

Corporate Priority Area	Ref	Annual Plan Commitments 2021/22 https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/your-council/annual-plan/	Update on position at the end of March 2022	RAG
Our environment and economy	1	Continue to deliver projects that work towards making ours a carbon neutral district by 2030 through our Carbon Neutral Climate Resilience Action Plan.	<p>Our climate change delivery team continues to deliver projects as set out in our CNCR 10 year plan. In the first year we delivered actions identified as 'immediate' such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided climate change training to all our staff and elected members • Started the transition of our pool car fleet to electric vehicles • Installed Electric Vehicle Charging Units at Blackbrook Leisure Centre in Taunton, Alexandra Road car park in Minehead and Exmoor House car park in Dulverton • Been awarded OZEV funding to install Electric Vehicle Charging Points within our SWT owned car parks across the district • Launched our free tree scheme for parish and town councils • Supported parish and town councils with grant funding to install Electric Vehicle Charging Points • Worked with Wessex Water to install water refill stations in Taunton, Wellington and Minehead • Retrofitted waterless urinals within our public toilets • We are leading on the 'Recycling on the Go' project for Somerset Waste Partnership • Approved to take part in the Department for Transport EScooter trials and have launched schemes in Taunton and Minehead <p>Work is now underway to identify priority projects from year 2 and year 3 of the plan to deliver from 2022 onwards.</p>	Green
	2	Deliver Recycle More, the expanded household recycling service, to make it easier for everyone to increase the amount they recycle.	Phase 3 (Taunton Deane) was rolled out in Q3 and Phase 4 (West Somerset) was rolled out in Q4. The roll out of communal collections for phase 4 has been delayed until 22/23 due to resourcing concerns. Contractor performance issues continue to have impact on the household collection service. Early indications have shown a significant increase in recycling rates as seen in earlier phases.	Amber
	3	Deliver a programme of creative initiatives to support the recovery and growth of our town centre businesses.	<p>Delivered 124 schemes in Taunton, Wellington, Minehead, Watchet, Porlock, Dulverton, Dunster and Wiveliscombe enabled through the delivery of a £535k grant scheme, and 100% expenditure of SWTs Welcome Back Fund allocation (£235k). These included events, markets, public realm improvements, business support, visitor and shopper guides etc.</p> <p>All town centre's have recorded an increase in footfall and the overall vibrancy and reputation of the towns.</p> <p>The ED team continue to facilitate and deliver a range of schemes to fill empty shop units, provide events, offer business support and regular conversations with Town Centre Businesses and Representative Groups.</p>	Green
	4	Complete the redevelopment of one of our prime riverside quarters, Coal Orchard in Taunton.	Scheme has been delayed due to contractor going into administration in Jan '22. Now programmed to finish in Summer 22	Amber
	5	Progress individual planning applications on Firepool, for Block 1 (Firepool South, next to the Viridor building) as well as Block 3 (Firepool North next to Trenchard Way) with a view to starting work on site in late 2021 and start on site of the Digital Innovation Centre at Block 6 (Firepool North).	<p>Block 3 and Infrastructure applications now approved, starting on site Summer 22.</p> <p>Block 1 is caught by phosphates with a timeline to be determined by mitigation solutions.</p>	Green

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	6	Increase opportunity for new jobs and businesses in Minehead and West Somerset by completing an employment land sites feasibility study.	<p>A feasibility study was carried out in Summer 2021, which reviewed a wide range of sites, as well as assessed business demand. The development appraisal concluded that one specific site and another location both offered potentially viable options for investment and development. A decision was made to further explore these sites in more detail (rather than bring forward business cases for the Council to consider), and in particular firm up some of the key variable costs, which in turn would lead to more robust business cases. Significant work has been going on to investigate costs and issues associated with each site.</p> <p>This work has progressed as far as it can prior to new financial rules coming into place for the Unitary authority summer '22</p>	Green
	7	Present a full business case to open a train station in Wellington (if given the go ahead from the 'Restoring Your Railway Panel')	<p>Following the funding announcement in the autumn budget statement in October 2021, the Steering Group have been working closely with Network Rail and the Department for Transport (DfT) to finalise next steps in relation to the new stations at Wellington and Cullompton.</p> <p>The £5 million of funding announced will enable the project to advance significantly through the next two stages of project development and design, following the submission of the Strategic Outline Business Case at the beginning of 2021. The £5m will be administered by Network Rail as part of the Restoring Your Railway, Rail Network Enhancements budget with specific outputs and milestones agreed between DfT and Network Rail.</p> <p>The promoters, Somerset West and Taunton Council (SWT) and Mid Devon District Council (MDDC), have agreed with DfT that Network Rail will lead on the project from this point onwards, with support from their alliance partner Great Western Railway. It is felt that this will bring significant benefits to the project.</p>	Green
	8	Continue to gather evidence to support the review of the Council's Local Plan. The Local Plan is a very important set of policies that will set out how the district will develop over the next 20 years, such as where new housing will go and what we expect from developers in terms of affordable housing, infrastructure, how biodiversity will be improved and how our landscapes and heritage will be protected.	<p>Given the new unitary council for Somerset will be formed on 1 April 2023 and the numerous stages in Local, Mineral and Waste Plan preparation, the existing councils will therefore no longer be progressing new plans through the statutory process based on their individual geographies. Existing county and district councils are working closely to scope the content and timescales for new Development Plan(s) to be prepared in the future as part the single unitary council. This includes ongoing work to progress and align key evidence base documents. Relevant documents, including an updated Local Development Scheme (LDS) for the new Somerset Council will be published in due course as the councils work through the transitional arrangements.</p> <p>There are a number of workstreams currently being progressed to ensure a smooth transition to the new council. There is a clear commitment to ensuring effective plan-making arrangements are implemented going forward and we will update our web pages when there is further information regarding timescales and scope of any new Development Plan Documents.</p>	Amber
	9	Keep delivering our new Garden Communities toward delivery.	<p>Garden Town Implementation Manager and Green Infrastructure Officer were appointed in Autumn 2021 to support delivery of the project. Delivery is ultimately in the hands of landowners, land promoters and developers - however SWT as planning authority has dedicated Development Management resource facilitating approvals, legal queries, assisting project management and engagement with local communities in order to move matters forward. The 'phosphates issue' remains a overarching problem which will hamper delivery, viability and commercial confidence in the sites moving forward.</p> <p>Comeytrove - Circa 380 homes with reserved matters or resolution to approve with phosphate mitigation, show home open, and first occupations. SCC is currently considering a planning application for a primary school and associated nursery.</p> <p>Staplegrove East - Resolution to approve outline consent now implicated by the 'phosphates issue' and therefore delayed awaiting a separate proposal for a wetland phosphate solution.</p> <p>Staplegrove West - Outline consent granted, reserved matters now implicated by the 'phosphate issue' and therefore delayed, however a 'integrated constructed wetland' is being pursued as mitigation with a live planning application.</p> <p>Monkton Heathfield Phase 2 - Hybrid planning application received December 2021 and is live. Phosphate mitigation will be required.</p>	Amber

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	10	Enable development by finding a long-term solution to manage the phosphates issue on the Somerset Levels and Moors while finding a way to unblock stalled sites as soon as possible.	<p>As previously reported, SWT Interim phosphate programme was considered at SWT Full Council on the 5th October 2021. The interim programme allows some of the planning applications currently held in abeyance to be determined. Since then, the Council has put in place an Interim Phosphates Mitigation Strategy, which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The establishment of Phosphates Planning Sub-Committee to oversee the strategy and the recruitment of 2 no. dedicated Officers. •Progressing projects (e.g. wetland creation) to generate 'Phosphate Credits' that can be used by applicants as mitigation and measures as to how this can be implemented. •A criteria-based process for phosphate (P) credit allocation once the programme is 'up and running' which was agreed by the Phosphates Planning Sub Committee.. •A draft template Section 106 agreement which planning applications which apply for Council-generate P credits will be subject to. •With the other Somerset Councils , jointly commissioned a strategic solutions report which has recently been published and its findings reported to Phosphates Planning Sub-Committee. This report sets out suitable mitigation options that could potentially be used to offset the additional phosphorus load from a new development within the catchment of the Somerset Levels and Moors Ramsar site. It also included an updated map showing the affected area or 'area of risk'. •Ongoing engagement with key stakeholders including Natural England, Wessex Water, the Environment Agency, Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DHLUC), Somerset Rivers Authority and the development industry . <p>The actions taken to date by SWT are interim in nature and will not address the scale of the issue but means that the Council will shortly be able to determine some of the applications held in abeyance. As at 28th April 2022 this involved circa 150 planning applications including 39 applications for the discharge of conditions. This equates to circa 3,163 homes in limbo . Given the growing impact that excessive nutrients are having on the delivery of development across the country, officers are of the opinion that strategic national solutions are required to address the fundamental issues of farming practices and the function of wastewater treatment works which contribute to the problem. To this end, lobbying of national government continues in order to develop long-term strategic scale solutions and support to Local Authorities affected by this issue.</p>	Green
	11	Maximise the benefits from the decommissioning of the Hinkley Point B power station for local business and employment.	SCC are in discussion with the Nuclear Decommissioning Agency to draw down funding to support Sedgemoor and West Somerset coastal areas and implement the recent Minehead development strategy.	Green
	12	Complete decontamination and structural repairs at Toneworks, Wellington, to help preserve this place of significant historic interest.	Phase 1 decontamination works completed in Summer 2021. Phase 2 planning underway for further structural repairs to the heritage asset from Jan 2022 onwards.	Green

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A Transparent and Customer Focused Council	13	Deliver a Customer Experience Programme to get a clearer picture of our customers and identify ways in which we can improve their experience of the Council.	This programme has been formally closed and a project closure gateway review undertaken. The focus of the programme has in large part now been overtaken by events; in particular the decision to create a single new Council for Somerset. The remaining items will be incorporated within the service improvement project or are being picked up within the LGR for Somerset programme. The deliverables / benefits achieved to date will be useful resources for the LGR programme.	Green
	14	Commence a Service Efficiency and Improvement Programme to improve our internal processes to increase productivity and efficiency.	The programme has delivered 6 projects this financial year for a total saving of 268.3K. These projects also enabled a robust corporate programme management and contributed to prepare the organisation for an easier and quicker unitary transition. At least, 4 projects are planning to be delivered during the next financial year. They will contribute to enable the organisation progress towards excellence by ingraining supporting tools, process and developing internal capabilities. The programme continues to support the organisation financial sustainability by forecasting 360K of financial saving for the next financial year and ambition to deliver an improved customer experience by developing a systematic and simple approach to solve the problem to the root cause.	Green
	15	Deliver a new system to manage programmes and projects within the Council to ensure better efficiency and effectiveness.	The process is in place, with the monthly PMO report presented to SMT. Further stakeholder liaison is taking place to promote process, refine benefits reporting and realise cashable savings.	Green
	16	Launch the newly elected Tenants' Strategic Group.	Launched in April 2021, already had 3 meetings	Green
	17	Update and distribute our housing tenancy handbook and new tenant's welcome pack.	Handbook and welcome pack have been combined into 1 document, currently in its second draft. This is being checked by relevant managers and will be presented to Directors for sign off for publication in summer 2022.	Amber
	18	We will carry on live streaming our public meetings in order to continue to make them accessible and inclusive for residents who want to participate but who are unable, or do not wish to, attend in person.	All SWT Committee meetings are live webcast or live-streamed (depending on the location of the meeting)	Green
	19	We will work to make the most of the talents that disabled people can bring to our workplace, with specific focus on how we can adapt to best support our current and prospective neurodivergent employees.	Highly commended award received for Neurodiversity project at MJ Awards. Disability confident employer status achieved. Neurodiversity project now ingrained with Equalities working group as a standard agenda. Work continuing on training for managers and staff on Neurodiverse conditions to embrace inclusivity and diversity in the workplace.	Green

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Homes and Communities	20	Start building 47 new low carbon Council homes and a new community facility at North Taunton.	SWT is on site building 101 New Carbon Homes with planning approval for 100 more and planning applications awaiting approval for an additional 46. NTWP Phase A commenced on site July 2021 and will deliver 47 new low carbon affordable Council homes. The first homes are expected to complete will be complete August 2022 and all by June/July 2023. Future phases are planned to overlap. Phase A bringing forward more low carbon affordable council homes by 2025. Seaward Way, Minehead is on site where 54 zero carbon homes are being built, practical completion summer 2024. 6 planning applications for a total of 46 zero carbon homes are awaiting planning approvals and SWT has submitted a phosphate mitigation strategy in support of the applications. Natural England as a consultee in the planning process have provided their support for the councils approach.	Green
	21	Acquire planning consent and start on site at Seaward Way, Minehead for the construction of 54 zero carbon homes.	JCT contract has now been entered into, and works have commenced on site with Classic Builders. Estimated completion date for whole scheme is Summer 2024, although some phased completions are anticipated prior to this.	Green
	22	Complete an options appraisal for Oake. This will identify the investment needed and timescales to manage the Council's defective non-traditional Woolaway homes in Oake, and any contribution to new affordable housing in that area.	The project has recieved SHDF Wave 1 funding and has an established budget. The scheme is mirroring NTWP phase 5 but the timeline has a 4 month leg due to ecology serveys pre planning application. Housing needs assessments have been completed, a route map for the works has been established, the sepcification is being finalised and the procurement of a contractor will commence in June 22	Green
	23	Complete a Housing Strategy Demand Study which allow the Council to develop a joined-up approach to affordable housing investment focusing on where it's most needed.	This work was completed during November 2021. The Study identified that there is significant demand for more 2 bed houses and 1 bed flats. 1 bed move-on accommodation is required for those who are ready to leave supported housing. The study also provided clearer evidence of the demand for 2,3 and 4 bed wheelchair adapted properties. There is an increasing trend of young children requiring support via Somerset Independence Plus (e.g. for Disabled Facilities Grants). There is also significant demand for more sheltered housing, especially in the west of the District. This indicates a need for more prevention focussed activity. The quality of accommodation in the Private Rented Sector is exacerbating fuel poverty. With rents increasing, along with the cost of living, fuel poverty will undoubtedly worsen acrssoss all tenures. The cost of home ownership is increasing and there is a continued struggle to identify rural housing demand through Homefinder Somerset. These findings (as well as others) are being used to influence a range of housing interventions.	Green
	24	Deliver a Homelessness Improvement Plan designed to minimise homelessness, promote prevention and lead to reduced bed and breakfast costs.	Since December 2021 there has been a renewed focus on the improving opportunities to prevent homelessness therefore reducing the cost of temporary accommodation. A range of new procedureds have been implemented to ensure that all opportunities to prevent homelessness are explored prior to placement in temporary accommodation. In addition, a fortnightly, cross team task and targeting meeting has been implemented to ensure that, where placements are made, there is a clear focus on move on. Rent and service charge procedures are being aligned with those already in place within the Council's own stock to both maximise income and reduce arrears. These positive improvements are being made at a time when the service is under increasing pressure including a 20% increase in service demand, ongoing competition from the development at Hinckley and changes to legislation designed to support households from Ukraine including the requirement to provide accommodation, including B&B, for all Homes for Ukraine placements which break down.	Amber
	25	Approve and commence delivery, of an accommodation strategy to meet the housing and support needs of single homeless people in the District.	The Single Homeless and Rough Sleeper Accommodation Strategy, together with the associated delivery plan, was approved by Full Council on October 5th 2021. Delivery is progressing. SWT has been successful in recievig grant funding in 2 RSAP rounds and has a live grant application awaiting a decision. SWT is working with partners and using the Housing service to create 36 new home in 2022/2023. The coordination of support services is being developed through the Better Futures Programme and the Somerset Homelessness Reduction Board.	Green
	26	As part of the move to a new IT system for Homefinder Somerset, we will introduce a new and improved form for applying for social housing within the district, that is as easy as possible for people to complete.	The new online application form went live on 2nd August 2021, offering an easier more intuitive means to access Homefinder and social housing. The new form was developed following consultation with partner local authorities and landlords, and wider stakeholders including applicants.	Green
	27	Introduce at least two community pantry schemes into the District offering subsidised food for communities affected by Covid-19.	The first pantry has been operating for a year in Rowbarton, Taunton. They have acted as a learning centre for others. New schemes in Rockwell Green, Wellington and Minehead will be operational from the spring of 2022 (May). Other schemes are progressing towards being operational in due course.	Green
	28	Review and improve the Council's CCTV to provide a more effective service and better value for money.	This review is underway and savings have been identified and moved back into general reserve. There is further work to be done on overall improvement of the estate, such as digital upgrade and linking the existing scheme in West Somerset to the monitoring service at Sedgemoor. These proposals will come forward fully during 2022/23 for a decision on delivery.	Green

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An Enterprising Council	29	Complete our programme of commercial property acquisitions that generate additional income.	The portfolio was completed in Dec 21	Green
	30	Deliver an asset management plan so we can make informed decisions on the investment or disposal of our land and property assets to maximise future income.	Asset Review Project has assembled information, pending implementation of Asset Database for data collation and analysis (joint procurement with SCC, live 2022-2023).	Amber
	31	Form a dedicated delivery company, owned by the Council, to deliver Town Centre Regeneration projects in addition to those brought forward by the private sector.	This work remains paused whilst issues resulting from phosphates are worked through and workable solutions found	Amber