2025). However, it remains valid and reasonable to illustrate how new development could and</p>

		<p>-Section 4.4.4 – Vistry do not consider that all new residential building plots should have electric vehicle cabling and charge points, but do support cabling route provision to housing groups with more than 10 units</p> <p>-Section 4.4.5 – the section is too prescriptive and should not request the size, colour or materials of roadway surfaces</p>	<p>should be looking to push ambition in this regard in advance of and beyond these standards in order to deliver on the adopted target of working towards carbon neutrality by 2030.</p> <p>Given government targets for electric vehicles and charging provision, it is reasonable that the Design Guide encourages the widespread use of charging points for the vast majority of homes. These materials have been agreed with the Highway Authority as a reasonable standard.</p>
<p>16. Redrow Homes Ltd</p> <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 93</p>		<p>-Appraisal of the setting of the site – Redrow consider that postwar housing estates are desirable and sustainable and that locally distinctive materials can be used to relate such scheme to the locality. The Design Guide should draw lessons from these much-loved places and should provide this in a framework for the delivery of house types designed for modern living.</p> <p>-Redrow claim that volume housebuilder house types are an essential reality of commercial house building and that bespoke designs for each site is unrealistic.</p>	<p>Postwar housing estates by their nature (nationally standardised house types with uniform density layouts and standard road layouts) are not considered locally distinctive as they are widely seen in the UK. However, there are cases where Garden City design principles have been adapted to the topography of sites and have used references to local architectural features which are used more successfully. House types which are developed to make successful streets and places (as in Section 4.3) can help in this process. It is noted that Redrow would be willing to consider this approach in collaboration with SWT. Section 4.3 indicates that house types should be developed which create successful streets and can be used to create individual groupings and can be used in a wide variety of settings. Too often standard house types</p>

		<p>-Under character areas, Redrow suggest that references should be made to the best post WWII housing developments.</p> <p>-Points are made regarding on-plot electric car charging</p> <p>-Redrow consider that the Design Guide shows a bias towards higher density housing which does not reflect the 30dph figure suggested elsewhere in the guide.</p> <p>-Redrow consider that the Design Guide must be revised to include more references to detached homes</p>	<p>do not perform the range of townscape functions necessary to create successful streets and places. They often are unable to effectively turn corners or create key groups due to their lack of flexibility.</p> <p>Whilst some reference can be made to the best of these areas, improved highway standards (Manual for Streets), best practice in urban design and the need to create walkable neighbourhoods means that the car based developments from the 1950's are not going to meet modern requirements. Standard low-density suburbia is no longer appropriate except in the minority of cases. Access to EV charging should be available for all on-plot parking spaces in order to meet zero carbon targets.</p> <p>Given the need to develop land economically and to encourage active travel, densities would need to be in a range from 30dph upwards. The diagrams show this range of densities even in a single block. The house typology shows both individual houses and how houses can be linked. (4.3.8 and 4.4.3d and 4.4.3g show a number of options for the grouping of individual or semidetached housing). Traditional streetmaking is not solely about detached house types since all too often traditional places have continuous frontages to enclose spaces and higher densities to make efficient use of land. Linked houses can be very attractive and desirable.</p>
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		<p>--Towards zero carbon and design construction, Redrow generally supports this ambition. However, it suggests that the Future Homes Delivery Plan should be included.</p> <p>- Sections 5.8 and 6.2, Redrow assert that design codes are not necessary given the Design Guide and masterplans for large development sites.</p> <p>-Section 6.1, Redrow welcomes the guidance on making a planning application</p> <p>-Section 6.5 Design Review, Redrow agrees that this is helpful at an early stage in the design process, however it would be helpful if the guidance could provide additional clarity in regarding what circumstances the panel is to be used.</p>	<p>Agreed</p> <p>Design codes are strongly advocated by government in the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code. Moreover, codes can coordinate house types and plot layouts with street design to ensure cohesion especially when a number of developers are involved in a scheme.</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted and the types of scheme required to undertake design review is clearly shown in the document</p>
17. Taylor Wimpey		<p>-Strongly supports and welcomes the production of the Design Guide SPD and supports the Forward by Cllr Rigby as 'entirely laudable objectives which would assist in delivering good design outcomes'.</p> <p>-Acknowledges the extensive work which has been undertaken in the preparation of the design guide and the complexities of producing guidance for different types of areas within the district. Welcomes the statement that it is not a straight jacket and that the drawings are indicative but not exhaustive and hopes that the design guide is implied in this way.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>

		<p>-Section 2 – supports the design process stages. Section 2.6 on consultation and engagement, however the nature of the consultation needs to be tailored to particular circumstances especially for larger scale developments.</p> <p>-Section 3 – acknowledges that local distinctiveness is a crucial element in the design process. They point out that additionally the fenestration of standard house types to reflect local vernacular is appropriate. In the issues part of each character area description, they point out that there may be limitations of the availability of local building materials and traditional paving materials.</p> <p>-Section 4 – they wholeheartedly support the design principles set out in this section, particularly those in section 4.1 (integrating placemaking with sustainability).</p> <p>-The bullet points on p.70 concerning sustainable principles within an indicative scheme, are fully supported. However, the suggested requirements for PV panels and air sourced heat pumps should be extended to other technologies in larger schemes where the critical mass can justify these (as endorsed by the NPPF para 72).</p> <p>-Suggests the introduction of a parallel sustainability framework process alongside that in Section 2. The following headings are suggested:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define a sustainability framework that is bespoke to the site</li> <li>• Determine what ‘sustainable looks like’ within this sustainability framework</li> <li>• Develop solutions which achieve these objectives</li> </ul>	<p>Noted. This principle is accepted in the document and should be appropriate to the scale of the development (see 2.6.2).</p> <p>Noted. However, where local traditional building and paving materials can be sourced, they should be used in key parts of the development. It is stressed that where traditional paving materials exist, they should be protected in any development.</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted and the document has been amended to reflect this.</p> <p>Noted. It is considered that this is already addressed in the document and that sustainability is shown as a key principle throughout the design process.</p>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop the application proposals on the basis of these outputs</li> <li>• Review and report on the application proposals in support of the planning application</li> </ul> <p>-Section 4.4.1- Seeks clarification that the inclusion of each of the measures shown for speed reduction have been discussed with the local Highway Authority and their inclusion in any scheme would not prohibit the adoption of streets.</p> <p>-Suggest that in low density areas the parking standards should recognise that car clubs and demand responsive transport could provide the opportunity to reduce the demand for second and third car ownership.</p> <p>-Section 4.4.5 – preference for footway surfaces outlined in the guide are noted and would seek clarification regarding the adoptability of these materials. Clarity is also sought regarding the commuted sums that would be payable for such surfaces, tree grilles and low planters.</p> <p>-Clarification is sought regarding on-street electric vehicle charging points regarding adoption, commuted sums, and future management.</p> <p>-Section 5 – generally agreed on design topics but need clarification on the status of 5.2 – Towards Zero Carbon Design and Construction.</p> <p>-Section 6.5 on Design Review – generally supports design review but suggests that the importance of ‘the local voice’ can be different to that of a panel of professional experts and whether this can be managed in the context of the community engagement guidance set out in the National Model Design Code. Clarification</p>	<p>Noted. These measures are the outcome of a series of workshops with the Highway Authority who agreed these principles, which are in line with Manual for Streets.</p> <p>Noted and this is advocated in the guidance</p> <p>The materials have been agreed with the Highway Authority. Agreement on tree grilles and planters would need to be discussed on a case by case basis.</p> <p>Noted.</p> <p>Noted. The guidance in the document when adopted will be a material planning consideration. The weight to be attached is for the decision maker.</p> <p>Noted. The design review panel is a different component of the engagement process which has to be weighed up alongside community engagement outcomes. Design Review taking place throughout the lifetime of the project and at</p>
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		is sought as to whether schemes over 50 homes would be informed by design review at both outline and reserved matter application stages.	an early stage is to be encouraged. Design Review Panels are keen to understand the results of community engagement as part of their evaluation of projects.
18. Hallam Land Management		<p>-Commends the draft Design Guide for being ambitious in scope and clearly communicating best practice for the design process.</p> <p>-Pleased to see the advocacy of increased density, encouraging a mix of uses and active travel.</p> <p>-Carbon neutrality – this principle is supported. However, SWT guidance and policy should progress in step and aligned with government guidance.</p> <p>-Electric vehicle infrastructure – supports the investment in electric vehicle infrastructure but the true costs are only just being understood and SWT should consider viability in terms of requirements.</p> <p>-National space standards – whilst supportive of the national space standards, SWT must adhere to footnote 49 of the NPPF requiring LPA’s to evidence need, viability and timing to support their implementation.</p> <p>-Design review – the flexible wording in relation to the requirement for design review – ‘the council will generally expect schemes of more than 50 homes or 5,000sqm of other floor space’, is considered too low to be effective. The design guide will not provide sufficient guidance to adequately inform a scheme at that scale. Suggests where used that design reviews should relate to large scale strategic sites of 500 – 1000 plus dwellings.</p> <p>Section 5.2 – Towards Zero Carbon Design &amp; Construction – supports SWT for its ambition to encourage a collective move towards zero carbon in</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted.</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted. However, from 6/4/21 National prescribed space standards are now requirements under the GPDO.</p> <p>Noted.</p> <p>Noted. It is recognised that this section can only be advisory at this stage.</p> <p>Noted</p>

		design and construction and its pragmatic approach to set standards at a higher level than current building regulations. However, these aims should be in step with the scope of the Future Homes Standard.	
19. Burrington Estates		<p>-Supports the aim and objectives of the design guide, which if approached correctly should be a valuable and helpful tool to raise design and sustainability standards in the district. The challenge of producing a design guide for the full range of development types across a large geographical area and for both lay and professional applicants is fully recognised.</p> <p>-It should be recognised that the SPD does not seek to make and implement new planning policy of its own e.g. delivery of renewable energy solutions.</p> <p>-Concerned that the SPD is overly lengthy and appears too prescriptive which could stifle creative design. However, it is recognised that para 1.7 advocates the intention to be a 'springboard to good design, sensitive to context, not a straight jacket'. This is a crucial point and the design guide should never be dogmatic.</p> <p>-Concern that the design guide tends to reference very traditional forms and vernacular design examples, precluding innovative thinking and modern design solutions.</p> <p>-Suggests the replacement of the good/bad tool with further examples of more contemporary design solutions.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted. The guidance is advocating best practice.</p> <p>Noted. Given the scope and ever-increasing agenda for good design in all contexts, the length of the document is considered appropriate.</p> <p>Noted. The design guide uses vernacular forms as a reference point to indicate the scale and context for development. The guidance drawings are illustrative and in the introduction it is stated that contemporary solutions are welcomed as long as they have regard to the design process and a proper understanding of site and context.</p> <p>Noted. The terms good/bad are not used in the design guide, but inappropriate solutions are included to encourage a more sympathetic approach to design.</p>

		<p>-The design guide should recognise technical feasibility and viability might override a preferred design solution, e.g. cost and availability of materials</p> <p>-To be deliverable, the design guide should have regard to the adoption requirements of the highway authority or water companies, especially regarding road materials, street trees and SUD's.</p> <p>- The draft design guide is very lengthy and wordy in trying to cover all bases, it has become prescriptive and unwieldy. Suggests a more focused user-friendly format as in the draft Taunton garden Town public Realm Design Guide.</p> <p>-Section 2 – generally supportive of the overall Design Process although questions how accessible this is given length and wordiness. Section 2.6 should recognise that consultation should be tailored to particular circumstances appropriate to site and location. This is especially the case where tailored stage engagement will be effective in larger developments.</p> <p>- Section 3 – repeats the concern about traditional vernacular examples which could stifle contemporary design.</p>	<p>Noted. A good solution in terms of layout, scale and form can be achieved with a variety of appropriate materials.</p> <p>Noted. The design guide has had regard to the requirements of the Highway Authority.</p> <p>Noted. Given the scope and ever-increasing agenda for good design in all contexts, , the length of the document is considered appropriate. It is hoped that the Key Requirements summary sheets, the use of bullet points as necessary and the frequent use of subheadings and indicative diagrams will help to give greater legibility of the document.</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted. The design guide uses vernacular forms as a reference point to indicate the scale and context for development. The guidance drawings are illustrative and in the introduction it is stated that contemporary solutions are welcomed as long as they have regard to the design process and a proper understanding of site and context.</p>
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		<p>-Concern that the cost and availability of local materials to apply to standard house types need to be recognised.</p> <p>-Section 4 Sustainable Placemaking- this holistic approach is considered positive and figure 4.1.1 is helpful in demonstrating this.</p> <p>- The bullet points on p.70 should not be seen as exhaustive, as alternative measures to address renewables are increasingly available.</p> <p>-Subsections 4.4.1 (20mph zones) and 4.4.5 (materials for footways, tree grilles and planters, on-street EV charging), these need to be agreed with the Highway Authority in order to avoid objections, refusal of adoption or incurring unreasonable costs.</p> <p>-Section 5 Design Topics – Section 5.2 – concern expressed about the relationship of the aspiration goals and adopted Local Plan policies and how decisions would be made in view of this.</p> <p>Section 6 Supplementary Information – The design review process and its importance are recognised. However, it would be helpful if the SPD could confirm the weight given to the panel’s comments where they conflict with local feedback or the views of the officer. Clarification is sought as to whether schemes over 50 homes would be informed by design review at both outline and reserved matter application stages.</p>	<p>Noted. There is an ever-increasing drive from government to reinforce identity and local distinctiveness and the recent requirement to have regard to beauty in design solutions. We however recognised that this needs to be balanced with viability. Noted.</p> <p>Noted.</p> <p>Noted. The materials have been agreed with the Highway Authority. Agreement on tree grilles and planters would need to be discussed on a case by case basis.</p> <p>Noted.</p> <p>Noted. The recommendations of a design review panel will be a material planning consideration in the determination of proposals. Design Review taking place throughout the lifetime of the project and at an early stage is to be encouraged</p>
<p>20. Bourne Leisure Ltd (holiday site operator, including Butlins)</p>		<p>-Acknowledges the importance of the design guide, however the scope of the draft SPD, which is predominantly residential, needs to clarify that not all the requirements will be relevant to non-residential</p>	<p>Noted. However, the design process in section 2, is applicable to all types of development and will be expected to be</p>

		<p>development. Otherwise this could result in unduly onerous requirements if applied to all new developments.</p> <p>-Concern that as the design guide is being prepared in advance of the emerging Local Plan that it must not create new policy.</p> <p>-Concern that the electric vehicle charging strategy final report, referenced on p.91 has not been fully consulted upon. Until this occurs this may affect any requirements in relation to the new Local Plan.</p> <p>-Questions the policy relationship for the SWT area, for example is Policy DM5 (TDBC) relevant to the former West Somerset area, and vice versa.</p> <p>-Acknowledges the importance of public consultation during the development process but states this is not mandatory in legislation.</p> <p>-The design guide should recognise that the character areas are not homogenous and the site context important. As drafted, it reads that certain types and scale of development are restricted to certain character areas. This could lead to overly restricted guidance and prevent future delivery of proposals.</p> <p>-We consider that the provision of electric car charging points should be clarified in relation to particular types of development, in particular to infrastructure. It suggests that the paragraph on p.91 should be amended as follows:          'With the declaration of a climate emergency by the Council...it will be expected that all developments SHOULD either provide charging points on plot or in convenient density in on street parking bays.'</p>	<p>adhered to especially in applications and Design and Access Statements.</p> <p>Noted. The policy context is clearly set out in the Introduction of the document.</p> <p>Noted. The Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy final report has been produced by the Highway Authority.</p> <p>Noted. Currently the policies relate solely to the former Local Plan areas and are not integrated. This will be revised in a future Unitary Local Plan.</p> <p>Public consultation is mandatory in the preparation of Development Plan Documents, SPD's and planning applications</p> <p>Noted. The sensitivity and scale of certain character areas might make some forms of development difficult or inappropriate to deliver. The design guide stresses that all proposals are context driven.</p> <p>Noted. We have clarified this point.</p>
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		<p>-Design Topic 5.2 Towards Zero Carbon Design and Construction – endorses this approach.</p> <p>-P.120 Non-Residential Redevelopment – whilst endorsing the principles in this section, it notes that the draft SPD does not provide specific guidance on holiday parks and as such proposals should not be required to comply with the SPD.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted. However, this general guidance, which of necessity cannot cover in detail every type of development, sets out broad principles that apply to all developments proposals and the design process that they will be expected to follow.</p>
<p>21. Abbey Manor Group</p>		<p>- The Introduction does not make it clear how this document should be used, the document reads as an instruction book on how to design a development. There is no room within this guide for contemporary or innovative design, all the examples quoted are of historic buildings.</p> <p>- what is unclear is whether the Design Process is a set format that must be followed. The document gives no flexibility or room for innovative design or creativity.</p> <p>- Whilst it is a consideration to reflect local distinctiveness, the word ‘reflect’ has been lost in this document.</p> <p>-Agrees with the broad principles of sustainable placemaking but considers that the draft design guide goes into unnecessary detail about how the principles should be implemented.</p>	<p>Section 1.7 – How Should It Be Used? Indicates the ways in which the design guide should be used and specifically states that this should be a springboard for good design and that quality contemporary design solutions are to be welcomed.</p> <p>Noted. Section 2.1 - The Recommended Design Process, indicated the stages of consideration in the development for any design scheme. These stages are recognised as best practice and they do not preclude innovative design (merely set a process not a specific outcome).</p> <p>Section 3 has been compiled to illustrate the salient aspects of character in the various parts of the district. It exists to inform designers of those characteristics which should be taken into account in context sensitive design responses.</p> <p>Noted. The principles and how they are implemented follows those set out in the National Design Guide, NPPF and general good urban design practice. The examples</p>

		<p>- The National Government has consulted upon and is bringing into legislation, improved Building Regulations and the Future Homes Standard. LPA's are not encouraged to adopt their own policies which are in excess of national standards. There is no reference to these National Standards in this guide and it appears that the LPA is seeking to adopt a higher standard than National policies</p> <p>- The document reads as very prescriptive and leaves no room for innovation or creative design but does leave the applicant and the Council open to challenge of non-compliance with the Design Guide if an application dared to stray outside of its strict parameters.</p>	<p>are used to illustrate the points and are indicative.</p> <p>Noted. This section sets out the Council's aspirations in regard to zero carbon design and construction.</p> <p>Noted. As already stated, in section 1.7, contemporary design solutions are welcomed as long as they can be justified in terms of addressing all the aspects set out in the design process (section 2).</p>
22. South West Taunton Comeytrowe Consortium		<p>-The Consortium continues to support the design guide as SPD in that it responds to the requirements of the NPPF. Also supports the overall objective that design should be locally distinctive, be conscious of deliver a Garden neighbourhood and have a positive approach to placemaking and sustainability.</p> <p>-The Design Guide is mainly geared towards outline planning applications for greenfield sites as indicated in Section 2 – Recommended Design Process. It gives limited advice at the level of Reserved Matter applications.</p> <p>-There are too many specific examples and illustrations of what the LPA want but often not clearly setting out the guiding principles underpinning them. This leaves officers to pick the specific illustration they want, rather than allowing an interpretation of a guiding principle, e.g. the village edge drawing.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>The approach taken to the design process is valid at outline stage which underpins the basic approach and character of a scheme, but its heading and subsequent guidance is applicable to all stages.</p> <p>The illustrations are all supported by captions which indicate the salient points and principles to be considered. Illustrations throughout the document, as pointed out in the Introduction, are indicative to help explain principles to a wide audience ranging</p>



-Pre-application discussions have centred on interpreting a Taunton vernacular but there is little in the Taunton Character Area section that sets out an architectural style, details or house typologies other than 3/3.5 storey terraced housing.

-No reference to the consideration of viability in meeting design expectations, especially around net zero.

from lay public to members, developer's and architects etc.

The text on the Taunton character area identifies a wide variety of housing types, the 3-storey terraced type illustrated is part of a typology which is wide spread in the town in different styles. There is an illustration of a tree-lined street with Victorian villas and the analysis of a unique piece of townscape, i.e. Bath Place, in another part of the Design Guide. Additional information regarding the character of Taunton can be seen in the Garden Town Vision document, which highlights the essential character of Taunton townscape. It should be noted that there are many typologies that are found in most established town, such as by-law terraced streets, the distinctiveness of these is to be seen in the use of materials and details. These pointers to character of each area are indicative and should be used as a springboard for applicant's own appraisals.

In connection with 5.2 Towards Zero Carbon Design and Construction, these are aspirations set out by the LPA in response to its declaration of a climate emergency and the national and international move towards zero carbon development. In that the Building Regulations are at present the main form of control; these measures have to be

		<p>-The Placemaking part of the Guide is more directed towards urban and higher density solutions with little guidance for consented Garden Neighbourhoods such as Comeytrowe where average densities are much lower.</p> <p>-Section 4.3 - Designing house types that make streets and places – agree with the conditions to achieve good streetscapes but not necessarily all of the sections of characteristics and illustrations. The limited number of illustrations means that officers will always point to those solutions when there are other ways of achieving the condition.</p> <p>-Section 4.4 – Streets, Places and Parking – encouraged to see this section has been developed with SCC Highways. There are also a set of clear ideas on how to control speed, many of which we would support.</p> <p>-Section 4.4.3 – Elements of the Hierarchy – supports the use of the hierarchy of streets, although would recommend flexibility in interpretation.</p>	<p>taken into account in project financial planning.</p> <p>The Sustainable Placemaking section outlines objectives for sustainable placemaking and indicates these in diagrams showing housing ranging from low to relatively high density, depending on distance from existing or proposed neighbourhood centres. This is advocated in the National Model Design Guide.</p> <p>Noted. Further illustrations of each condition and house types will be considered.</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted and agreed.</p>
Social Housing Providers			
23. Magna Housing		<p>Agrees in general with the design process but questions whether the many advantages of Modern Methods of Construction in housing development have been taken into account. In particular, discussion about material and finishes need to be brought forward in the design process.</p>	<p>Noted. The design process is applicable to all methods of construction and the layout of residential blocks can easily accept this form of construction. For instance, the guidance on 4.2.1 specifically mentions the appropriateness of the solution to block</p>

		<p>-Whilst local character and distinctiveness is an important consideration, it cannot be the 'be all and end all'. The advantages of Modern Methods of Construction in delivery and quality should be recognised and whilst sympathetic finishes can be applied, 'bespoke' solutions to each site are not possible.</p> <p>- The Sustainable Placemaking section fails to address the sustainability benefits of Modern Methods of Construction, mainly in terms of production and delivery</p> <p>-The Zero Carbon design topic is welcome, but largely ignores the significant role of Modern Methods of Construction in delivering sustainable design and construction. The SPD should champion the role of MMC in this regard, but rather makes a limited reference in section 5.2. We would cite the following as important benefits of MMC housing in terms of carbon reduction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistency of build-quality</li> </ul>	<p>layout to Modern Methods of Construction. Considerations of site layout, form and scale should predominate over details of materials and finishes. The design decision making 'triangle' on p.16 is a logical sequence of considerations.</p> <p>Noted. It is recognised that construction considerations are important, however the relationship of a scheme to its surroundings is equally important, especially in its acceptability or not to local communities. The challenge for Modern Methods of Construction is that the products should make successful streets and places and relate to topography without compromising site constraints.</p> <p>Noted. The section is applicable to all forms of construction in that it stresses the need for individual dwellings or other units to be grouped to create successful streets and places and to address matters such as the use of renewables, SUD's, green infrastructure etc, which are not mentioned in the respondents comments.</p> <p>Noted. Section 5.2 advocates design approaches to achieve zero carbon whether by traditional construction, hybrid or MMC. Indeed on p.101 it mentions that MMC can play a significant part in achieving these general aims. Passive design, the use of renewables, fabric first and efficient building services can all be incorporated in improved MMC housing units. However as stressed</p>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enabling a “fabric first” approach to sustainability</li> <li>• Truly sustainable housebuilding</li> <li>• Reduced impact of construction on local residents</li> </ul>	above, MMC should have regard to context and site constraints and opportunities.
24. Somerset West and Taunton Council - Affordable Housing Development Partnership		<p>-Agrees with the general aims and objectives of the draft Design Guide. However, the guide should not preclude innovation which may not entirely reflect local existing built form.</p> <p>-Whilst accepting the desirability of street trees, questions are raised regarding ownership, location and management.</p> <p>-Generally, agrees with the aims of Zero Carbon Design and Construction however, SWT policies would need to be supported by Somerset County Council to ensure a clear and consistent approach to highways /parking requirement, particularly in relation to use of shared spaces. Argues that electric vehicle charging provision must take account of infrastructure capability and that other measures can achieve zero carbon transport.</p>	<p>Noted. There will always be limited exceptions to the general guidance, but adherence to sound urban design principles as in the NPPF and National Design Guide and the SWT Design Guide should be followed. The guide welcomes contemporary design solutions as long as the stages in the design process are followed.</p> <p>Noted. Amendments have been made to the document to reflect concerns over maintenance. This involves the designation of tree pits to be separately managed by management companies etc, so not included as part of the public highway. SCC have agreed that if no other option could be found, then street trees might be adopted subject to commuted sums covering the lifetime management costs.</p> <p>Noted. SWT has engaged with SCC Highways regarding electric vehicle charging infrastructure and SCC is in general agreement.</p>

		<p>-Concern expressed about viability of the design requirements in terms of increased costs. There is a real risk this will prevent the delivery of affordable housing irrespective of scheme size.</p> <p>-Concern is expressed regarding the adoption of open spaces, maintenance charges and adoption of street trees. There is a risk of exceptionally high, unaffordable service charges for management and maintenance to cover Estate Management for all residents.</p> <p>-Questions whether the LPA has adequate staff resource in planning to cope with negotiations regarding design quality and the additional early consultations in the planning process.</p>	<p>Noted. The advantage of a design guide giving clear and coordinated quality expectations on the expanding agenda on design as required by government through NPPF, National Design Guide etc, these aspects need to be taken into account in the cost of land acquisition etc. To some degree the advocated increase in density could offset some costs in development. Additionally, Modern Methods of Construction can help in this respect on condition that good placemaking principles are adhered to.</p> <p>Noted. However, adoption of open space and maintenance charges are outside the remit of this design guide</p> <p>Noted. Ongoing training and advice will be provided to all Development Management staff on the contents and use of the design guide. The setting up the bespoke SWT Quality Review Panel will provide critical friend support on more significant schemes.</p>
Residents			
25. Individual Submission		<p>- Not all locally distinctive characteristics should be encouraged. The design guide should encourage improvement whilst reflecting positive local characteristics.</p> <p>- 5.2c illustrative key performance indicators seems to suggest that the base standard is illustrative of policy</p>	<p>Agreed</p> <p>Section 5.2 incorporates current best practice based on national guidance.</p>

		<p>compliance. Base standard is barely better than Building Regulations. It falls massively short of a zero or low carbon standard which I understood is central to both the garden vision and government policy.</p> <p>To accept anything less in respect of developments expected to have a useful working life comfortably in excess of 50 years represents a failure to embrace these fundamental aspirations.</p> <p>-Agrees with the content and scope of the design guide although section 5.2 could be strengthened. Questions whether there ought to be guidance on the weighting of various design aspects. Concerned that the vocal wishes of local communities can be overridden by planning officers in weighing up the planning balance of an application.</p>	<p>Compliance at this stage can only be through carried out through the Building Regulations.</p> <p>Noted and see small scale decisions. Response above regarding section 5.2. Weighting would be difficult to apply universally as each site and development has to be considered on its merits. However, the Decision 'Triangle' on p.16 indicates the order in which recommendations and decisions should be taken from strategic to small scale.</p>
26. Individual Submission		<p>-There are many anomalies and lack of references that would assist in using the design guide such as defraMAGIC.gov.uk and <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-character-area-profiles-data-for-local-decision-making/national-character-area-profiles">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-character-area-profiles-data-for-local-decision-making/national-character-area-profiles</a> for character areas which offer a better detail than that shown in doc</p> <p>It is a guide yet isn't as it suggests the solution but not all sites respond in that way and its wrong to suggest what is right and wrong design; that becomes more than a guide but a diktat on what should be designed to get permission.</p>	<p>Noted. Comment regarding the many anomalies does not include examples and is therefore difficult to respond to. There are many references used throughout the design guide and these are summarised in Section 7.2. Acknowledged that the reference suggested is not included and this will be considered.</p> <p>Noted. The guide indeed suggests solutions as well as setting out general guidelines. However these 'solutions' are indicative and illustrative in no way excluding others as long as the design process considerations are fully taken into account.</p>

		<p>section 6.5.3 of design review is good but fails on the last paragraph where by the rest of the chapter say its independent then 6.5.3 clearly is not independent and suggests that unless you use LA panel then it won't be accepted which goes against all government guidelines &amp; policies , invites cronyism and flies in face of competition laws thus illegal</p> <p>-The importance of landscape appraisal and ecological appraisals are not emphasised enough as the professions are trained in recognising landscape character and appraisal. Its clear up to offering suggestions such as in 2.5.4 and 2.7.2 that offer solutions.</p> <p>-It is a guide yet isn't as it suggests the solution but not all sites respond in that way and its wrong to suggest what is right and wrong design; that becomes more than a guide but a diktat on what should be designed to get permission.</p> <p>- Sometimes a new development can create a positive unique character and does not follow the pastiche potentially dangerous design of copying what's around rather than really examining high quality design for that space</p> <p>National Character Area should be referred to, the documents exist for a reason and the summary of them in section 3 is not complete.</p>	<p>The Quality Review Panel has been set up and will be managed independently. Whilst applicants might seek to use other panels, they will be strongly encouraged to use the bespoke panel for SWT, since officers are keen to have a consistent approach.</p> <p>Noted. Landscape appraisal is both advocated and the landscape of SWT is analysed in adequate detail for a design guide. Additional landscape appraisal is referred to in 7.2 Taunton Deane Landscape Character Assessment 2011. The last sentence is unclear.</p> <p>Noted. The guide indeed suggests solutions as well as setting out general guidelines. However these 'solutions' are indicative and illustrative in no way excluding others as long as the design process considerations are fully taken into account.</p> <p>Agreed. There will be cases based on a perceptive appraisal of context and site which can differ from the existing built form. The guide does not advocate the use of superficial pastiche solutions.</p> <p>Noted. A reference to this document has been included in Section 7.2. However the design guide landscape characterisation is more closely focused at the more local level as required by the NPPF.</p>
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		<p>- Agrees generally with the objective to achieve tree lined streets but urges that SCC Highways need to be in agreement management and adoption of street trees. This also applies to raingardens within the highway.</p> <p>-Regarding zero carbon design and construction, there needs to be an emphasis on using and buying local materials or workforce</p> <p>- The third public consultation on the draft SWT Districtwide Design Guide has not been well advertised</p>	<p>Amendments have been made to the document to reflect concerns over maintenance. This involves the designation of tree pits to be separately managed by management companies etc, so not included as part of the public highway. SCC have agreed that if no other option could be found, then street trees might be adopted subject to commuted sums covering the lifetime management costs.</p> <p>Agreed</p> <p>Noted. The consultation has been carried out following the Council's Statement of Community Involvement. We have received comments from members of the public, statutory consultees, Councillors, amenity groups, developers etc.</p>
27. Individual Submission		<p>-Agrees that the promotion of local distinctiveness is an important aspect of design guides. However this should be applied flexibly as strict adherence may preclude innovative solutions which are nevertheless responsive to context.</p> <p>-Support the aims in Section 5.2 Towards Zero Carbon Design and Construction and considers it is 'absolutely crucial'</p> <p>- Overall, I was much impressed by the draft. It is refreshing to see a well thought out and logical document - very different from what much of Government produces these days.</p>	<p>Agree</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>



		<p>-My only general comment is that it is very important that planning officers are not didactic, that they view each submission on its merits within the context of what is attempting to be achieved. They should not be driven by 'process' to the exclusion of common sense and flexibility.</p>	<p>Agreed. A programme of training of Development Management staff on the content and use of the SWT Design Guide was undertaken in Spring 2020. It is proposed that further training will be carried out after adoption of the document.</p>
28. Individual Submission		<p>-Agrees with in Section 5.2 Towards Zero Carbon Design and Construction especially regarding the need to prioritise the retrofitting of existing buildings.</p> <p>-Regarding Section 5.10 – Taller Buildings, the storey height of buildings within Taunton’s historic core should be restricted to 4 storeys since above this height they do not make a positive contribution. Taller buildings will not contribute to placemaking on our high density historic areas. E.g. proposals to demolish lower buildings and replace with taller buildings will have a disruptive impact on the pattern of main streets and the skyline of historic areas and reduce their visitor image. The inner residential areas of Victorian and Edwardian terraced housing would also be overlooked by taller buildings. Replacement of high density housing with taller buildings means the loss of embodied carbon. Space should be reserved around tall buildings should be reserved for maintenance access and retrofitting cladding throughout the life of the building.</p> <p>-Regarding Making a Planning Application and the use of Design &amp; Access Statements, he considers that ‘Access’ should include provision for maintenance access without the need to gain access to neighbouring properties.</p>	<p>Agree</p> <p>The Tall Building guidance in 5.10 sets out criteria for the assessment of the visual impact of a tall building regarding distant and streetscape views, amongst other key factors. This advice is based on Historic England guidance which is concerned with the relationship of historic areas and taller buildings. This has been changed in the document.</p> <p>Noted. This will be considered.</p>

		<p>-Beyond access issues, we will need personal space to store mobility carts and bike trailers</p>	<p>Noted. There is some guidance regarding storage in 5.7 and to some extent 5.3.</p>
<p>29. Individual Submission</p>		<p>-Planning policies at application approval stage and for any subsequent variations do not ensure developments are low carbon or zero carbon. What is required is closer coordination between the LPA and the Building Control/Approved Inspectors.</p> <p>-Building Regulations currently are the only ways to ensure zero carbon, yet these are minimum standards and not the ultimate. It is hoped that the forthcoming amendments to the Building Regulations will address this.</p> <p>-5.15 Residential Extensions and Alterations – the guidance is of some benefit although in light of increased permitted development rights, these can be detrimental to the aesthetics and the amenity of a locality. Extensions can mean the loss of on-plot parking spaces resulting in vehicles parked on front gardens or the highway.</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>Noted.</p> <p>Noted. Where planning permission is required, these considerations are taken into account.</p>

		<p>-5.8 Boundary treatments – the design of boundaries is an important issue and the problem is their replacement with inappropriate design, height and materials which can have a negative impact.</p> <p>-Section 3 Local materials – supports the use of local materials however cites the loss of local brick manufacturers and closure of quarries as well as insufficient recycling of local materials. The LPA should provide a register of suppliers of local materials.</p>	<p>Noted and agreed. Often such structures do not need planning permission.</p> <p>Noted and agreed. Subject to the LPA having the necessary staff resource, a register of suppliers of local materials could be compiled. Alternatively, this could be suggested to the South West Heritage Trust.</p>
Internal Staff			
30. Internal Staff		<p>-Has found the draft design guide very useful, especially the character areas section</p> <p>-The design guide is less useful for smaller infill and extension sites, when dealing with non-architects. It is difficult to make individual judgements at this scale.</p> <p>-Section 6.5 Design Review – in my opinion this will involve DM officers in much more work in providing background information.</p> <p>Questions whether this is the right time to introduce Design Review since there is a delay in processing planning applications due to phosphates and pending local government reorganisation.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted. Additional training on the use and contents of the Design Guide is proposed once the document is adopted.</p> <p>Noted. However, the total number of cases going to review will be approximately 20/year and the case officer will only be required to produce a briefing sheet with issues that he or she would require clarification. The DRP decision letter should assist the case officer in writing the recommendations.</p> <p>Noted.</p>
31. Internal Staff		<p>-5.16.11 Shop Front – do we need to add something on advertisement guidance from existing TDBC policy guidance</p> <p>-Section 6.5 Design Review – Questions what happens when an applicant doesn't agree to the procedure to attend DRP and who can request what schemes are to be invited to design review.</p>	<p>Noted and agreed. Will consider inclusion of this guidance.</p> <p>Noted. However, the LPA cannot require an applicant to attend DRP. A request for a scheme to be considered by DRP can come from an officer, Member or member of the</p>

			public. If a scheme fulfils the criteria for requiring DRP, it should automatically trigger a consultation.
32. Internal Staff		<p>-5.2 Towards Zero Carbon Design and Construction – should the adopted policy for TDBC be included in this chapter</p> <p>-5.5 Infill and Intensification – the illustrations could include guidance regarding questions of access, the appearance of blank gable walls facing rear gardens and acceptable windows on boundaries.</p> <p>-5.7 Storage for Cycles and Recycling – agree that this type of storage ought to be a covered structure. Can this be more explicitly stated.</p> <p>-5.10 Taller Buildings – Prefers a more restrained approach to the indicative illustration of the tall building to reflect the likely heights expected in the urban areas. Suggests buildings of approximately 6 storeys and points out that there is a considerable difference in character between 6 and 8 storeys. The existing illustration of a 10-storey building may suggest that this height will be generally acceptable.</p> <p>5.12 New Agricultural Buildings – sloping sites can be problematic and there is often insufficient information regarding the relationship of the proposed building to the sloping site.</p> <p>-Requests that the design guide sets out information required regarding finished level related to slope and that a section be provided. Additionally, the gradient of earth re-profiling should also be included to ensure blending with surrounding topography.</p>	<p>Noted. All relevant policy references are included in the introduction to the design guide. The Climate Positive Strategy (2021) incorporates the most up to date thinking. Noted and agreed.</p> <p>Noted and agreed.</p> <p>Noted. A more diagrammatic and lower building illustration will be considered.</p> <p>Noted and agreed</p> <p>Noted and agreed</p>

		<p>-Requests that the design guide discourages light grey roofs as they are more intrusive, should encourage more explicitly dark colours such as 'anthracite'. -Requests addition stating that 'permission for agricultural buildings will often be conditional on a landscape scheme being carried out'.</p>	<p>Noted and agreed</p> <p>Noted and agreed</p>
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## **CONSULTATION STATEMENT**

### **Somerset West and Taunton Council: District Wide Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)**

The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012

#### **Introduction**

Somerset West and Taunton Council (the Council) has produced a Districtwide Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which seeks a step change in the quality of new development in the district and provides additional guidance on how relevant policies of the adopted development plan should be responded to in relation to securing high quality design. A draft Design Guide SPD was considered by the Council's Executive meeting on 28 January 2020 and approved for public consultation. Following consultation in spring 2020, winter 2020/21 on an expanded 'Streets, Parking and Placemaking' section and in summer 2021, the Council has made several amendments across the document in response to comments received. The Council has now finalised the document in anticipation of adoption as an SPD.

This Consultation Report explains how the Council has undertaken public consultation to inform the development of the SPD, and how the engagement, feedback and responses received have influenced its development. The report covers: Which bodies and persons were invited to make comments; How those bodies and persons were invited to make comment; The material that was subject to consultation; A summary of the responses received; and A summary of how the responses influenced the development of the SPD.

The Council has an adopted Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). The SCI outlines that the Council is committed to effective community engagement and seeks to use a wide range of methods for involving the community in the plan making process. SWT's Statement of Community Involvement was adopted in November 2019. In relation to plan preparation, the SCI relates to the preparation of Development Plan Documents (DPDs), Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Sustainability Appraisal (SA), Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) and Neighbourhood Plans. As such, the SPD is required to comply with the SCI.

The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 set out what is required in terms of public participation and the making of representations in relation to the production of SPDs. In response to Regulation 12(b), a Draft Consultation Statement was made available for public consultation alongside the SPD itself in the final round of consultation. This final Statement complies with the requirements of Regulation 12(a).

## **Consultation Summary**

The Districtwide Design Guide SPD has been subject to three separate periods of consultation:

- Spring 2020 (3 February 2020 to 30 March 2020) – First draft Design Guide
- Winter 2020/21 (11 December 2020 to 5 February 2021) – Expanded 'Streets, Parking and Placemaking' section
- Summer 2021 (5 July 2021 to 16 August 2021) – Updated Draft Design Guide

## **Summer 2021 Consultation**

Consultation on an updated Districtwide Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) took place from 05 July 2021 until Monday 16 August 2021 (six weeks). In accordance with Regulation 12(b)(i) of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, consultation responses had to be submitted within this time period in order to be taken into consideration.

The documents available as part of this consultation included the following:

- Updated Draft Districtwide Design Guide SPD;
- Draft Strategic Environmental Assessment / Habitat Regulations Assessment (SEA/HRA) Screening Report; and
- Draft Consultation Statement

## **Purpose of the Consultation**

The Updated Draft Districtwide Design Guide SPD was produced as a response to a number of the issues raised in the previous rounds of consultation, particularly in relation to the climate emergency and how this is integral to high quality design.

As such, the purpose of the consultation was four-fold:

- To seek views of stakeholders and raise awareness in relation to the proposed amended design guidance,
- To ensure that the final SPD has been informed by a demonstrable level of public engagement and input as expected by the Planning Practice Guidance
- To ensure legal compliance with relevant Regulations and to ensure statutory consultee consultation in relation to the Draft SEA/HRA Screening; and
- To provide notice to the development industry, of the Council's design guidance and that as SPD it will influence planning decisions where it is a material consideration.

## **Who We Consulted**

A list of Specific Consultation Bodies, General Consultation Bodies, and other organisations and groups the Council seeks to involve in plan-making is included in the SCI. As a non-statutory plan, there is no statutory list of bodies and organisations that the Council was required to consult in preparation of the SPD. However, in accordance with Regulation 13(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning)(England) Regulations 2012, any person may make representations about an SPD. As such, all those on this list were consulted at this stage.

The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (SEA



Regulations) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (Habitat Regulations) set out that Historic England, the Environment Agency and Natural England are statutory consultees in relation to the Draft SEA/HRA Screening Report and as such these bodies were specifically invited to respond to this element.

The Council is committed to ensuring that local groups, organisations, and individuals are provided with the opportunity to be involved in the preparation of planning policy documents.

The Council has a database of consultees, who have either commented upon, or expressed an interest in being involved with the development of local plans. This database is used to keep individuals, companies and organisations informed on the production of the Local Plan and other planning policy documents. New consultees are added to the consultation database via e-mail or letter to the Strategy Team requesting inclusion on to the database. The General Data Protection Regulations are followed to ensure that personal data is only required and retained where proportionate and necessary, is only gathered where explicit consent has been provided, is kept securely and is not disclosed to others. All bodies and persons identified within this database were emailed with notification of the consultation.

### **How We Consulted**

Consultation on the updated Draft Districtwide Design Guide SPD ran from 05 July 2021 until Monday 16 August 2021 (six weeks). During this time a variety of methods were employed, though the full range of methods was limited by definitive restrictions and a cautiously proportionate approach due to the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic and gradual loosening of lockdown restrictions.

Responses to the consultation were invited:

- Online via the Council's consultation portal at <https://yoursay.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/design-guide/districtwide-design-guide03/>
- By email: [strategy@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk](mailto:strategy@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk)
- By writing to the Council at: Placemaking Specialist, Planning and Development, Somerset West and Taunton Council, Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton, TA1 1HE;

To publicise the consultation, the Council:

- Emailed notification of the consultation to all bodies and persons identified within the consultation database.
- Made the above consultation documents available for inspection at the Council's principal offices at:
  - Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton, TA1 1HE (Monday – Friday, 8.30am to 5pm)
  - West Somerset House, Killick Way, Williton, TA4 4QA (Monday – Friday, 8.30am to 5pm)
- Published the documents on the Council's website at <https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/planning-policy/districtwide-design-guide-spd/>
- Published a press release via the Council's website and social media posts via Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn in order to raise interest and encourage

participation, at <https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/news/swt-announces-further-design-guide-consultations/>

- Presented to a virtual meeting of the Agents Forum – 12 July 2021
- Presented to a virtual meeting of the Taunton Design Circle – 28 July 2021
- Presented to a virtual meeting of the Somerset Affordable Housing Group – 22 July 2021
- Hosted a virtual Town and Parish Councils Event – 13 July 2021
- Held a virtual General Question & Answer Session for Members of the Public – 14 July 2021 between 12.30 – 4.30pm

In light of the covid restrictions, it was decided not to arrange any in-person consultation events as would normally take place.

The consultation documents could also be viewed online at all libraries in Somerset West and Taunton.

### **Level of Response**

Overall, there were 31 responses to the consultation. Of the 31 respondents, 28 submitted their representation by email, 1 by post and the remaining 12 respondents responded online.

### **Summary of Responses Received**

The results of the consultation were representative of a wide spectrum of respondents, including Members, statutory consultees, community groups, parish and town councils, developers, housing associations and internal staff. In total 31 responses were received.

There was an overwhelming positive response to the revised draft design guide, with comments such as 'Overall, I was much impressed by the draft. It is refreshing to see a well thought out and logical document', 'Commends the draft Design Guide for being ambitious in scope and clearly communicating best practice for the design process, 'Strongly supports and welcomes the production of the Design Guide SPD and supports the Forward by Cllr Rigby as 'entirely laudable objectives which would assist in delivering good design outcomes' and 'Welcomes the preparation of the Guide as it is timely given the new NPPF etc. They commend its comprehensiveness and the design process and that it is clearly laid out, attractive to look at with many useful illustrations and signposts to useful information'.

The responses covered a wide variety of points, which is to be expected given the range of respondents' interests. The comments relating to the volume house builders are treated separately as their range, emphasis and depth was more substantial. Responses received from other parties can be broadly summarised under the following headings – a) Local Distinctiveness; b) Zero Carbon and Sustainable Development; c) Street Trees and EV Charging; d) Public Art; and e) Taller Buildings.

- a) Local Distinctiveness – The coverage by the design guide of the need to respond to local distinctiveness was welcomed by the majority of respondents, but it was recognised that this could also be achieved by contemporary design. – In response it has been emphasised that contemporary solutions that respond to local distinctiveness are welcomed. The recent update of the NPPF which requires that buildings are designed beautifully has been also been addressed.
- b) Zero Carbon and Sustainable Development – A number of respondents were keen

that the zero carbon agenda is afforded the highest consideration given the climate emergency. – In response the existing topic (5.2) has been expanded and emphasis is given in the introduction and in guidance on flood resilience.

- c) Street Trees and EV Charging – A number of respondents were keen to ensure that electric vehicle charging provision was catered in an appropriate manner related to context. Many respondents wanted to be assured that street trees would be included in new developments. – In response both EV charging and street trees were the subject of detailed discussions with SCC Highways to agree adoption and detailed design matters.
- d) Public Art – A member raised the issue of a lack of guidance regarding public art. – In response this has been addressed in the creation of a new design topic on public art (5.17)
- e) Taller Buildings – There were a few respondents who raised points regarding the need for increased guidance on the impact of taller buildings both on the landscape and townscape of main settlements in the district. – In response the guidance has been amended and strengthened on this matter and replacement diagrams provided.

Of the 31 respondents to the third consultation, 8 received were from volume house builders. A number of the comments from the volume house builders were broadly similar to those expressed in the previous consultations, particularly on issues of the level of prescription and local distinctiveness. These comments can broadly be summarised under the following headings – a) Over Prescriptive, Stifling Innovation and Document Too Lengthy; b) Local Distinctiveness; c) Requirements of SCC Highways and EV Charging; d) Zero Carbon and Future Homes Standards; and d) Design Review.

- a) Over Prescriptive, Stifling Innovation and Document Too Lengthy – Some of the house builders considered that the draft Design Guide was too prescriptive, would stifle innovative contemporary design and that the document was too lengthy. The issue of prescription was raised in the previous consultations. – In response, it was considered important for the design guide to strike a balance between policy requirements and to demonstrate through examples how these could be achieved in practise. The diagrams were considered illustrative, and the guidance made clear that if an applicant can demonstrate that other solutions would achieve the stated requirements, then other such solutions may be considered a valid approach.
- b) Local Distinctiveness – this was mentioned by a minority of the developers as being an issue and was also raised in the previous consultations. The house builder's concerns related to interwar suburban development not being recognised within the design guide as locally distinctive, that the distinctiveness of Taunton's vernacular was not sufficiently defined and that the section on distinctiveness over emphasises traditional built forms. – In response, interwar suburban development is universal throughout the whole country due to the standardisation of house types, layouts, road standards and density. These factors have resulted in uniform 'anywhere' character which is often at odds with the townscape and landscape of existing traditional settlements within the district. Furthermore, there is a need to make settlements walkable and to raise densities in areas which are most sustainable and nearest to facilities; this means that suburban low-density development is far less applicable than two generations ago. In regard to Taunton's vernacular not being sufficiently defined, much of

Taunton built form is 19 Century development with many characteristics that are common with building forms in other towns. There is however a palette of materials and a limited number of building details which are common to Taunton. On this point the house builders did not appear to appreciate that the guidance sets out pointers for applicants to make their own character appraisal of their site and its context. Regarding traditional building forms, the guidance does not suggest that an applicant slavishly copies historic buildings found in the district. The Design Guide advocates that traditional buildings provide a sense of place and identity, through establishing a scale, form, layout, and palette of materials which should be recognised and used as a springboard for design interpretation in new development.

- c) Relationship with SCC Highways Guidance – A number of the house builders raised the issue of the relationship of the Highway Authority and those of Planning and Placemaking. – In response, a series of workshop meetings were held with SCC Highways to attempt to resolve differing approaches to streetmaking. Substantial progress was made as shown in section 4.4.
- d) Working Towards Zero Carbon Design and Construction – Several of the house builders raised the question of the degree to which the guidance on Towards Zero Carbon Construction (section 5.2) was mandatory. In addition, some house builders raised the question of the design guide's relationship to the Future Homes Standard. – In response, the design topic 'Towards Zero Carbon Design and Construction' sets out a design process to help move development towards delivering zero carbon buildings. Tackling carbon emissions and climate impact via such a design process is integral to good design and aligns with existing planning policies. The topic clearly differentiates between what is policy requirement and what is aspirational/illustrative as the document does throughout. Additional text was prepared to clarify the relationship with the Government's proposed interim update to Building Regulations Part L (due December 2021) and the Future Homes Standard (due 2025). However, it was considered reasonable to illustrate how new development could and should be looking to push ambition in this regard in advance of and beyond these standards in order to deliver on the adopted target of working towards carbon neutrality by 2030. In response to the house builder's concerns at how to mitigate the effects of overheating in residential buildings, an additional illustrative diagram was provided in the design guide.
- e) Design Review – Several of the house builders expressed concern at the status and need for Design Review (to be renamed Quality Review) – In response, Design Review Panels are a well-established feature of the planning process, and their use is advocated in the NPPF and Policy D7 of the Taunton Deane Site Allocations and Development Management Plan. The design guide advocates that they offer independent critical friend advice. The criteria for triggering the need for design review related to the significance of a proposal as well as its size. The number of likely applications received per year, triggering the need for design review, was considered small in comparison to the total number of applications received.

## **You Said, We Did**

As a result of the 31 responses received during the third consultation, the following substantial revisions and additions were carried out to the document:

- The Design Guide was updated to take account of the new NPPF guidance on achieving 'Beauty' in new development as well as high quality and sustainability. Section 6.5 – Quality Review has been amended to clearly set out the Local Planning Authority's criteria for schemes where Design Review will be strongly encouraged as part of the authority's consideration of a development proposal. A bespoke Quality Review Panel has been set up for SWT district area and it is hoped that this will assist in making judgements on whether a scheme achieves high quality, beauty, and sustainability.
- Throughout the Design Guide, references and photographs were expanded on to encourage the use of contemporary design solutions as well as traditional. The Design Guide emphasises that the guidance should be treated as a springboard for good design rather than a straitjacket for development.
- Design guidance for flood resilience was expanded on in relation to the need for sustainable urban drainage, this was particularly in relation to guidance from the Construction Industry Research and Information Association. This publication has also been included in the References section.
- A new Design Topic on Public Art was included in the guidance. This subject was considered too light touch in the previous consultation drafts. This guidance corresponds to that contained in the Public Realm Design Guide for Taunton Garden Town. It emphasises that public art should not just be thought of as individual pieces of art but should also be integral to building design. It also emphasises the importance of achieving beauty in the built environment.
- The design guidance for achieving the urban block in a layout was also expanded upon to reflect the density requirements and variations shown in the National Model Design Code.

Other Minor Changes included:

- The context and local distinctiveness of the architectural character of Taunton was expanded upon to better reflect the predominant vernacular house types in the settlement.
- The guidance for shopfronts was expanded to include more guidance for signage and advertisements.
- Guidance on Taller Buildings was expanded upon particularly to include SWT's requirements for assessing such proposals and to include latest reference to Historic England guidance.
- Greater guidance was provided for agricultural buildings with their landscape setting, particularly regarding topography and the land profile of a site.
- The section on house types was amended and clarified to show the range and type of house types which are necessary as components to make successful streets and places.
- Greater reference was made to security and safety within layouts and the need to consult the Police Crime Prevention Officer.
- Guidance was also expanded on for the preparation of Heritage Statements in accordance with comments from Historic England.

## **Previous Consultations**

The Design Guide was initially subject to consultation from 3 February to 30 March 2020. Due to the covid pandemic, several consultations were significantly delayed including Somerset County Council (SCC). Following an objection from SCC Highways, detailed discussions took place in a series of workshop sessions between Somerset West and

Taunton and SCC as the Highway Authority.

As a result, on discussions with the Highway Authority, a second formal consultation was carried out on the Design Guide from 11 December to 5 February 2021 on an expanded section in the Design Guide 'Streets, Parking and Placemaking'.

During both previous consultations a number of methods were employed - the Council's consultation portal survey, by email and by post. All organisations, groups and individuals on the Council's Local Plan data base were notified of the consultation by the Strategy Team. In addition, press releases were issued by the Council's Communication Team and the consultations promoted on social media. The Design Guide was available on the Council's website and a copy was also available for inspection at the Council's office at Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton.

In addition, presentations on the Design Guide were carried out on 12 February 2020 at a CPD event for built environment professionals in Taunton, and for housing enabling providers on 27 February 2020. Also, a presentation on the Design Guide was also given to the Council's Agents Panel on 11 December 2020.

Most of the consultees welcomed the Design Guide SPD and were impressed with its attractive layout, illustrative material and its ambition to improve the standard of design. It was particularly welcomed as some consultees considered that the standard of design in the district was generally mediocre and lack local distinctiveness.

Of the 36 respondents to the first consultation and 7 respondents to the second consultation, 4 were from volume house builders already developing major sites in Taunton. The detailed comments from the volume house builders (which often overlap) and SWT's responses to them are show in detail in the summary of consultations in Appendix 1. These can broadly be summarised under the following headings - a) Viability; b) Level of Prescription; c) Local Distinctiveness; and d) Relationship with SCC Highways and parking.

Others comments received from residents, parish councils, amenity bodies etc, can broadly be summarised under the following headings - a) Importance of local distinctiveness; b) Need for active travel and well connected places; c) Need for new development to be as low carbon as possible and d) support for the Design Process.

In addition to comments from external respondents, other specialist officers from the Council provided consultation comments. Representations requested greater emphasis on a) zero carbon in the form of an extra topic, b) the development of smaller sites in order to expand the existing guidance in this area to smaller scale developments, c) agricultural buildings to reflect the rural character of the district.

A number of changes were made following the first and second rounds of consultation, responding to issues raised. Some of these changes were substantial revisions and additions, whilst others were of a smaller nature. For these reasons, the Council published an updated draft for a third round of public consultation before preparing the final draft SPD for adoption.



## **ADOPTION STATEMENT**

### **Somerset West and Taunton Council: Districtwide Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)**

#### **The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012**

In accordance with Regulations 14 & 35 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, notice is given that Somerset West and Taunton Council adopted the Districtwide Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on 7 December 2021.

The SPD contains guidance on Somerset West and Taunton Council's approach in relation to securing high quality design in the district. It supplements policies within the Taunton Deane Core Strategy, the Taunton Deane Site Allocations and Development Management Plan and the West Somerset Local Plan and forms a material consideration to be taken into account when determining planning applications.

Modifications have been made to the SPD as a result of public consultation. These can be viewed in the consultation statement published on the Council's website.

Any person aggrieved by the decision of the council to adopt the Supplementary Planning Document may apply to the High Court for permission to apply for Judicial Review of the decision. Any such application must be made promptly and in any event not later than 3 months after the adoption of the document, as required by Regulation 11 (2(c and d)) of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

#### Location of SPD for Inspection

A copy of the adopted Districtwide Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is available to view free of charge on the Council's website:

<https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/planning-policy/districtwide-design-guide-spd/>

In addition a hard copy of the document is available to view in the Council's Offices:

- Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton, TA1 1HE (Monday – Friday, 8.30am to 5pm)
- West Somerset House, Killick Way, Williton, TA4 4QA (Monday – Friday, 8.30am to 5pm)

For any viewing of the document at Deane House or West Somerset House, due to Covid restrictions, please call to make an appointment 0300 3048000.

The consultation documents can also be viewed online at all libraries in Somerset West and Taunton (please check with the library in question for their opening times).



# **Districtwide Design Guide**

## **SPD**

### ***Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitat Regulations Assessment***

### ***Screening Report***

<b>Version</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Date</b>
1	For internal consultation with Legal	15/03/2021
2	For consultation with Statutory Consultees	04/05/2021
3	To accompany final DWDG to adoption	05/10/2021

# ***Districtwide Design Guide SPD***

## ***SEA/HRA Screening Report***

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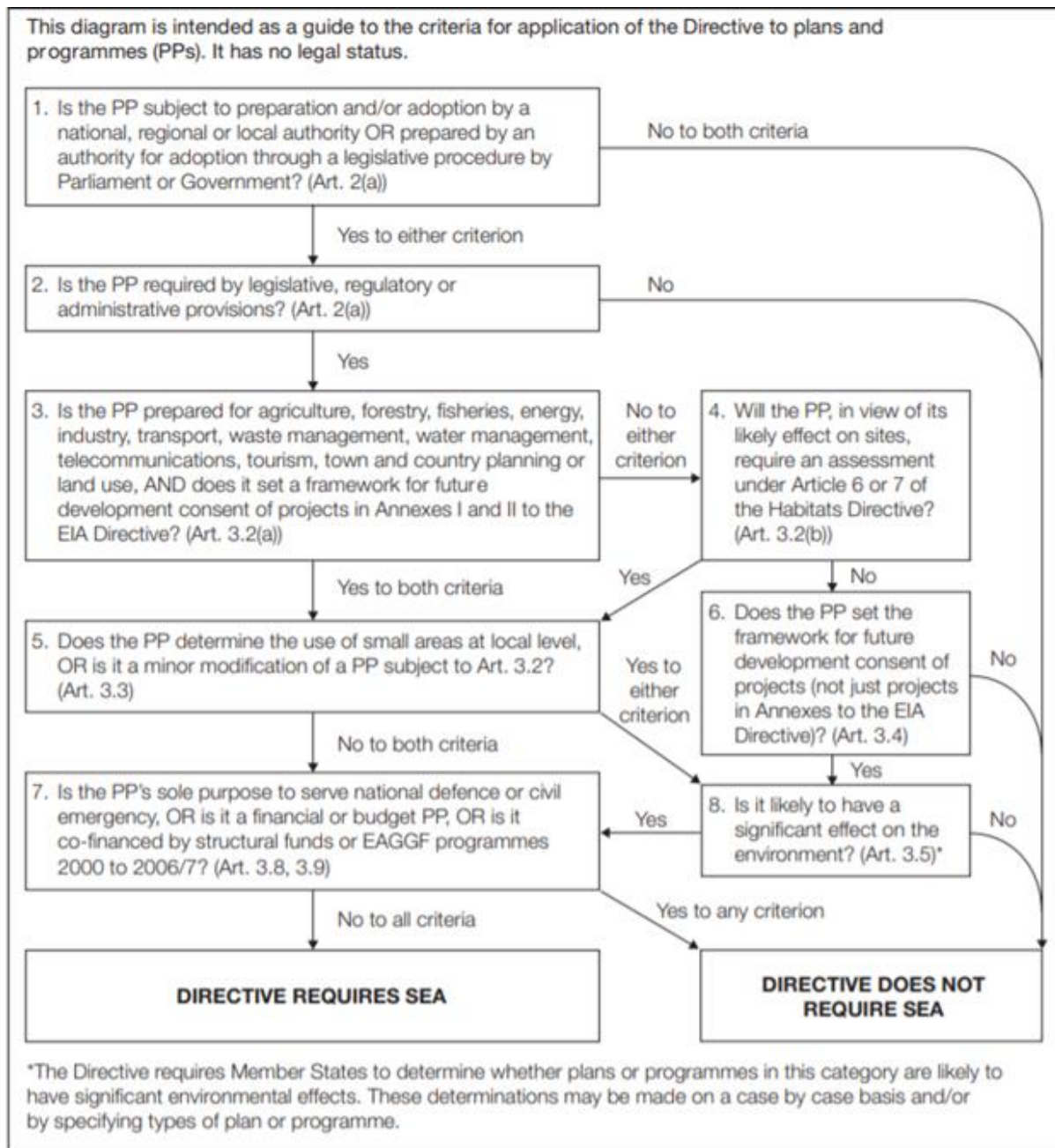
# 1. Introduction and Summary

- 1.1 Somerset West and Taunton Council has produced a Districtwide Design Guide which it intends to adopt as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The purpose of the SPD is to guide planning applications and decisions towards the successful implementation of policies DM4 (Design) of the Taunton Deane Core Strategy, D7 (Design Quality) of the Taunton Deane Site Allocations and Development Management Plan, and NH13 (Securing High Standards of Design) of the West Somerset Local Plan to 2032. The SPD seeks a step change in the quality of new development in the district and provides additional guidance on how these and other relevant policies of the adopted development plan should be responded to in relation to securing high quality design.
- 1.2 The purpose of this Report is to determine whether the Districtwide Design Guide SPD (herein referred to as “the SPD”) should be subject to:
- a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with European Directive 2001/42/EC (SEA Directive) and associated Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (SEA Regulations); or
  - a Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) in accordance with Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive and with Regulation 61 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010.
- 1.3 Under the above pieces of legislation, an SEA is required for all plans which may have a significant effect on the environment; and an HRA is required when it is deemed that the implementation of the plan is likely to cause significant negative effects upon protected European Sites (Natura 2000 sites).
- 1.4 The conclusion of the assessment is that the SPD does not require full SEA or HRA to be conducted.**
- 1.5 A Draft Screening Report was sent to the three statutory consultees designated in the regulations (Historic England, Environment Agency and Natural England) for their views. This final report has been informed by comments received.

## 2. SEA Screening

- 2.1 The basis for Strategic Environmental Assessments and Sustainability Appraisal legislation is European Directive 2001/42/EC (SEA Directive), transposed into English law by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (SEA Regulations). Detailed guidance on these regulations can be found in the Government publication 'A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive' (ODPM 2005).
- 2.2 The objective of SEA is *"to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of development plans... with a view to promoting sustainable development"* EU Directive 2001/42/EC (Article 1).
- 2.3 Under Article 2(a) of the SEA Directive, a plan or programme requires an SEA to be conducted where it is:
- *"subject to preparation and/or adoption by an authority at national, regional or local level or which are prepared by an authority for adoption, through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government, and*
  - *required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions."*
- According to the ODPM guidance, "administrative provisions" are *"likely to be that they are publicly available, prepared in a formal way, probably involving consultation with interested parties. The administrative provision must have sufficient formality such that it counts as a "provision" and it must also use language that plainly requires rather than just encourages a plan or programme to be prepared"*.
- 2.4 The National Planning Practice Guidance states that *"In exceptional circumstances a Strategic Environmental Assessment may be required when producing a Supplementary Planning Document"* (Paragraph: 008 Reference ID: 61-008-20190315). Therefore, the Council is legally obliged to advise on whether it is their opinion that an SEA is required or not.
- 2.5 In order to determine whether or not an SEA is required, a "screening" exercise has been undertaken by the Council. The screening evaluates the contents of the SPD against the criteria set out in the SEA Directive. These criteria are presented over the page in Figure 1.
- 2.6 Should the screening conclude that the SPD is applicable and will have a "significant impact on the environment", then a full SEA will be required. Should the conclusion be that an SEA is not required, then any future significant variations or additions to the SPD will need to be subject to further screening.

Figure 1 – Application of the SEA Directive to plans and programmes



### ***The Districtwide Design Guide SPD***

2.7 The SPD builds on and has been produced pursuant to adopted policies DM4 (Design) of the Taunton Deane Core Strategy, D7 (Design Quality) of the Taunton Deane Site Allocations and Development Management Plan, and NH13 (Securing High Standards of Design) of the West Somerset Local Plan to 2032. The purpose of the SPD is to seek a step change in the quality of new development in the district and guide planning applications and decisions towards the successful implementation of the above and other relevant policies of the adopted development plan, providing additional guidance as to how they should be responded to in relation to securing high quality design.

- 2.8 The SPD illustrates how the council's aspirations for maintaining and improving the quality of design can be achieved. It explains some key principles, such as placemaking and illustrates examples through indicative drawings. It demonstrates that many measures to reduce the harmful effects of climate change can be addressed within the context of good design and placemaking. It also attempts to show how current principles of highway design and layout can be incorporated into good placemaking.
- 2.9 The SPD is predominantly focussed on the range of new build residential development at all scales. However, the main recommendations and suggested design process are relevant to the majority of development types. The Guide also addresses the conversion and extension of existing buildings, whether heritage assets or not.
- 2.10 The SPD covers the area of the Local Planning Authority, which covers the Somerset West and Taunton Council area excluding areas within Exmoor National Park (which is its own Local Planning Authority).
- 2.11 The SPD has been compiled with the intention of being a springboard for good design, sensitive to its context, not a straitjacket requiring strict adherence to a particular aesthetic. The processes, principles, diagrams, illustrations, topics and associated advice and guidance included within seek to amplify existing requirements of adopted planning policies and provide guidance on how these requirements can be successfully responded to. Therefore, and by definition, the SPD sits as supplementary to these adopted plans. The SPD includes no policies and does not allocate any land for development.
- 2.12 The Districtwide Design Guide will be adopted as SPD and as such become a material consideration in the determination of relevant planning applications. This means that the SPD will carry weight in the decision-making process, although it will not in itself be part of the adopted development plan. Planning applications should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Provided regard is had to all material considerations, it is for the decision maker to decide what weight is to be given to the material considerations in each case.

### **The SEA Screening Assessment**

- 2.13 Table 1, below contains the criteria from Figure 1, above. It identifies whether the Council considers the answer to each criterion to be Yes or No, and gives the reason for this conclusion.

Stage	Y/N	Reason
1. Is the Plan or Programme (PP) subject to preparation and/or adoption by a national, regional or local authority <b>OR</b> prepared by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government? (Art. 2(a))	Y	The SPD has been prepared and will be adopted as SPD by Somerset West and Taunton Council in line with the procedure set out in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the Town and Country Planning (Local Plans)(England) Regulations 2012.
2. Is the PP required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? (Art. 2(a))	Y	The SPD is not formally <i>required</i> by any legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions. However, Paragraph 128 of the NPPF states that " <i>To provide maximum</i>

		<p><i>clarity about design expectations at an early stage, all local planning authorities should prepare design guides or codes consistent with the principles set out in the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code, and which reflect local character and design”, paragraph 129 states that “to carry weight in decision-making should be produced either as part of a plan or as supplementary planning documents” and the national Planning Practice Guidance suggests that “to be given as much weight as possible in the decision-making process, Design Guides should be adopted as SPDs”. So, whilst a design guide is not required, it is recommended/encouraged. The SPD will be publicly available and has been prepared in accordance with the above mentioned legislative and regulatory processes.</i></p>
<p>3. Is the PP prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use, <b>AND</b> does it set a framework for future development consent of projects in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive? (Art 3.2(a))</p>	N	<p>The SPD has been prepared for the purposes of town and country planning and informing consideration of development proposals which may include those associated with forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism and other land uses, including potentially in relation to some of the projects referred to in Annex I and/or II of the EIA Directive. However, the SPD does not set the framework for future development consent of such projects as this is already set by the existing adopted local plans covering the SWT district. The SPD merely provides additional guidance in relation to the design of such development proposals, and how specific adopted planning policies might be responded to in relation to securing high quality design.</p>
<p>4. Will the PP, in view of its likely effect on sites, require an assessment under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive? (Art. 3.2(b))</p>	N	<p>See section 3 of this Screening Report in relation to HRA Screening.</p>
<p>6. Does the PP set the framework for future development consent of projects (not just projects in Annexes to the EIA Directive)? (Art. 3.4)</p>	N	<p>The SPD does not set the framework for future development consent of such projects as this is already set by the existing adopted local plans covering the SWT district. The SPD merely provides</p>



		additional guidance in relation to the design of such development proposals, and how specific adopted planning policies might be responded to in relation to securing high quality design. The SPD does contain specific criteria and conditions designed to guide development proposals in responding to adopted planning policies, which the Council as the Local Planning Authority would take account of as a material consideration in determining an application for planning permission. However this is pursuant to the already adopted planning policies which have previously been subject to Sustainability Appraisal (SA) incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). In addition, the SPD will influence the production of a new Local Plan, the policies of which will be subject to SA/SEA as a matter of course in the development of that Plan.
8. Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment? (Art. 3.5)	N	See screening assessment for environmental effects in Table 2 of this report, below.

2.14 Criterion 8 requires an assessment of whether the SPD is likely to have a significant effect on the environment in reference to Article 3.5 of the SEA Directive. Schedule 1, Annex II of the SEA Regulations contains the criteria for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment. Table 2, below contains the criteria from Schedule 1 Annex II of the SEA Regulations and an assessment of whether the Plan would likely have a significant environmental effect or not.

Table 2 – Environmental impact screening assessment

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Schedule 1 of SEA regulations)	Is the strategy likely to have a significant environmental effect?	Justification for Screening Assessment
The characteristics of plans and programmes:		
a) the degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating	N	The SPD has been produced in conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework and influenced by the Planning Practice Guidance and National Design Guide. The SPD provides guidance as to how development proposals should respond to existing adopted planning policies including with regards to their detailed location (within

<p>conditions or by allocating resources;</p>		<p>a site rather than where the site is) and the nature of the development's design which may include the size and influence the operation conditions of the prospective development. However, the framework is set by the adopted development plan policies. The SPD will not influence the spatial distribution, scale or type of development that may come forward across the district, or suggest how appropriate or otherwise a development might be in relation to these factors, which are set by the development plan. The SPD does not allocate any resources. The overall intent of the SPD is to encourage and guide development towards delivering on the positive environmental and sustainable design requirements of adopted planning policy.</p>
<p>b) the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy;</p>	<p>N</p>	<p>The SPD has been produced in conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework and influenced by the Planning Practice Guidance and National Design Guide. It will influence the development of site-specific masterplans, design codes and other design processes which would be prepared by planning applicants in order to respond to existing adopted planning policies. The SPD will influence policy development for a new Local Plan, however, the new Local Plan will, once prepared and adopted sit above the SPD in the hierarchy and will be subject to its own Assessment. In this way, the SPD will influence the production of other plans and programmes. However, it is considered that the degree of influence of the SPD is limited in relation to these plans and programmes which will be influenced by a wide range of factors. With regards to influence of site-specific design processes the SPD is intended to influence these to a high degree, and it should therefore result in positive environmental effects, particularly with regards to the immediate built (including historic) and natural environment in and around a site. However, as just one factor influencing development proposals, and as a material consideration only, it is unlikely that the SPD would have a significant effect on proposals, or any environmental effects which may arise from a specific development proposal which will be far more influenced by site context, developer intentions, adopted</p>

		<p>planning policy, and national policy and guidance. Furthermore, the illustrative nature of much of the guidance contained within is intended to provide examples of how developments might respond to particular topics in responding to adopted planning policy and in some cases aspiring to higher standards, but do not set requirements in themselves. With regards to a new Local Plan, the degree of influence is much less, and the new Plan would have the freedom to choose to take a different path on issues covered by the SPD if so wished as it will be subject to a separate Assessment.</p>
<p>c) the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development;</p>	N	<p>The SPD is specifically aimed at promoting sustainable development, but has a particular focus on design. The high quality design that the SPD promotes is integral to sustainable development and will result in environmental (e.g. visual impact), social (e.g. health and wellbeing improvement) and economic (e.g. encouraging inward investment) benefits to the area. The SPD does not cover all aspects of sustainable development, however, this is not its intention or place. The integration of a wide range of social, economic and environmental factors has already been assessed and achieved via the existing adopted development plans. The relevance and influence of the SPD will be balanced in decision making alongside all relevant policies of the development plan and other material considerations with a view to promoting sustainable development in the round. Therefore, the SPD has relevance to the integration of environmental considerations as part of promoting sustainable development. However, the effects of the SPD in this regard are unlikely to be significant as the balance of different social, economic and environmental factors is already determined at a strategic level by the adopted development plan and will be balanced on a case-by-case basis in determination of planning applications.</p>
<p>d) environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme;</p>	N	<p>The SPD addresses environmental problems associated with the design of places, buildings and the spaces in between, specifically aiming to result in development which avoids and minimises and mitigates negative design-associated environmental impacts. This includes promoting positive</p>

		<p>strategies for the avoidance, minimising and mitigation of environmental problems such as landscape and visual impact, impacts upon designated and non-designated heritage assets, air quality, flood risk, health and wellbeing, carbon emissions and resilience to climate change amongst others. The SPD will not be the only factor informing the design response of development proposals in relation to these environmental problems. Therefore, it is difficult to quantify the contribution of the SPD as a part of this. The SPD is designed to encourage positive responses, building on local and national policies and guidance, resulting in positive impacts and effects upon the environment. However, the effects of the SPD in this regard are unlikely to be significant as the adopted development plan is the primary driver for how developments will respond to these issues. The SPD provides additional guidance to help clarify how development proposals can meet with existing policy requirements in this regard.</p>
e) the relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (for example, plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).	N	The SPD is not directly relevant to the implementation of European legislation including the Water Framework Directive.
<b>Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected:</b>		
a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects;	N	The SPD is intended to encourage development proposals which deliver positive environmental effects. The likelihood of these effects occurring is unknown as this is dependent on consideration and determination of individual planning applications where the full range of planning policies and material considerations must be taken into account. However, the intention would be that the SPD generally influences development proposals to deliver positive environmental effects in every case, and once implemented, these effects would generally be permanent. However, the environmental effects resulting from application of the SPD are unlikely to be significant.

b) the cumulative nature of the effects;	N	The SPD will in combination with other plans, policies and guidance of this nature locally, regionally, nationally and internationally, have a positive effect on the environment, and the strength of these plans, policies and guidance is amplified when consistent and considered together. However, in isolation, its effects will be more limited and are unlikely to be significant whether alone or cumulatively.
c) the transboundary nature of the effects;	N	There would be no transboundary effects.
d) the risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents);	N	The SPD promotes high quality sustainable design which would contribute towards the mitigation of risks to human health and the environment, including in relation to health and wellbeing (for instance through placemaking and street design which encourages walking and cycling which may result in reduced air quality concerns and improved physical and mental health for individuals). However, the specific impacts of the SPD guidance in relation to specific development proposals, and the effects these result in are not clear at this stage. However, the effects are likely to be positive although unlikely to be significant.
e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);	N	The SPD covers the extent of the Somerset West and Taunton Local Planning Authority area (i.e. the district minus those areas within Exmoor National Park). The SPD will influence development proposals, and as such will therefore only be relevant to specific areas and populations within the district where development takes place. Generally, the effects are likely to be positive and unlikely to be significant.
f) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to – i) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage; ii) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or iii) intensive land-use; and	N	The district of Somerset West and Taunton has a number of special natural, cultural and heritage characteristics which are specific to the district or wider area, including a relatively high concentration of historical assets including Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas and Scheduled Ancient Monuments. The SPD identifies these characteristics and provides guidance on how development proposals should respond to these in different cases and locations across the district. As such the SPD should contribute towards positive effects on these areas of the district, which may otherwise be adversely impacted by development proposals. The district includes natural areas particularly vulnerable

		to exceedance of environmental quality standards, including in relation to phosphate loading of the Somerset Levels and Moors Ramsar site. The SPD is unlikely to directly influence or impact upon this vulnerability or the unfavourable status of this protected site, However, strategies for mitigating impacts upon the site may be able to build upon objectives for Green Infrastructure and sustainable drainage solutions advocated by the SPD. The district hosts two Air Quality Management Zones. Successful implementation of the SPD may help to reduce air quality impacts of new development on these and other areas through the creation of streets and places which foster sustainable movement. The SPD encourages development proposals to make best use of land, including through appropriate intensification of the urban area and development of infill plots, however, the high quality design it seeks to deliver would avoid inappropriately intensive land use.
g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.	N	The SPD is intended to promote design solutions which respond effectively and appropriately to the contexts in which they are sited, including in relation to protected and valued landscapes. The SPD covers the parts of the Quantock Hills and Blackdown Hills AONBs which fall within the district as well as areas which fall outside these designations but would impact upon their settings. The setting of Exmoor National Park is also a key consideration in parts of the district covered by the SPD. The environmental effects upon these designations resulting from this SPD are likely to be positive and unlikely to be significant.

### ***SEA Screening Conclusion***

- 2.15 **It is the opinion of the Council that the Districtwide Design Guide SPD does not require Strategic Environmental Assessment. However, it is important that as relevant individual development proposals are developed, they are subject to project level Environmental Assessment as appropriate, in order to understand whether significant effects may arise.**

### 3. HRA Screening

- 3.1 The basis for Habitat Regulations Assessment legislation is the European Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (Habitats Directive), transposed into English law by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (Habitat Regulations).
- 3.2 The Habitats Directive and Regulations afford protection to plants, animals and habitats that are rare and vulnerable in a European context. Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) is a systematic process through which plans or projects are assessed for likely impact on the integrity of European Sites. European Sites, (also referred to as Natura 2000 sites), consist of Special Protection Areas (SPA), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC); Potential Special Protection Areas and candidate Special Areas of Conservation (pSPA and cSAC); and listed or proposed Ramsar sites.
- 3.3 There are seven Natura 2000 sites within the Somerset West and Taunton district, as set out in Table 3 below:

Table 3 – European Sites / Natura 2000 sites within Somerset West and Taunton district.

European Sites / Natura 2000 sites
Exmoor and Quantock Oak Woodlands SAC
Hestercombe House SAC
Holme and Clean Moor SAC
Quants SAC
Severn Estuary SPA/SAC/Ramsar
Somerset Levels and Moors SPA/Ramsar
Exmoor Heaths SAC

- 3.4 Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive states that:  
*“Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans and projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site’s conservation objectives”.*
- 3.5 Under the Habitat Regulations, the Council is considered to be a “competent authority”. Regulation 63(1) of the Habitat Regulations states that:  
*“A competent authority, before deciding to undertake, or give any consent, permission or other authorisation for, a plan or project which –*  
*a) is likely to have a significant effect on a European site or a European offshore marine site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), and*  
*b) is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of that site,*  
*must make an appropriate assessment of the implications of the plan or project for that site in view of that site’s conservation objectives.”*
- 3.6 The first stage of the HRA process is to establish whether a “*significant effect*” is likely. This is referred to as screening. If the screening assessment concludes that a significant effect is not likely then no further action is required. If the screening assessment identifies potential effects and deems them to be significant, then further “*Appropriate Assessment*” is required.

- 3.7 In order to establish whether the SPD is likely to have any significant effects upon the European Sites, this Screening assessment considers the SPD in relation to four steps based around the Screening methodology set out in the Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (European Commission 2001) as set out in Table 4, below.

Table 4 – Screening steps and responses

Question	Y/N	Reason
1. Is the PP directly connected with, or necessary to the management of a European site for nature conservation?	N	The SPD provides detailed guidance on the implementation of existing planning policies relating to the design of new development. In theory, new development proposals connected with or necessary to the management of a European site could come forward and in which case the SPD would be a material consideration in the determination of any related planning application. However, this is unlikely and the SPD does not directly influence or set policy necessary to the management of any European Site.
2. Are there any other PPs that could in combination with this PP have potential to have significant effects upon a European Site?	Y	The SPD has been produced pursuant to existing adopted planning policies in the adopted development plan, the comprising plans of which and the specific policies off of which this SPD hangs have been all been subject to Appropriate Assessment. As a result of this, the adopted plans include policies and mitigations to ensure that significant effects do not arise in relation to the European Sites. Subsequent to adoption of these existing adopted development plans, an issue has arisen whereby it has been identified that new development is contributing towards unacceptable phosphate levels in the Somerset Levels and Moors. The result of this is that the Somerset Levels and Moors Ramsar site is considered to be in an 'unfavourable state' and as such there is currently a constraint on the consent of new development which may result in further raising of phosphate levels until such point when a suitable mitigation solution has been identified and developed through a Phosphates Strategy. The effect of the SPD in combination with current adopted planning policies and the emerging Phosphates Strategy and other material considerations is that there are multiple, sometimes competing factors which new development has to try and respond to / satisfy. In some cases, development viability may result in a need to prioritise different elements whilst retaining the need to contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development. In this case, mitigating phosphate impacts upon the Somerset Levels and Moors and any other potential significant effects of a proposed development upon European Sites would need to take priority over compliance with the SPD. It's status as an SPD and material consideration in the determination of planning applications means that where necessary and



		appropriate there can be flexibility for development proposals in their responses. There may be synergies between the implementation of the SPD and ensuring no significant effects arise from new development, particularly in relation to Green Infrastructure and sustainable drainage solutions advocated by the SPD. A new Local Plan (the production of which will be influenced by the SPD) may have potential to have significant effects upon a European Site. However, these effects are not yet known and the Local Plan process will be subject to Appropriate Assessment as a matter of course. The HRA published alongside the Local Plan 2040 Issues and Options document earlier in 2020 describes the characteristics and potential issues of relevance for each of the European Sites and assesses the Local Plan policy options for likely effects upon the Sites.
3. Are there likely to be any potential effects upon the identified European Site(s)?	N	The SPD has been produced pursuant to existing adopted planning policies in the adopted development plan, the comprising plans of which and the specific policies off of which this SPD hangs have been all been subject to Appropriate Assessment. As a result of this, the adopted plans include policies and mitigations to ensure that significant effects do not arise in relation to the European Sites. The SPD will not result in development itself, rather guide development in relation to high quality design and responding to these existing adopted planning policies. As such, there are not anticipated to be any likely potential effects upon the identified European Sites as a result of the SPD.
4. What is the significance of the effects upon the identified European Site(s)?	N/A	No likely potential effects are anticipated as a result of the SPD.

### ***HRA Screening Conclusion***

**3.8 It is the opinion of the Council that the Districtwide Design Guide SPD does not require Appropriate Assessment under HRA legislation. However, it is important that as the detail of relevant individual projects developed, they are screened so that it can be understood whether significant effects may arise.**



# Somerset Equality Impact Assessment

The [EIA guidance notes](#) will help you complete this assessment.

If you need help or advice please contact Paul Harding. [P.harding@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk](mailto:P.harding@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk)

**Organisation prepared for**

**Somerset West and Taunton Council**

**Version**

**1**

**Date Completed**

**30 September 2021**

## Description of what proposed change or policy is being impact assessed

The Somerset West and Taunton Districtwide Design Guide is a new planning policy guidance document under the adopted Local Plan and is proposed to be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document. Once adopted the SPD would be a material consideration when considering any planning applications. The Design Guide sets out the Council's aspirations for improving the quality of design in all types of new development and provides guidance for creating resilient and sustainable built environments which are responsive to everyone, regardless of age, ability, gender and income.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code advocate that local authorities produce design guides as a means to achieve a higher quality of development which addresses the aims above. The NPPF recommends Design Guides should be adopted as SPD's in order they are given as much weight as possible in the decision making process.

The document has been subject to three separate public consultations over an 18-month period (minimum of 6 weeks each) and has involved consultation with an extensive range of stakeholders, including all those shown in Appendix A of the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement.

This SPD provides clear guidance for the creation of high quality buildings and places. Para 124 of the NPPF states that 'Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities'. The Council places equal importance on the creation of sustainable placemaking as well as accessibility for all, particularly for those people from the disabled community.

As part of the preparation of the document several workshops took place with SCC Highways to inform its preparation, particularly on the section Streets, Places and Parking. This has involved SCC officers also updating their own highways guidance.

## Evidence

**What data/information have you used to assess how this policy/service might impact on protected groups?** Sources such as the [Office of National Statistics](#), [Somerset Intelligence Partnership](#), [Somerset's Joint Strategic Needs Analysis \(JSNA\)](#), Staff and/ or [area profiles](#), should be detailed here

The Somerset West and Taunton Districtwide Design Guide has been reviewed.

This design guide document builds upon advice set out in NHCLG's National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code.

It also builds on work undertaken in the development and approval of other 'live' strategies:

- SWT Corporate Strategy;
- Taunton Garden Town Vision;
- Taunton Garden Town Charter and Checklist
- SWT Economic Development strategy;
- Improving Lives in Somerset (Health & Wellbeing) 2019-2028,
- Somerset Housing Strategy -2019-2023,
- Somerset Growth Plan 2017-2030

Each of the above which have been evidence-based using such sources as Office of National Statistics, Somerset Intelligence Partnership, Somerset's Joint Strategic Needs Analysis (JSNA).

**Who have you consulted with to assess possible impact on protected groups?** If you have not consulted other people, please explain why?

Officers within the Council with an overview of the Equalities function, who have experience of identifying impacts on those with protected characteristics have been consulted for this initial identification of potential impacts.

The SPD document has been subject to three separate public consultations (for a minimum of 6 weeks each consultation). These consultations have included the relevant community and interest groups and individuals associated with protected characteristics.

The groups consulted in the consultation events have included the below organisations:

- i) Disability groups – Action on Disability and Development, Alzheimer's Society – Somerset, Autism Somerset, Bridgwater & Taunton Deane Deaf Club, Compass Disability Services, ESCAPE Support Groups, Maggie's Centre (Cancer Care),

- Mind in Taunton & West Somerset, RNID (Action on Hearing Loss), Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB), Somerset Sight, Taunton and District Mencap Society.
- ii) Diversity groups – Avatar Indian Dance Somerset, British Bangladeshi Association Somerset, CHARIS, Devon and Somerset Anglo-Scandinavian Society, Diversity Voice, Johnny Mars Foundations, Minehead and District Refugee Support Group, Minehead Methodist Church- Little Fishes Toddler Group, Multicultural Parents Group, Oakwood Church, Philippine International Neighbourhood Association of Somerset (PINAS), Polish Association Taunton, Polish Voice TV, RAISE (Racial Awareness Inclusion Support and Education CIC, Somerset Art Works, Somerset Film, Somerset Gypsy and Traveller Forum, Somerset Portuguese Association, South Somerset Filipinos and Friends Association (SSFFA), Syrian Women’s Group, Taunton Malayali Prayer Group, Taunton Welcomes Refugees, Under One Sun, West Somerset Inter-Cultural Friendship Society, YMCA Somerset Coast
- iii) Multicultural groups – Anglo Chinese Society, Equality & Human Rights Commission, Ethnic Minority Achievement and Traveller Education Service, Friends Families and Travellers, Somerset Multicultural Association, Taunton Deane Polish Association, The Diversity Trust.
- iv) Religious Groups – Bahai Community, Catholic Church Clifton Diocese, Diocese of Bath and Wells, Diocese of Bath and Wells – Community Cohesion, Humanists, Jewish Community of Somerset, Minehead Baptist Church, Somerset Churches Together, Taunton Deane and South Sedgemoor Methodist Circuit.
- v) Other Voluntary Groups – 10 Parishes, Age UK Somerset, Arc Inspire (Taunton Association for the Homeless), Campaign to Protect Rural England (Somerset), Citizens Advice Bureau (Taunton), Citizens Advice Bureau (West Somerset), Community Council for Somerset, Creating Learning Opportunities in Western Somerset (CLOWNS), Cycle Somerset, Engage West Somerset, Forum 21, FWAG South West England Office, Home Builders Federation, Minehead Conservation Society, Onion Collective CIC, People Plus, Quantock Eco, RSPB South West England, Somerset Activity & Sports Partnership, Somerset Association of Local Council’s, Somerset County Federation of Women’s Institutes, Somerset Gay Health, Somerset Lesbian Network (SLN), Somerset Playing Field’s Association, Somerset Wildlife Trust, Somerset Youth Partnership, South West Seniors Forum, Sparkle Somerset, SUSTRANS, Taunton Area Cycling Campaign, Taunton Deane Tenants Forum, Taunton Open Door, Taunton Ramblers, Taunton Women’s Aid, The Exmoor Society, Transition Minehead and Alcombe, Transition Town Taunton, Taunton Deane Village Agent (East), Wellington & District Sports Federation, West Somerset Village Agent 1, West Somerset Village Agent 2, West Somerset and Exmoor Bridleways, West Somerset LETS Group, Wivey Action on Climate and Environment, Women’s Equality Network Somerset (WENS), YMCA – Taunton.

No representations were received from any of the above groups as part of the consultations carried out. Similarly, no representations were received from individuals suggesting that any changes be made to the draft document.

It is important to understand that where a planning application is brought forward it would be subject to additional public consultation on the details of the particular scheme and its impact on the community, including people with Protected Characteristics.

**Analysis of impact on protected groups**

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires us to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations with protected groups. Consider how this policy/service will achieve these aims. In the table below, using the evidence outlined above and your own understanding, detail what considerations and potential impacts against each of the three aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty. Based on this information, make an assessment of the likely outcome, before you have implemented any mitigation.

Protected group	Summary of impact	Negative outcome	Neutral outcome	Positive outcome
Age	<p>No negative impacts identified.</p> <p>All members of the community, including the protected groups, should benefit from the guidance set out in The Somerset West and Taunton Districtwide Design Guide, since this guidance will help improve the quality of design in the district by creating sustainable locally distinctive development and better places in which to live and work.</p> <p>The aim is to create streets and places for everyone, walkers, cyclists, drivers and all ages/abilities.</p> <p>A principle of the guidance is to encourage the provision of life time homes.</p> <p>The guidance shows how developing safe environments and active frontages may improve the safety of places and the feeling of safety.</p> <p>The guidance advocates that seating should be provided in main places.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

	The guidance advocates that Design & Access Statement should ensure that development proposals will be equally accessible to all users, residents and visitors.			
<b>Disability</b>	<p>No negative impacts identified.</p> <p>All members of the community, including the protected groups, should benefit from the guidance set out in The Somerset West and Taunton Districtwide Design Guide, since this guidance will help improve the quality of design in the district by creating sustainable locally distinctive development and better places in which to live and work.</p> <p>The aim is to create streets and places for everyone, walkers, cyclists, drivers and all ages/abilities.</p> <p>A principle of the guidance is to encourage the provision of life time homes, this includes wheelchair accessible dwellings.</p> <p>The guidance shows how developing safe environments and active frontages may improve the safety of places and the feeling of safety.</p> <p>The guidance advocates that Design &amp; Access Statement should ensure that development proposals will be equally accessible to all users, residents and visitors.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Gender reassignment</b>	<p>No negative impacts identified.</p> <p>All members of the community, including the protected groups, should benefit from the guidance set out in The Somerset West and Taunton Districtwide Design Guide, since this guidance will help improve the quality of design in the district by creating sustainable locally distinctive development and better places in which to live and work.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

	<p>The guidance shows how developing safe environments and active frontages may improve the safety of places and the feeling of safety.</p> <p>The guidance advocates that Design &amp; Access Statement should ensure that development proposals will be equally accessible to all users, residents and visitors.</p>			
<b>Marriage and civil partnership</b>	<p>No negative impacts identified.</p> <p>All members of the community, including the protected groups, should benefit from the guidance set out in The Somerset West and Taunton Districtwide Design Guide, since this guidance will help improve the quality of design in the district by creating sustainable locally distinctive development and better places in which to live and work.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b>	<p>No negative impacts identified.</p> <p>All members of the community, including the protected groups, should benefit from the guidance set out in The Somerset West and Taunton Districtwide Design Guide, since this guidance will help improve the quality of design in the district by creating sustainable locally distinctive development and better places in which to live and work.</p> <p>The guidance shows how developing safe environments and active frontages may improve the safety of places and the feeling of safety.</p> <p>The aim is to create streets and places for everyone, walkers, cyclists, drivers and all ages/abilities. This would include mothers with pushchairs and buggies.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>



<p><b>Race and ethnicity</b></p>	<p>No negative impacts identified.</p> <p>All members of the community, including the protected groups, should benefit from the guidance set out in The Somerset West and Taunton Districtwide Design Guide, since this guidance will help improve the quality of design in the district by creating sustainable locally distinctive development and better places in which to live and work.</p> <p>The guidance shows how developing safe environments and active frontages may improve the safety of places and the feeling of safety.</p>	□	□	☒
<p><b>Religion or belief</b></p>	<p>No negative impacts identified.</p> <p>All members of the community, including the protected groups, should benefit from the guidance set out in The Somerset West and Taunton Districtwide Design Guide, since this guidance will help improve the quality of design in the district by creating sustainable locally distinctive development and better places in which to live and work.</p> <p>The guidance shows how developing safe environments and active frontages may improve the safety of places and the feeling of safety.</p>	□	□	☒
<p><b>Sex</b></p>	<p>No negative impacts identified.</p> <p>All members of the community, including the protected groups, should benefit from the guidance set out in The Somerset West and Taunton Districtwide Design Guide, since this guidance will help improve the quality of design in the district by creating sustainable locally distinctive development and better places in which to live and work.</p>	□	□	☒

	<p>The guidance shows how developing safe environments and active frontages may improve the safety of places and the feeling of safety. This can be of particular importance to lone women at night.</p> <p>The guidance advocates that Design &amp; Access Statement should ensure that development proposals will be equally accessible to all users, residents and visitors.</p>			
<p><b>Sexual orientation</b></p>	<p>No negative impacts identified.</p> <p>All members of the community, including the protected groups, should benefit from the guidance set out in The Somerset West and Taunton Districtwide Design Guide, since this guidance will help improve the quality of design in the district by creating sustainable locally distinctive development and better places in which to live and work.</p> <p>The guidance shows how developing safe environments and active frontages may improve the safety of places and the feeling of safety.</p>	□	□	☒
<p><b>Other, e.g. carers, veterans, homeless, low income, rurality/isolation, etc.</b></p>	<p>No negative impacts identified.</p> <p>All members of the community, including the protected groups, should benefit from the guidance set out in The Somerset West and Taunton Districtwide Design Guide, since this guidance will help improve the quality of design in the district by creating sustainable locally distinctive development and better places in which to live and work.</p> <p>The aim is to create streets and places for everyone, walkers, cyclists, drivers and all ages/abilities. This would include carers assisting people in wheelchairs, pushchairs and buggies.</p>	□	□	☒

**Negative outcomes action plan**

Where you have ascertained that there will potentially be negative outcomes, you are required to mitigate the impact of these. Please detail below the actions that you intend to take.

Action taken/to be taken	Date	Person responsible	How will it be monitored?	Action complete
N/A	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>

**If negative impacts remain, please provide an explanation below.**

--

**Completed by:** Fiona Webb, Placemaking Specialist

**Date** 30/09/2021

**Signed off by:**

<b>Date</b>	
<b>Equality Lead/Manager sign off date:</b>	
<b>To be reviewed by: (officer name)</b>	
<b>Review date:</b>	

# **Somerset West and Taunton Council**

## **Executive – 17 November 2021**

### **Public Realm Design Guide for Taunton Garden Town – Review of Public Consultation and Adoption as Supplementary Planning Document**

**This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Member Mike Rigby**

**Report Author: Fiona Webb - Placemaking Specialist**

#### Executive Summary / Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval of the Public Realm Design Guide for Taunton Garden Town, prior to progressing to Full Council for formal adoption as a Supplementary Planning Document (“SPD”). The SPD has been produced pursuant to policies DM4 of the Taunton Deane Core Strategy and D7 of the Taunton Deane Site Allocations and Development Management Plan, to provide additional guidance on how these and other relevant policies of the adopted development plan should be responded to in relation to securing high quality public realm design in Taunton Garden Town.
- 1.2 The Public Realm Design Guide for Taunton Garden Town was subject to technical stakeholder consultation from 3 February to 30 March 2020, since it was initially proposed to adopt this document as a material technical consideration. With the government’s significant agenda to increase local walking and cycling capacity and the public’s much heightened awareness of the importance of public open space since Covid, it was considered that full public consultation would be beneficial in order to adopt the document as SPD and provide greater weight to the importance of this matter. As a result, formal consultation was carried out for the Public Realm Design Guide from 11 December to 5 February 2021. Following on from SWT’s approval of its Climate Positive Planning guidance, there were several responses that considered that the Council was not going far enough in its response on climate change. As a result it was further updated to provide a greater focus on the climate and ecological emergency. This also coincided with the release by government of the National Design Guide 2021 and the National Model Design Code which also required an update of the draft Public Realm Design Guide. For this reason, and to ensure that the draft Public Realm Design Guide could be adopted as SPD, it was considered appropriate to carry out a third consultation between 5 July and 16 August 2021.
- 1.3. Following receipt of the comments on the draft document and consideration of the points received changes proposed to the draft document have now been prepared and the draft amended. The emerging Public Realm Design Guide for Taunton Garden Town is now brought forward as an SPD and adopted as a material planning consideration for the preparation of masterplans, pre-application advice, assessing planning applications and any other development management purposes that result in proposals for works in public open space.

## Recommendations

### 2.1. Recommendations are that Executive resolves to:

- 1) Approve the Public Realm Design Guide to be put forward to Full Council for adoption as a Supplementary Planning Document and a material planning consideration in the preparation of masterplans, pre-application advice, assessing planning applications and any other development management purposes within Taunton Garden Town.
- 2) Having considered the consultation responses, note the outcomes of the consultations on the draft Public Realm Design Guide for Taunton Garden Town, undertaken 3 February to 30 March 2020, 11 December to 5 February 2021 and 5 July to Monday 16 August 2021 as set out in the consultation statement in Appendix 1 of this report.
- 3) Agree that the Director of Development & Place in consultation with the Planning and Transport Portfolio Holder be authorised to approve and make minor amendments to the Public Realm Design Guide for Taunton Garden Town Supplementary Planning Document prior to the final publication

## Risk Assessment

- 3.1 SPD's must be consistent with national planning policy, must undergo consultation and must be in conformity with policies contained within an adopted Local Plan. Potential risks that might impact on the preparation and timely delivery of the Local Plan and other Development Plan documents are set out the "Risk Assessment" section of the Local Development Scheme. It is not foreseen that any legal, financial, reputation or other risks will arise if the recommendations of this report are accepted.
- 3.2 This SPD provides clear policy guidance for the local planning authority, developers, statutory bodies and utilities which will support the delivery of sustainable public realm enhancement. The SPD will assist on the deliverability of public realm proposals since it clearly sets out guidance on the requirements of the Local Planning Authority and this can then be taken into account in any proposals. Similarly, the SPD clearly sets out Local Planning Authority's requirements for good design which will assist in officers making a balanced judgement against other policy and Council objectives.

## Background and Full Report

- 4.1 The purpose of the Public Realm Design Guide for Taunton Garden Town is to raise the standard of the public realm and streetworks consistently across the Garden Town. The guidance is aimed at guiding the design of public realm and street works by the highway authority, developers, utility companies and their agents and contractors. It also attempts to show how current principles of highway design and layout can be incorporated into good placemaking. If adopted by Somerset West and Taunton Council the Public Realm Design Guide for Taunton Garden Town as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) it will be a material planning consideration when determining relevant development proposals and applications. It will also inform discussions with our statutory consultees.
- 4.2 This means that the SPD will hold significant weight in the decision-making process.

## Policy Context

- 4.3 National planning and design policy underline the need for local authorities to ensure that the quality of the design of new development is both sensitive to the positive aspects of the character of local areas and to incorporate the principles of placemaking, to achieve viable resilient neighbourhoods. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code advocate that local authorities produce design guides and design codes as a means to achieve a higher quality of development which addresses the aims above. The NPPF recommends Design Guides should be adopted as Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) in order they are given as much weight as possible in the decision-making process,
- 4.4 Section 12 of the NPPF – Achieving Well Designed Places sets out the government's agenda for good design. Paragraph 126 states that ‘The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this’.
- 4.5 It should be noted that the NPPF was updated in July 2021. This now places the additional requirement for development to be ‘beautiful’ as well as high quality and sustainable. This update also emphasises the importance of guidance contained in the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code. In addition, there is new guidance for the requirement of street trees in Paragraph 131 which states ‘Trees make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments and can also help mitigate and adapt to climate change. Planning policies and decisions should ensure that new streets are tree-lined, that opportunities are taken to incorporate trees elsewhere in developments (such as parks and community orchards), that appropriate measures are in place to secure the long-term maintenance of newly-planted trees, and that existing trees are retained wherever possible.’ These new requirements align with the government setting up a new Office for Place and significantly highlight the attention afforded to high quality design in national policy and weight afforded to local design guidance such as this SPD.
- 4.6 The draft Public Realm Design Guide for Taunton Garden Town SPD (see Appendix 2) has been produced pursuant to policies DM4 of the Taunton Deane Core Strategy and D7 of the Taunton Deane Site Allocations and Development Management Plan, which aim to promote high quality design.
- 4.7 Regarding public art, existing adopted planning policies in the former Taunton Deane area set out requirements for public art in policies D13 and D7 of the Site Allocations and Development Management Plan (SADMP), policies ED1 and ED2 of the Taunton Town Centre Area Action Plan (TCAAP) and DM4 of the Core Strategy. The policies all either refer to the Public Art and Design Policy adopted by the Council in 2007, the Public Art Code adopted in 2010, or otherwise refer to public art being provided at 1% of development costs either via commissioning and integrating public art into the design of buildings and the public realm, or by a commuted sum. Additionally, in the case of Taunton, they refer to the Town Centre Design Code SPD which includes specific codes relating to public art and which identifies specific art and design sites relating to the public realm areas. The Public Realm Design Guide and Districtwide Design Guide refer to this existing policy context and recommend that public art is primarily integrated into the design of buildings and the public realm and is part of what constitutes good design.

## Consultation

- 4.8 A draft Design Guide was considered by Members at their Executive meeting on 28 January 2020 and approved for key stakeholder consultation. Key stakeholder consultation took place between Monday 3 February to Monday 30 March 2020. Due to the covid pandemic, a number of consultations were significantly delayed including that with Somerset County Council (SCC).
- 4.9 As a result of comments from SCC Highways about the highway principles set out in the overall Districtwide Design Guide, a series of workshops took place between officers which resulted in an expanded section in the Districtwide Design Guide on Streets, Parking and Placemaking. As a second round of public consultation was necessary for this expanded section, it was decided by officers to take the opportunity to also take the Public Realm Design Guide for Taunton Garden Town out to public consultation (rather than just key stakeholders). The public consultation on the Public Realm Design Guide for Taunton Garden Town was carried out from 11 December to 5 February 2021.
- 4.10 As a result of SWT approving the final version of Climate Positive Planning, there were a number of responses to this consultation that commented that the Council was not going further in its response on climate change. To address these the Public Realm Design Guide for Taunton Garden Town was updated to provide a greater focus on the climate emergency. This also coincided with the release by government of the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code which also required an update of the draft Public Realm Design Guide. For this reason, and in order to ensure that the Public Realm Design Guides for Taunton Garden Town could be adopted as SPD, it was considered appropriate to carry out a third consultation from 5 July to Monday 16 August 2021.
- 4.11 During the three consultations, the majority of the consultees welcomed the Public Realm Design Guide SPD and saw the document as an opportunity to provide an emphasis on high quality public open space, giving greater emphasis to people and less to cars.
- 4.12 A total of seven representations were received during the first consultation on the draft Public Realm Design Guide for Taunton Garden Town SPD, three during the second consultation and nineteen during the third consultation. These consultation responses were from members of the public, amenity bodies, police, Environment Agency, Historic England, SCC Highways and internal staff. A table showing all representations received is set out in the table in Appendix 1 of this report together with SWT's responses and proposed amendments to the guidance.
- 4.13 Consideration of representations received during the three public consultations on the Design Guide has resulted in proposed changes within the Public Realm Design Guide for Taunton Garden Town, as summarised below:
- 4.14 First and Second Consultations (3 February to 30 March 2020 and 11 December to 5 February 2021)

### Substantial Revisions and Additions:

- Section 1 Introduction - Clarity on its intention for use by competent professional public realm/ highway designers i.e. the guide is to steer the design approach



being tailored towards different parts of the urban area and enhance the Garden Town street environment for walking and cycling particularly. It is not a design manual and requires interpretation by designers, whether public highway authority or private developers.

- Section 2.3 General Standard Conservation Areas – add to map and explain that Town or Core Standard may be applied by Conservation Officer in these areas.
- Section 2.20 Conservation Area lighting – amended lighting to all standards after detailed additional consultation with SCC lighting engineer and heritage advisor.

Other Changes:

- SCC will not adopt setts laid in carriageways and require imprinted asphalt instead. This has been altered and described.
- Cycle track colours – colours amended to CORE terracotta, TOWN terracotta, GENERAL red, GREEN – red
- Blue street name plates traditional to Taunton will be applied to Core Standard Area.
- Minor changes to layout of Outer Gateway design illustrative exemplar to show more traditional cycle junction on a re-engineered A38 section as a new gateway to Monkton Heathfield.
- References added to recent or more explicit guidance:
  - National Planning Policy Framework 2021
  - Gear Change A bold vision for cycling and walking, DfT 2020
  - Local Transport Note 1/20, Cycling Infrastructure Design, DfT 2020
  - Beyond the Bicycle - An introduction to inclusive cycling, SWECO 2020
  - Inclusive Mobility, A Guide to Best Practice on Access to Pedestrian and Transport Infrastructure, DfT, 2005. and
  - DfT Minister's letter September 2018 on Shared Space schemes
  - SCC Commuted Sum policy – SCC require commuted sums from private developers when including non-tarmac surfaces, street tree planting<sup>i</sup>
  - Local Transport Note 2/09, Pedestrian Guardrail, DfT, 2009

4.15 One house builder commented and agreed with the main content and need to raise standard of street works. They commented that street lighting suggestions were too utilitarian in appearance. We have worked to refine the proposals in light of what SCC Street Lighting are able to deliver.

4.16 Third consultation - 5 July to Monday 16 August 2021

Substantial Revisions and Additions:

- Additional section on public art added, cross referencing the Public Life for Public Space, Public Art Code SPD, 2006.

Other Changes:

- Highlighted in section 1.1.8 the need to conserve historic paving in the Garden Town and strengthen the wording on potential for streetworks to affect the historic environment and need to conserve existing historic materials and furniture, including lighting.
- Equalities and inclusion section 1.1.9, has noted DfT advice in LTN 1/20 that cycles must be treated as vehicles and not as pedestrians. We will though ensure our streets are accessible for disabled cycle users to access all areas. On urban

streets, cyclists must be physically separated from pedestrians and should not share space with pedestrians.

- Added guidance note to this section on need for public spaces to be designed to enhance community safety. We will add that designers shall take into consideration Secure by Design principles and minimize opportunities for crime.
- Additional note section 2.4 and 2.20.21. that materials and components at river and canal side locations may be subject to a Flood Risk Activity Permit (FRAP) from the Environment Agency. Signs on the canal may need to comply with Canal & River Trust design standards.
- 2.18 tree planting - Notes added on consideration to be given to tree planting potential size at maturity and potential to affect nearby buildings, structures or underground utilities and not obstruct walking and cycling routes. Care to be taken to avoid impacts on heritage assets. Tree planting shall be supported by a management plan. Sourcing of trees should be from UKISG endorsed nurseries to reduce the risk of introducing pests and diseases.
- Notes added to River and Canal corridor section 3.5 that riparian planting should not damage the riverbank. Nature conservation enhancements shall have a long-term management plan approved prior to implementation.
- References added:
  - Active Design, Planning for health and wellbeing through sport and physical activity, Sport England, 2015
  - Designing for Physical Activity, Routes and Wayfinding, Sport England, 2019
  - Streets for All, Advice for Highway and Public Realm Works in Historic Places. Historic England, 2018
  - Streets for All South West, Historic England, 2018
  - External lighting of historic buildings, Historic England, 2020
  - Designing, Installing and Maintaining an External Lighting Scheme, Historic England, 2020
  - Secure Stations Scheme, British Transport Police Authority and DfT. 2018
  - Cycle Rail Toolkit 2, Cycle Rail Working Group, Rail Delivery Group 2016
  - Secured by Design, Design guides, Police Crime Prevention Initiatives, various

4.17 Of the nineteen respondents to the third consultation, five comments were received from developers, four of whom sent very similar responses. All supported the production and aims of the Public Realm Design Guide, which they agreed should be a valuable and helpful tool to raise design standards within Taunton's public realm but were concerned with the availability and cost of materials in some situations. They suggested that the Design Guide needs to recognise that in some cases a lesser design approach or other materials will or may be equally acceptable and that the materials and specifications requested might not be available and (or) better solutions for paving could materialise in the future. – In response, SWT has produced the design guide as ad hoc materials selections have led to poor quality public spaces. We acknowledge that materials or specifications may need to change in future, but this does not prevent us from addressing what is required now. The guide will need to be revisited in future to maintain its relevance to current standards and availability of materials and furnishings.

Developers also expressed concern over any conflict between what SWT and SCC require on highways, such as road materials, street trees, street furniture and sustainable urban drainage measures in the public realm and suggests the Guide does not offer further clarification a Page 162 this would be addressed. They wish the

implications of requiring enhanced materials on future commuted sums to be clear. - In response, a note to clarify the role of the planning officer to negotiate highways designs has been included in the document.

One developer suggested the guide was not for SWT to require but for the highway authority. – In response, this is noted but SWT as planning authority is responsible for determining applications that involve place making, urban design for health, environment, and movement on and off the highway network often before the highway authority get involved. This is the opportunity to raise design standards.

#### Adoption as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

- 4.18 In order to be legally compliant, an SPD must be prepared, consulted upon, and adopted by resolution of Full Council in line with certain regulations as set out in the Town and County Planning (Local Plans) (England) Regulations 2012. Appended to this Report is a draft Adoption Statement (Appendix 4) and Consultation Statement (Appendix 3). Together, these documents set out how the SPD is legally compliant and comply with key regulations.

#### Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)/ Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening

- 4.19 Under the European Directive 2001/42/EC (SEA Directive) and associated Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (SEA Regulations), an SEA is required for all plans which may have a significant effect on the environment. In addition to this, under Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive and Regulation 61 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 an HRA is required when it is deemed that the implementation of the plan is likely to cause significant negative effects upon protected European Sites (Natura 2000 sites).
- 4.20 An SEA/HRA Screening Assessment has been undertaken to ascertain whether or not significant effects are considered likely to arise as a result of the district-wide Design Guide SPD, requiring full SEA/HRA. A draft Screening Assessment was consulted on with the statutory consultees, and the final report (see Appendix 5) takes account of comments received. The conclusion of the assessment is that the SPD does not require full SEA or HRA to be conducted.

#### 5. Links to Corporate Strategy

- 5.1 Theme 1 – objectives towards the District **Carbon neutral by 2030**; clear vision and delivery plan for the Taunton Garden Town; 'Provide and maintain green open spaces and parks, enhanced public spaces, as well as additional opportunities to safely walk or cycle in order to encourage active and healthy lifestyles'. This theme is highly relevant as the main purpose of the design guide is to raise the standard of the public realm and streetworks consistently across the Garden Town and encourage active travel.
- 5.2 Theme 3 – objectives to 'Increase the number of affordable and social homes in our urban towns, rural and coastal communities; Facilitate the development of the residential blocks at Firepool, Taunton, in order to deliver new homes and public open spaces'; and 'Seek additional funding for new strategic infrastructure and regeneration projects from developers, investors, Government and other funders, which support or enable existing or new communities within our district'. This theme is relevant as the main purpose of the design guide is to raise the standard of the public realm and streetworks consistently

across the Garden Town and encourage active travel. Firepool is a strategic regeneration site at the heart of the town and a high quality public realm will be an important consideration in any proposal.

## 6. Finance / Resource Implications

6.1 The cost of preparing the Public Realm Design Guide for Taunton Garden Town has been funded from the Local Plan Reserves. The cost of public consultation on the guide has also been funded by Local Plan Reserves.

## 7. Legal Implications

7.1 The preparation of the draft Public Realm Design Guide for Taunton Garden Town and the period of public consultation is in compliance with relevant legislation and guidance regarding supplementary planning documents including the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2012 and the government's Planning Practice Guidance. Appended to this Report is a draft Adoption Statement (Appendix 4) and Consultation Statement (Appendix 3). Together, these documents set out how the SPD is legally compliant and comply with key regulations.

The final draft Public Realm Design Guide for Taunton Garden Town has been prepared in line with the relevant planning regulations. The draft Public Realm Design Guide for Taunton Garden Town SPD (see Appendix 2) is clearly identified as having been produced pursuant to policies DM4 of the Taunton Deane Core Strategy and D7 of the Taunton Deane Site Allocations, which aim to promote high quality design in the district.

The final draft Public Realm Design Guide for Taunton Garden Town SPD has been subject to consultation in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended). Following consultation and adoption by Full Council, the SPD will be a material consideration in the determination of all relevant planning applications. However, the SPD will be without any prejudice to any decisions that the Council may take as Local Planning Authority in respect of individual site/s and any future planning applications.

## 8. Climate and Sustainability Implications

8.1 Completion, adoption and implementation of the Public Realm Design Guide and the Districtwide Design Guide are identified in the Council's Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience Action Plan as key actions. The Public Realm Design Guide recognises that sustainable, energy efficient and climate resilient design is integral to what constitutes good design. It is considered that the Public Realm Design Guide will have positive implications in terms of sustainability through guidance including the integration of placemaking and sustainability principles. This includes the following:

- Green Streets – requires streets to be designed to be greener which could include more street trees, swales, and planting/hedgerows for garden boundaries.
- Water – requires that priority is given to sustainable drainage processes and that a drainage strategy should help to shape the design of the open space, landscape and streets.
- Biodiversity – identifies how development can provide a net gain in biodiversity by including design features at the scales of neighbourhood, street and individual house.

- Air Quality – the issue of air quality is addressed throughout the document through requiring that developments: - Prioritise active travel (walking and cycling) and public transport. - Incorporate street trees, planting, open spaces and landscape. - Include EV charging points for vehicles.
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions - The draft design guide should help to reduce greenhouse gas emission impacts through prioritising active travel and public transport over the car, making developments greener with more trees and landscape, requiring the provision of electric vehicle charging points and encouraging better energy efficiency in homes.

## 9. Safeguarding and/or Community Safety Implications

9.1 A priority of the Public Realm Design Guide for Taunton Garden Town is to create safe access and movement for all with direct routes, choice of routes, clear routes, and permeability.

## 10. Equality and Diversity Implications

10.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out and is appended to the report at Appendix 6. Additionally extensive public consultation has taken place in accordance with the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement. No representations were received from the community or from groups representing people with Protected Characteristics suggesting or requesting changes be made to the design guide.

## 11. Social Value Implications

11.1 The Public Realm Design Guide for Taunton Garden Town Design Guide is intended to have a positive influence on the quality of life, resulting in economic, social value and environmental benefits for the community.

## 12. Partnership Implications

12.1 As part of the Duty to Co-operate requirement (Town & Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012), we will be expected to work with other public bodies, particularly neighbouring planning authorities and the County Council on any cross-boundary issues. Close working has particularly taken place with SCC Highways through a number of workshop meetings.

## 13. Health and Wellbeing Implications

13.1 The Public Realm Design Guide for Taunton Garden Town is intended to have a positive influence on the quality of life, resulting in economic, social value and environmental benefits for the community. A key aim is to encourage active travel, cycling and walking have a positive benefit for health and wellbeing.

## 14. Asset Management Implications

14.1 None at this stage, however the Council will consider opportunities for use of its assets to contribute to the delivery and promotion of high quality and sustainable built environments.

## 15. Data Protection Implications

15.1 None at this stage.

16. Consultation Implications

16.1 The consultations on this document have been in line with the SWT's Statement of Community Involvement and the Council's legal obligations. Following the consultation exercises, this report considers what modifications need to be made to the Public Realm Design Guide for Taunton Garden Town.

17. Scrutiny/Executive Comments / Recommendation(s) (if any)

17.1 Not applicable

**Democratic Path:**

- **Scrutiny / Corporate Governance or Audit Committees – No**
- **Cabinet/Executive – Yes**
- **Full Council – Yes**

**Reporting Frequency: X Once only**

**List of Appendices (delete if not applicable)**

Appendix 1	Schedule of Responses to Consultations
Appendix 2	<a href="#">Appendix 2 - Public Realm Design Guide Part One</a> and <a href="#">Appendix 2 - Public Realm Design Guide Part Two</a>
Appendix 3	Consultation Statement
Appendix 4	Adoption Statement SPD
Appendix 5	Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitat Regulations Assessment
Appendix 6	Equality Impact Assessment

**Contact Officers**

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Consultee	General agreement/ disagreement	Detail comment received	SWTC response
COMMUNITY & BUSINESS			
1. Member of Cycle Somerset	Agree that Taunton Garden Town needs a Public Realm Design Guide to raise the standard of the street works and coordinate works by multi agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. PUBLIC REALM AREA STANDARDS AGREED - Core Std,</li> <li>b. PUBLIC REALM AREA STANDARDS COMMENTS -Most of what you are hoping to achieve in trying keep as many of Taunton's residents happy has already been achieved elsewhere. My Mum was from Holland and I've been back forth for the last 58 years visiting family, friends and holidays. Some holidays specifically for leisurely, family cycling.</li> <li>c. Think this organisation could have some interesting ideas and assistance. <a href="https://dutchcycling.nl/">https://dutchcycling.nl/</a> Just maybe some of your planners would interested in seeing what has already been successful.</li> <li>d. PAVING MATERIALS - Avoid the high initial costs of paving and subsequent upkeep and maintenance. As with the pavements recently upgraded, tarmac with brick or block borders is great, good for water ingress and reduced flooding.</li> <li>e. Good clear "Share and Care" signage on joint pedestrian and cycle paths.</li> <li>f. Adequate, good UNDERCOVER, secure parking for cyclists. Would you want to sit a saddle that was soaking wet?</li> <li>g. Restrict traffic to buses, Blue Badge Holders and a limited number of taxis.</li> <li>h. Since 1969, if your dog fouled the pavement you could be prosecuted for not collecting it.</li> <li>i. It's time car drivers through the town paid for the collection of there emissions and for those that increasingly want to drive through the town centre showing off how loud there exhaust system or music system is, let's say a £10.00 charge per drive-through.</li> <li>j. PAVING MATERIAL STANDARDS AGREED - Core Std, Town Std, General Std,</li> <li>k. PAVING LAYOUT DETAILS - Avoid high upfront costs of all types of paving and then the ongoing charges as well, as many can attest having had fancy coloured driveways paved. They now regret it whilst the companies that sell the idea are doing very nicely, thank you.</li> <li>l. SIGNAGE - Agree</li> <li>m. STREET FURNITURE - agree</li> <li>n. STREET PLANTING - agree</li> <li>o. LIGHTING -</li> <li>p. ILLUSTRATIVE LAYOUTS AGREED- Town Centre; Gateways and Approaches.</li> <li>q. ILLUSTRATIVE LAYOUTS COMMENTS - Taunton firstly needs to be sympathetic to pedestrians, it's only pedestrians that walk into shops, cafe's, bars, pubs, hairdressers, nail bars, vaping parlours, tattoo studios, it's pedestrians that send money and buy the various goods and services.</li> <li>r. Keep car, lorries and delivery out of the centre. Timed rise and fall bollards lowering from say between 6.30 pm and rising at 8.30 am allowing plenty of time for planned deliveries. Look at what has been achieved already for many years in Holland. <a href="https://dutchcycling.nl/">https://dutchcycling.nl/</a>. Absolutely nothing to stop Taunton doing something similar. It will ensure happiness for shop keepers, business owners, customers and pedestrians happy. Cyclist's with families and friends will be able to access the town in safety.</li> </ul>	CS pick up on many of the Go Dutch references in the Draft. The desire to see less money spent on expensive paving and more on standard but good cycle and pedestrian infrastructure is noted. The guide seeks to apply the higher standards only in some areas e.g where shops and walking are at their highest and where we want to encourage cycling. CS wants car free town centre - the guide doesn't deliver this, but the proposed public realm treatment doesn't prejudice this either.
2. Taunton Area Cycling Campaign	Agree that Taunton Garden Town needs a Public Realm Design Guide to raise the standard of the street works and coordinate works by multi agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. PUBLIC REALM AREA STANDARDS AGREED - Core Std, Town Std, General Std, Green Std</li> <li>b. PUBLIC REALM AREA STANDARDS COMMENTS - As there isn't a space for other comments, we have used these boxes. We wish to express strong support for the general principles of the draft guidance-to give much greater emphasis to people and places in the design of streets and public spaces. We agree that street design is currently dominated by the desire to facilitate car use and that this is often detrimental in terms of quality of public realm. We agree in general with the emphasis on high quality materials but are mindful that resources for walking and cycling</li> </ul>	TACC's strong support for principles are noted and their request that money isn't wasted on too high a quality of materials at the expense of good smooth surface cycle infrastructure also appreciated. The guide is aimed at targeting spending appropriately.

Consultee	General agreement/ disagreement	Detail comment received	SWTC response
		<p>infrastructure are limited. Keeping designs simple with less signing (compared with the over signing currently used) will hopefully minimise costs.</p> <p>c. TACC made a statement at the recent planning committee which gave approval to the strategic infrastructure for Comeytrowe, in which we referred to the fact that the spine road design is out of step with the draft Public Realm guidance. Neither the planning officer nor the committee members made any reference to the guidance, let alone gave it weight in making their decision. This is despite the fact that it has been considered by the full council. It is clear to us that a programme of training will be essential for officers and committee members, if the guidance is going to count for anything.</p> <p>d. Please note that the draft LCWIP is only a first phase of network improvements and is not an overall network plan. Please refer to TACC's 'Turn the network blue' and petition presented to the full SWTC council. Can we please discuss this?</p> <p>e. Support for as wide a use of 20mph as possible</p> <p>f. Guidance needs to distinguish between cycle lanes in carriageway and non carriageway provision ('cycletrack') and their application. Make ref to new DfT design advice (about to be published)</p> <p>g. Support for street gardens idea.</p> <p>h. Suggest that there is guidance for experimental traffic management schemes (DIY) with use of temporary street planters and seating. Experiments can lead to permanent changes to favour street activity.</p> <p>i. Fig 76 and 77 show cycle provision at mouth of junctions, which is an area of conflict. Needs further consideration.</p> <p>j. PAVING MATERIAL STANDARDS AGREED - Core Std, Town Std, General Std, Green Std</p> <p>k. PAVING MATERIALS - Need to ensure that material are smooth and have adequate skid resistance.</p> <p>l. Need to set up a system so that utilities can easily source materials for re-instatements following maintenance work (cf with Market House cobbles with black top re-instatements)</p> <p>m. Pedestrian streets. In some cases there will be cycle access. Needs subtle signing to show cycling ok. pedestrian priority, that cyclists can be expected.</p> <p>n. Strongly support efforts to minimise use of guardrail. Please include the advice against use of 'sheep pens' in this. The SCC highway safety audit will need to be adapted to be able to balance pure highway and theoretical risk against public realm</p> <p>o. PAVING LAYOUT DETAILS -</p> <p>p. SIGNAGE - Agree. Need to advise against over dependence on illuminated signs (reflective can be effective). Please advise against use of lit 'end of cycle route' and 'cyclist dismount' signs.</p> <p>q. You will already know that we are keen to develop a cycle network signing system based on the Dutch approach, using a node numbering system.</p> <p>r. STREET FURNITURE - Agree with bollards, cycle furniture and Play. Use of cycle bollards. These should be positioned at the side of paths and not in the middle (as is currently the case) due to conflict that they cause</p> <p>s. STREET PLANTING - Planting needs to be positioned to ensure that its future growth wont interfere with site lines and widths on cycle path and footpaths</p> <p>t. LIGHTING - Lower level lighting proposed for green standard might be appropriate in other contexts-e.g. Corkscrew Lane (bats)</p> <p>u. ILLUSTRATIVE LAYOUTS AGREED- Town Centre; Gateways and Approaches; Neighbourhood Centres, River &amp; Canal Corridors</p> <p>v. ILLUSTRATIVE LAYOUTS COMMENTS -</p> <p>w. STREET FURNITURE - Use of cycle bollards. These should be positioned at the side of paths and not in the middle (as is currently the case) due to conflict that they cause.</p> <p>x. ILLUSTRATIVE LAYOUTS AGREED- Town Centre; Gateways and Approaches; Neighbourhood Centres, River &amp; Canal Corridors</p>	<p>TACC note clarity required in guide on difference between cycle lanes and tracks. We will amend to make this clear.</p> <p>Pedestrian streets need cycle signage too - and a track may need cycle tactile. We will add note to drawing.</p> <p>Guide to mention retroreflective signs where regs permitted.</p> <p>The node guidance system is noted for cycle network - this is a specialist area that probably needs its own appendix to follow later as part of the guidance suite.</p> <p>We will add note to position cycle track signs to side of paths.</p>



Consultee	General agreement/ disagreement	Detail comment received	SWTC response
		<p>y. ILLUSTRATIVE LAYOUTS COMMENTS - We suggest that there are at least two additional gateways. One on the north side (Cheddon Road and possibly also Kingston Road) and one on the south approach (Honiton Road /Trull, The latter to reflect the impact of the Comeytrove spine road connection). These could be secondary gateways. We think that there is a mistake on page 72 with the Kingston Gap being shown as existing woodland-should this be shown in buff?</p> <p>z. Some difficulty in following how the application works on the dual example. Cycle provision is rather sketchy and geometry needs more consideration.</p> <p>aa. Strong support for suggested treatments at side road junctions and use of tight radii (as MfS).</p> <p>bb. More needed on design at large junctions, which are favoured by SCC</p> <p>cc. Strong support for remodelling of gyratories with space given back to public realm e.g. Park Street, Clifton Terrace</p> <p>dd. Note new Ch6 of Traffic Signs Manual</p> <p>ee. Strong support for Dutch style treatment where large roundabouts are considered essential</p> <p>2<sup>nd</sup> CONSULTATION ADDENDUM</p> <p>ff. The document should be updated on active travel infrastructure design to reflect Local Transport Note 1/20 and Gear Change. Shared use footways and now far less appropriate and LTN 1/20 needs to be at the top of the lists of refs (pgs 20 and 22).</p>	<p>Gateways noted - the guidance for gateways could be applied at Kingston Road entrance to the town. The smaller space on this route might suggest a more modest approach. To be reviewed.</p> <p>Drawing amended to standard layout.</p> <p>The guide reflects as far as possible LTN1/20</p>
3. Individual submission	Agree that Taunton Garden Town needs a Public Realm Design Guide to raise the standard of the street works and coordinate works by multi agencies	<p>a. PUBLIC REALM AREA STANDARDS AGREED - Core Std, Town Std, General Std, Green Std</p> <p>b. PUBLIC REALM AREA STANDARDS COMMENTS - I welcome the Design Guide and the Public Realm Design Guide - it is an opportunity to have a better quality built and natural environment giving greater emphasis to people and less to cars. I look forward to it being used by planning officers and councillors in decision making in planning applications. This is urgently needed as Councillors seem to be unaware of the contents of the Design Guide and need training in it for it to be effective.</p> <p>c. Developers also need to be strongly urged to follow it.</p> <p>d. PAVING MATERIAL STANDARDS AGREED - Core Std, Town Std, General Std, Green Std</p> <p>e. PAVING MATERIALS - The proposed surfaces seem to be appropriate for the various settings but all surfaces need to be smooth and skid resistant. Cyclists hate the current cobbles in the town centre because it is such an uncomfortable ride on a roundabout. Some of the towpath surface further out of town is also too rough and uncomfortable.</p> <p>f. PAVING LAYOUT DETAILS -</p> <p>g. SIGNAGE - Agree. There are currently too many cycling signs particularly the end of cycle route signs (often illuminated) which are completely pointless. I support the minimal use of signs but shop boards in pedestrian areas need to be controlled particularly in St James St. Signs attached to buildings could be a better alternative. I support high quality crossings giving cyclists and pedestrians priority over vehicles and the signing of the chief cycle routes not just those in LCWIP. 20mph in the centre would be great.</p> <p>h. STREET FURNITURE - Agree with bollards, litter bins, seats, cycle furniture, bus shelters, play, street name plates,</p> <p>i. STREET PLANTING - Agree. Be more adventurous with tree planting in new developments. I hope to see a lot of trees on Firepool. I support the E charging proposals to include bikes as well as cars. I like the paving around the trees if it is big enough to allow the trunk to grow.</p> <p>j. LIGHTING - Agree with Core St, Town Std, General Std, Green Std. Good to have some lighting along the Firepool Lock path where it is currently dark and also good to be able to do LED lighting to protect bats and other wildlife. It is a safe night time alternative to Station Road and its takeaway traffic if you don't mind the dark stretch and would be more used if some lighting is provided so you don't run into people walking dogs.</p> <p>k. ILLUSTRATIVE LAYOUTS AGREED- Town Centre; Gateways and Approaches; Neighbourhood Centres, River &amp; Canal Corridors</p>	<p>The use of setts is being limited to specific crossings - but suggestion from SCC to use imprint so will amend to this.</p> <p>Noted.</p> <p>Tree planting often down to committed sum policy by SCC dissuading street planting. Where SWTC has control of land the Council would expect to see more planting. Tree species list selected as guide - not definitive.</p>

Consultee	General agreement/ disagreement	Detail comment received	SWTC response
		<p>l. ILLUSTRATIVE LAYOUTS COMMENTS - I am not overly keen on the cycle lane around the roundabout as it brings you close to traffic waiting to pull out and needs to be designed with care .I like the 2.5m cycle lane in the bus only streets.</p>	
4. Individual resident	Agree that Taunton Garden Town needs a Public Realm Design Guide to raise the standard of the street works and coordinate works by multi agencies	<p>a. PUBLIC REALM AREA STANDARDS - Strongly agree</p> <p>b. PAVING MATERIAL STANDARDS AGREED: Strongly agree with all proposed standards and proposals for paving, street furniture, signage, lighting, and illustrative layouts.</p>	
5. Individual Resident		<p>a. PUBLIC REALM AREA STANDARDS AGREED - Agree with Core town and General Standards, strongly agrees with Green Standard.</p> <p>b. PAVING MATERIAL STANDARDS AGREED: - Agree with Core town and General Standards, strongly agrees with Green Standard.</p> <p>c. STREET FURNITURE - Agree with bollards, litter bins, seats, cycle furniture, bus shelters, play, street name plates</p> <p>d. STREET PLANTING: disagree. Think this duty will transfer to new town council they should set specification important to link every possible water run off opportunity with sustaining planting. important for voluntary groups who maintain green infrastructure without access to water supply Lead community effort 30 years ago for Duke St Car Park landscaping scheme with imported topsoil and plants, the car park has no road gullies, with a slope the edge planting thrives.</p> <p>e. SIGNAGE: page 74 signage conservation areas, there is a need to consider cast iron white enamel signs which are a feature of street corners</p> <p>f. LIGHTING - Agree with General Std, Green Std. Neutral about Core St, Town Std,</p> <p>g. ILLUSTRATIVE LAYOUTS: Disagree with town centre. Agree Neighbourhood Centres, Gateway and Approaches and River and Canal Corridors.</p> <p>h. I have concern of a major omission regards page 56 section 3.1 showing intended treatment of town centre Market House to further down North Street. North Street should have through car traffic reduction measures before trying to close three parallel streets St James, Hammet and East Street key reason is to allow all bus services and touring coach companies prime access to centre.</p> <p>i. 3 Key issues, keep centre roundabout by Market house as a turning point for large vehicles. British parking standards 26m diameter for large bus and coaches. The bus stop shown castle bow is too small for both buses and coaches, create instead a rendezvous point for touring coaches using the fine canopy to the Debenhams building which will be retained but with in some new uses.</p>	<p>Note the possible devolvement with new town council arrangements if they are completed. Add note</p> <p>The cast iron street name plates are of a later date than the original blue and white of the St Marys and St James Conservation Area and the streets to the east off East Reach. The design guide proposes the blue and white only in the Conservation Areas of the town in order to highlight their significance and distinction. Others will follow the SWTC Street Name and Numbering guidance.</p> <p>Consultee concerned that touring coaches should be able to turn on a 26m roundabout and have rendezvous in bays on North Street. It is not the role of the design guide to allocate space but to steer design to provide for sustainable modes as priority. Coach management requires a visitor strategy and place for layover and drop off/rendezvous but should not prejudice walking and cycling and public transport first.</p>
6. Cherwyn Developments Limited	Agree that Taunton Garden Town needs a Public Realm Design Guide to raise the standard of the street works and coordinate works by multi agencies	<p>a. PUBLIC REALM AREA STANDARDS AGREED - Core Std, Town Std, General Std, Green Std</p> <p>b. PUBLIC REALM AREA STANDARDS COMMENTS -</p> <p>c. PAVING MATERIAL STANDARDS AGREED - Core Std, Town Std, General Std, Green Std</p> <p>d. PAVING MATERIALS -</p> <p>e. PAVING LAYOUT DETAILS -</p> <p>f. SIGNAGE - Agree. Whilst design is important, location and what it says must be considered</p> <p>g. STREET FURNITURE - Agree cycle furniture, litter bins, bus shelters, seats, play</p> <p>h. STREET PLANTING - agree</p> <p>i. LIGHTING - AGREED - Core Std, Town Std, General Std, Green Std: Street lighting looks poor in quality and utilitarian, not inspiring</p>	<p>The street lighting is selected to fit to the wider county needs too as economies of scale are required. This leads to selecting standard types that SCC who own and manage them are happy with and where conservation areas require more</p>

Consultee	General agreement/ disagreement	Detail comment received	SWTC response
		<p>j. ILLUSTRATIVE LAYOUTS AGREED- Town Centre; Gateways and Approaches; Neighbourhood Centres, River &amp; Canal Corridors</p> <p>k. ILLUSTRATIVE LAYOUTS COMMENTS -</p>	stringent consideration of heritage, the guidance seeks to meet that too. The aim is to make the street lighting less eye catching during daylight, rather than more.
7. Abbey Manor Group Ltd (developer)	Agree that Taunton Garden Town needs a Public Realm Design Guide	<p>a. PUBLIC REALM AREA STANDARDS - DISAGREE Core and Town Stds. Neutral on General and Green Stds.</p> <p>b. PUBLIC REALM AREA STANDARDS COMMENTS - I think the role of approving the design of these public highways should rest with the current organisation which has a statutory duty to do so i.e. the Local Highway Authority, rather than create yet another layer of confusing and duplicating bureaucracy which undoubtedly will be in conflict with the statutory requirements and be expensive to deliver.</p> <p>c. PAVING MATERIAL STANDARDS AGREED - DISAGREE Core and Town Stds. Neutral on General and Green Stds.</p> <p>d. PAVING MATERIALS - You have stated in the Key Characteristics paragraph 2.1.2 that the paving "can be supplied from regional or national sources" and then specified granite kerbs. As far as i am aware there are now very few operational granite quarries in the UK, the largest supplier is China which is not a regional or national source and can hardly be sustainable once the transportation has been included.</p> <p>e. PAVING LAYOUT DETAILS -</p> <p>f. SIGNAGE - Disagree</p> <p>There is a general theme throughout this document which is that employment or commercial uses are bad and should either not exist in the garden town, or be hidden away and discouraged.</p> <p>examples of this are paragraph 2.6.1 fingerposts must not be used for commercial purposes paragraph 3.2.2 "nowhere land of employment" paragraph 3.4 neighbourhood centre should be based around social space not shop and car park.</p> <p>Employment and commercial uses provide jobs and income for people. Without Jobs and income people are generally poorer and whilst they may have the time to spend in the social spaces, won't have the ability to pay taxes which in turn pay for public expenditure on the social spaces.</p> <p>if Taunton's aim is discourage employment and Jobs it will quickly become a place that no one wishes to live in or visit.</p> <p>g. STREET FURNITURE - no comments</p> <p>h. STREET PLANTING - no comments</p> <p>i. LIGHTING - Street lighting is a statutory requirement. you should not set additional standards which duplicate or conflict with them. the additional lighting suggested may look pretty until it is vandalised but does nothing for the dark skies initiative and encouragement of wildlife</p> <p>j. ILLUSTRATIVE LAYOUTS - strongly disagree with all</p> <p>the drawings are of poor quality and not sufficiently clear as to be of any use as guidance.</p>	<p>The comment refers to paving rather than kerbing and the guidance will be amended to make this clear. Chinese/ Portuguese granite costs more in transport and CO2 emissions however its lifespan and low wastage due to reusability offsets this cost compared to concrete items and is warranted in the highest class standard areas. Recycled concrete is used in the other specified kerbs. Chinese granite environmental cost can be offset through the contribution to the Ethical Trading Initiative or similar.</p> <p>There is no anti-business bias in the guide. The guide seeks to enhance the public realm environment which is known to increase business, through footfall and attractiveness to inward investment.</p> <p>The lighting guide has been agreed with the statutory authority.</p>
8. The Canal & River Trust	Agree that Taunton Garden Town needs a Public Realm Design Guide to raise the standard of the street works and coordinate works by multi agencies	<p>a. PUBLIC REALM AREA STANDARDS AGREED - Core Std, Town Std, General Std, Green Std</p> <p>b. PUBLIC REALM AREA STANDARDS COMMENTS - The Canal &amp; River Trust believe that good design plays a key role in creating attractive waterside places that will enhance and protect the waterway. We welcome the inclusion of the canal &amp; river Corridor and wish to work together to ensure any new waterside development enhance the wider waterway corridor and protects the intrinsic qualities that waterways offer. This can be achieved in a number of ways and is dependent on many factors.</p> <p>c. Measures and designs that enhance waterways help to promote the utilisation of our waterways by new and existing communities. This has the potential to enhance the wellbeing of people who live and work close to our network.</p> <p>d. PAVING MATERIAL STANDARDS AGREED - Core Std, Town Std, General Std, Green Std</p>	

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		<p>e. PAVING MATERIALS - The Canal &amp; River Trust own the towpath of the Bridgwater &amp; Taunton canal. We publish a towpath design guide which provides more information on the type of materials and towpath width suitable for a range of locations. It is noted that the Public Realm document advocates resin bound gravel closest to the town and then a bitmac sealed surface to Creech St Michael, but it is not clear if an unbound gravel surface as shown on page 33 is the acceptable standard beyond this..</p> <p>f. The Trust wish to ensure that the towpath is suitable for its location, fit for purpose and to the highest quality possible. The type of surfacing chosen will be based on location, anticipated usage and funding available. As funding opportunities come forward further discussions should take place with the Trust to determine the most appropriate surfacing.</p> <p>g. Whilst the Canal &amp; River Trust agree that the range of surfacing materials specified for the Green Standard are broadly suitable the type of surfacing to be used on the canal towpath must vary from length to length depending on location, character and likely volume of usage. We are pleased to note that it is recognised that unbound surfaces causes on-going maintenance issues and are only suitable for areas of low usage as otherwise they can quickly development pot holes and erosion. In edge of town locations, or other high traffic areas, we suggest that a resin bound gravel surface material should be used, particularly where the towpath is likely to be used for commuter or recreational cycling.</p> <p>h. We do not normally promote the use of black bituman surfacing, unless a spray and chip layer of more appropriate colour is overlaid. Plain bitmac it is not considered appropriate in most towpath locations. The Trust often use centrac, which is more resilient than plain hoggin.</p> <p>i. The Canal &amp; River Trust will advise on individual proposals, which must align with our Towpath Design Guide. As previously mentioned the towpath is not suitable for use as a bridleway due to its restricted width and thus conflict with other users. Bridge parapets are not normally high enough to meet horse riding safety standards.</p> <p>j. PAVING LAYOUT DETAILS -</p> <p>k. SIGNAGE- generally agree. Signage on the canal towpath should be in line with the Canal &amp; River Trust's own standards and not result in visual or physical clutter. Wayfinding should consider the opportunity to incorporate other information via QR codes and can promote 'Step by Step' health initiatives using distance markers etc. It may also be necessary to consider 'traffic calming measures at certain locations to prevent conflict as a result of overly fast cycling. The Trust can advise on a range of initiatives, again based on a length by length upgrading programme.</p> <p>l. 2.6 Signage pedestrian wayfaring: The Canal &amp; River Trust advocate the Step by Step approach, as used successfully on the Monmouthshire &amp; Brecon canal.</p> <p>m. Step by Step includes simple marker posts at key lengths on the canal to build confidence and the activity range of new users wanting to gradually increase their walk length for health reasons (preventative/ chronic condition management/ recovery). The Trust can provide more information on this if required.</p> <p>n. STREET FURNITURE - Agree with Seats. 'Places to perch' can greatly extend the length and duration of walks by the aged and mobility impaired. We encourage the installation of a series of simple benches/perches at regular intervals (inc. along the Canal) as this will greatly enhance the utilisation of accessible routes.</p> <p>o. STREET PLANTING -</p> <p>p. LIGHTING - The Canal &amp; River Trust do not normally advocate the lighting of our canal corridor due to ecological impact, preferring that the canal remain a dark corridor, particularly for foraging bats. The lighting details provided appear to take account of these issues but if lighting is required for safety reasons along the canal towpath this should be discussed and agreed in advance with the Trust and must be designed so that there is no light spill over the water itself. There should be no lightspill at all over the waterspace of the canal, and whilst this may be achieved in the ways suggested within the Green standard, the Canal &amp; River Trust do not normally advocate lighting along the canal towpath, except in very urban areas. As mentioned elsewhere, improvements should be discussed with the Trust and considered on a length by length basis, considering impact on wildlife and other canal users, safety concerns as well as precedent.</p> <p>q. ILLUSTRATIVE LAYOUTS AGREED - River and Canal Corridor</p> <p>r. ILLUSTRATIVE LAYOUTS COMMENTS - - Whilst the Trust recognise the challenges identified in the River and Canal Corridor chapter we advocate good waterside design and are supportive of most of the ingredients of success and look forward to working with the council to ensure that they are delivered</p>	<p>The Canal &amp; River Trust own the towpath of the Bridgwater &amp; Taunton canal and revisions to the Guide will make that clear and will clarify where the unbound surfacing is to be encouraged.</p> <p>The step by step distance marking for wayfinding accords with Sport England Active Design advice a note will be added to refer to this and their Wayfinding guide. In addition a note will be added that signage on the canal towpath should be in line with the C&amp;RT's own standards</p> <p>The guide will make it clear that no light spill over the water is a requirement. The design guide covers an urban area where lighting is needed to improve walking and cycling.</p>

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		<p>as part of any new development, or if alternative funding sources become available. We do not normally advocate the lighting of our canal corridors due to ecological impact.</p> <p>s. The river and canal may need to be considered individually, with no single design approach being appropriate in all locations, however the details shown in the green standard are broadly suitable and in line with our own aspirations. The Council may find some of the specialist guidance including on our website of assistance, covering matters such as environmental issues and good waterside planning and design. <a href="https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/specialist-teams">https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/specialist-teams</a></p> <p>t. The Trust would welcome the opportunity to discuss the matters with the council, either in general terms or more specifically in relation to development proposals. The Trust offers a free pre-application consultation process and we welcome engagement to ensure that the benefits a waterside location brings to development is maximised. The Planning team can be contacted by email at <a href="mailto:NationalPlanning.Function@canalrivertrust.org.uk">NationalPlanning.Function@canalrivertrust.org.uk</a></p> <p>Please note that the Canal &amp; River Trust is written with an ampersand not 'and'. This needs correcting in several locations.</p> <p>Thank you for consulting the Canal &amp; River Trust (the Trust) in respect of this document and for recognising both the importance of the waterway corridors within the town but also their need for specific treatment.</p> <p>We are the charity who look after and bring to life 2000 miles of canals &amp; rivers and within Somerset West and Taunton District we own and maintain the Bridgwater &amp; Taunton Canal. Our waterways contribute to the health and wellbeing of local communities and economies, creating attractive and connected places to live, work, volunteer and spend leisure time.</p> <p>These historic, natural and cultural assets form part of the strategic and local green-blue infrastructure network, linking urban and rural communities as well as habitats. By caring for our waterways and promoting their use we believe we can improve the wellbeing of our nation. The Bridgwater &amp; Taunton Canal is as valued multi-functional green infrastructure asset within Taunton Garden Town. Improvements to the towpath to facilitate connectivity is welcomed but each section needs to reflect its surroundings and future level of usage. Bitmac and lighting may not be acceptable and these aspects should be discussed at the earliest opportunity. Interpretation should be incorporated into signage and any proposed improvement projects should be agreed with the Trust and we look forward to working with you on this.</p>	
9. Arts Taunton	Agree with some reservations on styles of some selected paving and furniture. Asked for a big bold idea - like a cherry walk along the whole riverside - to be included.	<p>a. PUBLIC REALM AREA STANDARDS AGREED - Core Std, Town Std, General Std, Green Std</p> <p>b. PUBLIC REALM AREA STANDARDS COMMENTS -none</p> <p>c. PAVING MATERIAL STANDARDS AGREED - Core Std, Town Std, General Std, Green St</p> <p>d. PAVING MATERIALS - Arts Taunton supports the additional comments made by the SW Heritage Trust in this area (in which they have expertise). i.e use of more local paving stone types)</p> <p>e. PAVING LAYOUT DETAILS - none</p> <p>f. SIGNAGE - Agree. In general, stainless steel signage tends to sit less well in a historic neighbourhood</p> <p>g. STREET FURNITURE - Bollard design is uneven. The cricket ball and apple designs look too small and vulnerable. The square, black bollards are look rather hostile. The seats/benches with no back are always less popular. Wooden benches are much warmer, and more friendly to the touch and in overall 'tone'. There are no 'traditional' bench designs, which is a shame. The cycle stores are not attractive and the litter bins hostile and joyless</p> <p>h. STREET PLANTING - The list of approved trees for street planting is very modest and could include a richer range. Somerset and the SW has a long tradition of exciting planting and the garden town should extend and promote that.</p> <p>i. LIGHTING - NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE - There is no specific mention of light pollution. Given how problematic it can be (in terms of impacts on wildlife), its high energy usage and its disruptive effect on place-making, this should be a priority. Minimising light pollution should be a core part of light design and choice</p> <p>j. ILLUSTRATIVE LAYOUTS - AGREED- Town Centre; Gateways and Approaches; Neighbourhood Centres, River &amp; Canal Corridors.</p> <p>k. ILLUSTRATIVE LAYOUTS COMMENTS - More information as to how some of these good proposals can be 'retro-fitted' to existing settlements would be helpful. It would be good to have a really</p>	<p>Noted observation about the small scale of the bollard apple and ball specials. The guide will add a traditional bench.</p> <p>The tree list is not definitive - but selected for disease resistant, growing habit suitable to public streets and spaces, etc. There are opportunities in green spaces to be far more adventurous as AT suggest. This will be made clearer.</p> <p>Light pollution outside of the river corridor is implicit in the guidance documents referenced. The guidance will make it clear that light pollution is a core part of the light design and choice.</p>

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		<p>exciting 'branding' of some of the planting/greening areas. How about planting 30,000 cherry trees all along the river, from Firepool to Harkeridge? It would give that area a sense of place and purpose and for a month of the year it would look sensational - and become a destination in its own right. This is the sort of imaginative thinking needed.</p> <p>l. 2<sup>nd</sup> CONSULTATION - additional comments</p> <p>m. A general comment on the entire document is that it contains much first rate work. Arts Taunton is delighted at the depth of commitment to the public realm shown by SWT. We urge the Council to ensure that there is a logistical and legal framework for these standards to be enforceable - else the entire purpose of it is wasted.</p> <p>n. STREET PLANTING - There is a pre-occupation nationally with 'native' tree species, a concept that is often hard to define. Better to pick a tree that will do the job that it is meant to do for the site in question (i.e. look beautiful/screen a building/provide a focus/stabilise ground/help air pollution/provide biodiversity etc.). The notion that a tree is always a good thing needs to be challenged - trees can sometimes disrupt, clog or interrupt a streetscape, can make it gloomy or overshadow fine buildings. Not all trees are good news.</p> <p>o. NIGHTSCAPE &amp; LIGHTING - Light pollution is an acute problem in outer town areas. This has a detrimental effect on the wider environment and should be taken seriously.</p> <p>p. ILLUSTRATIVE LAYOUTS - AGREED- Town Centre; Gateways and Approaches; Neighbourhood Centres, River &amp; Canal Corridors.</p>	<p>all of the illustrated schemes are retrofits of one sort or another.</p> <p>It is agreed that tree species should be appropriate to the site - the list has been drawn up in consultation with SCC and SWTC arboriculturists. This has taken into account maintenance costs, underground utilities etc. There are clear climate change, as well as Garden Town imperatives, to try to increase tree cover and if the only place for this is in a street, it can be both a beautiful and functional addition.</p>
10. Design Circle	Design Circle promotes and fosters high quality, sustainable urban and landscape design in Taunton and surrounding area and welcomes the approach foregrounding street making and public realm.	<p>a. More advice and certainty about how who to use when? Up front narrative about who should use this when. For example - the council will use for its own projects, in development brief for sites and to asses applications and negotiate contributions? For development on private land?</p> <p>b. In the face of reduced local consultation, it seems we need a way to enforce good design not just mention it as a 'nice to have'. I will read with a view of how this can be achieved, maybe it is a written policy statement that accompanies the guidance. i.e. Developers will demonstrate how they have met the design guidance within their plans including 1. Solar design, 2. Connected streets, 3. Key buildings and focal points, ... this will be demonstrated at all levels of consent (outline, reserved matters etc.)</p> <p>c. Advice about how to respond in Design and Access statements.</p> <p>d. Give more priority to tree planting as a key feature of the greener garden town?</p> <p>e. Ability to prioritise projects for example new tree planning o make visible 'garden town' in Town Centre.</p>	
11. Sport England		<p>a. PUBLIC REALM AREA STANDARDS AGREED - Core Std, Town Std, General Std, Green St</p> <p>b. PAVING MATERIAL STANDARDS AGREED - Core Std, Town Std, General Std, Green Std</p> <p>c. SIGNAGE: agreed. At the bottom of this link <a href="https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/facilities-and-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/active-design">https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/facilities-and-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/active-design</a> is a document called 'Routes &amp; Wayfinding' which you may find useful.</p> <p>d. STREET FURNITURE: agreed all</p> <p>e. STREET PLANTING - agreed. Asked that guide suggests awareness that street planting should not hinder walking and cycling</p> <p>f. NIGHTSCAPE &amp; LIGHTING - agreed all standards</p> <p>g. ILLUSTRATIVE LAYOUTS - AGREED- Town Centre; Gateways and Approaches; Neighbourhood Centres, River &amp; Canal Corridors.</p> <p>a. GENERAL COMMENT - Sport England along with Public Health England have published revised guidance 'Active Design' which we consider has considerable synergy the Plan. It may therefore be useful to provide a cross-reference (and perhaps a hyperlink) to <a href="https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/facilities-and-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/active-design">https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/facilities-and-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/active-design</a> .</p> <p>b. Sport England believes that being active should be an intrinsic part of everyone's life pattern.</p> <p>i. The guidance is aimed at planners, urban designers, developers and health professionals.</p>	<p>Add reference to Sport England Wayfinding guidance.</p> <p>Add note that street planting should not hinder walking and cycling</p> <p>Will add 'Active Design' into the references</p>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ii. The guidance looks to support the creation of healthy communities through the land use planning system by encouraging people to be more physically active through their everyday lives.</li> <li>iii. The guidance builds on the original Active Designs objectives of Improving Accessibility, Enhancing Amenity and Increasing Awareness (the '3A's'), and sets out the Ten Principles of Active Design.</li> <li>iv. Then Ten Active Design Principles have been developed to inspire and inform the design and layout of cities, towns, villages, neighbourhoods, buildings, streets and open spaces, to promote sport and physical activity and active lifestyles.</li> <li>v. The guide includes a series of case studies that set out practical real-life examples of the Active Design Principles in action. These case studies are set out to inspire and encourage those engaged in the planning, design and management of our environments to deliver more active and healthier environments.</li> <li>vi. The Ten Active Design Principles are aimed at contributing towards the Governments desire for the planning system to promote healthy communities through good urban design.</li> <li>c. The developer's checklist (Appendix 1) has been revised and can also be accessed via the website.</li> <li>d. Sport England would encourage development in the plan area be designed in line with the Active Design principles to secure sustainable design. This could be evidenced by use of the Active Design checklist.</li> </ul>	
<p>12. Historic England</p>		<p>We support the intent of this Design Guide to raise the standard of public realm and street works in Taunton Garden Town, noting that streets, pavements and associated public realm features may be heritage assets, may form their settings and positively contribute to historic townscape, local character and distinctiveness.</p> <p>particularly welcome paragraph 1.1.8 Respecting character and heritage. While we agree with its contents, we consider it should also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide links to conservation area character appraisals and to Streets for All (2018) and Streets for All South West (2018);</li> <li>• acknowledge that public realm and street works have the potential to affect heritage assets of archaeological interest, both designated (scheduled monuments) and non-designated;</li> <li>• highlight the potential for well-designated public realm and streetworks to enhance the settings and significance of heritage assets and increase the public's understanding and enjoyment of, and access, to local heritage, e.g. through signage, interpretation and/or making in-situ remains visible where appropriate. The latter options could be usefully covered in this Design Guide;</li> <li>• explain that public realm and street work proposals need will need careful planning, sensitive design and to be informed by research including checking the National Heritage List for England and the Somerset Historic Environment Record;</li> <li>• clarify that bespoke designs are required in some heritage sensitive locations despite the standards in this Design Guide;</li> <li>• recognise the potential need for scheduled monument and listed building consents as well as planning permission and the need for statements of heritage significance;</li> <li>• mention the potential need for recording; and</li> <li>• refer to draft Districtwide Design Guide for further information. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equality and inclusive mobility (paragraph 1.1.9): you may find this publication worth referencing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Improving Access to Historic Buildings and Streetscapes.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>PUBLIC REALM AREA STANDARDS (section 1.2): while we note palettes of materials for the four areas, we consider that the Council's conservation and archaeology advisers should be able to agree the quality of materials wherever these affect heritage assets and historic townscape.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paving (section 2.1-5): we would welcome clearer messaging that surviving historic paving and related features will be retained and conserved.</li> </ul>	<p>Add these comments into 1.1.8 Add ref to Streets for All guides</p> <p>Add this to 1.1.9</p>

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		<p>SIGNAGE AND STREET FURNITURE (sections 2.5-2.6): the retention and conservation of historic signs and street furniture should be encouraged as well as the sensitive design and siting of new works.</p> <p>TREE PLANTING AND STREET GARDENS (sections 2.18-19): further information on the historic environment issues associated with tree planting and gardens needs to be included. While we note the intention to increase tree planting and street gardens, care needs to be taken in the choice of places, species and sizes to avoid and/or minimise any negative impacts on the significance of heritage assets, either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o directly, e.g. damage or destroy buried heritage assets or affect foundations of buildings or other structures; and/or</li> <li>o indirectly, e.g. affect the setting of historic buildings, disrupt important views in historic streetscapes and within and through towns and affect the character of wider townscapes.</li> </ul> <p>HE Want more said on The maintenance needs of street trees and planting</p> <p>Care about historic and/or Registered Parks and Gardens and cemeteries and churchyards planting and rewilding.</p> <p>NIGHTSCAPE AND LIGHTING (2.20): in addition to the Streets for All already mentioned, you may find the following information on lighting useful to refer to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o External lighting of historic buildings</li> <li>o Designing, Installing and Maintaining an External Lighting Scheme</li> </ul> <p>We welcome the assurance at paragraph 2.20.17 that listed lamp column in Fore Street are to be retained. We consider that this should be broadened to encourage the retention of all historic lighting.</p> <p>ILLUSTRATIVE LAYOUTS - AGREED In respect of section 3 (Application to Places), we note the purpose of these illustrated examples for different urban conditions and welcome the assurance that designs will need to go through their own design process including survey, analysis, assessments and approvals. We are also pleased to see that some examples include reference to the need for special consideration to be given to siting, materials and visibility in designing works near to heritage assets.</p>	<p>Add re, to consideration for historic parks, gardens, cemeteries etc</p> <p>Add note to this effect</p>
<p>13. Environment Agency</p>		<p><b>1.1 Our public realm</b></p> <p>1.1.4 - Growth and climate change - We support the carbon sequestration opportunities, flood resilience and biodiversity net gain outcomes sought by the guide.</p> <p>The opportunity for carbon sequestration through wetlands, improved floodplain connection, wet woodlands, etc is encouraged and supports the approach for carbon net zero development. Our soils are one of the biggest carbon sinks available to reduce climate change therefore we suggest the concept of building soil depth and quality should be included within the Design Guide. The prevention of further soil depletion through runoff, at the very least, should be included. Sustainable land management practices will play a large role in this.</p> <p>1.1.5 - People first public realm - We note the 'green and clean' objective, which aligns well with the Environment Agency Corporate Plan 2020-25, and look forward to working more closely in partnership with some of this design guidance in practice.</p> <p><b>2.0 Materials and components</b></p> <p>Please note that any materials and components which apply to river and canal side locations through Taunton may be subject to a FRAP from the Agency, in addition to compliance with the design guide document as indicated within the design guide.</p> <p>It should also be noted that any materials or components will be required to be located so as not to obstruct riparian access for channel maintenance and/or planned improvement works, nor placed in such a manner that could impede flood flows in times of high flow. There should be no raising of land within flood zones 2 or 3.</p> <p>PAVING:</p>	<p>Note added</p> <p>Note added</p>



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		<p>2.4 Green standard paving - Any paths alongside watercourses may be subject to tracked vehicles crossing / travelling along the access to carry out maintenance or bank repair work. All paths should therefore be designed to ensure they would not be damaged by these tracked vehicles.</p> <p>2.4.7 - Water access slips, steps - Gabion cages - Please can softer more natural options be used wherever possible / appropriate instead of gabions.</p> <p>PLANTING:</p> <p>2.18. - The Garden Urboretum - trees for Taunton - Please note the tree planting strategy aligns to the DEFRA 25 year Environment plan and some of the Agency's local greener Wessex agenda.</p> <p>Native species of tree should be planted where possible especially in more rural areas and the riparian zone.</p> <p>We also support planting native trees and wetland creation on our land whilst allowing for flood risk maintenance activities.</p> <p>2.19 - Street gardens - As a form of SuDs they should be referred to Somerset County Council, as Lead Local Flood Authority, for comment, although we are supportive in principle where appropriate.</p> <p>LIGHTING:</p> <p>2.20 - Street and path lighting - Along riversides there should be kept a solid dark corridor and a buffer zone where possible, to avoid negative impacts on bats, birds, otters, invertebrates etc.</p> <p>Up lighting of trees - We are not in favour of this, as there is negative impacts on birds, bats, invertebrates and even the tree health itself.</p> <p>Any work within 8 metres will need careful consideration and design and should only be installed after prior consultation and/or FRAP from the Agency.</p> <p>3.5 - River and canal corridor - Please keep footpaths and cycle routes away from all watercourses, or have a buffer zone to minimise disturbance on riparian and aquatic wildlife. Please keep any lighting away from the water e.g. down lit, directional.</p> <p>RIVER AND CANAL CORRIDOR</p> <p>River edges - Please keep soft wherever possible. Avoid gabions or hard engineering, there are lots of soft and natural solutions available nowadays and should be possible in most areas.</p> <p>Scrub - Marginal vegetation and trees should be encouraged wherever possible.</p> <p>Possible enhancements - Bird boxes, bat boxes, kingfisher perches and nest boxes, otter holts, bug hotels, pollinator species. Please ensure they have a long term care and maintenance plan.</p> <p>Carefully managed wild and publicly inaccessible areas should be developed as part of this plan, this is where wildlife will thrive as it will offer havens free from urban litter, noise, light, and visual disturbance.</p> <p>Environment Agency specific consultation should be encouraged here in the guide, as many items may require FRAP from us on a site by site basis, and to ensure that proposals do not contradict with other strategies e.g. TSFAIS project delivery or routine maintenance activities.</p> <p>SEA / HRA</p> <p>It is noted that Somerset West and Taunton Council have applied the SEA/HRA Directive, and the Environment Agency can agree with their draft outcome.</p>	<p>Note added</p> <p>Noted preference below illustration. Urban areas and boat launch areas with more wear may require gabions though.</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted in paving section</p> <p>Note added to require management plan.</p>
14. Natural England		We have no specific comments to make on the design guides.	
15. Vistry Group (Developer)		<p><b>Section 2.3 General Standard - paving</b></p> <p><b>Again, this section is too prescriptive and should not be requesting the size and colour nor material of paving. This needs to be flexible and acknowledge that those materials and specifications requested</b></p>	The guide is there to avoid the multiple different surfaces and specifications used in development that lead to a large cost to the public purse in maintenance, difficulty in sourcing spares/replacements and no build up of knowledge of

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		<p>might not be available and (or) better solutions for paving could materialise in the future. Material choice could have an impact on viability, therefore a blanket approach is unreasonable.</p> <p><b>Section 2.6- Street Furniture and 2.20 Nightscape and lighting</b> Please see the comments above. The specifications are far too prescriptive, and lighting needs to be compatible with nature strategies. The specification does not allow for flexibility or innovation in the future and will become out of date quickly.</p>	<p>particular material by either contractors or the highway authority locally. The guide is permitted to codify this under NPPF and local Plan policies.</p> <p>See above. Lighting is compatible with nature strategies and has been agreed with county and EA. Flexibility is problematic for planning long term maintenance and consistency in appearance of the environment so restriction on the pallet of materials is required. The guide can be updated quickly.</p>
16. WessexWater		Street trees can have adverse impacts on underground utilities infrastructure. We suggest that an additional consideration is inserted into Section 2.18.2 'Tree Pit Location' to identify that consideration should be given to street tree location to ensure that they do not have an adverse effect on utilities infrastructure.	Note added
17. Taylor Wimpey (developer)		<p>Taylor Wimpey supports the production and aims of the Public Realm Design Guide, which should be a valuable and helpful tool to raise design standards within Taunton's public realm. The format and structure are considered clear and accessible, providing useful guidance to the approach and treatments to the different character areas</p> <p>It is important however that the SPD does not seek to make and implement new planning policy, for example in respect of the delivery of renewable energy solutions as part of new housing development. It must be recognised that the SPD can only implement policy that already forms part of the development plan.</p> <p>The only concern we would identify is if the detail set out in the Design Guide becomes too prescriptive and therefore risks becomes a 'tick box' tool stifling alternative design and treatments which may be appropriate. For example, Sections 2.1 - 2.4 and 2.7 - 2.13 respectively set out specific paving and street furniture requirements for the different standard areas, but other materials and treatment may be equally acceptable.</p> <p>There also needs to be specific recognition that issues of site-specific circumstance, technical feasibility, and viability may influence the design approach in a way that may not necessarily deliver the specific outcomes sought. While certain design treatments may not be the optimum outcome, in some cases there will be compelling technical reasons why the 'preferred' design solution cannot be followed or where it would make an otherwise desirably scheme unviable - a good example being the availability and cost of materials or particular brands and specifications of street furniture. The Design Guide needs to recognise that in some cases an alternative design approach or treatment will be acceptable.</p> <p>It is also crucial that the advocated design measures are deliverable. Where design measures impact on highways and/or have implications for adoption and maintenance these need to adhere to the relevant standards and guidance - this is specifically acknowledged at paragraph 2.17.1 in respect of Electric Vehicle Charging but this applies to other measures. A conflict between the standards specified in the Design Guide and the standards the Highway's Authority will accept would create additional burdens for applicants and will not facilitate a positive outcome. This is particularly relevant for road materials, street trees, street furniture, and sustainable urban drainage measures in the public realm both in terms of determining applications and longer-term adoption and maintenance implications. The implications of requiring enhanced materials on future commuted sums also needs to be clear. This is acknowledged at paragraph 2.1.3 but the Guide does not offer further clarification as to how this would be addressed.</p> <p>Overall, our client supports the aims and objectives of the draft Public Realm Design Guide SPD and consider it will be helpful in raising standards for the public realm in Taunton. However, as set out in the opening comments, it is important that the Council uses it as a guide and does not seek to apply it rigidly so that it stifles good creative design.</p> <p>Subject to further consideration of these points we offer broad support for the draft document.</p>	<p>The guide is there to avoid the multiple different surfaces and specifications used in development that lead to a large cost to the public purse in maintenance, difficulty in sourcing spares/replacements and no build up of knowledge of particular material by either contractors or the highway authority locally. The guide is permitted to codify this under NPPF and local Plan policies. Other specifications may be adequate functionally but will not be acceptable to the planning authority who must decide on suitability of appearance, scale, long term adequacy, maintenance and environmental performance.</p>
18. Burrington Estates		Burrington Estates supports the production and aims of the Public Realm Design Guide, which should be a valuable and helpful tool to raise design standards within Taunton's public realm. The format and	letter repeating text from Taylor Wimpey letter. See above comments.

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		<p>structure are considered clear and accessible, providing useful guidance to the approach and treatments to the different character areas.</p> <p>It is important however that the SPD does not seek to make and implement new planning policy, for example in respect of the delivery of renewable energy solutions as part of new housing development. It must be recognised that the SPD can only implement policy that already forms part of the development plan.</p> <p>The only concern we would identify is if the detail set out in the Design Guide becomes too prescriptive and therefore risks becomes a 'tick box' tool stifling alternative design and treatments which may be appropriate.</p> <p>There also needs to be specific recognition that issues of site-specific circumstance, technical feasibility, and viability may influence the design approach in a way that may not necessarily deliver the specific outcomes sought. While certain design treatments may not be the optimum outcome, in some cases there will be compelling technical reasons why the 'preferred' design solution cannot be followed or where it would make an otherwise desirably scheme unviable - a good example being the availability and cost of materials. The Design Guide needs to recognise that in some cases a lesser design approach will be acceptable.</p> <p>It is also crucial that the advocated design measures are deliverable. Where design measures impact on highways and/or have implications for adoption these need to adhere to the relevant standards and guidance - this is specifically acknowledged at paragraph 2.17.1 in respect of Electric Vehicle Charging but would apply to other measures. A conflict between the Design Guide and the Highway's Authority as to what will be acceptable will not be helpful to anyone and will not facilitate a positive outcome. This is particularly relevant for road materials, street trees, street furniture and sustainable urban drainage measures in the public realm. The implications of requiring enhanced materials on future commuted sums also needs to be clear. This is acknowledged at paragraph 2.1.3 but the Guide does not offer further clarification as to how this would be addressed.</p> <p>Overall, our client supports the aims and objectives of the draft Public Realm Design Guide SPD and consider it will be helpful in raising standards for the public realm in Taunton. However, as set out in the opening comments, it is important that the Council uses it as a guide and does not seek to apply it rigidly so that it stifles good creative design.</p>	
19. Woodland Trust		<p><b>DOCUMENT LEGIBILITY/ ACCESSIBILITY</b></p> <p>The format and layout of the document make it quite difficult to read online and it doesn't lend itself well to being zoomed in on to read the text. Please could some further consideration be given to the ease of reading this document and others which your team produces to ensure that they are fully accessible</p> <p><b>PLANTING</b></p> <p>The tree chapter seems well thought through and is to be commended</p> <p>The provision and design of tree planting in urban areas is to be commended. It is excellent to see that trees will play such a key role in the making of the garden town. The paragraphs in 2.18.1 - 5 are excellent, taking due care for tree health and the species categorised according to size will contribute well to ensuring that the right tree is planted in the right place. It is also good to see that you have considered the services to urban environments that trees can provide in regulating temperature and air quality.</p> <p>We welcome the commitment to a target of 30% tree cover by 2050 The target to increase tree cover to 30% in Taunton by 2050 is both ambitious and excellent to see. The Woodland Trust would welcome the opportunity to work with Somerset West and Taunton Council on the development of the Taunton Garden Town Tree Planting Strategy. We have schemes available to provide trees for planting on local authority land including MORE woods and community tree packs. We can work with you to develop a plan and move to delivery of this ambition. It is excellent to see that you have considered the local conditions and environments of the area and are including trees for wetlands, wet woodlands and withy beds, and orchards as well as mixed broadleaved woodland planting.</p> <p>It is excellent to see the Woodland Trust listed in your list of possible partners, and this is something we would certainly like to meet with you to take forward. We have experts in tree planting in urban and wilder settings, policy experts and can provide advice on matters relating to managing trees. Please connect with me to arrange an initial meeting.</p> <p>Ensuring trees thrive well into the future</p>	<p>We are not aware of any accessibility issues. The web version may pixellate when zooming in on some illustrations. A high resolution version should also be made available on the website for users who need the detail.</p> <p>Noted and have drawn partnering offer to attention of GT</p>

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		<p>We have identified two small gaps in the SPD which could be improved with some small modifications.</p> <p>Firstly, we would like to ask Somerset West and Taunton Council to consider how the Design Guide can ensure that new development takes account of the size of trees when they have reached maturity, and not at the time of planting. This will safeguard the trees in the future so that they are able to thrive.</p> <p>Secondly, although we advocate the planting of native trees, we understand the value of ornamental trees in urban environments. We would urge Somerset West and Taunton Councils to source trees from nurseries with the tightest plant health controls in place, that are UK sourced and grown and are UKISG endorsed. This will help to ensure that our native trees are protected from new pests and disease, but also that species are not selected which could threaten our native trees which are already showing signs of stress through pressures of climate change and existing diseases.</p> <p>Finally, we welcome the opportunity to work with you to achieve these ambitions and ensure that trees and woodlands thrive in Somerset West and Taunton for the benefit of people, biodiversity, and climate change</p>	<p>Note to be added to tree selection text</p> <p>Note to be added to tree selection text</p>
20. Network Rail		<p><b>ILLUSTRATIVE LAYOUTS: Section 3.2.3 Station - Inner gateway vision</b></p> <p>This section highlights improvements to the station area at Taunton in order to provide a high quality space for the public. As Network Rail is a publicly funded organisation with a regulated remit it would not be reasonable to require Network Rail to fund rail improvements necessitated by commercial development. It is therefore appropriate to require developer contributions to fund such improvements.</p>	<p>Comments noted. The guidance is for design not a scheme proposal or an expectation of funding. It is to show how a scheme might be designed should funding for instance from planning obligations, become available.</p>
21. Avon and Somerset Police		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The physical security of a building alone does not necessarily make it secure, instead, it is a by-product of well thought out, inconspicuous crime prevention measures that are incorporated within the whole design.</li> <li>2. When considering future developments, it is imperative to achieve sustainable reductions in crime to help people live and work in a safer society. Police Crime Prevention Initiatives (PCPI) are a police-owned organisation working on behalf of the police service to deliver a wide range of crime prevention initiatives of which they promote Secured by Design (SBD).</li> <li>3. Supported by Crime Prevention Design Advisors (CPDA's), SBD provide a series of design guides that enable CPDA's to work closely with architects, developers and local authority planners at the design stage. This enables the CPDA to assist developers to 'design out crime' by improving the layout and physical security of buildings at conception through to construction.</li> <li>4. Upon meeting the necessary requirements as stated within the SBD Design Guides e. g. Homes 2019 &amp; Commercial 2015, developers may achieve an SBD award. This achievement illustrates that the developer has incorporated crime prevention techniques in the layout, landscaping &amp; planting, provision of communal/play areas and parking in the immediate surroundings plus the physical security of buildings. In addition to the Design Guides listed on the SBD website – <a href="http://www.securedbydesign.com">www.securedbydesign.com</a> –there is a list of accredited products which have been independently third party tested. This ensures the physical security standards of products and services are guaranteed.</li> <li>5. Crime Prevention Design Advisors are trained members of the police service who specialise in crime prevention and designing out crime. Their role is to provide impartial, expert advice on Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) to a wide range of design and build professionals including architects, builders and developers, local authority planners and many others. Considering CPTED principles at the conception and planning stages is pivotal to the sustainability of future developments ranging from building new, large scale developments to major refurbishment projects. This encompasses a wide range of building sectors including residential, business, education, health, transport, retail and sport/leisure facilities.</li> <li>6. The government has placed obligations on police and local government to work together in the strategies for dealing with crime and ASB, which has firmly placed the CPDA role in the planning process. In addition, local planning policy, design codes, BREEAM and the Crime &amp; Disorder Act 1998 (Section 17) influence and address the need to design out crime and deliver safe and secure communities.</li> </ol> <p>I request that the above comments (or an appropriate version of them) be included in the above Design Guides.</p>	<p>Secured by Design is covered by SADMP 2016 Policy D8: Safety</p> <p>SBD tends to focus on development of sites in the planning system whereas the design guide is trying to also cover provision and reengineering /improvement of existing public space in highways and green spaces. Some of SBD guidance may also conflict with some sustainable design practice e.g. Low Traffic Neighbourhoods creation, so needs careful interpretation.</p> <p>A note to be added that the Police Crime Prevention Design Advisor can usefully advise on public realm design safety aspects.</p>

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22. Highways England		Whilst we have no specific comments on the draft guidance contained within the Design Guides, we welcome the Council's intention to deliver sustainable development across the district by encouraging the development of sustainable transport opportunities, thereby reducing the reliance on the private car	noted
23. Office for Nuclear Regulation		For developments we will require: confirmation from relevant Council emergency planners that developments can be accommodated within any emergency plan required under the Radiation (Emergency Preparedness and Public Information) Regulations 2019; and that the developments do not pose an external hazard to the site.	No developments proposed

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SOMERSET COUNTY COUNCIL			
24. Highways		<p>...strong concerns about the documents as currently drafted and would suggest that we arrange some collaborative sessions to work through your objectives and proposed changes to current practice; to agree an appropriate set of guidance that this Authority can sign up to.</p> <p>...broad concern is that the documents (in particular the public realm document) do not take sufficient account of the fundamental principles that underly most of the existing guidance and statutory requirements for the design, maintenance and operation of highway and transport networks.</p> <p>I note that the public realm guide is aimed at guiding design of public realm and street works by the highway authority, by developers, utility companies and by their agents and contractors. There is a wealth of existing guidance, much of it embedded in statutory regulation that does not appear to be compatible with many of the proposals in your draft guidance.</p> <p>The provision of a safe network with appropriate capacity to keep traffic moving is at the heart of current highway guidance and is not reflected sufficiently in your proposed approach. We need to ensure that the design standard, layout and materials used are appropriate to the role, function and strategic nature of the routes. Proposals for the A38 as an example do not appear to be appropriate...</p>	<p>The Guide takes into account all the current guidance and statutory regulations and the Council will continue to work with the Highways Authority.</p> <p>The guide is aimed at designing the appearance of public space to accord with Garden Town and our joint sustainability commitments - it is not meant to replace highways manual. All diagrams of application are illustrative of principles - not detailed engineering designs.</p> <p>The premise of keeping traffic moving here is that all streets and roads are treated equally with vehicle priority as the primary goal. Whilst the Traffic Management Act suggests this, such an approach is a blunt instrument and all streets must be treated according to their context - particularly their required (not necessarily existing) pedestrian and cycle activity level.</p>
		<b>1.1.1 Purpose of this Guide</b>	
24.1.		The Highway Authority require further clarification is required on the meaning of Public Realm and Streetworks. Is this guide intended to only apply to the existing highway network or will it also apply to internal estate roads within a housing development	Both - its area related - not new and existing related
		<b>1.1.7 Respecting Character and Heritage</b>	
24.2.		Please note there are spelling mistakes in the text which is associated with figure 3.	Noted.
		<b>1.1.8 Equality and Inclusive access</b>	
24.3.		From reviewing these paragraphs, they do not directly mention pedestrians with a visual impairment or the current pause on shared spaces. It is our opinion that this section needs to be carefully considered to ensure it adequately caters for all those with equality and inclusive access needs. In addition, you may wish to consider disabled parking and accessibility to public transport	<p>This introductory statement is about our Equalities Act duties. Visually impaired people are only one of the protected characteristics under the Equalities Act duties. Our duty is to eliminate unlawful discrimination; advance equality of opportunity; and foster good relations. It requires local authorities to make a 'reasonable' adjustment to ensure the equal provision of services.</p> <p>We deliberately do not use the term shared space in accordance with CIHT - nor show any. DPTAC more accurately state "Those involved in shared space schemes need to be cognisant of the need to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty</p>

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			<p>and the duty to implement reasonable adjustments”. So it is carefully considered.</p> <p>We also understand the shared space pause is not blanket but conditional. We draw your attention to the Minister’s statement of 28/9/2018 which states “<i>the focus of the pause is on level-surface schemes in areas with relatively large amounts of pedestrian and vehicular movement, such as high streets and town centres (outside of pedestrian zones). The pause does not apply to streets within new residential areas, or the redesign of existing residential streets with very low levels of traffic, such as appropriately designed mews and cul-de-sacs, which take into account the relevant aspects of the National Planning Policy Framework and associated guidance.</i>”</p> <p>And</p> <p>“<i>Features often included in a shared space scheme, such as the minimal use of traffic signs and other traffic management related street furniture, removing traffic signals, removing/modifying formal and informal crossings, raised side road entry treatments, continuous footways, table junctions and shared use routes for pedestrians and cyclists are often integral parts of other traffic management schemes. The use of these features in traffic management schemes is not included in the request to pause level surface shared space schemes. The availability of formal crossings is particularly important for visually impaired people. Local authorities should consider how this need can be met in all schemes, including shared space.</i>”</p> <p>See also</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">DPTAC position on ‘shared space’ 2018</a></li> <li>• Access for blind people in towns. SS1401 The National Federation of the Blind of the UK, 2013.</li> <li>• ‘Creating better streets: Inclusive and accessible places. Reviewing shared space’, CIHT, 2018</li> </ul>
24.4.		You will also need to include the following document in the reference section: “A Guide to Best Practice on Access to Pedestrian and Transport Infrastructure” - Inclusive Mobility (DfT) document.	Noted - will add ref. here. (Already mentioned in other parts of Guide and references at end)
		<b>1.1.9 Format of the Design Guide</b>	
24.5.		It is noted that several references have been listed but this does not cover all the documents likely to be referenced by the Highway Authority. The County Council’s Declared Standards are likely to extend beyond those listed. For example, there is no reference to the Traffic Signs Manuals, The Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB), which covers design & specific infrastructure not covered by MfS. There is also no reference to relevant legislation including Construction (Design and Management) Regs 2015, which is fundamental to ensure it is safe and fit for purpose. Whilst new DfT documents relating to Walking, Cycling and Horse riding must be considered to ensure the latest design ideals are adopted.	<p>It is not meant to cover every document likely to be referenced by the Highway Authority - it is those needed for public realm design in the Garden Town - not all highway design. The Highway Authority may need to update their guides in some areas</p> <p>TSM and DMRB are mentioned where these are relevant - see p.47 and 136</p> <p>“The Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) is a suite of documents which contains requirements and advice relating to works on motorway and all-purpose trunk roads for which one of the Overseeing Organisations is highway or road authority” (GG101, DMRB). It is not designed for local streets.</p> <p>The guide does not mention CDM as it is a statutory duty and doing so is a distraction from the main purposes of the document. The guide is aimed at professional and competent designers of public realm/highway works. The applicability of certain of the CDM regulations is anyway dependent on whether the project is notifiable, i.e. those projects for which the construction phase is likely to involve more than 30 working days or more than 500 person days of construction works.</p> <p>LTN1/20 has been followed as far as possible. Not sure what other DfT documents are being referred to? Recent CD 195 Designing for cycle traffic (DMRB) is mentioned.</p>
		<b>2.1.1 Core Standard</b>	

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24.6.		There is no specific reference made to conservation areas within the town. Do core standards only relate to conversation areas?	<p>No all the standards relate to more than just Conservation Areas. The Core Standard, which includes several Conservation Areas and many Listed Buildings. The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, is to also take account of the setting of these and other non-designated heritage assets (local listing/buildings, structures and fabric of historic importance) - not just the designated boundaries to conservation areas. See Fig 6 p13 and fig 7 p19.</p> <p>All the Core Area and part of the Town Standard area are environmentally sensitive and are lined by Listed Buildings as well as Conservation Areas most of which, but not all, adjoin. There are Conservation Areas in parts of the General Standard Area also. Note that Historic England guidance on planning also relates to the setting of Heritage Assets, which includes non-designated heritage assets (The Setting of Heritage Assets Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (Second Edition) 2015. Their Streets for All South West guidance also applies.</p> <p>The Conservation Area boundaries will be shown on the overall Area Standards plan but the quality and specification of materials is not solely based on this designation.</p>
		<b>2.1.2 Key Characteristics</b>	
24.7.		Regarding this paragraph clarification with DfT mobility and local disabled groups about new tactile guidelines. Please ensure adequate consideration is given to those with a visual impairment. Please note that sandstone cycleways and sandstone set for crossovers and contrast might be confusing. There are other questions relating to tactile delineation, flame textured contrast areas and colour of natural stone blister slabs at controlled crossings.	<p>Suggest the following insertion is made 'The public realm design process must consider the needs of blind and partially sighted people from the outset of a scheme, within an integrated and genuinely inclusive design process, that reflects the public sector obligations under the Equalities Act'.</p> <p>There is a cycle divider kerb as contrast and setts are in contrast jointing so appear darker. Design would as policy, be subject to consultation with disabled groups. Vehicle crossovers are in setts to allow for more vehicle use and also to provide indication of potential vehicle use. This is traditional over much of the country - not sure why it would cause confusion.</p> <p>We note the tactile contrasts issue- see 2.5.7 for suggested changes to colour to black in Core Standard area.</p>
24.8.		Where materials for carriageway construction differ from those outlined in SCC's standard construction materials then commuted sums will be sought by the local highway authority to secure the future maintenance of the assets.	SCC do not appear to have published standard construction materials but any information on this will be taken into account. The use of higher quality materials will be sought where appropriate. The town centre already has bespoke higher quality paving as is fitting to the centre of the county town.
24.9.		As an aside to the above it may be prudent to provide a link to SCC's commuted sum policy document. So, it will mean developers are under no illusion what is expected of them.	SCC commuted sum policy will be added for developer reference.
		<b>2.1.3 Specials</b>	
24.10.		Concerns that tactile natural stone blister slabs (grey) will not provide the contrast required for the visually impaired pedestrians. Off-road segregation of cyclists using cycle granite demarcation edge (Charcon) will again cause a colour contrast issue for the partially sighted pedestrians.	<p>The DfT guidance on tactile doesn't require contrast - it is advised. It is also accepted that "Where there are conservation considerations an alternative colour for the tactile surface may be appropriate" - design would be subject to consultation with disabled user groups as SCC policy.</p> <p>Proposed to insert 'The public realm design process must considers the needs of blind and partially sighted people from the outset of a scheme, within an integrated and genuinely inclusive design process, that reflects the public sector obligations under the Equalities Act'</p>
24.11.		Cycle drop kerbs in granite (Charcon) raise several questions i.e. are these too narrow and can cause a slip hazard for cyclists.	Cycle drop kerbs are available in a number of widths (450, 600, 750mm) to suit slope needed and meet BS EN1340 requirements for SRV.
24.12.		Finally, please can you clarify what a courtesy crossing, is this the same thing as an Uncontrolled Crossing facility.	Courtesy crossings are uncontrolled crossings, typically provided in more enhanced slow speed street environments, with no statutory requirement for

Consultee	General agreement/ disagreement	Detail comment received	SWTC response
			drivers to give way to pedestrians, but many do out of courtesy as is required in UK law where the pedestrian has equal right of use of the highway as the vehicle.
		<b>2.1.4 Paving Slabs - smooth</b>	
24.13.		Is the Slip Resistance Value sufficient?	Yes - meets BS 1341 - surface should be greater than 35 in the wet. Note - DMRB CD 239 Footway and cycleway pavement design also states "Natural stone flags or setts shall have a minimum unpolished skid resistance value (USRV) of 35 determined in accordance with BS EN 14231 [Ref 21.N] in wet conditions"
		<b>2.1.5 Paving setts - footways and cycle paths</b>	
24.14.		Colour contrasts to enable pedestrians (especially visually impaired) to decide what is a footway, i.e. a right of way on foot only, and a Segregated or shared-use footway/cycleway NMU route? As with the paving slabs, is Slip Resistance Value sufficient?	The specification is for setts. Sometimes these are used in cycle track and sometimes in footways - not saying same would be used in same place - see application diagrams. The layout design would seek to create suitable contrast. See also 2.5.7 response.
		<b>2.1.6 Paving slabs - textured</b>	
24.15.		No mention of tonal (or other type) of contrast between a footway and cycleway.	Para. numbering to be amended. Yes - meets BS 1341 - surface SRV should be greater than 35 in the wet
		<b>2.1.7 Paving Setts - carriageways</b>	
24.16.		No mention of tonal (or other type) of contrast between a footway and cycleway.	This section is for individual materials specification - not layout section. Contrast in layout is designer's responsibility using materials shown.
24.17.		Is the Slip Resistance Value sufficient?	Setts meet BS EN 1341 - surface SRV should be greater than 35 in the wet.
24.18.		With regard to materials, if these are nonstandard materials usually the Highway Authority would require a commuted sum. However, considering that this will be for the garden town has there been a discussion between SCC and SW&T over a change in policy because of this.	The use of higher quality materials on the areas shown is subject to agreement on a case by case basis. The town centre already has bespoke higher quality paving as is fitting to the centre of the county town. A ref. to commuted sum SCC policy for developers will be added.
24.19.		Please note that granite setts are not currently permitted for adoption within the SCC design palette.	Propose to change this to 'imprint asphalt' - setts can have problems where buses and HGVs access regularly though regularly used in high quality schemes.
		<b>2.1.8 Cycle demarcation edge</b>	
24.20.		We have not seen this approach used before, looks like potential for trip hazards if this is segregating cyclists and pedestrians. Drainage design will need careful consideration.	The shape is prescribed in 'Guidance on the use of tactile paving surfaces' for use to separate the pedestrian and cyclist sides of a segregated shared use cycle path See uses as kerb at Sauchiehall St Glasgow, and at Newarke Street, Leicester. Could use half batter kerb laid on side as alternative.  A max 1in4 to 1in7 slope is not found to cause a trip hazard. See also UCL PAMELA research "Testing proposed delineators to demarcate pedestrian paths in a shared space environment" 2008
		<b>2.1.9 Cycle edge kerb</b>	
24.21.		Raised kerb height - Problems experienced in Bridgwater of elderly pedestrians tripping up the kerbs when crossing. There is no colour contrast. No safety lines. Chamfered kerbs are a potential hazard. Drainage, thresholds, footway levels and transitions will need to be carefully considered and detailed and again is the slip resistance value sufficient.	This cycle kerb is designed to be more forgiving for a cyclist by avoiding pedal clipping kerb and causing and cyclist to fall into path of a vehicle. It is prescribed in TfL Streetscape Design Guide and sold commercially by Charcon. It is to be used in the right place - i.e. for a divider strip between carriageway and cycle lane, not to edge of footway. Kerb meets BS EN 1341 for SRV - see Charcon technical sheet. A competent designer would know how to use it. The colour contrasts the same as any other kerb so is no greater trip hazard.



Consultee	General agreement/ disagreement	Detail comment received	SWTC response
		<b>2.1.10 Cycle drop kerb</b>	
24.22.		Is the Slip Resistance Value sufficient?	Kerb meets BS EN 1341 for SRV
		<b>2.1.11 Kerbs</b>	
24.23.		Any materials use in a Conservation area will require prior approval by the District and County Conservation Officers.	We have consulted SCC's Conservation Officer. See SWHT comments. SWT is the District Conservation Officer and is the promoter of the design guide and its requirements.
		<b>2.1.12 Resin bound gravel</b>	
24.24.		No slip resistance value has been provided. It should be restricted to locations out of pedestrian areas - tree pits and surrounding street furniture.	A note re resin bonded gravel would be required to have SRV >40 (wet) measured in accordance with BS 598-105 : 2000 and BS EN 13036-4 : 2003 and have BBA Certificate .
		<b>2.2.2 Key characteristics</b>	
24.25.		Please note that gold resin bound gravel is unsuitable to use for cycle lanes. Where carriageway construction/materials proposed for use differ from those outlined in SCC's standard construction materials then commuted sums will be sought by the Highway Authority to secure future maintenance assets.	In light of SCC comment on consistency of cycle paths across the town, a change is proposed to a Terracotta self coloured asphalt binder surface for the Core and Town Standard area. The concern is that the red should be less bold within the historic town centre and its immediate margins.  The proposals show cycle lanes (in carriageway) as using asphalt colour binder surface as SCC standard - again in Terracotta colour.  The Council is now aware of any published SCC standards for construction materials since the Green Book was withdrawn. The use of higher quality materials on the areas shown will be considered on a case by case basis. The town centre already has bespoke paving as is fitting to our county town's prime shopping and civic area.  A ref. to the SCC commuted sum policy will be added for developer reference.
		<b>2.2.8 Cycle demarcation edge</b>	
24.26.		Firstly, there is a spelling mistake in the text for the photo. With regards to the demarcation will these be clearly visible during the hours of darkness? Drainage would also need to be detailed. Many of these features are not included in the core section of the report, which is likely to have a greater number of ped/visually impaired and cyclists.	The demarcation is for use in town centre (Core and Town Standard Areas) so will be illuminated. Drainage breaks are a detail issue but are deliberately shown in the illustration.  The guide is to establish principles of material use in each area- not to show every occurrence as it is not a plan.
		<b>2.2.11 Resin bound gravel</b>	
24.27.		Gold Resin bound gravel is unsuitable to use for cycle lanes.	Cycle tracks and lanes have been amended to a Terracotta self coloured asphalt binder surface for the Core and Town Standard area, in order to maintain the red tone for consistency. The Council seeks to ensure that the red used should be less bold within the historic town centre and its immediate margins.  RBG use confined to footway areas where there is less foot traffic (outside 'Clear Zone') and where colour contrast for visually impaired is required - i.e. around street furniture clusters, cycle racks etc
24.28.		Where carriageway construction / materials proposed for use differ from those outlined in SCC's standard construction materials then commuted sums will be sought by the local highway authority to secure the future maintenance of the assets. A link to the Commuted Sum Policy document would be useful here.	The Council is not aware of any published SCC standards for construction materials since the Green Book was withdrawn. The use of higher quality materials on the areas identified will be subject to discussion on a case by case basis. The town centre already has bespoke paving as is fitting to our main county town's prime shopping and civic area.  A ref. to the SCC commuted sum policy will be added for developer reference.
24.29.		Is the Slip Resistance Value sufficient?	A note will be added that resin bonded gravel would be required to have SRV >40 (wet) measured in accordance with BS 598-105 : 2000 and BS EN 13036-4 : 2003 and have BBA Certificate .
		<b>Missing Section</b>	

Consultee	General agreement/ disagreement	Detail comment received	SWTC response
24.30.		There is no reference to cycle path surfacing. Please note that red surface for cycle lanes and where clear segregation is required. No mention of shared areas. The colour contrast is to assist the partially sighted, to provide warning and raise awareness that they can expect cyclists. Red shared areas combined with signing also help inform motorists of the presence of a cycleway where cyclists are likely to be joining the carriageway	Cycle tracks are shown as RBG in 2.2.11 - see amendment to Terracotta asphalt proposed above. Shared cycle/footways not shown here as these are a layout issue - this section is only dealing with materials.
		<b>2.3.8 Resin bound gravel</b>	
24.31.		The paragraph numbering is incorrect	noted and will be amended
		<b>2.3.10 Cycle demarcation line</b>	
24.32.		The paragraph numbering is incorrect	noted and will be amended
		<b>2.3.11 Cycle path surface</b>	
24.33.		Red surface for cycle lanes and where clear segregation is required. No mention of shared areas. The colour contrast is to assist the partially sighted, to provide warning and raise awareness that they can expect cyclists. Red shared areas combined with signing also help inform motorists of the presence of a cycleway where cyclists are likely to be joining the carriageway.	Red surface is shown for cycle lanes in the General Standard area in this section.  Shared areas are a layout issue (and dealt with in LTN 1/12). This section is only a materials specification for specific areas.  LTN 1/12 also states "Coloured surfacing is not generally recommended for shared use" and "On shared use routes, coloured surfacing can be very detrimental to the streetscape". We also note SCC practice varies across Taunton, with many shared tracks uncoloured.
		<b>2.4.4 Sealed surface cycle paths: town centre area</b>	
24.34.		Any features or materials which are not part of the SCC palette or considered standard construction will attract a commuted sum.	These are not on highways land (i.e. cycle tracks under the RTRA) so do not strictly require SCC standard materials - A note to be added to make this clear
		<b>2.4.5 Sealed surface cycle paths: outer area</b>	
24.35.		It is recommended that a single binder/surface course material similar to that used as part of the Cannington-Combwich cycle route.	This is for largely off highway cycle tracks. The material shown is similar to that laid in Longrun Meadow recently by SCC (which includes a good proportion of recycled materials).
		<b>2.4.6 Unsealed surface cycle paths</b>	
24.36.		We would recommend that you consult SCC Public Rights of Way Team.	Noted
		<b>2.5.2 Controlled crossings</b>	
24.37.		Fig 15 has no guard rail as such kerbing will be a trip hazard. There is evidence of this on the Taunton Third Way.	This is used in busy pedestrian locations in London and is a successful design detail shown in the TfL Streetscape Design Guide having been used first in Kensington High Street (completed 2004 and reduced RTAs by 44%). A note will be added that disabled groups must be consulted during design stages. Removing guardrail in the right circumstances assists multiple different types of people abilities in crossing, assist physical distancing, aids pedestrian movement and removes clutter.
24.38.		High friction surfacing to be self-coloured. Currently we use buff coloured surfacing.	The performance is not different and SWT as planning authority require self coloured grey in the Garden Town centre.
24.39.		Tactile paving at controlled crossings should be red in accordance with the DfT's Guidance on the Use of Tactile Paving Surfaces unless it is in a conservation area.	The DfT guidance is not as binary (i.e. in and out of a CA as suggested). The Tactile guidance states "Where the blister surface is provided at crossing points in conservation areas or in the vicinity of a listed building, some relaxation of the colour requirements may be acceptable". It relates to environmentally sensitive areas - not just designated Conservation Areas.

Consultee	General agreement/ disagreement	Detail comment received	SWTC response
			<p>All the Core Area is an environmentally sensitive area and is lined by Listed Buildings as well as Conservation Areas most of which, but not all, adjoin. Historic England guidance on planning also relates to the setting of Heritage Assets. See 'The Setting of Heritage Assets Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning' Note 3 (Second Edition) 2015. Their Streets for All South West guidance also applies.</p> <p>The Tactile Guidance states the duty is to consult with local visual impairment groups which is made clear that this is a requirement for design teams.</p>
24.40.		SCC Traffic Signal Specification document sets out the county's standards for such locations including the use guard railing and colour of HFS on the approaches. The SCC Traffic Signals team should be consulted.	<p>The SCC STAN 11/17 Traffic Signals does not preclude this design approach - it is a detail the Council would like in the Garden Town to improve pedestrian comfort and visual amenity. The SCC guide says "We have alternative designs for islands some of which incorporate pedestrian guardrail and others safety kerbing as a way of both protecting vulnerable users and a way of guiding them". With speed reduction enabled and ISA coming in in 2022, we expect to see a more barrier free approach to public realm design.</p> <p>.</p>
		<b>2.5.3 Side Road Entry Treatments</b>	
24.41.		Will need to conform to Road Hump Regs, with humps being no higher than 100mm and 75mm on bus routes.	<p>The design to comply with TAL 2/94 and accords with SCC's own details STAN 08/18 Traffic Calming (section 7.18). Only need white hump arrows if table exceeds 100mm. Aim would be to design out a 100mm rise by tapering the carriageway surface up to the table. A competent designer would apply the regulations. Not proposed to use on bus routes.</p>
24.42.		In line crossing three rows deep on the tactile. Assume blister tactile? Consider layout for segregated route going into shared area at crossing.	<p>Tactile would seek to follow Guidance on Tactile Paving, 1998 Fig 16 (or if amended, any new guidance or the new cycle LTN).</p>
24.43.		Consider new design standard for cycling, with respect to these indented crossings. No drainage details. Illumination of crossing is an important safety feature.	<p>New LTN1/20 has been followed as far as possible. Drainage details are outside the scope of the guide. All use would be in the Garden Town urban area which is illuminated.</p>
24.44.		No detail of junction radius kerbing. Swept paths required to ensure overrun does not conflict with tactile paving, pedestrians, street furniture, exiting vehicle.	<p>Agreed, noting MfS 6.3.13 also allows for swept path to cross centre line. It is important not to design geometry solely based on occasional use by large vehicles, such as refuse or removal trucks. Junction radius is not shown deliberately - to be as small as possible to assist pedestrian and cyclists (MfS shows junctions with no radius - only quadrants) and based on local context, width of side street, volume of HGV movements etc.</p>
24.45.		No road hump triangles, warning signs etc	<p>The matter of whether it is a hump or not depends on height of table. We would suggest tapering adjoining blacktop surfaces to avoid the need to make it road hump. Road humps at entry points will need to be signed other than when used as an entry (LTN 1/07 Traffic Calming).</p>
24.46.		Are Dutch kerbs type approved in the UK? What is the evidence that they are work well for motorcyclists and cyclists?	<p>Yes - meet BS EN 1340. (Under cross compliance of EU Standards required by DMRB). See Charcon technical sheet. Used in Netherlands by 17 million people. Detailed in CROW design guide.</p>
24.47.		A Powered two-wheeled vehicle (PTW) turning into the junction will be leaning, no reference to skid resistance etc.	<p>They are BS EN 1340 i.e. &gt;40 USRV</p>
24.48.		If undertaking a Road Safety Audit (RSA), there is a concern that pedestrians assume priority and step out in front of a vehicle turning into the junction, exacerbated during the hours of darkness. PTW loss of control negotiating the junction.	<p>Hence need to design in context and understand the speeds, volume of peds etc. Accords in principle with SCC's own details STAN 08/18 Traffic Calming (section 7.18). The aim is to increase pedestrian access, provide more equitable public space for mobility impaired, reduce vehicle priority and decarbonise transport and of course, increase cycling by 100% by 2030. RSA Stages would be carried out as per adoption or highway asset management plans as usual. Consultation with local disability groups should be undertaken when designing schemes</p>

Consultee	General agreement/ disagreement	Detail comment received	SWTC response
24.49.		Conflict with cyclists (Fig 17), cyclists approaching crossing at speed and assuming priority, tactile paving does not appear to extend across the cycle route, visually impaired pedestrians who may stray onto the cycle path are given no warning that they are stepping out into the carriageway.	<p>Entry treatments are less used in Somerset but it does accord with the principles of the treatments in SCC Traffic Calming STAN 08/18 and complies with LTN1/20. Its purpose is to reinforce the appearance that a vehicle is no longer at this point on a 'live carriageway' (an emotive term) but on a pedestrian and cycle space that they are permitted to travel across where vehicle are at low speed. To the pedestrian the continuous footway shows the priority clearly that they already have in law and in the Highway Code. This accords with LTN 1/07 Traffic Calming and other advice.</p> <p>The tactile layout can be further refined but this is current thinking and would accord with Guidance on Tactile Paving 2008 Fig. 16 with 3 rows (the diagram is necessarily simplified to indicate principles). Visually impaired pedestrians would know if they stray onto the cycle track due to the demarcation kerb edge.</p>
24.50.		Not confident that the layouts shown, adequately cater for people who are visually or mobility impaired, which was the reason the government halted shared space schemes.	<p>This is not a shared space scheme but good practice in side road entry traffic calming in busy urban areas. It complies with SCC Traffic Calming STAN 08/18 and the Highway Code where vehicles are required to give way to people walking and on cycles at the side road exit/entry (Rules 170 and 183). Used successfully in many cities, it is acknowledged as better than the status quo at prioritising movement for visually impaired and all pedestrian people with disabilities and people on cycles by a long margin. This is in order to achieve the objectives of modal shift, higher cycling rates, physical distancing and better and more equitable walking environment. Following the status quo and not providing good continuous footways in the Garden Town core would really be overlooking our community's equality needs.</p> <p>See earlier comment on Minister's comment on Shared Space - which is not 'halted'.</p> <p>We will add note that 'Detail design would be subject to consultation with local disability groups' as suggested above,</p>
24.51.		Assumed 750mm is an error and should read 75mm?	No - this is one of the widths of a Charcon standard Dutch entrance 'inritbanden' kerb (Dutch standards also come in 450 and 600mm width)
		<b>2.5.5 Crossovers</b>	
24.52.		Fig 19 show the use of quadrant kerbs at dropped crossings these need to be carefully assess gradients for wheelchair users. In additional construction detail for southbound pedestrians and wheelchair users need to be considered.	Any design would of course be subject to scrutiny for compliance with disability access and we will add a general note to the guide saying how consultation with local disability groups should be undertaken when designing schemes. May need to adjust footway levels locally to achieve gradients and flush kerb.
24.53.		Fig 20 is similar to the above for Fig 19, but consideration must also be given to construction details to avoid trips, vertical faces or excessive gradients for east-west pedestrians. The proposed details at the back edge of the footway are not clear, potential for trip hazards.	Any design would of course be subject to scrutiny for compliance with disability access. May need to adjust footway levels locally to achieve gradients and flush kerb.
		<b>2.5.6 On footway loading and cargo bike bays</b>	
24.54.		With regard to Fig 23 consideration needs to be given to visual and mobility impaired pedestrians. The quadrant kerb, and associate kerb that runs perpendicular to the channel and may present a trip hazard. There appears to be a considerable length of drop kerb (assume flush, if cycles are crossing it at an acute angle). No tactile show to warn visually impaired pedestrians that they are stepping into live carriageway. Recessed lock rings may have potential to fill with detritus and become a trip hazard, regular maintenance liability. Finally paving will need to be laid to the manufacturer's requirements.	<p>A quadrant is shown (and would not be a trip hazard any more than a vehicle crossover elsewhere) but a simple drop kerb would also work too. The guide is a principle of providing segregated time limited loading that does not disrupt normal pedestrian flow when not in use.</p> <p>This is footway with loading specifically permitted (as S.19 of the Road Traffic Act 1988). They are not stepping into a live carriageway - this is a time limited loading or cargo bike bay shared on the footway. Currently these are present on North Street as unregulated areas. This is a clearer layout for visually impaired due to the tone contrast in the paving. It also returns to pedestrian use when not in use for loading. If a bay is solely for cargo bike parking the bay could use contrast resin bound gravel in lieu of setts.</p> <p>The bike parking rings are flush with the footway. Minor detritus would be picked up by normal mechanical sweepers used in Taunton.</p>

Consultee	General agreement/ disagreement	Detail comment received	SWTC response
			The design guide is not meant to be a construction specification (though we would envisage paving is laid to BS EN 7533-13).
		<b>2.5.7 Tactile paving</b>	
24.55.		Controlled crossings should have red coloured tactile paving unless it is in a conservation area. Interim changes to the Guidance on the use of Tactile Paving surfaces was a consultation that concluded and was not taken further.	This is not so. Tactile guidance includes “or in the vicinity of a listed building, some relaxation of the colour requirements may be acceptable”. The Core Area is both CA and vicinity of listed buildings.
24.56.			DfT Tactile review (TRL Studies) - still ongoing as Feb 2020
24.57.		SCC Traffic Signal Specification document sets out the county's standards for such locations including the use guard railing and colour of HFS on the approaches. The SCC Traffic Signals team should be consulted.	All signals design would require sign off by SCC as the highway authority. This document is a guide.
		<b>References</b>	
24.58.		Noted that a number of references have been listed but this does not cover all the document which are likely to be referenced by the Highway Authority with SCC's declared standards likely to extend beyond those listed. For example, there is no mention of the Traffic Signs Manuals, Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) which provide detailed design advice for specific infrastructure not covered by MfS.	It is not the purpose of the guide to list every policy and standard. These are SWT requirements.  DMRB is not relevant to non-trunk roads. DMRB does not cover infrastructure not covered by MfS - this is the role of local guidance. GG101 states “DMRB is a suite of documents which contains requirements and advice relating to works on <u>motorway and all-purpose trunk roads</u> for which one of the Overseeing Organisations is highway or road authority.”  This guide is a public realm guide - not a highway design technical guide. It is aimed at the Garden Town public face to meet Garden Town objectives.
24.59.		In addition, no reference is made to relevant legislation including Construction (Design & Management) Regs 2015. It is fundamental that any design is safe and fit for purpose. New DfT documents for Walking, Cycling, Horse-riding must be considered.	We have referred to CDM Regulations and other guidance including LTN1/20 that is relevant to the purposes of the guide.  We would value details of any recent DfT documents that we should include.
		<b>2.6 Signs and road markings</b>	
24.60.		Must comply with legislation i.e. Road Traffic Regulation Act and the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions. Should follow the guidance set out in the Traffic Signs Manuals.	The guidance does not contradict the TSRGD or TSM. Relevant TSM references are shown where there are choices within them that SWT wish to utilise - such as yellow line colours.  The guidance has flexibilities within it and our Guide suggests how it should be applied in Taunton.
		<b>2.6.1 Clutter awareness</b>	
24.61.		With regard to signs on buildings what are the legalities of this in terms of maintenance? Where signs are proposed to be located on lamp columns Highway Lighting must be consulted as there are limits to size of sign that can be mounted on a column.	No amendment necessary. Sections 64 and 65 of the Towns Improvement Clauses Act 1847 and power to alter or renew in Public Health Act 1925, Section 19. We have made clear that all lighting must be agreed with the Highway Authority Lighting Engineer.
		<b>2.6.2 Marketing</b>	
24.62.		Hanging baskets proposed to be located on lamp columns. Highway lighting should be consulted.	Noted.
		<b>2.6.3 Cycle signage and road infrastructure</b>	
24.63.		Paving insets to be used where road markings are considered to be intrusive. In addition, they don't appear to be considerate of shared space concerns raised by disabled groups.	The photo used will be replaced with an alternative. Paving insets showing cycle route are suggested as ways of reducing sign clutter and obstruction to visually impaired and people on cycles that vertical poles incur. Only one repeater is required by TSRGD but this is often ignored and sign clutter, some historic, is allowed to aggregate.

Consultee	General agreement/ disagreement	Detail comment received	SWTC response
		<b>2.6.4 Parking Restricted zone</b>	
24.64.		Parking Restricted Zones - no road markings required. Consultation required with the Traffic Management team.	Noted.
		<b>2.6.5 Colour consistency</b>	
24.65.		Painted posts and columns hide defects such as corrosion and present an ongoing maintenance issue for the county hence why we currently galvanised. In addition, commuted sums may be required.	Noted.
24.66.		Please note that our Highways Lighting Team have responded stating that the Highway Lighting specification document should be consulted. We will provide this once it has been approved. The Somerset County Council Conservation Officer will also need to be consulted on any lighting requirements in a Conservation Area.	Noted. Somerset Technical Advice Note 22/20 is referred to in the document.
24.67.		We are still awaiting comment from our Traffic Engineering Team once this has been received, we will provide you with a copy of their observations.	Noted
		<b>2.6.6 Cycle Lanes</b>	
24.68.		Colour contrast for cycle routes is for the benefit of visually impaired pedestrians as well as enabling the cyclist to identify routes dedicated for them reducing the potential conflict with pedestrians. Red colour routes also help inform motorists to the likely presence of cyclists.	<p>This section is to be amended to 'Cycle lanes and tracks' and will show a clear colour for lanes and tracks for each area standard as follows:</p> <p>Colours:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Core standard - terracotta</li> <li>• Town Standard - terracotta</li> <li>• General standard - red</li> </ul> <p>Delineator:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Core standard - demarcation kerb</li> <li>• Town Standard - white line profile</li> <li>• General standard - white line profile</li> </ul> <p>A note will be added that drainage breaks are required.</p>
24.69.		May not be relevant in 20mph speed limits/zones when taking into consideration the factors associated with use of red surfaced cycle routes. Likely to be more important in areas where pedestrian is prevalent. Light grey for cycleways is unlikely to provide sufficient colour contrast against the grey granite. Finally raised profile longitudinal line will require drainage breaks.	See response above
		<b>2.6.8 Centre lines</b>	
24.70.		'In the town centre... centre line markings will not be used' - Where road markings are required by legislation or for the purposes of road safety they will need to be provided (Unless otherwise approved by Sec. of State).	Centre line road markings are not required by legislation. When they are used, they are to be used in compliance with legislation (TSRGD). A 20mph zone is proposed in the town centre so centre lines will not generally be required for safety reasons. (Also ref. MfS 9.3). The guide is showing the need to design out unnecessary engineering infrastructure to improve amenity and reduce vehicle dominance of the street environment, particularly in the Core Standard and Town Standard areas, but equally in other areas of the Garden Town. We want to use what is permitted to achieve this. Secretary of State approval is only required for installing non standard signing, not omitting something that is not required.
		<b>2.6.9 Zig zags at crossings</b>	
24.71.		Zig-zag markings may be extended or reasons for of road safety. Each location will be assessed on its own merits and subject to road safety audit process.	Yes - TSRGD is quoted in the guide i.e. 'depends on visibility on the approach to the crossing'. The guide is for professional highway and public realm designers and any design would require SCC approval. It will be made clear that 'local context, required vehicle speeds, traffic calming, volumes and vehicle mix type will be considered in RSA'.

Consultee	General agreement/ disagreement	Detail comment received	SWTC response
		<b>2.7 Bollards</b>	
24.72.		This section is currently being reviewed by our Traffic Management and Network Management Teams, once this has been completed, we will provide you with their comments under separate cover.	Noted
		<b>2.8 Seats and benches</b>	
24.73.		Licences will be required for the placement of seats and benches on the highway. Asset Ownership will need to be clearly identified.	Noted. SWT have powers under the s14 of the Public Health Act 1925 and Parishes powers under the Parish Councils Act 1957, and for bus shelters under Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1953
24.74.		<b>2.9 Cycle furniture</b>	
24.75.		Licences will be required for the placement of seats and benches on the highway.	Noted. Notwithstanding any SWT powers, if any, under s63 Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (and as amended) to erect cycle parking and motorcycle parking stands
24.76.		Asset Ownership will need to be clearly identified.	Noted - but a detail beyond the scope of the guide
24.77.		<b>2.10 Litter/recycle bins</b>	
24.78.		Any security issues, that might affect public safety? London streets apply clear plastic bags bins.	We are not aware of any - all existing bins in town centre are currently steel and have been since 1996 when last town centre streetscape scheme installed.
24.79.		Licences will be required for the placement of seats and benches on the highway.	Notwithstanding SWT's powers under the s14 of the Public Health Act 1925 and Parishes powers under the Parish Councils Act 1957, and to erect bus shelters under Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1953.
24.80.		Asset Ownership will need to be clearly identified.	Noted - but a detail beyond the scope of the guide
		<b>2.11 Parklets</b>	
24.81.		Licences will be required for the placement of seats and benches on the highway.	Notwithstanding SWT's powers under the s14 of the Public Health Act 1925 and Parishes powers under the Parish Councils Act 1957, and for bus shelters under Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1953
		<b>2.12.1 Pedestrian guardrail</b>	
24.82.		There is a spelling mistake in 'pedestrians and cyclist on al streets'	Noted - we will amend
24.83.		On the subject of guard rails and road safety a number of reports have been produced both for an against. There have been instances where not providing rails on islands has resulted in several incidents and safety concerns particularly for the elderly and the visually impaired. This has resulted in the need to retrofit guard barriers. This is often a difficult as it is necessary to ensure minimum lateral clearance is achieved.	STAN 11/17 Traffic Signals does not preclude this design approach - it is a detail we seek in the Garden Town. SCC guide says "We have alternative designs for islands some of which incorporate pedestrian guardrail and others safety kerbing as a way of both protecting vulnerable users and a way of guiding them". Guardrails prejudice against pedestrians and the guide seeks to design out the need for them.
24.84.		Careful considering must be given to road safety on a site by site basis. Risks must be carefully assessed, in accordance with CDM legislation, and principles of prevention applied to the design in accordance with CDM legislation, and principles of prevention applied to the design in accordance with legislation.	Further explanatory text is proposed. "Each location will be assessed on its own merits and subject to road safety and Equalities audit process. The use of the principles of prevention should (a) avoid risks where possible; (b) evaluate those risks that cannot be avoided; and (c) put in place proportionate measures that control them at source. Designers are expected to do more than the minimum in order to design out the need for guardrails. This means in appropriate locations reviewing altering signal timings to all reds or diagonal crossings, not staggering crossings, reducing approach speeds, etc."  The guide is aimed at professional and competent designers who are fully aware of their CDM responsibilities.

Consultee	General agreement/ disagreement	Detail comment received	SWTC response
24.85.		SCC Traffic Signal Specification document outlines the county's policy on the use of guard railing at controlled crossing points.	STAN 11/17 Traffic Signals does not preclude this design approach
24.86.		The network management team should be consulted on the use of painted street furniture as it presents an additional maintenance liability.	Noted (as with lighting columns and natural stone paving).
		<b>2.13.1 Shelter types and ownership</b>	
24.87.		Positioning of bus stops to be mindful of visibility splays. No reference is made to Low floor bus access kerbs, tactile, safety markings, bus stop clearway markings and signs.	The section is about the shelters in the district and parish control. We will add a note to paving details section 2.5 re. Kassell kerbs for stops
24.88.		Please note that the Highway Authority only maintain stops that are made up of the raised kerb and flag. In terms of shelters the maintenance falls either with the district council or the parish councils.	noted
		<b>2.14.1 Clear zones</b>	
24.89.		Stating minimum widths allows designers to use them. Better not to mention minimum widths.	Noted, however not showing a minimum means clear zones can be insufficient as designers comply with total width minima. The indication to a designer at concept stage would allow this to be addressed.
		<b>2.15.1 Activity for health</b>	
24.90.		Licences will be required for the placement of seats and benches on the highway.	Noted notwithstanding SWT's powers under the s14 of the Public Health Act 1925
24.91.			Proposed to add more explanatory text. "Each location will be assessed on its own merits and subject to road safety and Equalities audit process. The use of the principles of prevention should (a) avoid risks where possible; (b) evaluate those risks that cannot be avoided; and (c) put in place proportionate measures that control them at source. Designers are expected to do more than the minimum in order to design out the need for guardrail. This means in appropriate locations reviewing altering signal timings to all reds or diagonal crossings, not staggering crossings, reducing approach speeds, etc." (It is assumed the guide is aimed at professional and competent designers who are fully aware of their CDM responsibilities).
24.92.		Asset Ownership will need to be clearly identified.	Noted
		<b>2.15.2 Doorstep play</b>	
24.93.		Licences will be required for the placement of seats and benches on the highway.	Noted notwithstanding SWT's powers under the s14 of the Public Health Act 1925
24.94.		Asset Ownership will need to be clearly identified.	Noted
		<b>2.16 Street name plates</b>	
24.95.		Agreements required with property owners to have plates fixed to walls. Highway Authority / District Council to consider future maintenance responsibilities.	SWT has powers under the Towns Improvement Clauses Act 1847, Public Health Act 1925 and the Local Government Act 1972 to erect, maintain and require signs to be retained.
		<b>2.17 Electric vehicle chargers</b>	
24.96.		The ECI Programmes Manager should comment on this matter.	The EV charger position was agreed at early consultation stage.
		<b>2.18.1 Tree selection</b>	
24.97.		Asset ownership would need to be confirmed. Where SCC are adopting a commuted sum will be secured to cover the future maintenance of the asset.	Noted - SWT would plant trees by agreement under S.96(4) of the Highways Act. The principle is about providing the trees to assist in combatting climate change



Consultee	General agreement/ disagreement	Detail comment received	SWTC response
			and poor air quality and improving wellbeing and biodiversity, all also objectives of SCC. We will make a general note to refer to SCC commuted sum policy where planting in adopted highway land is provided by developers
		<b>2.18.2 Tree pits and trenches</b>	
24.98.		SCC has a standard construction detail relating to tree pits	SWT would be pleased to see SCC standard detail and its suitability for a range of tree sizes.
24.99.		Please note for section 2.18 there is a need to consult with the SCC Arboriculturalist. The document will be passed to them for comment and a separate response will be provided. Please note this is for sections 2.18.3 to 2.18.8.	There was consultation with SCC Arboriculturalist prior to drafting and all comments incorporated.
		<b>2.18.9 Increasing tree cover</b>	
24.100.		Careful consideration must be given to tree planting plans to ensure they do not have an adverse impact on other highway safety matters i.e. visibility splays.	Noted - we will add note to make this clear
		<b>2.19.3 Growing edible places</b>	
24.101.		Careful consideration should be given to safety factors associated with planters etc such as positioning in relation to visibility and the safety of volunteers if they are to be working at on or near the highway.	noted - we will add note to make this clear
		<b>2.19.4 Green gyms</b>	
24.102.		Asset ownership to be confirmed. Where SCC are adopting a commuted sum will be secured to cover the future maintenance of the asset.	Likely to be outside adopted highway areas - we will add note to make this clear
		<b>2.20.1 Street lighting</b>	
24.103.		Highway Lighting have responded by saying that the Highway Lighting specification document should be consulted. This will be forwarded when it has been approved.	This was agreed with SCC Senior Lighting Engineer.
		<b>2.20.2 Core Standard lighting</b>	
24.104.		Highway Lighting have indicated that the specification document should be consulted. This will be provided once it has been approved. The conservation officer should be consulted regarding any lighting requirements within a Conservation Area.	The Council is not aware of a published SCC specification but will consider this in any final designs.
		<b>2.20.3 Town Standing lighting</b>	
24.105.		Highway Lighting have responded by saying that the Highway Lighting specification document should be consulted. This will be forwarded when it has been approved.	The Council is not aware of a published SCC specification but will consider this in any final designs.
		<b>2.20.4 General Standard Lighting</b>	
24.106.		Highway Lighting have responded by saying that the Highway Lighting specification document should be consulted. This will be forwarded when it has been approved.	The Council is not aware of a published SCC specification but will consider this in any final designs.
		<b>2.20.5 Green Standard lighting</b>	
24.107.		Highway Lighting have responded by saying that the Highway Lighting specification document should be consulted. This will be forwarded when it has been approved.	The Council is not aware of a published SCC specification but will consider this in any final designs. Much of the Green Standard area is not highway, (though some cycle tracks may be adopted?).
		<b>2.20.6 Taunton illuminart</b>	

Consultee	General agreement/ disagreement	Detail comment received	SWTC response
24.108.		Careful consideration to be given to the safety aspects of lighting schemes this should include:	noted - planning issue - we will add note on need to consult highway authority
24.109.		Distractions;	noted - planning issue - we will add note on need to consult highway authority
24.110.		See through effects (coloured lights dominating background;	noted - planning issue - we will add note on need to consult highway authority
24.111.		Taking emphasis away from foreground traffic/crossing lights	noted - planning issue - we will add note on need to consult highway authority
24.112.		Ownership will need to be confirmed. Where SCC are adopting a commuted sum will be required.	noted - planning issue - we will add a note with reference to SCC commuted sum policy if any features shown here are to be adopted
		<b>2.20.7 Gateway art and lighting</b>	
24.113.		Highway Lighting have responded by saying that the Highway Lighting specification document should be consulted. This will be forwarded when it has been approved.	These are not intended as highway lighting features but public art and is not for adoption by the highway authority. This may need planning and highway authority approval (for glare etc) as above.
24.114.		Where SCC are adopting a commuted sum will be secured to cover the future maintenance of the asset.	We will make a general note to refer to SCC commuted sum policy where any lighting or public art is provided by developers in adopted highway land.
		<b>3.1.1 Illustrated examples</b>	
24.115.		Fig 80 consideration should be given to emergency vehicle access.	Noted - will add note
24.116.		Fig 77 item 4 - all vehicle street raised granite sett paved crossing, careful consideration must be given to the materials used on crossings to ensure they are pedestrian friendly i.e. non slip/trip and the sensitivities of pedestrians with mobility impairments. Colour is also important for the partially sighted. Currant granite slabs can be slippery. Sets & blocks have the potential to move causing rutting and damage which requires regular maintenance, hence why the town centre crossings have been replaced with imprinted slabs.	We appreciate your concerns re. schannelisation and potential maintenance and will amend the specification to use a sliver grey imprint for bus and heavy vehicle over run areas. Well laid setts (fine picked so suitable for visually and mobility impaired) are not a slip hazard and are used extensively in contemporary public realm schemes. Trips are very unusual and caused by poor construction and heavy point loading causing structural failures, not by the setts.
24.117.		Item 6 - Potential for conflict between buses and cycles.	Noted - though this is what the layout is at present so the design is no worse. The alternative would be a floating bus stop - this is a busy pedestrian setting. What we want to achieve is a wider cycle lane that shows bus drivers the cycle presence more boldly than currently and gives more space and prominence to cycling. See also TACC comments.
24.118.		Item 9 - PTWs liable to clip granite set islands causing loss of control type incidents.	Risk is no different to other islands in the proposed 20mph zone. The danger is obvious so volenti non fit injuria applies. We will show a #610 hoop sign to emphasise the island but this is only an illustrative concept visualisation, not a finished design, and would be subject to usual highway design approval process.
24.119.		Fig 80 LGV and service vehicles require access. By making the through route pedestrian only effectively creates a no through road, that will need to cater for service vehicle turning movements within the highway limits.	Hammet Street closure is an SCC Public Space Improvement Scheme in partnership with SWT. This is illustrative design showing principles - i.e. a clearly marked way for pedestrians and cyclists, seating, planting that would not obscure the church view etc. A detailed scheme would of course have to work through all the details of turning, servicing etc. There are no service intensive uses on the street.
		<b>3.1.3 Amenity not clutter</b>	
24.120.		Discussions with disability groups, with regard to mind mapping etc would be of benefit at planning stage.	Noted - we will add note as stated. Will apply to all designs as recommended by DfT Inclusive Mobility and Tactile Paving Guidance.
		<b>3.1.5 Urban squares</b>	
24.121.		Shared spaces should not be provided in accordance with the DfTs Inclusive Transport Strategy.	See previous note on Ministers clarification letter Sep 2019. There is no moratorium on shared surface areas in the right location.

Consultee	General agreement/ disagreement	Detail comment received	SWTC response
		<b>3.2.6 Ingredients for success</b>	
24.122.		Road safety, measures have previously been implemented to address highway safety matters, particularly conflict between cyclists and motor vehicles at junctions. An assessment of NMU routes and potential conflicts should be carefully considered at the planning and feasibility stage.	The plan is highly conceptual as the area is still subject to change with potential major new development at Firepool. The crossing to Firepool needs to accommodate levels of service/ cricket test match crowds - with very high footfall and greater appearance of a major pedestrian crossing. The plan just indicates the need to consider the design here holistically.
		<b>3.2.7 Ingredients for success</b>	
24.123.		Fig 89 will require careful consideration in association with future planning & development works. The illustration appears to show an on-carriageway cycle lane that sweeps across two lanes of dual carriageway on the main A38. This is a complex junction where high traffic volume; vehicle speeds; overtaking manoeuvres and visibility constraints may be contributory factors in conflicts between cyclists and motor vehicles.	<p>Illustration is a concept derived from some assumptions that would require more detail than the guide is meant to provide. It shows a reduction in scale of the existing priority junction (designed for high speed prior to the M5 existing). This would also involve moving the existing 40mph limit 350m north (and perhaps the 30mph limit), as the urban area is moving north in this district and it no longer needs to have a rural inter-urban road form. This would allow narrower lanes, tighter junction SSDs, safer crossings etc. Speed reduction from north and south approaches may well have to be started further away. The road is not a particularly high volume traffic road at 18k AADT (2018) but lacks good safe cycle links to North Petherton. This is no more than the flows at A38 Stonegallows or Rumwell Green which has single carriageway (and is also M5 diversion route).</p> <p>The illustration is a concept aimed at achieving a slowing of traffic, a gateway to the town where there is none as this area has until now been rural. It seeks to add an excellent cycle right turn infrastructure and amend the road design to achieve this. It is possible do this in other ways of course -the illustration is conceptual. For instance a roundabout may be an alternative with a CD195 design or a signalised junction.</p> <p>We are suggesting in effect that the area is one where DMRB standards would give way to urban standards. This could be done in a number of ways and perhaps further into Monkton Heathfield if not here. The illustration is not a completed scheme and would require a whole range of factors to be addressed that it is not in the scope of the guide to do more than point to.</p> <p>We have a duty to improve cycle use and signal the Garden Town entrance. We do not see the status quo to achieve this and are happy to discuss alternatives. The guide is to be used to suggest where developer contributions from growth areas might be used.</p>
24.124.		Lit totem signs adjacent to high speed roads, may cause distraction and are unlikely to be a passively safe feature. Apple trees and totem poles in visibility splays. Designers must apply the principles of prevention and heed advice from road safety professionals.	We do not see that lit totems are unusual next to roads - every petrol station and MacDonalds has one. See also above re. suggestion that this no longer be high speed at this point. Any design would have to take all the criteria in hand and be in accordance with required standards, audit processes etc We do not accept the status quo is adequate in reducing speeds on approaching the town, making clear to road users they are entering the Garden Town and demonstrating our clear commitment to improving cycle use substantially.
24.125.		Significant overrun will cause coloured surfacing to fade thus losing its impact.	Noted.
		<b>3.2.8 Challenges</b>	
24.126.		Incorrect numbering	noted
		<b>3.2.9 Design solutions</b>	
24.127.		Incorrect numbering	noted
		<b>3.3.2 Ingredients for success</b>	

Consultee	General agreement/ disagreement	Detail comment received	SWTC response
24.128.		Asset ownership to be confirmed. Where SCC are adopting a commuted sum will be secured to cover the future maintenance of the asset.	We would expect this to be part of any improvement, design and SCC adoption process. We will make a general note to refer to SCC adoption and commuted sum policy where assets are provided by developers.
		<b>3.3.3 Illustrated examples</b>	
24.129.		Illustrations for location 1 do not appear to be in kilter with imminent plans/proposals for this area. No evidence has been provided to substantiate concepts based on actual and predicted traffic flows and volumes. No NMU assessment has been provided to determine desire lines.	It is clearly shown that the plans and drawings are illustrative concepts only (as are all plans). We have not been notified of any highway plans for this area, though that is not the point of the guide. It is to show a design approach to be taken in the Garden Town on all approaches to the town centre - it is to show how an approach road changes in nature as it engages the core urban streets. It is not a detailed design. It does however show a high priority approach to improve facilities and flow for people walking and cycling (NMs of your prefer) getting home, work and school while negotiation major roads. The traffic counts go from 37k AADT to 10k AADT from east to west hereabouts and the street needs to be designed to show vehicles they are entering a more restricted and friction-lined area, and allow for easier transition by pedestrians and people on bicycles.
24.130.		Several fundamental road safety implications which include the following:	
24.131.		Crossing locations;	Not clear what is being addressed here
24.132.		Access;	Not clear what is being addressed here
24.133.		At-grade crossings across dual carriageways	This is quite normal close to a junction and allowed for in DMRB. Subway crossings are unattractive and discriminate against women, elderly, young children and other vulnerable people.
24.134.		Location 2 show the severing of major roads, no information on traffic modelling have been provided.	It is an illustration of de-gyratoring the gateway and reallocating road space to improve walking and cycle access and permeability. It is not meant to be a fully designed scheme but an indication of what can and should be achieved. Gyratories on all our town centre approaches are anti-pedestrian. They make our town centre approaches threatening with fast moving vehicles that dissuades people arriving on foot or by bicycle. Which then encourages more car traffic.  No major roads are severed; the A38 is shown as two way.  The design approach the guide seeks is to reduce the over generous road space left over from the pre-M5 era and make access to the town centre safer, more convenient and comfortable.
24.135.		Cycle lanes running through traffic signal junction, may encourage cyclists to proceed against traffic control resulting in conflict. Designer will need to apply principles of preventions and heed advice from road safety professionals.	This again is showing a design approach - not a developed detail design scheme. The text note makes this clear. The purpose is to show a more developed cycle infrastructure to make the junction less intimidating for people on bicycles. The junction has no adequate cycle infrastructure at present, with road space prioritised to vehicles - yet it provides a major approach to school, college and hospital for residents from all over Taunton. Of course alternatives exist such as pre-green for cyclists etc. and we can show a note. We are not clear on why a waymarking through a junction would make a cyclist carry out a reckless manoeuvre but such details would be subject to scrutiny at detail design. The issue is the junction could be vastly improved for people walking and cycling.
		<b>3.4.2 Ingredients for success</b>	
24.136.		Rumble strips in urban areas will generate noise pollution. Low kerb heights may present difficulties and hazards for mobility and visually impaired pedestrians.	The rumble strip suggestion is shown as one alternative and of course noise is a consideration. Imprint asphalt or block paving may be appropriate. Fast traffic creates noise pollution too and is more aggravating and unsafe for adjoining properties. The design is generic for neighbourhood centres and is suggestive of ways of slowing traffic, and improving pedestrian comfort, use by all generations and abilities. All designs would again be subject to consultation with local disability groups.

Consultee	General agreement/ disagreement	Detail comment received	SWTC response
25. Ecology		It is disappointing that the Green Standard section makes no reference to habitat requirements. As with comments made in relation to the SWT Design Guide, this should be considered.	This is beyond the scope of the guide.
25.1.		Page 72 - this does not appear to show all of the woodland that is required to mitigate the effects on lesser horseshoe bats from the Hestercombe House SAC. It is recommended that this is amended/included.	have indicated area shown by SCC and EJP - plan only indicative
25.2.		2.20.5 - it is recommended that this section on lighting and bats, needs to include use of techniques to keep areas used by bats dark including distance buffers and the use of red lamps. The following links may assist: <a href="http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/sitedocuments/Environment/ba306_bath_bats_and_lighting_guide_10_june_2018.pdf">http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/sitedocuments/Environment/ba306_bath_bats_and_lighting_guide_10_june_2018.pdf</a> and <a href="http://wiltshire.objective.co.uk/portal/spatial_planning/spds/trowbridge_bat_mitigation_strategy_spd/the_trowbridge_bat_mitigation_strategy_spd?tab=files">http://wiltshire.objective.co.uk/portal/spatial_planning/spds/trowbridge_bat_mitigation_strategy_spd/the_trowbridge_bat_mitigation_strategy_spd?tab=files</a> These links could be included on p137 under lighting.	BANES guide is shown. We note the Trowbridge guide is still out to consultation so think it premature to include as reference.
25.3.		3.5.3 - this section should include reference to sensitive lighting and the prevention of light spill from buildings, to minimize impacts.	Noted - we will add a note.
25.4.		Page 130 - please be aware that only one bank should have a hard edge, given that this is a significant strategic wildlife corridor. The section appears to omit reference to planting and minimum buffers to built development, which should be included.	no the bank treatment is urban transect related. Soft banks to edge of town, harder to centre of town (with mosaic of soft/hard treatments). One bank should preferably have a softer edge to allow for wildlife.
26. Flood (LLFA)		None	
27. Heritage (SWHT)	support the use of a Restricted Zone. Would like more local geologies used in paving selection.		
27.1.		Section 1.0 References: Historic England's publication "Streets for All" (2018) and "Streets for All: South West" (2018) would	We will add these references.
27.2.		Paragraph 1.2.2: A caveat or new standard type is required for the historic core and conservation areas of the neighbourhood centres. Some parts of these areas will require high quality materials to maintain their character and appearance [in line with section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990]. The same principle will apply to parts of the conservation areas outside of the Core or Town Standard areas, however, the Design Guide allows for the Council to individually specify the appropriate standard for unspecified areas.	Conservation Area treatments are not shown as the designation boundaries do not always follow the street functions and place status of a neighbourhood. In fact the guide seeks to take account of the wider setting of the heritage assets - not just the designated area. We note there are a few conservation areas in the Neighbourhood Centres and are amending the area standards map to show these. If it seems appropriate to then raise the standard in those from General to Town or Core Standard, we will show that.
27.3.		Paragraph 2.1.2 to 2.1.5: The Design Guide should encourage the use of traditional local paving stones over nationally available natural stones that have no local connection	The suggestions made by SWHT were considered at early stages in the preparation of this guide and consulted with highway engineering colleagues. The connection is important - the geologies selected are from further afield but are and have been used in towns in the south west since C19.
27.4.		Lias Limestone is inexplicably omitted from the Guide despite being a hardwearing paving stone, which was by far the most widely used paving stone across Somerset, and historically quarried east of Taunton. It gained an unfortunate reputation for being slippery, however, this has been overcome in recent years with surface treatment, including the flame texturing of a sawn face. Other treatments include bush hammering, although our experience is that this over- lightens the stone.	We note the desire to use local lias and the flame treatment (though we have seen no SRV test results to confirm). SCC are concerned with the wearing of surfaces causing polishing and therefore slip risks. The SRV wet must exceed 55. Forest Pennant and Scoutmoor York stone and are extremely similar in appearance, and petrographic characteristics including hardness and slip resistance. They are also available from several large quarries (Scoutmoor from at least 2 and Forest Pennant from one) under several ownerships with excellent quality controlled production meaning replacement and consistency across a

Consultee	General agreement/ disagreement	Detail comment received	SWTC response
		<p>Furthermore, modern Lias slabs are normally supplied sawn on all sides, avoiding the finer grained natural bedding planes, and many of the problematic areas of historic Lias paving were polished over time by hobnail boots and survived, algae covered and untrod, in forgotten corners.</p> <p>Lias paving slabs are available from at least three of the central Somerset Lias quarries. We know that one of the quarries has commissioned a slip resistance test for its sawn slabs, which achieved an acceptable SRV.</p> <p>Scoutmoor is the best colour match of the York stones for Pennant sandstone but York stone has no traditional in Somerset. It only appears in the late 20th century with the development of townscape enhancement schemes at a time before Pennant sandstone was again readily available. Scoutmoor should only be used as a substitute for Pennant sandstone when the latter is not available.</p> <p>Pennant sandstone is a Somerset paving stone but came from the now closed quarries around Clevedon, Nailsea, east Bristol, Keynsham, Temple Cloud, etc. It is very much as stone associated with north Somerset and Bristol, with occasional use in the rest of the county; probably following the introduction of the railways.</p> <p>Another source of Pennant sandstone is the Gwrhyd Pennant Stone Quarry near Swansea.</p>	<p>period of installations on different schemes would be achievable and reliable. Pennant is used in Castle Green already, and in Bath at the station public realm. We suggest Scoutmoor York stone is only used if Pennant is not available.</p> <p>Relying on local smaller specialist or artisan quarries is much harder to achieve quality control and leaves a risk of becoming hostage to single suppliers on price and business fortune.</p>
27.5.		<p>Buff clay stable bricks were a common paving material in the early-to-mid 20th century, as manufactures by Candy of Newton Abbot. The last extensive area of buff stable block paving was removed from Richmond Road in the early 2000s. A few remnants survive in the public realm (Station Road forecourt, Harveys Court and Union Gate) and below bitumen macadam pavements (Wilton Street). Further examples survive in Watchet and Minehead and more extensively in other south- west towns (Dartmouth, Torquay). They are a useful and uplifting paving material that would enrich the palette of materials for the Garden Town.</p>	<p>The guide has not specified the buff stable paviers seen in some old forecourts primarily due to their association with a single period of architecture and their very limited use does not seem to be enough to set a precedent. This does not preclude their use in the public realm, just that the guide will not promote them.</p>
27.6.		<p>Paragraph 2.1.7 to 2.1.11: Granite is an unfamiliar paving stone for Taunton and a peculiar choice in a county with a rich variety of historic paving stones (Lias, Pennant and Forest Marble) and open quarries. Its current application is in the fanned setts of the 1990s Parade town scheme. The use of granite for carriageway paving, edge paving, drop kerbs and kerbs is not supported when these items can be supplied in Lias or Pennant stone.</p>	<p>Granite is used throughout the town centre now. It is selected, as it is in most of the country, for its hardness and durability in highly exposed street environments. We see it as an improvement in the use of a generous wide kerb rather than the ubiquitous and domestic standard bull nose 125mm concrete predominant beyond the Market House area now. We appreciate the softer sandstone pennant and oolitic limestone Forest Marble have been used - including the kerbs on the (listed) Tone Bridge. Our experience though is the hardness can be variable and can lead to failures (especially on radii and specials like droppers) and this then leads to maintenance operatives using ugly concrete replacements. Granite also has a good reuse potential with redressing, which is perhaps less easy with the softer stones.</p>
27.7.		<p>Paragraph 2.3: Please refer to comments on paragraphs 1.2.2.</p>	<p>See note</p>
27.8.		<p>Paragraph 2.6.4: Somerset County Council was applying Primrose yellow for all yellow waiting restricting lines in and outside conservation areas, which brought a significant benefit to the public realm. We would encourage the continuation of this practice.</p>	<p>This has been shown for use in a potential Restricted Zone (which avoids yellow lines generally). The proposal is encourage its use in all the Core Standard area and environmentally sensitive areas. 100mm yellow will be used elsewhere except in environmentally sensitive areas.</p>
27.9.		<p>Paragraph 2.6.4: We support the use of a Restricted Zone as a means to minimise the use of highway signage and road markings in the town centre.</p>	<p>noted</p>
27.10.		<p>Paragraph 2.6.5: We support the painting of highway lighting columns and sign posts, and for the finish to be in Raven. This is the colour we have for a considerable time recommended to the Highway Authority.</p>	<p>noted</p>
27.11.		<p>Paragraph 2.7: The 'Manchester' is a large and ubiquitous bollard that is more suitable for large cities. Its use would be a missed an opportunity to bring local character to the streetscene. Historic photos and the paintings of Harry Frier depict a round topped bollard with a double band in Taunton. Examples of this survive in Hammet's Walk and Castle Bow. Hammet's Walk has another local bollard design, cast by Taunton foundry C. Allen &amp; Sons. Either of these could form a pattern for a Taunton bollard, cast in iron or for enhanced highway safety in polyurethane with a steel tube core in the same way the Great British Bollard Company produced the Somerset lamp column.</p>	<p>The selection is of a Durapol® budget plastic bollard of deliberately unassuming style for use where a heavier looking budget bollard is required is very exposed to knock downs e.g. traffic calming build outs etc -the more contemporary Retford type is available in as an alternative. At the moment there are about 5 or 6 different budget bollards used around the town and neighbourhoods.</p> <p>We are not aware of the local designs nor have drawings/photos. We would need to know they can be replicated at appropriate material, quality and cost by a reputable manufacturer.</p>

Consultee	General agreement/ disagreement	Detail comment received	SWTC response
27.12.		Paragraph 2.13: The high quality glass and stainless steel town centre bus shelters were installed on our advice. They were chosen for their inherent quality and transparency, in order to allow views through and minimise their impact on the streetscene. None of the proposed shelters in the Design Guide are of the same quality and transparency and would be a retrograde step for the town centre. A higher quality shelter is required for the town centre.	Bus shelters are SWTC property and planning approval is by SWTC. The design guide is balancing the needs of contracted bus shelters with associated sponsorship funding across the whole Garden Town. The current bus shelters in the town centre are of multiple types and shapes, with the stainless steel doing little to reduce their visual impact. We are looking for consistent high quality across the whole town and have selected simple black (or possibly Raven - subject to agreement with manufacturer/supplier) coloured shelters to match other street furniture.
27.13.		Paragraph 2.16: The enamel street name plates are an important feature of Taunton. The Design Guide should encourage their retention and repair in all streets. For new name plates, the Guide is unclear where white-on-cobalt blue is to be used; town centre or conservation areas, or both. Replacement enamel street signs are still available and should be considering for town centre streets given their impact in enhancing the streetscene.	We will be more specific on location - i.e. all Core Standard area streets
27.14.		Paragraph 2.18.1: Pleached Plane trees were a common feature of the town centre, as surviving in Corporation Street, and their reintroduction would make a significant contribution to the Garden Town.	Noted - the guide doesn't go into detail of pleaching but pleached or espalier trees are certainly a possibility where space is restricted and we will add a note to that effect.
27.15.		Paragraph 2.18.9: We would encourage the introduction of street trees in Taunton, including the replacement of those lost to age, disease, storms or development, the introduction of pleached trees in the town centre and strong avenues on the main approach roads.	noted
27.16.		Paragraph 2.20.1: The lamp columns in the Crescent are reproduction columns from a pattern by the Edward Cockey & Sons foundry of Frome, now known as the 'Somerset' column and currently cast in polyurethane with a steel tube core.	We will add a note to the caption.
27.17.		There are six listed lamp columns/standards in Fore Street (NHLE entry number 1233500) although one is missing.	We will amend the note. (Presumably one lost in the 1996 street improvement works)
27.18.		In the LED lamp caption states that the paint finish should be Black rather than Raven.	Noted - we will amend
27.19.		We strongly support the use of wall mounted units where high buildings are available, the use of minimalist equipment, and the painting of columns and brackets in Raven. We would also support the use of warm light lamps as technology develops.	Noted
27.20.		Post top stirrup brackets are proposed for pedestrian and conservation areas with embellished columns, as currently used in Woodstock Road and The Elms in Taunton. We have not recommended this configuration of highway light for many years as the units are ill proportioned. Nor have we recommended ornate square arm brackets and embellishment kits specifically for conservation areas as the units are generally too tall and fussy for historic areas. Painted tapered columns with swan-neck brackets and Albany tear-drop lanterns are often a good solution depending on the location and highway specification. We would be pleased to discuss this further.	We can change to standard tapered column with Albany on swan neck bracket (presumably where the square bracket Albany ornate columns are not used). <i>(check with again SCC lighting engineer.)</i>
27.21.		Figure 79: Bullet point 6 states that all street furniture is to be painted Black rather than Raven.	Noted - we will amend
27.22.		Figure 80: Whilst illustrative only, this road is Hammet Street where the inclusion of parklets and other structures in the highway has previously been resisted as they would obscure the deliberate late 18th century vista of the church tower of Mary Magdalene. As would banners on lamp columns, although there are currently none in Hammet Street due to the use of wall mounted units.	Noted - no tree planting proposed, nor banners or lamp columns if this type layout used in Hammet Street - it is as you say, illustrative.
27.23.		Paragraph 3.2 and Figures 84 & 95: The current Junction 25 improvement works includes a substantial hard central reservation for the A358 Tone Way rather than an attractive soft reservation. It's regrettable that this important approach to Taunton will be degraded by this aspect of the new works and that current works are not being influenced by the good design principles in the Design Guide.	We are not aware of an alternative scheme but this is illustrative of the treatments for major roads approaching and transitioning in form as they enter the tighter scale of the town centre edge.
27.24.		Acknowledgements: "Somerset Heritage Trust" should read "South West Heritage Trust".	Noted - we will amend
28. Traffic Engineering		None	

Consultee	General agreement/ disagreement	Detail comment received	SWTC response
29. Street Lighting		None	
30. Climate resilience		None	
31. Traffic Signals		None	
32. Public Right of Way		None	
33. Traffic Management		None	
34. Estates	General agreement	Agree that Taunton Garden Town needs a Public Realm Design Guide, Agree all area public realm Standards and strongly agree with Town Standard. Agree with all General paving standards and strongly agree with all others. Strongly agree with all furniture standards. Strongly agree with lighting suggestions and suggested maybe using more heritage special lighting in the town centre to improve the character of the town. For are illustrations, agree to Town Centre, strongly agree to Neighbourhood Centres and River/Canal corridors and neutral on approaches. Suggested Traffic Assessment should be considered for alterations.	The matter for Traffic Assessments of schemes is for the highway authority to decide. The PRDG does not either require or preclude this so no amendment to be made.
SWTC			
35. Garden Town Manager			
35.1.		it's not clear whether this is SPD or 'just' a Guide - what's it's status/purpose? -	this will be SWTC Technical Guidance and a material consideration for any planning application
35.2.		under references and throughout the document there is no reference our adopted Planning Policies like Core Strategy, SADMP and most importantly the AAP (plenty of Core Standard but not a single Core strategy...); - and thus how it can be implemented as a document for DM? It needs clear policy references to our documents and/or National Guidance.	Noted - we are adding a section in the introduction on NPPF and Local plan policies including the TTCAAP that are relevant.
35.3.		I think the plans showing Firepool need to be checked for consistency with the emerging BDP work which was consulted on in November; and	The guide was produced prior to this commission and seeks not to prejudice it but shows the standards and principles for public realm connections.
35.4.		Worth checking the station references/plans. Doesn't appear to reference the multi-storey car park on the south side. There are detailed plans for the south side	This is private Network Rail land. The guide shows the standards and principles for public realm connection to the Firepool development and boulevard.
36. Street cleansing		consideration to the paving material and whether this is suitable for a mechanical sweeper who will own the asset once completed?	Resilience to sweepers will be a detail design issue (sub-base and jointing)
36.1.		Current bins are 240L, so equivalent size bins will be required the replacement cost of bins would need to be considered.	<a href="#">Bins shown</a> are 100, 140 and 200 litres or wall mounted (25 and 100 litres). The award winning design is modular and can be purchased in dual or triple back to back units for the busier situations in the town centre where large volume may be required. Single smaller units may be more appropriate in narrower streets.
36.2.		The tree grilles look very neat Castle Tree Grille preferred - less litter and detritus would become trapped.	The Monza tree grille would be laid with washed gravel beneath, so litter would not accumulate. We will add a note
36.3.		With the proposal for new avenues of trees, SWT would probably require additional street sweeping during leafing season, which will require budgeting.	Noted.
36.4.		Street furniture - consider the ease of graffiti removal.	Noted. All products are coated.
37. Landscape and Green		Comments received 13/12/19 and incorporated into consultation draft.	



Consultee	General agreement/ disagreement	Detail comment received	SWTC response
Infrastructure Specialist			
38. Trees Specialist	Generally it all looks very positive and encouraging. I really hope that its aspirations come to fruition over the next few years	In terms of the tree species, I've commented previously that I don't think we should limit ourselves too much, as I think that variety is good for several reasons - visual interest, biodiversity, pest and disease resilience etc. It will also help to emphasise the 'garden town' arboretum character, rather than standard street tree planting. (Can I coin a new word - 'Urboretum'?). Also, species choice will be influenced by each specific site, its buildings, character and constraints. So I'm pleased to see that the species lists have grown, and that they are not definitive, but are suggested and can be added and agreed to when specific projects are being designed. This will also help when trying to source particular species, as some will not be available, or might not be available at the desired size	Noted - we like it. We will add urboretum to the section name
38.1.		With regards to the lists themselves, you've got Quercus 'Green Pillar' twice. If you wanted to add any, try: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Betula ermanii (medium)</li> <li>o Betula pendula 'Dalecarlica' (medium)</li> <li>o Gelditsia triacanthos varieties (medium)</li> <li>o Add cordata to Alnus incana, so 'Alnus incana and cordata'</li> <li>o Sorbus aucuparia 'Asplenifolia' (medium')</li> <li>o Tilia cordata 'Mongolica' (medium)</li> <li>o Corylus collurna</li> <li>o Liquidambar styraciflua 'Worplesdon' (medium)</li> </ul>	We will amend to accord with suggestions.
38.2.		A minor point - you are missing some apostrophies at the ends of the cultivar names	Noted - we will amend
38.3.		There's a typo in paragraph 2.18.3 I think.	Noted - we will amend
39. Active Travel Specialist	Agrees that Taunton Garden Town needs a Public Realm Design Guide to raise the standard of the street works and coordinate works by multi agencies?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. PUBLIC REALM AREA STANDARDS - agree all areas</li> <li>b. In reference to 1.1.8: 'We will help ensure that pedestrians and cycle users of all types, ages and abilities, and all with mobility or cognitive impairments, are able to move around freely through the pedestrian environment, and use it to access other modes of transport.' Please note that the DfT's LTN 1.20 1.6.1 'cycles must be treated as vehicles and not as pedestrians. On urban streets, cyclists must be physically separated from pedestrians and should not share space with pedestrians.'</li> <li>c. PAVING MATERIALS -agree</li> <li>d. SIGNAGE - agree</li> <li>e. STREET FURNITURE - Agree. Bollards, seats, cycle furniture, litter bins, bus shelters, street name plates.</li> <li>f. Play- Strongly Agree</li> <li>g. STREET FURNITURE AREA STANDARDS - Strongly Agree 'Cycle racks should be provided with seating where possible. In reference to 2.13 Bus shelters: To encourage cycling to become the natural choice for short journeys or to form part of longer journeys, I would recommend the inclusion of cycle racks within close proximity to bus shelters where possible.'</li> <li>h. STREET PLANTING - Agree</li> <li>i. NIGHTSCAPE &amp; LIGHTING - Agree all area standards</li> <li>j. ILLSUTRATIVE LAYOUTS - Agree all standards.</li> <li>k. In reference to Fig 76 and 77 : No clarity on how cyclists would exit the cycle lane and access bike racks on the footway adjacent to the roundabout junction.</li> </ul>	<p>We have noted the LTN 1/20 desire to segregate cycle users and pedestrians, and the recommendations in 6.5 Shared Use and 7.4 Vehicle Restricted Areas that notes that segregation can lead to higher cycle speed and greater potential for conflict with pedestrians and that careful urban design is required as well.</p> <p>We note too the 'Beyond the Bicycle' An introduction to inclusive cycling 2020 guidance that highlights the need to ensure our designs are accessible for disabled cycle users to access all areas</p> <p>We will add a note.</p> <p>Noted - we would expect a drop kerb might be suitable but would depend on a number of other detail design issues (drainage, other street furniture etc) but we can add a note that it should be considered.</p>
Environment Agency			
40.	do not have any major concerns or objections to the draft design guide document, in principle		

Consultee	General agreement/ disagreement	Detail comment received	SWTC response
40.1.		1.1.3 Growth and climate change - We would support the carbon sequestration opportunities mentioned but also suggest that flood resilience outcomes are also sought by the guide.	We will add a note regarding that public realm “can also have major influence on flood resilience outcomes”
40.2.		1.1.4 - People first public realm - We note the 'green and clean' objective aligns well with the emerging Environment Agency Corporate Plan 2020-25, so there may be opportunities to work more closely in partnership with some of this design guidance in practice.	noted
40.3.		1.2 - Public realm area standards - Please note that Green Standards apply to the river and canal side locations through Taunton and are applicable to the Environment Agency. The guide should mention that potential works in these areas may be subject to FRAP from the Agency, in addition to compliance with the design guide document.	We will add notes that ‘works in these areas may be subject to Flood Risk Activity Permit from the Environment Agency in addition to compliance with the design guide document.’
40.4.		2.4 - Green standards - Should be assessed for their flood resilience and Climate Change adaptation potential, and if any of the measures promoted in the guide are found sub-standard, then the guidance should be revised and/or amended to suit.  Green standards should also be noted that they are required to be located so as not to obstruct riparian access for channel maintenance and/or planned improvement works, nor placed in such a manner that could impede flood flows in times of high flow.	Noted - We have selected the Green Standards materials to meet multiple criteria including flood resilience and climate adaptation (carbon cost, vandal resistance, slip resistance, cost, appearance etc).  This section is on materials rather than locational guidance. We can add a note that “works that may impede flood flows and alteration to riparian access may require statutory approval or permit from the EA.”
40.5.		2.4.7 - Water access slips, steps - Gabion cages - Please can softer more natural options be used wherever possible/appropriate instead of gabions.	We have suggested gabions as we see these as a softer option than solid walling for where higher wear access might be required to the water i.e. slips for boat access and amenity/recreation steps, where soft options would perhaps get eroded too much. We can add some bio- retention alternatives too.
40.6.		2.18.10 - Tree planting strategy - Please note the tree planting strategy aligns to the DEFRA 25 year Environment plan and some of the Agency’s local greener Wessex agenda. Could the EA be listed as a potential partner?  Native species of tree should be planted where possible especially in more rural areas and the riparian zone.  We also support planting native trees and wetland creation on Environment Agency land whilst allowing for flood risk maintenance activities.	We would be delighted to add the EA as a potential partner in a tree planting strategy. The strategy development is beyond the scope of this guide but will be developed further in other documents from SWTC.  Noted.  Noted
40.7.		2.19 - Street gardens - This is a SuDs design guide concept for all intents and purposes so should be referred to Somerset County Council, as Lead Local Flood Authority, for comment, although we are supportive in principle where appropriate.	Noted - SCC have been consulted. No
40.8.		2.20.5 - Green standard lighting - Along riverside there should be kept a solid dark corridor and a buffer zone where possible, to avoid negative impacts on bats, birds, otters, invertebrates etc. Up lighting of trees - We are not in favour of this, as there is negative impacts on birds, bats, invertebrates and even the tree health itself. See following report:  Chapter 4: <a href="https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/690846/CMO_Annual_Report_2017_Health_Impacts_of_All_Pollution_what_do_we_know.pdf">https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/690846/CMO_Annual_Report_2017_Health_Impacts_of_All_Pollution_what_do_we_know.pdf</a>  Any work within 8 metres will need careful consideration and design and should only be installed after prior consultation and/or FRAP from the Agency.	
40.9.		3.5 - River and canal corridor - Please keep footpaths and cycle routes away from all watercourses, or have a buffer zone to minimise disturbance on riparian and aquatic wildlife. Please keep any lighting away from the water e.g. down lit, directional.  Any paths alongside watercourses may be subject to tracked vehicles crossing/travelling along to access and carry out maintenance or bank repair work. All paths should therefore be designed to ensure they would not be damaged by these tracked vehicles.  River edges - Please keep soft wherever possible. Avoid gabions or hard engineering, there are lots of soft and natural solutions available no	We will add “footpaths and cycle routes should be directed away from watercourse edges where feasible, or have a buffer zone to minimise disturbance ton riparian and aquatic wildlife. Keep any lighting away from the water edge and avoid directional down lights, than can disturb wildlife.  We will add to 2.4.1 “Note riparian paths may require water access by tracked vehicle and should therefore be designed to support weight and reasonable wear. Consult with EA/Canal and River Trust”

Consultee	General agreement/ disagreement	Detail comment received	SWTC response
		<p>wadays and should be possible in most areas.</p> <p>Scrub - Marginal vegetation and trees should be encouraged wherever possible.</p> <p>Possible enhancements - Bird boxes, bat boxes, kingfisher perches and nest boxes, otter holts, bug hotels, pollinator species. Please ensure they have a long term care and maintenance plan.</p> <p>Carefully managed wild and publicly inaccessible areas should be developed as part of this plan, this is where wildlife will thrive as it will offer havens free from urban litter, noise, light, and visual disturbance.</p> <p>Environment Agency specific consultation should be encouraged here in the guide, as many items may require FRAP from us on a site by site basis, and to ensure that proposals do not contradict with other strategies e.g. TSFAIS project delivery or routine maintenance activities. See 1.2 comments above.</p>	<p>We have tailored guidance with soft/hard treatments appropriate to the urban/rural transect and have coded this by saying hard edges permitted. We will add note that 'soft bioengineering retention treatments will be preferred to harder surfaces depending on level of use.'</p> <p>We will add these. Thank you.</p> <p>We will add footnote - "Works to riparian areas may require Flood Risk Activity Permit on a site by site basis - consult with the Environment Agency". We note the ongoing. Taunton Strategic Flood Alleviation Improvements Scheme project</p>





## CONSULTATION STATEMENT

### **Somerset West and Taunton Council: Taunton Public Realm Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)**

The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012

#### **Introduction**

Somerset West and Taunton Council (the Council) has produced a Taunton Public Realm Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which seeks to raise the standard of the public realm and streetworks consistently across our Garden Town. The guide is aimed at guiding the design of public realm and street works by the highway authority, developers, utility companies and their agents and contractors. It also shows how current principles of highway design and layout can be incorporated into good placemaking. A draft Public Realm Design Guide SPD was considered by the Council's Executive meeting on 28 January 2020 and approved for key stakeholder consultation. Following key stakeholder consultation in spring 2020, public consultation took place in winter 2020/21 and summer 2021. The Council has made a number of amendments across the document in response to comments received. The Council has now finalised the document in anticipation of adoption as an SPD.

This Consultation Report explains how the Council has undertaken public consultation to inform the development of the SPD, and how the engagement, feedback and responses received have influenced its development. The report covers: which bodies and persons were invited to make comment; how those bodies and persons were invited to make comment; the material that was subject to consultation; a summary of the responses received; and a summary of how the responses influenced the development of the SPD.

The Council has an adopted Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). The SCI outlines that the Council is committed to effective community engagement, and seeks to use a wide range of methods for involving the community in the plan making process. SWT's Statement of Community Involvement was adopted in November 2019. In relation to plan preparation, the SCI relates to the preparation of Development Plan Documents (DPDs), Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Sustainability Appraisal (SA), Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) and Neighbourhood Plans. As such, the SPD is required to comply with the SCI.

The Town and Country Planning (local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 set out what is required in terms of public participation and making of representations in relation to the production of SPD's. In response to Regulation 12(b), a Draft Consultation Statement was made available for public consultation alongside the SPD itself in the final round of consultation. This final Statement complies with the requirements of Regulation 12(a).

## **Consultation Summary**

The Taunton Public Realm Design Guide SPD has been subject to three separate periods of consultation:

- Spring 2020 (3 February to 30 March 2020) – first draft Design Guide (technical stakeholder only)
- Winter 2020/21 (11 December 2020 to 5 February 2021)
- Summer 2021 (5 July 2021 to 16 August 2021) – Updated draft Design Guide

### **Summer 2021 Consultation**

Consultation on an updated Taunton Public Realm Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) took place from 05 July 2021 until Monday 16 August 2021 (six weeks). In accordance with Regulation 12(b)(i) of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, consultation responses had to be submitted within this time period in order to be taken into consideration.

The documents available to comment on as part of this consultation included the following:

- Updated Draft Taunton Public Realm Design Guide SPD;
- Draft Strategic Environmental Assessment / Habitat Regulations Assessment (SEA/HRA) Screening Report; and
- Draft Consultation Statement

### **Purpose of the Consultation**

This updated draft Taunton Public Realm Design Guide SPD was produced as a response to a number of the issues raised in the previous rounds of consultations, particularly in relation to updated government guidance on cycling and active travel, standards in conservation areas and SCC adoption and how this is integral to high quality design. Links across to existing adopted planning policies as well as the Council's Climate Emergency declaration were also strengthened.

As such, the purpose of the consultations was four-fold:

- To seek views of stakeholders and raise awareness in relation to the proposed amended design guidance,
- To ensure that the final SPD has been informed by a demonstrable level of public engagement and input as expected by the Planning Practice Guidance
- To ensure legal compliance with relevant Regulations and to ensure statutory consultee consultation in relation to the Draft SEA/HRA Screening; and
- To provide notice to the development industry, of the Council's design guidance and that as SPD it will influence planning decisions where it is a material consideration.

### **Who We Consulted**

A list of Specific Consultation Bodies, General Consultation Bodies, and other organisations and groups the Council seeks to involve in plan-making is included in the SCI. As a non-statutory plan, there is no statutory list of bodies and organisations that the Council was required to consult in preparation of the SPD. However, in accordance with Regulation 13(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning)(England) Regulations

2012, any person may make representations about an SPD. As such, all those on this list were consulted at this stage.

The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (SEA Regulations) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (Habitat Regulations) set out that Historic England, the Environment Agency and Natural England are statutory consultees in relation to the Draft SEA/HRA Screening Report and as such these bodies were specifically invited to respond to this element.

The Council is committed to ensuring that local groups, organisations and individuals are provided with the opportunity to be involved in the preparation of planning policy documents.

The Council has a database of consultees, who have either commented upon, or expressed an interest in being involved with the development of local plans. This database is used to keep individuals, companies and organisations informed on the production of the Local Plan and other planning policy documents. New consultees are added to the consultation database via e-mail or letter to the Strategy Team requesting inclusion on to the database. The General Data Protection Regulations are followed to ensure that personal data is only required and retained where proportionate and necessary, is only gathered where explicit consent has been provided, is kept securely and is not disclosed to others. All bodies and persons identified within this database were emailed with notification of the consultation.

## **How We Consulted**

Consultation on the updated Draft Taunton Public Realm Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) ran from 05 July 2021 until Monday 16 August 2021 (six weeks). During this time a variety of methods were employed, though the full range of methods was limited by definitive restrictions and a cautiously proportionate approach due to the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic and gradual loosening of lockdown restrictions.

Responses to the consultation were invited:

- Online via the Council's consultation portal at <https://yoursay.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/public-realm/prdgfortgt/>
- By email: [strategy@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk](mailto:strategy@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk)
- By writing to the Council at: Placemaking Specialist, Planning and Development, Somerset West and Taunton Council, Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton, TA1 1HE;

To publicise the consultation, the Council:

- Emailed notification of the consultation to all bodies and persons identified within the consultation database.
- Made the above consultation documents available for inspection at the Council's principal offices at:
  - Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton, TA1 1HE (Monday – Friday, 8.30am to 5pm)
  - West Somerset House, Killick Way, Williton, TA4 4QA (Monday – Friday, 8.30am to 5pm)
- Publishing the documents on the Council's website at <https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/planning-policy/taunton-garden->

[town-public-realm-design-guide-spd/](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/news/swt-announces-further-design-guide-consultations/)

- Published a press release via the Council's website and social media posts via Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn in order to raise interest, and encourage participation, at <https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/news/swt-announces-further-design-guide-consultations/>
- Presented to a virtual meeting of the Agents Forum – 12 July 2021
- Presented to a virtual meeting of the Taunton Design Circle – 28 July 2021
- Presented to a virtual meeting of the Somerset Affordable Housing Group – 22 July 2021
- Hosted a virtual Town and Parish Councils Event – 13 July 2021
- Held a virtual General Question & Answer Session for Members of the Public – 14 July 2021 between 12.30 – 4.30pm

In light of the covid restrictions, it was decided not to arrange any in-person consultation events as would normally take place.

The consultation documents could also be viewed online at all libraries in Somerset West and Taunton.

### **Level of Response**

Overall, there were 19 responses to the consultation. Of the 19 respondents, 14 submitted their representation by email, 0 by post, 0 by social media and the remaining 5 respondents responded online.

### **Summary of Responses Received**

The results of the consultation were representative of a wide spectrum of respondents, including statutory consultees, community and amenity groups, developers and internal staff. In total 19 responses were received.

There was a positive response to the revised draft design guide, with comments such as 'We support the intent of this Design Guide to raise the standard of public realm and street works in Taunton Garden Town', 'The guidance supports the creation of healthy communities through the land use planning system by encouraging people to be more physically active through their everyday lives', and 'We strongly support the overarching principle that all works in the public realm should seek to be flood resilient, adaptable to any climate change impacts, and where possible, contribute towards net carbon zero outcomes'.

The responses covered a wide variety of points, which is to be expected given the range of respondents' interests. The comments relating to the volume house builders are treated separately as their range, emphasis and depth was more substantial. Responses received from other parties can be broadly summarised under the following headings – a) People First Public Realm; b) Flood resilient, adaptable to climate change and contribute towards net carbon zero outcomes; c) Street Trees; and d) Public Art.

- a) People First Public Realm – The green and clean' objective and people first public realm was welcomed by a number of respondents. New guidance on cycling was mentioned and the need for cycles to be treated as vehicles and not as pedestrians. It was also stressed that we need to ensure that our streets are accessible for disabled cycle users to access all areas. It was also emphasised that



on urban streets, cyclists must be physically separated from pedestrians and should not share space with pedestrians. – In response all comments have been incorporated into the design guide and appropriate guidance included. The recent update of the NPPF which requires that buildings are designed beautifully has been also been addressed.

- b) Flood resilient, adaptable to climate change and contribute towards net carbon zero outcomes – A number of respondents were keen to support the carbon sequestration opportunities, flood resilience and biodiversity net gain outcomes sought by the guide. – In response this topic has been emphasised in guidance.
- c) Street Trees – Many respondents wanted to be assured that street trees would be included in the public realm. However issues were raised concerning regard to be given to tree planting potential size at maturity and potential to affect nearby buildings, structures or underground utilities and not to obstruct walking and cycling routes. Further comments were given on care to be taken to avoid impacts on heritage assets and that sourcing of trees should be from UK endorsed nurseries to reduce the risk of introducing pests and diseases. – In response these points have been emphasised in the guide.
- d) Public Art – A member raised the issue of a lack of guidance regarding public art. – In response this has been addressed in the creation of a new design topic on public art.

Of the 19 respondents to the third consultation, 5 comments were received from developers, 4 of whom sent very similar responses. All supported the production and aims of the Public Realm Design Guide, which they agreed would be a valuable and helpful tool for raising design standards within Taunton's public realm but were concerned with the availability and cost of materials in some situations. They suggested that the Design Guide needed to recognise that in some cases a lesser design approach or other materials will or may be equally acceptable and that the materials and specifications requested might not be available and (or) better solutions for paving could materialise in the future. – In response to this, SWT produced the design guide since ad hoc materials selections in the past have led to poor quality public spaces. We acknowledge that materials or specifications may need to change in future, but this does not prevent us from addressing what is required now. As such it is recognised that the guide may need to be revisited in future to maintain its relevance to current standards and availability of materials and furnishings.

Developers also expressed concerns over any conflict between what SWT and SCC require on highways, such as road materials, street trees, street furniture and sustainable urban drainage measures in the public realm and they suggested that the Guide does not offer further clarification as to how this would be addressed. They requested that the implications of requiring enhanced materials on future commuted sums be clearer - In response, a note to clarify the role of the planning officer to negotiate highways designs was added.

One developer suggested the guide was not for SWT to require but for the highway authority. – In response, this was noted but SWT as planning authority is intricately involved in approving applications that involve place making, urban design for health,

environment, and movement on and off the highway network often before the highway authority get involved. As such this is the opportunity to raise design standards.

## **You Said, We Did**

As a result of the 19 responses received during the third consultation, the following substantial addition was carried out to the document:

- Additional section on public art added, cross referencing the Public Life for Public Space, Public Art Code SPD, 2006.

Other smaller changes included:

- Highlighting in section 1.1.8 the need to conserve historic paving in the Garden Town and the wording was strengthened on potential for streetworks to affect the historic environment and the need to conserve existing historic materials and furniture, including lighting.
- The Equalities and Inclusion section 1.1.9 noted DfT advice in LTN 1/20 that cycles must be treated as vehicles and not as pedestrians. However, it was also stressed that we need to ensure that our streets are accessible for disabled cycle users to access all areas. It was also emphasised that on urban streets, cyclists must be physically separated from pedestrians and should not share space with pedestrians.
- Guidance was added in the Equalities and Inclusion section on the need for public spaces to be designed to enhance community safety. It was also added that designers must take into consideration Secure by Design principles and minimize opportunities for crime.
- An additional note was also included in section 2.4 and 2.20.21. that materials and components at river and canal side locations may be subject to a Flood Risk Activity Permit (FRAP) from the Environment Agency. It was also added that signs on the canal may need to comply with Canal & River Trust design standards.
- In section 2.18 - Tree Planting - Notes were added on consideration to be given to tree planting potential size at maturity and potential to affect nearby buildings, structures or underground utilities and not obstructing walking and cycling routes. Also, further comments were included on care to be taken to avoid impacts on heritage assets. In addition, further comments were added to ensure that tree planting is supported by a management plan and that sourcing of trees should be from UKISG endorsed nurseries to reduce the risk of introducing pests and diseases.
- Notes were added to River and Canal corridor section 3.5 that riparian planting should not damage the riverbank. Nature conservation enhancements shall have a long-term management plan approved prior to implementation.
- The following References were also added:
  - Active Design, Planning for health and wellbeing through sport and physical activity, Sport England, 2015
  - Designing for Physical Activity, Routes and Wayfinding, Sport England, 2019
  - Streets for All, Advice for Highway and Public Realm Works in Historic Places. Historic England, 2018
  - Streets for All South West, Historic England, 2018

- External lighting of historic buildings, Historic England, 2020
- Designing, Installing and Maintaining an External Lighting Scheme, Historic England, 2020
- Secure Stations Scheme, British Transport Police Authority and DfT. 2018
- Cycle Rail Toolkit 2, Cycle Rail Working Group, Rail Delivery Group 2016
- Secured by Design, Design guides, Police Crime Prevention Initiatives, various

## **Previous Consultations**

The Taunton Public Realm Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) Design Guide was initially subject to key stakeholder consultation from 3 February to 30 March 2020. Due to the covid pandemic, a number of consultations were significantly delayed including Somerset County Council (SCC). Following an objection from SCC Highways on the Somerset West and Taunton Districtwide Design Guide, detailed discussions took place in a series of workshop sessions between Somerset West and Taunton and SCC as the Highway Authority.

As a result on discussions with the Highway Authority, an expanded section in the Districtwide Design Guide was prepared - 'Streets, Parking and Placemaking'. As a second round of public consultation was necessary for this expanded section, it was decided by officers to take the opportunity to also take the Public Realm Design Guide for Taunton Garden Town out to public consultation (rather than just key stakeholders). The public consultation on the Public Realm Design Guide for Taunton Garden Town was carried out from 11 December to 5 February 2021.

During both previous consultations a number of methods were employed - the Council's consultation portal survey; by email and by post. All organisations, groups and individual's on the Council's Local Plan data base were notified of the consultation by the Strategy Team. In addition, press releases were issued by the Council's Communication Team and the consultations promoted on social media. The Design Guide was available on the Council's website and a copy was also available for inspection at the Council's office at Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton.

In addition, presentations on the Taunton Public Realm Design Guide were carried out on 12 February 2020 at a CPD event for built environment professionals in Taunton, and for housing enabling providers on 27 February 2020. Also, a presentation on the Taunton Public Realm Design Guide was also given to the Council's Agents Panel on 11 December 2020.

Specialist workshops were held in the scoping of the design guide with heritage, tree care, wildlife, and flood, river and canal water management stakeholders.

SW Heritage Trust, Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society, Somerset Wildlife Trust, Environment Agency, Canal & River Trust, Somerset County Council highways Traffic Management, Road Safety and Parking, Service Commissioning Manager Transport Policy, Assistant Highway Service Manager, arboriculture, flood risk, street lighting, ecologist, and Taunton Strategic Flood Alleviation Project. In addition, officers of SWTC Conservation, Landscape and Green Infrastructure and arboriculture and Programme Manager Town Centre Regeneration were also involved with workshops.

Further meetings were held after consultations on the initial draft guide with SCC Highways Local Cycling and Walking project manager (Sep 2019), and with street lighting engineer and SCC's conservation adviser (July 2020).

All of the consultees agreed that Taunton Garden Town needed a Public Realm Design Guide to raise the standard of the street works and coordinate works by multi agencies. There were many who welcomed the Public Realm Design Guide SPD and liked its method of designating quality standards to areas of public realm in the town and for its use by both councils and developers. Some stated how they saw the guide as making the Garden Town visible. Some expressed strong support for the general principles of the guidance to give much greater emphasis to people and places in the design of streets and public spaces. There was delight by some at the depth of commitment to the public realm shown by SWT in the document.

A total of 20 representations from members of the public, government bodies, amenity and local transport bodies, developers and internal staff were received during the consultations on the Public Realm Design Guide. 6 representations were submitted via the Council's consultation portal and 13 via email. 6 county departments elected not to comment.

Other comments received from residents, county council, amenity bodies etc, can broadly be summarised under the following headings

- Standards: strong agreement on the four standards and their proposed areas
- Paving materials: agreement to the use of high quality materials to suit prestige and premium streets and places within those streets like local centres.
- Signage: Cycle signing by step by step /node points was suggested.
- Street furniture: agreement on most street furniture with some call for more covered areas for cycle parking. The location of furniture to not obstruct cyclists or pedestrians was a common comment. Some suggested a traditional bench be included.
- Lighting: low levels of lighting needed in wildlife sensitive sites like the riverside that still allowed its use as a vehicle free route after dark. Use of lighting styles suited to the historic settings in the town, not solely to Conservation Areas as present.

Illustrative Layouts: there was desire by county council highways to highlight a need for provision of a safe road network with appropriate capacity to keep traffic moving, though the requirement applies to pedestrians and cyclists too.

A number of changes were made following the first and second rounds of consultation, responding to issues raised. Some of these changes were substantial revisions and additions, whilst others were of a smaller nature. For these reasons, the Council published an updated draft for a third round of public consultation before preparing the final draft SPD for adoption.



## **ADOPTION STATEMENT**

### **Somerset West and Taunton Council: Public Realm Design Guide for Taunton Garden Town Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)**

#### **The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012**

In accordance with Regulations 14 & 35 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, notice is given that Somerset West and Taunton Council adopted the Public Realm Design Guide for Taunton Garden Town Taunton Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on 7 December 2021.

The SPD contains guidance on Somerset West and Taunton Council's approach in relation to securing high quality public realm in Taunton Garden Town. It supplements policies within the Taunton Deane Core Strategy and the Taunton Deane Site Allocations and Development Management Plan and forms a material consideration to be taken into account when determining planning applications and guidance when considering and undertaking any works within the public realm that wouldn't require planning permission.

Modifications have been made to the SPD as a result of public consultation. These can be viewed in the consultation statement published on the Council's website.

Any person aggrieved by the decision of the council to adopt the Supplementary Planning Document may apply to the High Court for permission to apply for Judicial Review of the decision. Any such application must be made promptly and, in any event, not later than 3 months after the adoption of the document, as required by Regulation 11 (2(c and d)) of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

#### Location of SPD for Inspection

A copy of the adopted Public Realm Design Guide for Taunton Garden Town Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is available to view free of charge on the Council's website:

<https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/planning-policy/taunton-garden-town-public-realm-design-guide-spd/>

In addition a hard copy of the document is available to view in the Council's Offices:

- Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton, TA1 1HE (Monday – Friday, 8.30am to 5pm)
- West Somerset House, Killick Way, Williton, TA4 4QA (Monday – Friday, 8.30am to 5pm)

For any viewing of the document at Deane House or West Somerset House, due to Covid restrictions, please call to make an appointment 0300 3048000.

The consultation documents can also be viewed online at all libraries in Somerset West and Taunton (please check with the library in question for their opening times).

# **Taunton Garden Town Public Realm Design Guide SPD**

***Strategic Environmental Assessment and  
Habitat Regulations Assessment***

***Screening Report***

<b>Version</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Date</b>
1	For internal consultation with Legal	18/03/2021
2	For consultation with Statutory Consultees	04/05/2021
3	To accompany final PRDG to adoption	05/10/2021



***Taunton Garden Town Public Realm  
Design Guide SPD  
SEA/HRA Screening Report***

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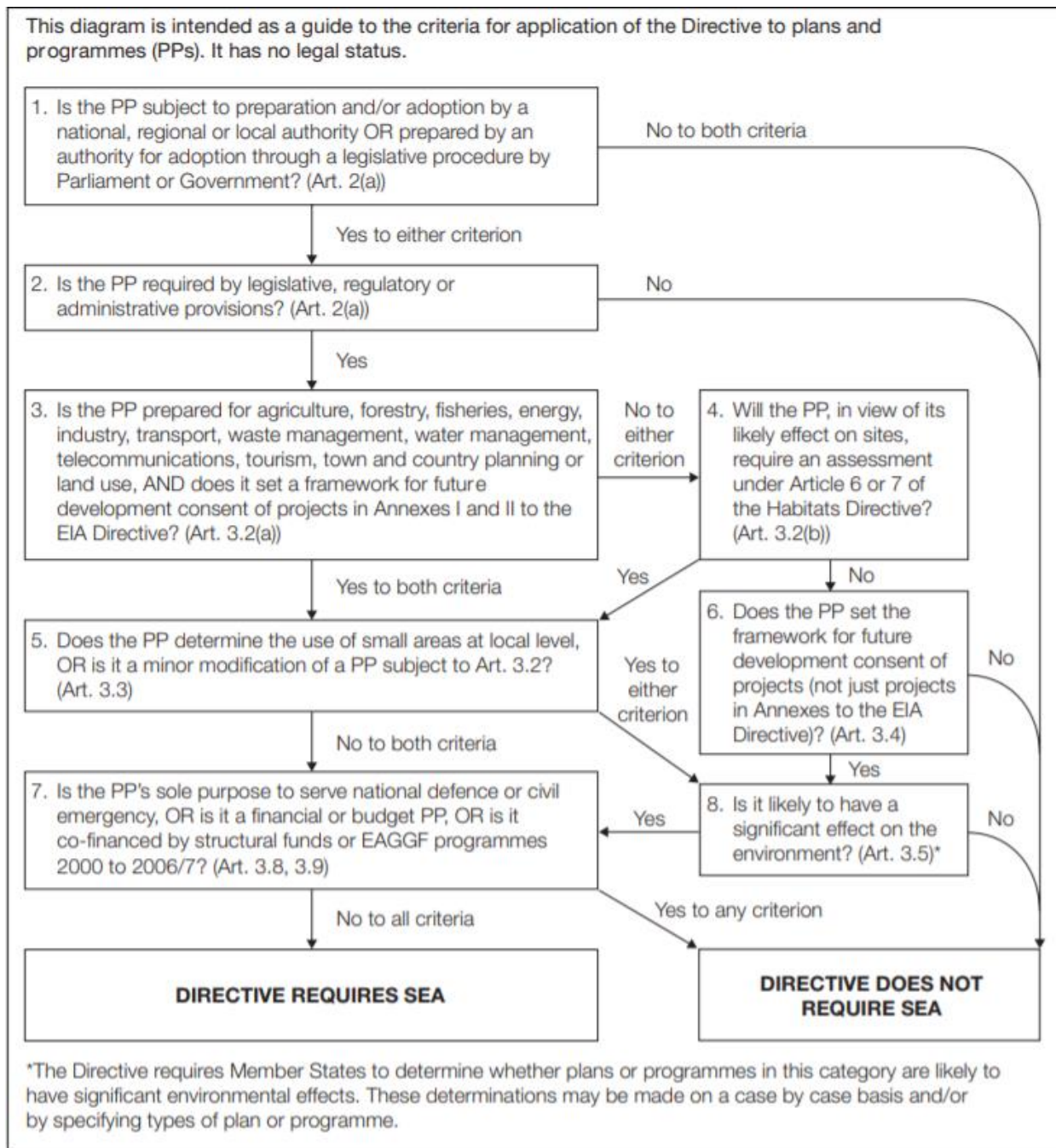
# 1. Introduction and Summary

- 1.1 Somerset West and Taunton Council has produced a Taunton Garden Town Public Realm Design Guide which it intends to adopt as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The purpose of the SPD is to raise the standard of the public realm and streetworks consistently across Taunton Garden Town. It provides guidance to support the successful implementation of policies of the adopted development plan, particularly DM4 (Design) of the Taunton Deane Core Strategy, D7 (Design Quality) and D9 (A Co-ordinated approach to development and highway planning) of the Taunton Deane Site Allocations and Development Management Plan and ED1 (Design), ED6 (Off-site Public Realm Enhancements), Hs2 (High Street Design Principles), Hs3 (East Street) Hs4 (Whirligig Lane Area) and Tr8 (North Street, The Parade, The Bridge and Bridge Street) of the Taunton Town Centre Area Action Plan. The SPD seeks a step change in the quality of new development in the district and provides additional guidance on how these and other relevant policies of the adopted development plan should be responded to in relation to securing high quality design. The SPD is aimed at guiding the design of public realm and street works by the highway authority, developers, utility companies and their agents and contractors. It also attempts to show how current principles of highway design and layout can be incorporated into good placemaking and provides additional guidance on how these and other relevant policies of the adopted development plan should be responded to in relation to securing high quality design of the public realm in Taunton Garden Town
- 1.2 The purpose of this Report is to determine whether the Taunton Garden Town Public Realm Design Guide SPD (herein referred to as “the SPD”) should be subject to:
- a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with European Directive 2001/42/EC (SEA Directive) and associated Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (SEA Regulations); or
  - a Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) in accordance with Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive and with Regulation 61 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010.
- 1.3 Under the above pieces of legislation, an SEA is required for all plans which may have a significant effect on the environment; and an HRA is required when it is deemed that the implementation of the plan is likely to cause significant negative effects upon protected European Sites (Natura 2000 sites).
- 1.4 The conclusion of the assessment is that the SPD does not require full SEA or HRA to be conducted.**
- 1.5 A Draft Screening Report was sent to the three statutory consultees designated in the regulations (Historic England, Environment Agency and Natural England) for their views. This final report has been informed by comments received.

## 2. SEA Screening

- 2.1 The basis for Strategic Environmental Assessments and Sustainability Appraisal legislation is European Directive 2001/42/EC (SEA Directive), transposed into English law by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (SEA Regulations). Detailed guidance on these regulations can be found in the Government publication 'A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive' (ODPM 2005).
- 2.2 The objective of SEA is *"to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of development plans... with a view to promoting sustainable development"* EU Directive 2001/42/EC (Article 1).
- 2.3 Under Article 2(a) of the SEA Directive, a plan or programme requires an SEA to be conducted where it is:
- *"subject to preparation and/or adoption by an authority at national, regional or local level or which are prepared by an authority for adoption, through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government, and*
  - *required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions."*
- According to the ODPM guidance, "administrative provisions" are *"likely to be that they are publicly available, prepared in a formal way, probably involving consultation with interested parties. The administrative provision must have sufficient formality such that it counts as a "provision" and it must also use language that plainly requires rather than just encourages a plan or programme to be prepared"*.
- 2.4 The National Planning Practice Guidance states that *"In exceptional circumstances a Strategic Environmental Assessment may be required when producing a Supplementary Planning Document"* (Paragraph: 008 Reference ID: 61-008-20190315). Therefore, the Council is legally obliged to advise on whether it is their opinion that an SEA is required or not.
- 2.5 In order to determine whether or not an SEA is required, a "screening" exercise has been undertaken by the Council. The screening evaluates the contents of the SPD against the criteria set out in the SEA Directive. These criteria are presented over the page in Figure 1.
- 2.6 Should the screening conclude that the SPD is applicable and will have a "significant impact on the environment", then a full SEA will be required. Should the conclusion be that an SEA is not required, then any future significant variations or additions to the SPD will need to be subject to further screening.

Figure 1 – Application of the SEA Directive to plans and programmes



### The Taunton Garden Town Public Realm Design Guide SPD

2.7 The SPD builds on and has been produced pursuant to adopted policies DM4 (Design) of the Taunton Deane Core Strategy, D7 (Design Quality) and D9 (A Co-ordinated approach to development and highway planning) of the Taunton Deane Site Allocations and Development Management Plan and ED1 (Design), ED6 (Off-site Public Realm Enhancements), Hs2 (High Street Design Principles), Hs3 (East Street) Hs4 (Whirligig Lane Area) and Tr8 (North Street, The Parade, The Bridge and Bridge Street) of the Taunton Town Centre Area Action Plan. The purpose of the SPD is to raise the standard of the public realm and streetworks consistently across Taunton Garden Town and guide planning applications and decisions towards the successful

implementation of the above and other relevant policies of the adopted development plan, providing additional guidance as to how they should be responded to in relation to securing high quality design in the public realm.

- 2.8 The SPD is aimed at guiding the design of public realm and street works by the highway authority, developers, utility companies and their agents and contractors. It also attempts to show how current principles of highway design and layout can be incorporated into good placemaking and provides additional guidance on how these and other relevant policies of the adopted development plan should be responded to in relation to securing high quality design of the public realm in Taunton Garden Town.
- 2.9 The main aspiration of the SPD is to accommodate people well, maximising the efficient use of limited space by designing our public realm primarily for people rather than for vehicles. As a result, the aim is for the Garden Town's public realm to be:
- Healthy and well – streets and public space will promote social resilience by prioritising activity, and making comfortable and convenient movement
  - Quiet and slow – we will reduce noise and rapid movement and so increase the enjoyment of public space
  - Green and clean – we want clean air, clean pavements, and a green environment for shade, biodiversity, water management and beauty

The SPD accommodates vehicles and gives only appropriate priority to through movement in the right places. This is our response to the climate change emergency and will bring social, health and economic benefits to all our town.

- 2.10 The SPD covers just the area designated as Taunton Garden Town and identified by Figure 5 in the SPD, which lies entirely within the Somerset West and Taunton Local Planning Authority area.
- 2.11 The SPD includes “core”, “town”, “general” and “green” standards relating to different materials and components, and illustrated examples of places, streets, gateways, centres and the river and canal corridor together with associated advice and guidance. These seek to amplify existing requirements of adopted planning policies and provide guidance on how these requirements can be successfully responded to as well as providing an element of aspiration for the general public realm to inform discussions with our statutory consultees and emerging policies within the new Local Plan to 2040. Therefore, and by definition, the SPD sits as supplementary to these adopted plans. The SPD includes no policies and does not allocate any land for development.
- 2.12 The Taunton Garden Town Public Realm Design Guide will be adopted as SPD and as such become a material consideration in the determination of relevant planning applications. This means that the SPD will carry weight in the decision-making process, although it will not in itself be part of the adopted development plan. Planning applications should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Provided regard is had to all material considerations, it is for the decision maker to decide what weight is to be given to the material considerations in each case.

## The SEA Screening Assessment

2.13 Table 1, below contains the criteria from Figure 1, above. It identifies whether the Council considers the answer to each criterion to be Yes or No, and gives the reason for this conclusion.

Stage	Y/N	Reason
1. Is the Plan or Programme (PP) subject to preparation and/or adoption by a national, regional or local authority <b>OR</b> prepared by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government? (Art. 2(a))	Y	The SPD has been prepared and will be adopted as SPD by Somerset West and Taunton Council in line with the procedure set out in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the Town and Country Planning (Local Plans)(England) Regulations 2012.
2. Is the PP required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? (Art. 2(a))	Y	The SPD is not formally <i>required</i> by any legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions. However, Paragraph 128 of the NPPF states that “ <i>To provide maximum clarity about design expectations at an early stage, all local planning authorities should prepare design guides or codes consistent with the principles set out in the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code, and which reflect local character and design</i> ”, paragraph 129 states that “ <i>to carry weight in decision-making should be produced either as part of a plan or as supplementary planning documents</i> ” and the national Planning Practice Guidance suggests that “ <i>to be given as much weight as possible in the decision-making process, Design Guides should be adopted as SPDs</i> ”. So, whilst a design guide is not <i>required</i> , it is recommended/encouraged. The SPD will be publicly available and has been prepared in accordance with the above mentioned legislative and regulatory processes.
3. Is the PP prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use, <b>AND</b> does it set a framework for future development consent of projects in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive? (Art 3.2(a))	N	The SPD has been prepared for the purposes of town and country planning and informing consideration of development proposals relating to land use, including potentially in relation to some of the projects referred to in Annex I and/or II of the EIA Directive, particularly Infrastructure (Urban development projects) and (Construction of roads). However, the SPD does not set the framework for future development consent of such projects as this is already set by the existing adopted local plans covering the Taunton Garden Town area within

		SWT district as well as adopted plans of Somerset County Council as the Local Transport Authority and Local Highways Authority. The SPD merely provides additional guidance in relation to the design of such development proposals, and how specific adopted planning policies might be responded to in relation to securing high quality design for the public realm.
4. Will the PP, in view of its likely effect on sites, require an assessment under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive? (Art. 3.2(b))	N	See section 3 of this Screening Report in relation to HRA Screening.
6. Does the PP set the framework for future development consent of projects (not just projects in Annexes to the EIA Directive)? (Art. 3.4)	N	The SPD does not set the framework for future development consent of such projects as this is already set by the existing adopted local plans covering the Taunton Garden Town area within SWT district as well as adopted plans of Somerset County Council as the Local Transport Authority and Local Highways Authority. The SPD merely provides additional guidance in relation to the design of such development proposals, and how specific adopted planning policies might be responded to in relation to securing high quality design. The SPD does contain specific standards and which are intended to express the expectations of the Council in relation to specific issues/materials/components and designed to guide development proposals in responding to adopted planning policies, which the Council as the Local Planning Authority would take account of as a material consideration in determining an application for planning permission. However this is pursuant to the already adopted planning policies which have previously been subject to Sustainability Appraisal (SA) incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). In addition, the SPD will influence the production of a new Local Plan, the policies of which will be subject to SA/SEA as a matter of course in the development of that Plan.
8. Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment? (Art. 3.5)	N	See screening assessment for environmental effects in Table 2 of this report, below.

2.14 Criterion 8 requires an assessment of whether the SPD is likely to have a significant effect on the environment in reference to Article 3.5 of the SEA Directive. Schedule 1, Annex II of the SEA Regulations contains the criteria for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment. Table 2, below contains the criteria from Schedule 1 Annex II of the SEA Regulations and an assessment of whether the Plan would likely have a significant environmental effect or not.

Table 2 – Environmental impact screening assessment

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Schedule 1 of SEA regulations)	Is the strategy likely to have a significant environmental effect?	Justification for Screening Assessment
The characteristics of plans and programmes:		
a) the degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources;	N	The SPD has been produced in conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework and influenced by the Planning Practice Guidance, National Design Guide, and the Manual for Streets 1 and 2. The SPD provides guidance as to how development proposals should respond to existing adopted planning policies including with regards to materials and components for paving, signage, street furniture, planting and lighting. It provides illustrated examples of how this might be applied to places, streets, gateways, centres and the river and canal corridor. However, the framework is set by the adopted development plan policies and policies and guidance of the Local Transport Authority and Local Highways Authority. The SPD will not influence the spatial distribution, scale or type of development that may come forward across the district, or suggest how appropriate or otherwise a development might be in relation to these factors, which are set by the development plan. The SPD does not allocate any resources. The overall intent of the SPD is to encourage and guide development towards delivering on the positive environmental and sustainable design requirements for the public realm of adopted planning policy.
b) the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes	N	The SPD has been produced in conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework and influenced by the Planning Practice Guidance and National Design Guide. It will



including those in a hierarchy;		influence the development of site-specific masterplans, design codes and other design processes which would be prepared by planning applicants in order to respond to existing adopted planning policies. The SPD will influence policy development for a new Local Plan, however, a new Local Plan will, once prepared and adopted sit above the SPD in the hierarchy and will be subject to its own Assessment. The SPD will also inform discussions with our statutory consultees including Somerset County Council as the Local Transport Authority and Local Highways Authority. In this vein it is hoped that the content and direction of the SPD (much of which has its roots in the Manual for Streets 1 and 2) will help to inform future review of SCC's own transport and highways policies and guidance. In this way, the SPD will influence the production of other plans and programmes. With regards to the extent of any influence on site-specific design processes the SPD is intended to influence these to a high degree, and it should therefore result in positive environmental effects, particularly with regards to highways design and public spaces within and around a site. However, as just one factor influencing development proposals, and as a material consideration only, it is unlikely that the SPD would have a significant effect on proposals, or any environmental effects which may arise from a specific development proposal which will be far more influenced by site context, developer intentions, adopted planning policy, SCC highways guidance, and national policy and guidance. Furthermore, the illustrative nature of much of the guidance contained within is intended to provide examples of how developments might respond to particular issues in responding to adopted planning policy and in some cases aspiring to higher standards, but do not set requirements in themselves. With regards to a new Local Plan and SCC policy and guidance documents, the degree of influence is much less, and these documents would have the freedom to choose to take a different path on issues covered by the SPD if so wished.
c) the relevance of the plan or programme for	N	The SPD is specifically aimed at promoting sustainable development in relation to the

<p>the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development;</p>		<p>public realm, but has a particular focus on design and ensuring the public realm contributes towards the mitigation of and adaptation to the climate emergency. The high quality design that the SPD promotes is integral to sustainable development and will result in environmental (e.g. sustainable movement and visual impact), social (e.g. health and wellbeing improvements and creating more sociable spaces) and economic (e.g. encouraging dwell time – increased visitor spend and creating investable places) benefits to the area. The SPD does not cover all aspects of sustainable development, however, this is not its intention or place. The integration of a wide range of social, economic and environmental factors has already been assessed and achieved via the existing adopted development plans. The relevance and influence of the SPD will be balanced in decision making alongside all relevant policies of the development plan and other material considerations with a view to promoting sustainable development in the round. Therefore, the SPD has relevance to the integration of environmental considerations as part of promoting sustainable development. However, the effects of the SPD in this regard are unlikely to be significant as the balance of different social, economic and environmental factors is already determined at a strategic level by the adopted development plan and will be balanced on a case-by-case basis in determination of planning applications.</p>
<p>d) environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme;</p>	<p>N</p>	<p>The SPD addresses environmental problems associated with the design of places, streets and public spaces, specifically aiming to result in development which avoids and minimises and mitigates negative design-associated environmental impacts. This includes promoting positive choices of materials and components and strategies for the avoidance, minimising and mitigation of environmental problems such as landscape and visual impact, impacts upon designated and non-designated heritage assets, air quality, flood risk, health and wellbeing, carbon emissions and resilience to climate change amongst others. The SPD will not be the only factor informing the design response</p>

		of development proposals in relation to these environmental problems. Therefore, it is difficult to quantify the contribution of the SPD as a part of this. The SPD is designed to encourage positive responses, building on local and national policies and guidance, resulting in positive impacts and effects upon the environment. However, the effects of the SPD in this regard are unlikely to be significant as the adopted development plan is the primary driver for how developments will respond to these issues. The SPD provides additional guidance to help clarify how development proposals can meet with existing policy requirements in this regard.
e) the relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (for example, plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).	N	The SPD is not directly relevant to the implementation of European legislation including the Water Framework Directive.
<b>Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected:</b>		
a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects;	N	The SPD is intended to encourage development proposals which deliver positive environmental effects. The likelihood of these effects occurring is unknown as this is dependent on consideration and determination of individual planning applications where the full range of planning policies and material considerations must be taken into account. However, the intention would be that the SPD generally influences development proposals to deliver positive environmental effects in every case, and once implemented, these effects would generally be permanent. However, the environmental effects resulting from application of the SPD are unlikely to be significant.
b) the cumulative nature of the effects;	N	The SPD will in combination with other plans, policies and guidance of this nature locally, regionally, nationally and internationally, have a positive effect on the environment, and the strength of these plans, policies and guidance is amplified when consistent and considered together. However, in isolation, its effects will be more limited and are unlikely to be significant whether alone or cumulatively.

c) the transboundary nature of the effects;	N	There would be no transboundary effects.
d) the risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents);	N	The SPD promotes high quality sustainable design which would contribute towards the mitigation of risks to human health and the environment, including in relation to health and wellbeing (for instance through placemaking and street design which encourages walking and cycling which may result in reduced air quality concerns and improved physical and mental health for individuals). However, the specific impacts of the SPD guidance in relation to specific development proposals, and the effects these result in are not clear at this stage. However, the effects are likely to be positive although unlikely to be significant.
e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);	N	The SPD covers the extent of Taunton Garden Town which is home to approximately 70,000 people, and ambitious housing development plans which if realised would significantly increase this further. The SPD will influence development proposals across this area, but to different degrees based on their identification as “core”, “town”, “standard” or “green” areas. Proposals in the “core” and “town” areas are more likely to affect more people as they are used by the majority of the population of the town as well as people directly local to those locations and people from outside the area covered by the SPD. Generally, the effects are likely to be positive and unlikely to be significant.
f) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to – i) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage; ii) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or iii) intensive land-use; and	N	Taunton Garden Town has a number of special natural, cultural and heritage characteristics which are specific to it or the wider area, including a high concentration of historical assets including Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas and Scheduled Ancient Monuments, particularly in the town centre. The SPD is designed to respond to these characteristics and provides guidance on how the public realm should be designed to respond to these in different cases across the town. The establishment of the different area standards within the SPD is a specific response to the different levels of significance and settings of these special characteristics. As such the SPD should contribute towards positive effects on these characteristics, which may otherwise be adversely impacted by development proposals. Taunton Garden

		<p>Town includes green spaces, some of which include Local Wildlife Sites and Local Nature Reserves, which are covered by the “green” standard in the SPD, intended to protect and enhance their special characteristics.</p> <p>Development in Taunton Garden Town has been identified by Natural England as relevant to the exceedance of environmental quality standards in relation to phosphate loading of the Somerset Levels and Moors Ramsar site (which exists outside the boundaries of the SPD but downstream of the town). The SPD is unlikely to directly influence or impact upon this vulnerability or the unfavourable status of this protected site. However, strategies for mitigating impacts upon the site may be able to build upon some of the proposals included within the SPD including the aspiration to grow a “Garden Town Forest” and incorporate sustainable drainage solutions as a “Sponge Town”.</p> <p>Taunton Garden Town includes one Air Quality Management Zone (AQMZ) along East Reach, and has a large degree of relevance to the district’s only other AQMZ in Henlade, just to the east of the town. Taken in isolation, there may be some concerns associated with the slowing of vehicular traffic flow through the town centre and the knock-on effect this might have on the AQMZs as well as the re-routing of traffic from certain town centre routes proposed to be pedestrianised. However, taken in combination with other local and national initiatives to drive modal shift in the town and more widely as well as the shift to electric vehicles, the effects are unlikely to be significant. In addition, the wider benefits of these proposals are likely to significantly outweigh any such concerns. The SPD encourages the best use of constrained land resource within the town in order to accommodate sustainable movement and placemaking to support appropriate intensification of the urban area through high quality design.</p>
g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.	N	<p>The SPD is intended to promote design solutions which respond effectively and appropriately to the contexts in which they are sited. There are no areas or landscapes within the Garden Town benefiting from protection at a national, Community or</p>

		<p>international scale. Despite this, developments within the Garden Town has the potential to impact upon such areas and landscapes which lie nearby including the Quantock Hills and Blackdown Hills AONBs. The environmental effects upon these designations resulting from this SPD are likely to be minimal, though positive in nature and unlikely to be significant.</p>
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***SEA Screening Conclusion***

2.15 **It is the opinion of the Council that the Taunton Garden Town Public Realm Design Guide SPD does not require Strategic Environmental Assessment. However, it is important that relevant as individual development proposals are developed, they are subject to project level Environmental Assessment as appropriate, in order to understand whether significant effects may arise.**

### 3. HRA Screening

- 3.1 The basis for Habitat Regulations Assessment legislation is the European Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (Habitats Directive), transposed into English law by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (Habitat Regulations).
- 3.2 The Habitats Directive and Regulations afford protection to plants, animals and habitats that are rare and vulnerable in a European context. Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) is a systematic process through which plans or projects are assessed for likely impact on the integrity of European Sites. European Sites, (also referred to as Natura 2000 sites), consist of Special Protection Areas (SPA), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC); Potential Special Protection Areas and candidate Special Areas of Conservation (pSPA and cSAC); and listed or proposed Ramsar sites.
- 3.3 There are seven Natura 2000 sites within the Somerset West and Taunton district, as set out in Table 3 below:

Table 3 – European Sites / Natura 2000 sites within Somerset West and Taunton district.

European Sites / Natura 2000 sites
Exmoor and Quantock Oak Woodlands SAC
Hestercombe House SAC
Holme and Clean Moor SAC
Quants SAC
Severn Estuary SPA/SAC/Ramsar
Somerset Levels and Moors SPA/Ramsar
Exmoor Heaths SAC

- 3.4 None of the above are within the Taunton Garden Town area covered by the SPD, though there is a relationship between development and activities within the Garden Town and certain European Sites which is explored in the assessment below.
- 3.5 Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive states that:  
*“Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans and projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site’s conservation objectives”.*
- 3.6 Under the Habitat Regulations, the Council is considered to be a “competent authority”. Regulation 63(1) of the Habitat Regulations states that:  
*“A competent authority, before deciding to undertake, or give any consent, permission or other authorisation for, a plan or project which –*  
*a) is likely to have a significant effect on a European site or a European offshore marine site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), and*  
*b) is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of that site,*  
*must make an appropriate assessment of the implications of the plan or project for that site in view of that site’s conservation objectives.”*
- 3.7 The first stage of the HRA process is to establish whether a “*significant effect*” is likely. This is referred to as screening. If the screening assessment concludes that a

significant effect is not likely then no further action is required. If the screening assessment identifies potential effects and deems them to be significant, then further “*Appropriate Assessment*” is required.

- 3.8 In order to establish whether the SPD is likely to have any significant effects upon the European Sites, this Screening assessment considers the SPD in relation to four steps based around the Screening methodology set out in the Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (European Commission 2001) as set out in Table 4, below.

Table 4 – Screening steps and responses

Question	Y/N	Reason
1. Is the PP directly connected with, or necessary to the management of a European site for nature conservation?	N	The SPD is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of any European Sites which are all located beyond the boundaries of Taunton Garden Town and as such this SPD.
2. Are there any other PPs that could in combination with this PP have potential to have significant effects upon a European Site?	Y	The SPD has been produced pursuant to existing adopted planning policies in the adopted development plan, the comprising plans of which and the specific policies off of which this SPD hangs have been all been subject to Appropriate Assessment. As a result of this, the adopted plans include policies and mitigations to ensure that significant effects do not arise in relation to the European Sites. Subsequent to adoption of these existing adopted development plans, an issue has arisen whereby it has been identified that new development including that within the Garden Town is contributing towards unacceptable phosphate levels in the Somerset Levels and Moors. The result of this is that the Somerset Levels and Moors Ramsar site is considered to be in an ‘unfavourable state’ and as such there is currently a constraint on the consent of new development which may result in further raising of phosphate levels until such point when a suitable mitigation solution has been identified and developed through a Phosphates Strategy. The effect of the SPD in combination with current adopted planning policies and the emerging Phosphates Strategy and other material considerations is that there are multiple, sometimes competing factors which new development has to try and respond to / satisfy. In some cases, development viability may result in a need to prioritise different elements whilst retaining the need to contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development. In this case, mitigating phosphate impacts upon the Somerset Levels and Moors and any other potential significant effects of a proposed development upon European Sites would need to take priority over compliance with the SPD. It’s status as an SPD and material consideration in the determination of



		<p>planning applications means that where necessary and appropriate there can be flexibility for development proposals in their responses. There may be synergies between the implementation of the SPD and ensuring no significant effects arise from new development, particularly in relation to Green Infrastructure and sustainable drainage solutions advocated by the SPD. A new Local Plan (the production of which will be influenced by the SPD) may have potential to have significant effects upon a European Site. However, these effects are not yet known and the Local Plan process will be subject to Appropriate Assessment as a matter of course. The HRA published alongside the Local Plan 2040 Issues and Options document earlier in 2020 describes the characteristics and potential issues of relevance for each of the European Sites and assesses the Local Plan policy options for likely effects upon the Sites.</p>
3. Are there likely to be any potential effects upon the identified European Site(s)?	N	<p>The SPD has been produced pursuant to existing adopted planning policies in the adopted development plan, the comprising plans of which and the specific policies off of which this SPD hangs have been all been subject to Appropriate Assessment. As a result of this, the adopted plans include policies and mitigations to ensure that significant effects do not arise in relation to the European Sites. The SPD will not result in development itself, rather guide development in relation to high quality design of public realm and responding to these existing adopted planning policies. As such, there are not anticipated to be any likely potential effects upon the identified European Sites as a result of the SPD.</p>
4. What is the significance of the effects upon the identified European Site(s)?	N/A	<p>No likely potential effects are anticipated as a result of the SPD.</p>

### ***HRA Screening Conclusion***

**3.9 It is the opinion of the Council that the Taunton Garden Town Public Realm Design Guide SPD does not require Appropriate Assessment under HRA legislation. However, it is important that as the detail of relevant individual projects are developed, they are screened so that it can be understood whether significant effects may arise.**



# Somerset Equality Impact Assessment

The [EIA guidance notes](#) will help you complete this assessment.

If you need help or advice please contact Paul Harding. [P.harding@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk](mailto:P.harding@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk)

**Organisation prepared for**

**Somerset West and Taunton Council**

**Version**

**1**

**Date Completed**

**30 September 2021**

## Description of what proposed change or policy is being impact assessed

The Public Realm Design Guide for Taunton Garden Town is a new planning policy guidance document under the adopted Local Plan and is proposed to be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document. Once adopted the SPD would be a material consideration when considering any planning applications. The Design Guide sets out the Council's aspirations for improving the public realm and public spaces in Taunton Garden Town and sets out a materials and street furniture palette for these areas.

The document has been subject to three separate consultations over an 18-month period (minimum of 6 weeks each) and has involved consultation with an extensive range of stakeholders, including all those shown in Appendix of the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement.

This SPD provides clear policy guidance for the local planning authority, developers, statutory bodies and utilities which will support the delivery of sustainable public realm enhancement. The SPD will assist on the deliverability of public realm proposals, since it clearly sets out guidance on the requirements of the Local Planning Authority and this can then be taken into account in any proposals. Similarly, the SPD clearly sets out Local Planning Authority's requirements for good design which will assist in officers making a balanced judgement against other policy and Council objectives.

As part of the preparation of the document a number of workshops took place to inform its preparation, this involved officers and statutory consultees from a range of disciplines - planning, landscape, ecology, trees, heritage and highways. This has enabled an insight into many issues affecting statutory consultees and different user groups.

## Evidence

**What data/information have you used to assess how this policy/service might impact on protected groups?** Sources such as the [Office of National Statistics](#), [Somerset Intelligence Partnership](#), [Somerset's Joint Strategic Needs Analysis \(JSNA\)](#), Staff and/ or [area profiles](#),, should be detailed here

The Council's draft Public Realm Design Guide for Taunton Garden Town has been reviewed.

This design guide document builds upon advice set out in NHCLG's National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code.

It also builds on work undertaken in the development and approval of other 'live' strategies:

- SWT Corporate Strategy;
- Taunton Garden Town Vision;
- Taunton Garden Town Charter and Checklist
- SWT Economic Development strategy;
- Improving Lives in Somerset (Health & Wellbeing) 2019-2028,
- Somerset Housing Strategy -2019-2023,
- Somerset Growth Plan 2017-2030

Each of the above which have been evidence-based using such sources as Office of National Statistics, Somerset Intelligence Partnership, Somerset's Joint Strategic Needs Analysis (JSNA).

**Who have you consulted with to assess possible impact on protected groups?** If you have not consulted other people, please explain why?

Officers within the Council with an overview of the Equalities function, who have experience of identifying impacts on those with protected characteristics have been consulted for this initial identification of potential impacts.

The SPD document has been subject to three separate consultations (for a minimum of 6 weeks each consultation). These consultations have included the relevant community and interest groups and individuals associated with protected characteristics.

The groups consulted in the consultation events have included the below organisations:

- i) Disability groups – Action on Disability and Development, Alzheimer's Society – Somerset, Autism Somerset, Bridgwater & Taunton Deane Deaf Club, Compass Disability Services, ESCAPE Support Groups, Maggie's Centre (Cancer Care),

- Mind in Taunton & West Somerset, RNID (Action on Hearing Loss), Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB), Somerset Sight, Taunton and District Mencap Society.
- ii) Diversity groups – Avatar Indian Dance Somerset, British Bangladeshi Association Somerset, CHARIS, Devon and Somerset Anglo-Scandinavian Society, Diversity Voice, Johnny Mars Foundations, Minehead and District Refugee Support Group, Minehead Methodist Church- Little Fishes Toddler Group, Multicultural Parents Group, Oakwood Church, Philippine International Neighbourhood Association of Somerset (PINAS), Polish Association Taunton, Polish Voice TV, RAISE (Racial Awareness Inclusion Support and Education CIC, Somerset Art Works, Somerset Film, Somerset Gypsy and Traveller Forum, Somerset Portuguese Association, South Somerset Filipinos and Friends Association (SSFFA), Syrian Women’s Group, Taunton Malayali Prayer Group, Taunton Welcomes Refugees, Under One Sun, West Somerset Inter-Cultural Friendship Society, YMCA Somerset Coast
- iii) Multicultural groups – Anglo Chinese Society, Equality & Human Rights Commission, Ethnic Minority Achievement and Traveller Education Service, Friends Families and Travellers, Somerset Multicultural Association, Taunton Deane Polish Association, The Diversity Trust.
- iv) Religious Groups – Bahai Community, Catholic Church Clifton Diocese, Diocese of Bath and Wells, Diocese of Bath and Wells – Community Cohesion, Humanists, Jewish Community of Somerset, Minehead Baptist Church, Somerset Churches Together, Taunton Deane and South Sedgemoor Methodist Circuit.
- v) Other Voluntary Groups – 10 Parishes, Age UK Somerset, Arc Inspire (Taunton Association for the Homeless), Campaign to Protect Rural England (Somerset), Citizens Advice Bureau (Taunton), Citizens Advice Bureau (West Somerset), Community Council for Somerset, Creating Learning Opportunities in Western Somerset (CLOWNS), Cycle Somerset, Engage West Somerset, Forum 21, FWAG South West England Office, Home Builders Federation, Minehead Conservation Society, Onion Collective CIC, People Plus, Quantock Eco, RSPB South West England, Somerset Activity & Sports Partnership, Somerset Association of Local Council’s, Somerset County Federation of Women’s Institutes, Somerset Gay Health, Somerset Lesbian Network (SLN), Somerset Playing Field’s Association, Somerset Wildlife Trust, Somerset Youth Partnership, South West Seniors Forum, Sparkle Somerset, SUSTRANS, Taunton Area Cycling Campaign, Taunton Deane Tenants Forum, Taunton Open Door, Taunton Ramblers, Taunton Women’s Aid, The Exmoor Society, Transition Minehead and Alcombe, Transition Town Taunton, Taunton Deane Village Agent (East), Wellington & District Sports Federation, West Somerset Village Agent 1, West Somerset Village Agent 2, West Somerset and Exmoor Bridleways, West Somerset LETS Group, Wivey Action on Climate and Environment, Women’s Equality Network Somerset (WENS), YMCA – Taunton.

No representations were received from any of the above groups as part of the consultations carried out. Similarly, no representations were received from individuals suggesting that any changes be made to the draft document.

It is important to understand that where a planning application is brought forward it would be subject to additional public consultation on the details of the particular scheme and its impact on the community, including people with Protected Characteristics.

### Analysis of impact on protected groups

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires us to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations with protected groups. Consider how this policy/service will achieve these aims. In the table below, using the evidence outlined above and your own understanding, detail what considerations and potential impacts against each of the three aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty. Based on this information, make an assessment of the likely outcome, before you have implemented any mitigation.

Protected group	Summary of impact	Negative outcome	Neutral outcome	Positive outcome
<b>Age</b>	<p>No negative impacts identified.</p> <p>All members of the community, including the protected groups, should benefit from the guidance set out in the Public Realm Design Guide, since this would create high quality spaces without trip hazards and with attractive street furniture well located. Spaces will also be well lit and overlooked with natural surveillance. The guide also recommends the provision of seating which will be of particular benefit to older people who may need to rest.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Disability</b>	<p>No negative impacts identified.</p> <p>All members of the community, including the protected groups, should benefit from the guidance set out in the Public Realm Design Guide, since this would create high quality spaces without trip hazards and with attractive street furniture well located. Spaces will also be well lit and overlooked with natural surveillance. The guidance includes a specification for the use of tactile paving and highlight strips for street</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

	<p>furniture in order to assist blind and partially sighted persons. This accords with national highway design guidance.</p> <p>The guidance advocates in section 1.1.9 equality and inclusive mobility through design and engagement.</p> <p>The guide also recommends the provision of seating which will be on particularly benefit to people with restricted mobility who may need to rest.</p>			
<b>Gender reassignment</b>	<p>No negative impacts identified.</p> <p>All members of the community, including the protected groups, should benefit from the guidance set out in the Public Realm Design Guide, since this would create high quality spaces without trip hazards and with attractive street furniture well located.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Marriage and civil partnership</b>	<p>No negative impacts identified.</p> <p>All members of the community, including the protected groups, should benefit from the guidance set out in the Public Realm Design Guide, since this would create high quality spaces without trip hazards and with attractive street furniture well located.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b>	<p>No negative impacts identified.</p> <p>All members of the community, including the protected groups, should benefit from the guidance set out in the Public Realm Design Guide, since this would create high quality spaces without trip hazards and with attractive street furniture well located. These spaces will be fully accessible by mothers with babies in pushchairs and buggies.</p> <p>The guide also recommends the provision of seating which will be on particularly benefit to women who may need to sit to feed their baby or pregnant women who may need to rest whilst in the public realm.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

<b>Race and ethnicity</b>	<p>No negative impacts identified.</p> <p>All members of the community, including the protected groups, should benefit from the guidance set out in the Public Realm Design Guide, since this would create high quality spaces without trip hazards and with attractive street furniture well located.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Religion or belief</b>	<p>No negative impacts identified.</p> <p>All members of the community, including the protected groups, should benefit from the guidance set out in the Public Realm Design Guide, since this would create high quality spaces without trip hazards and with attractive street furniture well located.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Sex</b>	<p>No negative impacts identified.</p> <p>All members of the community, including the protected groups, should benefit from the guidance set out in the Public Realm Design Guide, since this would create high quality spaces without trip hazards and with attractive street furniture well located. The guidance also addresses lighting of public realm in order to create safe environments. This can be of particular importance to lone women at night.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Sexual orientation</b>	<p>No negative impacts identified.</p> <p>All members of the community, including the protected groups, should benefit from the guidance set out in the Public Realm Design Guide, since this would create high quality spaces without trip hazards and with attractive street furniture well located.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>



<p><b>Other, e.g. carers, veterans, homeless, low income, rurality/isolation, etc.</b></p>	<p>No negative impacts identified.</p> <p>All members of the community, including the protected groups, should benefit from the guidance set out in the Public Realm Design Guide, since this would create high quality spaces without trip hazards and with attractive street furniture well located.</p> <p>The aim is to create streets and places for everyone, walkers, cyclists, drivers and all ages/abilities. This would include carers assisting people in wheelchairs, pushchairs and buggies.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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**Negative outcomes action plan**  
 Where you have ascertained that there will potentially be negative outcomes, you are required to mitigate the impact of these. Please detail below the actions that you intend to take.

Action taken/to be taken	Date	Person responsible	How will it be monitored?	Action complete
N/A	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>

**If negative impacts remain, please provide an explanation below.**

<b>Completed by:</b>	<b>Fiona Webb, Placemaking Specialist</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>30/09/2021</b>
<b>Signed off by:</b>	
<b>Date</b>	
<b>Equality Lead/Manager sign off date:</b>	
<b>To be reviewed by: (officer name)</b>	
<b>Review date:</b>	

Report Number: SWT 95/21

# **Somerset West and Taunton Council**

## **Executive – 17 November 2021**

### **North Taunton Woolaway Project - Authorisation to make a Compulsory Purchase Order in relation to the North Taunton Woolaway Project**

**This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Member Francesca Smith**

**Report Author: Jane Windebank – Development Manager, Development and Regeneration**

**Chris Brown – Assistant Director, Development and Regeneration**

#### **1 Executive Summary / Purpose of the Report**

1.1. The Report has two purposes:

1.1.1. To reinforce the Council's willingness to progress a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) to achieve vacant possession of the North Taunton Woolaway Project (the Project) development area to achieve the successful regeneration of North Taunton. The Council throughout the CPO process enthusiastically attempt to purchase by mutual consent wherever possible.

1.1.2. To request permission from the Executive Committee to purchase two privately owned dwellings in the North Taunton Woolaway Project (the Project), if purchased this will avoid CPO activity in relation to these properties.

1.2. To ensure a smooth transition between all future phases and to ensure vacant possession by the date at which demolition needs to commence, this Report seeks a resolution to make a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) to assist with the site assembly required to facilitate the implementation of the regeneration proposals of the North Taunton Woolaway Project as edged red on the plan at Appendix 1. The Report is also asking for authorisation for officers to make the CPO and to carry out all necessary steps in conjunction with the CPO to secure its confirmation and subsequent implementation.

1.3. The Project is the flagship regeneration project of the Council's housing development programme and tackles some of the Council's worst performing homes in one of the most socially deprived areas in our County.

1.4. The Project will deliver two hundred and twenty-seven (227) new Council homes and comprehensively refurbish twenty-seven (27) Council homes in five (5) phases over an eight and a half (8.5) year period, a phasing plan is attached at Appendix 2. The Project will also provide a community facility/project office in the first phase which can be converted into 2 homes should a sustainable business plan not be achieved at the

end of the Project. This would increase the number of new homes to 229.

- 1.5. The Project is an essential part of the Council's commitment to offer a choice of good quality homes for our residents, whatever their age and income, in communities where support is available for those in need. The proposals identified in this Report will assist the progression of the remaining Phases (B–D) in a timely manner and provide certainty and security to the North Taunton Woolaway Project tenants.
- 1.6. Officers are requesting the Executive, under their delegated authority, permission to purchase one privately owned dwelling by mutual consent to progress with the demolition and development of Phase B of the Project. A confidential financial summary is included at Appendix 7 for the purchase of the private property.

## **2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Executive approves the purchase of the private dwellings as set out in confidential Appendix 7.

### **The Executive recommends to Full Council:**

- 2.2 To resolve, subject to consideration of the matters set out in this Report, to make a Compulsory Purchase Order pursuant to powers under section 17 of the Housing Act 1985 and section 13 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 and all other enabling powers as deemed necessary for the acquisition of the private properties in Phases B – D and any new rights for the purposes of securing both a quantitative and qualitative gain in housing by the delivery of the comprehensive redevelopment of the Woolaway properties on the land.
- 2.3 To delegate authority of all matter relating to this CPO activity to the Director of Housing and Communities in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Section 151 Officer. Matters include:
  - 2.3.1 To take all steps to secure the making, confirmation and implementation of the Compulsory Purchase Order ("Order") including the publication and service of all notices and the promotion of the council's case at any written representations procedure, public hearing or public inquiry.
  - 2.3.2 To approve the draft Statement of Reasons for making the Compulsory Purchase Order as set out in Appendix 3 in consultation with the Solicitors acting for the Council.
  - 2.3.3 To amend the Statement of Reasons referred to in paragraph 2.3.2 above as required in consultation with the Solicitors acting for the Council.
  - 2.3.4 To make any amendments, deletions or additions to the land identified in this Report to be subject to the Order ("Order Land") as to include and describe all interests in land and rights required to facilitate the carrying out of the redevelopment and regeneration of the Project and surrounding area;
  - 2.3.5 To identify and acquire interests and new rights required to facilitate delivery of the redevelopment and regeneration of the Project and surrounding area

either by agreement or compulsorily pursuant to the Order (including pursuant to any blight notices as appropriate) including conduct of negotiations and making provision for the payment of compensation;

2.3.6 To negotiate, agree terms and enter into agreements with interested parties including agreements for the withdrawal of blight notices and/or the withdrawal of objections to the Order and/or undertakings not to enforce the Order on specified terms, including where appropriate removing land or rights from the Order, making provision for the payment of compensation and/or relocation;

2.3.7 If the Order is confirmed by the Secretary of State, to advertise and give notice of confirmation and thereafter to take all steps to implement the Order including, executing General Vesting Declarations and/or to serve Notices to Treat and Notices of Entry in respect of the acquisition of interests in and rights over the Order Land;

2.3.8 To take all steps in relation to any legal proceedings relating to the Order including defending or settling claims referred to the Lands Tribunal and/or applications to the courts and any appeals; and

2.3.9 To retain and/or appoint external professional advisers and consultants to assist in facilitating the promotion, confirmation and implementation of the Order, the settlement of compensation and any other claims or disputes.

2.4 To approve the service of a Final Demolition Notice and the demolition of the buildings and structures in Phase B and C(i) as shown in Appendix 2.

### 3 Risk Assessment

3.1 A risk assessment can be found at Confidential Appendix 6 however the main risks in relation to vacant possession are set out in Table 1 below:

**Table 1: Main Scheme Risks**

Risk	Score out of 25 based on probability x impact	Mitigation
SWT fail to achieve the purchase of the remaining privately owned dwellings in NTWP phases B, C & D	10 (probability 2 x impact 5)	To date 15 of the 22 privately owned properties have been purchased and 2 properties are in final stages of negotiation. SWT provides an enhanced offer to owners to encourage purchase by mutual consent, the Council have introduced an equity share loan removing barriers to owners purchasing an alternative home from the market, the Council apply all statutory compensations as outlined in SWTs Decant Policy and in accordance with current legislation governing the use of Compulsory

		Purchase Orders under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) and the payment of compensation in accordance with the Land Compensation Act 1973 and the Planning and Compensation Act 1991. SWT resource the NTWP and staff are equipped to negotiate with private owners.
SWT fail to gain vacant possession of NTWP private dwellings in a timely manner.	8 (probability 2 x impact 4)	There remains one single private dwelling in Phase B, 2 in Phase Ci, one in Cii, none in Ciii and 3 in Phase D. SWT encourages negotiation with private owners at any time regardless of phase. The request to commence a CPO allows a parallel approach to gain vacant possession.
The CPO is contested	8 (probability 2 x impact 4)	A contested case could delay the progress of one or more phases. The impact of delays in the delivery of phases impacts on the potential contract costs (as the contractor will be less able to deliver contract efficiencies by remaining on site) and the Council's HRA account would extend the period of rent loss due to new homes not being let in a timely way.
SWT fail to be awarded possession of the dwellings through CPO activity.	5 (probability 1 x impact 5)	SWT believes the rationale for CPO activity is proportionate to allow much needed regeneration of the area and the required investment in the properties. SWT believe that there is a compelling case in the public interest. SWT has appointed expert advice to guide SWT through this process, SWT has involved residents over a long period of time in developing the regeneration plans and has appointed contractors to deliver a new offer in the area which reflects the consultation, SWT has followed policy when negotiating with private owners and has provided a generous offer to encourage private owners to sell by mutual agreement, The council has approved the funds to deliver the new scheme.

#### 4 Background and Full details of the Report

- 4.1 In February 2019 the Shadow Full Council approved the redevelopment of the North Taunton Woolaway Project area and approved the principle of using Compulsory Purchase Powers set out in Section 17 of the Housing Act 1985, should vacant possession not progress to acquire the properties under the regeneration initiative detailed in the Report. It delegating such decision making to the Executive.

- 4.2 The existing site comprises of 212 Woolaway homes of which the Council retain ownership of 162 and 45 have been purchased through the Right to Buy and are now in private ownership.
- 4.3 In total the Council have decanted eighty-three (83) out of the one hundred and sixty-seven (167) tenants and purchased fifteen (15) of the twenty-two (22) private homes within the Project area. A breakdown of the properties is set out below in Table 2:

**Table 2: Tenure of North Taunton Woolaway Project Area**

Phase	No. of Existing homes	No. of Tenants	No. of Private Home	No of Private homes left to purchase
Phase A	26	23	3	0
Phase B	22	21	1	1
Phase Ci	16	12	4	2
Phase Cii	18	17	1	1
Phase Ciii	22	20	2	0
Phase D	58	47	11	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>REFURBISHMENT ONLY</b>				
Phase E –	50	27	23	0 – none to purchase
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>7</b>

- 4.4 Detailed planning permission for Phase A has been granted. The Council's Planning Committee has resolved to grant outline planning permission for Phases B–E (in March 2019 and again in November 2019). Phase A will deliver 47 new social rented homes and a community facility. The outline planning permission for Phases B–E will deliver up to 180 new build Council homes and refurbish 27 existing Woolaway Council homes. The indicative scheme will provide a net increase of 65 affordable Council homes.
- 4.5 The Outline Planning Permission for the redevelopment of Phase B – E is being held pending phosphates mitigation. In the meantime, a full detailed planning application has been submitted for Phase B – D to ensure the development is not affected by the current phosphate mitigation delays as there is no increase in housing numbers. A separate planning application for the refurbishment of SWT properties in Phase E will be submitted.
- 4.6 The purchase of a private dwelling within Phase B has been agreed and details contained in confidential Appendix 7. The detail is confidential under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, namely information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). The purchase of this property is strategic to the regeneration scheme. The other alternative would be purchase using a Compulsory Purchase Order but this would have an adverse effect on the Project due to the timescales

involved. Further, the owner is willing to sell which would mean the use of CPO powers would not be a last resort (one of the requirements of guidance on the use of CPO powers). The budget for purchasing private properties within phases B-D was agreed by Council 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2019 and 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2020.

#### 4.7 **NTWP Update**

4.9 The contract for the construction of Phase A has been signed and Engie took possession of the site on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021. The programme is on track with the site set up complete and Welfare Offices are situated in Durham Place. The enabling groundworks have been completed and the new road in Wells Close installed, foundations have been poured in Bodmin Road. Site signage is being installed.

4.10 The Project is currently in five phases, A – E with delegation to the Director of Housing and Communities and the Portfolio Holder for Housing granted on 3 December 2020 to agree the timely decanting of Phases C - E. Table 3 (4.11) is an indicative timeline for the five phases, however once the sequence of refurbishment is known Phase E will be sub divided into smaller phases to allow timely decanting in line with the required refurbishment sequence.

4.11 Phase C has been sub divided to enable the development of M4(3) adapted properties to ensure vulnerable tenants only have to decant once.

#### 4.12 **Table 3: Indicative Timeline by Phases**

<b>Phase</b>	<b>Estimated Date of Decanting Priority</b>	<b>Estimated Start on site</b>	<b>Estimated Practical completion</b>
A	Complete	<b>ACTUAL</b> February 2020 – Hoarding July 2020 – demolition June 2021 - construction	June / July 2023
B	<b>ACTUAL</b> December 2020	Apr 2022	July /August 2023
C(i)	October/November 2021	May 2022	December 2023
C(ii)	March 2022	August 2023	July 2025
C (iii)	June 2022	Sept 2023	April 2026
*D	January 2024	February 2025	November 2027



E	Phased Comprehensive Refurbishment	November 2021	**November 2025
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*\*Estimated as pending outcome of phosphate mitigation.*

*\*\*Refurbishment could run into Phase D timeline depending on the number of owner occupiers who wish to participate.*

- 4.13 Negotiations are continuing to purchase the remaining private properties which are not held in Council ownership. It is the aim of the Council to make sure all private owners are made suitable offers based on their requirements and within a reasonable timescale to enable the regeneration works to proceed. The remaining private owners are being advised of the revised phasing schedule and being encouraged to enter into negotiations to sell their homes by mutual agreement to the Council.
- 4.14 Negotiations are entered into sensitively and taking each individual owner's circumstances into account. Owners may be given assistance to find alternative accommodation, the options available to them are dependent on their individual circumstances and the equity available to them. Where an owner agrees to sell their property to the Council, the Council will offer support with the process to help the owner to purchase their new home. In addition to the Home Loss Payment and Disturbance Compensation, the Council can provide additional financial assistance to owner/occupiers looking to purchase a new home. The Council operates an equity loan scheme which can be made available to qualifying households to provide financial assistance to help an owner/occupier purchase an alternative property. Additional services are offered for any vulnerable private owner such as assisted packing service and reinstallation of any disabled adaptations.
- 4.15 Under Homefinder Somerset policy, a home owner who has significant difficulties in meeting their ongoing housing need through their own means, can apply for rehousing. The home owner's application will be considered against the eligibility criteria for Council housing.
- 4.16 To ensure the redevelopment of the Project can be guaranteed within the timeframes set out above in Table 3, it is necessary for authority to be obtained for a Compulsory Purchase Order to enable the acquisition by the Council of any remaining properties.
- 4.17 Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO)**
- 4.18 If the Council pursues a CPO, then subject to the projected dates for the phases to obtain planning permission it should incorporate into the CPO all interests it believes it will need to complete the whole development.
- 4.19 Whilst there is no absolute legal bar to making a CPO without having planning permission in place, the lack of planning permission is considered to be an impediment to delivery. It is therefore recommended that, at the latest, planning permission is in place by the time of any consideration of the Secretary of State as to whether to confirm the Order. If it is not, then the Council will need to show that there is no reason that it is aware of as to why planning permission should not be granted.

4.20 If a CPO is confirmed over future phases, the Council does not have to exercise it if it is no longer needed (for example because negotiations eventually lead to a negotiated settlement). Negotiations can continue and provided they move in the right direction the CPO may not be needed. However, national guidance on CPO in the form of ‘Guidance on compulsory purchase process and the Crichel Down Rules’ (MHCLG, July 2019) (‘the Guidance’) recognises the benefit of beginning the CPO process and securing a CPO even if in slightly speculative circumstances in terms of its use.

*“Compulsory purchase is intended as a last resort to secure the assembly of all the land needed for the implementation of projects. However, if an acquiring authority waits for negotiations to break down before starting the compulsory purchase process, valuable time will be lost. Therefore, depending on when the land is required, it may often be sensible, given the amount of time required to complete the compulsory purchase process, for the acquiring authority to:*

- *plan a compulsory purchase timetable as a contingency measure; and*
- *initiate formal procedures This will also help to make the seriousness of the authority’s intentions clear from the outset, which in turn might encourage those whose land is affected to enter more readily into meaningful negotiations.”*

There is therefore recognition that the CPO process can be begun as a contingency measure.

#### **4.21 Factors for Granting CPO**

4.22 The Shadow Council resolved to support in principle the use of CPO powers, with further decision making delegated to the Executive. That in principle decision did not consider in full the various tests and requirements that need to be met to secure a confirmed CPO. In general terms, before pursuing a CPO, the Council should consider the case for using the powers, and then those matters which the Secretary of State will wish to be satisfied of before confirming a CPO. The issues include:

:

- What power will it use.
- How is the particular power used justified in these circumstances?
- The general requirements for using CPO powers, including whether there is a compelling case in the public interest;
- What land and interests are required, and do any rights need to be created?
- The relevant power for the compulsory acquisition of land or buildings for the provision of housing requires a qualitative or quantitative gain;
- the scheme should be deliverable and have funding in place for such delivery;
- there should be no impediments (other than the need for a CPO) to delivery of the scheme.

4.23 The draft Statement of Reasons appended to this Report addresses each of the above in full. Brief detail on each is included in the following paragraphs.

#### **4.24 What power should be used**

- 4.25 The in principle resolution already identifies the most appropriate power that can be used in this case, which is section 17 of the Housing Act 1985 which allows an authority to acquire land, houses or other properties for the provision of housing accommodation. There must be a qualitative or quantitative gain (the gain of one dwelling is sufficient). The draft Statement of Reasons expands on the remit of this power.
- 4.26 How is the particular power used justified in these circumstances, including there is a compelling case in the public interest.**
- 4.27 The Guidance sets out what information must be compiled by way of evidence regarding the need for further housing accommodation. This includes matters such as: the total number of dwellings in the district; the total number of substandard dwellings, the total number of households for which provision needs to be made, and information on the authority's housing stock. This information set out in the Statement of Reasons – the document that justifies the use of CPO powers.
- 4.28 Note also that the Guidance provides that for housing development acquisitions, the CPO will not be confirmed unless the land is likely to be required within 10 years from when the CPO is confirmed. In this case the land will be required within 10 years.
- 4.29 The draft Statement of Reasons for making the Compulsory Purchase Order at set out in Appendix 3. This will be amended as appropriate by the Solicitor acting for the Council in accordance with the recommendations above.
- 4.30 The general requirements for using CPO powers, including whether there is a compelling case in the public interest.**
- 4.31 Putting aside the specific Housing Act requirements, there are also a series of general tests or requirements that the Secretary of State will consider when deciding whether to confirm a CPO. These are set out in the Guidance under Tier 1 General Overview.
- 4.32 The first is that the Council should only use its CPO powers when there is a compelling case in the public interest. Satisfying that includes demonstrating that all reasonable steps have been taken to acquire the interests by agreement. The compelling case test also requires the Council to consider interference with human rights (in particular the Article 1 right to peaceful enjoyment of possessions and the Article 8 right to respect for private and family life and home) and whether that is justified. It must also carry out an equality impact assessment (or similar), to show that it has taken into account the public sector equality duty.
- 4.33 Other considerations are:
- Does the Council have a clear idea of how it intends to use the land and interests acquired? In this case, given the ongoing development and the existence of planning permission and planning applications, this would not be difficult to satisfy; and
  - Are all necessary resources available within a reasonable timeframe? Again, given the progress of the development this should not be difficult to demonstrate, though it is

always crucial to show that a scheme has funding (which in turn helps show deliverability).

#### **4.34 Are there any impediments to delivery**

4.35 It is important to demonstrate that should a CPO be confirmed and the Council use those powers, that there is no reason thereafter why the scheme should not go ahead, i.e. there are no impediments. Examples of impediments include the need to obtain planning permission, highway diversions or closures, habitat licenses, etc.

4.36 Planning is in place to an extent, but the outline planning application for the phases after Phase A is yet to be granted despite benefitting from a resolution to approve due to the phosphate mitigation.

4.37 A new detailed planning application has been submitted for Phases B – D which does not increase housing numbers and should not be affected by the phosphate mitigation. Before starting a CPO process a review would need to take place to consider what matters might need to be settled before a spade can go into the ground on the relevant phase, and whether those can be seen as impediments to delivery.

4.38 As above, it is not an absolute requirement, and a CPO can be made without a planning permission in place, but justifying the CPO with a planning permission granted by the time of an inquiry (or by the time the Secretary of State considers the CPO) significantly de-risks the process and it is not recommended to seek the confirmation of a CPO without planning permission.

#### **4.39 What land and interests are required, and do any rights need to be created.**

4.40 A detailed exercise of scoping what land and rights are needed for the development is current being carried out, albeit in this case there is a relatively limited number of properties outstanding. New rights, such as crane oversailing, would need to be considered, and indeed any other rights felt necessary for the development to be delivered.

#### **4.41 Timescale**

4.42 It is difficult to accurately predict how long the CPO process will take, from start to vesting of title in the Council. Please refer to Appendix 4 which estimates a period of 8 months should there be no need for a public inquiry, and 15 months if an inquiry is required.

4.43 The table shows the specific steps and time periods for each so overall timescales can be extrapolated.

4.44 It concludes that if no public inquiry is needed and assuming the preparation process begins in earnest in October 2021, the process from starting to vesting title in the Council would be circa 8 months (to June 2022), and with a public inquiry circa 15 months (to January 2023). Note that 3 months (minimum) of this are the post confirmation steps. Even with a confirmed CPO, that period is required to allow the challenge period to expire and allow for the relevant notice periods.

- 4.45 The period of 8 months could be shortened, in the sense that it assumes that some work needs to be done before objections are withdrawn and that period is unknown. However, any time saving at that time is likely to be limited.
- 4.46 The Phase C properties in Phase Ci in the new phasing plan (meaning it is required by May 2022), then if a CPO is not contested it could be acquired in time. However, if contested our estimate is January 2023. Whilst time savings could possibly be made, it is noted that CPOs tend to take longer than expected, rather than be quicker. The Phase C (ii) and Phase D properties (start on site August 2021 and February 2025) do not pose a problem timing wise.
- 4.47 If a CPO that includes the Property (Phase B) is objected to and objections are not negotiated away, the inquiry process begins and the timescale to secure title is pushed out to January 2023. That would mean the deadlines for securing any property in Phase Ci would also be difficult to meet.
- 4.48 For phases Cii onwards, even if a CPO is contested and an inquiry held, we would expect that process to be completed circa January 2023, which would be before the time those properties are needed.
- 4.49 Once a CPO is confirmed:
- the time it takes to secure ownership of the land acquired is now relatively fixed.
  - a legal challenge period of 6 weeks will begin.

## 5. Links to Corporate Strategy

- 5.1 The scheme compliments the Council's Corporate Strategy 2020 - 2024 - Homes and Communities – to offer a choice of good quality homes for our residents, whatever their age and income, in communities where support is available for those in need.
- 5.2 The Project significantly increases the number of affordable and social homes in Taunton and will be built by the Council including a range of housing types to cater for single person, family, vulnerable and elderly households.
- 5.3 The Council's Housing Revenue Account Business Plan sets out the financial model for the Housing Service over a 30 year period. The Council has agreed a number of priorities in its updated Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan 2020-2050, which are included in the vision statement "*Great Homes for Local Communities*" that accompanies the business plan ('the **Action Plan**'). Its overarching mission statement is: "*Our homes will be safe and secure and we will build many more in which our tenants will thrive. To do this we will develop a great team to provide excellent and modern services...*" The Project compliments these strategy objectives;
- 5.4 **Deliver more new homes** – including a commitment that the Council will deliver 1000 new homes over the next 30 years; build new homes that help combat climate change; and implement exemplar regeneration in North Taunton (including the Scheme). The Action Plan also explains that when having their community regenerated, customers will have the opportunity to relocate or move back into new homes that will be more

comfortable and cheaper to run.

5.5 **Provide great customer service** – the Council is committed to ensuring that the voices of their customers are heard and they influence the services offered, and also to improving how customers are kept up to date on what is happening.

5.6 **Improve our existing homes and neighbourhoods** – the Council will continue to invest in the safety of its homes, investigate ways to increase investment in the energy efficiency of its stock, and look after the Council's estates. This will mean customers can expect: to live in good quality homes where they feel safe, warm, and secure and where they can thrive; that their communities can be attractive places to live, work and stay; and to live in homes that are cheaper to run and that reduce environmental impacts.

5.7 Engaging and listening to our residents has been the primary driver and embedded in the Project principles established at the initiation of this project. The key Project principles are:-

5.7.1 Existing SWT residents within the scheme will be given the opportunity to remain on a social rent level.

5.7.2 Existing SWT residents within the scheme will be supported to downsize through the scheme design but retain the right to return to an equivalent size property within the new scheme.

5.7.3 The Project is underpinned by the SWT development aspirations and provide new, high quality and energy efficient homes.

5.7.4 The new development compliments The Vision for Taunton as a Garden Town, specifically the themes:

5.7.5 Growing our town greener – quality of the environment. The scheme incorporates green spaces and play spaces and provides more street trees.

5.7.6 Growing Quality Places – quality of our places and neighbourhoods. The design of the scheme focuses on places and spaces with high quality homes, green streets and public spaces. The homes will be energy efficient and aim to incorporate sustainable technologies.

## 6. **Unitary Authority Considerations**

6.1 The Report has reflected on the potential consequences of the impact of unitary authority status when considering its recommendations. The following statements provide comfort that the recommendations of the Report are appropriate:

- The increased supply of affordable housing is a district priority and a Somerset wide priority. This is evidenced in the Somerset wide Housing Strategy and through the demand recorded through the Somerset wide Homefinder Somerset lettings system.
- The HRA Business Plan is a thirty (30) year Business Plan approved in February and set out an ambition to build homes to increase the supply of

affordable homes in the district and in the county. The HRA Business Plan is ring fenced and therefore applies HRA rules and the Council's HRA Business Plan discipline.

- The four District authorities have different structures to manage their housing responsibilities including stock transfer organisations, ALMO and SWT has retained its stock. It is difficult at this moment to make assumptions of how a unitary authority(s) would manage its housing duties or the emphasis it would place on new development. We therefore consider the Business Plan is a relevant guide to support the Council's decision making.
- All authorities within the unitary proposal are subject to the government climate change policies and targets including net carbon zero by 2050.

## **7. Finance / Resource Implications**

- 7.1 Please see Confidential Appendix 7 regarding the purchase of the Phase B property.
- 7.2 The cost of staff time will be met from existing resources or charged to the capital scheme as appropriate.

## **8. Legal implications**

- 7.1 Statutory Home Loss and Disturbance Payments will be made in line with legislative guidance and the North Taunton Woolaway Decant Policy. As properties are anticipated to be purchased under, or 'under the threat of' the exercise of CPO powers there is scope for utilisation of the HMG guidance on compensation payments.
- 7.2 Whilst the Council intends to work closely with each household and seek agreement to achieve vacant possession in the event an acceptable agreement cannot be sought the contingency of a CPO is beneficial. In recommending the making of a CPO the rights of third parties that may be affected (including the property rights of the current property owners of the sites) have been balanced against the public interest in acquiring the land.
- 7.3 It is recommended that the Council can be satisfied that the proposed CPO is necessary and proportionate having regard to the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 and is in the public interest having regard to the both the need to provide good quality, energy efficient homes in areas where people wish to reside now and in the future and the need to regenerate the Project area.
- 7.3 If vacant possession cannot be provided to a contractor by the long stop date in the build contract, the Council will be at risk of litigation for specific performance under the contract and this will potentially have associated financial implications.
- 7.4 Section 11 (6) of the Local Government Act 2003 relates to the Council's ability to retain and use Right to Buy receipts to fund affordable housing.

## **8. Climate and Sustainability Implications**

- 8.1 New build homes will be constructed to a minimum of Part L of the Building Regulations which will substantially improve the thermal performance of the dwellings

compared to the existing dwellings. In addition, the contracted specification for phase A has increased insulation, air tightness and reduced cold bridging. The units will also have Air Source Heat Pumps, PV, Batteries, and water reduction measures. The properties will have no gas and are zero carbon 2050 ready. The carbon and fuel efficiency is 12 times better than the Woolaway homes being demolished. On the first let carbon saving and tenant fuel costs are anticipated to be 70%-80% less than current Woolaway homes.

- 8.2 The new development has been designed to take advantage of biodiversity opportunities in the neighbourhood such as planting trees and creating a new public open space.
- 8.3 The Project has enabled the Council to embrace and design a new garden community to incorporate the Garden Town Principles and safeguard the natural environment, providing areas of planting and open space whilst ensuring residents have access to suitable homes and facilities.
- 8.4 Phosphates and housing development within the hydrological catchment of the Somerset Levels and Moors Ramsar Site - This scheme falls within the water catchment area of the Somerset Levels and Moors Ramsar Site. The new planning application for Phases B, C and demolition of Phase D assumes a mitigation strategy is not required. However, a mitigation strategy is required to build homes in phase D and the HRA and council are exploring options for mitigation. Phase D planning permission is not required until 2025 which allows significant time for a phosphate mitigation strategy to be agreed.

## 9. **Safeguarding and/or Community Safety Implications**

- 9.1 Through the design of the Project, tenants and residents will feel safe in the public realm and feelings of safety and security in the home due to the adoption of crime prevention measures in the new development.
- 9.2 Consultation with Police and other statutory authorities has already been undertaken as part of the planning application process. No implications arose thanks to the meticulous design and resident consultation that was undertaken to achieve planning permission.

## 10. **Equality and Diversity Implications**

- 10.1 An Equality Impact Assessment was first undertaken in relation to the regeneration of the Project in February 2019 (Appendix 5). That assessment concluded that there would either be a positive or neutral effect on any protected groups.
- 10.2 An Equality Impact Assessment ("EIA") has been undertaken to assess the impact on any protected groups of the making of a Compulsory Purchase Order and implementation of the Development, in line with the Equality Act 2010. The assessment concludes that there would either be a positive or neutral effect on any protected groups. Please refer to Appendix 3 – draft Statement of Reasons.
- 10.3 The owners and occupiers of the remaining private homes within the Order Land are



likely to be the most affected by the Order. Three of these properties are investments and rented out to tenants. One owner/occupier of one property is considered to have protected characteristics but it is hoped that current negotiations can be concluded shortly to purchase this property by agreement.

10.4 In respect of the remaining three owner/occupied properties and the tenants of the investment properties, they are not considered or known to have any protected characteristics.

10.5 The public sector equalities duty is a continuing duty and the impacts on any protected groups will be kept under review should any new information come to light or circumstances change.

## 11. **Social Value Implications**

11.1 The resident consultation phase of the Project has delivered social value through providing the opportunity for residents to be actively involved in the scheme design process and provide valued and informed contributions.

11.2 Social Value formed part of the selection criteria for the procurement of Phase A main contractor and for future phases.

## 12. **Partnership Implications**

12.1 Any Project opportunities for partnership working with different organisations and agencies that enhance the benefits of the scheme will be explored as they arise. For example, NHS Talking Therapies and MIND have worked in partnership with us to provide a local presence for resident mental health and well-being. This has improved our tenant access to services, enabling them to receive support that they might not have otherwise accessed if not for the regeneration of the scheme.

## 13. **Health and Wellbeing Implications**

13.1 The Project as a whole has been designed to Nationally Described Space Standards to ensure properties are future-proofed and residents can benefit from some of the principles of lifetime homes and will contribute to the improve health and wellbeing of the residents.

13.2 Phase A includes a new community building to provide a focal point for local people to meet and enhance community spirit and interactions.

13.3 The new detailed Planning Application for Phases B–D illustrates the provision of public open space for community use which has been informed by public consultation.

## 14. **Asset Management Implications**

14.1 The Housing (HRA) Asset Management Strategy 2016 reflects the challenges the Council faces and improving its focus on value for money for the Council and for our residents:

- 14.1.1 To promote sustainable local communities through coordinated capital investment and housing management.
  - 14.1.2 To work closely with residents to ensure that their homes meet their needs and aspirations.
  - 14.1.3 To invest in stock, to achieve good quality and environmental standards and to ensure that all statutory obligations are met.
  - 14.1.4 To ensure that stock secures and strengthens the financial viability of the business plan and safeguards its long term future and the income stream it generates.
  - 14.1.5 Deliver Value for Money through targeting investment where it will have the best financial and social return.
  - 14.1.6 To carry out options appraisals on stock that does not meet the above criteria, exploring the widest range of alternative options to improve outcomes for residents and for our Business Plan.
  - 14.1.7 To deliver investment programmes in an effective way, achieving agreed quality and value for money.
- 14.2 Through the evaluation, the asset management model identified 4% of the total stock with an average Net Present Value which is negative. These were exclusively for the Council's Woolway constructed properties, reflecting the anticipated need for major works to these properties in the medium term.
- 14.3 The HRA Asset Strategy 2016 recognised the Woolway house type as the Council's lowest performing stock with a limited life expectancy and high future maintenance costs. Unless action is taken to address the structural defects, the properties will continue to deteriorate, increasing the problems of a poorly performing dwelling.
- 14.4 Providing new energy efficient, affordable homes with a range of property sizes will improve the living standards for residents to create a sustainable community of high quality homes. In addition, increasing the scheme density will generate greater income and make best use of the Council's assets.

## **15 Data Protection Implications**

- 15.1 All personal data is held in accordance with GDPR and Data Protection Act requirements.

## **16 Consultation Implications**

- 16.1 Community Engagement and supporting the residents affected by the scheme, have been at the forefront of the Project's ethos to regenerate the area.

16.2 Home owners have been consulted regarding the new detailed planning application for Phases B – D. Negotiations will continue with the remaining home owners to agree terms throughout the CPO process.

## 17 Scrutiny Comments / Recommendation(s)

17.1 The Report was considered by Community Scrutiny Committee on 28 October 2021. There was unanimous support for the measures outlined in this Report, but that the Community Scrutiny Committee highlighted and wished to feedback to the Executive especial concern for supporting individuals who unfortunately found themselves in these circumstances, notwithstanding the fact this was felt to be largely a precautionary measure and it was hoped that the Council would ultimately do the right thing when faced with such a situation.

### Democratic Path:

- **Scrutiny / Corporate Governance or Audit Committees – Yes / No** (delete as appropriate) **28 October 2021**
- **Cabinet/Executive – Yes / No** (delete as appropriate) **17 November 2021**
- **Full Council – Yes / No** (delete as appropriate) **7 December 2021**

Reporting Frequency:  Once only

### List of Appendices (delete if not applicable)

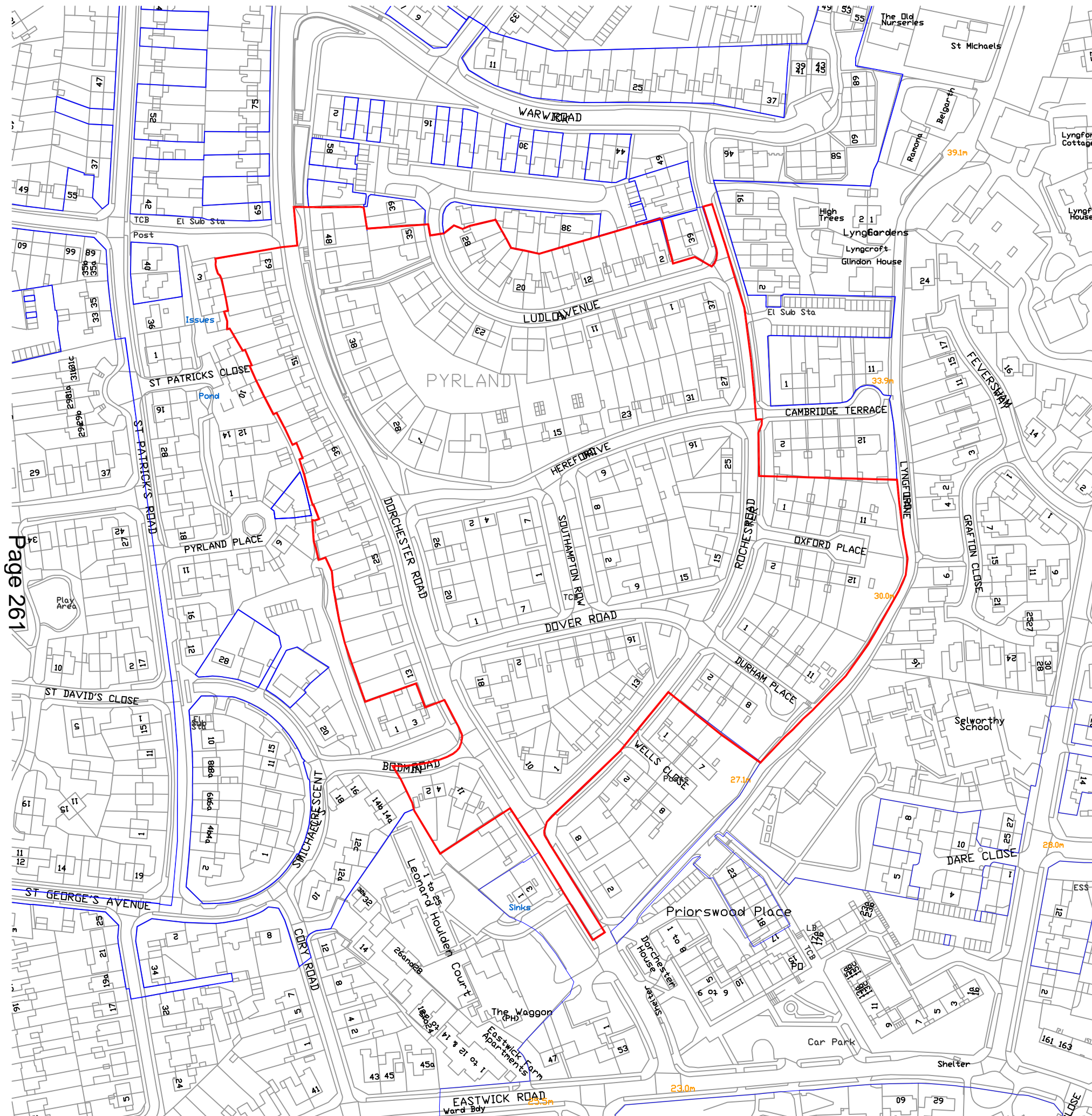
Appendix 1	Plan of NTWP CPO area
Appendix 2	Phasing Plan for NTWP
Appendix 3	<b>CONFIDENTIAL</b> CPO - Statement of Reasons
Appendix 4	CPO - Timescales
Appendix 5	Equality Impact Assessment October 2021
Appendix 6	<b>CONFIDENTIAL</b> Risk Assessment
Appendix 7	<b>CONFIDENTIAL</b> Purchase of private residential properties

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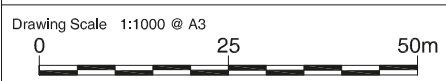
— Site

— TDBC Ownership

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Rev.	Date	Notes	Int.
A	06.11.18	Draft Application Issue	LM
B	11.12.18	Outline Planning	LM

CDM Regulations  
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**PRELIMINARY**

Job Number	Drawing Number	Revision
17025	L005	B

Project  
North Taunton Woolaway Project

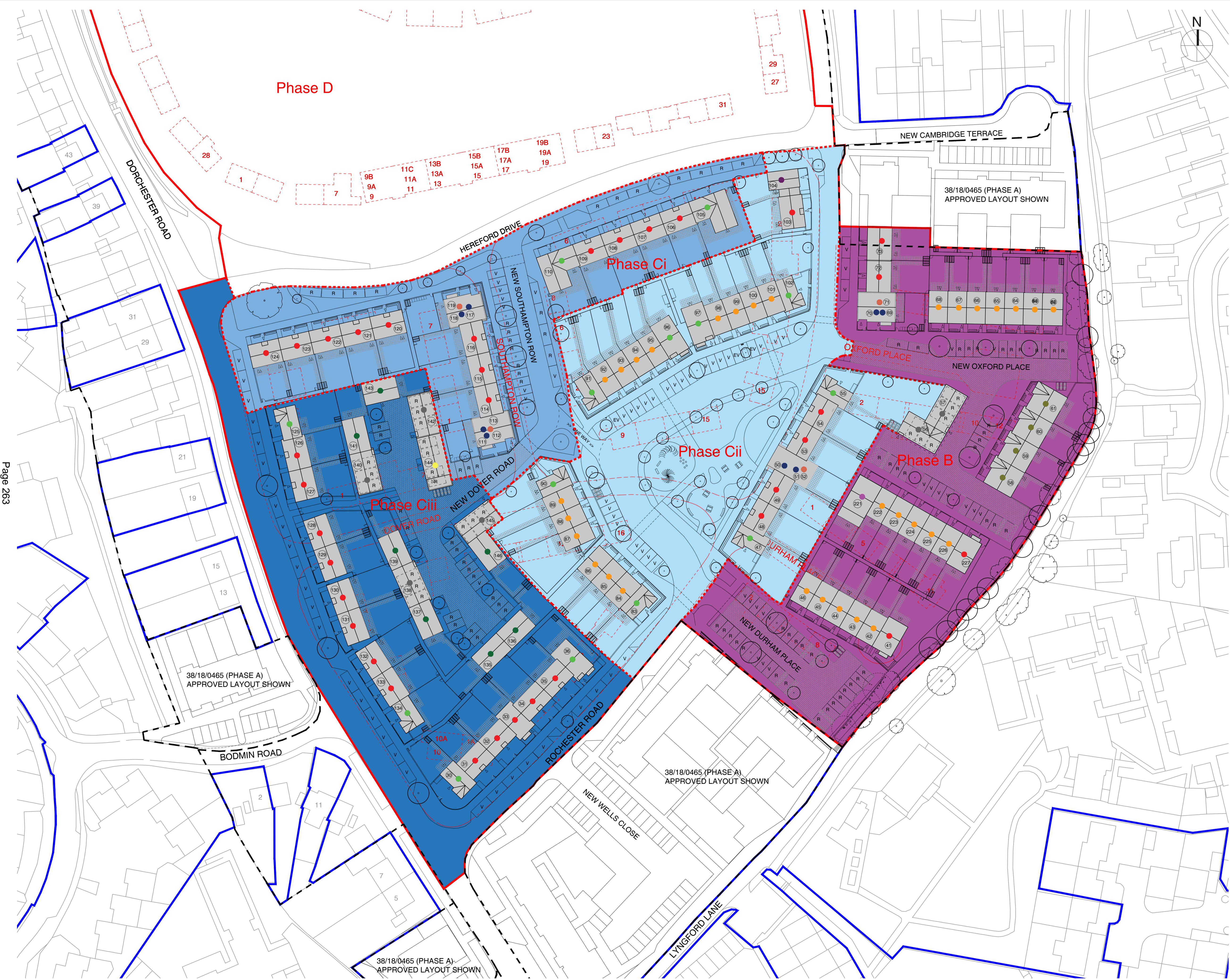
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Existing Site Plan

Drawn by	Project Manager
LM	AT

Scale	Date created
1:2000 @ A3	06.11.18







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Rev.	Date	Notes	Int.
1	30.06.21	For Planning	RB

CDM Regulations  
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File Name: 20060-NP-02-XX-DR-A-1205

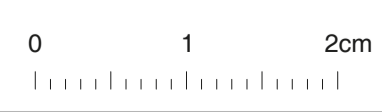
**FOR PLANNING**

Job Number	Originator	Zone	Level
20060	NP	02	XX
Type	Role	Drawing Number	Revision
DR	A	1205	1

Project  
North Taunton Woolaway Project

Title  
Phases BCD  
Proposed Sub-phasing 1 to 500

Drawn by	Project Manager	Scale
RB	PM	1:500 @ A1







By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted



**Key stages and timescales in relation to the compulsory purchase of land – Woolaway Project**

Scope of work	Projected timescale for completion
<b>Start of CPO preparation in earnest (December 2021)<sup>1</sup></b>	
Service of request for information (RFI) notices	December 2021  RFI notices must give recipients 14 days to respond
Collating and review of existing title information into table format to produce CPO schedule, and production of CPO plot plans	December 2021 - January 2022
Finalising statement of reasons (SoR) and preparing and reviewing first draft CPO documents (order, schedule and plans)	December 2021 – January 2022
Gathering and collating of supporting documents to be submitted to PCU and placed on deposit once CPO made, and drafting statutory certificates to be submitted with the CPO.	December 2021  This can also take place while RFI responses are awaited
Review of final form CPO documents and SoR once RFI responses received.	January 2022
Submission of draft CPO papers to Planning Casework Unit (PCU) for checking pre formal submission (a technical check encouraged by guidance).	February 2022  Estimated turnaround by Planning Casework Unit of about 2 weeks
Preparing notice of making of the CPO for publication in local newspapers (which is also the site notice) and notices for service upon those with an interest in the CPO land, including cover letters.	February 2022

<sup>1</sup> Note: we have assumed these workstreams beginning in earnest once final approval is obtained from Full Council

Scope of work	Projected timescale for completion
Making of the CPO (by application of the Council's seal) followed by service of CPO notices, erecting of site notices and putting notices in local newspapers.	February - March 2022  The newspaper notice must be published in two successive weeks  Objection period of 21 days runs from date of first publication of notice
Expiry of objection period	March – April 2022
<b>SCENARIO 1: CONFIRMATION BY THE COUNCIL - NO PUBLIC INQUIRY<sup>2</sup></b>	
Liaison with objectors with a view to closing deals to have objectors withdrawn. Deals to be conditional on them writing a pro forma letter to PINS <sup>3</sup> withdrawing their objection.  Particular focus on statutory undertaker objections if they are affected.	From February - March 2022 onwards (up to withdrawal of objection).
Preparation of statement of case, including letters of service, and collating additional supporting documents <sup>4</sup>	March - April 2022  The statement of case must be submitted within 6 weeks of start date letter from PINS.
Liaison with PINS regarding authorisation to confirm order as unopposed, and confirmation then authorised by Secretary of State. This will occur if we secure deals with all outstanding objectors.	Assume that by end <b>April 2022</b> we have secured deals for the outstanding interests, for the sake of this scenario.
<b>SCENARIO 2: IF OBJECTIONS RECEIVED AND NOT WITHDRAWN – PUBLIC INQUIRY<sup>5</sup></b>	

<sup>2</sup> If no objections at all are received, confirmation by the Council can occur as soon as the PCU issues authorisation (about two weeks usually).

<sup>3</sup> Note the Planning Casework Unit (PCU) hands the matter over to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS)

<sup>4</sup> Note if objections are not withdrawn quickly, we have to continue with the statutory procedures which require a statement of case to be prepared 6 weeks from receipt of the "start date" letter from PINS (which arrives relatively shortly after the end of the objection period)

<sup>5</sup> Other procedures are now available including hearings, but most CPOs are dealt with by public inquiry.

Scope of work	Projected timescale for completion	
Consideration of issues raised in the objections, and negotiations with objectors for withdrawal.	March/April 2022 – date of inquiry	
Preparation of statement of case, including letters of service, and collating additional supporting documents	March - April 2022 The statement of case must be submitted within 6 weeks of start date letter from PINS.	
Inquiry preparation including instructing Counsel, conferences with Counsel and preparation and service of evidence	March/April 2022 – date of inquiry	
Public inquiry  Inquiries must now be held with 22 weeks of 'relevant date', which is in a letter to be issued by SoS at the start of the process.	Entirely dependant on inspector availability, but assume July 2022	
Secretary of State's decision	October 2022	
<b>ACQUISITION OF INTERESTS SUBJECT TO THE CPO (IE POST CPO CONFIRMATION)</b>		
	<b>Scenario 1: No inquiry</b>	<b>Scenario 2: Inquiry</b>
Preparation of newspaper confirmation notice, site notice and notice to be served on those with interests in the land subject to the CPO, and service of same.  A 6 week legal challenge applies. This schedule assumes no further steps are taken until that period has passed. However, it can run alongside the next stage.	May 2022  Assuming we had to deal with some objectors and to allow for notice period.	October 2022

Scope of work	Projected timescale for completion	
<p>Drafting and execution of general vesting declaration and notice of same, and service of same.</p> <p>From service of the notice of the GVD, at least 3 months must pass before land vests.</p>	June 2022	January 2023
<p><u>Land subject to the GVD vests in the Council</u> – advice in relation to registration and/or transfer of land/granting of rights once vested in the Council.</p> <p>Note: there may be outstanding compensation disputes, but those does not impact on Council's ability to vest legal title in itself.</p>	September 2022	April 2023

**Summary**

Total estimated time to complete the CPO process and vest land in the Council assuming no public inquiry <sup>6</sup>	Total estimated time to complete the CPO process and vest land in Council assuming public inquiry
9 Months	16 months

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<sup>6</sup> Note: as per the schedule this assumes some delay caused by objections needing to be negotiated away. If no objections are submitted, because all deals have been done, then this period will be 2 months or so shorter.

# Somerset Equality Impact Assessment

Before completing this EIA please ensure you have read the EIA guidance notes – available from your Equality Officer

<b>Organisation prepared for</b>	<b>Somerset West and Taunton Council</b>		
<b>Version</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Date Completed</b>	<b>19 October 2021</b>

## Description of what is being impact assessed

### North Taunton Woolaway Project (NTWP) - Compulsory Purchase Order and implementation of the Development in line with the Equality Act 2010

The NTWP will make a significant contribution toward delivering quality housing to meet the needs of SWT residents. The Project will provide a significant contribution towards:

- Resolving severe structural matters in relation to 162 defective Woolaway Homes through demolition and replacement with up to 230 new low carbon homes and 27 defective Woolaway properties with better insulated and structurally sound refurbished homes.
- Affordable Housing supply; with 227 – 230 new homes for rent
- Healthier homes and community; well-designed green space and road layout and efficient to heat homes
- Low carbon homes; a significant step toward zero carbon with a fabric first approach and a fund for renewable heat and power
- Accessible housing; a major contribution towards meeting the councils demand for wheelchair accessible homes
- Garden Town; the scheme adopts many principles of the Garden town design guide
- Larger accommodation; national space standards have been maintained throughout the scheme including the design of larger family accommodation (4 / 5 bed).
- The community building and open space will be accessible for all groups in the community reflecting the diversity of the local population, helping to bring people together and foster good relations between different groups.

## Evidence

**What data/information have you used to assess how this policy/service might impact on protected groups?** Sources such as the [Office of National Statistics](#), [Somerset Intelligence Partnership](#), [Somerset's Joint Strategic Needs Analysis \(JSNA\)](#), Staff and/ or [area profiles](#),, should be detailed here

Through the extensive resident consultation undertaken, a detailed understanding and demographic profile of the existing community and its potential future needs has been created.

The consultation in 2018 included four public consultation events in a venue selected for its close proximity and accessibility to the affected residents, the opportunity for home visits from the project team alongside the project team being based in an office hub to provide a 'drop in' facility for the residents.

The scheme proposals have evolved in consultation with a project Design Group. The Design Group consisted of residents, both SWT tenants and homeowners, with a range of housing and lifestyle requirements.

In addition to information gathered through the resident consultation, the community profile has been further populated through information held by the Somerset Intelligence Partnership, specifically the area Indices of Multiple Deprivation results.

Housing needs have been further informed by data held within the Choice Based Lettings System 'Homefinder Somerset'.

All affected home owners have been contacted during the consultation phase and kept up to date with the project progress and phasing plans via newsletters, letters and meetings. Negotiations are preferred option and will continue throughout the CPO process.

**Who have you consulted with to assess possible impact on protected groups?** If you have not consulted other people, please explain why?

The demographic profiles includes every single household within the projects redline area. The information gathered, particularly through 1-2-1 home visits included completing questionnaires to help identify vulnerable and protected groups.

The project team have worked across a range of agencies and partners within the Priorswood 'One Team' area.



To assist with Skills and Learning, Somerset Academy and Skills and Learning Council have been invited to discussions. The local primary school and doctors surgery have been provided with progress updates.

SWT Tenants Forum and Tenant Services Management Board have received regular feedback on the project and provided views and considerations.

SWT Ward Councillors have been briefed on the report requesting approval to progress the Compulsory Purchase Order.

### Analysis of impact on protected groups

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires us to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations with protected groups. Consider how this policy/service will achieve these aims. In the table below, using the evidence outlined above and your own understanding, detail what considerations and potential impacts against each of the three aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty. Based on this information, make an assessment of the likely outcome, before you have implemented any mitigation.

Protected group	Summary of impact	Negative outcome	Neutral outcome	Positive outcome
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The increased choice of affordable housing type, size and tenure provides housing options for all age groups.</li> <li>For rented properties Lettings will be taken from the choice based lettings system 'Homefinder Somerset' which has equality and diversity policies in place to ensure protected groups are not disadvantaged.</li> <li>For private owners there is choice of housing type, size, tenure and location that will not negatively impact on this protected group</li> </ul>	□	□	☒

<b>Disability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specific provision for a range of adapted properties has been made within the scheme proposal to provide a housing choice for those with a disability</li> <li>• For rented properties Lettings will be taken from the choice based lettings system 'Homefinder Somerset' which has equality and diversity policies in place to ensure protected groups are not disadvantaged.</li> <li>• For owner occupiers with disabled adaptations or aids, these will be replicated at their new homes and costs covered by the Disbursement Compensation as set out in the Compulsory Purchase and Compensation Guide (Compulsory Purchase and Compensation, Compensation Guide to Residential Owners and Occupiers: Communities and Local Government, April 2010)</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Gender reassignment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The increased choice of affordable housing type, size and tenure provides housing options that will not negatively impact on this protected group.</li> <li>• For rented properties Lettings will be taken from the choice based lettings system 'Homefinder Somerset' which has equality and diversity policies in place to ensure protected groups are not disadvantaged.</li> <li>• For private owners there is choice of housing type, size, tenure and location that will not negatively impact on this protected group</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

<b>Marriage and civil partnership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The increased choice of affordable housing type, size and tenure provides housing options that will not negatively impact on this protected group.</li> <li>• For rented properties Lettings will be taken from the choice based lettings system 'Homefinder Somerset' which has equality and diversity policies in place to ensure protected groups are not disadvantaged.</li> <li>• For private owners there is choice of housing type, size, tenure and location that will not negatively impact on this protected group.</li> </ul>	□	□	☒
<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The increased choice of affordable housing type, size and tenure provides housing options that will not negatively impact on this protected group.</li> <li>• For rented properties Lettings will be taken from the choice based lettings system 'Homefinder Somerset' which has equality and diversity policies in place to ensure protected groups are not disadvantaged.</li> <li>• For private owners there is choice of housing type, size, tenure and location that will not negatively impact on this protected group</li> </ul>	□	□	☒
<b>Race and ethnicity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The increased choice of affordable housing type, size and tenure provides housing options that will not negatively impact on this protected group.</li> <li>• For rented properties Lettings will be taken from the choice based lettings system 'Homefinder Somerset' which has</li> </ul>	□	□	☒

	<p>equality and diversity policies in place to ensure protected groups are not disadvantaged.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For private owners there is choice of housing type, size, tenure and location that will not negatively impact on this protected group</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Religion or belief</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The increased choice of affordable housing type, size and tenure provides housing options that will not negatively impact on this protected group.</li> <li>For rented properties Lettings will be taken from the choice based lettings system 'Homefinder Somerset' which has equality and diversity policies in place to ensure protected groups are not disadvantaged.</li> <li>For private owners there is choice of housing type, size, tenure and location that will not negatively impact on this protected group</li> </ul>	<p>□</p>	<p>□</p>	<p>☒</p>
<p><b>Sex</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The increased choice of affordable housing type, size and tenure provides housing options that will not negatively impact on this protected group.</li> <li>For rented properties Lettings will be taken from the choice based lettings system 'Homefinder Somerset' which has equality and diversity policies in place to ensure protected groups are not disadvantaged.</li> <li>For private owners there is choice of housing type, size, tenure and location that will not negatively impact on this protected group</li> </ul>	<p>□</p>	<p>□</p>	<p>☒</p>

<p><b>Sexual orientation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The increased choice of affordable housing type, size and tenure provides housing options that will not negatively impact on this protected group.</li> <li>• For rented properties Lettings will be taken from the choice based lettings system 'Homefinder Somerset' which has equality and diversity policies in place to ensure protected groups are not disadvantaged.</li> <li>• For private owners there is choice of housing type, size, tenure and location that will not negatively impact on this protected group</li> </ul>	<p>□</p>	<p>□</p>	<p>☒</p>
<p><b>Other, e.g. carers, veterans, homeless, low income, rurality/isolation, etc.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The increased choice of affordable housing type, size and tenure provides housing options that will not negatively impact on this protected group.</li> <li>• For rented properties Lettings will be taken from the choice based lettings system 'Homefinder Somerset' which has equality and diversity policies in place to ensure protected groups are not disadvantaged.</li> <li>• For private owners there is choice of housing type, size, tenure and location that will not negatively impact on this protected group</li> </ul>	<p>□</p>	<p>□</p>	<p>☒</p>

<b>Negative outcomes action plan</b>				
Where you have ascertained that there will potentially be negative outcomes, you are required to mitigate the impact of these. Please detail below the actions that you intend to take.				
<b>Action taken/to be taken</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Person responsible</b>	<b>How will it be monitored?</b>	<b>Action complete</b>
No adverse equality impact identified. These have been mitigated through an extensive resident consultation process and the resultant scheme design.  Any negative outcomes which may emerge during the implementation of the development will be addressed through strong project management and identifiable workstreams.	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>If negative impacts remain, please provide an explanation below.</b>				
<b>Completed by:</b>	Jane Windebank, Development Manager			
<b>Date</b>	19 October 2021			
<b>Signed off by:</b>				
<b>Date</b>				
<b>Equality Lead/Manager sign off date:</b>				

<b>To be reviewed by:</b> (officer name)	
<b>Review date:</b>	

DRAFT





By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted



# Somerset West and Taunton Council

## Executive - 17 November 2021

### Innovation District Report

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Marcus Kravis

**Report Author: Lisa Tuck, Service Manager – Economic Development, Growth, and Inclusion**

#### 1. Executive Summary / Purpose of the Report

- 1.1. This paper brings forward a recommendation from the Corporate Scrutiny Committee (3<sup>rd</sup> November 2021) to recommend to the Executive that;
  - 1.1.1. 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.
  - 1.1.2. The funding for this proposal is to be found within existing 2021/22 budgets where possible.
- 1.2. This report provides additional information relating to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee recommendation and proposes that the work already identified following the Education and Innovation Business Consultancy (EiBC) 'Developing the Innovation Ecosystem in Somerset West and Taunton – Framework for action' report is progressed.

#### 2. Recommendations

- 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.

#### 3. Risk Assessment

- 3.1. Additional funding to complete a feasibility study on an Innovation Hub based in Taunton is likely to significantly duplicate work of the recent feasibility study carried out by consultants on the potential for an innovation park or campus within the district.
- 3.2. The procurement of an additional feasibility study will inhibit the progress of the delivery of the Innovation District action plan and route map designed to provide short-, medium-, and long-term benefits for the district through the attraction of inward investment and economic growth.
- 3.3. There is a risk that the collective ongoing place shaping activity with business leaders, university centre, college, lodges and innovation leadership group will cease

until such a time it becomes a priority for the unitary council. This will impact on the reputation of the Council.

- 3.4. There is a risk that the momentum gained will be lost during an additional feasibility study and SWT will not be sufficiently prepared for upcoming Levelling up and Prosperity funding bids.

#### 4. Background

- 4.1. In November 2018, the Taunton Deane Borough Council (TDBC) Scrutiny Committee presented a paper to the TDBC Executive Committee from the Scrutiny Task and Finish Group 'Review into Affordable Employment Land' with the following recommendation:

- 4.1.1 Investigate the feasibility of an office for the creation of a Research and Innovation Centre: TDBC, and the subsequent Council, should undertake a prompt detailed feasibility study into the viability of such a centre. This needs to be enabled by appropriate TDBC resources, including officers, elected members and a dedicated office if appropriate. Effective use of appropriate partnership working is crucial to the success.

- 4.2. On 28th November 2018, the TDBC Executive noted the Task and Finish Groups Report and resolved the following:

- 4.2.1 Investigate the feasibility of an office for the creation of a Research and Innovation Centre:

- a) TDBC and the subsequent Council should undertake a prompt detailed feasibility study into the viability of such a centre.
- b) Effective use of appropriate partnership working was crucial to the success of such a venture.

- 4.3. An informal working group of Members and officers was established to take forward this action.

- 4.4. A scope of work was created as part of a suite of tender documents published during the procurement of a consultant (or consultants) to carry out the feasibility study (attached at Appendix A).

- 4.5. During scoping of the works in May 2020 the Portfolio Holder for Assets and Economic Development agreed to extend the scope of works from a single option feasibility study which **“assessed the extent of the market opportunity for developing an innovation park in Taunton”** to a multi option feasibility study **“A report which assesses and validates and/or develops and refines an initial concept or proposes an alternative concept for the development of an innovation/technology park and /or science park in our District”**.

- 4.6. The reasoning behind the decision to extend the scope of the contract is as follows:

- 4.6.1 From April 2019 the new Somerset West and Taunton Councils had responsibility for Economic Development and Growth across a wider geographical area including the former West Somerset area and that the

feasibility study should consider the opportunities, community benefits and land availability across the district.

- 4.6.2 The approach to widen the scope would reduce the risk, if a single option were found to be unfeasible, that the feasibility study would result in no other option to take forward.
- 4.6.3 The approach would ensure that the contract would produce a deliverable plan that could be taken forward at the end of the feasibility study which would produce immediate, medium-, and long-term positive impacts on the local economy.
- 4.6.4 The approach would ensure that the independent, experienced, and professional advice of consultants – considering a rapidly changing innovation environment, nationally tried and tested models, local, county, and national progress, and employment land availability across the district would provide a current and realistic option for the Council to take forward.
- 4.7. The contract was awarded to Education and Innovation Business Consultancy (EiBC) in July 2020.
- 4.8. In December 2020 EiBC produced a report that included the findings of the feasibility study (Appendix B – redacted in line with data protection regulations) and a summary report provided to Members and published on the SWT website.
- 4.9. Further information can be found in the report to Scrutiny, Innovation District Update, 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2021 (Appendix C).

## **5. Consideration of the recommendation to carry out a feasibility study for an Innovation Hub in Taunton.**

- 5.1. The results of the feasibility study completed by EiBC in November 2020 established that at this time there is no requirement for an Innovation campus or park in Taunton or within the district.
- 5.2. The recommendations within the EiBC feasibility study are aligned with ambition of the HoSW LEP to establish ‘technopole,’ ‘eco-systems’ and ‘networks’ across the region – linking already established hubs, businesses and organisations together.
- 5.3. The Digital Innovation Centre on Firepool is due to be occupied and operational in early 2023 acting as a hub in Taunton for Innovation. It should also be borne in mind that the Nexus site adjacent to the M5 has planning permission for employment use and provides space for a potential hub. This can be progressed without a further study.
- 5.4. In addition, commissioning is in progress of an overarching and shared support service for following Innovation Hubs in Somerset:
  - Somerset Energy Innovation Centre (Bridgwater)
  - Yeovil Innovation Centre
  - Taunton Digital Innovation Centre
- 5.5. The feasibility study completed by EiBC has considered the Innovation Hubs already established or in progress, including the Rutherford Diagnostics and Innovation Centre

and the private sector led Collar Factory innovation and collaboration space (opening spring 2022) in Taunton and focuses SWTs delivery on establishing a strong business and investor led 'eco-system' that would enable the attraction of inward investment, collaborative research and development and local growth across the district.

## **6. Links to Corporate Strategy**

- 6.1. Our Environment and Economy: "Encourage wealth creation and economic growth throughout the District by *attracting inward investment, enabling research and innovation, improving the skills of the local workforce* and seeking to *ensure the provision of adequate and affordable employment land* to meet different business needs."
- 6.2. SWT's Economic Development Strategy approved at Full Council in February 2020.

Encourage wealth creation and clean economic growth throughout the District by:

- Attracting inward investment and enabling research and innovation.
- Explore a Higher-Level Educational Research Institution and Innovation Park to explore and validate emerging knowledge economy opportunities such as AI/Big Data and digital technologies, remote healthcare delivery and low carbon renewable energy and environmental technologies as well as exploring the circular economy and natural capital, including plastic waste recycling.
- Reviewing business and innovation support to determine the most appropriate approach to building a sustainable Somerset wide local business and innovation ecosystem.
- Strategic employment site development, specifically referencing Firepool and the development of an innovation zone.
- Implementing a Rural Local Development Order, supporting and promoting Nexus 25 and our own commercial assets and sites.
- Taunton Garden Town becoming a dynamic economy of cultural, creative, and digital businesses as part of a future Tech Nation Corridor.

## **7. Finance / Resource Implications**

- 7.1. The financial implications of the recommendation of the Scrutiny Committee are being considered by the Director of Development and Place and Finance officers. A verbal update on the financial implications of the recommendation will be presented verbally at the meeting of the Executive on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2020.

## **8. Legal Implications**

- 8.1. Any new feasibility study would be subject to procurement and contract legislation. There are no other legal implications of note.

## **9. Climate and Sustainability Implications**

- 9.1. The recommendation of the Scrutiny Committee has not been assessed for Climate or Sustainability Implications.

## **10. Safeguarding and/or Community Safety Implications**

- 10.1. The recommendation of the Scrutiny Committee will not have safeguarding or community implications.

## **11. Equality and Diversity Implications**

11.1. If the recommendation of the Scrutiny Committee is resolved by the Executive Committee Equality and Diversity considerations should be included in the scope included in the procurement process.

## **12. Social Value Implications**

12.1. If the recommendation of the Scrutiny Committee is resolved by the Executive Committee Social Value considerations should be included in the scope included in the procurement process.

## **13. Partnership Implications**

13.1. If the recommendation of the Scrutiny Committee is resolved by the Executive Committee Partnership considerations should be included in the scope included in the procurement process.

## **14. Health and Wellbeing Implications**

14.1. If the recommendation of the Scrutiny Committee is resolved by the Executive Committee Health and Safety considerations should be included in the scope included in the procurement process.

## **15. Asset Management Implications.**

15.1. If the recommendation of the Scrutiny Committee is resolved by the Executive Committee Health and Safety considerations should be included in the scope included in the procurement process.

## **16. Data Protection Implications**

16.1. The full findings of the feasibility study carried out by EIBC and attached at Appendix B have been redacted to comply with GDPR regulations, protect the identity of external contributors, and remove any commercially sensitive information.

## **17. Consultation Implications**

17.1. If the recommendation of the Scrutiny Committee is resolved by the Executive Committee consultation with key stakeholders, businesses, partner agencies, education providers and regional partners should be included in the scope included in the procurement process.

## **18. Corporate Scrutiny Comments**

18.1 It would be normal for reports moving through committees to Executive to contain a section on Scrutiny comments, in this case the report was not originally intended to contain a decision and progress onward through the committee process. Therefore, the whole report should be considered to reflect the response and supported recommendation from Corporate Scrutiny where considerable debate took place.

### **Democratic Path:**

- **Scrutiny - Yes**
- **Cabinet/Executive - Yes**
- **Full Council - No**

**Reporting Frequency: Once only**

### **Contact Officers**

Name	Lisa Tuck (was Redston), Economic Development Operational Manager
Email	l.tuck@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk





## APPENDIX 2: SPECIFICATION OF REQUIREMENTS

### 1. Overview

Somerset and West has just launched its economic development strategy, part of which is to help it transition to a high skills knowledge economy with greater levels of productivity and GVA.

It is now looking to commission expert advice into the type of knowledge economy and technology businesses (including ‘niche’ subsectors and emerging opportunities) which the Council might look to proactively target as future prospects for supporting sustainable economic growth, the creation of knowledge economy jobs, improved levels of productivity, innovation and research and development and potential future beacons for inward investment to the District.

Furthermore, in the context of the Coronavirus crisis, this work will inform our approach to new opportunities for the District economy on the path to recovery presenting new transformational economic opportunities around enterprise and innovation, development of emerging sectors and market opportunities aligned to the Opportunity areas of the Local Industrial Strategy and seen through the prism of Clean Growth, building from the asset, research and business base we may have.

At the same time, the Council is refreshing its Local Plan and there is an opportunity to consider the allocation of land under the new Local Plan to support the delivery of a sustainable innovation park potentially in a phased approach and possibly linked to Exeter University and other research institutes, with whom our members have previously engaged.

### 2. Background

In March 2010, a previous economic development strategy for Taunton Deane Borough Council entitled “Grow and Green - a new economic development strategy for Taunton Deane” was produced.

The Strategy was guided by a vision of sustainable economic growth:

*By 2026 Taunton will be one of Europe’s most successful and sustainable towns with a dynamic knowledge economy and a high quality of life*

It set out three areas for consideration which are still broadly relevant today, but our context is now broadened to include West Somerset, having merged as a newly formed Council formally in April 2019.

- **‘Grow and Green’ communities:** to develop community-based, driven and owned approaches to the green knowledge economy, linking green initiatives (renewable energy, resource conservation and management and sustainable development) with business and employment growth initiatives

- **Innovation and Enterprise:** to accelerate business growth and innovation and new enterprise development, giving particular attention to high growth firms and high skill knowledge-intensive sectors of Taunton's economy.
- **Promoting Taunton:** to promote Taunton both *internally* to local businesses, residents, students and policy-makers in order to encourage more local spending and investment and retain companies and talent; and *externally* to establish Taunton as an important destination for inward investment and tourism, at the regional, national and international levels.

**A convenient “Summary of Actions” was given in the last chapter of the report.**

It was agreed that the Council would develop coherent programmes for 'growing and greening' Taunton's economy, reaching across all sectors. This second thrust was around making accelerating green innovation a top priority, through identifying opportunities for demonstrating and piloting new schemes, developing a Taunton innovation system with businesses, the HE/FE sector and other players including the LEP and networking into other Government funded innovation related programmes.

### **3. New opportunities and a fresh approach**

Many of the proposed activities are still relevant today and indeed some of them have now been superseded by the announcement of the Somerset wide climate change strategies and emerging workplans, including that of Somerset West and Taunton.

Somerset West and Taunton's own economic development strategy has been produced and adopted by the Council in February 2020, within which there is a focus on a stated strategic priority as follows:

#### **University in Taunton / Research and Innovation Park**

Explore the potential and scope for a University in Taunton, with a business led curriculum that will help deliver the skills businesses want, attract more inward investment and create opportunities for higher value jobs for residents.

There is an opportunity to build on the UK Hydrographic Office (UKHO) open innovation activity and links with other South West Universities, (such as Exeter), but also embrace other opportunities arising from the South West Institute of Technology with a focus on advanced engineering and digital, working with Bridgwater and Taunton college and the University Centre.

There is a clearly stated intent to explore and scope the future potential for a knowledge based Innovation and Technology Park, with links to specialist centres of excellence and research Institutes linked to Higher Education and relevant Universities and Research Institutes and/or Catapults.

This includes opportunities to explore and validate emerging opportunities in knowledge economy sectors and clustering such as:

- AI/Big Data and digital technologies already underway with links to the South West Institute of Technology
- Remote healthcare delivery (telehealth/telemedicine) linked to the care of an increasing elderly population
- Low carbon renewable energy and environmental technologies (including plastic waste recycling and the circular economy).

The latter could include innovations around the circular economy and innovation in manufacturing and processing, linked to the Climate change emergency and the associated industry and business workstreams and sustainable smart city type of 'Garden Town living' for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, as well as building on exciting initiatives such as the Biohm investment in biosciences linked to plastic waste recycling and other commercial applications exploiting our Natural Capital. <https://www.onioncollective.co.uk/industry-for-watchet>

### **Somerset's Climate Change Strategy**

***<https://wwwmedia.somerset.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Somerset-Climate-Emergency-Framework-Final.pdf>***

Following the publication of Somerset's Climate change strategy and the development of the various workstreams, including industry and business and waste in particular, there is an opportunity to harness this activity and focus on those aspects of the Climate change strategy where a future innovation park and campus could contribute, working in partnership with Exeter University and other stakeholders.

### **Garden Town Prospectus**

<https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/media/1450/taunton-garden-town-vision.pdf>

"Taunton, the County Town of Somerset will be flourishing, distinctive, and healthy – and the country's benchmark Garden Town. We will be proud to live and work in a place where the outstanding natural environment, diverse and thriving economy and inspiring cultural offer, contribute to an exceptional quality of life and well-being".

### **National and Local Industrial Strategy**

Clean growth opportunities need to be considered in terms of the Heart of the South West Local Industrial Strategy and in the context of some of the themes of the national strategy around:

**Ideas** - the world's most innovative economy and a world leader in global science and innovation collaboration. The Government is looking to increase R&D tax credits and investment in R&D. This is intended to encourage the private sector to invest more in R&D, to turn exciting ideas into commercial products and services and to build research and innovation excellence across the UK, linked to the Science and Innovation Audit.

**Grand Challenges** - developments in technology that are set to transform industries and societies in which the UK has an opportunity to play a leading role. Essentially this is commonly referred to as the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution, with the convergence and fusion of technologies blurring the boundaries between physical, digital and biological worlds which will introduce new business paradigms and enhance GVA and productivity.

**Clean Growth** - to maximise the advantages for UK industry from the global shift to clean growth through leading the world in the development, manufacture and use of low carbon technologies, systems and services that cost less than high carbon alternatives.

Economic opportunities from this area could grow at four times the rate of GDP, following the Paris Agreement of 2015, which commits to revolutionising power, transport, heating and cooling, industrial processes and agriculture.

**d) SWT's Great Plastic debate and associated papers**

There has been significant discussions previously with Exeter University and some of the local networks around the circular economy including recycling of plastic waste for instance, building on Exeter University's research credentials as well as discussion with the South West Academic Health network and opportunities for innovation in remote delivery of healthcare including telehealth and telemedicine in the context of an ageing population in more peripheral rural areas across the district. There are potentially a wide range of stakeholders who could leverage investment funding, provided the business case is robust and then deliver aspects of this innovation/science park forming an Integrated Programme Delivery partnership. These papers will be shared with the winning consultant at the inception meeting,

**4. Scope of tender opportunity and Key Outputs**

Further to the strategy in 2011, internal discussions and a forum on the Plastics debate in 2018, compounded now by the declaration of a Climate Change emergency and faced with the LIS and a clean growth focus as well as the need to provide and support new Opportunities to re-position the economy during the recovery phase from Covid 19 and beyond and be transformational addressing societal challenges, it would now seem opportune to re-consider the opportunities of emerging sectors and also collaboration with the knowledge base in our neighbouring surroundings. In parallel to this assignment, work has been underway to develop a Digital Innovation Centre in Taunton building on a Digital Taunton cluster to help businesses transform their business models in a digital economy, which has resulted in a thorough demand and need study and proposals for a Digital Innovation Centre and associated innovation services, culminating in a build to the Government through an ERDF funded capital programme in March 2020 for a proposed future build by early 2022.

The time has never been better to look to work strategically and collaboratively sub-regionally with a range of stakeholders to develop the future business support and eco-innovation network, and physical infrastructure in this strategic growth corridor along the M5 between Bristol and Exeter.

This will in future necessitate greater collaboration and alignment with Further Education and Higher Education Institutes, sub-regional sectors and business membership bodies and enterprise agencies, pan-LEP sector networks, and sub-regional partnerships within the Heart of the South West and potentially Greater South West and the West of England Combined Authority, along with other national and sub-regional stakeholders including Catapults etc. Department for International Trade (DIT) and other Government departments.

#### **4A Key Deliverables**

The key deliverables arising from the scope of this initial feasibility work should comprise of a comprehensive report, routemap and action plan, with supporting annexes of research and discussion with local stakeholders, which addresses the following:

1. A report which assesses and validates and/or develops and refines an initial concept or proposes an alternative concept for the development of an innovation/technology park and /or science park in our District and benchmarks the strengths, weaknesses, gaps and opportunities measured against the normal criteria and the Critical Success Factors normally associated with a successfully operating science and innovation/technology park. This should include a healthcheck and barometer of our current starting position as well as the building blocks on which we should build. (referring to article attached as Annexe A).
2. It should recommend an initial starting point and subsequent routemap for how we might go about developing the business case, setting out the recommended approach we should take from a series of alternative options with supporting rationale (e.g. a virtual hub and spoke model vs one consolidated park development and other alternatives you consider there might be). This should be based on your objective, realistic assessment of the vision, aims and objectives as well as your view on the initial starting point and focus for such a venture, resulting from the desk and field work you propose to undertake and having an eye to attracting Government public and private sector R&D funding and likelihood of attracting future institutional and commercial seedcorn and medium to longer term investment.
3. Following on from the recommendation of the preferred starting model, the report should set out the proposed Governance approach that should be adopted, as well as the roles of the stakeholders, the workstreams that needed to be developed and the routemap for moving to implementation of the first phase of development and what the future phases and activity might look like. This should include a clear action plan of key activity, milestones and key performance indicators, phasing and timelines to move from concept to initial realisation on the ground for each of the phases of implementation.
4. Assuming that this is taken forward, it would be good for you to provide an assessment of the likely economic impact in terms of GVA, Innovation and Productivity and start up rates etc. and associated multiplier effect on the local economy and existing value and supply chains locally and sub-regionally and what we will need to do to develop the attractiveness of the business environment and innovation ecosystem further. Consideration given to an assessment of the current strengths and weakness of the local sub-regional social, human, financial and technological capital to support such a concept and proposition and steps to strengthening and deepening those areas where here are deficiencies.
5. As a final part of this commission, we would like an some early consideration to be given to the short, medium and longer term property and land allocations and the critical success factors would be in the initial design and masterplanning and physical location of the park to ensuring such a park would be successful by assessing the location and other essential infrastructure and connectivity requirements might be to ensure its viability. This is obviously at a high level as more of that work would be taken forward in the next phase and scope of work.

**4B Considerations related to the initiation and development of an innovation/technology and/or science park which may inform the methodology and approach you take**

- This will necessitate desk based research and updating of the relevant Government policies and strategies linked to Clean Growth and associated sector opportunities and require renewed engagement with the departmental heads at Exeter University.
- It will also require active discussion and engagement with members of the Council and other actors such as the County Council who have been previously engaged in such discussions to seek their input and what they can contribute in terms of know how, institutional support and assessment of the market opportunity but also their thoughts as to how to take any ideas they might have with supporting rationale.
- It will also require a realistic assessment of the opportunity to develop an innovation campus, after undertaking a review of the business opportunities, assets, and potential early commitments of Universities and research and innovation bodies and organisations.
- SWT will need to focus down on a core concept from which to start, where there are likely to be the greatest opportunities for success and where we have tangible assets, businesses and research capabilities which are relatively strong and possibly where there is a unique capability.
- Furthermore, although we are able to allocate land for an innovate park, we need to understand and validate the opportunity for an innovation park first and understand the type of model we should look to operate – namely, might it be a hub and spoke model lining different centres of excellence together and premises for start up and move on or other approaches

**a. Validating future knowledge economy market opportunities & emerging businesses to target**

SWT needs to identify the focus for the R and D area of research and development which presents the best immediate opportunity for development of the innovation/technology and/or science park concept and in parallel identify the types of businesses and start-ups in emerging sector/technology areas that might be looking for new environments to test, prototype and collaborate and innovate. This will in future require us to target the early movers and shakers in these areas who hopefully will subsequently attract others in, once they are well established here.

Such movers and shakers may an existing set of businesses, or be a new style of business incubator or accelerator that is established, a large anchor corporate relocating to the area, a leading research institute or offshoot of a University, or a UK or Foreign Investor looking for a suitable location. It will hopefully lead to the opportunity for an applied research and development intensive cluster around sustainable clean growth and environmental/energy related businesses and stakeholders.

**b. Better partnering and collaboration**

SWT needs a vision for the future which will develop better links between local and sub-regional partners, businesses and stakeholders, along the M5 corridor and its hinterland in the form of triple helix open innovation type of collaborations and potentially complementary

clusters each with their unique points of differentiation but where the sum is greater than the parts in a national and international context, seen through the lens of Clean and sustainable growth and opportunities. The example of one of the key challenges challenges to address is that of Climate Change and Clean Growth.

It should look to seize upon synergies and complementary research and development activities and clustering, potentially involving collaborative interest and are shared institutes, assets and resources which could be made to be bigger than the sum of the parts. This would build on previous interactions with Exeter University amongst other local business networks in the South West.

**c. Proactive preparation for strategic funding opportunities**

SWT and its businesses, asset and stakeholders need to be outward looking and proactive in responding to wider Governmental funding opportunities and associated calls from Government bodies such as UKRI and emanating from the National Industrial and Prosperity strategies such as from Innovate UK for instance. Once a proposition and focus for the innovation park is confirmed, we can collectively anticipate and intelligently horizon scanning all opportunities, seeking where possible to strive to be a pilot and a collaborative testbed for Government funding calls addressing societal issues in related areas including low carbon & sustainable energy challenges, digital upskilling etc. responding to calls for Institutes of Technology etc., enterprise zones etc.

**d. Attracting and growing businesses involving local recruitment, inclusion and upskilling of the indigenous workforce**

A wider consideration related to the development of an innovation park is that future is that there are opportunities for sustainable growth of the economy in the future which will provide new and emerging career and employment pathways for the resident population and it is important that there is a broad range of employment opportunities which can lead to higher skilled and paid jobs within the District for its residents over time. This would be an opportunity to develop zero carbon environmental and renewable technologies skills and training for instance as a legacy of Hinkley C construction and transferability and application of manufacturing and engineering skills to these new and emerging work and sector opportunities.

**a. District wide focus**

It is envisioned that this scope of work will propose a direction of travel in terms of the type of future knowledge economy prospects and targets should aspire to which ultimately will help transform the economy over the short, medium and long term, starting with some early quick wins within the next 3-5 years.





## Developing the Innovation Ecosystem in Somerset West & Taunton

# Framework for Action

**Final Report: Confidential**



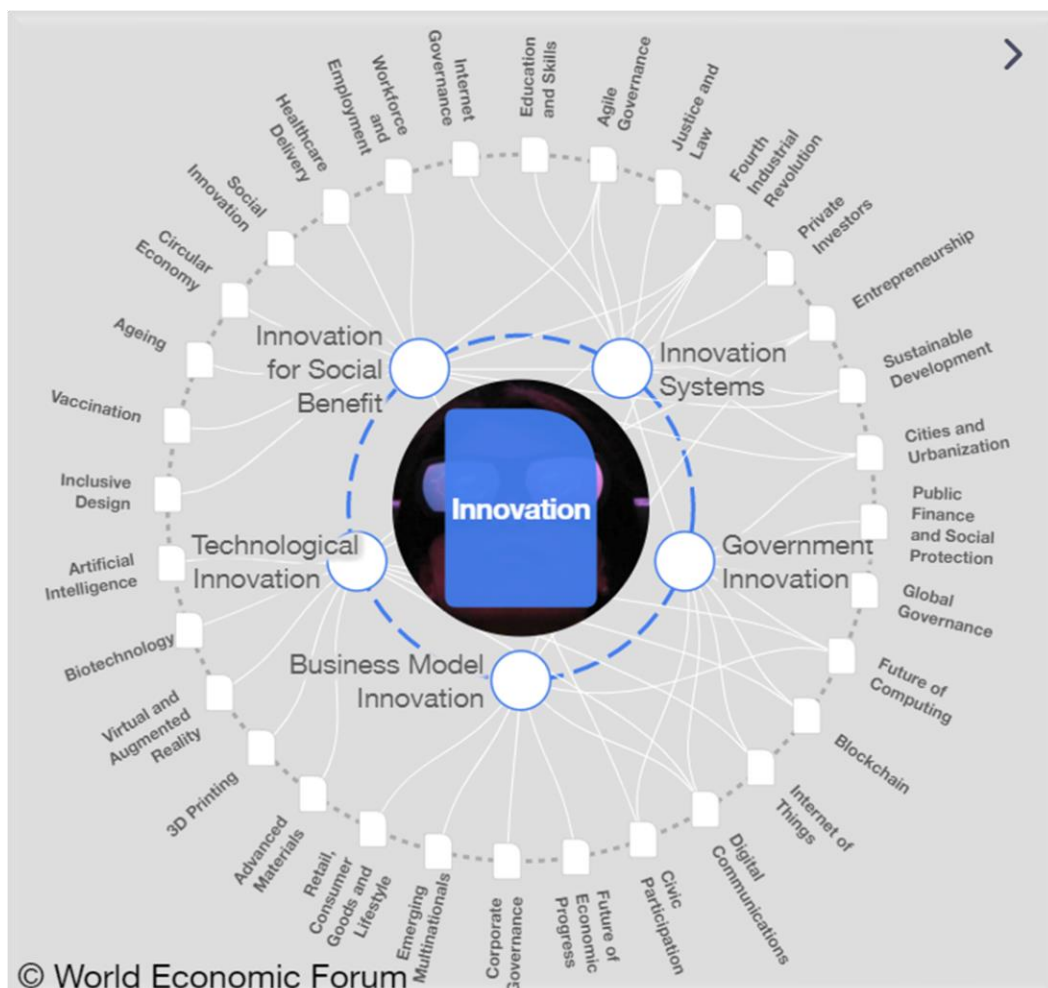
## Defining Innovation

Innovation concerns a wide range of players, processes and impacts (see diagram below), but essentially is about people and organisations *investing in R&D and implementing new or significantly improved products and services, processes, marketing methods, or organizational methods for customer, community and natural environment benefit.*

## Why is it important?

Innovation is at the heart of a successful economic growth and job creation strategy. It can transform productivity and efficiency. It can also address many of the world's longstanding and emerging challenges, such as climate change, improved healthcare outcomes, enhancing education and social inclusiveness.

Innovative people and organisations are high skilled and knowledge intensive, have high levels of productivity and higher levels of pay. Areas where these type of people and organisations are located tend to be more economically resilient and secure higher levels of job multiplier effects than other parts of the economy. This is especially the case when there is strong clustering and network interactions, as these tend to re-enforce the additional innovation opportunities and economic development.



## Acknowledgements

In undertaking this study the EiBC wish to thank the many contributors who helped inform this report – Somerset West and Taunton Council who commissioned the report and the many businesses and business organisations, the Heart of the South West (HotSW) Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), NHS partners, Sedgemoor District Council, Somerset County Council, Bridgwater and Taunton College, the University of Exeter, voluntary sector and government organisations that gave their time and shared their thinking with us.

Whilst all the consultees have assisted with this study, any views and conclusions expressed in this report are entirely those of EiBC.

Many thanks

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December 2020

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**Oxford and Edinburgh**

# **Developing the West Somerset and Taunton Innovation Ecosystem; Framework for Action**

## **Report Structure**

### **Executive Summary**

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Somerset West and Taunton's Innovation Assets**
- 3. Supporting and Enabling the SWT Innovation Assets**
- 4. Action Theme A: Establishing a Thriving Innovation District in Taunton**
- 5. Action Theme B: Securing an Innovation Legacy from Hinkley**
- 6. Action Theme C: Creating a Bio-Manufacturing & the Circular Economy Demonstrator**
- 7. Action Theme D: Establishing the Underpinning Support for Innovation**
- 8. Summary of Recommended Actions**

## **Appendices**

- **Appendix A:** Terms of Reference
- **Appendix B:** List of Consultees

## Executive Summary

### Purpose and Critical Time for Innovation Led Action

This report has been commissioned by Somerset West and Taunton District Council (SWT) so that it can better support innovation and knowledge based organisations and deliver economic development for its community and meet the objective of making the District Carbon Neutral by 2030.

The report provides the Council with a *Framework for Action* with 22 recommendations for how it and its partners can *enhance and transform the SWT innovation ecosystem* and enable the Council to be more proactive around innovation and economic development, better shape its post Covid Recovery Plan, set resource priorities and pursue a range of opportunities to secure co-investment from the private sector and government and deliver on these actions.

### The Innovation Challenge and a Framework for Action

Innovation is widely acknowledged to be a key driver of improved productivity and economic growth.<sup>1</sup> It secures high quality, sustainable jobs and the benefits of this have been secured most successfully in ‘the golden triangle’. With central government committing record levels of investment in R&D (£22bn by 2023) and to pursuing ‘levelling up’ actions this represents a crucial time for the Council to better position itself for innovation led investments and developments and adopt the recommendations proposed. Crucially, the opportunity also helps shape wider public sector actions and investments and co-investment by the private sector.

In this report EiBC has provided a *Framework for Action* to address these opportunities and informed by conditions found in other successful innovation ecosystems. Specifically, we provide an independent assessment of the area’s innovation assets (ie knowledge based organisations), the current business innovation support systems and the research and skills assets, the physical infrastructure (ie innovation centres and suitable business space) and leadership arrangements to support innovation.

We have also reviewed those weaknesses already known to SWT. For example, the general low levels of R&D expenditure in companies relative to turnover, a relatively low level of Higher Education (HE) participation, a large county area without a university, a comparatively older population, a lower proportion of knowledge-based workers and a lower GDP/per capita, with some areas with high multiple deprivation. Also the low levels of inward investment and the recognition that there needs to be improved perceptions about SWT as an excellent place for innovation and knowledge based organisations to be attracted to and grow in the area. Many of these weaknesses have been recognised in SWT’s own Economic Development Strategy and by HotSW’s Local Industrial and Productivity Strategies.

### Approach to the Assignment

EiBC’s work programme involved the following:

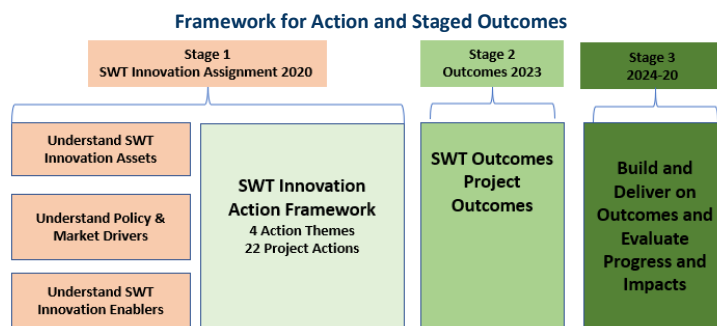
- **Background research:** building a clear understanding of SWT’s innovation assets through background research;
- **Consultations:** conducting consultations with SWT Council members and senior officers, partner local authorities, the HotSW and holding in excess of 30 consultations with CEOs/directors in knowledge based organisations in the area, in addition to Bridgwater and Taunton College (BTC), the University of Exeter and with developers

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<sup>1</sup> For example, UK Industrial Strategy (2019), UK Innovation Road Map (2020), HotSW Local Industrial and Productivity Strategies (2019)

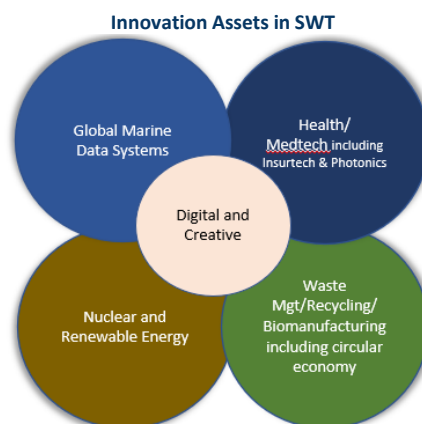
- **Benchmarking:** Drawing on UK/international research and experience in innovation systems, science parks and innovation centres
- **Action Focused Report:** Bring together our evidence, analysis and conclusions and framing our recommendations around 4 Action Themes and 22 specific recommended actions.

In setting out our *Framework for Action* EiBC emphasise that this must be seen as a *stage one* of a journey. This stage enables the Council to fully understand the area’s innovation assets, the policy and market drivers impacting on these and the enabling and support systems for innovation. Should the Council adopt this *Framework for Action* then this can deliver a number of early stage outcomes that can be achieved by 2023/4 (stage two). With these achieved (and evaluated) further work would then build on these achievements over the next 5-10 years. A simple illustration of these stages is presented below with further detail on the recommended actions set out later.



### Innovation Assets

The key *business based innovation assets* in the SWT area are in four distinct clusters (global marine data systems; healthcare, medtech, including insurtech and photonics; nuclear/renewable energy; waste management/recycling and biomanufacturing including the circular economy). Additionally we define a cross cutting theme consistently emphasised by central government, HoTSW and the private sector – the digital and creative theme.



A high level summary of the clusters is presented below:

- **Global Marine Data Systems:** the HQ of the UK Hydrographic Office, with its 800 research intensive staff provides data to 90% of all global shipping, data inputs for autonomous shipping and undertakes a wide range of marine environmental projects across the world. Government has recognised it to be one of the key organisations that can exploit the forecast £3.2 trillion ‘blue economy’ by 2030. At present, however, this major asset is the most undeveloped in terms of it creating a local cluster of partner businesses. A pilot accelerator programme has been launched this year and is designed to stimulate new business ventures and the UK Government’s Geospatial Commission should also provide further new

opportunities for SWT. In EIBC's view, very strong local action at SWT and HotSW levels will be required to unlock a small part of the huge potential associated with the UKHO's presence and the 'blue economy' and our *Framework for Action* identifies recommendations to address this challenge around sustaining and upscaling accelerator and business partnership programmes, developing international partnerships for inward investment and exploring how university research and industry partnerships can be co-located in Taunton.

- **Healthcare, medtech, health insurance and photonics** represent major innovation assets within the SWT area and where there are significant opportunities for growth. The cluster has a workforce in excess of 10,000 with more than half of this total located in Taunton. The cluster comprises the recently merged Somerset NHS Foundation Trust, employing nurses, doctors, researchers, scientists, therapists and its support staff and having around 350 active research projects running at any one time. The latter has 'export type services' in that the Trust supports other UK trusts, notably in cancer and diagnostics. The Trust is also investing £450m to a major building programme (Musgrove 2030). The Musgrove Hospital site is highly constrained and there are opportunities to relocate some non-acute services off-site as a part of the Musgrove 2030 investment programme. This in turn could create opportunities to redesign services and co-locate with other knowledge based organisations. One such co-location with the private sector has already been committed – this also delivering a new 30,000 square foot Health Innovation Centre at Blackwater in the Zenith Building. Importantly, the cluster also includes several medium sized private companies operating in health, medtech, ehealth, health insurance, health care photonics – with these businesses employing in excess of 1,000 jobs, this excluding the SW regional HQ of NHS England (with St Austell). Significantly, most of the private companies are the UK/European HQs of international businesses and all are located in Taunton. In the round and given the size of this cluster, together with its forecast growth, stability and impact on community wellbeing and ageing – and because government's *R&D Road Map 2020* commits it to '*unlock improvements in health, wellbeing and prosperity*' and to *level up*<sup>2</sup>, it is EIBC's view is that this cluster needs to be given a much higher priority and a target for growth. Part of achieving this higher priority is to establish a *Taunton Innovation District* (see later), which is part of a proposed HotSW *Regional Technopole*<sup>3</sup>.
- The **construction and decommissioning of nuclear power stations** at Hinkley are well understood drivers of economic development and there are already a wide range of actions and groups operating in this domain. Actions are organised at the regional and national level (eg, EDF, CGN, the NDA with many companies involved in designing, contracting an decommissioning nuclear power), as well as enabling groups such as Nuclear South West, the South West Energy Hub, the HotSW and the Energy Working Group. BTC also hosts the National College for Nuclear. Bridgwater also hosts the Somerset Energy Innovation Centre with its Phases 1,2 & 3, SWMAS and the Hinkley Supply Chain Team. However, whilst all of these have positive economic impacts, most of the knowledge based employment associated with nuclear design, testing, design construction and commissioning is focussed elsewhere. In large part, this is also the case with the development of renewable technologies in the South West. Moreover, a significant part of the current economic benefits will begin to tail off with the completion of the construction and commissioning work associated with Hinkley C and the Decommissioning of Hinkley B. EIBC is therefore of the view that more emphasis needs

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<sup>2</sup> UK Government R&D Road Map 2020

<sup>3</sup> HotSW agreed at its November 2020 Innovation Board to progress plans and investments around a Regional Technopole

to be given to defining a *distinct innovation legacy* from nuclear and in this regard we have identified some potential projects that require detailed consideration (see below).

- A small but nationally significant group of organisations is located in SWT around the business domains of **waste management, recycling, biomanufacturing and the circular economy**. Three organisations in particular provide a platform to develop and grow this cluster in a way that is highly distinctive at regional and UK levels (Viridor, Biohm and SWP). Viridor, the largest recycling and energy recovery company in the UK, is headquartered in Taunton, has a long history associated with the South West and has an active programme of R&D associated with recycling and the circular economy<sup>4</sup>. Biohm is a biotech and biomanufacturing company based in London with innovative technologies in bringing new green construction materials and systems to market using local excess resources. A recent inward investment to Watchet, Biohm is establishing its first production plant in the UK and the ambition is to diversify into more bio-based construction products (eg biomanufactured construction boards, mycelium insulation boards, plant-based concrete and a biotechnology that consumes plastic). It also intends to develop a number of other related projects associated with the circular economy such as affordable housing using low carbon materials, renewable energy and research and skills initiatives underpinned by an innovative community partnership business model with the Onion Collective.

- Somerset Waste Partnership, a partnership business operated through a joint board drawn from Somerset's county council and its 4 district councils has responsibilities are for waste collection, waste disposal and recycling and is independently ranked as a leading operator in England for carbon saving, emphasis on waste reduction, energy from waste solutions, recycling, education and changing behaviours. It has a strong desire to support research, innovation and impact, in partnership with others, by using its operational knowledge, scale and influence. EiBC consider this cluster opportunity to be nationally distinctive, fully aligned with the Carbon Neutral ambitions of the SWT. Further detailed feasibility and planning work will be required and could attract funding and support from the private and third sectors, BEIS, Innovate UK, universities, BTC and HotSW.
- The SWT **Digital and Creative** cluster is largely a cross-cutting innovation asset embedded in many organisations, but also evident in the large number of micros of less than 10 employees. For example, Digital Taunton (DT) is a 750 plus membership organisation with many micros supporting an active cluster for the digital community, through collaborations, networking and by hosting quarterly workshop events. As a dynamic community led organisation it is a regional 'stand out' and together with CICCIC, a creative innovation and community interest company, both have been drivers supporting the £9.6m plus Taunton Digital Innovation Centre to be delivered by Q3 2021. Key to exploiting the local digital and creative assets is to *link* SWT micros and the growing BTC digital talent pool<sup>5</sup> to the four clusters through partnership programmes and placements.

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<sup>4</sup> For example, it is investing £65m in the UK's biggest multi-plastic recycling and reprocessing plant at Avonmouth - this ground-breaking UK circular economy collaboration, integrates with Viridor's polymers investments to deliver a more complete plastics recycling solution.

<sup>5</sup> Through its SWInstitute of Technology Partnership, BTC has recently launched 28 'hop on hop off' Digital programmes



## Enabling Innovation Assets

The innovation assets within the SWT area are supported by five enablers and some of these are areas where the Council has some influence and control. These enablers are: 1) policies that align with and support innovation assets; 2) business space and physical infrastructure that is suitable, functioning and attractive for knowledge based businesses; 3) good access to high level skills, talent and university research; 4) easy access to practical knowledge exchange and business innovation support services and funding; and 5) leadership/governance. EiBC's assessment of these enablers are summarised below:

- **Policy Alignment and SWT Innovation Assets:** there is a high degree of alignment between the Government's Industrial Strategy, the UK R&D Road Map, HotSW LIS and Productivity Strategies and SWT, SCC, SNHSFT and BTC strategies and plans relevant to innovation in the SWT area and also a good alignment between HotSW priorities in Clean Growth, Energy Futures, Digital Futures and Inclusive Growth. However, the Health/Medtech strength in SWT is not currently highlighted by HotSW as a priority and EiBC believe there is a strong case for this cluster to be better recognised and supported. Also assets and opportunities around waste, recycling, biomanufacturing and the circular economy should also have stronger policy priorities. HotSW's innovation policy emphasis was set out by its Innovation Board in November 2020 with this informed by the MIT REAP programme<sup>6</sup>. This seeks to build a network approach to innovation around a multiple locations using the Technopole concept and to invest in support for knowledge exchange and business support services<sup>7</sup>. This approach strongly accords with the conclusions reached by EiBC.
- **Skills, Talent and Universities:** BTC and its University Centre employs in excess of 1,000 staff and recruits some 23,000 full time and part time students. Approximately 700 students are pursuing programmes at Higher Education (HE) level and significantly, BTC has a national role in co-hosting the UK's Nuclear College. It is currently expanding its T level<sup>8</sup> and Digital programmes and its degree level Nursing programmes – the latter likely to stimulate demand for additional student accommodation. Although universities in Bristol, Exeter, Bath and Plymouth surround the SWT area and there are many links between these and knowledge based organisations in the area, there is, in EiBC's opinion, a case to secure some *selected strategic commitments* from the university sector within SWT around some of its key innovation assets and also opportunities to strengthen BTC's UK and international role in specialist high level vocational training (see recommendations).
- **Physical infrastructure:** infrastructure (innovation centres, science and innovation and mixed use developments that specifically targeting knowledge based occupiers) are one element required for a successful innovation ecosystem. Currently there is only 34,000 square feet specifically catering for knowledge based business in Somerset County area, but in the next two years this will increase fourfold to 124,00 square feet when construction and fit out at the TDIC (Firepool, Taunton), Zenith (Blackbrook Business Park, Taunton), Phase 2 and 3 SEIC (Bridgwater) and iAERO (Yeovil) innovation centres are complete. In addition to this with a second phase of the TDIC at Firepool, the Gravity and Nexus sites fully developed there will be a huge level of additional floorspace available over the next 2-10 years and specifically targeting knowledge-based businesses. In the light of this EiBC has concluded there is no case to promote a SWT science park at the present time. We comment further on this below.
- **Knowledge Exchange, Innovation Business Support:** A range of general business support services operate in SWT and are provided by the District Council, SCC and the HotSW Growth Hub. Since 2019 SCC and the four Somerset District Councils have also piloted a business

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<sup>6</sup> <https://reap.mit.edu/>

<sup>7</sup> HotSW Innovation Board Paper November 2020

<sup>8</sup> T Level programmes are equivalent to 3 'A' levels and are applied to some 24 industry specific areas

mentor programme (Somerset Catalyst) to support fast growth knowledge based start-ups. However, EiBC's conclusion is whilst all of these are beneficial, much more is required to provide knowledge based businesses with a more focussed and comprehensive innovation service for businesses – and that are regularly found in many successful science and innovation centres and innovation districts. This is important as start-ups, SMEs and even larger knowledge based organisations rarely have the time and resources to 'pick through' and bring together all the key services and support to drive and deliver innovation, or the external stimulus that such services bring to the process of securing innovation. EiBC has identified recommendations to pursue this type of service (involving the HotSW) and a specific business planning piece of work is required to take this forward.

- Leadership and Governance:** Leadership is also widely accepted as one of the key elements of a successful ecosystem.<sup>9</sup> EiBC's UK experience and our assessment of the particular challenges in SWT supports this view. Specifically, EiBC believes that a SWT Innovation Board supported by Cluster Groups can help secure innovation and economic development. From our initial consultations these concepts have support from a number of senior level employers and they can provide ideas, independent assessments of progress and be a powerful and influence voice for the funding of new initiatives. A Board and Cluster Groups would come as a near zero cost intervention with its inputs largely dependent on senior employer and stakeholders time and would complement the HotSW Innovation Board.

A summary of EiBCs assessment is presented below with the areas of strength and opportunity highlighted in green – and weak/missing areas in orange.

Innovation Clusters	Innovation Assets					Digital/ Creative	Major Opportunity Action Areas
	Major	Significant	Niche	Missing/Weak			
Health/Medtech/Health Insurance/Photonics/Health Applications					Health Care	Cross cutting and needing development and links to all sectors	Growth/Start Up/Network and Inward Investment Opps and Taunton Innovation District
					Medtech/eHealth (with a number of HQ's in Taunton)		
					UK Health Insurance (HQ in Taunton)		
					Photonics /Health Applications (UK HQ in Taunton)		
Clean Tech					Nuclear Construction/Decommissioning (EDF, CGN, )		Legacy, Growth, International UK/regional leadership Opps
					Renewables		
					Waste Management (Viridor HE and SWT)		
					Biomufacturing/Sustainable Construction Materials (Biohm)		
					Agritech		
Marine Data Systems					Natural Assets		Growing Blue Economy & leveraging from UKHO
				Missing	Global business and UK HQ UKHO		
Skills/Research					Missing UKHO business/research partners in SWT		Grow UK/International Nuclear Skills Centre & secure niche on-site R&D and University presence
				Missing	BTC/National Nuclear College/University Centre		
Infrastructure					In-County University Presence		Develop Innovation network and district concept
					Existing Innovation Centres		
					Committed Innovation Centres		
				Weak	Grow-on-Space for Knowledge Businesses		
Networks/Governance					Digital Taunton		Establish Innovation Board and Cluster Groups with KE/Commercialisation & Innovation Support Service
					Public sector general innovation business support service		
				Missing	KE/Commercialisation Service		
				Missing	WST Business led Innovation Governance		
Community Assets					Number of Very High Performing Schools	Develop Innovation & Enterprise marketing messages	
					Outstanding Natural Heritage Assets		
					High level accessibility to cities/rail/M5/M4		
Innovation Image/Perception				Weak	Housing quality/range/pricing		
					Marketing message needs development		

<sup>9</sup> Many established science and innovation parks and innovation districts have small innovation leadership boards, for example, Manchester Science Park and its Oxford Road Innovation District, Edinburgh BioQuarter, Newcastle Helix, Northern Ireland's Catalyst.

## Summary of Recommendations

### An Alternative to a Traditional Science Park

EiBC has concluded that there is no case for SWT to promote or invest in a traditional new science park, but rather pursue a different approach. The reasons why we do not recommend a science park have been touched on already, but as this was one of the central questions raised as a part of this assignment, we summarise the key points below:

- there is no evidence that a university, an anchor knowledge intensive business/organisation will provide the stimulus for a single site traditional science park.
- As we have already indicated over the next 3 years a network of new innovation centres will be delivered in Taunton (2), Bridgwater (3), Yeovil (1). Additionally 3 sites in SWT (Firepool TDIC, Nexus and Blackbrook) offer further opportunities for grow-on space for knowledge based businesses with a capacity in excess of 600,000 square feet in Taunton. This is in addition to a further 300,000 square feet of general business and light manufacturing space at the Crown Estate<sup>10</sup> and over 300,000 square feet at the Gravity site. Firepool has a capability to accommodate a Phase 2 innovation centre and Blackbrook, already the home for several health based knowledge based businesses, has a key undeveloped site adjacent to Zenith innovation Centre, whilst the 40 acre Nexus site can accommodate around 377,000 square feet of knowledge based business. Outside Taunton, Watchet can also accommodate at least 54,000 square feet of business space at the former papermill site. All of these sites are committed and most are 'shovel ready'. Excluding the Crown Estate and Gravity sites and the other innovation centres coming on stream elsewhere in Somerset, the remaining SWT sites deliver in excess of half a million square feet of space with a potential to accommodate up to 4,600 direct knowledge based jobs in addition to jobs that are indirect and induced economic impacts .
- Our recommended Taunton Innovation District proposal <sup>11</sup> and also the opportunities at Watchet offer the SWT area to develop an innovation ecosystem at scale, that is credible, distinctive and viable and secures far greater investment leverage from the private sector.
- There is little appetite from HotSW to support new science parks. Current thinking is based on developing a networked Technopole – this using the key innovation assets of the region and supporting growth through a network of existing sites/innovation centres, parks and innovation zones/districts and by developing a knowledge exchange and business innovation support service.

Our alternative approach is to recommend that SWT pursues multiple actions that that builds on the particular and distinctive innovation assets in the area and can transformed into an innovation ecosystem by pursuing four action themes:

- Establishing a Thriving Innovation District in Taunton;
- Securing an Innovation Legacy from Hinkley;
- Creating a Biomanufacturing/Biomimicry and the Circular Economy Demonstrator in Watchet; and
- Establishing the Underpinning Support for Innovation across the District

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<sup>10</sup> Already the home of two major advanced engineering/health and photonics businesses, Amphenol Thermometrics and Novanta

<sup>11</sup> Innovation Districts are being developed in many UK and international locations. They 'constitute the ultimate mash-up of entrepreneurs and educational institutions, start-ups and schools, mixed-use development and medical innovations, bike-sharing and bankable investments - all connected by transit, powered by clean energy, wired for digital technology, and fuelled by caffeine' (Katz & Wager, Brookings Institution 2017)

Through these actions SWT would become known for its strengths in Global Marine Data Systems, Health/Medtech, Energy and Biomanufacturing and the Circular Economy and use the Taunton Innovation District, the Taunton Digital Innovation Centre, the Zenith Innovation Centre and a new innovation focused centre in Watchet as engines for the wider growth of knowledge based businesses. Integrated with a wider HotSW service, a new SWT Knowledge Exchange Business Innovation Support Service would support start-ups, high growth companies by providing research, market, financial, technology, skills, partnering and accelerator/mentor services. SWT would establish the Taunton Innovation District as a key part of the HotSW Technopole – this helping to change perceptions, develop place marketing initiatives and secure inward investment. Promotion, events, signage and an Innovation Cyclerroute could also connect key hubs and link to other initiatives being developed though the Garden Town vision.

SWT should encourage BTC to grow its HE and Degree Apprenticeships so that it supports innovation and together with HotSW and its partner councils. The Council should also invite all the universities surrounding the county to commit to specific place based partnership projects in key domains, eg in to place based partnership working in global marine systems, health/medtech and in biomimicry.

SWT should support the establishment of a SWT Innovation Board and domain specific Cluster Groups. These can support innovation initiatives, support inward investment and help leverage central government resources. The Council's role should be to support and enable these to be established, not to lead them.

### **Detailed Recommendations and Next Steps**

Overall, we recommend that the Council adopts this *Framework for Action* – as a working document and considers four Action Themes and 22 specific recommendations:

#### **Action Theme A: Taunton Innovation District (TID)**

1. **Adopt and promote a Taunton Innovation District** – this will define some of the core SWT innovation and knowledge based assets and clusters, the network of innovation centres and knowledge focussed grow-on sites and an Innovation Cyclerroute/civic art installations connecting all key locations all within the Garden Town. The TID will highlight the easy access to knowledge based skills, research and knowledge exchange and innovation business services all supported by its Innovation Board and Cluster Groups. This would represent a distinctive, powerful and credible proposition and be a major focus within the regional Technopole **(Recommend 'intent to adopt' in Q1 2021 and formal launch in Q1 2022)**
2. Work up the **Taunton Digital Innovation Centre (TDIT) Furniture Fittings & Equipment (FFE) specification and budget**. FFE including specialist equipment will be crucial to make this very important *SWT innovation showcase building* both useful for knowledge based businesses and attractive. At present neither has been confirmed and costs could be in excess of £0.5m and require an additional funding - from public and private sources **(Recommend immediate action)**
3. Work up a preferred plan for **securing a TDIT operator**, this to include knowledge exchange and business innovation support services. Options should include links and/or integration with the private sector/NHS led Zenith Innovation Centre and a wider District service (First phase of this service to be operational by Q4 2021 and the full service by Q3 2022)
4. Explore and develop **Firepool 'meanwhile innovation and creative uses'** in the TDIC Phase 2 area and the adjacent sites **(Recommend this forms part of the delivery plan for the Firepool JV. Progress in 2021 for implementation by 2023)**

5. Liaise with UKHO on the **Pilot Marine Data Systems Accelerator** and explore with UKHO and HotSW how this can become a permanent jointly promoted programme and also strengthened to encourage businesses to co-locate in the TID. (Q1/2 2021).
6. **Promote local economic development and government 'levelling up' relocations** associated with UKHO and the Blue Economy (2021-3)
7. Discuss with UKHO/HotSW/Government the setting up an **Expert International Panel for Blue Economy Commercialisation** to drive opportunities to capture some of the huge opportunities locally (2021)
8. Explore with Government (BEIS/Mod), HotSW and the UKHO a **Blue Economy co-location research partnership based in and using TDIC space**. A 3 year programme could involve the UKHO, the University of Exeter and other UK and international universities and could draw on the successful University/Met Office partnership located on the Exeter Science Park. Acton would require a working group to define potential areas of research and potential funding support (2021/22)
9. **Establish a Cluster Group** around healthcare, eHealth insurtech, medtech, digital and photonics – represented strongly by private sector and NHS employers. This would link with and be complementary to the South West Academic Health Sciences Network. It should be a 'light touch' networking group to enable initiatives to be explored and specific projects actioned through joint or bilateral work (Q1 2021)
10. Work with Rutherford and SNHS Trust to **establish an innovation operator for the Zenith Innovation Centre** – focused primarily on supporting new/growing medtech, ehealth/digital health businesses (see 3 above) (Q2/3 2021)

#### Action Theme 2: Nuclear/Renewables

1. Continue to **support the Hinkley Point Supply Chain** to ensure local WST businesses have access to the high value knowledge based Hinkley contracting opportunities (On-going)
2. Explore with EDF, HotSW, central government and SWT's local authority partners work a **business innovation legacy** from Hinkley. Three potential projects could be around a) the creation of an **International Training Centre for Nuclear Skills** operating as a major UK and export training service; b) a nuclear and/or renewable energy **research and testing facility**; and c) a **sustainable energy demonstrator project linked to the circular economy**. (2021/23)

#### Action Theme 3: Biomimicry and Circular Economy Demonstrator

1. **Support the development of the biomanufacturing businesses** (for example by encouraging the use of these materials in SWT housing developments) and a wider **cluster of cluster of biomimicry R&D and businesses developments** in SWT. This could involve the support of feasibility work, community town planning consultations and planning consents (joint working over the period 2021-3)
2. Support the emerging opportunity for a **Biomimicry and Circular Economy Demonstrator Village at the former Watchet Paper Mill**. This could take many forms from supporting feasibility work, funding support etc to explore the development of affordable and market housing using low carbon materials, [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] (Joint working over the period 2021/3)

#### Action Theme 4: Underpinning Support

1. **Set up a SWT Innovation Board** – this to link to the HotSW Innovation Board and other Somerset initiatives (Q3 2021)

2. **Encourage and Support the creation of Cluster Groups** – Health/MedTech, including Insurtech and photonics (2021); BioManufacture/Circular Economy (2021); Global Marine Data Systems (2021); and continue to support existing Energy Groups
3. In collaboration with HotSW and other SWT partners **set up a Knowledge Exchange and Business Innovation Support Service** in SWT. Initially this should have a focus on TDIC and Zenith and the four clusters. Later it could operate across the wider SWT area and other domains (eg agritech, natural assets) and also provide services in the 4 SWT Enterprise Centres. The services offer needs to be defined, resources and staffing agreed and a plan for making the service fully operational. Services that can be offered could include funding/grant support, business to businesses networking and partnerships, angel/funding links, networking events, innovation research and skills initiatives, placements/KTPs, mentoring, digital skills partnering, business innovation accelerator programmes). One option would be to set up a SWT pilot service with some services supported by some resources/funding and secondments. (Deliver pilot service in Q3 2021 and full service in 2022)
4. Support BTC work up new programmes for **existing and emerging skills gaps for knowledge based businesses** (2021-3)
5. Explore the setting up a **CPD/Post Graduate Study Centre at TDIC and the Zenith Innovation Centre** in collaboration with the BTC and partner universities (2021-23)
6. Work to secure some **specific university commitments in SWT**. Set out a high level evidence base and a proposition (ie a Somerset Universities Partnership Prospectus) and engage in a high level dialogue with a number of universities at the highest level that seeks to secure a long term strategic commitment and presence in SWT and elsewhere in Somerset(2021/2)
7. Work up an **Innovation and Enterprise Communications** action plan aimed at changing perceptions for individuals, businesses, inward investment businesses and house buyers who operate in the knowledge-based sector (2021)
8. Consider **budgetary implications** of the *Action Framework* for the next 3 years (2021) notably:
  - a) Capital and revenue funding associated with the launch and delivery of the TDIC (TBC over the period 2021)
  - b) Capital funding for TDIC fit out and equipment funding (this might require ca £0.5m or more)
  - c) Revenue funding/secondments/office space in TDIC to support the establishment of a SWT knowledge exchange and innovation support service (further work is required to define this over the period 2021)

# 1 Introduction

## Background to the Assignment

EiBC was commissioned by Somerset West and Taunton Council (SWT) to provide an independent assessment of SWT's innovation assets and enable it to focus on and support businesses and other knowledge based organisations in *cleantech* (including nuclear, renewable energy, the circular economy), *digital* (including opportunities associated with the UK Hydrographic Office) and *healthcare/medtech*.

SWT wanted independent evidence on the validity of focusing on these domains and advice on what potential business support and physical concept interventions it might pursue that would support and accelerate economic development and other wider SWT policies including those associated with meeting its target of the District being Carbon Neutral by 2030<sup>12</sup>. A particular question was also to explore the strategic rationale for developing a SWT Science Park. The full Terms of Reference (ToR) for the work are set out in Appendix A.

## Why Support Innovation in SWT?

There is a wealth of evidence that knowledge based organisations are drivers of high-quality jobs, higher skills, growing jobs and those with more resilience. For example, the UK Government's *Industrial Strategy* places ideas and innovation as not only one of the UK's great historic strengths, but central to increased productivity. It sets out the case for more investment in research and development (R&D) and in turning ideas into strong commercial products and services, and to do this in every part of the UK.<sup>13</sup> The UK Innovation Road Map commits record levels of investment in R&D (£22bn by 2023) and to 'levelling up' actions to support the distribution of R&D investment outside the 'golden triangle'<sup>14</sup>. A host of other organisations<sup>15</sup> promote insight, research, techniques and interventions to support innovation with all of these underlining the fundamental role of local government acting in collaboration with knowledge based businesses, universities/colleges and civic society to address the challenge of increasing productivity and jobs, but also other goals such as those associated with climate change, enhanced quality of life and improved health and well-being.

From many research reports and sources we also know that there is extensive evidence that in SWT there are a set of challenging KPIs for the area to address around innovation, for example:

- A low level of R&D expenditure in companies relative to turnover and only one significant R&D asset, this being the HQ of the UK Hydrographic Office (see Chart 1)
- A relatively low level of Higher Education participation, ie a HE 'cold spot' (Chart 2)
- A comparatively older population (ie 24% of the population are over 65 in Somerset compared to 18% in the rest of England & Wales<sup>16</sup>)
- In terms of its workforce, a lower proportion of knowledge-based workers and a lower GDP/per capita<sup>17</sup>
- A number of areas in Somerset with high multiple deprivation especially in West Somerset and Sedgemoor<sup>18</sup>
- Low levels of inward investment

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<sup>12</sup> <https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/media/2320/swt-economic-development-strategy-2020-2024.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/industrial-strategy-the-foundations/industrial-strategy-the-5-foundations>

<sup>14</sup> UK Innovation Road Map (2020)

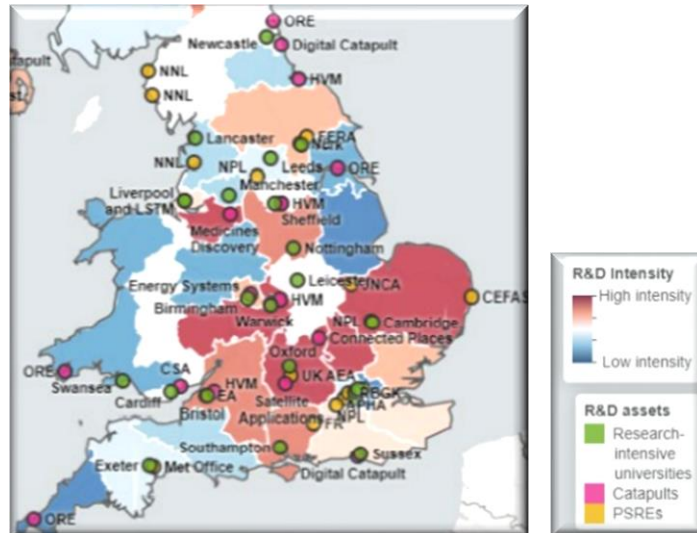
<sup>15</sup> For example, NEST, UKSPA, OECD see for example [www.oecd.org/innovation/research/1842070.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/innovation/research/1842070.pdf) · PDF file

<sup>16</sup> ONS 2019 (see HJA 2019)

<sup>17</sup> <https://gw4.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/SWW-SIA-MainReport-Final.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> The number of 'highly deprived' neighbourhoods in Somerset (categorised as being within the 20% most deprived in England) increased to 29 in IMD 2019, up from 25 at the time of IMD 2015. Around 47,000 Somerset residents now live in a neighbourhood (LSOA) identified as one of the 20% most deprived in England. <http://www.somersetintelligence.org.uk/indices-of-deprivation-2019-somerset-summary.pdf>

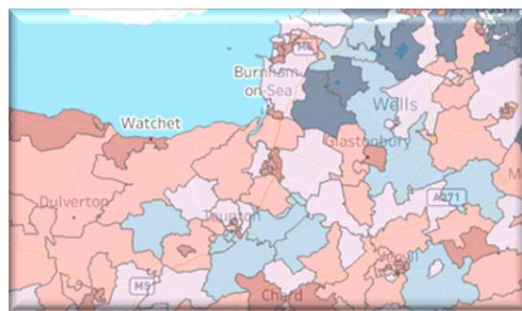
Chart 1: Selected R&D Assets & R&D Intensity



Source: R&D Road Map 2020

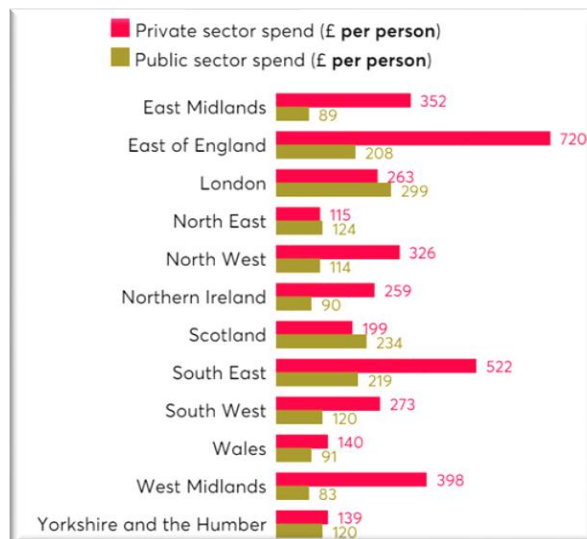
Note: Regional R&D intensity is calculated as GDP expenditure on R&D divided by GDP

Chart 2: HE Participation



Source: HESA/POLAR 2018

Chart 3: UK Private and public sector spend on R&D



Source: <https://www.nesta.org.uk/innovation-policy/>



The Heart of the South West LEP (HotSW) has recognised these challenges and its strategy concentrates on supporting the ‘dynamic heart’ of the economy, (clean energy, engineering and digital) where there are significant opportunities to drive up productivity, transform the economy and deliver against national grand challenges. Harnessing these opportunities and the interplays between them will drive ‘*clean, inclusive and productive growth across the area*’<sup>19</sup>.

The SWT Council has stated there has been an historic lack of clarity about the public policy innovation message and a perception that there is: ‘*inadequate support for enterprise and innovation*’ and a ‘*fragmented approach that has not been spread evenly across its geography. ....the Council has not been very proactive*’ (SWT Economic Development Strategy 2020-24)

From our early work on this assignment EIBC also recognised that whilst there was a wealth of research studies assessing the *general issues of economic development performance* – less has been focused on *practical actions*. In this report, whilst we have rooted our thinking in evidence, we have focused less on presenting extensive background data and more on our recommendations for how opportunities can be explored further and practical action taken forward<sup>20</sup>.

In part this reflects our own predilection for action-focused research and advice, but also because since the commissioning of our work, capital funding of £9.3m has been secured from HotSW, SCC, ERDF and SWT (the latter as landowner)<sup>21</sup> to develop a new 3,000 square metre Taunton Digital Innovation Centre at the Firepool site. A condition of this funding package approval is that it needs to be delivered by Spring 2022 and on this basis the delivery partners have committed to start construction work in January 2021.



Chart 4 Development Concept for the Taunton Digital Innovation Centre (TDIC).

This new investment and the level of engagement secured from businesses to use and take space in the TDIC<sup>22</sup> has the *capacity* to be part of a *transformation* towards a more vibrant knowledge based economy in SWT and a trigger for wider successes. But as we set out in our report, much more is required to fulfill the ambitions of the Council and secure a lasting change.

### Innovation Work Programme

Our work programme has in summary involved three principal areas of work:

- **Building a clear understanding of SWT’s Innovation Assets** through
  - background research on the local and regional business and economic development and planning context, including reviews of many previously commissioned reports
  - holding consultations and workshops with

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<sup>19</sup> Underpinning this, will be action on each of the five foundations identified in the National Industrial Strategy: Ideas, People, Infrastructure, Business Environment and Place. See HotSW Industrial Strategy

<sup>20</sup> EIBC is also aware that a 2 year MIT REAP Programme has been on-going since February 2020 among 10 leading figures at the HotSW level. Our approach to understanding innovation ecosystems assets, engage with stakeholders, designing strategy and actions is similar to the MIT programme, albeit that we have been able to be more granular by focusing on SWT. We hope that the output of this report will feed into the thinking and outputs from the MIT programme

<sup>21</sup> This is subject to final business case approval from ERDF, SCC, SWT and HotSW/Get Building Fund

<sup>22</sup> Over 90 businesses and organisations have confirmed their interest in supporting, using and/or taking space in the TDIC as a part of the Full Business Case

- the SWT Council members and officers and with partner local authorities and with the HotSW LEP on matters associated with policy, ambition, direction of travel and funding
  - knowledge intensive based businesses and organisations including the NHS around their business activities and in particular their challenges, plans and ambitions in regard to R&D, innovation and business growth
  - university and college organisations around research, knowledge exchange and commercialisation and skills issues and partnerships
  - developers and land owners
- **Drawing on our own UK and international experience** of best practice in innovation and holding some selected consultations with UK based organisations
  - **Bring together our analysis and conclusions and discussing these with SWT senior officers and members**

**Consultations**

In building a clear understanding of SWT innovation assets, the consultations we have held with senior executives have proved to be critical to our work. These were gratefully facilitated through the excellent connections that the Council has built up in the recent past with these organisations. Significantly, the consultations held were at CEO/MD/Director level and were not only informative and positive, but crucial in influencing our recommendations about building the power of a local *innovation network capacity* and the possibilities of developing the ‘soft power’ of an innovation board and cluster groups (see Chapter 6 and 7) and, in due course, deploying an approach to *Integrated Project Management* for delivery. The grouping of the consultees by sector and domain is reflected in Chart 5 below.

**Chart 5: List of Consultee Organisations**

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. SWT Council Portfolio leaders</li> <li>2. SWT Directors/Managers</li> <li>3. Sedgemoor District Council</li> <li>4. Somerset County Council</li> <li>5. HotSW</li> </ol>	<p>Digital, InsurTech, MarineTech</p> <p>Health</p> <p>MedTech, Advanced Eng with Health</p> <p>Clean Tech incl, energy, waste, materials</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Digital Taunton</li> <li>2. CICCIC/Creative Sector</li> <li>3. The Claims Consortium</li> <li>4. Western Provident Association</li> <li>5. UK Hydrographic Office</li> <li>6. Somerset NHS Foundation Trust</li> <li>7. SW Academic Health Science Network</li> <li>8. Somerset CCG</li> <li>9. DEOS</li> <li>10. Rutherford Diagnostics Ltd.</li> <li>11. Novanta/Cambridge Technology</li> <li>12. UXC Group</li> <li>13. Singer Instruments</li> <li>14. SWMAS</li> <li>15. Somerset Energy Centre</li> <li>16. EDF</li> <li>17. Viridor</li> <li>18. Biohm</li> <li>19. Onion Collective</li> <li>20. Somerset Waste Partnership</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Bridgwater and Taunton College/South West Institute of Technology</li> <li>2. University of Exeter</li>    <li>3. Nexus/Cushman &amp; Wakefield</li> <li>4. Gravity</li> </ol>
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Note: For a full list of consultees names see Appendix B

**Key Questions for the Assignment**

EiBC also wanted to underpin our work by asking a series of key questions at the outset:

- **Sectors, Domains and Innovation Assets:** Can EiBC validate and give further insight into the Council’s ambitions to focus on Clean Tech, MedTech and Digital? What are SWT’s actual *business-based innovation assets* and what and where are the *opportunity areas*? Where might SWT focus its efforts and possible areas of support?

- **Locations and Sites for Innovation:** Over and above the Taunton Digital Innovation Centre (TDIC) is there a need and a market for another innovation centre or science park? If yes, where are the options - in Taunton or outside the town? If not, are there other physical interventions and support that are needed? Should any physical interventions be based on a single location and site or involve an innovation network approach involving multiple sites?
- **Supporting Knowledge-based businesses:** Having an effective knowledge exchange and innovation support service is in EiBC's experience critical to grow knowledge-based business clusters and sustain vibrant innovation centres and science parks. What might SWT consider to establish this type of service?
- **Skills/Talent for Innovation:** Attracting, growing and retaining talent and skills is also a crucial success factor for any innovation cluster. Based on this, what might be needed to strengthen local skills for innovation?
- **Policy, Governance & Funding for Innovation:** What is the alignment between central government, HotSW and SCC policies and SWT's current policies and the District Council's innovation assets and opportunities. Also how can good governance help achieve SWT's innovation ambitions, are there any innovation related implications for the current options associated with local government re-organisation and what are the implications for funding?
- **Branding/Promotion for Enterprise and Innovation:** Finally, what messages might SWT consider to promote inward investment for innovation?

Of course, a further consideration running through all of these questions is the impact of Covid 19.

## Report Structure

The rest of this report is structured as follows:

- The next section provides a summary of the innovation assets within SWT, making reference to its wider catchment. We define these assets as the businesses and other organisations that are knowledge intensive and actively involved in *investing in R&D and implementing new or significantly improved products and services, processes, marketing methods, or organizational methods for customers, the community and secure natural environment benefits*. In this section we also comment on the alignment of these assets with policies and ambitions at the UK and regional level.
- In Sections 4-7 we then set out action areas around three organising themes: establishing a Thriving Innovation District in Taunton; Securing an Innovation Legacy from Hinkley; Creating a Biomanufacturing and the Circular Economy Demonstrator; and Establishing the Underpinning Support for Innovation
- In Section 8 we summarise our key recommendations.

## 2 Innovation Assets

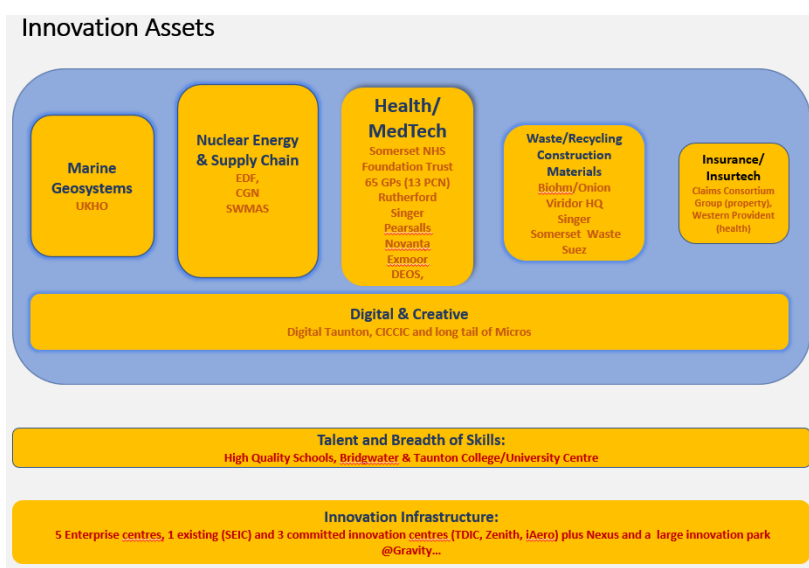
### Innovation Assets in SWT

In undertaking this work we have undertaken a high level scanning exercise to identify knowledge and innovation based organisations. We have done this by drawing on a range of secondary research sources, including a number of reports commissioned by SWT, SCC, HotSW and the UK government, the Innovate UK data base of grants given to businesses, as well as from intelligence drawn from the consultations we have undertaken. As it is a scanning exercise we have therefore not mapped every organisation involved in innovation, but have built a sufficiently clear picture of SWT's main business based innovation assets to inform our analysis and *Framework for Action*.

Our high level summary of the Innovation Assets in SWT is illustrated in Chart 5 (highlighted in blue) and these operate in the six broad domains:

- **marine geosystems**, represented almost exclusively by the government research organisation the UK Hydrographic Office (UKHO);
- **clean tech/ energy sector**, including the nuclear energy businesses associated with Hinkley and including energy construction, operation and decommissioning (and including EDF, CGN and SWMAS its associated supply chain, in addition to the onshore and off shore renewables businesses);
- **clean tech/circular economy**: a smaller but distinctive group of businesses operating in the waste, recycling and biomanufacturing sectors and the circular economy;
- **health/medtech cluster**: a significant cluster of healthcare delivery, medtech, eHealth, advanced original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) operating in the healthcare markets;
- **insurance/insurtech**: a small but again distinctive group of companies in property insurance and health insurance; and
- **digital and creative**: a significant cluster of micros operating in the digital and creative sectors. We positioned the latter in the Chart as cross-cutting as these sectors tend to interact with many of the others around for example, industrial design, ICT, digital design, software publishing and solutions, telecommunications, computer programming, communications, etc.

Chart 6 Innovation Assets Summary



The chart also refers to skills and the institutions that are crucial in supporting innovation skills and research and to innovation infrastructure, ie the enterprise, innovation and science parks. We comment on these later in this Section.

### **UKHO and Marine Geospatial Data Systems**

The UKHO is the largest hydrographic office in the world and its headquarters, with a workforce of 850, is located in central Taunton. UKHO provides marine geospatial services to ship owners, governments, and logistics businesses and *90% of all global marine trade* and some 50,000 vessels use UKHO services. UKHO also undertakes research on coastlines, for example, on data and change in mangroves, kelp and seagrass.

Its business focus is on data collection, aggregation, analysis and the core part of its £168m business derives income from map sales and licenses. UKHO is sponsored by the MoD, receives no public sector annual grant and generates a significant annual surplus for the Treasury.

Its staff include some 450 geo-spatial specialists (geographers, cartographers, climatologists, oceanography, acoustics, marine data, water profiling, marine biologists etc), some 150 software engineers, data scientists and astrophysicists) and around 250 other managerial and support staff. It has a number of commercial and university partnerships around the globe.

A key challenge for UKHO is responding to the digitalisation of marine data and the competition that will ensue from a more open market in global marine data services.



The UKHO and the UK government through the setting up of the Geospatial Commission<sup>23</sup> recognize the scale of this challenge and also the new opportunities associated with the 'blue economy' - this estimated to be worth £3.2 trillion by 2030. Marine geospatial data is expected to play an essential role in supporting this growth, for example, by enabling the identification of new areas for tidal and wind generation, supporting safe navigation for larger autonomous ships and playing a vital role in mitigating the effects of climate change.

In September 2020 the UKHO launched a Pilot Accelerator Programme<sup>24</sup> to attract research and commercialisation partnerships, with this a very significant new step in exploring new markets and commercial opportunities. The programme comprised 4 mini-competitions based around: autonomous marine navigation systems; marine risks and insurance; offshore renewables; and carbon sequestration/sea level rises plus an internal UKHO project. The competition has already attracted over 35 submissions from the UK and overseas commercial partners and the UKHO has already selected a small number of good potential projects to progress and award – not only a prize of £175k but access to further UKHO partnership working in 2021 and beyond.

Th pilot programme is already been viewed as a success and there is a very good case for it to be further developed, expanded and supported further. It will be important for SWT and HotSW to support this further and also seek to secure local innovation and economic development benefits from

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<sup>23</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/geospatial-commission>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ukho-launches-new-innovation-programme-to-support-development-of-the-blue-economy>

the programme. SWT might could offer to provide business space in the TDIC offer to successful UKHO partnerships and together with HotSW support the continuation and expansion of the programme.

Like all knowledge based organisations talent recruitment, training and retention is also a key issue for UKHO. Efforts to strengthen SWT as an attractive location for knowledge based workers is therefore important, as are perceptions and practical arrangements for networking, continuing professional development and apprenticeships.

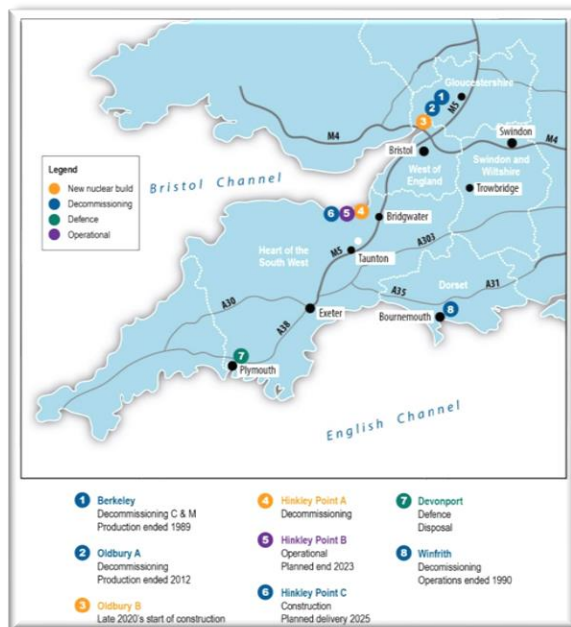
**UKHO opportunities that are discussed later are:**

- How the UKHO might sustain its Pilot Accelerator Programme?
- How UKHO/university research partnerships can be strengthened as well as those with the HotSW Marine Sector strategy
- How the UKHO might link with the Met Office/University of Exeter Environmental Accelerator?
- How the UKHO might use the Taunton Digital Innovation Centre?
- What more might be explored to promote UK and international inward investment around marine data systems?
- What talent and skills initiatives might be progressed that support UKHO requirements and the growth of businesses in this domain?

**South West Nuclear Sector and Local Innovation Assets**

A major hub within the South West nuclear sector is located around Hinkley Point A, B and C. (see Chart 7) with much of the local business and economic activity clustered in the West Somerset and Bridgwater area.

**Chart 7 Major Nuclear Sites in the South West<sup>25</sup>**



Hinkley A: is one of the 17 earliest nuclear power stations which have now ceased operation and are being decommissioned by the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) / Magnox. Hinkley A closed in 2000 and decommissioning work is in progress. Hinkley B: is one of the second generation of nuclear

<sup>25</sup> Nuclear Sector Capability of the South West of England, 2018, Frazer Nash Consultancy

power stations, the advanced gas cooled reactor (AGR) fleet operated by EDF. The first EDF station to start decommissioning is likely to be Hunterston B in 2023, followed by Hinkley B in 2024<sup>26</sup>.

Hinkley C: is a new build nuclear power station being developed by EDF at an estimated cost of £20 billion. Construction work started in 2018 and it is due to be completed by 2023.

Many of the nuclear related businesses are located close to the M4, M5 and A30, with Bristol home to the largest number of companies (34% of all entities and including EDF's south west HQ). According to the Science and Innovation Audit,<sup>27</sup> there are also notable clusters around Bridgwater, as well as Gloucester and Cheltenham, but not the SWT area.

Key business, innovation and skills support assets include the following:

- **Nuclear South West (NSW)** was established in 2015 and is an industry-led cluster supported by government, academic and education stakeholders which *coordinates dialogue between the partners and provides the region with one unified voice for developing and managing new projects and investments*
- **Hinkley Supply Chain Team** is a collaboration of Somerset Chamber of Commerce, South West Manufacturing Advisory Service (SWMAS) and Business West with EDF Energy at Hinkley Point C. The consortium uses their local knowledge and expertise to *support businesses in Somerset and the South West to compete for Hinkley Point C contracts*
- **Somerset Energy Innovation Centre (SEIC)** is close to Junction 23 on the M25 and a hub for *businesses seeking to collaborate and exploit opportunities in the low carbon and nuclear energy sectors*, particularly in relation to the new build development at Hinkley C. SEIC 1 opened in February 2016, is ca 30,000 ft<sup>2</sup> and home to ca 40 businesses. SEIC 2 opened in 2018 and is ca 20,000 ft<sup>2</sup> of mostly office space but includes 3,500 ft<sup>2</sup> of technology workshop space as well. It is operated by the (SWMAS). A third SEIC building of 1,000 square feet is planned for delivery by Q3 2021.



- **National College for Nuclear (NCN)** is part of Bridgwater and Taunton College (BTC) and is located on the College's Cannington Campus near Bridgwater. It provides tailored training programmes for the nuclear sector and specifically it works with EDF to provide the skilled workforce it needs for the construction of Hinkley Point C. It will also provide a potential a legacy for future training needs of employers and learners for other regional and national needs. Extensive work with EDF energy and its supply chain has highlighted specific training needs including steel fixing and form working, plant operations, and engineering as well as wider skills to support the major infrastructure impact of this project.

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<sup>26</sup> A Review of Nuclear Capabilities in the South West, 2020, SWMAS

<sup>27</sup> Based on Nuclear Industry Association members list of individual business units

- **Construction Skills and Innovation Centre (CSIC)** is also part of Bridgwater and Taunton College (BTC) and is also located on the College's Cannington Campus. The CSIC was built in partnership between the College, HotSW LEP and EDF Energy. It replicates a real-life construction site, with industry-standard plant, machinery and equipment, and provides critical skills training and apprenticeships for infrastructure construction, including nuclear new build at Hinkley Point C
- **Advanced Centre for Engineering (ACE)** is also part of BTC on the College's Bridgwater Campus. It provides skills training and support for advanced electrical engineering industries, and is a key partner in this respect for Hinkley Point C
- **Centre of Excellence for Welding** BTC has recently secured funding for this new facility which will also be based at its Bridgwater campus. The College has worked collaboratively with Weldability Sif, South West Institute of Technology (SWIOT), EDF and HotSW LEP to bring forward the project. It aims to develop, support and standardise the supply of high quality welders within the region, not only to support Hinkley Point C but to ensure a legacy of a highly skilled workforce which will be attractive to inward investors in the future.
- **South West Nuclear Hub** is based at the University of Bristol and incorporates the Nuclear Research Centre (NRC), which is a collaboration between Bristol and Oxford universities. It aims to reduce the cost of nuclear and grow research and teaching activities, driven by industry demand
- **Hinkley Point C Supply Chain Innovation Lab** is based at the University of Bath. It is a partnership between Hinkley Point C and the University of Bath School of Management based on a donation by EDF for a five-year period. The aim of the Lab is to deliver insightful and impactful research focusing on complex supply networks and connecting business leaders, policymakers and academics.

Beyond nuclear there are a range of other energy assets with emerging innovation related opportunities in the South West and some of these are represented in the SWT area. However, our scoping work suggests that a number of these assets or opportunities are yet to be fully assessed and represent a specific innovation related opportunity at this time, for example:

- **Renewable Energy** technologies and applications will have a range of positive business implications for SWT, but our study has not revealed any significant innovation based businesses in the area. Renewable energy is a major strength in the South West, especially marine renewables, with easy accessibility from ports and with clusters of specialist industrial and academic activity spread across the region, mostly in Devon and Cornwall. These areas also have a number of significant research assets.<sup>28</sup> The proposed Atlantic Array project<sup>29</sup> in the Bristol Channel may have significant implications for SWT but at the present time this project has been shelved, amid environmental concerns
- **Distributed / smart energy systems** whilst recognised to be a major UK opportunity and the SW region has limited capacity in the grid network<sup>30</sup> a pilot Active Management System is in Bridgwater

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<sup>28</sup> For example, the Offshore Renewable Energy Catapult, research centres and testing facilities relating to marine renewables (Plymouth is the largest marine institute in Europe and the home of Plymouth Marine Laboratories - PML), Exeter's Marine Energy Group, the WaveHub facility and the Marine Enterprise Zone, Plymouth

<sup>29</sup> An array of 220m high turbines would produce electricity to power around 900,000 homes

<sup>30</sup> Ibid



- **Carbon Offsetting** Seizing more carbon offsetting markets, in relation natural assets such as the SWT coastal margins, as well as from energy crops and building projects<sup>31</sup> may represent a range of innovation related opportunities. However, we have not been able to identify these as sufficiently distinctive or developed in the SWT area
- **Retrofit** Retrofitting older housing stock is acknowledged as a key challenge in reducing carbon, with this housing accounting for 17% of energy related CO2 emissions. This is dominated by space heating<sup>32</sup> and recent Government funding support measures will accelerate the retrofit of social and market housing and support to decarbonise public buildings, including schools and hospitals. Like many other areas SWT will have a need to consider how several thousand dwellings can be retrofitted and this may stimulate new innovation in testing, materials, marketing, skills and monitoring.

#### Key Energy Opportunities

- The focus to date in energy has been on nuclear construction, supply chains, skills for construction and on providing some support for impacted communities
- First mover opportunities associated with building on and replicating services for other nuclear construction sites, especially Sizewell, but also potentially other sites around the world offer significant potential opportunities
- There appears to be a lack of focus on funded innovation legacy assets beyond the completion of the Hinkley C or related to the decommissioning of Hinkley A and B in the form of research centres and businesses that are located in SWT (or Sedgemoor)
- Links to other clean energy initiatives within SWT might offer opportunities eg renewable energy associated with waste/circular economy initiatives

#### Health, MedTech and Photonics

A significant cluster of knowledge-based organisations and businesses operate in the health care delivery, health care research, ehealth service delivery and in photonics manufacturing – largely in the Taunton area. NHS organisations dominate employment, but there is also a strong private sector business base.

The largest of organisations in this cluster is the **Somerset NHS Foundation Trust**.<sup>33</sup> It provides community and mental health services across the whole of Somerset and acute hospital services in the north, west and centre of the county and beyond. Its workforce comprises over 9,000 employees, ranging from therapists to nurses, doctors, researchers, scientists and its support staff. Musgrove Hospital in Taunton accounts for approximately half of the workforce and has nearly 600 beds, 30 wards, 15 operating theatres, a fully equipped diagnostic imaging department and a purpose built cancer treatment centre. It also has around 350 active research projects running at any one time and contributes to training the next generation of nurses, doctors and therapists and conducts research that helps advance clinical practice and treatments. Work is underway at Musgrove Park Hospital that will benefit from a major hospital building programme (Musgrove 2030) involving ca £450m of investment, with this including a new maternity and children’s building and the further development

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<sup>31</sup> A proposal is that carbon offsetting from new building projects is secured at a planning application stage  
<https://www.bristol.gov.uk/documents/20182/3368102/Carbon+Offsetting+in+the+West+of+England.pdf/894f7c11-33e4-a8b4-ec89-383828553184>

<sup>32</sup> <https://www.eti.co.uk/insights/housing-retrofits-a-new-start>

<sup>33</sup> Formed in April 2020 from Somerset Partnership NHS Foundation Trust and Taunton and Somerset NHS Foundation Trust

of its cancer and emergency services. This is in addition to a new surgical centre, acute assessment hub, therapies department and maternity refurbishments at the hospital, which are already underway. The Musgrove Hospital site is very constrained and it is understood that there may be some opportunities to relocate some non-acute services off-site as a part of this programme. This in turn may create opportunities to redesign services and co-locate other knowledge based businesses with these ventures.

The Trust is active in developing new approaches and partnerships in digital health applications and an exemplar in this regard is in its Cancer Register Service that has been developed by the Trust and rolled out to over 100 organisations in the UK and overseas. The register allows clinicians to track a patient through their whole cancer journey, from GP referral through to treatments and follow-up, with real-time data capture. The Trust is developing two similar products for patients who have suffered strokes or have diabetes.



An approach that secures partnership working with the private sector has also been developed with Rutherford Diagnostics (see below) and the ambition is to explore other potential areas where mutual benefits can be secured, for example, in proton therapy, pathology, audiology. The Trust is also keen to support the local expansion of Nursing with the College (see later).

Below we highlight other organisations that make up this significant cluster of health, medtech and photonics companies almost exclusively located in Taunton. This sector comprises at least 1,000 employees, with this excluding employees in NHS England, the Clinical Commissioning Groups and SCC's social care responsibilities, the 65 GPs and 13 Primary Care Networks, the SW Academic Health Sciences Network and education and training organisations operating in health and care.

- **Rutherford Diagnostics** provides advanced cancer care in the UK and internationally, building a network of oncology centres known as the Rutherford Cancer Centres. They provide CT, MR, Ultrasound, Endoscopy, PET/CT and Genomics services, provide staff, buildings and undertake research and education placements. They have a strategic equipment and research partnerships with Philipps, Elektra and IBA and their infrastructure investment with Equitix. The outcome of a new partnership with NHS Somerset Foundation Trust is that the Zenith Building at Blackbrook, Taunton will be refurbished and operational by the Q3 2021, this providing diagnostic services that will include Computed Tomography, Magnetic Resonance Imaging, Ultrasound, X-Ray and other relevant diagnostic services. In part this will be facilitated by Rutherford's health technology partner, Philips and would be accommodated on the ground floor of the Zenith Building. The building is also planned to host some Trust research and innovation activities (on one of its other two floors) and another floor will be designed to host and support other MedTech, eHealth businesses. Plans for this innovation venture are at an early stage of development
- **Novanta (trading as Cambridge Technology)** designs, develops, and manufactures innovative laser beam steering solutions with its key markets in advanced industrial and electronics processes, health care laser-based medical procedures, and scientific applications. Medtech is seen as a significant and growing sector and the company is embarked on a growth strategy. Novanta has recently announced that it is moving from its older premises in central Taunton to new premises on the Crown Estate, expanding its services and employment



and further developing its R&D and innovation services. Novanta currently employs around 50 staff and Taunton is a major UK business centre within a global Novanta network of businesses.

- **Singer Instruments** is located in West Somerset and is a technology provider operating in a variety of technology areas and medical fields, for example, catheters and transducers, electronic pills, surgical tools and implants, robotic systems. It has global research partnerships and markets and is planning on major expansion over the next 3-5 years. This will require new premises and a new location. Singer employs around 40 staff
- **Surgical Specialties Taunton, trades as Pearsalls**. Pearsalls has transitioned to the manufacture of medical devices from its original set of core competencies of twisting, braiding, dyeing and coating. The site covers 65,000 square feet with 30,000 square feet of manufacturing area and it employs around 200 staff. The company HQ is in Taunton and it trades globally. It discovers, develops, and markets innovative technologies and medical products primarily for local diseases or for complications associated with medical devices
- **Amphenol Thermometrics**. Amphenol Thermometrics is part of a global US Amphenol Group businesses with Amphenol Thermometrics UK headquartered in Taunton (the Crown Estate). Its business provides advanced sensing technologies and embedded measurement solutions, for example, temperature, pressure, humidity sensors for: medical devices and medical instrumentation; and a range of sensor applications for the industrial pharmaceutical and transport sectors. Amphenol UK had a turnover of £27m in 2019 and employs around 130 staff
- **Exmoor**, located in central Taunton designs, develops, manufactures and markets sterile surgical devices for use in otorhinolaryngology (ie Ear, Nose and Throat treatments). Exmoor develops and manufactures for ENT/ORL, anaesthetics and pathology / histology / cytology and is a leading company in the field. In September 2020 Exmoor Plastics Limited was acquired by Robinson Healthcare Limited which is active in single use medical instruments.
- **Telemedic Systems** is a small business located in central Taunton with global markets and partnerships in integrated healthcare solutions, telemedicine and portable medical devices that can be used anywhere to transfer health data. The company moved from the USA to Taunton and retains strong links to a number of US health care partners.
- **DEOS** is a Taunton-based business that has developed a mobile service for radiography that can cut costs and speed up medical screening for breast cancer and other diseases. It has been supported by Innovate UK. Mobile medical screening involves the collection of digital images and their physical transportation to a centre where they can be processed and viewed. DEOS was initially based at the European Space Agency's Business Incubation Centre in Harwell, Oxfordshire, but moved to Taunton.
- **WPA** specialises in health care insurance and is located in Blackbrook Park Taunton. WPA moved from Bristol to a specially designed building and has made some significant innovations in the health insurance market. It was described by the World Health Organization as leading in the development of coinsurance, or "shared responsibility", policies, in which the patient pays a portion of the liability. Its turnover is in excess of £100m and has in excess of 250 employees. WPA is a 'not for profit' organisation and has significant CSR activities.
- **NHS England/Health Improvement** is one of the South West's NHS England's headquarter offices and is located in Blackbrook, Taunton, with a number of the leading directors and management staff based at this centre<sup>34</sup>.

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<sup>34</sup> Somerset CCG is based in Yeovil although a number of its staff are Taunton based.

- **Somerset CCG** is headquartered in Yeovil, but a number of its staff are located in the SWT area. Post Covid office working arrangements are likely to create some opportunities for flexible working not only from home but in appropriate co-working spaces such as the TDIC.
- **Somerset County Council** is the lead organization for adult and children care and for public health. It operates across the county and has its HQ in Taunton.

As a part of our work EIBC hosted a workshop involving senior staff from some of the above organisations. This revealed that this was the first time this domain specific group of businesses had come together. Moreover, although it was early days, there was an appetite to consider setting up a network group of likeminded businesses to exchange ideas, network and consider potential research, innovation and skills issues.

#### **Key Health/Medtech/Photonics Opportunities:**

- Taunton has a major cluster of health/medtech/eHealth organisations in the public and private sectors and there is clear evidence of growth and investment, the cluster is robust and operating in a growing local and international market and there are opportunities to grow this cluster further, focusing on local solutions for health care delivery and rest of UK and international export services
- There is a strong case that this cluster needs to be better reflected in economic policies
- There are opportunities for product design, university/NHS/ business research partnerships, spin-outs/spin-inns and space and knowledge exchange services to be provided at the Zenith Building and links to Taunton Digital Innovation Centre. The application of digital technologies and businesses applications will be key to many opportunities
- There is an appetite to consider a health, medtech cluster group
- The above has implications for inward investment in these domains and potentially there are a number of site specific opportunities that might emerge from further business growth, collaborations and clustering

#### **Biomanufacturing, Waste and the Circular Economy**

A nationally significant group of organisations are located in SWT, with their business interests in biomanufacturing, recycling and waste management. R&D and innovation is an important part of each of their organisations. We provide a brief introduction to these below:

- **Viridor:** Viridor is the largest recycling and energy recovery company in the UK, is headquartered in Taunton. In July 2020, Kohlberg Kravis Roberts, a global investment firm, bought Viridor in a £4.2bn deal. Viridor have a long history associated with the South West and has an active programme of R&D and innovation associated with recycling and the circular economy and the Director of Innovation is Taunton based. Earlier in 2020 Viridor led a collaboration designed to allow the South West and South Wales take responsibility for all the plastic consumed to give it a recycling solution.<sup>35</sup> It is now investing £65m in the UK's biggest multi-plastic recycling and reprocessing plant at Avonmouth with this expected to be finalised by the end of 2023. The project would represent a ground-breaking UK circular economy collaboration, integrating with Viridor's polymers investments to deliver a more complete plastics recycling solution. The project involves a German specialist partner, Plastic Energy.

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<sup>35</sup> Viridor has brought together 150 representatives of local authorities, trade bodies, recyclers and reprocessors, packaging manufacturers, consumer brands, the retail sector and NGOs involved in beach cleans and litter picks to consider a new regional initiative.

The new plastics recycling plant will be powered by energy created from non-recyclable waste as its fuel

- **Biohm:** Biohm is a biotech and biomanufacturing company based in London with innovative technologies in bringing new green construction materials and systems to market using local excess resources. A recent inward investment to Watchet, Biohm is establishing its first production plant in the UK and the ambition is to diversify into more bio-based construction products (eg biomanufactured construction boards, mycelium insulation boards, plant-based concrete and a biotechnology that consumes plastic). It also intends to develop a number of other related projects associated with the circular economy such as affordable housing using low carbon materials, renewable energy and research and skills initiatives underpinned by an innovative community partnership business model with the Onion Collective.
- **Onion Collective:** The Onion Collective is a social enterprise formed in 2013, with a focus on West Somerset / Watchet community regeneration. It is a place-based Community Interest Company (CIC) that operates with a systems change lens. Its focus has been on developing plans, securing funding and managing the delivery of projects associated with the regeneration of the town, but doing so in collaboration with the local community – demonstrating a socially just transformation of a local economy. This includes work on the site at Wansbrough Paper Mill, which closed in 2015 with loss of 175 local jobs. It currently employs 12 people and is now in the process of formalising a JV with Biohm regarding a community biomanufacturing facility at this former industrial site. Onion Collective has also devised and managed the delivery of a £7million cultural development on the town’s quayside, as well as a visitor centre/boat museum, a community garden and pavilion. Its Directors were previously involved in the establishment of the Minehead EYE project, a £3.2m youth centre initiative.
- **Singer Instruments:** previously referred to in health and medtech has a R&D collaboration in in automation and robotic instruments for synthetic biology with the BioFoundry Singapore. This involves the development of a new advanced and automated high-throughput colony picker to design and build biological parts and cutting edge devices to help fuel bio-based economies
- **Somerset Waste Partnership:** SWP is a partnership business operated through a joint board drawn from Somerset’s county council and its 4 district councils. Its responsibilities are for waste collection, waste disposal and recycling and it has an annual budget of ca £45 million. It has contracts with Viridor (for disposal) and SUEZ (for collections) and is independently ranked as a leading operator in England for carbon saving, emphasis on waste reduction, energy from waste solutions, recycling, education and changing behaviours.<sup>36</sup> Whilst recognising its limited ability to do so independently, it has a strong desire to support research, innovation and impact, in partnership with others, by using its operational knowledge, scale and influence. It also believes there is an opportunity for other parties to develop new knowledge based business opportunities associated with waste, for example, the provision of specialist advisory services to businesses for their waste, recycling, packaging and addressing climate change impacts.

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<sup>36</sup><http://modgov.southsomerset.gov.uk/documents/s29358/6%20updated%20Somerset%20Waste%20report%20on%20business%20plan%202020%20-%20dec%2019%20revised.pdf>

### Key Biomanufacturing, Waste and the Circular Economy Opportunities:

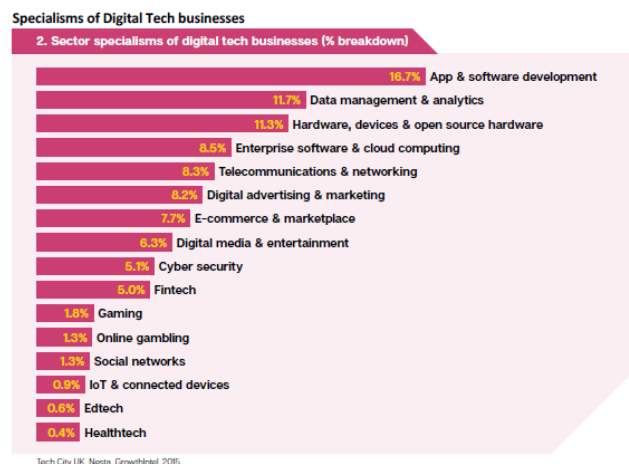
- SWT has significant business and local authority assets operating in waste, recycling, biomanufacturing for construction materials and the circular economy. These are of regional, UK and possibly international significance
- In November 2019 government committed UKRI funds of £22.5m in 5 research centres to tackle waste, boost recycling with UCL's and Exeter University's research centres both relevant to the SWT opportunities<sup>37</sup>
- Research, innovation, talent and skills will be crucial to support innovation in these domains. There are opportunities to open up partnerships with universities, research institutes, such as the Manufacturing Technology Centre and BRE and with BTC
- The large Watchet site is of particular relevance to this development

### Digital and Creative

The digital and creative sectors encompass a diverse range of activities; from telecoms to advertising, computer programming and computer software, product design, media and broadcasting, architecture, art, crafts, fashion, film, photography/video, music, performing arts, publishing. Creative businesses are based on work in which *ideas and innovation* are fundamental and many businesses incorporate digital technologies to engage and communicate whilst creativity and design disciplines are increasingly important to not only digital projects, but a wide range of other products and services.<sup>38</sup>

Government considers digital skills to be a top priority for investment, is seen as offering people greater employability and job resiliency<sup>39</sup> especially since the Covid 19 pandemic. Some of the skills and specialisms that it can apply to a wide range of business domains are illustrated in Chart 8

Chart 8 Specialisms of Digital Tech Businesses



<sup>37</sup> £22.5 million funding to turn industry waste into environmental wins - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))

<sup>38</sup> See for example DCMS 2015

<sup>39</sup><https://www.nesta.org.uk/innovation-policy/>

Digital<sup>40</sup> and creative<sup>41</sup> sectors are recognised as major industries in the UK context (£184 billion and £111 billion respectively) and have experienced rapid growth and widespread economic impacts. They are also dominated, especially the creative sectors, by a very large number of micro and self-employed businesses. They are also highly interconnected businesses and in the South West have partnership with, for example, Tech Nation, Tech South West, Enterprise Nation, Cosmic & the HotSW Digital Skills Partnership, the latter playing a role in supporting and delivering digital transformation programmes and digital upskilling.

Two membership organisations in SWT exemplify the significance of both sectors in the SWT area (Digital Taunton and CICC), whilst the Taunton Digital Innovation Centre represents a new and significant opportunity to grow the sector.

**Digital Taunton :** Digital Taunton (DT) is a 750 plus membership organisation established in 2018 with the aim of creating an active cluster for the digital community in the Taunton area. Digital Taunton engages with members ‘to collaborate, innovate, network and share knowledge and companies and individuals’<sup>42</sup> and the organisation hosts quarterly workshop events around digital topics (eg AI, Livestreaming, Digital marketing, Covid 19 impacts, etc). These regularly involve 50-80 attendees.

The organisation has been significant supporter of the Taunton Digital Innovation Centre and used its membership base to test the appetite to use and take space in the centre as a part of the funding business case. In a survey conducted by DT some 90 organisations indicated a positive interest in either using the centre, using services associated with the centre or taking space. The founders of DT see the organisation as an enabler and network support organisation to many other ‘sectors’ and areas of business – to the creative sector, environmental, energy and clean tech sectors, health and care, insurance/fintech/insurtech, education, advanced engineering and a distinctive feature of DT is its linkages and deep roots into the community of small companies and self-employed businesses that are often not well understood, recognised in economic development.

**CICC/SABCA:** CICC is a creative innovation and community interest company and social enterprise based in Taunton with a focus on supporting and enterprise, community and cultural activities. It provides enterprise business support services, product development, access to funding, networking and training and has an active programme of events and programmes. It also supports community arts space exhibitions, lectures, showcases and performance and has a mission to promote diversity. Somerset Arts Business Cultural Alliance (SABCA) is another Somerset-wide group of individuals and organisations working within communities and businesses that provide arts and culture services and support and grow the sector.

**Taunton Digital Innovation Centre:** As set out in the introduction to this report, the construction of the Taunton Digital Innovation Centre offers to be the beginning of a transformation around the actual and the perceived status of SWT as a location for knowledge based businesses.

The building is located in a high profile location at the Firepool site, close to the station, three storeys in height and will be able to host a range of activities associated with the knowledge businesses – all in an ‘open innovation’ based environment. This will enable many organisations to meet, network, host events, use as a demonstration space for products and services, collaborate on projects and joint

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<sup>40</sup> Tech Nation estimate the digital tech sector to be worth nearly £184 billion to UK economy, up from £170 billion in 2016.

<sup>41</sup> Before the pandemic, the creative industries were one of the fastest growing sectors, contributing £111 billion to the UK economy in 2018 . [12.22 Supporting the creative sector\\_05.pdf](#)

<sup>42</sup> <https://www.meetup.com/digitaltaunton/>

ventures, test new products and services, provide a space for public and schools engagement around innovation and occupy space in the building on flexible terms.

The 32,000 square feet phase 1 building (Gross External Area) is in the process of securing all of the capital funding of £9.636 million and construction is planned to start in early 2021 and be complete by Q3 2022. The project is on land owned at the SWT and a lease (at a peppercorn rent) has been agreed with SCC who have in turn helped secure additional funding from ERDF and central government (MHCLG).

**Chart 9 DTIC Capital Funding**

Funding Sources	£ Million
BRR funding	0.25 m
Somerset County Council Initial Capital	£1.6 m
Additional SCC	£0.708 m
ERDF	£1.688 m
MHCLG Getting Building Fund	£5.39 m
<b>Total</b>	<b>£9.636 million</b>

Note: Excludes land ownership and infrastructure related costs being borne by SWT

Like most innovation centres the design of the building is not being progressed to respond to any one particular user, although efforts are being made to ensure this takes account of the consultative work facilitated through SWT and Digital Taunton.

One issue that will require further consideration by SWT and SCC relates to the cost and funding of innovation equipment, furniture and fittings including the café and kitchen. Also the critical issue of who will run the centre and what innovation, business support services and facility management services this will include. We understand these matters are under consideration but also that no decisions or funding commitments have been made at this point. It is for this reason we highlight three points with these taken up in the following Chapters:

- Elsewhere EiBC has witnessed ‘innovation centres’ being brought to market with an inadequate level of thought around the importance of supporting equipment crucial to especially SMEs, micro businesses and self-employed, eg high quality/speed internet, printers, VC screens and rooms, design workshop equipment, 3D printers and some ‘dirty space’. This needs to be considered in the design stage and funded by the partners, or secured from additional fund raising, albeit that some costs might be charged through a service charge or rent.
- The quality of the interior of the building, especially the entrance, ground floor reception, café, informal meeting space, exhibition panels/digital screens will be crucial in setting the tone of the building and conveying the ‘energy’ and digital sector connections sought of by the partners. This needs to be carefully thought through at this stage and adequately funded to be successful. Elsewhere we have seen great ambitions for lively, creative and interesting innovation centres disappoint because inadequate thought and resources was not forthcoming with fit out, equipment and interior design.
- Most innovation centres invest in innovation and commercialisation services to support start ups, scale ups and fast growing knowledge based businesses for local economic development.<sup>43</sup> They do so in recognition that many companies are too slow to bring new

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<sup>43</sup> Investors such as universities, LEPs, local authorities, central government, the EU, private/voluntary sector funders and science park/innovation occupiers



products and services to market, while some others simply are unclear how they can do this, or simply do not have the time or resource to piece together the elements that enable innovation and business growth to take place. Innovation and commercialisation services provide a fresh source of ideas, bring technical, funding, finance, IP, marketing skills together and accelerate the speed of innovation. Importantly they can also help de-risk investments and attract talent, enhance skills and employee engagement and generally build a culture of innovation. These are also some of the reasons why many businesses, individuals, universities and students use innovation centres and accelerators programmes to spearhead new product and service development. It is for these reasons that we set out later our thinking on what we call a knowledge exchange and innovation support service – or an innovation operating platform for SWT

#### **Key Issues**

- Digital/creative businesses and organisations are already significant in SWT but a key challenge is how they can be sustained and grow post Covid in their own markets and also *how they might better connect and support* those businesses we have highlighted in the earlier Chapter, eg in global marine systems, energy, health and care, insurtech, photonics, waste, recycling and bio manufacture and the circular economy.
- There is a need to explore in detail the specifications and funding opportunities associated with the non-build elements of furniture, fittings, equipment and operations and including knowledge exchange and business support services
- Digital skills will be fundamental to securing the above outcomes and BTC has a major role in promoting and supporting innovation

### 3 Supporting and Enabling the SWT Innovation Assets

#### Introduction

As we have emphasised, at its heart, innovation and economic development is about people and organisations investing in R&D and implementing new or significantly improved products and services, processes, marketing methods, or organizational methods for customer, community and natural environment benefit. In this process, the public sector has a key support and enabling role - in setting policies that support innovation, providing gap/support funding, investing in skills and talent and providing knowledge exchange and business support services. It also has an important role in helping to create the right physical infrastructure for innovation and economic development and a supporting leadership role to encourage innovation culture, investment and services.

In this section, we briefly review and comment on these matters, namely:

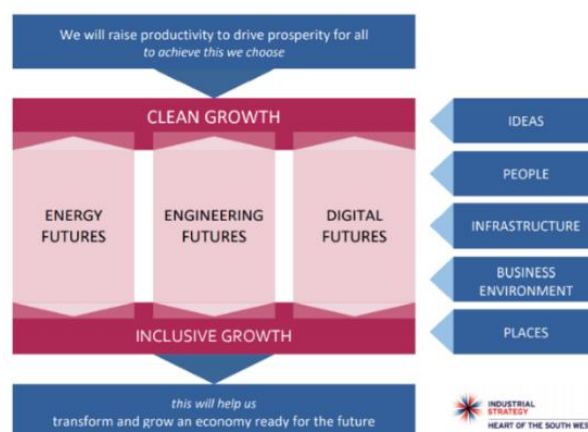
1. Policy Support and the alignment of policies with SWT’s Innovation Assets
2. Talent, skills and university research
3. Physical infrastructure in the form of specific innovation centres, enterprise centres and science parks. Also the pattern of physical clustering of innovation assets and the physical infrastructure
4. The knowledge exchange and business support services in SWT
5. Leadership and governance issues

#### Policy Alignment

In the *SWT Economic Development Strategy 2020-24* the Council has set out its support for innovation with this also underpinned by its commitment to make the area carbon neutral by 2030<sup>44</sup>. It also seeks to secure clean economic growth, inward investment, enabling research and innovation and providing employment land to meet different business needs and protect the built and natural environment and promote the Taunton Garden Town vision. The plan also highlighted the importance of supporting town centres, the arts and cultural provision and the development of the commercial elements of the Firepool site.

The HotSW LEP also has a range of policies that support innovation and like many other LEPs has established an Innovation Board led by the private sector to focus on its strategy and interventions. The Innovation Board will have an important role in shaping the implementation of the *Local Industrial Strategy*<sup>45</sup> and crucially focus on ensuring that the HotSW builds a strong innovation ecosystems based on its strengths and resources around clean and inclusive growth, energy, engineering and digital futures (see Chart 13).

Chart 13: HotSW Growth Strategy



<sup>44</sup> <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/business-and-economy/somerset-growth-plan/>

<sup>45</sup> <https://heartofswlep.co.uk/growing-our-economy/local-industrial-strategy/>

In reviewing all relevant policy documents it is clear that there is a high level of alignment and synergy between policies and strategies, for example, between the Government’s *UK Industrial Strategy*, the *UK R&D Road Map*, *HotSW LIS and Productivity Strategies* and a range of SWT, SCC, SNHSFT and BTC strategies and plans relevant to innovation in the SWT area. There is also alignment between HotSW priorities in Clean Growth, Energy Futures, Digital Futures and Inclusive Growth and policies and innovation assets at the SWT level.

Policy Context and Alignment: Selected Documents	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government’s Industrial Strategy</li> <li>• UK R&amp;D Road Map</li> <li>• Government Green 10 Point Plan</li> <li>• BEIS/InnovateUk/UKRI Strategies &amp; Funding Initiatives</li> <li>• Office for Students Annual Review</li> <li>• HotSW Local Industrial Strategy</li> <li>• HotSW Productivity Strategy</li> <li>• HotSW Coastal Productivity Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SWT Economic Development Strategy 2020-24</li> <li>• Somerset Economic Recovery &amp; Growth Plan</li> <li>• Somerset Climate Change Strategies</li> <li>• SWT Local Plan</li> <li>• Nuclear decommissioning agency strategies and legacy</li> <li>• EDF Hinkley DCO and s106 legacy funds</li> <li>• BTC Strategic Plan</li> <li>• SNHS Foundation Trust Strategic Plan /Musgrove 2030</li> <li>• SCC and CCG Health and Social Care Strategies</li> </ul>

However, the Health/Medtech strengths in SWT *do not* currently feature as economic strengths or priorities by HotSW and that based on our more granular understanding of SWT innovation assets EiBC believe there is a strong case for this cluster to be better recognised and supported in economic development and innovation strategies.

EiBC also believe that the assets and opportunities around waste, recycling , biomanufacturing and the circular economy should also have stronger policy priorities – this also reflecting the high priority given by SWT to being Carbon Neutral by 2030.

HotSW’s general innovation policy emphasis was set out by its Innovation Board in November 2020 with this informed by the MIT REAP programme<sup>46</sup>. This seeks to build a network approach to innovation around a multiple locations using a *regional technopole* concept and to invest in support for *knowledge exchange and business support services*<sup>47</sup>. This approach strongly accords with the conclusions reached by EiBC.

**Key Issues**

- There is general strong alignment of policies that support clean growth, engineering futures and digital futures with the innovation assets and opportunities in SWT.
- However, there are also some additional areas of focus where it would be helpful to have a better alignment between HoTSW policy ambitions and notable strengths in SWT, ie in
  - health and medtech and
  - bio-manufacturing, waste management and the circular economy.
- The emerging HotSW strategy that would focus on developing a regional network technopole approach supported by knowledge exchange and innovation business support services accords with EiBC conclusions based on circumstances in SWT. Taking into account the above points with regard health/medtech and biomanufacturing/waste/recycling – the emerging HotSW policy development around a regional technopole should be actively supported.

<sup>46</sup> <https://reap.mit.edu/>

<sup>47</sup> HotSW Innovation Board Paper November 2020

## Talent, Skills & University Research

Talent, skills and university research represent a crucial components of successful innovation systems. Universities in Bristol, Exeter, Bath and Plymouth surround the SWT area and a host of links exist between these and knowledge based businesses and organisations in the area, as well as with Bridgwater and Taunton College (BTC).

**Talent and Skills:** Bridgwater and Taunton College (BTC)<sup>48</sup> with its Taunton based ‘University Centre’ has been strengthened through its collaboration in the South West Institute of Technology (SWIoT).<sup>49</sup> The SWIoT has been designed to deliver a range of higher level programmes across the digital, engineering, construction and manufacturing sectors throughout the South West and has obtained £25million for this venture.

Significantly BTC is also the ‘Southern Hub’ for the UK’s National College for Nuclear (NCfN), located at Cannington in Sedgemoor. Finally the College operates a Multi-Academy Schools Trust with 5 schools at primary and secondary level – so it has a significant involvement at many levels and with a number of organisations.

Its College turnover is some £53m and the Schools Trust turnover around £19m. It has been successful in securing a range of capital grants, especially through its NCfN<sup>50</sup>, T Level Skills and IoT work and is now progressing capital developments to host a rapid expansion of degree level nursing programmes. Overall, the College recruits some 23,000 full time and part time students (2019) with nearly 700 at Higher Education (HE) level. The College employs some 1,000 staff.



A key issue for both BTC and knowledge based businesses is about what additional investment and new courses the College can make for *future skills* – especially those relevant to the innovation assets we have outlined earlier. Further work would be required to assess and quantify this, but our preliminary assessment is that key targets for growth would likely be at Levels 4/5 and 6, especially in Health and Social Care, including Nursing, but also in the Allied Health Professions,<sup>51</sup> Digital, Electronics and Advanced Engineering for Medtech and eHealth businesses and programmes around Environmental Waste Management, Biomimicry and the Circular Economy. A wide range of Digital skills need to be embedded in many of the above programmes and all programmes would benefit by being linked to placements and employer and community based projects. Digital programmes, for example, could be linked in particular to marine data applications, insurtech, ehealth, health diagnostics, public health, waste management and the circular economy, construction etc.

Working with the University of Plymouth BTC has already made major strides in devising new digital programmes and Chart 11 indicates new programmes that have been agreed in November 2020 to provide ‘hop-on & hop-off’ options, full and part-time options and flexibility.

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<sup>48</sup> Bridgwater & Taunton College is an amalgamation of Bridgwater College, Cannington College and Somerset College

<sup>49</sup> The SWIoT was established in 2019 following a successful bid to government and involved Exeter College, Truro College, PETROC College and the University of Exeter

<sup>50</sup> £15m was secured for the NCfN training centre

<sup>51</sup> <https://www.england.nhs.uk/ahp/role/>. For example, Art Therapists, Drama therapists, Music therapists, Chiropodists/podiatrists, Dietitians, Occupational therapists, Operating Department Practitioners, Orthoptists, Osteopaths, Paramedics, Physiotherapists, Prosthetists and Orthotists, Radiographers and Speech and language therapists

### Chart 11 New BTC Digital Programmes

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 HNC Computing and Digital Technologies (P/T and F/T)</li> <li>• L5 HND Computing and Digital Technologies (P/T and F/T)</li> <li>• L6 BSc (Hons) Computing and Digital Technologies (P/T and F/T)</li> <li>• L6 BSc (Hons) Top-up Computing and Digital Technologies</li> <li>• L4 Software Engineer Short Course (20 credits)</li> <li>• L5 Software Engineer Short Course (40 credits)</li> <li>• L6 Software Engineer Professional (60 credits)</li> <li>• L4 Cyber Security Short Course (20 credits)</li> <li>• L5 Cyber Security Short Course (40 credits)</li> <li>• L6 Cyber Security Professional (60 credits)</li> <li>• L4 Network Engineer Short Course (20 credits)</li> <li>• L5 Networking Engineer Short Course (40 credits)</li> <li>• L6 Networking Engineer Professional (60 credits)</li> <li>• L4 Web Development and Cloud Services Short Course (20 credits)</li> <li>• L5 Web Development and Cloud Services Short Course (40 credits)</li> <li>• L6 Web Development and Cloud Services Professional (60 credits)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• L4 Data Science Short Course (20 credits)</li> <li>• L5 Data Science Short Course (40 credits)</li> <li>• L6 Data Science Professional (60 credits)</li> <li>• L6 BSc (Hons) Digital &amp; Technology Solutions Professional Degree Apprenticeship (Software Engineer)</li> <li>• L6 BSc (Hons) Digital &amp; Technology Solutions Professional Degree Apprenticeship (Network Engineer)</li> <li>• L6 BSc (Hons) Digital &amp; Technology Solutions Professional Degree Apprenticeship (Data Analyst)</li> <li>• L6 BSc (Hons) Digital &amp; Technology Solutions Professional Degree Apprenticeship (Cyber Security Specialist)</li> </ul> <p>The package can also be infilled with the following Apprenticeship programme pathways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• L4 Higher Apprenticeship Cyber Security Technologist</li> <li>• L4 Higher Apprenticeship Data Analyst</li> <li>• L4 Higher Apprenticeship Software Developer</li> <li>• L4 Higher Apprenticeship Network Engineer</li> </ul>
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**University Research:** There are no specific university research centres or research activities *based in SWT* and of course no ‘University of Somerset’ and BTC’s University Centre is not a research centre. The consultations held with knowledge based businesses in SWT have nonetheless demonstrated that there are many research links and partnerships with SW regional universities and others in the rest of the UK and overseas. There are also links and funding support arrangements with government research funding organisations, such as Innovate UK and UKRI and NIHR.

In EiBC’s view it is significant that none of the above have any profile or location presence in SWT, or indeed in the rest of Somerset and we do not think this is inevitable. Indeed, we think there is a case to explore how *some selected university research activities* might be linked to and co-located SWT’s innovation asset base, especially where these are distinctive and scaleable and have possibilities of R&D co-investment with knowledge based businesses. Potential target areas could include nuclear and renewables research, global marine data systems; health/medtech; and waste/recycling and biomimicry.

**Knowledge Exchange and Innovation Business Support Services:** Knowledge based organisations in SWT can secure a range of knowledge exchange and innovation support services from SWT, SCC, HotSW<sup>52</sup> as well as from university led programmes for innovation, business recovery, scale up, export services, carbon reduction etc. Other UK government innovation support programmes offered through, for example, Innovate UK<sup>53</sup>, the OfS, NIHR and BEIS also provide a range of other opportunities for support and funding. As the HotSW Innovation Board has noted there is a case to

<sup>52</sup> For example, the MIT REAP programme

<sup>53</sup> For example the Innovate UK / Magnox Decommissioning Competition 2020

explore how these many services might be better facilitated to knowledge based businesses in the area. This is the conclusion also reached by EiBC and this is explored further in the following Chapters.

**University of Somerset:** Within the scope of this report, EiBC is not able to explore the wider issues associated with the feasibility of developing a 'University of Somerset', or indeed the alternative viable options. Nor in this study is it able to consider the issues around HE demand, the curriculum portfolio, the academic business model, viability, investment, governance and delivery etc<sup>54</sup>. That said we pose two key questions relevant to this innovation study:

- First, in the absence of a university in SWT/Somerset, how should SWT and SCC best secure specific and significant university research activities and knowledge exchange services that could benefit the SWT ecosystem? With this study demonstrating that there are significant innovation businesses, BTC and infrastructure innovation assets, there is now, in EiBC's opinion a more substantive basis to seek a strategic commitment from one or more universities to establish some niche university research and higher skills activities in SWT
- Second, to provide knowledge based businesses with improved access to university research resources and expertise there is a case to consider a 'go to' service. This could link, join, monitor and support existing and additional university/research centre links and opportunities, especially for SMEs and micros.

We pick up these issues in the following Chapters.

#### Key Issues

- Talent and skills for innovation and to sustain, attract and retain knowledge based businesses is fundamental. SWT and BTC is making major strides to address this challenge but deciding on which areas are supported with investment will always be a challenge and will need detailed follow up consultations and research.
- An important issue will also be to develop *some distinctive areas of the curriculum* that have wider UK and international student market potential. These areas may in turn drive research links and wider economic development opportunities and also student residential development.
- SWT and SCC need to consider how best it can secure university research investment located within the SWT/SCC areas – in selected research domains and potentially promote some niche post graduate study programmes.
- SWT working with other Somerset councils and HotSW needs to establish a more coherent knowledge exchange and innovation business support service.

#### Innovation Infrastructure

We define the innovation infrastructure as buildings that provide for existing knowledge based businesses premises (ie buildings accommodating the knowledge based businesses referred to earlier in this chapter) and innovation centres, science parks and mixed use developments specifically targeting knowledge based occupiers. Here we focus on the latter category, highlighting the

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<sup>54</sup> EiBC has considerable experience in this arena, having been the lead adviser in developing three entirely new universities and many other university centres and new university campuses

floorspace and domain focus of centres and their status in terms of those under construction, committed, or planned.

In summary, based on the wider SWT catchment include the following:

- Taunton Digital Innovation Phase 1 in the Firepool development Taunton
- Zenith in Blackbrook, Taunton
- Nexus, at Junction 25 in Taunton
- Somerset Energy Innovation Centre (SEIC), Phase 1 and the further phases 2 and 3 in Bridgwater and focused on nuclear/renewables
- Gravity at Junction 23 in Bridgwater
- the four Enterprise Centres located in SWT (ie those in Minehead, Wheddon Cross, Barle/Dulverton, Wiviliscombe)
- iAero Innovation Centre located adjacent to the Leonardo aerospace plant in Yeovil

As Chart 10 shows in 2020 there is only some 34,000 square feet specifically catering for knowledge based business (ie the SEIC and 10% of space at the Enterprise Centres<sup>55</sup>). However, this will increase to 124,000 square feet by 2022 when Zenith, TDIC and iAero are complete (nearly a fourfold increase) and in excess of 800,000 square feet (more than 20x increase) when the second phase of Firepool is developed and Gravity and Nexus are developed and available for knowledge based occupiers. This would be over and above any other locations that might be developed in the future. As such it is clear that there is a huge level of additional floorspace committed and coming on stream over the next 2-10 years, specifically targeting knowledge-based businesses.

**Chart 10: Innovation Floorspace in SWT and the surrounding catchment**

Development	Locations(s)	Focus	Status	Floorspace (NIA)
Somerset Energy Innovation Centre	Bridgwater	Renewable and Nuclear Energy	Existing	30,000 ft2
Somerset Energy Innovation Phases 2 & 3	Bridgwater	Renewable and Nuclear Energy	Under construction	20,000 ft2 and 10,000 ft2
Enterprise Centres	Minehead, Wheddon Cross, Dulverton, Wiviliscombe, Highbridge	General offices and units with some occupiers knowledge-based businesses	Existing	40,000 ft total with say 10% knowledge based
iAero	Yeovil	Aerospace/Advanced Engineering	To be complete 2020	26,000 ft2
Taunton Digital Innovation Centre Ph 1	Firepool, Taunton	Digital	Planned for 2022	30,000ft2
Taunton Digital Innovation Centre, Ph 2	Firepool, Taunton	TBC	Phase 2	30,000ft2 plus offices in Plot 3
Zenith Diagnostics and Innovation Centre	Blackbrook	Health/eHealth & MedTech	Planned for 2021	30,000 ft2
Gravity (J3)	Bridgwater	Offices, R&D, Light Industrial & Manufacturing	Committed with Infrastructure	Up to 296,700 ft2 <sup>56</sup>
Nexus (J5)	Taunton	Mixed use/R&D offices	Planning Brief	Ca 377,000ft <sup>57</sup>
Crown Estate	Taunton	Mixed site with light industry, knowledge based businesses, retail and storage	Existing with expansion space	Expansion space for excess of 300,000 square feet

<sup>55</sup> Based on advice from TDA we have assumed approximately 10% of space and occupiers are knowledge based

<sup>56</sup> We assumed one third of the total energy generation and manufacturing space is a 'knowledge intensive' business and 50% of the offices, R&D, light industrial and leisure is 'knowledge intensive'. The total floorspace for Gravity is ca 1.9 million square feet

<sup>57</sup> 150 acre site with a total Gross External Area (GEA) of 920,000 sq feet. EIBC estimate knowledge based businesses could occupy ca 377,000 sq ft based on a 80% GIA and 50% occupation from 5 plot areas shown as accommodating offices and R&D. Source from NEXUS 25 LDO DESIGN GUIDE Amendment Application - Revision A March 2019

This evidence shows that the private sector has responded to a perceived shortfall of business and innovation type space. In Bridgwater Salamanca, the developers of Gravity have brought forward 1.9million square feet of space, of which EiBC estimates some 300,000 square feet could be associated with knowledge based businesses.

In Taunton, Henry Boot, the developers of Nexus, are committed to creating the space and physical conditions for a mixed use development over a 150 acre site accommodating up to 920,000 square feet (GEA), of which EiBC estimates that some 377,000 square feet of space could be made available for knowledge based businesses. Gravity and Nexus developments have secured town planning consents/Local Development Orders and have also been supported through the funding of enabling infrastructure works.

These private sector led developments investments have not been replicated in West Somerset. However, the former 42 acre employment site at Watchet is currently the focus of a planning application by the Tameer Group<sup>58</sup>. The planning application is for a development of ca 350 homes, a hotel, care home development and some 54,000 square feet of employment land.

These employment and potential innovation land development opportunities do not include other existing business park sites, such as the Crown Estate in Taunton.

#### Key Issues

- the SWT and the Bridgwater area is in the process of witnessing a major additional level of space for knowledge based businesses in the next 2 years through the delivery of four new innovation centres, plus the iAero centre in Yeovil (116,000 square feet additional)
- the Gravity and Nexus developments will also provide for major scale knowledge developments and grown on space centre for some (677,000 square feet additional)
- Together with other sites such as Firepool Innovation Phases 2, Blackbrook and the Crown Estate, the above sites will be more than adequate for the foreseeable future. As such the real issues are more about creating the business conditions to grow, co-locating projects, the marketing proposition and attracting the right kind of knowledge based businesses
- For the Nexus development, place making and creating the right conditions for knowledge based businesses will remain very important given its location and greenfield character

#### Innovation Clustering

Based on our analysis of significant knowledge based businesses and organisations and of the infrastructure assets we have reviewed there is a clear picture of innovation clustering.

- In the north there is a major cluster of businesses concerned with the nuclear and renewable energy businesses (nuclear power station construction, nuclear power decommissioning), the BTC national nuclear power industry training centres, a specialist supply chain associated with these domains, including an innovation centre and support service (SEIC), two BTC college campuses including one focussed on rural/agriculture skills, and a large 'science park' (Gravity) with the developers seeking to secure major new energy, manufacturing and R&D businesses.
- In Taunton, a cluster of businesses and organisations focussed on global marine data, health care delivery and ehealth/medtech, photonics, digital and creative, with 2 major innovation centres coming on stream in the next 2 years and a major mixed use development at Nexus. Within this cluster, Musgrove Hospital will also see major investment in new hospital facilities

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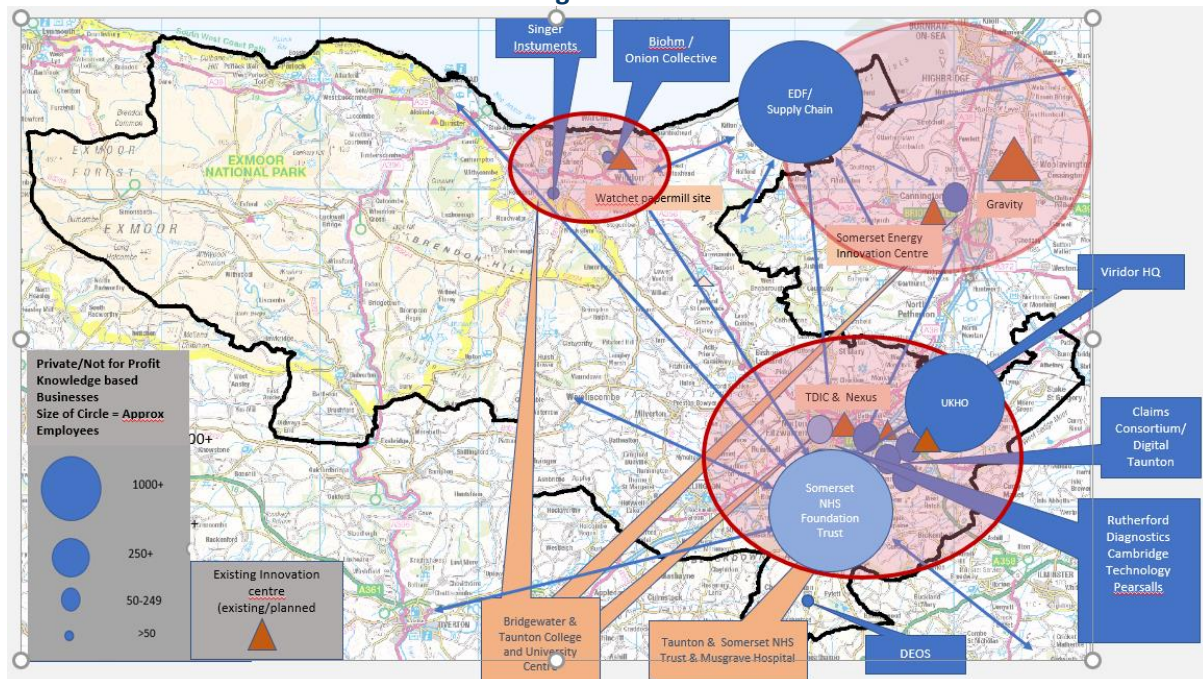
<sup>58</sup> [https://www.tameergroup.co.uk/?page\\_id=3340](https://www.tameergroup.co.uk/?page_id=3340)



and Bridgwater and Taunton College also plans to expand its main campus for nursing and health care training with new facilities, the latter also requiring new student accommodation.

- In West Somerset, a smaller emerging, but potentially significant cluster of business interests relate to bio-manufacturing, waste management (also in Taunton) and potentially education and training related to this opportunity. The clusters are illustrated in Chart 12 below.

**Chart 12: Innovation Clusters in SWT and Sedgemoor**



**Key Issues**

- Clustering conveys a significant aggregation of knowledge based businesses – almost certainly not perceived by knowledge workers, businesses and inward investors and this needs to be used to promote, support and strengthen the innovation ecosystem
- Clustering also conveys some potential connections that are not always explicit for different parts of the ecosystem eg for knowledge workers, businesses, educational institutions, students, public transport, cycling and potentially some implications for public realm infrastructure planning
- Clustering can offer some practical opportunities around the commonalities of challenge and opportunity and actions, eg around innovation oversight, the provision of knowledge based support services and knowledge based marketing actions – and generally building a local culture of innovation

## 4 Action Area A: Establishing a Thriving Innovation District in Taunton

### Introduction

In the following chapters we define 4 broad 'Action Areas'. These are focussed on the following:

1. Establishing a Thriving Innovation District in Taunton
2. Securing an Innovation Legacy from Hinkley C
3. Development of Watchet as a Bio-manufacturing Centre and Circular Economy Demonstrator
4. Providing the Underpinning Innovation Infrastructure

We have deliberately limited these to four action areas so as to give focus for SWT and its partners. That said in each of these Action Areas there are a range of more specific actions and recommendations and also a number that interconnect and map across to other Action Areas. To assist review the list of actions and inter-linkages we provide a summary check list in Chapter 7.

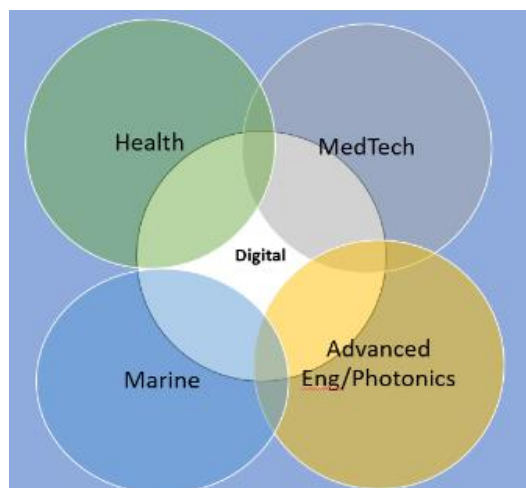
### Taunton Innovation District

Focussed on Taunton, there are a number of interconnected actions that can help the town and its hinterland become a thriving innovation district. These will help drive SWT innovation ambitions to secure more knowledge based businesses, high-quality jobs, higher skills, jobs growth and those with more resilience. It also gives a physical and investment focus to our recommendations and areas of public policy support.

As we have commented on earlier, Taunton might have been perceived as not having the basic ingredients to grow and develop a vibrant knowledge based ecosystem. But as we have set out there are a number of businesses, organisations and innovation skills and infrastructure assets in Taunton that are significant, especially viewed *in combination and as a part of an innovation ecosystem that derives benefit from being better networked and derive mutual leverage, funding and advantage from working more effectively together*. Beyond perceptions it can also provide the basis for some practical solutions and changes about doing knowledge based business in Taunton and of attracting and retaining high skilled knowledge workers and in growing and attracting new businesses.

Chart 14 Innovation Domains in Taunton

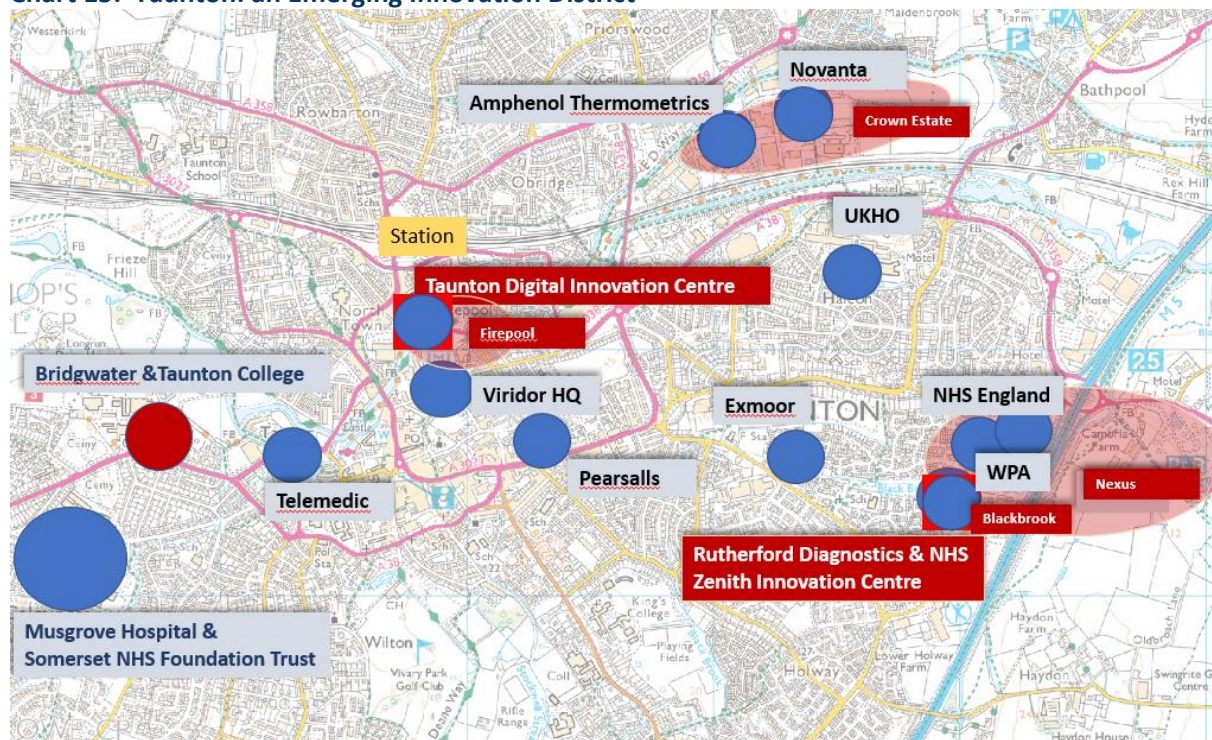
Chart 14 defines the domains that represent organisations and assets that are knowledge intensive and located in Taunton (global marine data systems; health; medtech; advanced engineering/ photonics; and digital and creative). We estimate these organisations have a *total knowledge based workforce to be in excess of 4,000 employees*, in addition to a wider total workforce of some 10,000 employees, this excludes BTC, schools and local authority workers and supply chain and supporting jobs.



At least 8 of the companies and organisations are headquarters of UK and global businesses, with a strong export service role. The district also has a major research institution (the UKHO), 2 committed innovation centres soon to be completed and in excess of 600,000 square feet of space for knowledge based business growth. This cluster can help convey how this perceived weakness, where knowledge and innovation is largely unseen and perhaps seen as isolated and disparate – to one that is a place that has a rich and distinct innovation ecosystem and

also connected to other major innovation ecosystems in the South West and in Bristol/Cardiff city regions. We suggest this area is called the *Taunton Innovation District*<sup>59</sup>.

**Chart 15: Taunton: an Emerging Innovation District**



As we have highlighted some of these organisations operate in different domains but this should not be a reason to underestimate the importance that each will have similar challenges, eg around tackling new innovation opportunities, retaining competitiveness, access and growing talent and skills or securing funding to support any of these challenges. Time, talent, access to researchers, specialists and partnerships, promotion of new products, services and processes, as well as funding and markets are all common innovation challenges, as are those associated with cost reductions and operational and site rationalisations.

### Grow-on Space

Chart 16 also highlights 4 development sites that offer opportunities for knowledge based businesses to grow:

- Firepool, largely for housing, commercial and leisure with its flagship Taunton Digital Innovation Centre and with a capability to accommodate a second phase innovation centre and potentially some other uses that would directly support innovation, such as some College/University Centre teaching space and student accommodation
- Blackbrook – already the home for several health based knowledge based businesses and with a key undeveloped site adjacent to Zenith innovation Centre
- Nexus – with the promoters identifying health care as one of the sectors it wishes to pursue
- Crown Estate – already the home of two major advanced engineering/photronics businesses

<sup>59</sup> We are aware that there is some interest in defining ‘innovation zones’ in the HotSW geography, but have used the term ‘Innovation District’ given the recognised standing of this term among UK and international researchers, practitioners and policy makers. The terminology is however a minor issue.

In combination and with clear set of choices these four sites represent major cluster of sites in one innovation district for digital, health, medtech and insurtech expansion that has a number of either 'shovel ready' and 'planned' sites, at scale and of regional and national significance, in total with in excess of 600,000 square feet of space for knowledge based businesses in Taunton. This is in addition to a further 300,000 square feet of general business and light manufacturing space at the Crown Estate and over 300,000 square feet at the Gravity site.

It follows from this that EIBC is of the view that there is *no current rationale for a new or additional science park for Taunton for the present time*. The Taunton Innovation District and its Grow-on-Sites provide a powerful focus for strengthening and growing an innovation ecosystem at scale and an opportunity to support a package of actions around networking, service provision, marketing and economic development. The following summarises our recommendations

### Recommended Actions

- a) **Taunton Innovation District:** There is a strong case to define a Taunton Innovation District (TID) and to capture these innovation assets into a short TID Prospectus. This could raise the profile of the TID with its principal knowledge based organisations and domains, the scale of existing and future potential employment and the physical innovation assets including the innovation centres and grow on sites.<sup>60</sup> The TID Prospectus could also be a simple device to demonstrate the value of innovation networking, business support for innovation and help with inward investment marketing for knowledge based businesses. For the Grow on Sites it also offers a platform and focus for further engagement with land owners, developers and their advisers that could better inform masterplanning and occupier marketing strategies.

#### **Strategies for Successful Innovation Centres**

*Drawing on our own experience and from other international research<sup>61</sup> EIBC has identified four strategies that innovation districts can use to make a successful innovation district.*

- 1. Successful innovation districts define a clear competitive advantage, an economic or technological niche that aligns with that of the broader region. They also build from a critical mass of businesses, researchers, knowledge workers and entrepreneurs in close proximity to each other, enabling networking, meeting, shared amenities, social and knowledge sharing events that set innovation districts apart from out of town science parks and campuses.*
- 2. Innovation districts whilst having some kind of economic specialization are often most successful when they have connected or adjacent knowledge based domains and sectors, and explicitly foster multi-disciplinary and interdisciplinary convergence. This collaboration is increasingly important for developing emerging innovation challenges like tackling complex public health challenges, distributed and sustainable energy and materials manufacture and climate change.*
- 3. Innovation districts also comprise spaces and services that support start-ups, grow-ons and co-locations and business support that promotes networking, incubations, acceleration with access to a range of services.*
- 4. Successful districts should also developing a strong quality of place, people and trust. This can have explicit physical implications and be about a strong community of people and partners. Crucially it also needs 'buzz', with an active programme of events, connections and demonstrators of action and successes. Successful innovation districts need to invest in this and this is often overlooked*

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<sup>60</sup> We recommend that this is captured in a TID Prospectus with this including some further detailed business engagement/account managements work and an accompanied innovation monitor dashboard

<sup>61</sup> For example <https://www.giid.org/the-evolution-of-innovation-districts/>

- b) **Taunton Digital Innovation Centre:** As we have already commented the TDIC can become a physical flagship, gateway and focal point for a number of the ambitions and activities around innovation in SWT. SWT and SCC have already put in place plans to bring this venture to the market by Q3 2022 and our recommendations are that the following issues will need further work over the next 12-18 months;
- **TDIT Fit out:** having briefly reviewed the committed build cost budgets for the delivery of the building these currently do not include for furniture and fittings equipment. In taking into account our own experience of advising on the delivery of innovation centres and consulted with some potential users of the centre we would suggest that further consideration is given to the crucial importance of specifying and funding key elements for furniture and fittings and innovation support equipment. The vision is that this building is a showcase, and is lively, creative, inviting, supporting businesses, engaging to the community. This will require it to have, for example, a well fitted out café and kitchen, IT, display and video communication facilities to be available, workshop space/benches/basic tools and 'dirty space', printers and 3D printers, as well as art work and demonstration space and visuals that illustrates innovation in SWT. We have not explored this, but know the costs associated with these are significant. And if public funding for this is constrained then a development funding campaign around a set of deliverables should be considered early on in the process.
  - **Innovation Operator:** to be a focal point for businesses to drive start-ups, collaborations, growth and new occupiers the TDIC will require a focussed knowledge exchange and business innovation service operator, beyond conventional 'hard' and 'soft' FM provider. It will also require the TDIC and its operator to secure benefits from interacting with organisations outside SWT, for example those operating at the HotSW, SCC and Western Gateway level (see WG Powerhouse Applied Digital Accelerator proposal)<sup>62</sup> We say more about this later.
  - **Promoting Innovation Meanwhile Uses:** On the assumption that Phase 2 of the TDIC is not likely to not be delivered within the next 3-5 years and that not all of the car parking might be developed - and that some other sites on the Firepool development may not come forward as quickly as hoped, we believe consideration should be given to *actively exploring* 'meanwhile innovation uses' on the TDIC site. For example, there maybe an interest in outside innovation, creative and public events, activities and displays or simply a case for temporary art works, landscaping or even innovative food production.
- c) **Business Innovation Network for Health, MedTech, InsurTech, Digital & Advanced Engineering/Photonics:** There is a case for SWT to help facilitate and support a network of health, medtech, insurtech, digital and photonics organisations to share ideas, initiatives address common innovation challenges and opportunities. Through our work EIBC, a workshop was held to explore the value of such a venture<sup>63</sup> and several ideas associated with a collaborative 'cluster group' emerged. Whilst it is early to determine the precise focus for this cluster group or indeed its membership, there was an enthusiastic support for it. Our recommendation would be for SWT to provide support for this cluster group over at least the

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<sup>62</sup> Launched by ministers in November 2019 the plans to boost local economies through increasing co-operation on both sides of the Severn between eight cities, including Newport, Swansea, Cardiff, Bristol, and Bath – with digital defined as having a catalytic impact on a range of sectors covering aerospace, health, advanced materials, creative, to add

<sup>63</sup> The workshop was attended by senior management from NHS, the SWAHSN, companies and WST staff

next year or so to explore its potential and to it achieve some specific added benefits that relate to innovation. Examples of the kind of activities and benefits it could pursue could include:

- a focus on businesses securing specialist skills and talent through BTC/university business degree/technical apprenticeships, placement and joint project working projects. Also inputting into the curriculum of new programmes;
- supporting existing and new research and innovation programmes, including networks such as the South West Academic Health Science Network (SWAHSN);
- co-investing in new innovation projects and programmes and securing funding support for these ventures
- graduate/technical placements for innovation through Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs)
- supporting new businesses/growth and inward investments
- supporting joint schools and community events encouraging STEAM and innovation.

- d) **Global Marine Systems:** the opportunities to secure wider knowledge based economic development opportunities from the UKHO are considerable, but until very recently has been as yet largely unexploited. The scale and market impact of UKHO though its collection and analysis of marine data is unrivalled, yet the UK and local impacts of exploiting the £3.2 trillion Blue Economy opportunities (by the year 2030) are in danger of being missed. The very recent UKHO accelerator programme announced in September 2020 represents a major change in this regard. But as we have reported in Section 3 this is only a pilot. Sustaining, building and developing this type of programme should be a major priority for SWT, as well as for the SCC and HotSW. This may require finding additional ways to support the programme and to scale it up. Of course, not all opportunities will mean new business growth in Taunton or the South West, but with the combined business and research assets of the SW, its strong policy priorities in marine – and local co-funding this should be given high priority and should secure local economic development outcomes.

A number of other initiatives might also be explored in parallel with the accelerator programme

- Exploring an on-site university research programme and partnership along the lines of the recent University of Exeter/Met Office. This draws together climate science research with teams of scientists at both the Met Office the University in a Joint Centre for Excellence in Environmental Intelligence
- Supporting specialist international training and finding ways to expand UKHO's international training business, possibly in partnership with a commercial partner.
- Establishing a *UKHO international business advisory panel* drawing on senior and experienced experts to scan international business opportunities and explore local delivery solutions for new business operations. Opportunities might flow from a range of parallel knowledge based businesses in, for example, other industries, eg space, sensors, electronics, insurance, mining, fisheries, intergovernmental research organisations etc or from new joint business and research work associated with new Trade Deals, eg with Japan, South Korea and Singapore.

- e) **Setting up a Knowledge Exchange and Innovation Business Support Service:** there is a strong case to set up an Knowledge Exchange and Innovation Business Support Service for the TDIT

and Zenith innovation centres beyond any basic reception/FM services<sup>64</sup>. This service could also to a wider network of organisations in SWT and beyond. These services can be key in helping new and existing businesses meet the challenges of improving productivity, quality, building new products and services addressing questions associated with reducing costs. They can also make it easier and quicker to find solutions, access talent, expertise and secure finance through for example through direct access to a range of services and potentially to accelerator programmes.

Setting up these types of services requires a *very small team* of dedicated professionals and advisors and some revenue/in-kind support to make this happen. Elsewhere such services are paid for in part by rent, service charges, grants or by partner direct contributions via secondments, cash or other resource commitments. With the Zenith Innovation Centre and the Taunton Digital Innovation Centre being completed in 2021 and 2022 respectively, some 4,000 square feet of purpose designed space will becoming available for new ventures, both ventures will want to focus and target on new ventures and innovations from collaborations, inward investment and growth. Further work to explore and bring this proposal to a conclusion could include the following:

- Defining the possible scope and coverage of services to be provided, the centres to be covered and the players in the market
- Defining business models, learning from other similar examples and undertaking some soft market testing on options
- Costing
- Revenue and resource funding options
- Timescales, procurement and implementation

Such a venture would likely take 12-24 months to explore, agree, set up and operationalise and care would need to be taken to ensure that it is additional and complementary to any other supported services and in alignment with other hard/soft FM services (building maintenance, basic reception/security/cleaning, occupier marketing and property services<sup>65</sup>

- f) **Skills for Innovation:** Skills to support businesses and grow new companies also needs to be aligned with the network of businesses in the Taunton Digital innovation District and we say more about both these issues in Action Area 4.

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<sup>64</sup> For example, reception, café, security, building maintenance

<sup>65</sup> EiBC has UK-wide experience of services provided and different approaches taken to funding such ventures

## 5 Action Theme B: Securing an Innovation Legacy from Hinkley C

### Existing Energy Activities

As we have indicated, there are already a wide range of actions, initiatives and groups operating in the energy domain where knowledge and innovation is fundamental to the construction, commissioning and decommissioning of nuclear and renewable energy. These organisations operate at the regional and national level and involve a large number of organisations, for example, EDF, CGN, the Nuclear Decommissioning Agency (NDA) and many companies involved in designing, contracting and decommissioning nuclear power and a range of renewable energy and low carbon projects. Additionally, Nuclear South West, the South West Energy Hub, the HotSW and the Energy Working Group,<sup>66</sup> the National College for Nuclear, the Construction and Innovation College, the Somerset Energy Innovation Centre, SWMAS and the Hinkley Supply Chain Team all have a role in promoting, supporting and coordinating projects, economic development and carbon reduction.

Although Hinkley C is located in SWT and there is undoubted positive economic impacts on the area, most of the business and research based employment associated with nuclear design, testing, design construction and commissioning is focussed elsewhere. In large part, this is also the case with the development of renewable technologies.

Nonetheless overall construction supply chain benefits are significant with many companies active in the SWT area (see Chart 16). For SWT it will therefore be important to continue to engage with the Hinkley Point C Supply Chain to ensure local SWT businesses have access to the Hinkley Point C contracting opportunities<sup>67</sup> Chart 15 shows the number and location of contractors in the SWT area who have engaged in the construction of Hinkley Point C to date. According to EDF, £37m has been spent in the area since January 2016 with 122 suppliers. This may be modest in the scale of the overall spend on Hinkley Point C but it is still substantial.

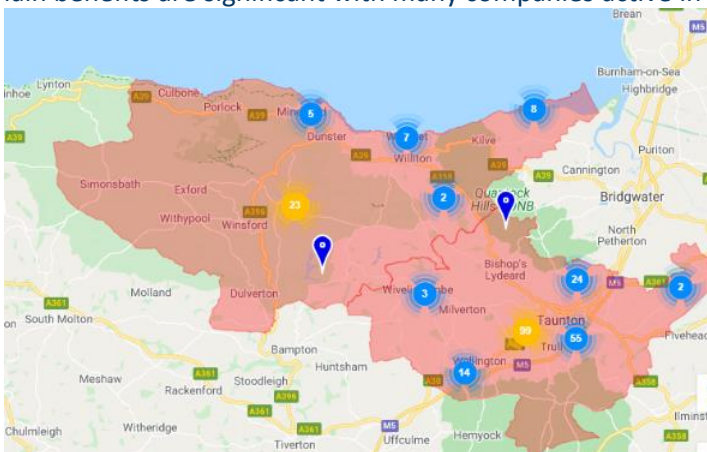


Chart 16 SWT contractors engaged in Hinkley Point C Supply Chain

Source: EDF

### Innovation and Skills Legacy Benefits

Based on our high level assessment of these energy domains and the importance of securing a knowledge based legacy beyond the construction of the Hinkley C and the Decommissioning of Hinkley B that going forward there needs to be more emphasis on securing a knowledge based legacy for SWT. An important backdrop to our thinking in this regard is that much of the EDF's and government's focus has been inevitably focussed on delivering and making operational the energy projects and in funding road, skills, supply chain infrastructure projects and local community ventures, but arguably less on exploring broader knowledge based business opportunities that serving the UK and international market. The question we pose regarding the innovation legacy is illustrated in Chart 17

<sup>66</sup> Includes SCC, DCC, WST, Sedgemoor, Regen SW

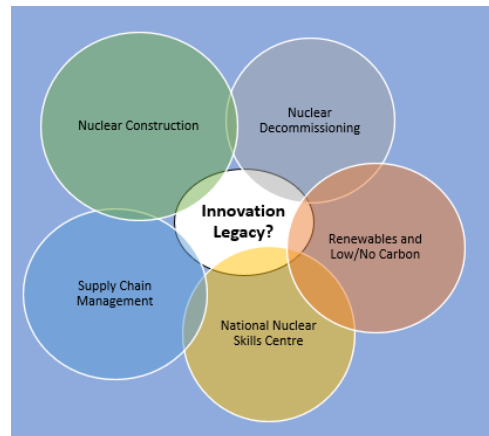
<sup>67</sup>



Chart 17 Longer Term Innovation Legacy from Hinkley

a) **Nuclear Construction and Decommissioning Skills:**

There is a need to ensure that BTC and SWT residents capitalise fully on the excellent advanced skills infrastructure that has been established. There are already significant assets, specifically those relating to advanced skills development, which can significantly benefit SWT residents in the future. BTC is already a UK leader in nuclear construction skills and Hinkley B will be one of the first EDF reactors to be decommissioned so there is potential ‘first mover’ advantage it can take advantage of the new ideas and innovative approaches this will entail. Whilst the key R&D knowledge assets for nuclear are clustered in Bristol and Bath (and elsewhere in the UK), and it is likely to be as difficult to prise them away for SWT.



The picture has been very different for innovative skills development and this is an opportunity for the SWT area in the future working in collaboration with BTC. Whilst new skills partnerships and initiatives will no doubt develop following government’s recent decision to deliver a further nuclear power station at Sizewell (also awarded to EDF). With EDF owning and managing 7 operating sites and having significant research, innovation and skills investments and activities<sup>68</sup> there is an opportunity to build on the skills dimensions of nuclear and renewable energy for not only local projects but for UK and international opportunities, ie create an *International Training Centre for Nuclear Skills*. For example, in Aberdeen, Robert Gordon University has over many years developed its industry focussed education and training business from its oil and gas role in the North Sea to one addressing offshore renewables and a significant part of its business is now international -this being linked to the strong cluster and supply chain that the University has linked with. The energy workforce of the future will also have skills and roles that do not currently exist, like automation and data science. In collaboration with one or more university partner, BTC supported by SWT and its partners should explore these market opportunities *beyond Hinkley*.

b) **Testing Facilities:** Hinkley B may also present opportunities for new *testing facilities* which could be based locally. For example North Wales secured investment in a new nuclear National Thermal Hydraulic Test Facility because of its geographical proximity to the Wylfa project which would have been the first advanced boiling water reactor nuclear power plant in the country (currently suspended following the withdrawal of Hitachi).<sup>69</sup> First mover advantage from Hinkley B may confer similar opportunities. Specialist expertise would be required to explore this type of opportunity, but part of the Hinkley R&D legacy could involve some testing research facilities and this should be discussed with EDF, the UK government and the nuclear industry.

<sup>68</sup> EDF R&D UK is undertaking research in the fields of Low Carbon Generation (supporting existing nuclear, nuclear new build and renewables), Modelling and Simulation, Environment and Natural Hazards, Energy System Design, Smart Cities, Local Energy Systems, Energy Storage & Efficiency and Smart Digital Technology.

<sup>69</sup> <https://www.powerengineeringint.com/nuclear/atkins-appointed-to-work-on-the-uks-national-thermal-hydraulic-facility/>

## 6 Action Theme C: Creating a Bio-manufacturing & Circular Economy Demonstrator

As we have set out earlier, the technology and inward investment opportunities associated with the Biohm/Onion Collective JV and its potential investment partners are at an early stage of development and subject to a confidentiality agreement and commercial sensitivities. Nonetheless there is an opportunity for this venture to be innovative, radical and highly distinctive. Its products and processes potentially have UK and international market application and the potential implications for a cluster based development at Watchet could also be of local, regional and potentially national and international significance.

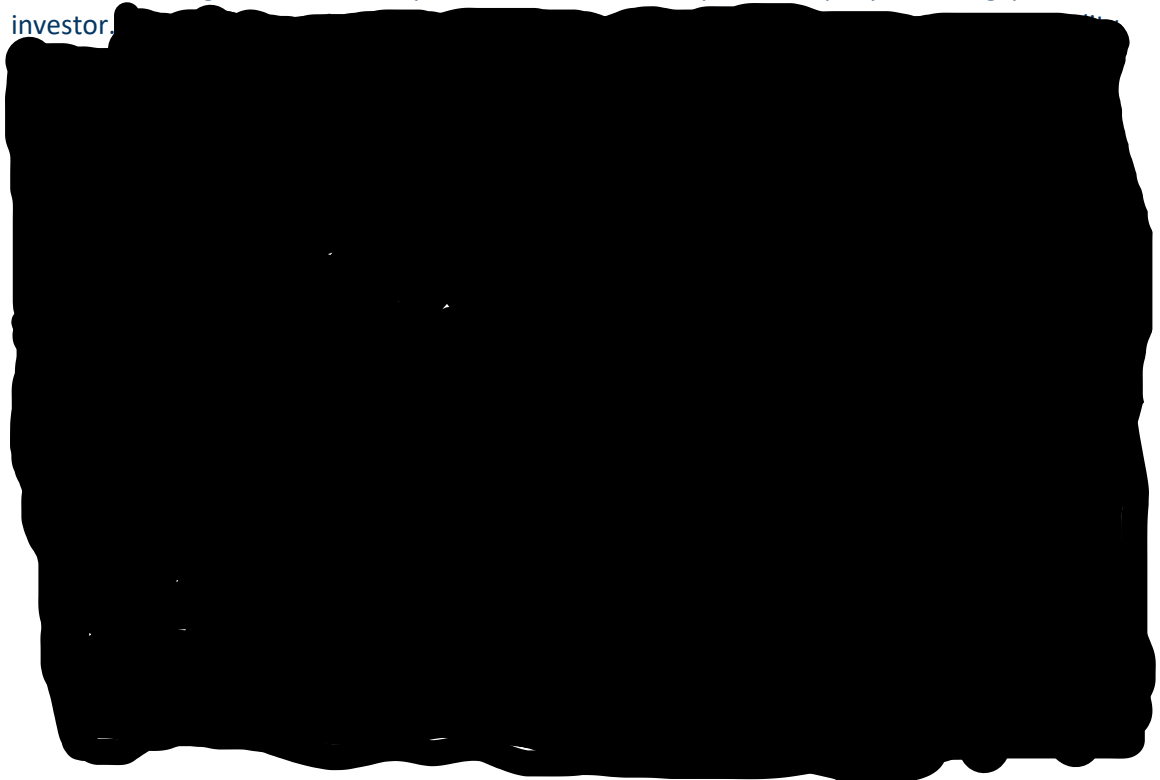
At its core the opportunity is to develop the site as a carbon neutral, community based, not for profit project, based on the principles of the circular economy. The site could be used for a range of uses including housing types using Biohm products and ensuring that a major part of any housebuilding is affordable and to showcase bio manufactured products in all construction projects. The site could also incorporate passive energy and renewable energy technologies and seek to attract and work with a range of other biomimicry and carbon neutral/positive businesses. A biomimicry innovation and skills centre could also be developed and a range of other complementary ventures including an education centre, visitor facilities, appropriate retail, community, aquaculture, aquaponics and woodland projects - all based on circular economy principles.



Any suggested actions set out here must, for the reasons associated with the commercial sensitivity of the project, be necessarily brief and general. However, EiBC's conclusions are that this opportunity is very significant and should be strongly supported by SWT, the Somerset Waste Partnership and the

HotSW. There may also be a role for Viridor – given its HQ function, its investment in innovation and its strong association with the South West. Areas for action include:

- a) Exploring ways in which SWT can support the delivery of the Biohm biomanufacturing business – so that this plant becomes fully operational, successful and part of a bigger opportunity. SWT might also use Biohm’s materials in housing and other construction projects, eg in the Firepool and TDIC projects
- b) Explore the opportunity of investigating a national bio-manufacturing and circular economy demonstration village based on the Watchet site. This will require feasibility work study and business/funding cases and likely be commissioned in partnership by a willing potential investor.



## 7 Action Theme D: Establishing the Underpinning Support for Innovation

In this penultimate chapter we set out elements of broader support that will be needed to strengthen and develop a successful innovation ecosystem for SWT, namely:

- Supportive public policy and governance for innovation
- Knowledge exchange (KE) and business innovation support
- Skills for innovation
- Sites, town planning and digital infrastructure
- Inward investment & marketing
- Innovation support funding

### Supporting Innovation Ecosystem Development through Governance

**SWT Innovation Board:** To give further support and oversight for innovation in SWT we recommend that consideration is given to forming a '*local innovation board*' of senior stakeholders to help build a diverse business-led cross-domain innovation group. This informal governance group can:

- help secure innovation, business and economic development benefits from networking and interaction;
- provide ideas and direction for new initiatives;
- help secure short and longer term wins;
- provide an independent assessment of achievements and progress; and
- influence outcomes and be a driver of a successful innovation ecosystem.

**Remit and Scale:** Its precise remit, focus and membership needs further consideration but it should be light touch, have some oversight role on the development of the local innovation ecosystem, its assets and its knowledge exchange and innovation support services including new initiatives and projects, funding bids and the direction of travel.

This intervention would come as a near zero cost intervention with its inputs largely dependent on senior stakeholders time. A SWT Innovation Board would complement the HotSW Innovation Board, giving it local granularity and an ability to progress practical innovation insights and actions at the local level. As such it would not take on a too large and complex geography and would ensure that board members are locally connected. It would network with the proposed Cluster Groups (see below), other possible local innovation boards and the HotSW Innovation Board. Above all it would be guided by practical opportunities, likely impact, people and connections, and less so on any administrative neatness - as this could weigh down its cost and effectiveness.<sup>70</sup>

We have not explored the options for scaling up a SWT Innovation Board to replicate a combined unitary boundary or a Somerset County wide boundary but would recommend that there is a case for undertaking some optioneering and consultations around this issue. There may be benefits from having a larger geographic/domain scope, but also risks that if it was too big it might simply replicate the work of the HoTSW Innovation Board and lose the essential personal connections between individual organisations and business and innovation domains, given that any board membership should be limited to a small number of highly motivated and experienced individuals.

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<sup>70</sup>See for example <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/strategy-and-corporate-finance/our-insights/making-innovation-structures-work-mckinsey-global-survey-results#>

**Membership of SWT Innovation Board:** We would recommend that a SWT innovation board comprises senior individuals (probably no more than 12) *principally drawn from the knowledge based organisations* we have identified in this report and including businesses, the UKHO, NHS, the College, a member from the HoTSW, and independent senior experts with deep connection to SWT and UK/international insight and influence, with the Board facilitated and supported by SWT. We recommend that SWT *should support and facilitate the board*, but leave the leadership and chairperson role of this group to its knowledge based organisations. Members term of appointment might be for 3 years.

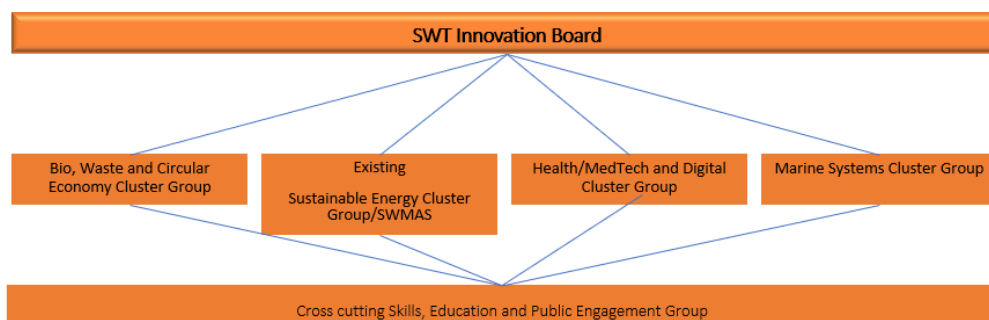
**SWT Cluster Groups:** A crucial part of developing a vibrant innovation ecosystem would be to establish a small number of Cluster Groups. These would be based around connected but not the same domains and have shared challenges and opportunities. They would be informal, purposeful and light touch networks to connect people and organisations – mostly through simple email updates, early morning/after work meet ups and to stimulate ideas and possible bi-lateral, joint initiatives. and to energise and inform an Innovation Board. Useful advice on how they might operate is provided by NESTA<sup>71</sup>. We suggest Cluster Groups could be formed around the following:

- Bio-manufacturing, Waste and Circular Economy – with Digital
- Sustainable Energy (several groups are already established in this domain and therefore this may not be required)<sup>72</sup>
- Health Medtech, Photonics and Health insurance – with Digital
- Marine Systems – with wider International Blue Economy, Environment and Digital links
- Skills and Public Engagement Group

The cluster groups could have a loose geographic focus and membership that might include others operating at County, HotSW, SW or Western Gateway catchments, but always maintaining a strong SWT involvement.

**Towards an Organisational Structure:** A simple illustration of the Innovation Board and Cluster Group arrangements is presented in Chart 18 and although further consideration needs to be given to this, our work has suggested that there is appetite among business leaders to launch such an initiative.

**Chart 18: Illustrative Innovation Governance Model for SWT**



**Note:** The Board could of course link to other SWT Economic Development & Recovery Groups or Boards

<sup>71</sup> <https://www.nesta.org.uk/toolkit/collective-intelligence-design-playbook/>

<sup>72</sup> One cluster group is already operating in the Energy domain.

### **Knowledge Exchange and Innovation Business Support Service**

We also recommend that SWT and its key stakeholders set up a knowledge exchange (KE) and innovation business support service. This would have a specific role in supporting the two innovation centres (Zenith and TDIC) that would be operational in 2021 and 2022, but would also operate on a wider basis throughout the SWT area.

A short piece of work could set out the scope and potential operations for this service, undertake some soft market testing and define the services that could be provided. Likely costs and potential revenues for the service should also be assessed, together with potential staffing/governance arrangements, start-up costs and scoping possible partners/service providers, funding and procurement and implementation arrangements. This work would inform a full business case for this service and any procurement and partnership arrangements.

We are aware that SCC is also considering the provision of KE and innovation business support services for the Somerset Energy Centre (the existing and additional buildings) and the iAero building, together with TDIC. These all come on stream within a 2 year period and a decision on how any services are to be provided will need to be considered urgently.

As in the case of the innovation board issues referred to above, we would recommend that a short piece of scoping and optioneering work is undertaken to frame the service and options, before proceeding with investment, commercial, service and procurement decisions.

As an illustration potential KE and innovation services that could be provided include the following:

- Services could include networking/facilitation of events and a focal point for Innovation Support
- Focal point for the provision of business accelerator services
- Advice on for example, proof of concept, clinical trials, rapid prototyping specialist contracts support, Intellectual Property advice, specialist R&D funding applications
- Advice and networking for innovation finance and venture capital inputs
- Networking with universities, other businesses, UKRI/Innovate UK and government
- Oversight/management of accelerator programmes
- The provision of specialist equipment

In terms of the scale of the service its remit could be any one or combinations of the following:

- SWT wide service covering all of following and including Innovation- home working and inward investment
- Taunton Digital Innovation Centre service
- Zenith Innovation service
- Watchet Innovation service
- Additional service to SWT's Enterprise Centres
- SCC wide
- HotSW LEP wide

Consideration would be needed to define the level of funding support required to support this services, especially in the start-up and early operation phase<sup>73</sup>.

**Universities and Research:** As we have recorded in Chapter 2 the absence of a university, post graduate studies and research in SWT limits the development of a vibrant innovation ecosystem. We also highlighted that in the scope of this report EiBC is not able to explore the complexity of issues associated with the feasibility of developing a ‘University of Somerset’, nor alternative HE options that go beyond the BTC SWIoT University Centre and fundamental issues around HE demand, the curriculum portfolio, the academic business model, viability, investment, governance and delivery etc<sup>74</sup>. We posed two key questions around how SWT and SCC might best secure specific and significant university research activities and knowledge exchange services that would benefit the SWT ecosystem and the case for a ‘go to’ point or ‘network service’ for linking and support university/research centre opportunities, especially for SMEs and micros.

Regarding the former we would recommend that working with its business partners SWT, SCC and BTC formulate a short *University Partner Prospectus* setting out areas of strategic interest against the backdrop of the SWT/SCC innovation assets. This will need to be accompanied by high level meetings at CEO/Leader and Vice Chancellor levels. Inevitably, resource commitments to make these partnerships attractive will need to be considered and this should form part of the preliminary work of working up the University Partner Prospectus. There are many recent precedents for this type of approach (eg in Hereford, Peterborough, Milton Keynes) and EiBC can provide further insight and experience in these matters.

### **Skills for Innovation**

This study has only been able to ‘scratch the surface’ of the issues relating to skills for innovation, ie knowledge based organisations that have existing and forecast skill shortages, skills gaps, recruitment and retention challenges. It has nonetheless been clear that based on our consultations these issues rank very high on all knowledge based organisations agendas, as ultimately they impact on competitiveness, productivity and innovation.

Employer and BTC consultations identified many different high skills areas that are required in the future, for example, technicians and management specialists in nuclear and renewable energy construction, operations, management and support, specialists in digital and eHealth, digital and marine, digital and insurtech, digital and education, nursing, primary health care and care support, radiographers and a range of other higher level skills for medtech, instrumentation, photonics, construction and bio-manufacturing industries and many more.

It is also evident from our work elsewhere that there is a desire to link traditional class based learning to work placed and project based learning – this demanding collaborative, problem solving, communication and project management skills with employers.

BTC is fully aware of this, but more work is needs to understand the specific skills needed for innovation and how new and often speculative new programmes can be co-designed and co-funded with BTC and employer practitioner inputs. From our own experience it is also evident that there is a wealth of experience from leading business practitioners to provide their expertise for skills and

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<sup>73</sup> EiBC’s UK experience suggests that services operating outside university run services and those operating in the high value life sciences sectors would need additional public sector support

<sup>74</sup> EiBC has considerable experience in this arena, having been the lead adviser in developing three entirely new universities and many others establishing new campuses

education programmes - often free or at minimal cost - and with this type of expertise it can add real credibility, quality and a high level of student experience.

It will also be important to consider *which programmes* can be positioned and marketed *beyond the local catchment* to the UK/overseas market and here it will be important to link BTC, partner universities and key employers together and to explore potential legacy support from industry.

Our consultations have highlighted that BTC is keen to know what new skills are required, who might demand them and how sustainable and viable any new programmes might be. In emerging skills market areas and especially in markets where many employers are micros and SMEs this task becomes even more challenging. There may also be a perception from some schools and parents that BTC is not a favoured alternative route into a high skilled job in the knowledge sector and this is an issue faced by many colleges. Collaborative action to overcome the practical challenges and market perceptions will be required.

Attracting and retaining higher level knowledge workers to Somerset will also remain a challenge because of a perception that there is an absence of a higher level research community, a university presence or easy access to Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and Post Graduate studies. To address this one idea would be to create the right support and physical setting for a CPD/post graduate study centre) (often found in university campuses) where some support, networking and flexible multi-university/CPD seminars, programmes can be hosted. The idea of a *CPD/Post Graduate Study Centre* could be explored within the TDIC.

### **Carbon Capture/Credits/AgriTech, Natural Capital**

There are inevitably a host of other potential areas of innovation that might be explored and supported by SWT. However, given the limits of this report we have not been able to cover some of these that are at an early stage of understanding and opportunity. The most notable among these is drawing on SWT's natural assets for carbon capture and carbon credits associated with its coastland, the Somerset Levels and from more organic farming and increased agroforestry. More detailed work would be required to explore these opportunities and the UKHO carbon capture accelerator programme (see earlier) maybe be one way to raise profile and engage with businesses in this space.

### **Sites, town planning and digital infrastructure**

In Action Theme A we have already set out evidence that in Taunton there is not an issue in the foreseeable future about creating new physical capacity beyond the developments already committed. Instead, it will be more about setting out the combined proposition to knowledge based businesses and inward invest agencies. Our recommendation is therefore that SWT use this report and findings to promote the *Taunton Innovation District* proposition as a part of its planning and economic development policies. This device can also be used to inform new project opportunities and property and masterplanning work, for example: how the Blackbrook site adjoining Zenith might be developed for other complementary non-acute health care and ehealth uses; how the Firepool site might accommodate the longer term expansion of the BTC University Centre and to provide for student accommodation; and how the Nexus site might be promoted around complementary research and industrial linkages to international marine data systems, the expansion of the insurtech, health/medtech and digital sectors.

### **Inward investment & marketing proposition**

This report provides much of the background to support an engaging and distinct narrative around innovation and knowledge based businesses in SWT. We would recommend that a small comms



project<sup>75</sup> focusses on outputs that change perceptions - for individuals, businesses, inward investment businesses and house buyers who operate in the enterprise and knowledge-based sectors. It would highlight the strength and diversity of the knowledge based assets and opportunities, the natural environmental assets, the quality of the schools, the further and higher education assets, the easy transport links to key cities and airports and the cash premium that would accompany many moving to Somerset.<sup>76</sup>

### **Innovation support funding**

Inevitably resources and funding to support any of the initiatives set out in the report will be required – from the SWT Council, HotSW, ERDF and its successor funding, BEIS, Innovate UK, DoE/OfS, etc and from the private and voluntary sectors. From our work we identify four areas:

- **Capital funding for TDIC fit out and equipment funding** – based on some detailed specification work, the costs of fit out, furniture and equipment will need to be defined, along with options for securing funding. Public and private funding sources should be actively considered as well as from philanthropic organisations. SWT and SCC, with inputs from organisations like Digital Taunton and CICCIC should work up this budget
- **Knowledge exchange and innovation support service** Revenue funding to support the establishment of a SWT (or wider) knowledge exchange and innovation support service will need to come from public and private sources and from in-kind resource commitments (public and private sector employer secondments, voluntary inputs etc). The amounts required need to be defined and informed by a short business planning piece of work
- **Bio/Waste Circular Economy and Watchet related costs and funding:** revenue and capital funding will be required to advance the feasibility/business/funding cases and potentially the project components. This maybe funded entirely from the private sector or by a combination of private and public sector feasibility funding work.
- **Revenue Funding:** public sector funding to support innovation will continue to be important - to de-risk private sector business investment at the early stage of development, support innovation skills, support business support services and to make some selected capital investment projects. Capital funding is often easier to secure, but this report would want to highlight a need for modest levels of revenue funding for
  - the knowledge exchange/innovation business support services,
  - accelerator programmes
  - new innovation based course development programmes in emerging untried markets,
  - further feasibility/business planning and implementation support work associated with new ventures and
  - innovation promotion and comms schools events

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<sup>75</sup>For example, in addition to building the narrative a comms project might consider actions and impacts around speaker events (locally and nationally), social media initiatives, the development of a prospectus and part of the WST web site, selected media coverage and advertising

<sup>76</sup> For example, moving from London to an equivalent house in Somerset could release £200k in equity

## 8 Summary of Recommendations

**Overall:** Endorse the *Innovation Framework* as a ‘work in progress’ road map for action (Q1 2021)

### Action Theme A: Taunton

1. Promote a **Taunton Innovation District** –(Q1 2021) this will be a powerful device for conveying some of the core SWT knowledge assets and promoting the new innovation centres, the grow on places and the wider support of a knowledge exchange and business promotions services and the recommended establishment of SWT Innovation Board (see Action Theme D)
2. Work up a **Firepool TDIT FFE/Equipment specification and budget**. Explore funding options from public and private sources (Q1/2 2021)
3. Work up the **options** for securing a **Firepool TDIT operator** (Q1/2 2021), this to include supporting services for innovation, start-ups, business change, reliance, new ventures for established businesses. Options should include links/integration with Zenith Innovation Centre (Soon)
4. Explore and develop **Firepool ‘meanwhile innovation and creative uses’** in the Phase 2 area and adjacent sites (2021)
5. Continue to liaise with UKHO on its commercialisation pilot and explore options for how this **Marine Data Systems Accelerator can become a permanent jointly promoted programme** with SWT and HoTSW LEP (Q1-3 2021)
6. Explore a **co-location research partnership using TDIC between UKHO and the University of Exeter** – drawing on the University/Met Office partnership (Q1-4 2021)
7. Discuss with **UKHO the formation of an International Expert Advisory Panel for Commercialisation** (2021)
8. **Establish a Cluster Group** around healthcare, eHealth insurtech, medtech, digital and photonics – represented strongly by private sector and NHS employers. This would link with and be complementary to the South West Academic Health Sciences Network. This would be a light touch networking group to enable initiatives to be explored and specific projects actioned through joint or bilateral work (Q1 2021)
9. Work with Rutherford and SNHS Trust to explore and **establish an operator for the Zenith Innovation Centre** (see 3 above) (Q1-Q2 2021)
10. SWT to actively promote the **combined start-up and grow-on space opportunities** for knowledge based businesses through the Taunton Innovation District at Firepool Phase 1 and 2, Blackbrook, Nexus, Crown Estate (Q2-4 2021)

### Action Theme B: Nuclear/Renewables

1. Continue to **support the Hinkley Point C Supply Chain** to ensure local SWT businesses have access to the Hinkley Point C contracting opportunities (ongoing)
2. Explore with SWT partners work that could secure a major **innovation legacy** from Hinkley – especially around the creation of an **International Training Centre for Nuclear Skills**, operating as a UK and export service and also possible **Nuclear/Sustainable Energy research testing facilities and new sustainable demonstrator energy projects**. (Q1-Q4 2021)

### Action Theme C: Biovillage and Circular Economy Demonstrator

3. Find ways in which **SWT can support the growth of the Biohm/OC bio-manufacturing business**. This might include helping source waste inputs, using the finished materials in SWT projects and helping promote the use of bio-manufactured products (2021 and ongoing)
4. Support the emerging vision for a **Bio-manufacturing and Circular Economy Demonstrator Village at Watchet**.

[REDACTED]

(2021/22)

### Action Theme D: Underpinning Support

9. **Assess in detail the setting up of a SWT Innovation Board** – this to also consider the wider views of SCC, partner districts and HotSW (Q1-Q2 2021)
10. **Encourage and Support the creation of Cluster Groups** – Health/MedTech (Q1 2021); Bio-Manufacture/Circular Economy (Q2 2021); Marine Data (Q2 2021); and continue to support existing Energy Groups (ongoing)
11. Progress work that would establish a **KE and Innovation Support Service**, initially with a focus on TDIC and Zenith, but with a clear ambition to operate across the wider area including links into the all knowledge based businesses, Enterprise Centres, and home workers (Q1 2021 – Q3 2022)
12. Support BTC in **working up new employer relevant programmes** for existing and emerging skills gaps for knowledge based businesses and help **change perceptions** around routes to higher technical education (ongoing)
13. Explore the establishment of a **CPD/PG Study Centre at TDIC and the Zenith Innovation Centre** in collaboration with the BTC and partner universities (Q2 2021-2022)
14. Work up a **University Partnerships Prospectus and engage in a high level dialogue with universities** at the highest level that seeks to secure a long term strategic commitment and presence in SWT (Q1/4 2021)
15. Work up **Innovation and Enterprise Communications** action plan aimed at changing perceptions for individuals, businesses, inward investment businesses and house buyers who operate in the knowledge-based sector (Q1-4 2021)
16. Consider **budgetary implications** of the above for the next 3 years (Q1-Q4 2021) notably:
  - e) Capital funding for TDIC fit out and equipment funding
  - f) Revenue funding to support the establishment of a SWT knowledge exchange and innovation support service
  - [REDACTED]
  - h) General revenue funding for new projects not covered above

# Appendices

## Appendix A: Terms of Reference: The Specification

### 1. Overview

Somerset and West has just launched its economic development strategy, part of which is to help it transition to a high skills knowledge economy with greater levels of productivity and GVA. It is now looking to commission expert advice into the type of knowledge economy and technology businesses (including 'niche' subsectors and emerging opportunities) which the Council might look to proactively target as future prospects for supporting sustainable economic growth, the creation of knowledge economy jobs, improved levels of productivity, innovation and research and development and potential future beacons for inward investment to the District. Furthermore, in the context of the Coronavirus crisis, this work will inform our approach to new opportunities for the District economy on the path to recovery presenting new transformational economic opportunities around enterprise and innovation, development of emerging sectors and market opportunities aligned to the Opportunity areas of the Local Industrial Strategy and seen through the prism of Clean Growth, building from the asset, research and business base we may have. At the same time, the Council is refreshing its Local Plan and there is an opportunity to consider the allocation of land under the new Local Plan to support the delivery of a sustainable innovation park potentially in a phased approach and possibly linked to Exeter University and other research institutes, with whom our members have previously engaged.

### 2. Background

In March 2010, a previous economic development strategy for Taunton Deane Borough Council entitled "Grow and Green - a new economic development strategy for Taunton Deane" was produced.

The Strategy was guided by a vision of sustainable economic growth:

*By 2026 Taunton will be one of Europe's most successful and sustainable towns with a dynamic knowledge economy and a high quality of life*

It set out three areas for consideration which are still broadly relevant today, but our context is now broadened to include West Somerset, having merged as a newly formed Council formally in April 2019.

- **'Grow and Green' communities:** to develop community-based, driven and owned approaches to the green knowledge economy, linking green initiatives (renewable energy, resource conservation and management and sustainable development) with business and employment growth initiatives
- **Innovation and Enterprise:** to accelerate business growth and innovation and new enterprise development, giving particular attention to high growth firms and high skill knowledge-intensive sectors of Taunton's economy.
- **Promoting Taunton:** to promote Taunton both *internally* to local businesses, residents, students and policy-makers in order to encourage more local spending and investment and retain companies and talent; and *externally* to establish Taunton as an important destination for inward investment and tourism, at the regional, national and international levels.

**A convenient "Summary of Actions" was given in the last chapter of the report.**

It was agreed that the Council would develop coherent programmes for 'growing and greening' Taunton's economy, reaching across all sectors. This second thrust was around making accelerating green innovation a top priority, through identifying opportunities for demonstrating and piloting new schemes, developing a Taunton innovation system with businesses, the HE/FE sector and other players including the LEP and networking into other Government funded innovation related programmes.

### 3. New opportunities and a fresh approach

Many of the proposed activities are still relevant today and indeed some of them have now been superseded by the announcement of the Somerset wide climate change strategies and emerging workplans, including that of Somerset West and Taunton.. Somerset West and Taunton's own economic development strategy has been produced and adopted by the Council in February 2020, within which there is a focus on a stated strategic priority as follows: **University in Taunton / Research and Innovation Park**

Explore the potential and scope for a University in Taunton, with a business led curriculum that will help deliver the skills businesses want, attract more inward investment and create opportunities for higher value jobs for residents. There is an opportunity to build on the UK Hydrographic Office (UKHO) open innovation activity and links with other South West Universities, (such as Exeter), but also embrace other opportunities arising from the South West Institute of Technology with a focus on advanced engineering and digital, working with Bridgwater and Taunton college and the University Centre.

There is a clearly stated intent to explore and scope the future potential for a knowledge based Innovation and Technology Park, with links to specialist centres of excellence and research Institutes linked to Higher Education and relevant Universities and Research Institutes and/or Catapults.

This includes opportunities to explore and validate emerging opportunities in knowledge economy sectors and clustering such as:

- AI/Big Data and digital technologies already underway with links to the South West Institute of Technology
- Remote healthcare delivery (telehealth/telemedicine) linked to the care of an increasing elderly population
- Low carbon renewable energy and environmental technologies (including plastic waste recycling and the circular economy).

The latter could include innovations around the circular economy and innovation in manufacturing and processing, linked to the Climate change emergency and the associated industry and business workstreams and sustainable smart city type of 'Garden Town living' for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, as well as building on exciting initiatives such as the Biohm investment in biosciences linked to plastic waste recycling and other commercial applications exploiting our Natural Capital. <https://www.onioncollective.co.uk/industry-for-watchet>

#### **Somerset's Climate Change Strategy**

**<https://wwwmedia.somerset.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Somerset-Climate-Emergency-Framework-Final.pdf>**

Following the publication of Somerset's Climate change strategy and the development of the various workstreams, including industry and business and waste in particular, there is an opportunity to harness this activity and focus on those aspects of the Climate change strategy where a future innovation park and campus could contribute, working in partnership with Exeter University and other stakeholders.

**Garden Town Prospectus** <https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/media/1450/taunton-garden-town-vision.pdf> "Taunton, the County Town of Somerset will be flourishing, distinctive, and healthy – and the country's benchmark Garden Town. We will be proud to live and work in a place where the outstanding natural environment, diverse and thriving economy and inspiring cultural offer, contribute to an exceptional quality of life and well-being".

**National and Local Industrial Strategy** - Clean growth opportunities need to be considered in terms of the Heart of the South West Local Industrial Strategy and in the context of some of the themes of the national strategy around: **Ideas** - the world's most innovative economy and a world leader in global science and innovation collaboration. The Government is looking to increase R&D tax credits and investment in R&D. This is intended to encourage the private sector to invest more in R&D, to turn exciting ideas into commercial products and services and to build research and innovation excellence across the UK, linked to the Science and Innovation Audit.

**Grand Challenges** - developments in technology that are set to transform industries and societies in which the UK has an opportunity to play a leading role. Essentially this is commonly referred to as the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution, with the convergence and fusion of technologies blurring the boundaries between physical, digital and biological worlds which will introduce new business paradigms and enhance GVA and productivity.

**Clean Growth** - to maximise the advantages for UK industry from the global shift to clean growth through leading the world in the development, manufacture and use of low carbon technologies, systems and services that cost less than high carbon alternatives. Economic opportunities from this area could grow at four times the rate of GDP, following the Paris Agreement of 2015, which commits to revolutionising power, transport, heating and cooling, industrial processes and agriculture.

#### **d) SWT's Great Plastic debate and associated papers**

There has been significant discussions previously with Exeter University and some of the local networks around the circular economy including recycling of plastic waste for instance, building on Exeter University's research credentials as well as discussion with the South West Academic Health network and opportunities for innovation in remote delivery of healthcare including telehealth and telemedicine in the context of an ageing population in more peripheral rural areas across the district. There are potentially a wide range of stakeholders who could leverage investment funding, provided the business case is robust and then deliver aspects of this innovation/science park forming an Integrated Programme Delivery partnership. These papers will be shared with the winning consultant at the inception meeting,

#### **4. Scope of tender opportunity and Key Outputs**

Further to the strategy in 2011, internal discussions and a forum on the Plastics debate in 2018, compounded now by the declaration of a Climate Change emergency and faced with the LIS and a clean growth focus as well as the need to provide and support new Opportunities to re-position the economy during the recovery phase from Covid 19 and beyond and be transformational addressing societal challenges, it would now seem opportune to re-consider the opportunities of emerging sectors and also collaboration with the knowledge base in our neighbouring surroundings. In parallel to this assignment, work has been underway to develop a Digital Innovation Centre in Taunton building on a Digital Taunton cluster to help businesses transform their business

models in a digital economy, which has resulted in a thorough demand and need study and proposals for a Digital Innovation Centre and associated innovation services, culminating in a build to the Government through an ERDF funded capital programme in March 2020 for a proposed future build by early 2022.

The time has never been better to look to work strategically and collaboratively sub-regionally with a range of stakeholders to develop the future business support and eco-innovation network, and physical infrastructure in this strategic growth corridor along the M5 between Bristol and Exeter. This will in future necessitate greater collaboration and alignment with Further Education and Higher Education Institutes, sub-regional sectors and business membership bodies and enterprise agencies, pan-LEP sector networks, and sub-regional partnerships within the Heart of the South West and potentially Greater South West and the West of England Combined Authority, along with other national and sub-regional stakeholders including Catapults etc. Department for International Trade (DIT) and other Government departments.

#### **4A Key Deliverables**

The key deliverables arising from the scope of this initial feasibility work should comprise of a comprehensive report, routemap and action plan, with supporting annexes of research and discussion with local stakeholders, which addresses the following:

1. A report which assesses and validates and/or develops and refines an initial concept or proposes an alternative concept for the development of an innovation/technology park and /or science park in our District and benchmarks the strengths, weaknesses, gaps and opportunities measured against the normal criteria and the Critical Success Factors normally associated with a successfully operating science and innovation/technology park. This should include a healthcheck and barometer of our current starting position as well as the building blocks on which we should build.
2. It should recommend an initial starting point and subsequent routemap for how we might go about developing the business case, setting out the recommended approach we should take from a series of alternative options with supporting rationale (e.g. a virtual hub and spoke model vs one consolidated park development and other alternatives you consider there might be). This should be based on your objective, realistic assessment of the vision, aims and objectives as well as your view on the initial starting point and focus for such a venture, resulting from the desk and field work you propose to undertake and having an eye to attracting Government public and private sector R&D funding and likelihood of attracting future institutional and commercial seedcorn and medium to longer term investment.
3. Following on from the recommendation of the preferred starting model, the report should set out the proposed Governance approach that should be adopted, as well as the roles of the stakeholders, the workstreams that needed to be developed and the routemap for moving to implementation of the first phase of development and what the future phases and activity might look like. This should include a clear action plan of key activity, milestones and key performance indicators, phasing and timelines to move from concept to initial realisation on the ground for each of the phases of implementation.
4. Assuming that this is taken forward, it would be good for you to provide an assessment of the likely economic impact in terms of GVA, Innovation and Productivity and start up rates etc. and associated multiplier effect on the local economy and existing value and supply chains locally and sub-regionally and what we will need to do to develop the attractiveness of the business environment and innovation ecosystem further. Consideration given to an assessment of the current strengths and weakness of the local sub-regional social, human, financial and technological capital to support such a concept and proposition and steps to strengthening and deepening those areas where here are deficiencies.
5. As a final part of this commission, we would like an some early consideration to be given to the short, medium and longer term property and land allocations and the critical success factors would be in the initial design and masterplanning and physical location of the park to ensuring such a park would be successful by assessing the location and other essential infrastructure and connectivity requirements might be to ensure its viability. This is obviously at a high level as more of that work would be taken forward in the next phase and scope of work.

#### **4B Considerations related to the initiation and development of an innovation/technology and/or science park which may inform the methodology and approach you take**

- This will necessitate desk based research and updating of the relevant Government policies and strategies linked to Clean Growth and associated sector opportunities and require renewed engagement with the departmental heads at Exeter University.
- It will also require active discussion and engagement with members of the Council and other actors such as the County Council who have been previously engaged in such discussions to seek their input and what they can contribute in terms of know how, institutional support and assessment of the market opportunity but also their thoughts as to how to take any ideas they might have with supporting rationale.

- It will also require a realistic assessment of the opportunity to develop an innovation campus, after undertaking a review of the business opportunities, assets, and potential early commitments of Universities and research and innovation bodies and organisations.
  - SWT will need to focus down on a core concept from which to start, where there are likely to be the greatest opportunities for success and where we have tangible assets, businesses and research capabilities which are relatively strong and possibly where there is a unique capability.
  - Furthermore, although we are able to allocate land for an innovate park, we need to understand and validate the opportunity for an innovation park first and understand the type of model we should look to operate – namely, might it be a hub and spoke model lining different centres of excellence together and premises for start up and move on or other approaches
- a. Validating future knowledge economy market opportunities & emerging businesses to target**
- SWT needs to identify the focus for the R and D area of research and development which presents the best immediate opportunity for development of the innovation/technology and/or science park concept and in parallel identify the types of businesses and start-ups in emerging sector/technology areas that might be looking for new environments to test, prototype and collaborate and innovate. This will in future require us to target the early movers and shakers in these areas who hopefully will subsequently attract others in, once they are well established here. Such movers and shakers may be an existing set of businesses, or be a new style of business incubator or accelerator that is established, a large anchor corporate relocating to the area, a leading research institute or offshoot of a University, or a UK or Foreign Investor looking for a suitable location. It will hopefully lead to the opportunity for an applied research and development intensive cluster around sustainable clean growth and environmental/energy related businesses and stakeholders.
- b. Better partnering and collaboration**
- SWT needs a vision for the future which will develop better links between local and sub-regional partners, businesses and stakeholders, along the M5 corridor and its hinterland in the form of triple helix open innovation type of collaborations and potentially complementary clusters each with their unique points of differentiation but where the sum is greater than the parts in a national and international context, seen through the lens of Clean and sustainable growth and opportunities. The example of one of the key challenges to address is that of Climate Change and Clean Growth. It should look to seize upon synergies and complementary research and development activities and clustering, potentially involving collaborative interest and shared institutes, assets and resources which could be made to be bigger than the sum of the parts. This would build on previous interactions with Exeter University amongst other local business networks in the South West.
- c. Proactive preparation for strategic funding opportunities**
- SWT and its businesses, asset and stakeholders need to be outward looking and proactive in responding to wider Governmental funding opportunities and associated calls from Government bodies such as UKRI and emanating from the National Industrial and Prosperity strategies such as from Innovate UK for instance. Once a proposition and focus for the innovation park is confirmed, we can collectively anticipate and intelligently horizon scanning all opportunities, seeking where possible to strive to be a pilot and a collaborative testbed for Government funding calls addressing societal issues in related areas including low carbon & sustainable energy challenges, digital upskilling etc. responding to calls for Institutes of Technology etc., enterprise zones etc.
- Attracting and growing businesses involving local recruitment, inclusion and upskilling of the indigenous workforce**
- A wider consideration related to the development of an innovation park is that future is that there are opportunities for sustainable growth of the economy in the future which will provide new and emerging career and employment pathways for the resident population and it is important that there is a broad range of employment opportunities which can lead to higher skilled and paid jobs within the District for its residents over time. This would be an opportunity to develop zero carbon environmental and renewable technologies skills and training for instance as a legacy of Hinkley C construction and transferability and application of manufacturing and engineering skills to these new and emerging work and sector opportunities.
- a. District wide focus**
- It is envisioned that this scope of work will propose a direction of travel in terms of the type of future knowledge economy prospects and targets should aspire to which ultimately will help transform the economy over the short, medium and long term, starting with some early quick wins within the next 3-5 years.



## Appendix B: List of Consultees

Somerset and West Taunton District Council	James Hassett
Somerset and West Taunton District Council	Nick Bryant
Somerset and West Taunton District Council	Mark Wathen
Somerset and West Taunton District Council	Dan Webb
Somerset and West Taunton District Council	Gordon Dwyer
Somerset and West Taunton District Council	Councillor Marcus Kravis
Somerset and West Taunton District Council	Councillor Habib Farhabi
Somerset and West Taunton District Council	Councillor Mike Rigby
Somerset County Council	Paul Hickson
Somerset County Council	Sam Seddon
Somerset County Council	Steve Lawrence
Somerset County Council	Julie Wooler
South Somerset District Council/MIT/HotSW lead	Alex Parmley
Sedgemoor District Council	Doug Bamsey
HotSW	Eifion Jones
HotSW	Corinne Matthews
HotSW Innovation Board	Stuart Brocklehurst
HotSW/Maritime UK SW	Sheldon Ryan
UKHO	David Tomaney
UKHO	Mark Casey
SWMAS	Nick Golding
SNHS Foundation Trust	David Shannon
SNHS Foundation Trust	Karen Prosser
SNHS Foundation Trust	Gregory Cobb
Somerset CCG	Allison Nation
SW Academic Health Science Network	Stuart Monck
WPA	Charlie MacEwan
Rutherford Diagnostics	Steven Powell
DEOS	Viv Barrett
Novanta/Cambridge Technology	Adrian Willoughby
UXC Group	Craig Newman
Singer Instruments	Harry Singer
Viridor	Tim Rotheray
Biohm	Ehab Sayeb
Biohm	Harry Darkly
Onion Collective	Naomi Griffith/Jessica Prendergast/Sally Lowndes
Somerset Waste Partnership	Mickey Green
Digital Taunton	Shane Griffiths
Digital Taunton	Jeremy Hyams
CICCIC	Andrew Knutt
CICCIC	Richard Holt
Claims Consortium	Jeremy Hyams
Bridgwater & Taunton College	Andy Berry
Bridgwater & Taunton College	Matt Tudor
Bridgwater & Taunton College	Sam Reilly
University of Exeter	Chris Evans
University of Exeter	Alan Brown
University of Exeter	Robert Kathro
Taunton Based Ex MoD	Paul Casson
Taunton Based Ex Imperial West Science Park	Eulian Roberts
Cushman & Wakefield	Andy Heath
GHA (European Funding)	Richard Hancock



# Somerset West and Taunton Council

## Corporate Scrutiny Committee - 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2021

### Innovation District Update

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Marcus Kravis

Report Author: Mark Wathen, Lead Specialist Economic Development and Prosperity

#### 1 Executive Summary / Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This paper contains an update on recent activity and progress and follows a request to explore the links between the resolutions made by the Executive in November 2018 and the activity to deliver inward investment and the Innovation District.
- 1.2 The EiBC consultancy contract was completed in line with the scope and expected outcomes of the contract which allowed for consideration of alternative approaches.

#### 2 Recommendations

- 2.1 This report is provided as an update paper to note.

#### 3 Risk Assessment

- 3.1 This report is an update on progress to establish SWT as the Innovation District for note by the Scrutiny Committee.

#### 4 Statement of Portfolio Holder

- 4.1 Statement by Cllr Marcus Kravis *“As Portfolio Holder for Assets and Economic Development, I confirm that I am content that the resolutions made by Taunton Deane Borough Council (TBDC) in 2018 have been taken into account when taking the activity to deliver the innovation district and inward investment forward and am proud of the achievements of this Council to date.”*

#### 5 Summary

- 5.1 The Innovation District action plan is in its early formative stage and will continue to be a long term evolving programme of activity responding to new and emerging opportunities and policy direction for investment from Government, academia, research and development businesses and the private sector, working collaboratively.

- 5.2 In July 2020 the Education and Innovation Business Consultancy (EiBC) were appointed to produce a feasibility report which assessed and validated and refined an initial concept or proposed an alternative concept for the development of an innovation/technology park in Somerset West and Taunton.
- 5.3 During the research and development of the report EiBC, Council officers and stakeholders found a considerably changed innovation landscape in 2020/21 when compared to 2018 and that matters had progressed significantly over the intervening period including:
- i. The business case for a Taunton Digital Innovation Centre.
  - ii. The Somerset NHS Foundation Trust 50/50 private sector led Joint Venture (JV) with Rutherford Diagnostics Ltd to establish a Community Diagnostics Centre including healthtech innovation space, the first of its kind in the UK.
  - iii. Strategic masterplanning of the Firepool regeneration site including innovation and commercial 'move on' employment space.
  - iv. An outline masterplan for Nexus 25 employment land and potential Local Development Order.
  - v. The final publication of the Taunton Garden Town Prospectus and Taunton 2040 Vision.
  - vi. The development of the "Gravity" campus and enterprise zone.
- 5.4 During the research and development stage of the feasibility study it was identified that there was a significant opportunity to extract more value from existing employment land allocations and to make individual assets greater than the sum of their parts.
- 5.5 Through the research it became apparent that the potential to utilise current available employment land would ensure employment, education, business growth and local supply chains were supported across the entire district rather than a focus on a single innovation campus site within the District.
- 5.6 To that end, the concept of a networked Innovation District was born (alongside other actions) and adopted by SWT, the public summary published on SWT's business facing website in March 2021. The work to develop this activity further was outlined in the SWT Economic Development Strategy approved by Full Council in February 2020.
- 5.7 The Innovation District work programme continues to progress the recommendations of the Scrutiny Task and Finish Group (November 2018) and the decision by the Executive in November 2018 to "Investigate the feasibility of an office for the creation of a Research and Innovation Centre. TDBC and the subsequent Council should undertake a prompt detailed feasibility study into the viability of such a centre. Effective use of appropriate partnership working [will be] crucial to the success of such a venture."
- 5.8 The EiBC consultancy contract was completed in line with the scope and expected outcomes of the contract which allowed for consideration of alternative approaches to a single Innovation campus within SWT, other options to be considered.
- 5.9 This approach ensured that the contract would produce a realistic and deliverable plan that could be taken forward with short-, medium- and long-term benefits for the District, rather than limiting to the consideration of one option only. This approach ensured that SWT were considering best use of public funds and benefiting from the professional opinion of the independent consultants.

- 5.10 The next phase of the Innovation District work programme includes further conversations with education providers in the region, leading innovation, research and development business and agencies as part of the establishment of the District as the first Rural Market Town Innovation District in the UK.
- 5.11 During the next phase of the Innovation District work programme further conversations will be had with SWT Members, following presentations of the work carried out and evidence base collected during the next phase, to ensure members are able to input into the development of the Innovation District.

## 6 **SWT Innovation Framework in March 2021 under the delegated authority of the Portfolio Holder**

- 6.1 Over the last few months, SWT has been working to understand its knowledge economy and innovation assets, clusters and businesses to help further develop the knowledge economy opportunities for its businesses and residents looking to the future and as a commitment made in the Economic Development Strategy published in March 2020.
- 6.2 It has provided a clear way forward for developing **a framework for action for the short term but with an eye to a longer term gain**, as the initial innovation clusters and innovation board is established, building on immediate opportunities.
- 6.3 **It is to be stressed that this is the start of an evolving journey involving a range of partners linked to the emerging Somerset West and Taunton Innovation District concept.**

## 7 **Update on the significant progress made in the 9 months since the adoption of the Innovation District Framework**

- 7.1 Since the approval of the Innovation District Framework (and EiBC recommendations), work has been taking place on:
- working up the Innovation District concept to put to the market
  - aligning SWT town centre, marketing and inward investment work programmes with the Innovation District
  - continuing the dialogue with the high-tech businesses and innovation organisations that will 'anchor' the Innovation District. Further conversations are planned with the Director of Regional Innovation and Impact at Exeter University.
  - continued discussion with the Local Enterprise Partnership about the shape and commissioning of LEP wide innovation support.
  - discussions relating to the integration of the Barclays Lab virtual innovation ecosystem across the UK to support peer to peer knowledge transfer and events.
  - the opening of the Rutherford Diagnostics Centre for healthtech and the start on site for build of the Digital Innovation Centre
  - discussion with Host Somerset about developing student accommodation with our regeneration team in Taunton on behalf of Bridgwater and Taunton College and University Centre Somerset.
  - the feasibility study of additional employment land in West Somerset to meet the express demand of businesses looking to expand in the West Somerset geography and grow the local knowledge based talent pool.

- consideration of partnering with a leading independent and impartial organisation with expertise in connecting businesses and public sectors to cutting edge research on the development of innovation centres, and how to grow new markets. The organisation would provide capacity and expertise to the Innovation Leadership Group and deliver a routemap through the process of establishing an Innovation District. This work would help to facilitate future conversation with members and wider stakeholders about the critical stages of the innovation journey and routemap, as they support other innovation districts across the UK. Discussions with Somerset County Council and other Districts in Somerset to position this work are underway that takes into account the transition to a Unitary Council and into a Somerset wide Innovation Place, examining how we might collectively unite the innovation assets and innovation support under collective stewardship and oversight.

***Excitingly, new market opportunities have arisen during this time which the Innovation District work is capitalising on including:***

**a) Artificial Intelligence(AI)/Big Data & Digital:**

- With funding confirmed in September 2021, build will commence on a £9.5m Innovation Centre on Firepool in October/November.
- UKHO have undertaken a £0.5m commercialisation accelerator programme linked to the utilisation of its maritime AI/Big Data.
- Visit Somerset is developing an AI/Big Data platform for the visitor economy utilising latest digital technologies and techniques.

**b) Healthcare, medtech and e-health:**

- The Joint Venture between Somerset NHS Foundation Trust at Musgrove Park and Rutherford Diagnostics Ltd has led to the opening of the innovative Rutherford Diagnostics Centre in October 2021.
- Healthcare partners and Bridgwater and Taunton College have run 12 week National Re-training Skills Bootcamps in e-health and digital upskilling. SWT officers are working with Sedgemoor District Council to support a Levelling Up bid to support the establishment of a centre of excellence in Social Care aligned to the SWT Innovation District work. SWT officers have worked with Plymouth and Exeter Universities and the Academic Health Science Network on a LEP wide healthcare technopole.
- An Expression of Interest has been submitted to the Connected Places Catapult “Homes for Healthy Ageing Programme” to secure support for SWT to be a “demonstrator site” to match solutions from healthtech and care innovators with insights and capabilities of local authorities and housing associations to harness innovation and growth to build a healthier future for the UK. If successful SWT could be one of 5 organisations receiving up to £0.5m to support this work during 2021-2022.

**c) Creative/cultural:**

- SWT secured funding from the £4m Business Rates Pool to support the capacity of both our cultural and digital sectors. A £0.5m Community Renewal Fund bid was submitted in June 2021 by the Somerset Arts and Business Cultural Alliance (SABCA) to support innovation and growth within the creative and digital industries. SWT officers have submitted a Levelling up bid

for Wellington's ToneDale Mill which has support from the creative, cultural, fashion and textile industries.

- The opening East Quay in Watchet, a cultural, creative and makerspace enabling collaboration and sector innovation.
- The Collar Factory, a new co-working space in Taunton, is opening offering creative studios, meeting, networking and event space to supportive innovation in the sector.

#### **d) Innovation ecosystem and higher level skills (education)**

- The launch of 'T' levels and University Centre Level 6 courses in Information Technology and 'Big Data', Nursing and Healthcare supported by the Institute of Technology.
- Bridgwater & Taunton College (BTC) has been approved by the Nursing & Midwifery Council (NMC) to deliver a Nursing Degree and Nursing Degree Apprenticeships across Adult Nursing and Mental Health pathways. The NMC has also recommended the approval of the Trainee Nurse Associate programme. All the programmes are validated by the University of the West of England (UWE), with the apprenticeships due to start this year. Bridgwater & Taunton College has become the first college in the UK to achieve this recommendation. These degree pathways enhance the degree provision at University Centre Somerset and have been developed in direct response to Somerset's skills gaps in nursing.
- A Somerset wide Bootcamp for 10 businesses (4 of which are in the SWT area) to help inform future innovation ecosystem development.

#### **e) Circular natural capital economy:**

- Plans are continuing on the development of circular sustainable economies in West Somerset, including the development of an Exmoor strategy which recognises the opportunity for new entrepreneurial start-ups in sustainable circular economy businesses, using its natural capital to counter climate change.

#### **f) Renewable energy/nuclear:**

- SWT officers are working with the HotSW LEP, Nuclear South West, EDF and the Nuclear Decommissioning Agency to ensure that opportunities for supply chain, education and training are maximised and aligned with the development of the Innovation District.

#### **g) Inward investment and place making and promotion:**

- Appointment of a marketing and communication agency to develop a marketing and communications plan, and a range of propositions to target and attract inward investment to the area, including the innovation, clean tech and clean energy sectors.
- The Nuclear South West proposition is already well developed and more recently an Autonomous Maritime Vessels national proposition incorporating the UK Hydrographic Office (UKHO) was produced with the Department for International Trade.

- Inward Investment articles have been published in the South West Insider Investment magazine which was circulated around the UK as well as profiling the Innovation District at the annual UK Science Park Association conference.

7.2 Further developments are expected during the course of 2021/22 including building on the launch of the Government's Innovation Strategy and Levelling Up White Paper which will have more detail around innovation places and a multi-year approach to the UK's Prosperity Fund from 2022 onwards.

## 8 **Specific responses to the final resolutions of the Affordable Employment Land Task and Finish Group 2018**

8.1 This section aims to respond specifically to explore the links between the final resolutions related to the Affordable Employment Land Task and Finish Group's report, which was affirmed by the Executive in November 2018 and the eventual EIBC report. The resolutions made in 2018 have been delivered by a diverse approach and are not solely found in the EIBC report.

The recommendations in the 2018 report were:

**Resolved** that the Executive noted the Task and Finish Group's Report and recommended the following:-

### **1. Affordable Employment Land:**

- a) TDBC and the subsequent Council must build on the Affordable Employment Land Report undertaken by Peter Brett Associates by commencing an urgent reappraisal of all employment sites
- b) TDBC and the subsequent Council to explore the delivery of Affordable Starter Employment Units via different delivery models including varying forms of Local Development Orders, and expedient Council enabling through a standalone approach or development partner involvement.

### **2. Investigate the feasibility of an office for the creation of a Research and Innovation Centre:**

- a) TDBC and the subsequent Council should undertake a prompt detailed feasibility study into the viability of such a centre. Effective use of appropriate partnership working was crucial to the success of such a venture.

8.2 **The response in respect of gap analysis of each of the above in turn is as follows:**

#### **1a) Affordable Employment Land**

**Somerset West and Taunton Local Plan development** - the National Planning Policy Framework requires the planning system to be genuinely plan-led. The Council will be reviewing its employment sites through the Local Plan review process considering them for their sustainability, appropriateness, deliverability, attractiveness as employment sites, infrastructure requirements and other local



benefits that could be delivered. The Council will also consider where employment development should be retained in order to deliver sustainable communities. The Planned approach to reviewing employment sites ensures that decisions on the location of new employment and the specific sites is considered in conjunction with all other strategic planning matters and not in a silo.

This process will be informed with up-to-date evidence on employment land needs. Emerging evidence suggests a need for 44,800 sqm office floorspace and 53 ha of industrial land between 2020-40 although the appropriate target will be determined through the Local Plan review.

## 1b) Affordable Starter Units

**A Rural Local Development Order received Full Council Approval on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2020** - during the early part of 2019, the economic development team working with our planning colleagues made the development of affordable starter employment units a priority in accordance with the Executive Resolution from 2018 and developed a Rural Local Development Order which has subsequently been published and launched and fully adopted by the Full Council on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2020.

[Employment Local Development Order \(somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk\)](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/employment-local-development-order)

- This LDO is a proactive planning tool to enable increased delivery of small-scale employment space in rural parts of Somerset West and Taunton, and was developed in response to demand from small businesses to set up or expand their existing operations.
- The LDO and accompanying Design Code will provide clarity on how to deliver high quality small-scale employment space appropriate to the site. It will ensure that a high and consistent standard of design is delivered, providing sustainable and stimulating working environments whilst at the same time enabling the diverse requirements of individual occupiers to be met.
- The LDO sets out to grant planning permission for small scale office, research and light industrial space across the Council area removing the need for a planning application to be made. Development must accord with all aspects of the Design Code in order to benefit from the permitted development rights confirmed by the LDO.

### Other support for progress delivery of allocated employment land in response to need

- **Firepool business case was approved in November 2020.** This will provide circa 600 residential units, subject to planning and circa 20000 sq/m of commercial, office and leisure uses. The site has been fallow since the cattle market closed 12 years ago. Our estimate is that this will provide FTE 350 direct jobs and up to 3000 construction jobs over the course of the programme. The space also provides space for the Digital Innovation Centre being developed in partnership with Somerset County Council.
- **Coal Orchard**, was built in 2020/21 in a location where the market could not make viable. This build continued through the Pandemic. This has provided 40 apartments, 8 commercial units and car parking for 40 cars, including EV charging. SWT have enhanced public realm and access to river, and flood mitigation is built into the design. The site has the propensity to create 94 Jobs.
- **Seaward Way, Minehead, West Somerset.** SWT built two much needed employment spaces in 2020 and this project came in under budget and produced a

4.9% yield for income. In total, 32,000 sq ft of commercial / light industrial space was built. Both units have been let, one to a local company who have been based in Minehead for 20+ years who was desperately in need of larger and more modern facilities to expand.

- **Additional employment space review is underway in West Somerset** - being able to find new employment land for industrial purposes in West Somerset has been a significant problem for many years. Aside from the recent Snazaroo development and the units next to West Somerset Railway, no new sites have come forward in over a decade. A review is being undertaken to identify land and employment site options in West Somerset to help to continue to deliver growing employment opportunities and to respond to their immediate needs.
  - **SME A** in Minehead employ 33 staff and produce products for security, medical and military personnel. They are seeking 1,200 sqm of space (12-15k sq. ft) and will create 10 new jobs. The company would be content with a discreet premise and would prefer the Minehead area.
  - **SME B** employs some 30-40 staff and produce scientific research instruments. They are seeking 2,800 sqm (30k sq. ft) and will create 15 new jobs initially. They would prefer a high profile site preferably in the Minehead area. One of the two businesses is likely to move away from the area if a site is not found. Both businesses are content with renting space from the Council and are happy to wait on the outcome of this report. They are both currently looking at options to temporarily expand. In addition to this it is recognised that one of the sites identified should be large enough to accommodate other future units if possible.
- **Town Centre/High Street affordable employment space.** SWT are also working with Town Centre locations to explore the opportunities afforded to start-up companies by using the available space created by vacant retail locations. In Wellington, a feasibility study has also been undertaken on an enterprise centre and hotdesking centre in the High Street, making use of vacant retail space as appropriate. All of these initiatives aim to respond to the need in a post Covid19 environment and be more agile in helping to meet those needs in a more flexible manner, building on the existing enterprise centre network of the County Council in Minehead, Williton, Wiveliscombe and potentially in Wellington.

## **2a) Investigate the feasibility of an office for the creation of a Research and Innovation Centre:**

Research has shown that there is adequate site provision in our District – there is no evidence of need for additional office for a Research and Innovation centre space. The current offers include:

- Over the next 3 years a network of new innovation centres will be delivered in Taunton (2), Bridgwater (3), Yeovil (1).
- Additionally 3 sites in SWT (Firepool TDIC, Nexus and Blackbrook) offer further opportunities for grow-on space for knowledge based businesses with a capacity in excess of 600,000 square feet in Taunton.
- This is in addition to a further 300,000 square feet of general business and light manufacturing space at the Crown Estate and over 300,000 square feet at the Gravity site.
- Firepool has a capability to accommodate a Phase 2 innovation centre and Blackbrook, already the home of a health based knowledge based

businesses, has a key undeveloped site adjacent to the Rutherford Diagnostics innovation Centre, whilst the 40 acre Nexus site can accommodate around 377,000 square feet of knowledge based business.

- Outside Taunton, Watchet can also accommodate at least 54,000 square feet of business space at the former papermill site. All of these sites are committed and most are 'shovel ready'.
- Excluding the Crown Estate and Gravity sites and the other innovation centres coming on stream elsewhere in Somerset, the remaining SWT sites deliver in excess of half a million square feet of space with a potential to accommodate up to 4,600 direct knowledge based jobs in addition to jobs that are indirect and induced economic impacts .
- On 9<sup>th</sup> July 2021, a meeting of the initial inaugural group of over 12 private and public sector stakeholders representative of the five domains of the Innovation District were brought together to help inform the development of the workplan over the next year and to move to a more formalised stewardship group, which was avidly received by all the participants, including links to the LEP and their Innovation Board. This collaborative approach to the Taunton Innovation District embeds the principles of the integrated project delivery approach which was highlighted in the 2018 work and still has a long way to go, but the foundation pieces are beginning to be laid.

## 9. **Next steps**

9.1 The next steps for the 2021-2022 Innovation District work programme will continue to be developed in line with corporate plan commitments. Some of the immediate components of the workplan are illustrated here and will be overseen by the stewardship of the recently convened Innovation Leadership Group (ILG).

### 9.2 **Infrastructure**

#### **Activity will include:**

- Finalise the funding package to enable the start on site build of the Digital Innovation Centre.
- Continue to support local knowledge based businesses expand into grow-on space (two companies are actively seeking support) and engage more in detail with businesses.
- Identify regeneration opportunities and locations for student accommodation build for the healthcare sector in Taunton so that this supports full-time and part-time Higher Education and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) growth.

### 9.3 **Clusters** (groups of inter-related industries that drive wealth creation in a region)

- Identify ways in which the clusters can be strengthened by providing more operational capacity.
- Undertake more detailed cluster segmentation and mapping to identify unique characteristics and unique selling points and opportunities for joint collaboration and funding.
- Start the mobilisation of other clusters including biomanufacturing, waste and circular economy.

### 9.4 **Innovation support**

- Commission innovation support for Digital Innovation centre in 2021/22 and collaborate with plans to establish a HotSW Innovation Technopole service.

#### **9.5 Talent Development**

- Work with Bridgwater and Taunton college and local businesses to engage young people in the innovation district through innovation and enterprise placements.
- Align the education pathways and skillsets of young people to develop the talent pool needed by businesses within the Innovation District.

#### **9.6 Place marketing and promotion**

- Work with the marketing and communication consultants appointed over the course of the next year to update marketing and propositions for inward investment and establish place marketing protocols, ensuring they are complementary to surrounding regional clusters and add value.

#### **9.7 Funding opportunities**

- Review opportunities on the horizon and identify immediate needs.

#### **9.8 Stewardship**

- Support the establishment of the Innovation Leadership Group in terms of its terms of reference and composition.
- Identify cluster development groups/leads to engage and network the private sector businesses and the college and universities.

### **10 Links to Corporate Strategy**

**See 7.1**

### **11 Finance / Resource Implications**

This report provides an update only. No decision required that would have financial or resource implications

### **12 Legal Implications**

This report provides an update only. No decision required that would have legal implications.

### **13 Climate and Sustainability Implications**

This report provides an update only. No decision making that would have climate or sustainability implications.

### **14 Safeguarding and/or Community Safety Implications**

This report provides an update only. No decision making that would have safeguarding or community safety implications.

## **15 Equality and Diversity Implications**

This report provides an update only. No decision making that would have equality and diversity implications.

## **16 Social Value Implications**

This report provides an update only. No decision making that would have social value implications.

## **17 Partnership Implications**

This report provides an update only. No decision making that would have partnership implications.

## **18 Health and Wellbeing Implications**

This report provides an update only. No decision making that would have health and wellbeing implications.

## **19 Asset Management Implications**

This report provides an update only. No decision making that would have asset management implications.

## **20 Data Protection Implications**

This report provides an update only. No decision making that would have data protection implications.

## **21 Consultation Implications**

This report provides an update only. No decision making that would have consultation implications.

### **Democratic Path:**

- **Scrutiny - Yes**
- **Cabinet/Executive - No**
- **Full Council - No**

## Contact Officers

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# Appendix

## Relevant Policies and Strategies informing the approach taken and continuing evolution of the SWT Innovation District

The recent policies and associated timelines that have informed and are aligned to the Innovation District and its direction of travel are as follows:

### **Affordable Employment Land Task and Finish Group's report November 2018 (Taunton Deane Borough Council)**

**TDBC Executive Decision November 2018** to “Investigate the feasibility of an office for the creation of a Research and Innovation Centre. TDBC and the subsequent Council should undertake a prompt detailed feasibility study into the viability of such a centre. Effective use of appropriate partnership working was crucial to the success of such a venture”.

**SWT Council's Corporate Strategy October 2019** was approved by Full Council and relevant objectives that relate to the Innovation District include:

#### ***Environment and Economy***

- Work towards making our District ***carbon neutral by 2030***.
- Shape and protect our built and natural environment, supported by a ***refreshed Local Plan***, develop our heritage, cultural and leisure offer, including a ***clear vision and delivery plan for the Taunton Garden Town***.
- Encourage wealth creation and economic growth throughout the District by ***attracting inward investment, enabling research and innovation, improving the skills of the local workforce*** and seeking to ***ensure the provision of adequate and affordable employment land*** to meet different business needs.
- ***Support the town centres*** throughout the District to meet the challenge of changing shopping habits.
- ***Facilitate the development of the commercial parts of the Firepool site*** in Taunton.
- Support the ***enhancement of arts and culture provision*** within the District.

### **LEP's Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) published in 2020**

This has superseded the *South West and South Wales Science and Innovation Audit referenced in the 2018 Task and Finish Group*, prioritising those aspects that are of most relevance to the LEP's greatest chances of success. The LIS subsequently identified ***three key priorities to build on the expertise and distinctive assets of the LEP area, whilst moving to a greener economy:***

They are:

- ▶ **energy**; stemming from the construction, and legacy benefits, of one of Europe's largest infrastructure projects – the UK's first nuclear power station in twenty years at Hinkley Point C – and pioneering the development of the next generation of marine renewables;
- ▶ **engineering**: leading on the development and commercialisation of marine autonomy, and supporting the sustainable aviation challenge through development of rotary technologies and electric planes; and
- ▶ **digital**; specifically through environmental intelligence, the marine geospatial innovation market, and health and agri-technologies.

## **SWT's Economic Development Strategy approved at Full Council in February 2020**

A key stated objective was to encourage wealth creation and clean economic growth throughout the District by:

- **Attracting inward investment and enabling research and innovation.**
- SWT also committed to **explore a Higher Level Educational Research Institution and Innovation Park to explore and validate emerging knowledge economy opportunities** such as AI/Big Data and digital technologies, remote healthcare delivery and low carbon renewable energy and environmental technologies as well as exploring the circular economy and natural capital, including plastic waste recycling.
- Reviewing business and innovation support to determine the **most appropriate approach to building a sustainable Somerset wide local business and innovation ecosystem.**
- Strategic employment site development, specifically referencing **Firepool** and the development of an innovation zone.
- **Implementing a Rural Local Development Order**, supporting and promoting **Nexus 25** and our **own commercial assets and sites.**
- **Taunton Garden Town** becoming a dynamic economy of cultural, creative and digital businesses as part of a future Tech Nation Corridor.

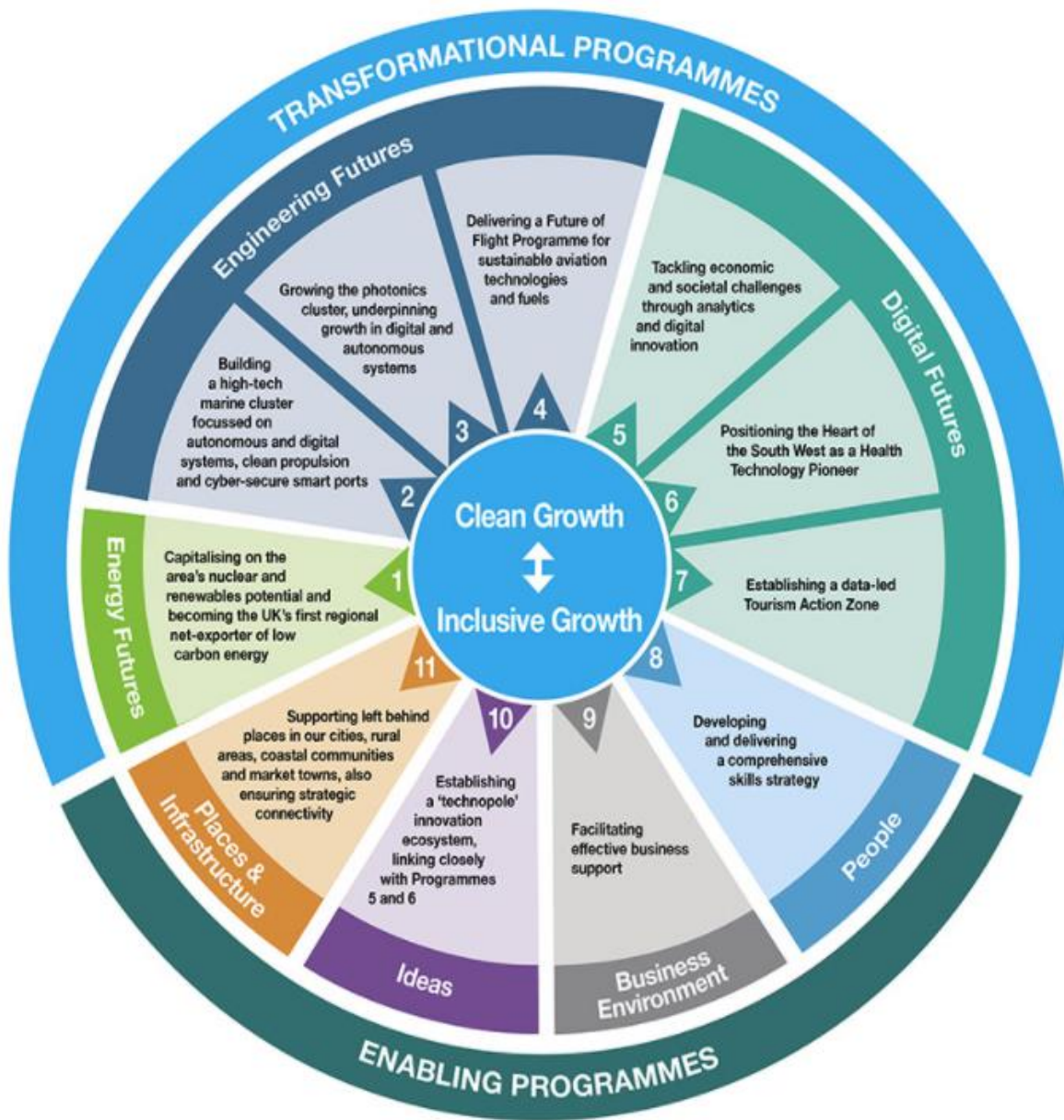
## **Somerset Economic Recovery and Growth Plan March 2021**

The Plan was developed and **agreed by 5 Local Authorities in Somerset in January 2021** and submitted to Government and replaces the Somerset Growth Plan which was developed pre-pandemic.

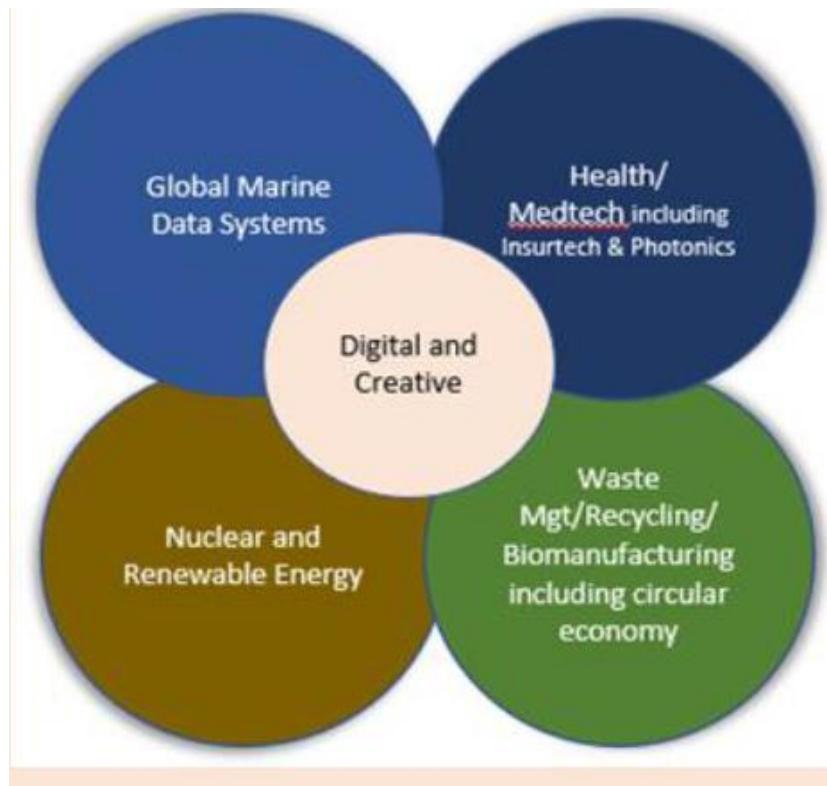
The plan differentiates activities and interventions across the different phases of recovery (**Lockdown, Restart, Revitalise, Grow**), which has been adopted widely by partners across the Heart of the South West LEP.

- **LEP's Build Back Better Plan March 2021** - the Build Back Better Plan is not on its own a recovery plan from COVID-19, but is rooted in the ambitious vision of our Local Industrial Strategy (LIS), which has a distinctive focus to deliver on clean and inclusive growth.





Source: EIBC Innovation District Framework 5 Domains



Source: HoTSW LEP Building Back Better Plan Priorities 2021

The specific opportunities from the diagram and SWT's innovation domains align in the following ways:

- **Energy Futures: capitalising on the area's nuclear and renewables potential**
- **Engineering Futures: UKHO's involvement in building a high-tech marine cluster and commercialising its AI/Big Data assets**
- **Digital Futures: tackling societal challenges through digital innovation** and positioning the Heart of the South West as a **Health Technology Pioneer** and establishing a **data-led Tourism Action Zone**, with Visit Somerset now deploying AI/Big Data platforms
- **Enabling programmes (Ideas):** establishing a **'technopole' innovation ecosystem** which is not focused on Universities but on **any business undertaking R and D** and connecting them with other businesses & the knowledge base and future R&D funding opportunities