

SWT Executive - 17 November 2021

Present: Councillor Federica Smith-Roberts (Chair)

Councillors Derek Perry, Chris Booth, Caroline Ellis, Ross Henley, Marcus Kravis, Mike Rigby, Francesca Smith and Andrew Sully

Officers: James Barrah, Andrew Pritchard (Chief Executive), Paul Fitzgerald, Alison Blom-Cooper, Chris Brown, Sam Murrell, Clare Rendell, Lisa Tuck, Mark Wathen, Fiona Webb, Scott Weetch and Jane Windebank

Also Present: Councillors Simon Coles, Habib Farbahi, Libby Lisgo, Janet Lloyd, Ray Tully, Sarah Wakefield and Loretta Whetlor

(The meeting commenced at 6.15 pm)

52. Apologies

An apology was received from Councillor Dixie Darch.

53. Minutes of the previous meeting of the Executive

(Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 20 October 2021 circulated with the agenda)

Resolved that the minutes of the Executive held on 20 October 2021 be confirmed as a correct record.

54. 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 C Booth	All Items	Wellington and Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
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 J Lloyd	All Items	Wellington & Sampford Arundel	Personal	Spoke
Cllr D Perry	All Items	Taunton Charter	Personal	Spoke and Voted

		Trustee		
Cllr M Rigby	All Items	SCC & Bishops Lydeard	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr F Smith	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr F Smith-Roberts	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr R Tully	All Items	West Monkton	Personal	Spoke
Cllr L Whetlor	All Items	Watchet	Personal	Spoke

55. **Public Participation**

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

56. **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.

57. **Scrutiny Recommendations**

During the discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Councillors queried whether the deadline for the conference would be achievable and whether there would be enough planning time to allow the event to take place.
The Portfolio Holder for Asset Management and Economic Development advised that they had given a lot of thought to the deadline and agreed it would be a tight timescale but that he did not want to lose momentum on the project.
- Councillors queried whether the funding for the conference work would go through the normal business case process and then onto Full Council for approval.
The Portfolio Holder for Asset Management and Economic Development confirmed that they would follow the democratic processes for approval. The Section 151 Officer further advised that they needed to ensure that the relevant resource was available for recommendation 2.2.
- Councillors suggested a disclaimer was added to the report to advise that some businesses may no longer be 'live' or trading.
- Concern was raised on what would happen after 2023 when the Unitary Authority was formed.
- Councillors urged officers to spend money on a venue located in central Taunton.
- Councillors wanted the whole district involved but highlighted that Taunton was the centre and where the emphasis should be placed.

- Councillors agreed that it was an exciting opportunity for the District to capitalise on innovation.
- Councillors agreed that they wanted Somerset West and Taunton to take the lead on innovation in the area.
- Councillors wanted to encourage young professionals to move to the area.
- Councillors wanted to promote businesses and growth.
- Councillors thanked officers for all their work so far.

Resolved that the Executive approved:-

- 2.1 To progress the work identified in the 'Developing the Innovation Ecosystem in Somerset West and Taunton – Framework for Action' report and not to carry out an additional feasibility study for an innovation hub in Taunton, however;
- 2.2 As part of Somerset West and Taunton Council's role as an enabler to deliver the space necessary for research and innovation within the district, the Council would as part of the work of enabling the development of innovation assets to the next level, would finance and host a R&I Conference in Taunton by or during the summer 2022, which would bring together business, academia, developers, investors and the wider industries in order to progress development of R&I assets in Taunton and the wider district.

Councillor Marcus Kravis left the meeting.

58. **Review of Voluntary and Community Sector Grants**

During the discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Councillor Ross Henley was not present for the debate.
- Councillors thanked the Portfolio Holder for Community and the Working Group for all their hard work.
- Councillors agreed that funding was important to the many community groups in the area.
- Concern was raised that there was a lot of uncertainties for community groups in the future.
- Councillors suggested that they were given 6 monthly updates, so that they could support officers and give updates to their local groups to answer any queries they might have.
- Councillors agreed that although the funding was not a statutory function, it benefited those who were in need across the district and so therefore was 'priceless'.

Resolved that the Executive approved:-

- 2.1 The schedule of grants set out within the table 'Proposed Voluntary and Community Sector Grants 2022/23' in section 6.2 of the report; and
- 2.2 That councillors would be given 6 monthly updates on the funding review to assist with queries raised by community groups.

59. **Somerset West and Taunton Districtwide Design Guide - Review of Public Consultation and Adoption as Supplementary Planning Document**

During the discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Agenda items 7 and 8 were debated together.
- Councillors agreed that the Design Guides were very useful documents, which would make developers take local identity into account when drawing up their plans.
- Councillors agreed that local identity was very important, and that they wanted to see well designed properties in the area.
- Councillors wanted to ensure the local heritage was taken into consideration in local developments.
- Councillors agreed that the quality of the built environment was very important.

Resolved that the Executive:-

- 1) Approved that the Somerset West and Taunton Districtwide Design Guide 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) Noted 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 the report.
- 3) Agreed that the Director of Development and Place, 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) Agreed 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.

60. **Public Realm Design Guide for Taunton Garden Town - Review of Public Consultation and Adoption as Supplementary Planning Document**

Resolved that the Executive:-

- 1) Approved that the Public Realm Design Guide 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, noted 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 the report.
- 3) Agreed that the Director of Development and 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.

61. **Access to Information - Exclusion of the Press and Public - appendices 3, 6 and 7 only**

Resolved 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 grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 respectively of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, namely information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

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

During the discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Concern was raised on the residents who lived in the project area and whether they would be placed into gold band on the Homefinder register if they were required to move out.
The Development Manager confirmed that residents who fell into the 'live decant' category would be placed into the gold band.
- Councillors queried whether carbon neutral designs would be used and whether the Design Guides would influence the plans.
The Development Manager advised that the current carbon neutral processes would be used and that officers had used the Design Guide to input what materials were used in the plans.
- Councillors were reassured that the report would only be used as a precautionary measure and that the tenants involved in the project had given their support.
- Councillors were pleased to see the project works were underway and progress was being made.
- Councillors thanked the Project Team for all the support they had given to the local residents.
- The Portfolio Holder for Housing thanked everyone for their comments and the officers for all their hard work.

Resolved that the Executive approved the purchase of the private dwellings as set out in confidential Appendix 7.

(The Meeting ended at 7.45 pm)