

SWT Executive

Wednesday, 15th February, 2023,
6.15 pm



Somerset West
and Taunton

The John Meikle Room - The Deane
House

[SWT MEETING WEBCAST LINK](#)

Members: Federica Smith-Roberts (Chair), Derek Perry (Vice-Chair), Benet Allen, Chris Booth, Dixie Darch, Caroline Ellis, Mike Rigby, Francesca Smith, Andrew Sully and Sarah Wakefield

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 5 - 14)

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.

We are now live webcasting most of 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](#).

- 5. Executive Forward Plan** (Pages 15 - 16)

To receive items and review the Forward Plan.

- 6. Taunton Garden Town - Delivering our Vision, the Planning Context** (Pages 17 - 40)

This matter is the responsibility of Executive for Planning, Transportation and Economic Development, Councillor Mike Rigby.

This report sets out the contents and therefore the direction of travel of the proposed document for 'A Vision for our Garden Town' and seeks agreement over its scope.

- 7. Local Labour Agreement Policy** (Pages 41 - 80)

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Member for Planning, Transportation and Economic Development, Councillor Mike Rigby.

The report presents a proposal for the adoption of a new corporate policy that states the Council's position in relation to increasing local skills and employment opportunities generated by new developments for people within the district.

- 8. Scrutiny Recommendations** (Pages 81 - 132)

At the meeting Corporate Scrutiny Committee held on 1 February 2023, the committee recommended that before Somerset West and Taunton Council ceased to exist, the Executive consider the report of the Public Transport Task and Finish Group with a view to forwarding it to the new Somerset Council for their appropriate consideration.



ANDREW PRITCHARD
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

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

Members of the public are welcome to attend the meeting and listen to the discussions. There is time set aside at the beginning of most meetings to allow the public to ask questions. Speaking under "Public Question Time" is limited to 3 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. These arrangements do not apply to exempt (confidential) items on the agenda where any members of the press or public present will be asked to leave the Committee Room.

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

Any requests need to be received by 4pm on the day that provides 1 clear working day 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 Friday prior to the meeting.

We are now live webcasting most of 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](#).

The meeting rooms, including the Council Chamber at The Deane House, are on the first floor and are fully accessible. Lift access to The John Meikle Room (Council Chamber), is available from the main ground floor entrance at The Deane House. The Council Chamber at West Somerset House is on the ground floor and is fully accessible via a public entrance door. Toilet facilities, with wheelchair access, are available across both locations. An induction loop operates at both The Deane House and West Somerset House to enhance sound for anyone wearing a hearing aid or using a transmitter.

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

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

If you would like an agenda, a report or the minutes of a meeting translated into another language or into Braille, large print, audio tape or CD, please email: governance@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk

SWT Executive - 21 December 2022

Present: Councillor Federica Smith-Roberts (Chair)
Councillors Benet Allen, Chris Booth, Dixie Darch, Caroline Ellis, Francesca Smith, Andrew Sully and Sarah Wakefield

Officers: James Barrah, Chris Hall, Andrew Pritchard, Marcus Prouse, Sarah Povall, Graeme Thompson, Alison Blom-Cooper, Richard Doyle, Paul McClean, Richard Sealy and Sophie Jones

Also Present: Councillors Janet Lloyd and Loretta Whetlor

(The meeting commenced at 6.15 pm)

149. **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillors Derek Perry and Mike Rigby.

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

(Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 16 November 2022 circulated with the agenda)

Resolved that the minutes of the Executive held on 16 November 2022 be confirmed as a correct record.

151. **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, Taunton Charter Trustee & Shadow Taunton Town	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr D Darch	All Items	SCC	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr C Ellis	All Items	SCC, Taunton Charter Trustee & Shadow Taunton Town	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr F Smith	All Items	SCC, Taunton Charter Trustee & Shadow Taunton Town	Personal	Spoke and Voted

Cllr F Smith-Roberts	All Items	SCC, Taunton Charter Trustee & Shadow Taunton Town	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr A Sully	All Items	SCC	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr S Wakefield	All Items	SCC	Personal	Spoke and Voted

152. **Public Participation**

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

153. **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.

154. **Wellington Place Plan - Approval for Public Consultation**

During the discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Councillors were very supportive of the report.
- Councillors agreed it was a very exciting project.
- Councillors were impressed with the level of community interest and engagement.
- Councillors queried whether phosphates would have an impact on the project.
The Project Officer advised that phosphates would not impact on the railway station but that it might have an impact on the wider development.
- Councillors urged officers to give plenty of advance notice of when public workshops were due to take place.
- Clarification was sought on the population figures used within the appendix.
- Councillors highlighted different aspects of the project, which included bus station provisions, north link road, allotments and use of the pavement area by the old sorting office.

Resolved that the Executive:-

- 1) Approved the Draft Wellington Place Plan for public consultation for a four-week period and that the Assistant Director Strategic Place and Planning, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, be authorised to make minor amendments to the Draft Place Plan prior to the public consultation.
- 2) Noted that, following consultation and any subsequent revisions to the documents, it was intended that the final Wellington Place Plan would be considered by the Executive 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 area of the Plan.

155. **Connecting our Garden Communities - final approval**

During the discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Councillors highlighted that there had been a lot of interesting responses to the consultation.
- Councillors were impressed with the level of local knowledge contained within the responses.
- Councillors highlighted that many of the responses suggested that people preferred the off-road cycling routes and councillors queried whether that was due to the time of year the consultation had been carried out.
The Project Officer had investigated a breakdown of who had responded and agreed that maybe the time of year had impacted the results and that he wanted to ensure that all routes were safe for all users.
- Councillors were pleased to see the document being integrated into policy and the joined-up thinking of transport strategies and planning policy.
- Councillors were happy to see improved cycle routes included and were keen to see them rolled out across the whole district and county.
- Concern was raised on the lack of 20mph speed routes in certain areas of the town.
- Concern was raised that there were no routes going across the motorway to the south of the area and that the project should be aspirational to include south routes as well as north routes.
- Clarification was sought on where the priorities were located within the document.
- Councillors agreed that it was a very ambitious scheme to cover Taunton but that there was some concern on how the project would be funded.
The Project Officer advised that the funding was the major hurdle of the project and that they were reliant on securing funding from Central Government and other routes.

Resolved that the Executive:-

2.1 Approved the Connecting our Garden Communities Plan for adoption: a) as a material planning consideration in the preparation of masterplans, pre-application advice, assessing planning applications and any other development management purposes across Taunton Garden Town, and b) as corporate policy to inform future policy and project development and funding bids within Taunton Garden Town.

2.2 Agreed that the Director of Development and Place in consultation with the Economic Development, Planning and Transportation Portfolio Holder be authorised to approve and make minor amendments prior to the final publication of the Connecting our Garden Communities Plan.

156. **Corporate Performance Report - Quarter 2 2022/23**

During the discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Councillors requested an update on the current situation for call handling times.
The Assistant Director for Customer advised that the situation was still challenging but that improvements were being made and the statistics were under constant review.
- Councillors highlighted how well the statistics were doing compared to the corporate plan.
- Councillors requested an update on phosphates.
The Director for Place advised that although the indicator was red, there was a lot of work being carried out in the background to release credits for applications that had met the criteria set by the sub-committee.
- Councillors queried what progress had been made on the work to encourage customers to use digital channels instead of using the phone, as that seemed to be the suggested solution to call handling waiting times.
- Councillors queried who was on the Nutrient Board.
The Assistant Director for Planning advised councillors of the membership.
- Councillors queried the breakdown of what properties were being used regarding the indicator for homelessness.
The Director for Housing advised that the housing first properties were being used and that there was a combination of properties being reallocated from the HRA stock, all of which were one bed properties for single accommodation.
- Councillors highlighted that there were many companies that did not have a phone number that customers could use and when they did, call waiting times could be well over 40 minutes, therefore they agreed that the council had achieved very high targets set in comparison.
- Concern was raised on the communal area fire risk assessments and how many homes had been impacted.
The Director for Housing advised that the details were within the report and that the risks had been rectified very quickly by housing officers.
- Councillors highlighted the digital connection survey results and that it had found that tenants had increased their connectivity.

Resolved that the Executive noted the Council's performance report.

157. **2022/23 Housing Revenue Account Financial Monitoring as at Quarter 2 (30 September 2022)**

During the discussion, the following point was raised:-

- Councillors queried whether there was still a challenge on the turnaround times on void properties.
The Director for Housing advised that the turnaround times had improved compared to across the sector and advised that the Void Team also dealt with approximately 20 temporary accommodation properties, which when compared to Housing Associations, who did not have temporary accommodation, meant the team had performed very well. Sadly, the team were seeing more major voids coming back to the council which meant there was an increased cost due to the works required to get the property back into use.

Resolved that the Executive:-

- 2.1 Noted the HRA's forecast financial performance and projected reserves position for 2022/23 financial year as at 30 September 2022.
- 2.2 Approved the transfer funds from capital reserves to repay debt and to release the voluntary repayment of debt budget to offset the variance on depreciation charges

158. **Access to Information - Exclusion of the Press and Public - Agenda Item 11 - Appendix F Only**

Resolved that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the next item of business (Agenda Item 11 – Appendix F 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).

159. **2022/23 General Fund Financial Monitoring as at Quarter 2 (30 September 2022)**

During the discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Councillors agreed that the report gave a very positive situation for the council to be in.
- Councillors thanked officers for their hard work on carrying on with business as usual alongside work to prepare for the New Council.
- Councillors requested clarification on the recommendation for the Somerset Waste Partnership.
Clarification was given.

Resolved that the Executive:-

- 2.1 Noted the Council's forecast financial performance and projected reserves position for 2022/23 financial year as of 30 September 2022.
- 2.2 Approved the transfer of £1.294m of revenue funds previously planned to finance the capital programme in 2022/23 to be returned to General Reserves reflecting updated capital financing plans.
- 2.3 Approved the transfer of £500k Treasury Management surpluses to general reserves.
- 2.4 Approved the transfer of £440k to the Somerset Waste Partnership Earmarked Reserve, and delegate authority to the S151 Officer to adjust the amount transferred at year end based on final outturn for the SWP surplus.
- 2.5 Approved a virement between funds for the Covid Additional Relief Fund (CARF) scheme that was not implemented.

(The Meeting ended at 7.45 pm)

SWT Executive - 18 January 2023

Present: Councillor Federica Smith-Roberts (Chair)

Councillors Derek Perry, Benet Allen, Chris Booth, Dixie Darch, Caroline Ellis, Mike Rigby, Francesca Smith, Andrew Sully and Sarah Wakefield

Officers: Chris Hall, Clare Rendell, Sue Tomlinson and Jane Windebank

Also Present: Councillors Tom Deakin, Libby Lisgo, Brenda Weston and Loretta Whetlor

(The meeting commenced at 6.15 pm)

160. Apologies

No apologies had been received for this meeting.

161. Minutes of the previous meeting of the Executive

Resolved that the minutes of the Executive meeting held on 21 December 2022 would be brought to the next meeting of Executive for approval.

162. 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, Taunton Charter Trustee & Shadow Taunton Town	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr D Darch	All Items	SCC	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr T Deakin	All Items	SCC, Taunton Charter Trustee & Shadow Taunton Town	Personal	Spoke
Cllr C Ellis	All Items	SCC, Taunton Charter Trustee & Shadow Taunton Town	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr L Lisgo	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee & Shadow Taunton Town	Personal	Spoke

Cllr D Perry	All Items	SCC, Taunton Charter Trustee & Shadow Taunton Town	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr M Rigby	All Items	SCC & Bishops Lydeard	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr F Smith	All Items	SCC, Taunton Charter Trustee & Shadow Taunton Town	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr F Smith-Roberts	All Items	SCC, Taunton Charter Trustee & Shadow Taunton Town	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr A Sully	All Items	SCC	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr S Wakefield	All Items	SCC	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr B Weston	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee & Shadow Taunton Town	Personal	Spoke
Cllr L Whetlor	All Items	Watchet	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr G Wren	All Items	SCC & Clerk to Milverton PC	Personal	Spoke

163. **Public Participation**

Councillor Brenda Weston spoke on Local Community Networks and Children's Youth Provisions within the North Taunton Area.

164. **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.

165. **Wellington Depot Solar PV/Battery Storage - Capital Supplementary Budget Approval**

During the discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Councillors were in favour of the project.
- Councillors were pleased to see the report coming forward to contribute towards work on climate change.

Resolved that the Executive approved the supplementary capital budget allocation of £215k and the revenue budget virement that was required for the capital financing for this project.

166. **Access to Information - Exclusion of the Press and Public - Agenda Item 8 - Appendix 2 and 3 ONLY**

Resolved that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the next item of business (Agenda Item 8 - Appendix 2 and 3 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).

167. **North Taunton Woolaway Project - Vacant Possession of Site**

During the discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Councillors supported the report to enable progress on the project.
- Councillors thanked officers for their work.

Resolved that the Executive approved the purchase of the private dwelling as set out in Confidential Appendix 2.

(The Meeting ended at 6.27 pm)

EXECUTIVE

Executive Meeting	Draft Agenda Items	Lead Officer
15 February 2023	Taunton Garden town: Delivering our Vision	Jenny Clifford
venue =	Local Labour Agreements	Hattie Winter/Lisa Tuck
Exec RD = 3 February		
Informal Exec RD = 3 January		
SMT RD = 14 December		
15 March 2023	GF Financial Performance 2022/23 Q3	Kerry Prisco
venue =	HRA Financial Performance 2022/23 Q3	Kerry Prisco
Exec RD = 3 March	Corporate Performance Report Q3	Malcolm Riches
Informal Exec RD = 1 February	Wellington Place Plan – Adoption	Sarah Povall
SMT RD = 18 January	Commercial in Confidence: “Commercial Incentives Ear Marked Reserve	Joe Wharton

Somerset West and Taunton Council

Executive – 15 February 2023

Taunton Garden Town - Delivering our Vision, the Planning Context

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Mike Rigby (Planning, Transportation and Economic Development)

Report Author: Jenny Clifford, Garden Town Implementation Manager

1 Executive Summary/Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 Taunton was designated as a Garden Town in 2017. Following this designation the Council produced the document A Vision for our Garden Town in 2019. Intrinsic to realising the Council's Vision for the Garden Town, is the delivery of high quality, attractive and sustainable development through the planning process.
- 1.2 Officers have identified the need to produce a document which will set out the current planning context for Taunton Garden Town (TGT) in one place, with particular emphasis upon the policies within the adopted Development Plan, national planning guidance, local planning guidance and wider considerations of relevance. The document will reflect the current planning policy position in advance of the production of the new Local Plan for Somerset and signpost to the wide range of work areas and issues of relevance. It is intended for use primarily by developers, their consultants and stakeholders in the planning process but will be a useful reference for the Town Council and local residents.
- 1.3 This report sets out the contents and therefore the direction of travel of the proposed document and seeks agreement over its scope, together with the grant of delegated authority to the Assistant Director Strategic Place and Planning in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transportation and Economic Development for its finalisation.
- 1.3.1 Appended to this report is a draft green infrastructure (GI) checklist (**Appendix A**). This is to be appended to the proposed TGT document and seeks to ensure a holistic approach to GI is taken from the early stages of the design process in order to protect, enhance and maintain TGT's green spaces, landscape and ecology. Aiming to promote best practice design solutions, the checklist sets out the Local Planning Authority's expectations for GI, asks a series of key questions to ensure consideration of GI matters and sets out what supporting material including drawings, reports or other evidence may be required to determine whether GI has been considered and integrated into the design proposal. It is intended for use by developers, design teams and consultants to inform the planning assessment process.
- 1.4 The recommendation at 2.1 seeks agreement to consult upon the draft at **Appendix A**

with agents and applicants within TGT. It is further recommended that delegated authority is gained for its subsequent finalisation post consultation.

- 1.5 No direct financial implications have been identified. The document is also not expected to raise legal implications as it does not set new policy but to draw on and signpost to current planning policy and guidance. However, once drafted it will be reviewed by Legal before finalisation as it will reflect on the existing planning context and how it relates to the delivery of the Vision for TGT. The proposed document is also not considered to directly impact upon Corporate risks or issues.

2 Recommendations

That Corporate Scrutiny Committee recommends:

- 2.1 That Executive Committee
- i) Agree the scope of the document
 - ii) Agree the green infrastructure checklist document for consultation with agents/applicants within the Garden Town
 - iii) Grant delegated authority to the Assistant Director Strategic Place and Planning in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transportation and Economic Development for the finalisation of the document and associated green infrastructure checklist.

3 Risk Assessment

- 3.1 The proposed document is not considered to directly impact upon Corporate risks or issues. However, as it is intended to provide an overarching planning context for the Garden Town, it will inevitably refer to topics such as phosphates and the commitment to achieving carbon neutrality by 2030, which are identified as Corporate risks or issues. Identification of topics relevant to the planning context for the Garden Town, together with the planning policies and guidance relating to them is expected to provide greater clarity for applicants over the issues the Council will expect them to respond to and the basis upon which they will be assessed. The intent is to achieve higher quality development as a result.

4 Background and Full details of the Report

4.1 Background

- 4.1.1 Taunton was granted Garden Town status by the Government in 2017. The Government's Garden Communities Prospectus refers to the setting of clear expectation for the quality of development, how this can be maintained ('such as by following Garden City Principles'), to see vibrant, mixed-use, communities where people can live, work, and play for generations to come. It sets an expectation of exemplar large new development with high quality placemaking, embedding a series of key qualities: clear identity, sustainable scale, well-designed places, great homes, strong local vision and engagement, transport, healthy places, green space, legacy and stewardship arrangements and future proofed. In response to this Prospectus and subsequent successful designation, this Council produced the document 'Taunton, The Vision for Our Garden Town' (2019). This Vision for the future of Taunton is as follows:

"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".

4.1.2 The Council's expression of interest for the Garden Town sets out the ambition to deliver a series of new garden communities around the periphery of Taunton at Nerrols/Priorswood, Monkton Heathfield, Staplegrove and Comeytrove/Trull, together with identifying opportunities for regeneration within the town centre. These are reflective of site allocations within the Development Plan. Intrinsic to realising the Council's Vision for the Garden Town, is the delivery of high quality, attractive and sustainable development through the planning process. Significant planning proposals including emerging masterplans are referred to the Quality Review Panel which was established in 2022.

4.2 Delivering Our Vision for Taunton Garden Town- Planning context

4.2.1 The planning process and associated decisions are at the heart of the delivery of the Council's Vision for TGT. Officers have identified the need to produce a document which will set out the current planning context for TGT with particular emphasis upon the policies within the adopted Development Plan (the starting point for planning decision making), national planning guidance, local planning guidance and wider considerations of relevance. The document will reflect the current planning policy position in advance of the production of the new Local Plan for Somerset. The Council expects new development within TGT to respond positively to the Vision and garden community principles. The document is intended to pull together the planning context and signpost to the wide range of work areas and issues of relevance. In this manner, the different threads can be drawn together for use by developers, their consultants and all stakeholders in the planning process.

4.2.2 Relevant to delivering on the Vision are a wide range of considerations including (but not limited to) the declaration of the climate and ecological emergencies including the commitment to achieving carbon neutrality by 2030; phosphates, the impending introduction of mandatory biodiversity net gain of 10% and the desire to raise design quality. The document is intended to respond to these issues within the TGT context but will not duplicate other guidance documentation. The Council's Climate Positive Planning (2022) sets out interim guidance for the determination of planning applications over planning for the climate and ecological emergency. This is an example of where prior work is not intended to be duplicated but will instead be signposted through the proposed TGT document.

4.2.3 The proposed contents of the document are broadly as follows:

Executive summary

1. Purpose:
 - i. Set out the planning context for the garden town: local and national
 - ii. Signpost to relevant guidance and documentation
 - iii. Identify existing planning policy requirements within the SWT Local Planning Authority area regarding Taunton Garden Town.
2. Taunton Garden Town: Background
3. Garden Town Vision
4. National context - broad themes

5. Local context - identification of and signposting to other relevant guidance and documentation
6. Relevant Local Planning Policy and Guidance
7. National Planning Policy Context
8. Green infrastructure

Appendix 1. Table summarising specific planning policies

Appendix 2. Green Infrastructure checklist

Referenced documents

4.2.4 The recommendation at 2.1 seeks to agree the scope of the document and the grant of delegated authority to the Assistant Director Strategic Place and Planning in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transportation and Economic Development for its finalisation.

4.3 Green infrastructure

4.3.1 Green infrastructure (GI) is recognised as being highly important to delivering the vision for TGT. Within the Vision document there are extensive references to the quality of the environment and growing our town greener is one of the four core themes within it. This theme is expressed as follows and is one of the 'seeds' to deliver the Vision:

Grow our town greener- transforming our open spaces and streets

Quality of our Environment: give our town a green makeover, joining up our green spaces, waterways, parks and play spaces, planting more street trees and woodlands and managing our water more imaginatively with wetlands and rain gardens to improve it for recreation, tourism and wildlife.

4.3.2 Re-establishing connections to the town's landscape by making the most of our rivers, canal, streams and watercourses and their landscapes is an important part of this theme. There is also reference to connecting our green spaces and walks along corridors that reflect the watercourses, public rights of way, historic landscape destinations and proposed developments. In order to clarify the approach to GI, GI considerations and expected documentation to be submitted in association with planning applications, GI guidance and a checklist has been produced (**Appendix A**)

4.3.3 For clarity, the GI document uses the following definitions:

Green infrastructure (GI) is a network of green space and other urban and rural green features at all scales, which can deliver high quality of life and environmental benefits for communities. The key features of GI are that it is a network of integrated spaces that provides multiple benefits simultaneously, including social, economic, environmental, and cultural benefits.

Natural England's Green Infrastructure Guide¹ described GI as "*a strategically planned and delivered network comprising the broadest range of high-quality green spaces and other environmental features. It should be designed and managed as a multifunctional resource capable of delivering those ecological services and quality of life benefits required by the communities it serves and needed to underpin sustainability. Its design and management should also respect and enhance the character and distinctiveness*

of an area with regard to habitats and landscape types" (Natural England Green Infrastructure Guidance 2009).

- 4.3.4 The same document by Natural England identified that blue infrastructure is sometimes used to describe riverine and coastal environments with a green infrastructure network. Within the document, blue infrastructure is used to describe water elements, such as rivers, canals, ponds, wetlands, floodplains. Where it refers to green infrastructure, the document should be interpreted as also incorporating blue infrastructure elements.
- 4.3.5 The checklist is intended to be appended to the proposed TGT document. For use by developers, design teams and consultants, the checklist seeks to ensure a holistic approach to these matters is taken from the early stages of the design process in order to protect, enhance and maintain TGT's green spaces, landscape and ecology. Aiming to promote best practice design solutions, the checklist sets out the Local Planning Authority's expectations for GI, asks a series of key questions to ensure consideration of GI matters and sets out what supporting material including drawings, reports or other evidence may be required to determine whether GI has been considered and integrated into the design proposal.
- 4.3.6 It is important to note that the answers to the questions in the checklist do not have to be "yes", and therefore no additional requirement is placed on developments or applicants. The responses to the questions will act as a prompt to applicants and ensure that GI is properly considered in weighing up the planning balance of proposals by the Council. The checklist will be used proportionately in relation to the scale and nature of the proposed development, therefore not all of the checklist questions will be relevant to each application.
- 4.3.7 The GI guidance and checklist have been drafted to assist the planning application process. The recommendation at 2.1 seeks agreement to consult upon the draft at **Appendix A** with agents and applicants within TGT. This will raise the profile of GI, gain feedback on the guidance and checklist and clarify whether any amendments to its contents are required before it is finalised and implemented. It is further recommended that delegated authority is gained for its subsequent finalisation post consultation. It is intended for the final document to incorporate visual material.

5 Links to Corporate Strategy

- 5.1 The proposed document will pull together planning related documentation relevant to TGT in order to assist in delivering the Council's Vision for the Garden Town 2019. This Vision aligns with the objectives in the Council's strategic themes of "Our Environment and Economy," "A Transparent and Customer Focused Council" and "Homes and Communities."

6 Finance / Resource Implications

- 6.1 No direct financial implications are identified, as the document is to be produced in house rather than commissioned. TGT is supported financially by capacity funding awarded by the Department of Levelling Up and Housing and Communities. This supports direct staff resources and the commissioning of vital work to bring forward the delivery of the Council's Vision for the garden town. Further capacity funding bid rounds are expected. In addition, funding from other sources has been awarded, including Government capital

programmes to help deliver infrastructure associated with the project.

Unitary Council Financial Implications and S24 Direction Implications

- 6.2 No direct financial implications for the new unitary council have been identified as arising from this report.

7 Legal Implications

- 7.1 None directly as the proposed document will not in itself set planning policy, nor is it intended to be adopted as statutory planning guidance. Instead, it will identify planning context, issues, policies and documents relevant to TGT, articulating how these relate to and contribute to the delivery of the Vision for our garden town.
- 7.2 Prior to finalisation, Legal will be asked to review the document.

8 Climate, Ecology and Sustainability Implications

- 8.1 No direct carbon/environmental impacts arise from the recommendation, although the TGT project itself is expected to significantly contribute to the Council's climate, ecology and sustainability objectives, through work to deliver on the Vision. The proposed document will signpost to Climate Positive Planning, the Council's interim guidance statement on planning for the climate and ecological emergency.

9 Safeguarding and/or Community Safety Implications

- 9.1 No direct safeguarding or community safety implications arise from this report. The TGT project itself is expected to deliver improved community safety outcomes via the Vision in terms of quality of life, well-being and placemaking. Crime is a material consideration in planning decision making.

10 Equality and Diversity Implications

- 10.1 No direct equality and diversity implications arise from this report. The Vision for Taunton Garden Town is one of inclusion and quality of opportunity. All project activities, workstreams and planning decisions have regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty.

11 Social Value Implications

- 11.1 The National Planning Policy Framework expresses the purpose of the planning system as being to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and identifies interdependent economic, social and environmental objectives. TGT is expected to bring about added social value through the approach to placemaking and the aspiration within the Vision to create environments that people are proud of, want to spend time in and invest in. The benefits of the overall garden community project are economic, social and environmental. The Vision specifically references growing social value through strengths in knowledge, education, culture and business.

12 Partnership Implications

- 12.1 None directly arising from this report, although TGT draws together a wide range of interests, stakeholders and partners, the governance for which provides a formal structure through which they can participate in and/or steer the Garden Town project.

13 Health and Wellbeing Implications

13.1 TGT is expected to deliver positive health and well-being outcomes through quality of place and environment, fostering active, healthy and communal lifestyles and enabling healthier and more sustainable journey choices. Health and well-being are integral to the Council's Vision for TGT.

14 Asset Management Implications

14.1 None directly arising from this report, although the stewardship (long term management on behalf of the community) of community assets within TGT is an area of work currently under consideration and has a planning context where new assets are created through development.

15 Consultation Implications

15.1 It is proposed to consult upon the draft GI checklist document at **Appendix A** with agents and applicants across TGT before finalisation. This report seeks agreement to do so.

Democratic Path:

- **Corporate Scrutiny Committee – No**
- **Executive – Yes (15th February 2023)**

Reporting Frequency: Once only

List of Appendices (background papers to the report)

Appendix A	Green Infrastructure checklist
Appendix B	Draft document: Taunton Garden Town - Delivering our Vision, the Planning Context - TO FOLLOW

Contact Officers

Name	Jenny Clifford, Taunton Garden Town Implementation Manager
Direct Dial	01823 219436
Email	J.Clifford@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk
Name	Alison Blom-Cooper, Assistant Director Strategic Place and Planning
Direct Dial	01823 217517
Email	A.Blom-Cooper@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk

Green Infrastructure

Guidance Statement and Design Checklist for implementation of Green Infrastructure within Taunton Garden Town



DRAFT

Definition of Green Infrastructure:

Green infrastructure (GI) is a network of green space and other urban and rural green features at all scales, which can deliver high quality of life and environmental benefits for communities. The key features of GI are that it is a network of integrated spaces that provides multiple benefits simultaneously, including social, economic, environmental, and cultural benefits.

The Natural England's Green Infrastructure Guide¹ described GI as *"a strategically planned and delivered network comprising the broadest range of high-quality green spaces and other environmental features. It should be designed and managed as a multifunctional resource capable of delivering those ecological services and quality of life benefits required by the communities it serves and needed to underpin sustainability. Its' design and management should also respect and enhance the character and distinctiveness of an area with regard to habitats and landscape types"* (Natural England Green Infrastructure Guidance 2009).

Natural England has also identified that blue infrastructure is sometimes used to describe riverine and coastal environments with a green infrastructure network. Within this document, blue infrastructure is used to describe water elements, such as rivers, canals, ponds, wetlands, floodplains. Where this document refers to green infrastructure, it should be interpreted as also incorporating blue infrastructure elements.

Type of Green Infrastructure components:

A GI network is composed of all types of green open spaces and environmental features (see definition above). It is designed and managed as a multifunctional resource that can deliver social, environmental, and economic benefits required by the communities it serves. As such, GI covers all spatial scales from sub-regional, connecting larger sites in the wider countryside, through local neighbourhood level and accessible natural green spaces within local communities and down to the building scale, amenity spaces, green and blue roofs, and gardens.

¹ <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/35033>

The main components of Green Infrastructure are:

- **Natural and Semi-natural open space** - Woodlands, nature reserves, grasslands, wetlands, open water bodies, wastelands, and disturbed ground
- **Corridors (green and blue)** - Rivers/canals and their banks, road and rail verges, hedgerows, ditches, cycling routes, pedestrian paths, and public rights of way
- **Parks and green open spaces** - Country and regional parks, urban parks, and pocket parks
- **Sports facilities and play areas** - Outdoor sports pitches, tennis courts, athletics tracks, play areas, playgrounds, skateboard parks, and other more informal recreational areas
- **Other green spaces** - Allotments, community gardens, city farms, cemeteries, land used for agriculture
- **Civic open spaces** - Urban squares, plazas, and streets
- **Amenity Greenspace** - Informal recreation spaces, communal green spaces, and domestic gardens
- **Drainage elements (Sustainable Drainage Systems SuDS)** - Attenuation ponds, Bioswales and rain gardens
- **Roofs (and walls)** - Extensive, semi-intensive, and intensive green walls roofs

Benefits of Green Infrastructure:

The multifunctional nature of GI provides social, environmental, and economic benefits at the same time and therefore has the potential to tackle several problems simultaneously. In contrast, grey infrastructure refers to a human-engineered infrastructural application, such as roads, wastewater treatment plants, pipelines, and dams. This approach typically fulfils a single function, such as drainage or transport.

Green Infrastructure - the policy context:

The need for people to have contact with green open space and nature has long been considered important. More recently, following the impact of **COVID-19**, the benefits of GI have been more clearly evidenced. Organisations such as the United Nations (through its Sustainable Development Goals), the World Health Organization, Natural England, and Public Health England have highlighted the multiple benefits that GI can deliver for people's mental and physical health, responding to the climate emergency, enhancing and protecting biodiversity and improving water quality.

Over the last few years, changes to planning policy which reflect the growing importance of GI have occurred at the national, regional, and local level. At the national level, the revised **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** from 2021 changes the definition of sustainable development (chapter 2), which now references the 17 Global Goals of Sustainable Development from the United Nations (paragraph 7). The NPPF also sets a clear environmental objective that all plans need to 'protect and enhance' the environment and to 'improve biodiversity' (paragraph 11).

The revised NPPF references the importance of trees (paragraph 131) in new developments. It states that new streets should be tree-lined and that opportunities should be taken to incorporate trees elsewhere as part of every new development, such as parks and community orchards. The NPPF also says that appropriate measures should be put in place to secure the long-term maintenance of newly planted trees and that existing trees should be retained wherever possible.

Other amendments in the NPPF related to GI have been made to ensure walking and cycling networks are attractive and well-designed and promote active travel (chapter 9). The revised NPPF also states that all plans should respond to climate change and take into account all sources of flood risk (chapter 14). The revised NPPF states that new developments must be 'sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on designated areas' such as National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and others (chapter 15).

A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment² report sets out a comprehensive plan for England's natural environment from the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra). It is part of the UK Government's goal to be the first generation to "leave our environment in a better state than we found it".

The plan sets ten targets, four of which will have a direct impact on the management of GI. It aims to deliver cleaner air and water in our cities and rural landscapes, protect threatened species and provide richer wildlife habitats, and calls for an approach to agriculture, forestry, land use and fishing that puts the environment first.

Natural England launched "**the Green Infrastructure Framework - Principles and Standards for England**"³ in January 2023. The national framework is a commitment in the Government's 25-Year Environment Plan. It sets out the requirements and characteristics of high-quality green infrastructure to support the greening of towns and cities and promote connections with the surrounding landscape as part of the Nature Recovery Network.

The Framework provides further information and design guides on how green infrastructure should be implemented for improving health and wellbeing, air quality, nature recovery and resilience to and mitigation of climate change, along with addressing issues of social inequality and environmental decline.

The Environment Act 2021 introduces into law several of the commitments made in the 25 Year Environment Plan. The Environment Act has passed into UK law and legislates on a wide range of relevant issues. It sets clear statutory targets for the recovery of the natural world in four key areas: air quality, biodiversity, water, waste, including to reverse the decline in species abundance by the end of 2030.

Under the Environment Act, all new developments, including national infrastructure projects, are required to assess habitat and biodiversity present on the site before and after new development. The Act requires a minimum of 10% biodiversity net gain (BNG) be secured for 30 years. Regulations are expected to formally bring in this requirement from Autumn 2023 at which point any new scheme will be expected to provide a biodiversity net gain plan which should include the following:

- The set of measures that are required to minimise the impact on habitats/ecosystems

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/25-year-environment-plan>

³ <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/GreenInfrastructure/Home.aspx>

- The pre and projected post-development biodiversity value, showing at least a 10% net gain, based on the Defra Metric 3.0.
- Any offsite biodiversity credits and gains
- Stewardship and maintenance strategies that clearly set out net gain outcomes through habitat creation or enhancement for a minimum of 30 years after the scheme has been completed

At the local level, Taunton was designated as a **Garden Town** in 2017 and developed a **vision document**⁴ for the future growth of the town as a garden community. The Council set four main themes to deliver the Garden Town Vision into reality:

1. Grow our town greener – transforming our open spaces and streets
2. Branching out – moving cleaner, moving smarter
3. Growing quality places to live – town centre, new and existing neighbourhoods
4. New shoots and blossom – a dynamic and prosperous community founded on knowledge, culture, and business

Integrated and well-managed GI components could help to deliver the Garden Town Vision by joining up the town's green spaces, waterways, parks and play spaces, planting more street trees and woodlands and managing the water more imaginatively with wetlands and rain gardens to improve it for recreation, tourism, wildlife and reducing flood risk.

In February 2019, Somerset West and Taunton Council declared a **Climate Emergency**⁵ and prepared a **Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience (CNCR) Action Plan**⁶, which sets out a series of actions that are needed to work towards carbon neutrality by 2030. GI component plays a key part in adapting to and mitigating climate change.

SWT also declared an **Ecological Emergency**⁷ in October 2020 and adopted an Ecological Emergency Action Plan⁸. The action plan seeks to address ecological issues alongside the climate emergency actions, maximising opportunities by

⁴ <https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/taunton-garden-town/vision-for-our-garden-town/>

⁵ <https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/climate-emergency/>

⁶ <https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/climate-emergency/climate-change-strategy/>

⁷ <https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/news/swt-declares-ecological-emergency/#:~:text=Somerset%20West%20and%20Taunton%20Council,declaration%20made%20in%20February%202019.>

⁸ <https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/climate-emergency/ecological-emergency-vision-and-action-plan/>

combining both climate and ecological emergencies. GI has a vital role in restoring ecosystems, enhancing and protecting biodiversity assets and promoting natural recovery.

In August 2020, in response to the Dutch N Case, Natural England confirmed that the designated interest features of the Somerset Levels and Moors Ramsar Site are currently unfavourable or at risk, due to eutrophication caused by excessive **levels of phosphates**. Natural England has advised the Council that in determining planning applications which may give rise to additional phosphates within the catchment of the River Tone they must, as a competent authority, undertake a Habitats Regulations Assessment and an appropriate assessment where a likely significant effect cannot be ruled out. Appropriate assessment should demonstrate through an agreed phosphorus budget that development proposals can achieve phosphorus neutrality through the implementation of appropriate permanent offsetting measures, thereby ensuring no significant adverse impact on the affected designated area. Integrating natural based phosphate solutions and other GI components within new developments has the potential to improve water quality and help to mitigate phosphate issues.

List of key local policies and guidance related to GI:

- Taunton Deane Core Strategy 2011 – 2028⁹
 - DM4 – Design
 - CP1 – Climate change
 - CP8 – Environment

- The Site Allocations and Development Management Plan (SADMP)¹⁰
 - C2 – Provision of recreational open space
 - C3 – Protection of recreational open space
 - C4 – Protection of community facilities
 - C5 – Provision of community facilities
 - C6 – Accessible facilities
 - A3 – Cycle network

⁹ <https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/planning-policy/adopted-local-plans/taunton-deane-core-strategy-2011-2028/>

¹⁰ <https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/planning-policy/adopted-local-plans/sadmp/>

- A5 – Accessibility of development
- I4 – Water infrastructure
- ENV1 – Protection of trees, woodland, orchards, and hedgerows
- ENV2 – Tree planting within new developments
- ENV3 – Special landscape features
- ENV4 – Archaeology
- ENV5 – Development in the vicinity of rivers and canals
- D7 – Design Quality
- D12 – Amenity space
- D13 – Public art

- SWT Districtwide Design Guide SPD¹¹
- SWT Public Realm Design Guide SPD¹²
- SWT Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)¹³
- SWT Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience Action Plan (CNCR)¹⁴
- SWT Climate Positive Planning Guidance¹⁵
- SWT Net Zero Carbon Toolkit¹⁶

¹¹ <https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/planning-policy/districtwide-design-guide-spd/>

¹² <https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/planning-policy/taunton-garden-town-public-realm-design-guide-spd/>

¹³ [https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/roads-and-transport-local-cycling-and-walking-infrastructure-plans-lcwips/#:~:text=Local%20Cycling%20and%20Walking%20Infrastructure%20Plans%20\(LCWIPs\)%20are%20focused%2C,support%20active%20travel%20funding%20opportunities.](https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/roads-and-transport-local-cycling-and-walking-infrastructure-plans-lcwips/#:~:text=Local%20Cycling%20and%20Walking%20Infrastructure%20Plans%20(LCWIPs)%20are%20focused%2C,support%20active%20travel%20funding%20opportunities.)

¹⁴ <https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/media/2429/carbon-neutrality-and-climate-resilience-plan.pdf>

¹⁵ <https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/media/3280/climate-positive-planning.pdf>

¹⁶ <https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/planning-policy/net-zero-carbon-toolkit/>

Appendix A

- Taunton Deane Green Infrastructure 2009¹⁷
- Taunton Deane Green Infrastructure Opportunities Update¹⁸
- SWT Recreational Open Space & Community Halls: Guidance Note¹⁹
- Sedgemoor and Somerset West, and Taunton Districts 'Ecological Emergency Vision and Action Plan (EEVAP)'²⁰

¹⁷ <https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/media/1328/taunton-deane-green-infrastructure-strategy-luc-2009.pdf>

¹⁸ <https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/media/1223/taunton-green-infrastructure-strategy-opportunities-update-2017.pdf>

¹⁹ <https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/media/2734/recreational-open-space-community-halls.pdf>

²⁰ <https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/climate-emergency/ecological-emergency-vision-and-action-plan/>

Purpose of the GI Checklist:

The purpose of the Checklist is to ensure a holistic approach is taken to Green Infrastructure (GI) from the early stages of the design process to protect, enhance and maintain Taunton Garden Town's green spaces, landscape and ecology.

The GI checklist aims to promote best practice design solutions, and whilst the checklist will not be adopted policy, it will help in determining planning applications by prompting a response from the applicant as to how key questions/issues have been addressed by the application.

Who is the GI Checklist for?

The GI Checklist is to be used by developers, design teams, consultants and contractors. The document sets out the Local Planning Authority's (LPA's) expectations in relation to GI and what drawings, reports or other evidence might be required to determine whether GI has been considered and integrated within the design proposal.

How will the checklist be used?

It is intended that the Local Validation Checklist be updated to include a requirement for applicants to submit responses to the questions identified in the GI Checklist (below), as a means of providing additional supporting information. Answers provided to these questions, and any further information relevant in response to them will potentially be used by the Council as Local Planning Authority to assess how the application responds to GI. It is important to note, however, that the answers to these questions do not have to be "yes", and therefore no additional requirement is placed on developments or applicants. The responses to the questions will simply act as a prompt to applicants and ensure that GI is properly considered in weighing up the planning balance of proposals by the Council. The checklist will be used proportionately in relation to the scale and nature of the proposed development, therefore not all of the checklist questions will be relevant to each application (due to scale, site constraints etc.)

Responding to the questions in the GI Checklist should not be seen as a simple "yes" or "no" tick box exercise, but should provoke appropriate consideration by the applicant about how their application could seek to provide a positive answer.

Responses should be specific, not generic and supplemented with explanation and evidence of how the proposed development will or will not meet the suggestions.

Where the answer is “no” or considered to be unsatisfactory, officers will enter negotiation with the applicant to discuss whether there are opportunities for the development to respond positively.

The answers to the questions will also not be scored or given any particular weighting, although they will feed into the Council’s evaluation of the proposal under adopted planning policies. The need to answer these questions may also identify opportunities for the applicant to explore and/or the Council to look to instigate negotiation around, which would not have come forward otherwise. It will also aid the planning officer to determine whether or not, on balance, the development in question is sufficiently responding to GI and current requirements of local and national policy. The Checklist will help guide the assessment of planning applications for developments coming forward within Taunton Garden Town. It will inform pre-application discussions and assist decision-makers in ensuring GI is integrated into the proposal.

The GI checklist: questions and considerations

The following set of questions has been compiled to ensure GI is considered throughout the design and planning process. Applicants and their consultants are advised to consider GI from project inception to ensure that it is fully integrated into the proposals. The questions in the first column are intended to trigger consideration and project response. The second column sets out the drawings, reports, or other evidence that might be required to determine whether the plan meets GI requirements. A copy of this checklist should be completed by the applicant or on their behalf and submitted as part of the documentation to support planning applications that raises GI issues and are located within Taunton Garden Town.

Question:	Drawings, reports, or other evidence documents that might be required to support the design:	Application response/commentary (To be completed on behalf of the applicant)
------------------	---	---

Climate change:		
<p>Has the amount of soft landscape, trees and vegetation been maximised for carbon sequestration and reducing the urban heat island effect?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A drawing identifying the different surface type across the development site as proposed and in particular identifying the green surfaces by amount and type. • Report describing how landscape design is used to mitigate climate change (for example planting for shade and mitigating winds, noise, air pollution and similar) 	
Biodiversity enhancement:		
<p>Have important biodiversity, habitats, vegetation and trees within the site been retained and incorporated into the GI proposals?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline analysis drawing that show all existing green features within and adjacent to the site boundary • A drawing that shows the existing green features that are kept and integrated within the proposed design • A report or a drawing summarising the set of measures that are required to minimise the impact of the proposed development on habitats/ecosystems 	

<p>Have all the existing GI assets and green links located beyond the project boundary been considered?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline analysis drawing that shows all existing green features within and adjacent to the site boundary • A drawing/report that shows how the proposed plan considers the GI elements within the site and links to GI components adjacent to the site 	
<p>Does the plan provide evidence that a 10% biodiversity net gain has been achieved together with a management and maintenance strategy that considers opportunity for stewardship in the community interest?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The pre-development and projected, post-development, biodiversity value. The latter to show at least a 10% net gain, based on the Defra Metric 3.0 • Management and maintenance strategies to secure the 10% net gain for a minimum of 30 years after the scheme has been completed which also considers opportunity to incorporate a stewardship approach in the interests of the community 	
<p>Have green roofs been incorporated into the design (where possible)?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drawing that shows buildings with the potential to have a green roof - such as education, culture, commercial, retail, and similar • Proposed details of the green roof to include a cross-section of the structure of 	

	<p>the roof to ensure an adequate substrate depth (full and reserved matters applications)</p>	
<p>Water management:</p>		
<p>Have SuDS been incorporated into the scheme drainage plan as a way to attenuate water close to source? And have SuDS been designed to be multifunctional considering opportunities for biodiversity enhancement and recreation?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A plan that shows how sustainable drainage components are integrated within the landscape plan to drain and capture runoff. To include surface water flow direction, SuDS drainage components and SuDS storage components 	
<p>Has analysis and calculation been carried out to determine the potential for on-site runoff/rainwater catchment, and has this opportunity been maximised when compared with the amount of runoff flowing into the public drainage system?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of potential attenuation storage volumes within SuDS components 	
<p>Public health:</p>		

<p>Has the design proposed opportunities for local food growing such as via allotments and community orchards?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drawing/report showing the provision and size of allotment and community orchard land compared with the number of new dwellings 	
<p>Has the development site been designed in a multifunctional way integrating GI features with sustainable active transport and recreational links both within and adjacent to it?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drawing that shows the hierarchy of sustainable active transport and recreational routes within, and/or adjacent to the site, how they connect to the town's walking and cycling network, and how GI components have been integrated into their design 	
<p>Cultural Services:</p>		
<p>Does the plan provide the required amount of open space and play areas, and does it meet the needs of all relevant age groups and consider accessibility for all?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A drawing/report that includes the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provision of open spaces and play areas, including the type of open space and its distance from new dwellings ○ Calculation of open spaces and play areas in square meters for two or more beds dwelling units within the proposed site 	

<p>Have open spaces and play areas been designed in a multifunctional way, balancing social, environmental and place-making functions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Hard and soft landscape plans that describe the type of uses within the public realm	
---	--	--

DRAFT

Somerset West and Taunton Council

Executive – 15 February 2023

Local Labour Agreement Policy

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Member Councillor Mike Rigby

Report Author: Lisa Tuck, Service Manager, Economic Development

1 Executive Summary / Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The report presents a proposal for the adoption of a new corporate policy that states the Council's position in relation to increasing local skills and employment opportunities generated by new developments for people within the district.
- 1.2 Implementation of the policy will enable the Council to enter into Local Labour Agreements with developers in order to secure employment and skills opportunities at both the construction and first operational phase (where sites include commercial units) of new developments that meet the thresholds set out in the guidance note (Appendix 2).
- 1.3 Adoption of the proposed Local Labour Agreement Policy will enable SWT to increase the social value of new development across the district through the use of its Local Planning Authority powers. The value realised will include
 - Improved skills and educational attainment levels of the district's labour supply.
 - Increase the number of employment opportunities available for local people
 - Increase the number of apprenticeship and upskilling opportunities for local people.
 - Increase opportunities for young people in the district to enter the construction sector.
 - Support the viability of new sites by providing an appropriately skilled construction workforce.
 - Reduction in the carbon footprint of new development through the use of local resources.
- 1.4 The policy outlines the council's commitment to working in partnership with developers and operators to maximise the opportunities available to all parties and recognises developers as major contributors to the growth and success of Somerset West and Taunton's economy.
- 1.5 The report outlines the background to the development of the proposed policy, a copy of the draft policy, and a draft technical guidance note for developers and operators.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Executive approves the adoption of the SWT Local Labour Agreement Policy and Technical Guidance Note (attached as Appendices 1 and 2 to this report) as a material planning consideration in the preparation of masterplans, pre-application advice and the assessment of major planning applications and any other development management purposes.
- 2.2 That the Executive delegates the approval of any future changes to the Technical Guidance Note (Appendix 2), including thresholds and target levels to the Portfolio Holder Economic Development, Planning and Transportation and the Director of Place and Climate Change.

3 Risk Assessment

- 3.1 Potential risks have been identified as follows:
 - 3.2.1 The new policy and planning obligations will increase requirements placed on developers which may impact the perceived viability of sites however, developers are likely to have experienced local labour requirements set out by Local Planning Authorities across the country and have practises in place to fulfil such obligations. Also, the obligations provide benefits to developers and the sector as a whole as outlined in this report. The Council will also provide practical assistance and support developers in achieving their obligations.
 - 3.2.2 The policy could be unpopular with developers due to the additional resources required to implement local labour obligations, however, the developers contacted during the preparation of this proposal are supportive of the scheme, the benefits to the local area and the sector as a whole, especially with regard to increasing the skilled workforce in the construction industry of which there is a shortage.
 - 3.2.3 If the policy is not implemented there is a risk that employment and training opportunities generated by new development will not provide a direct benefit for Somerset West and Taunton residents.
 - 3.2.4 There is a potential risk that developers will be unable to meet Local Labour targets due to a lack of availability of appropriately skilled people within the district. Each Local Labour Agreement will be negotiated on a case-by-case basis. Where local labour supply does not meet the requirement of the development (in particular where there are specialised workforce requirements) targets will be negotiated.

4 Background and Full details of the Report

4.1 SWT Local Plans and new Somerset local plan

- 4.1.1 Details of the Strategic Planning and Policy context for this proposal can be found in the Technical Guidance Note (Appendix 2, 2.0).
- 4.1.2 In light of the Local Government Reorganisation in Somerset a new Somerset-wide Local Plan will be developed by the new Somerset Council. The current target for the creation

of a new Local Plan is 5 years from 1st April 2023. Due to the regulations and consultation requirements surrounding the development of Local Plans, a significant amount of lead-in time is required. The adoption of this policy at this time will ensure that, while the new Somerset Council continues to deliver against former district Local Plans, local labour and skills opportunities can be maximised in the former SWT district area until such a time as a Somerset wide Local Plan is adopted.

4.1.3 Further detail on how this policy aligns with similar policies of other district councils in Somerset and opportunities for the new Somerset Council can be found in section 5 of this report.

4.2 Evidence and Need

4.2.1 Development across the District in future years will create a significant number of jobs and the Local Labour Agreement policy will play an important role in helping to secure local employment at both the construction and operational stages of development.

4.2.2 An Employment and Skills profile for Somerset West and Taunton is attached in appendix 3.

4.3 Research and Stakeholder engagement

4.3.1 In order to prepare a robust LLA policy the project team carried out research into best practice including but not limited to

- Shared learning from other local authorities (Sedgemoor, Brighton and Hove, Hampshire, Basingstoke, and Lewes),
- Academic studies,
- Industry papers,
- Industry interview with Construction Industry Training Board (CITB).

4.3.2 The team is consulting with a sample of developers and agents to seek feedback on the proposed policy, its aims and the obligations Local Labour Agreements will place on developers and operators, and how the authority can best support developers to realise the benefits of the policy.

4.3.3 Initial consultation has given an indication that developers are keen to see this policy come forward along with the support to deliver employment and skills plans.

“We understand the importance of working with a range of local partners – schools, colleges, community hubs, community centres, skills agencies, local JCPs and so on - to ensure we are creating better opportunities for employment. As well as being the ‘right thing to do’, the initiatives created provide an opportunity to embed ourselves into the local community. Building and regeneration creates upheaval and disruption for many local people but by removing barriers for local residents, and providing opportunities to upskill local people, they are more accepting of the disruption. The local community benefit from the works taking place in and around their homes.

As with many industries at the moment, construction is struggling to recruit new trainees into the business so in addition to the employability sessions we deliver various sessions around careers in construction, helping young people make informed decisions about their choice of study and raise awareness of the many pathways into a career within our industry. This helps to

address skills shortages and helps people follow career aspirations leading to sustainable employment.” – Equans UK.

4.3.4 The policy and operation processes needed to deliver the policy have been designed in consultation with a range of internal teams including the Planning Policy, Development Control and Climate Change teams.

4.4 Benefits for developers and operators

4.4.1 The Local Labour Agreement policy provides developers and operators an opportunity to:

- Deliver Corporate Social Responsibility commitments
- Be recognised by local residents, businesses, and stakeholders as major contributors to the success of the local economy
- Create a pipeline of skilled workers to support future developments.
- Reduce the carbon footprint of sites through the use of local resources and minimising unnecessary travel by maximising local employment opportunities.

4.5 New developer and operator obligations

4.5.1 The Local Labour Agreement Policy will place obligations on developers and operators (if applicable, further explanation can be found in Appendix 2, 7.0) of new sites to work in partnership with SWT to deliver the skills and employment targets set out within the Section 106 planning agreements for those sites.

4.5.2 The Local Labour agreement policy relates to sites that meet the below criteria:

- Non-residential– All developments (other than C3/C4 Planning Use Class), including change of use, that create/relate to 5,000 sq m. This also includes developments of strategic importance (e.g., essential infrastructure, development identified in Council plans and strategy)
- Residential - Major developments (within C3/C4 Planning Use Class) that involve 50 or more units.
- Sites with mixed-use will be considered where non-residential size (sq m) or the number of residential units combined would be deemed by the Council to be of similar significance to either of the above criteria.

4.5.3 The Section 106 agreement (see Appendix 2, pg. 16) states that developers must:

- Prepare a Skills and Employment Plan in order to meet the site’s Local Labour targets
- Deliver the measures required to fulfil the site’s Local Labour targets.
- Provide SWT with the required monitoring information and evidence of target completion.
- Work in partnership and meet regularly with SWT Economic Development Officers until the section 106 obligations have been discharged.

- 4.5.4 The Technical Guidance note (Appendix 2, pg. 17-24) describe the site-specific targets that will be placed on developers during the construction phase of the project.
- 4.5.5 Developers will be expected to work with subcontracts to ensure targets are met in relation to the total development.
- 4.5.6 Operators will be required to:
- Prepare a Skills and Employment Plan in order to meet the site's Local Labour targets
 - Deliver the measures required to fulfil the site's Local Labour targets (initial cohort of employees and within the first six months of opening).
 - Provide SWT with the required monitoring information and evidence of target completion.
 - Work in partnership and meet regularly with SWT Economic Development Officers until the section 106 obligations have been discharged.

4.6 Typical Employment and Training measures

- 4.6.1 The specific measures to be secured through a Section 106 agreement with the developer, could include recruitment events and promotion of opportunities to local people, training (pre-employment and vocational), apprenticeships, employment advice, interview guarantees, and work placements.

5 Local Government Reorganisation

- 5.1 Throughout the project the team considered how the proposed policy and implementation of Local Labour Agreements would provide increased benefits for local people and would support the delivery of a thriving economy across Somerset.
- 5.2 As mentioned in this report Sedgemoor District Council currently delivers a Local Labour Agreement scheme. Where possible we have aligned the processes, approach, and targets with those used by Sedgemoor District Council, for example, both authority areas will use the CITBs best practice targets and use section 106 obligations to secure measures and client support approach. This aims to ease the transition into a new single authority.
- 5.3 There are opportunities for the rollout of Local Labour agreements into the South Somerset and Mendip Local Plan boundary areas with the potential for shared resources.

6. Fees and Charging options

- 6.1 SWT places a standard charge of £100 per dwelling for residential development and £1.25 per sqm for commercial floorspace to support the additional resources required by the Council to prepare and monitor compliance with Section 106 agreements. This fee will apply to S106 agreements made under this policy.
- 6.2 There is potential to recover costs from developers (and where applicable operators) for the provision of support in preparing and delivering site-specific Skills and Employment Plans (a requirement of the Local Labour Agreement).
- 6.3 The research carried out by the Local Labour Agreement project team identified that recharging the developer (and where applicable the operator) for support is standard

practice where Local Labour Agreement schemes are in place in other Local Planning Authorities across the country and that developers are keen to take up any support offered by Local Authorities in discharging their Section 106 obligations in relation to employment and skills.

- 6.4 In light of Local Government Reorganisation, the potential to seek recovery of developer and operator support costs could be considered by the new Somerset Council alongside the rollout of the Local Labour Agreement Schemes of Somerset West and Taunton and Sedgemoor District Council across the whole of Somerset.

7.0 Communication

- 7.1 A communication plan is currently under development which will include an analysis of stakeholders, direct communication of the policy and new obligations with developers, a targeted written communication to other key stakeholders (including supply chain businesses), an informational webinar for interested businesses and a webinar for partner organisations and local education providers.
- 7.2 The communication will aim to introduce the policy and the new obligations expected of developers and operators (for example leaseholders or new freeholders of commercial units on the site) and discuss how private and public sector partners can work together to achieve local employment and skills targets.
- 7.3 All Members of the Council will be invited to a Member Briefing on the new policy and its implementation processes.

8.0 Implementation and Resources

- 8.1 A member of the SWT Economic Development Team will be responsible for liaising with Planning colleagues and Developers to ensure the LLA's are negotiated, implemented and monitored effectively.
- 8.2 There will be no requirements for additional planning officer resources to support the implementation of the policy, other than to inform the SWT Economic Development Team at the pre-application stage of any new development. The council's S106 officer will support the preparation of the S106 agreement within the current capacity.
- 8.3 No additional budget is required to implement this policy.

9.0 Links to Corporate Strategy

- 9.1 This proposal supports the Council's strategic priority theme of Our Environment and Economy and in particular the objective to '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'. This also links to the economic development framework to support the transformation of the Somerset West and Taunton (SW&T) economy to a knowledge-based one over time, ultimately leading to greater levels of investment and higher-paid jobs. The whole approach is structured around People, Place and Business, which are very much aligned

to the Local Enterprise Partnership's Local Industrial Strategy (LIS).

10.0 Finance / Resource Implications

- 10.1 There are no budget requests in relation to the scheme. More information on the staff resource requirements and how these will be met can be found in the Implementation and Resources section of the report.
- 10.2 Information on the standard cost recovery charges associated with section 106 agreements can be found in section 6 of this report.

11.0 Legal Implications

- 11.1 SWT can implement this policy through the use of its Local Planning Authority powers.
- 11.2 Legal advice has been sought on the specific wording of the Local Labour and Section 106 Agreements to ensure the obligations are enforceable and in line with the Council's Local Planning Authority powers.

12.0 Climate, Ecology and Sustainability Implications

- 12.1 By encouraging developers and operators to use local resources and procure local subcontractors the policy will contribute towards achieving net zero targets by reducing unnecessary travel of employees. Increasing the number of training and apprenticeship opportunities will also reduce the need for local people to travel outside of the district.
- 12.2 SWT economic development officers will support developers to work with local education providers in order to develop a talent pool in sustainable construction techniques. Implementation of the policy will allow SWT to promote the use of sustainable construction techniques and advancement towards net zero developments.

13.0 Equality and Diversity Implications

- 13.1 The adoption and implementation of the policy will strengthen the Council's commitment to enabling people from a disadvantaged background, areas of deprivation and those facing financial inequality to access skills and employment opportunities. This policy will also, through apprenticeships and T-level placements, advance the equality of opportunity for young people across the district
- 13.2 The policy will support the sustainability of local communities by retaining young people and the working age population in the district through upskilling and creating local jobs.
- 13.3 Through an initial Equality Impact Assessment the following advantages and issues have been identified:
- 13.4 Developers and operators (where relevant) will be required to evidence the number of local people employed on the site. Local people can be defined as those that have a permanent home address within the Somerset West and Taunton boundary. This method of monitoring may exclude Ukrainian guests hosted within the district or those that are in temporary accommodation due to homelessness or other circumstance. To avoid inequality of opportunity the council will monitor the postcode of the 'primary'

address of the employee or student.

- 13.5 To ensure that those furthest from the job market or who require additional support to secure work or training, the Council will work with partner agencies such as the DWP, Job Centre Plus, Somerset Displaced Peoples Unit and Skill Up Somerset to ensure referral routes into opportunities provided through local developments.
- 13.6 The evidence provided in Appendix 3 highlights key areas of deprivation and low social mobility within the district. The Councils Economic Development Team run Community Employment Hubs within these key areas, and this will provide robust referral routes into the opportunities offered by new developments in the District.
- 13.7 The Councils Access to Employment Grant scheme will provide support for those with barriers to work and learning, this could include support towards the cost of CSCS cards, health and safety training and active travel to work that may be required. This in particular could help to reduce inequalities faced by young people, especially in the rural areas of the district.
- 13.8 Developers will be encouraged to promote opportunities in an accessible and inclusive way to ensure people of all backgrounds, age groups, ethnicities, abilities, and genders are aware of the work and training opportunities on offer.

14.0 Partnership Implications

- 14.1 The policy commits the Council to work in partnership with developers, education and training providers and employment support agencies to maximise the opportunities generated by new development in the district.

15.0 Data Protection Implications

- 15.1 Monitoring no personally identifiable data will be shared with the council during monitoring developers and operators will be asked to redact any information before sharing it with the council.

16.0 Consultation Implications

- 16.1 See section 4.3 of the report. There are no legal requirements to consult on this under Local Planning Authority regulations.

17.0 Scrutiny Recommendations

- 17.1 The Councils Corporate Scrutiny Committee did not make a specific recommendation in relation to this report. Committee members made a range of comments that were noted by the project team. The comments will be considered during the implementation of the policy to ensure the objectives of the policy and aspirations of the Council are realised.

Democratic Path:

- **Scrutiny / Audit and Governance Committee – Yes 1st Feb 2023**
- **Executive – Yes 15th Feb 2023**
- **Full Council – No**

Reporting Frequency: Once only

List of Appendices (background papers to the report)

Appendix 1	Policy Statement
Appendix 2	Technical Guidance Note
Appendix 3	SWT Employment and Skills Profile

Contact Officers

Name	Lisa Tuck
Direct Dial	07881 218666
Email	l.tuck@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk
Name	Hattie Winter
Direct Dial	07785 454130
Email	h.winter@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk

Somerset West and Taunton Local Labour Agreement Policy:

Somerset West and Taunton Council is committed to improving the quality of life for those who live and work in the district and the promotion of economic prosperity and growth.

Development across the district in future years will create a significant number of jobs and this policy will play an important role in helping to secure local employment and training opportunities at both the construction and operational stages of development.

In order to maximise these opportunities Somerset West and Taunton Council will seek agreement with developers to secure appropriate planning obligations for employment and training initiatives as part of development proposals.

In common with other local authorities, developers, and operators of commercial units on sites will be expected to sign a Local Labour Agreement and implement an Employment and Skills Plan identifying opportunities for employment and up-skilling of local people.

A Local Labour agreement will be required for developments that are for 50 (or more) dwellings or 5000 sqm (or more) of commercial development.

This Policy was adopted to ensure that:

- Local people benefit from new job opportunities created by major developments in the district.
- Local people are provided with opportunities to gain skills needed for employment in growth industries.
- Economic inactivity in the local area is reduced
- The environmental impact of unnecessary travel is minimised by maximising local employment opportunities.
- Developers, subcontractors, and operators of commercial units are adding social value to the local area.

These plans will support the delivery of the Council's strategic priority theme of Our Environment and Economy and in particular, the objective to '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'.

Somerset West and Taunton

Local Employment and Skills Technical Guidance Note

Draft – Not yet adopted January 2023

Page | 1

Local Employment and Skills Technical Guidance Note
Draft January 2023

Page 53

Contents

1.0	Introduction	3
2.0	Strategic/Policy Context	3
3.0	Corporate Social Responsibility and Social Value	7
4.0	Use of Planning Obligations	7
5.0	Thresholds and Definitions	9
6.0	Local Labour Agreement and Employment and Skills Plans	10
7.0	Employment and Skills Plan and Method Statement	11
8.0	Fees	14
	Appendices	16
	Template Section 106 Obligations	16
	Benchmark Standards for construction phase.....	17
	Sample Monitoring Form for the Construction Phase.....	25
	Sample Monitoring Form for the Operational Phase	26

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Somerset West and Taunton Council has prepared a Local Employment and Skills Technical Guidance Note (TGN) for the district to assist in securing Local Labour agreements as part of development proposals. Development across the district in future years will create a significant number of jobs and this TGN will play an important role in helping to secure local employment at both the construction and operational stages of development.
- 1.2 The Local Employment and Skills TGN will apply to proposals and developments within the boundaries of Somerset West and Taunton Council as a local planning authority.
- 1.3 This Local Employment and Skills TGN has been prepared to provide detail in establishing a framework as to how Local Labour agreements (including employment and training measures) will be secured and how to maximise local employment opportunities at both the construction and first operational phase of a development.
- 1.4 This TGN provides more detailed guidance on how the Council will provide opportunities for the improvement of the skills and educational attainment levels of the district's labour supply, this will help in the delivery of the Council's key strategic objectives in relation to employment and sustainability.
- 1.5 The Council is committed to working in partnership with developers and operators to assist in the delivery of this TGN to maximise the opportunities available to all parties. Developers and operators that support this TGN and achieve the measures identified within will be recognized by local residents, business and key stakeholders as major contributors towards the growth and success of the local economy.
- 1.6 The Local Employment and Training TGN was approved for adoption by the Executive Committee on xxx, following a targeted consultation with key stakeholders.

2.0 Strategic/Policy Context

- 2.1 There are a number of national, regional, and local strategic policy goals and objectives that provide a strong justification for this document. These policies and objectives are critically important to the district. In summary the key objectives are to improve training and skills in the district for future economic growth.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 2.2 A key policy direction of the NPPF is to deliver sustainable development, by building a strong and competitive economy. The Framework highlights that planning policies and decisions should help to create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand, and develop. Significant emphasis is placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, acknowledging local business needs and wider development opportunities.
- 2.3 Local Labour Agreements are a tool for supporting growth and building a strong, skilled local economy, which provides opportunities for local people and social mobility, whilst protecting and enhancing the local and global environment, key to the achievement of these objectives.
- 2.4 The definition of sustainable development includes reference to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. Local Labour Agreements can help to work towards numerous indicators aligned across multiple goals, but in particular the goal for decent work and economic growth (goal 8).
- 2.5 Paragraph 81 of the NPPF states that "Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, considering both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. The approach taken should allow each area to build on its strengths, counter any weaknesses and address the challenges of the future".

Somerset West and Taunton Local Planning Policy Context

- 2.6 Local planning policy is set out in a number of different documents produced by the former Taunton Deane Borough Council and West Somerset District Council as well as Somerset West and Taunton Council. Due to this, the planning policy context differs in the former Taunton Deane and West Somerset areas, with the focus on securing improved employment skills and opportunities from developments being stronger and more explicit in the Taunton Deane area policies than West Somerset ones. Despite this, there is a commonality in objectives and purpose which the use of Local Labour Agreements can effectively respond to.

Former Taunton Deane Area

- 2.7 **Core Strategy CP1** – This policy aims for development proposals to result in a sustainable environment and address the issue of climate change. As part of this, the policy refers to use of BREEAM standards

(particularly in relation to commercial development) and ensuring that the “impact on the local community, economy, nature conservation or historical interests does not outweigh the economic and wider environmental benefits of the proposal”. BREEAM standards are wide ranging and support delivery of social value in development including in relation to health and wellbeing of asset users and local communities, local investment, social justice, and responsible leadership.

- 2.8 **Core Strategy CP2** – This policy focuses on how overarching economic growth ambitions for the Taunton Deane area will be achieved. It includes the following statement: “The Borough Council and its partner organisations will work with developers and contractors on allocated sites to secure job sustainability by improving local skills and employment opportunities by ensuring that an optimum proportion of jobs are sourced from within the local area and employers investing in relevant training and learning schemes for employees”.
- 2.9 **Core Strategy CP5** – This policy focuses on the creation of inclusive communities and the role which new development should play in addressing inequalities. It includes a requirement for development proposals to “promote sustainable development that creates social cohesive and inclusive communities; reduce inequalities, promote personal well-being and address accessibility to health, inclusive housing, training, education, places of worship, leisure and other community facilities ensuring a better quality of life for everyone both now and for future generations”. In particular, it requires development proposals to “make provision and access for all to: Training and Employment Opportunities – raising the skill and wage level as well as diversifying the range of jobs”.
- 2.10 **Taunton Town Centre Area Action Plan TS1** – The Taunton Town Centre Area Action Plan has a chapter devoted to training and skills and the role that planning plays in helping to deliver on a range of local employment priorities including improving the range of local skills and helping deprived communities with access to employment and training. Policy TS1 in particular states that “The Borough Council and its partner organisations will work with developers and contractors on allocated sites to secure job sustainability in construction industries by improving local skills. The following will be undertaken a. Developers and partners will work together to ensure that an optimum proportion of construction related jobs are sourced from within the local area b. Developers and partners will be required to invest in relevant training schemes for construction and/or allied trades skills and learning that provides for individual local workers to achieve industry accreditation and employment”.

Former West Somerset Area

- 2.11 **West Somerset Local Plan to 2032 Policy EC1** – “Proposals which will make the West Somerset economy stronger and more diverse and that are likely to increase the proportion of higher paid jobs locally will be supported”. Whilst this policy is primarily aimed at employment generating development proposals, where any type of development demonstrates that it will improve the strength and diversity of the economy and provide higher paid employment opportunities then it may have relevance.
- 2.12 **West Somerset Local Plan to 2032 Policy EC7** – “Proposals which strengthen the range and quality of training opportunities offered within the area will be supported”. Whilst this policy is primarily aimed at development proposals which combine education, training and, employment functions and opportunities in one location, the stated purpose of the policy is “to take advantage of opportunities which arise to increase the range and / or skill level of the local workforce through training”. As such, the policy may have relevance to any development which can demonstrate working towards that purpose.

SWT District

- 2.13 **SWT Local Plan to 2040 Issues & Options Consultation** – “Work to secure Local Labour Agreements with developers and contractors on allocated sites to secure job sustainability in construction industries by improving local skills and support proposals which strengthen the range and quality of training opportunities”. Whilst the SWT Local Plan to 2040 is no longer being progressed, it is a material consideration, and the contents will influence future plan-making in the new Unitary Council.

Regional Economic Strategy

- 2.14 **Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership ‘Local Industrial Strategy’**
- We are committed to investing in our community to support businesses, employers and local people that meet local needs.
 - We are committed to supporting local people who have the fewest job, training, and skills development options, and will provide additional support that helps people who are furthest from the labour market and increase social mobility.
 - We are customer and community focused and are committed to improving our services in line with increasing local job opportunities. The Local Labour Agreement client-based approach will support people to move towards work and cater for their changing needs and aspirations over time.

- We will work efficiently to support the delivery of our social priorities and objectives. It sets out how we will improve our business practices, drive out value for money and pursue new activities through new development within our district.

Somerset West and Taunton Corporate Strategy

- 2.15 **Strategic priority “Our Environment and Economy”** - in particular the objective to ‘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’.
- 2.16 The construction sector has been identified as a key driver for Economic Growth in the SWT area. It is important there is a sufficiently skilled workforce to meet the demands of these major developments as well as others that are planned for the near future.

3.0 Corporate Social Responsibility and Social Value

- 3.1 The benefits to developers and operators in terms of delivering their CSR objectives and making a social difference include:
- Local people benefit from new job opportunities created by major developments in the district.
 - Local people are provided with opportunities to gain skills and upskill for employment in growth industries.
 - Creation of a pipeline of skilled workers to support future developments.
 - Local people have access to lifelong learning and the promotion of “learning communities”.
 - Reduction in carbon footprint through utilising local resources and minimising unnecessary travel by maximising local employment opportunities.

4.0 Use of Planning Obligations

- 4.1 The requirement for a Local Labour Agreement will be discharged by the developer through a s106 planning obligations agreement. The thresholds are detailed in 5.0 Thresholds and Definitions.

Section 106 Planning Obligations

- 4.2 Section 106 planning obligations can be secured from new developments to mitigate the impacts of development, including improving employment opportunities, training and skills. The Government has guidelines for when Section 106 obligations can be used. This document complies with Regulation 122 of the Community Infrastructure Levy regulations 2010 (as amended) which requires the planning obligation to be:
- Necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms
 - Directly related to the development and
 - Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.
- 4.3 Developers will need to discuss measures and agree these in advance with the Council's Economic Development Team.
- 4.4 An example of Planning Obligation clause is set out in Appendix 1.

Local Labour Agreements

- 4.5 Somerset West and Taunton Council have adopted a Local Labour Agreement Policy to ensure that:
- Local people benefit from new job opportunities created by major developments in the district.
 - Local people are provided with opportunities to gain skills and upskill for employment in growth industries.
 - Local people have access to lifelong learning and the promotion of "learning communities".
 - The environmental impact of unnecessary travel is minimised by maximising local employment opportunities.
 - Development proposals consider their sustainability in the round (including supply chain, project management and labour sources which can be central to addressing climate targets).
- 4.6 Developers would be required to sign a Local Labour Agreement outlined in Appendix 1.
- 4.7 The objectives of the Local Labour Agreement are to:
- Demonstrate the use of local labour from within the developer's project team and the wider company
 - Where feasible (economically and practically), procure goods and services from local contractors
 - Encourage sub-contractors and suppliers to support employment from the local community
 - Demonstrate recruitment and training opportunities within the contractor's company

- Provide opportunities for local residents to access jobs created during the construction phase of the development and subsequent occupation.
- Reduce economic inactivity in the local area to support NEETS (Not in Education, Employment or Training)
- Support the development of skills within the local community.

5.0 Thresholds and Definitions

- 5.1 This TGN will apply to residential and non-residential as outlined in the 'Thresholds for Development' detailed below.

Thresholds for Development

S106 Planning Obligation Thresholds

Non-residential: All developments (other than C3/C4 Planning Use Class), including change of use, that create/relate to 5,000 sq m. This also includes developments of strategic importance (e.g., essential infrastructure, development identified in Council plans and strategy)

Residential: Major developments (within C3/C4 Planning Use Class) that involve 50 or more units.

Mixed-use sites: Where non-residential size (sq m) or number of residential units combined would be deemed by the Council to be of similar significance to either of the above criteria.

For residential development this applies to the construction phase, however, if there are operational jobs associated with the residential development, then both the construction and operational stages will apply.

For commercial developments or mixed use this applies to both construction and operational stages.

- 5.2 Below these thresholds applicants will be encouraged to consider committing to a LLA, though this will not be actively sought by the Council.

- 5.3 Local Labour Agreements will stipulate that 25% of the employment opportunities generated at the construction and operational phases

should be for Local People.

- 5.4 Appendix 2 provides a table for each type of development and indicates the number of work experience placements*, NVQ (award, certificate, or diploma) starts and completions and apprenticeships that should be provided at the construction stage. There is also a table outlining the extra-curricular activity commitments. Appendix 2 provides the benchmark standards for new developments.

* Please Note: Work experience placements will also include T (Technical) Level placements.

6.0 Local Labour Agreement and Employment and Skills Plans

- 6.1 At the pre-planning application stage, prospective developers whose development would exceed the thresholds will be contacted by the Economic Development Team at Somerset West and Taunton Council to discuss local labour employment and training measures that are appropriate to the size of the development.
- 6.2 Through the Local Labour Agreement (Appendix 1), an Employment and Skills Plan (ESP) for both phases of the development – construction (developers, contractors, subcontractors) and operation (primarily in the case of commercial developments, starting workforce only/first 12 months of operation) will be required.
- 6.3 If the operational phase of the development has multiple operators, separate and appropriate employment and training measures will be negotiated independently with each operator through their own separate ESP's.
- 6.4 The complexities of multi-site and multi-phase developments are recognised and will be negotiated on a case-by-case basis to achieve a balance between meeting the needs of the TGN and the employment and training needs of the local construction supply chain and operator/s.
- 6.5 The Economic Development Team of Somerset West and Taunton Council will work with and draft an ESP with the developer, and if applicable the operator(s) to agree the requirements of the project in relation to employment opportunity measures and activity.
- 6.6 The Employment and Skills Plans (ESP) will be approved by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the Council's Economic Development Team, who will liaise with the developer and then

track progress against the ESP's Key Performance Indicators.

7.0 Employment and Skills Plan and Method Statement

Construction Phase

- 7.1 Developers are required to complete an Employment and Skills Plan (ESP) and Method Statement as outlined below. This should be done in accordance with the guidance in Appendix C of The Client Based Approach, Local Client Guidance – England, March 2016 ([english-client-based-approach-contractor-guidance.pdf \(citb.co.uk\)](https://www.citb.co.uk/~/media/2016/03/English-client-based-approach-contractor-guidance.pdf)), this is also available from Somerset West and Taunton Council.
- 7.2 The ESP could include but not limited to the following Employment and Skills Areas as listed below:
- NVQ (award, certificate, or diploma) training for sub-contractors (construction phase only)
 - Apprenticeships
 - Pre-employment training
 - Work experience placements for those unemployed
 - Work experience placements for those aged 14-18 years in education, 16-19 and 19+ years
 - Skills development workshops with education and training providers for the unemployed or those wishing to re-train, including employer led bootcamps/ sector-based work academies
 - Targeted recruitment and training campaigns including promotion of vacancies locally, pre-employment training, work trials and guaranteed interviews
 - Job Fairs to promote new operational vacancies and opportunities
 - Site visits and talks
 - Career activities – mock interviews, information events, mentoring, site visits
 - In-house training schemes
 - Leadership and Management training
 - Sector based work academy programmes
- 7.3 Developers are required to provide a detailed Method Statement setting out how they intend to implement the ESP. The Method Statement should be restricted to 800 words and clearly set out the proposed approach for delivering skills development against the Employment and Skills Areas, covering the following:
- Who in the organisation will be responsible for managing the training scheme and overseeing the proposals?

- Which education and training providers will be involved with the delivery of the ESP?
 - What types of accredited and non-accredited training are expected to be offered and who are expected to be the main beneficiaries of this training?
 - Which trades or occupational areas is it envisaged will be offering Apprenticeship opportunities?
 - What types of Apprenticeship are expected to be offered (e.g. traditional, specialist, Shared, Advanced etc.)?
 - How will the Target Outputs as set out in the ESP be delivered?
 - How will health and safety issues be managed?
 - What actions will be taken to ensure the support of trade contractors and how will compliance be managed [and monitored] with respect to the organising trade contractors and subcontractors?
- 7.4 The developer needs to include a written statement in their contracts with the contractor and sub-contractors and inform the freeholder or lease holder of the operational phase of the development, encouraging them to liaise with the Council to discuss, agree and implement the arrangements as set out in this TGN and the site-specific Section 106 obligations to ensure the successful and consistent application.
- 7.5 The contractor and sub-contractors in the construction phase shall provide to the Council on a quarterly basis a Monitoring Form (example in Appendix 3) outlining the achievements against the ESP and Section 106 obligations.
- 7.6 On completion of development and/or one month after opening for operational developments, the Council will review performance against the ESP(s) and Section 106 obligations to formulate an evaluation report to consider the scope for improvement on future developments and to maximise promotional activities of the outcomes of the specific development.
- 7.7 For developments under 52 weeks or where contractors will be on site for limited times only, the Council understands that it is difficult for employers to engage with apprenticeships. In these instances, the use of an independent Apprenticeship Training Agency (ATA) is recommended. The Council can provide contacts where this is required.
- 7.8 For developments expected to last for at least 52 weeks, the Council seeks those apprenticeships are facilitated. The developer is responsible for ensuring the relevant number of new apprenticeships is created on site – either directly or through the developer’s managing agents and their supply chain. If apprentices are recruited through the supply chain, it must be clearly evidenced that the apprentice appointment is directly associated with the development.
- 7.9 The Council encourages the contractor and supply chain to access

sector-specific grants through CITB - Construction Skills. The Council can signpost to this support.

Monitoring at Construction Phase

- 7.10 Provide regular monitoring and information to the Council on:
- The achievements against the ESP, numbers of local businesses contracted and numbers of local people* employed on a monthly / quarterly basis via completion of a Monitoring Form (Appendix 3)
 - Apprentices, work experience placements and NVQ (award, certificate, or diploma) starts and completions and any extracurricular and career activities.
 - A bimonthly/ quarterly site monitoring meeting
 - Any other relevant information as directed by the Council

*Local people count as those living in the Somerset West and Taunton District.

Operational Phase

- 7.11 The developer is to inform the lease holder about this TGN and the site-specific Local Labour Agreement. The lease holder is expected to meet with the Councils Economic Development Team to produce an ESP for submission to the Council as soon as possible after leasing the premises.
- 7.12 Operators are responsible for ensuring the relevant numbers of local employees, apprenticeships, work experience and NVQ (award, certificate, or diploma) training places are created, and they are responsible for all associated costs.
- 7.13 The ESP could include but not limited to the following Employment and Skills Areas as listed below:
- NVQ (award, certificate, or diploma) training for sub-contractors (construction phase only)
 - Apprenticeships
 - Pre-employment training
 - Work experience placements for those unemployed
 - Work experience placements for those aged 14-18 years in education, 16-19 and 19+ years
 - Skills development workshops with education and training providers for the unemployed or those wishing to re-train, including employer led bootcamps/ sector-based work academies
 - Targeted recruitment and training campaigns including promotion of vacancies locally, pre-employment training, work trials and guaranteed interviews

- Job Fairs to promote new operational vacancies and opportunities
- Site visits and talks
- Career activities – mock interviews, information events, mentoring, site visits
- In-house training schemes
- Leadership and Management training
- Sector based work academy programmes

7.14 Operators are required to provide a detailed Method Statement setting out how they intend to implement the ESP. The Method Statement should be restricted to 800 words and clearly set out the proposed approach for delivering skills development against the Employment and Skills Areas, covering the following:

- Who in the organisation will be responsible for managing the training scheme and overseeing the proposals?
- Which education and training providers will be involved with the delivery of the ESP?
- What types of accredited and non-accredited training are expected to be offered and who are expected to be the main beneficiaries of this training?
- Which occupational areas is it envisaged will be offering Apprenticeship opportunities?
- What types of apprenticeship are expected to be offered (i.e. traditional, specialist, Shared, Advanced etc.)?
- How will the Target Outputs as set out in the ESP be delivered?
- How will health and safety issues be managed?

Monitoring of Operational Phase

7.15 Tenants or freeholders are to provide monitoring information (via Appendix 4) to the Council one month after operation commences on:

- The achievements against the ESP
- Starting workforce statistics including details of number of local people
- Apprentice and work experience placements
- Any other relevant information as directed by the Council.

8.0 Fees

8.1 The Council seeks an administration fee for the negotiation and administration of all S106 agreements. This is a fixed sum of £100* per dwelling will be charged for residential development and £1.25per sqm for commercial floorspace(3) to support the additional resources required by the Council to deliver the administration system.

8.2 This charge is in addition to planning application fees and will be payable on completion of a S106 Agreement or when the number of dwellings or

amount of commercial floorspace is known.

- 8.3 Where a site has abnormally low costs, or where little negotiation is required, a reduction in fees will be considered.

*subject to review, correct as of January 2023.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Template Section 106 Obligations

Template Section 106 Obligations

The Owner and/or the Developers covenant with the Council as follows:

Not to commence development unless a Local Labour Agreement (LLA), including an Employment and Skills Plan (ESP) and Method Statement, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Economic Development Lead PROVIDED THAT where the Council has confirmed receipt of and been in receipt of the LLA for 4 weeks and no approval or dispute is given or notified then approval shall be deemed to have been given. The ESP and Method Statement shall include details demonstrating how the development will achieve compliance with and implementation of the Employment and Skills output figures contained within Appendix B of The Client Based Approach, Local Client Guidance – England, March 2016 as applied to the approved construction costs of the Development and the work types comprising the Development.

The approved LLA shall be implemented and complied with in accordance with that approval for the lifetime of the LLA unless subsequently otherwise approved in writing by the LPA.

The Local Labour Agreement template will be included here.

Appendix 2

Benchmark Standards for construction phase

Benchmark Standards for Work Experience Placements, Apprenticeships and NVQs (Award, Certificate or Diploma) at Construction Phase and Extra Curricular/Careers Activities/Programmes for the Unemployed

The commitment for extracurricular, careers activities and/or working with local unemployed people through various programmes on offer is as follows:

Up to £1m	£1m - £5m	£5m - £10m	£10m - £20m	£20m - £30m	£30m - £40m	£40m - £50m	£50m - £60m	£60m - £70m	£70m - £80m	£80m - £90m	£90m - £100m
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	10	11	12

The tables in this Appendix detail the Work Experience placements, Apprenticeship and NVQ (award, certificate, or diploma) benchmarks that will apply for qualifying developments during the construction phase. The benchmarks vary dependent on the type and cost of the build.

Build types are classified as follows:

- Residential
- Retail, Sports, Leisure and Entertainment
- Factories
- Education (Private/Non County Council)
- Health
- Offices
- Refurbishment/Decent Homes

NVQ – National Vocational Qualification usually represented in the form of an Award, Certificate or Diploma

Client-Based Approach to developing and Implementing an Employment and Skills Strategy on construction projects through on-site training (May 2012)

Residential	Up to 500K	£500K - 1m	£1 - 3.5m	£3.5 - 6m	£6 - 10m	£10 - 15m	£15 - 20m	£20 - 30m	£30 - 40m	£40- 50m	£50- 60m	£60- 70m	£70- 80m
Work Experience Placement for those Unemployed – persons	1	2	3	5	7	9	11	13	16	18	19	20	20
Work Experience Placement for those aged 14-18 yrs in Education – persons	0	0	0	1	1	2	3	3	4	4	4	5	5
Apprentice Starts – persons	0	0	0	2	4	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Apprentice Completions –persons	0	0	0	0	2	3	4	5	5	6	6	6	7
<u>Construction Phase Only</u>													
NVQ Starts for Sub-contractors – persons	0	0	1	2	3	6	8	10	13	15	17	19	21
NVQ Completions for Sub-contractors – persons	0	0	1	2	3	5	7	8	11	12	14	16	17

Retail, Sports, Leisure and Entertainment	Up to 3.5m	£3.5 – 6m	£6 – 10m	£10 – 15m	£15 – 20m	£20 – 30m	£30 – 40m	£40 – 50m	£50 – 60m	£60- 70m	£70- 80m	£80- 90m	£90- 100m
Work Experience Placement for those Unemployed – persons	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	10	10	11	11
Work Experience Placement for those aged 14-18 yrs in Education – persons	0	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3
Apprentice Starts – persons	0	1	3	4	5	5	6	7	7	8	8	9	10
Apprentice Completions –persons	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2
<u>Construction Phase Only</u>													
NVQ Starts for Sub-contractors – persons	1	1	2	4	5	6	8	9	10	11	13	14	14
NVQ Completions for Sub-contractors – persons	1	1	2	3	4	5	7	7	8	10	10	11	12

Factories	Up to 3.5m	£3.5 – 6m	£6 – 10m	£10 – 15m	£15 – 20m	£20 – 30m	£30 – 40m	£40 – 50m	£50 – 60m	£60- 70m	£70- 80m	£80- 90m	£90- 100m
Work Experience Placement for those Unemployed – persons	0	1	1	1	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3
Work Experience Placement for those aged 14-18 yrs in Education – persons	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Apprentice Starts – persons	0	1	1	2	2	2	3	3	3	4	4	4	5
Apprentice Completions –persons	0	0	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
<u>Construction Phase Only</u>													
NVQ Starts for Sub- contractors – persons	1	1	2	3	4	6	7	8	9	10	12	13	13
NVQ Completions for Sub-contractors – persons	1	1	2	3	4	4	6	7	8	9	9	10	11

Education (Private/Non County Council)	Up to 3.5m	£3.5 – 6m	£6 – 10m	£10 – 15m	£15 – 20m	£20 – 30m	£30 – 40m	£40 – 50m	£50 – 60m	£60- 70m	£70- 80m	£80- 90m	£90- 100m
Work Experience Placement for those Unemployed – persons	4	6	8	11	13	16	19	22	23	24	24	25	25
Work Experience Placement for those aged 14-18 yrs in Education – persons	0	1	1	2	4	4	5	5	5	6	6	6	6
Apprentice Starts – persons	0	2	3	5	6	6	7	8	9	10	10	11	12
Apprentice Completions –persons	0	0	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	5	6	6	6
<u>Construction Phase Only</u>													
NVQ Starts for Sub-contractors – persons	1	2	3	6	8	10	13	15	17	19	21	23	24
NVQ Completions for Sub-contractors – persons	1	2	3	5	7	8	11	12	14	16	17	19	20

Health	Up to 3.5m	£3.5 – 6m	£6 – 10m	£10 – 15m	£15 – 20m	£20 – 30m	£30 – 40m	£40 – 50m	£50 – 60m	£60- 70m	£70- 80m	£80- 90m	£90- 100m
Work Experience Placement for those Unemployed – persons	2	3	4	5	7	8	10	11	11	12	12	13	13
Work Experience Placement for those aged 14-18 yrs in Education – persons	0	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3
Apprentice Starts – persons	0	1	2	4	4	5	5	6	7	7	8	8	9
Apprentice Completions –persons	0	0	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
<u>Construction Phase Only</u>													
NVQ Starts for Sub-contractors – persons	1	2	2	5	6	8	10	12	14	15	17	18	19
NVQ Completions for Sub-contractors – persons	1	2	2	4	6	6	9	10	11	13	14	15	16

Offices	Up to 3.5m	£3.5 – 6m	£6 – 10m	£10 – 15m	£15 – 20m	£20 – 30m	£30 – 40m	£40 – 50m	£50 – 60m	£60- 70m	£70- 80m	£80- 90m	£90- 100m
Work Experience Placement for those Unemployed – persons	1	2	2	3	3	4	5	5	6	6	6	6	6
Work Experience Placement for those aged 14-18 yrs in Education – persons	0	0	0	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Apprentice Starts – persons	0	1	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	5	6	6	7
Apprentice Completions –persons	0	0	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3
<u>Construction Phase Only</u>													
NVQ Starts for Sub-contractors – persons	1	1	2	4	5	6	8	9	10	11	13	14	14
NVQ Completions for Sub-contractors – persons	1	1	2	3	4	5	7	7	8	10	10	11	12

Refurbishment/Decent Homes	Up to 3.5m	£3.5 – 6m	£6 – 10m	£10- 15m	£15 20m	£20 30m	£30 – 40m	£40 – 50m	£50 – 60m	£60- 70m	£70- 80m	£80- 90m	£90- 100m
Work Experience Placement for those Unemployed – persons	2	4	5	6	8	9	11	13	13	14	14	15	15
Work Experience Placement for those aged 14-18 yrs in Education – persons	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2
Apprentice Starts – persons	0	1	3	4	5	6	6	7	8	8	9	10	11
Apprentice Completions –persons	0	0	1	2	3	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	5
<u>Construction Phase Only</u>													
NVQ Starts for Sub-contractors – persons	1	1	2	4	6	7	9	11	12	13	15	16	17
NVQ Completions for Sub-contractors – persons	1	1	2	4	5	6	8	8	10	11	12	13	14

Notes: The numbers in the tables refer to total amount of work experience placements and apprenticeships in each category expected by value of development. For projects in excess of the development costs listed above, targets need to be negotiated with the Council.

Source: Client-Based Approach to developing and Implementing an Employment and Skills Strategy on construction projects through on-site training (May 2012)

Appendix 3

Sample Monitoring Form for the Construction Phase

Please complete and submit this form to the Council Economic Development Team.

All sub-contractors in the development chain are required to complete this form under the site's Section 106 agreement. **All recording relates to on site activity only.** If you need assistance in completing this form, contact the Council's Economic Development Team.

Date	
Company name, address and contact number of headquarters	
Company number of employees	
Company contact name	
Number of staff on site	
Number of staff on site previously unemployed	
Number of staff <u>on site</u> who live in Somerset West and Taunton District	
Number of NEW apprentices <u>on site</u> and level of apprenticeship (intermediate, advanced, or higher) Provide details of qualification title and level	
Number of EXISTING apprentices <u>on site</u> and level of apprenticeship (intermediate, advanced, or higher) Provide details of qualification title and level	
Number of apprenticeship completions whilst <u>on site</u> Provide details of qualification title and level	
Number of completed work experience placements for those unemployed	
Number of completed work experience placements for those aged 14-18 in education	
Number of NVQ starts (award, certificate, diploma) <u>on site</u> for Sub-contractors Provide details of qualification title and level	
Number of NVQ completions (award, certificate, diploma) <u>on site</u> for Sub-contractors Provide details of qualification title and level	
Number of extracurricular, careers/employment support activities Date and details of activity	
Number on site in receipt of the Living Wage	
Please list the contact details of any new sub-contractors to be used on site	

Appendix 4
 Sample Monitoring Form for the Operational Phase

Please complete and submit this form after 4 weeks of opening to SWTs Economic Development Team.

All sub-contractors in the development chain are required to do so under the Section 106 Agreement.

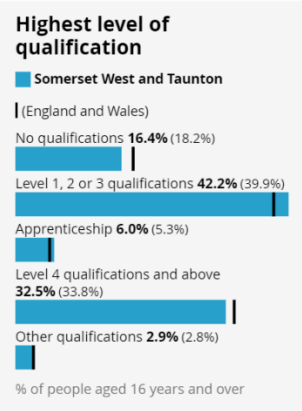
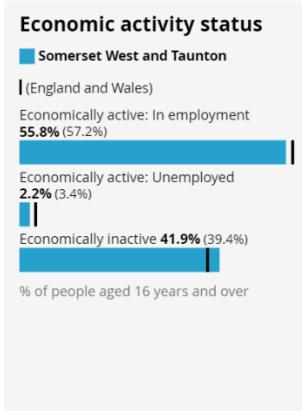
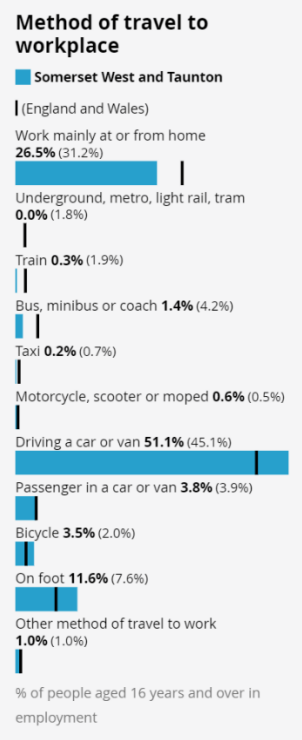
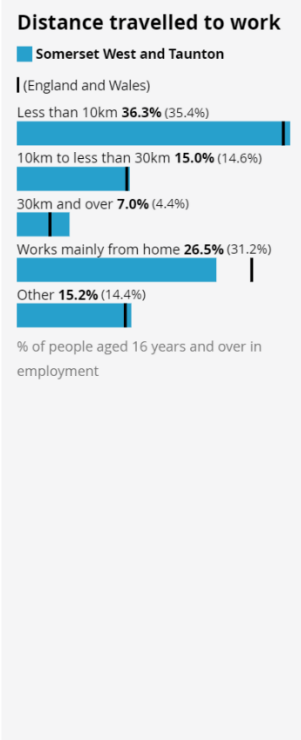
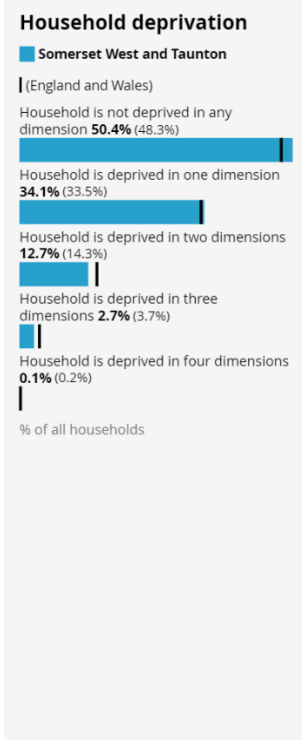
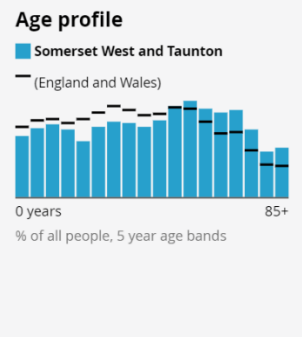
If you need assistance in completing this form, contact..... via email at

Date	
Company name	
Company contact name	
Number of staff employed	
Number of staff employed who live in Somerset West and Taunton District	
Number of staff previously unemployed	
Number of NEW* apprentices on site and level of apprenticeship (intermediate, advanced, or higher)	
Number of work experience placements for those unemployed	
Number of work experience placements for those aged 14-18 in education	
Curriculum, careers/employment support activities (site visits, talks, mock interviews, mentoring, participation in employability programmes)	

*Since operation of development

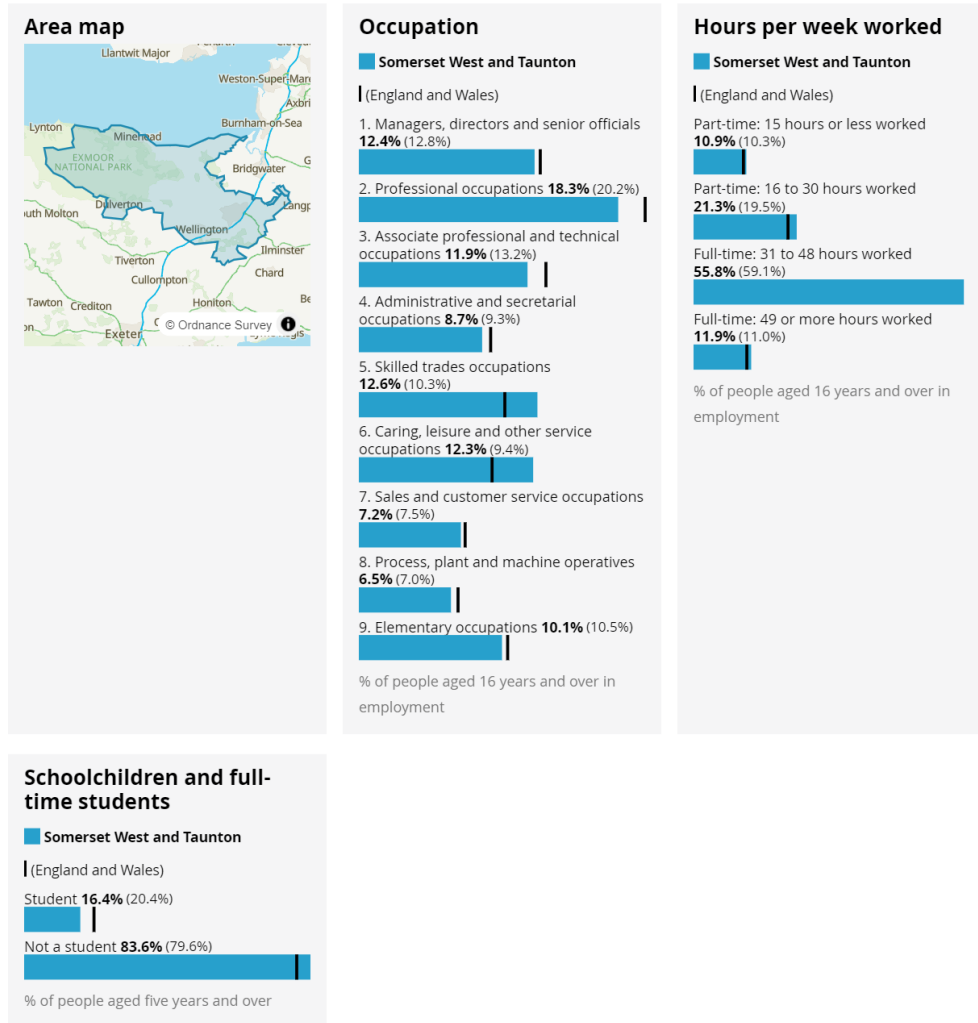
Economic Profile for Somerset West and Taunton

Somerset West and Taunton



Source: Office for National Statistics - Census 2021

Somerset West and Taunton



Source: Office for National Statistics - Census 2021

Other headline statistics relevant to this report:

- SWT employs most people within the associate professional and technical occupations- the construction for Somerset accounts for 12.8% of the workforce.
- UC Claimant count- 1,955 people (2.2%, national = 3.7%)
- The number of neighbourhoods in the 10% most deprived is 3, the same ones as in 2015. There are an additional 3 neighbourhoods (all in Taunton) that now fall within the 20% most deprived, making 5 in total.
- The rural parts of West Somerset are now ranking as slightly more deprived than in 2015.
- There is a wide range in levels of deprivation in neighbourhoods across the SWT area. There are 5 neighbourhoods in the 10% least deprived and a further 9 in the 80-90% decile.
- SWT is ranked 142 Out of 317 English Local Authority areas, with 1 being the most deprived.
- The IMD comprises a number of domains and in the SWT neighbourhoods the highest levels of deprivation relate to 'barriers to housing and service' and 'living environment'.

Public Transport Task and Finish Group – Final Report

15th February 2023 – Executive

Chair – Cllr Loretta Whetlor
Scrutiny Officer Support – M Prouse

Thank you

A big thank you to all officers and representatives who engaged with the work of the review.

Page 82

- *SCC/SWT Officers*
- *Buses of Somerset/First Bus SW*
- *Richard Huish College/ Bridgwater and Taunton College*
- *Travel Watch SouthWest*

Membership

Councillors John Hassall, David Mansell, Anthony Trollope-Bellew, Derek Perry, Brenda Weston, Keith Wheatley and Loretta Whetlor - **Members of the Review into Public Transport Task and Finish Group**

Page 83

Dates of meetings (Notes of all attached to the Agenda):

- **1st Meeting – 19th August 2020**
- **2nd Meeting – 1st October 2020**
- **3rd Meeting – 5th January 2021**
- **4th Meeting – 8th February 2021**
- **5th Meeting - 26th April 2021**
- **6th Meeting – 11th August 2021**
- There were also sub-group meetings with College reps in February and March 2021.

Background

- In the summer of 2020 the then Managing Director of First Bus South West was invited to appear before the Scrutiny Committee to discuss Bus Provision in the light of the recent closure of Taunton Bus Station.
- In a follow up meeting, both Cllrs Kravis and Rigby as the relevant Portfolio Holder's were invited. A detailed discussion took place which covered both a temporary opening of the recently closed bus station in light of the Covid-19 pandemic to enable greater social distancing when using public transport; in addition to the long term solution of a bus station.
- At the conclusion of the item the Scrutiny Committee resolved **to examine the current provision in relation to public transport in the district and what is required to increase provision and improved modal links including consideration of carbon neutrality.**

Purpose

‘examine the current provision in relation to public transport in the district and what is required to increase provision and improved modal links including consideration of carbon neutrality.’

Page 85

What we did

The group has considered what action is within SWT's powers to address the reasons for the under-use, and dissatisfaction of bus users with the current service and associated facilities in order to increase public transport use.

This Task and Finish Group undertook the following;

- Reviewed the changes that have occurred and continue to evolve in this area.
- Examined the evidence presented by invited guests (SWT Officers, SCC Officers, academics and external consultants), including the current provision of bus transport.
- Been a critical friend.
- Reviewed SWT policies and practices.
- Developed a Survey (did not use due to SCC request not to clash with existing)

Implications

Links to Corporate Aims / Priorities

This is in line with the Corporate Strategy of the Council and the Climate Emergency Declaration of the Council.

Finance / Resource Implications

Funding requirements from this Council to ensure the delivery of recommendations requires confirmation.

Climate and Sustainability Implications (if any)

The recommendations contained within this report would benefit the District's aims and aspirations in relation to Climate and Sustainability.

87
As it states in the SWT Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience Plan *“As the authority responsible for highways and transport, this Council must rely on Somerset County Council (SCC), to deliver on many of the actions and aspirations relating to transport. This Action Plan has been developed alongside the Somerset Climate Emergency Strategy so that it is informed by its emerging strategic direction and actions. SCC have been kept abreast of this Action Plan and its contents, but have not been involved in its detailed development and have not adopted it as their own policy. The Council will work closely with SCC to ensure the transport elements of this Action Plan are delivered”*.

Process

Process

The task and finish group has produced this report to the Scrutiny Committee to outline details of the review process undertaken, the evidence gathered, conclusions and subsequent recommendations for action. The Scrutiny Committee can if so wished refer this report to the Council or Executive and/or the appropriate partner organisation, and ask them to consider the recommendations arising from the review.

The Task and Finish Group has gathered evidence through a variety of ways and referred to the following background documents. The Group held five meetings. Background documents are annexed to this report.

College Transport Case Study

- Led on by Cllrs Wheatley and Perry - Case Study Proposal
- **Who would we speak to?**
- Staff at RHC who deal with transport, plus principal on macro issues
- Transport Commissioner at SCC
- Education officers at SCC (if student transport is part of their remit)
- Bus operators regarding routing matters

Page 89

Desired outcomes?

- Identify various problems at RHC and vicinity caused or exacerbated by the current model of student transport
- Identify possible solutions and improvements to these problems, especially where SWT could help.
- Extract any wider lessons from the case study relevant to urban/rural public transport in the district

Examining Provision – info provided by SCC

- There were at the time of the Group meeting 17 fully or partially subsidised bus routes operating in or through the SWT area and 2 Slinky services operating in the area.
- Patronage figures on the Park and Ride service were provided.
- Rural Mobility Fund
- Community Transport

Picture since meetings

Due to officer capacity and changes in the Governance Team a final report as is customary was not able to be prepared at the conclusion of the Group's Work.

Page 9
There have been a number of events that have taken place since the Group last met in August 2021 which have superseded events, e.g. BSIP funding J25 Pedestrian/cycle improvements.

Conclusions have been identified which would need to be investigated further by the appropriate Council teams/PFH/ Place Scrutiny of the new Somerset Council

Picture since meetings

BSIP funding has also been allocated to deliver:

- Bus priority measures (bus lanes and bus priority signals at junctions) in Taunton and Bridgwater
- The £1 single fare within the Taunton Town Zone (commenced 5th December 2022)
- The trial of evening services into Taunton with last buses being between 10 and 11pm – these are due to commence 30th January 2023 and include:
 - Service 28 – Minehead to Taunton
 - Service 21 – Bridgwater to Taunton
 - Service 22 - Wellington to Taunton
 - Service 30 – Chard/Ilminster to Taunton serving Gateway P&R site
 - Service 1 – Priorswood town service serving Silk Mills P&R site
- A mobility hub in Somerton – acting as a rural test bed and providing a bus interchange facility for services from Somerton/Yeovil to Taunton
- Development of the Think Travel journey planning site to incorporate ticketing options
- Marketing of the BSIP specific schemes

Bus Service Improvement Plan Picture

To confirm the BSIP related activity:

- SCC in consultation with key stakeholders developed the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP)
- SCC established a Bus Advisory Board
- SCC has entered into an Enhanced Partnership with all local bus operators in Somerset
- The DfT awarded BSIP funding to Somerset for various schemes

Conclusions

Page 94

Conclusion 1

- SWT Council to write a letter to Government and specifically the Department of Transport asking them to trial future transport/bus schemes in Somerset.
- That the Council seeks endorsement from the County Council and the Districts and MP's for the letter's contents.

Conclusion 1 – further comments

BSIP funding has been awarded to Somerset to trial a number of schemes. The funded schemes have been selected to demonstrate how effectively the funding can be used to deliver the results the DfT are wishing to see and hopefully prove the case for more funding to deliver similar schemes in other areas of the County.

Conclusion 1 – further comments

- The letter needs to include references to;
- LTA resource
- Refer to Enhanced Partnerships and opportunities these create (SCC has entered into an Enhanced Partnership with all local bus operators in Somerset)
- Specifically mention unique rurality of Somerset and DRT as a solution supported
- Build on Community Transport e.g. Watchet and Wivey Link

Conclusion 2

- We heard from Officers at South Somerset District who were exploring the potential to trial a Digital Demand Responsive Transport scheme working with SCC.
The Group encouraged officers at SWT to investigate/opt-in to this scheme and it was pleasing to see in the Somerset Recovery and Growth Plan include a pledge to deliver a digital Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) solution for the residents of Somerset.

Conclusion 2 – further comments

Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) and Govt funding will be used to trial a Digital Demand Responsive Transport (DDRT) service in the Somerton area, feeding into the proposed rural mobility hub, also funded by BSIP. This will help to facilitate access to and onward travel via the public bus network and help to increase patronage to support the public bus services. This initiative is already in the pipeline.

Conclusion 2 – further comments

- Direct Response Travel (DRT) is a practice carried out by at least three local authorities Milton Keynes, West Midlands and N.E Lincolnshire. The first two are mostly conurbations and the third being largely rural. Ours is a mixture of urban and rural and the rural areas suffer most from a lack of bus services. DRT involves bus and coach companies working together to provide a service on demand.
- It was understood that Somerset has the 4th lowest area of the UK with each resident using the bus 10 times each year on average.

Conclusion 3

- The Group considered that the closure of the Bus Station in Taunton had created an issue and the lack of a proper bus interchange needed to be addressed.
- The Group looked to Gloucester and Swindon as an example of recent exemplar developments in this regard and hoped that this could be looked at as a priority project for any successor Council.

Conclusion 3 - comments

BSIP funding has been awarded to develop a mobility hub in Taunton, on the former bus station site. This will provide an interchange facility, not just for buses for other modes of travel as well. Stage 1 of the feasibility study is complete and this will shortly move to stage 2 which involved more detailed design and shortlisting the components to be delivered through the hub.

Conclusion 4

- The Group discussed SWT facilitating and potentially trialling electric community car club schemes. The Group was aware there are examples of this in Watchet and elsewhere.
- The Group hoped the Council could promote ride sharing wherever possible, especially perhaps benefitting Students driving in from neighbouring authorities such as North Devon to get to College.
The Group discussed ensuring existing schemes were expanded to try and get a complete coverage.
- The Group was pleased to hear that SWT is in the process of developing a Car Club pilot which aims to deliver eco-friendly shared transport in the heart of Taunton. Its project partner, Co Cars, was at the Coal Orchard event to showcase the electric cars that will be available to hire via the scheme which is expected to go live by the end of 2022.

Conclusion 5

- The Group investigated a Workplace Parking Levy, which is in place in Nottingham and being considered in other areas. The levy on employers gives an incentive to walk, cycle and use public transport instead of cars for commuting to work. It also raises funds to improve these alternatives.
- The new Council should set up a feasibility study into it's practical application across the area and its effect on businesses.

Conclusion 6

- SWT Council to write to Butlins and First Group to request extra 28 services to alleviate pressure on the single bus due to the normal 28 bus being overfull, if able to do so without subsidy.
- Request the relevant PFH to meet with them to discuss feasibility.

Conclusion 7

- It was discussed that the Council needed to take an active communications role alongside SCC in promoting the use of public transport as a safe option in the re-opening from Covid-19 via its Communications team to ensure that Public Transport use is encouraged.

Conclusion 7 -comments

- SCC in conjunction with the Somerset Bus Partnership launched the 'Bus It' campaign in August 2022, to encourage travel by public bus. This focussed on the potential cost savings when looking at the cost of fuel and running costs of a car. The campaign also focussed on bus pass holders to encourage this cohort to use their bus passes and travel more.
- We are happy to receive suggestions and work with colleagues to understand any other promotional activities/communication streams that would be beneficial.

Conclusion 8

- The Group investigated the history of the Student Bus Ticketing Scheme - 'County Ticket' and believed there needed to be a greater flexibility in the ticket prices to ensure it is well used in future, if ever brought back into use following its suspension.
- The Group hoped there could be some form of subsidy to the Student County Ticket for one year as a trial to get the county ticket down to sub £500 (It was over £800) and see if this increases usage.

Conclusion 8 - comments

- Development of a young persons ticket was submitted as part of the initial BSIP funding bid but money was not allocated for this scheme. This remains an initiative we will continue to review and re-visit in the future should funding opportunities arise.

Page 109

The County Ticket has not been re-introduced, with the various ticket types available direct from operators, it is more cost effective for students to purchase tickets that are suited to their travel requirements, direct from the operator.

- College transport included as part of Bus It £2 Somerset County Wide scheme.

Conclusion 9

The Group would encourage regular working together with the Council and Local Colleges to encourage their students to opt for public transport following successful meetings with all parties to understand each others issues/priorities.

Conclusion 9 - comments

The operational team meets with the FE Support Group throughout the year – which includes representatives from the main FE Colleges in Somerset and transport features on the agenda. We are happy to discuss particular issues/opportunities with individual Colleges

Conclusion 10

The Group expressed a wish that the Planning department looked at strengthening enforcement of its travel plan enforcement in future.

Page 112

Conclusion 10 - comments

- The Local Transport Authority should monitor and improve the outcomes of Travel Plans for new housing developments. Consideration should be given to replacing ‘Travel Vouchers’ with significant funding for additional bus services or for Park and Ride improvements serving the new housing from their first occupation.
- The Local Transport Authority needs to monitor the implementation of Travel Plans and publish any evidence on the benefits achieved. The task and finish group expects any benefits are currently small and may have arisen without the Travel Plan.

Conclusion 10 - comments

- Provision of information on active travel and public transport to new occupiers is low cost and should be worth continuing. The benefits of green vouchers seem more doubtful.

Page 114

It could be better to instead invest directly in additional bus service provision for new housing developments, which is available once more than a quarter of the new dwellings are occupied. Where this is impractical, equivalent funding should be provided instead to improve Park and Ride services that could be used by new occupiers. It is important planning policies require new housing to be located where active travel options and public transport can be available to residents.

Conclusion 11

- The Group discussed the under-utilisation of the Park and Rides in Taunton.
- The Group believed they could be better marketed as destinations and the Council look to implement amenities on their site.

Conclusion 11 - comments

- SCC decided in August 2021 to make the Park and Ride free during the construction of road improvements associated with Creech Castle Junction/A358/Toneway. > Patronage rose significantly
- Page 116
- On completion of the works, the free fares came to an end but through BSIP funding SCC have managed to reinstate fares at a lower rate (£1 single, £2 return) and free for bus pass holders after 9.30 am. Patronage numbers have been retained at a good rate and are still much higher than before the free fares were introduced.
- This coincided with the ongoing Covid 19 pandemic and the temporary pedestrianisations of Town Centre.
 - Use of enhanced real time Car Parking Information Signs
 - Late Night Service introduction on 30/01/2023
 - Bus it Campaign - £1 fares in Taunton

Conclusion 12

- The Group identified that the Somerset Climate Strategy says that the Council would work with operators to improve provision.
The Group supported this ambition.

Any questions?

Page 118

Somerset West
and Taunton

Public Transport in SWT Task and Finish Group

19.08.20

Attendees: Cllr L Whetlor (Chair), Cllr J Hassall, Cllr D Mansell, Cllr D Perry, Cllr A Trollope-Bellew, Cllr B Weston

1. Appointment of Chair

Cllr Loretta Whetlor was duly appointed Chair of the Task and Finish Group.

2. Apologies and Declarations of Interest

Apologies were received from Cllr K Wheatley

Declarations of Interest were received from Cllr Hassall and Whetlor in relation to being a shareholder of the West Somerset Railway.

3. Notes of previous Scrutiny Committees – held in May and June 2020

These were noted.

4. Agree and review Terms of Reference/Scope of the Task and Finish Review

The Scrutiny Committee on 3rd June 2020 had resolved

‘to establish a task and finish group to examine the current provision in relation to public transport in the district and what is required to increase provision and improved modal links including consideration of carbon neutrality.’

- Councillors discussed why each had signalled a wish to serve on this group and what they hoped to achieve.
- Interest was expressed in ensuring the co-ordination between the various modes of transport e.g. bus and rail, canal and river etc.
- Interest was expressed in ensuring public transport was a growing and essential public service.
- The linkage with District priorities of the Climate Emergency and Health and Wellbeing were noted.
- The Equalities aspects of public transport and the access to employment were highlighted.
- Concern was raised over the constantly changing routes which made District Bus Stops redundant.
- A query was raised as to how many of the current routes in Somerset were subsidised, as it was felt the vast majority were in some form.
- Councillors representing rural wards were concerned at the service cuts and how they could look at provision increases, whilst being focused on reasonable aims. Funding was recognised as an issue.
- Suggested avenues of inquiry included Workplace Parking levies and Developers being required to fund Bus Services.
- A question was posed as to what could be done to make public transport a more attractive option, with the role of the Park and Ride a key part of that.

- There was an opportunity for the Task and Finish Group to take a lead on looking at how the District Council could facilitate the integration of Bus and Rail in the District.
- It was suggested that key stakeholders needed to be identified and brought together to examine the key opportunities.
- Concern was raised over the cost of the West Somerset Railway option.
- The timetabling of buses and funding opportunities were also raised as issues.
- It was known that the difficulty in attracting grants for Transport projects was the need to acquire match funding.
- Concern was raised over the information that transport companies provided often not being accessible and only available online. The demographics of those who used public transport often meant this was affecting those who would least likely use the internet.
- The link between road maintenance and investment in buses was a potential line of enquiry.
- It was suggested the Group could look to run a consultation with Bus Users.
- It was suggested the Group could look at other parts of the country to see what other Local Authorities had done.
- The Chair expressed that this Group had an opportunity to collaborate with the County Council and the Bus Company.
- Further investigation of the closure of Taunton Bus Station was discussed and it was felt that this could be warranted.
- The need to change the type of bus for the 28 route to comply with the height required was raised, and a scheme had been passed to the West Somerset Railway by First Group.
- The need for a facility/integrated hub linking the Bus and Train Stations in Taunton was recognised, and this Group could lead on looking at other examples where this had been done.
- The 'Taunton Vision 2002' document would be still relevant to this Group.
- The plans to pedestrianize Taunton was felt to be relevant to the need to understand the Transport infrastructure of the area as a whole.
- The need to understand why the WSR hasn't been able to reach an agreement on Minehead to Taunton was needed.
- Objectives were felt to be to increase provision.
- (It was suggested that) the group's objectives should be to consider what action is within SWT's powers to address the reasons for the under-use, and dissatisfaction of bus users with the current service and associated facilities in order to increase public transport use.

5. Next Steps/Work Plan

It was agreed to invite the relevant officers from the County Council and District to the next meeting.

6. Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting is proposed to be 1st October 2020.

The meeting closed at 6.22pm

Public Transport in SWT Task and Finish Group

01.10.20

Attendees: Cllr L Whetlor (Chair), Cllr J Hassall, Cllr D Mansell, Cllr A Trollope-Bellew, Cllr B Weston, Cllr K Wheatley

1. Apologies and Declarations of Interest

No Apologies were received.

No Declarations of Interest were made in relation to any item on the Agenda.

2. Notes of previous Task and Finish Group – 19/08/2020

These were noted. It was commented that the link of Park and Rides with the Bus and Train network was mentioned and should be added.

3. Round table discussion with Paul Browning (Somerset West and Taunton Strategy Specialist), Mike O'Dowd-Jones (Strategic Commissioning Manager – Highways and Transport – Somerset County Council) and Natasha Bates (Passenger Transport Commissioner, Somerset County Council.)

- The Chair welcomed the officers and thanked them for attending.
- It was queried as to how many bus routes in SWT and those that passed through ran without subsidy?
- It was confirmed that 60% of 103 routes in Somerset were fully or partially subsidised. The statistics for SWT could be provided.
- A map of coverage across Somerset of the Community Transport Groups in operation would be interesting to view if that could be provided.
- The County Council saw those groups as part of the network and worked closely with providers.
- The County Council also provided advice and guidance to the 32 community car schemes across the District.
- They also delivered the demand responsive service and worked to avoid conflict.
- It was confirmed that when a route was changed the operator had to notify residents but not consult.
- It was confirmed that the County Council spent in the 2019/20 budget £3.2m on bus subsidies.
- Councillors noted that in Devon they spent 80% more - £5.3m.
- Passenger Transport was a high priority for the County Council, however the balancing act between Highways maintenance and that was difficult. In contrast the County Council received 25-30 million pounds a year from central government to maintain 7000km of the network.
- In the last couple of years the Bus budget had been specifically protected, with additional money spent on demand responsive and college routes.
- A clear issue was the lack of Government funding for revenue projects to run services.

- Councillors sought clarity from SCC officers on the funding provided from central government for the Better Deal for Bus Users.
- This pot of £445,000 had not yet been spent due to Covid but was looking to be prioritised on bolstering services and potentially adding additional evening services to support the flexible working lives of people during the pandemic and night time economies. The County Council had also been given extra funding to support Schools and College routes.
- Officer O'Dowd-Jones led on bidding for funding for schemes.
- The operational service was managed by Bus Operations Manager John Perrott.
- Councillors raised queries about the County Council benefitting from the Bus Services Act and how other Local Authorities had ran a more strategic service, however there were legal differences.
- It was confirmed that any company could register to run a commercial route.
- Where the County Council wished to run a service it would go through procurement. The Council would encourage other operators to come in however there was a limited market.
- Clarity was sought over a comment made at Scrutiny about FirstGroup sending their old stock to Somerset?
- The County Council could specify stock on a tendered route but not on a Commercial route, however the balance needed to be struck between provisions.
- A recent bid had gone to Government on Rural funding mobility which would hope to trial a different market to the buses and this could be shared for Councillors information only afterward.
- A lot of customers are concessionary and there was a need to see more working age people use the buses.
- The County Council assured Councillors that they followed up every grant funding opportunity.
- Recent grants e.g. £56 million for Portsmouth were specifically limited to cities to bid for, which Government funds tended to focus on with sustainable travel.
- It was commented that rural transport was often overlooked and underfunded.
- Councillor Hassall suggested that the Task and Finish Group recommend that a letter was written to the Department of Transport/responsible Government minister drawing their attention to this issue.
- Officers supported the idea of a letter and suggested that it be shared with them and could offer the opportunity for this area to trial schemes and for the relevant key people to come and visit the area.
- It was queried as to how the move to Electric buses could be undertaken.
- The County Council officers confirmed that fleet electrification was being explored and a Strategy was coming forward on this but a pilot project would be needed. Hydrogen buses were also an opportunity.
- A Transport Strategy at SWT would need to address the current convenience of getting into the centre of Taunton.
- A Car Parking Strategy for Taunton would also be required to understand cross-town movements.
- Draft work had been undertaken on introducing a car parking levy at Deane House before the Covid issue.

- The County Council had introduced bus priority and bus gates and would do so in new areas such as Monkton Heathfield where it made sense.
- Decarbonising car travel and pay per use parking were also discussed.
- The scattered scarce population of Somerset made public transport planning difficult and expensive.
- The need to protect retail in Taunton Town Centre was recognised.
- It was stated that a holistic case needed to be made for a bus service that was attractive and climate friendly.
- It was recognised that the current financial funding model needed reviewing and was not fit for the future
- A briefing note on the Total Transport Portal could be shared with Councillors.
- An example was given of wage earners travelling into and outside of Williton, which showed that it was not as simple as rural travelling into urban for work.
- Ideas were shared of using CIL monies to finance a bus, offer new homeowners a free bus pass for one year only.
- The low social mobility contribution of poor transport were stated.

4. Next Steps/Work Plan

- Councillor Mansell emphasised the focus should be on public transport and mentioned college transport and community transport as areas of interest.
- The provision of cycling and whether to include in this review was discussed.
- It was suggested to pull in evidence from Cornwall and Devon and invite officers from those Councillors to attend if needed.
- Councillor Weston suggested that the Group should consult with the bus users and consider our powers as a Council to address under-use and dissatisfaction.

5. Date of Next Meeting

The meeting closed at 7pm.

Public Transport in SWT Task and Finish Group

05.01.21

Attendees: Cllr L Whetlor (Chair), Cllr J Hassall, Cllr D Mansell, Cllr A Trollope-Bellew, Cllr D Perry, Cllr B Weston, Cllr K Wheatley

1. Apologies and Declarations of Interest

No Apologies were received.

No Declarations of Interest were made in relation to any item on the Agenda.

2. Notes of previous Task and Finish Group – 01/10/2021

These were noted.

3. Round table discussion/Follow-up on strands identified

- Councillor Weston raised the issue of contacting the User Group for Bus Users – Cllr Hassall knew Mike Palmer who was involved with this group and could provide contact details.
- Councillor Darch was suggested as a possible contact with the Citizens Somerset group. Also Community Car Schemes could be contacted.
- The idea of a Survey was supported. Suggested questions include;
- User Satisfaction? How can it be improved? Number of Services, frequencies, times of day, Barriers to using it more, How do we expand service, times, accessibility, any other ideas?
- It was suggested to run the survey past the County Council/Transport Commissioner and Bus Company to ensure the survey was not duplicating recent work.
- The need to reach non-users but potential bus users was important and discussion was had on the creation of a Survey Monkey and how it could be marketed on Facebook and various groups. A suggestion was made to involve the Comms Team at SWT.
- Interest was expressed in having a visual map of the bus routes, with key car usage routes in Taunton overlaid on top.
- The funding possibilities of the District Council in this regard and the scope for increased funding opportunities would be interesting to discover.
- More information was requested on the Workplace Parking Levy and how that could be implemented. Planners from SWT were requested to come and help give further explanation as to how this would work in practice if it was recommended.
- Travel Plans – consideration as to whether these are being achieved? Who is checking these are being provided for? Would need to involve County and District as primarily a County Council responsibility.
- Discussion was had on using the issues surrounding Richard Huish College as a micro-study of the broader themes, e.g. expensive costs, lack of service, impact on neighbouring streets, travel plans etc.

- The use of E-Scooters in Richard Huish was positive but further development was needed to broaden the scheme if it was being so positively adopted by young people.
- Gloucester and Exeter had built new bus stations in the past 18 months and these Councils could be contacted to find out more about how they undertook this work. The use of Kilkenny Car Park as a Transport interchange hub was again raised.
- Buses in Langport had apparently utilised chocolate waste and cheese waste to run their services, much like the Bristol scheme that used human waste.
- Officers involved with the District Transport Strategy could be invited to give more information.

4. Next Steps/Work Plan

- The support officer would draft a set of questions for the survey and circulate them to the Group for comment, before possible circulation to Mike Palmer of the Bus User Group and other Officers as appropriate, and then engage with our Comms team and others to circulate it more widely once finalised.
- The support officer would investigate the feasibility of inviting officers to discuss Workplace Parking Levy, Active Travel Plans and the District Transport Strategy to the next meeting.
- Cllr Wheatley and Perry would meet to discuss further and refine the idea for further investigation on the Transport issues at Richard Huish College.

5. Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting was identified for the 8th February with a reserve date of the 15th February 2021.

The meeting closed at 6.30pm.

Public Transport in SWT Task and Finish Group

02.02.21 at 3pm

Attendees: Cllr Derek Perry, Cllr Keith Wheatley, Marcus Prouse (Specialist – Democracy and Governance), John Abbott (CEO- Richard Huish College), Stuart Todd (College Travel Access Lead – Richard Huish College)

Notes of Discussion

- All attendees introduced themselves and the reason behind the meeting.
- This was an area that had been a problem for the last two years in particular, and would welcome input from the Council. To contextualise, since September 2020 there had been a management restructure and Mr Abbott had moved from his role as Principal of the College (in post since January 2013) to CEO and a new principal appointed, due to the growth of the Educational Trust in recent years. A particular challenge for the College is Car parking and has been for the past 20 years since worked for the College, in having some but not enough. It has got worse but the College felt it was doing everything it could to resolve it. A Travel Plan created in 2013 was not a living and breathing document, it had complied with Planning rather than an embedded document on how to travel to the College. Stuart Todd – had been hired as a consultant to assist on this matter and had worked for 8-9 months on a new Travel Plan in a formal capacity, with the aim to bring the Travel Plan to life and reality. Had worked for previous two Councils and had a background in Active Travel and Planning. The timing of the approach was good from the Task and Finish Group as the conversations between Public Health, SCC and the College were taking place. Also referenced the Taunton 2040 vision, various strategies and targets on emissions.
- Aware of a new parking scheme in the area – with Letters from SCC going out to residents last week.
- How many students? 1900 16-19 year olds with 400 apprentices.
- Proportion of those that use Public Transport and other modes? Attendance of Richard Huish had remained fairly level in the last 8 years despite a perceived increase due to a £13m spend on building footprint increase. Growth of schools in next 3-4 years expected to have a concurrent increase.
- In 19/20 – 319 County Tickets were purchased. Task – Primary data on student travel – car share/dropped off by friends. The County Ticket used to be seen as really good value, free anywhere even over the weekend. Anecdotally, the price increase and cuts to its benefits has led to a decrease in take up.
- Around 500/600 students from North Devon travel to come to Richard Huish College. Anecdotally they found ways to share costs such as Car Share. Issues with buses and trains – North Devonian students could catch train from Tiverton, the bus has become less attractive over the years e.g. Uffculme takes 20/25 mins by car but 1hr plus with the winding routes on a bus. Other barriers are the 20/25 minutes' walk from the Train Station to the College.
- Car parking in the college currently was run on a permit scheme, with no one living in a TA1 post code allowed a permit. The permit cost was £1 a day. There was no limit on how many permits could be issued but there were only

200 Car Parking Spaces and 12 moped spaces. The College could make it more expensive however you would then see a further impact on the residential streets. The College would be really keen to see better links with the Park and Ride and discount parking costs for students in the Town Centre, e.g. capacity expected to be lower coming out of Covid – could students be given a discounted rate? It was not only students who used the residential streets around Huish – it had been observed that significant members of the public parked there and cycled into town using the back lane, with the pressure of the costs of Town Centre Parking a significant issue. The Council was considered to have tools at its disposal to tackle these displacement issues, with pros and cons to the Residents Parking Schemes. Did the issues with Public Transport effect enrolment? E.g. cost. The College does worry about this – the further rural you lived the more difficult it was, with an attritional effect on retention. The College had looked at supporting/putting on its own transport arrangements, however, the College wasn't big enough to afford individual bus routes – costs prohibitive.

- Looked at specific bespoke – do have a means tested bursary fund. Some challenges were not always financial. Good high quality accessible affordable public transport improves Colleges. County Ticket – stayed away – told Huish students were propping up scheme – volume made it a scheme that worked – costs gone up and numbers gone down. SWT had a role in the running of the Park and Ride and Cllr Perry had spoken with Cllr Rigby, the relevant PFH around Musgrove and Richard Huish College opportunities. Questions around the Park and Ride stopping at college and being more affordable. Specific college buses 1 in 5 or at specific times such as 8.30am were mooted.
- The College had trialled with SCC a train station bus to the college, which had a reasonable take-up. Some funds had been provided by Julia Ridgeley and the West Somerset Opportunity Area/SCC to develop those educational links. Reference to the Connected Taunton 2018 Workshop and the 2040 vision. There was a need to change behaviour and ensure using the bus became a habit. There were economic benefits as well as health benefits to greater bus usage. Understand the macro value of education and value in the long term. A suggestion was made that SCC were talked to see if they could modify bus routes to terminate routes at the College instead of the Town Centre. Was terminating in town a problem for the College? Confirmed it was.
- Issues with old buses, reduced times, services and wrong places served. The College were happy for Councillors to talk to a group of students about their experiences. The students themselves had raised that they felt they were subject to a postcode lottery e.g. in Birmingham and Manchester they would get their public transport free of charge. Evidence on poor public transport affecting attendance, and travel to learn was one of the issues alongside poverty and lower grades. Those that travel from further away tend to outperform those that live closer. We do have students from West Somerset – issue is that even with a regular bus service it does not get here any faster. Discussion around Remote Learning centres e.g. one on Exmoor and virtual classrooms in the pandemic. Planning for a future where students attend once or twice a week rather than five days. In 2/3 years' time could see outreach centres in localities.

The Clerk left the meeting at 4pm and the meeting closed at 4.40pm.

Public Transport in SWT Task and Finish Group

08.02.21

Attendees: Cllr L Whetlor (Chair), Cllr J Hassall, Cllr D Mansell, Cllr A Trollope-Bellew, Cllr B Weston, Cllr K Wheatley

Others: M Prouse, N Bryant, B Chetwode (Travel Watch Southwest)

1. Apologies and Declarations of Interest

No Apologies were received.

No Declarations of Interest were made in relation to any item on the Agenda.

2. Notes of previous Task and Finish Group – 05/01/2020

These were noted.

3. Update from Group Members

- Councillor Keith Wheatley provided an update on the meeting he had held along with Cllr Perry with Richard Huish College around their transport issues.
- Cllr Weston reminded Councillors of the testimony given by Citizens Somerset and especially the 28 Bus and examples of children being missed and left behind.
- Councillor Trollope-Bellew noted there had been issues with the buses not going through Stogumber or Lydeard St. Lawrence.
- Councillor Hassall stated that a Double Decker to Bishops Lydeard was feasible and would help with capacity.

4. Round table discussion/Follow-up on strands identified

- Nick Bryant (Assistant Director Strategic Place Planning for SWT) was in attendance to discuss the Workplace Parking Levy. It had been used to fund the metro system in Nottingham. Questions of how easy to do in a 2 tier area?
- TDBC had done previous good work in this area in Green Travel Planning.
- Suggested if wish to progress this matter needed to be done through the Internal Operations Directorate.
- Councillors raised matters around air quality, contributions being used towards the Park and Ride and the powers of a Unitary Council.
- Councillors were clear this would be a cost for the employer and not for the employee.
- The scheme could disincentives commuting journeys and raise funds.
- A question was raised as to whether the Climate Strategy said anything about Public Transport and this was confirmed.
- Discussion on bypassing the Kingston Road gyratory. Kilkenny/Obridge Yard – give consideration to public transport.
- Policy Making perspective – these ideas captured for a future authority.

- Caveat – report of this group would probably be a direction of travel for a Unitary to pick up and run with.
- Bryony Chetwode (Travel watch Southwest CIC) introduced herself. They had input into regional government, national and local policy. Public Transport enables human interaction and expedition.
- Critical friend of bus and rail operators and acting as a facilitator. Help to reduce carbon and seek funds from central government.
- Explainer to SWT Departments – transport touches everything.
- Government Bus Strategy about to come out.
- Mentioned Lincolnshire work – first and last mile. Reliability and connection.
- Issues around reliability – bus operators would suggest is caused by cars.
- Park and Ride was a fantastic opportunity for the Council to build on e.g. facilities, encouraging take up.
- Benefits of having out of town stores – node (point or pathway at which traffic intersects) – electric buses to them?
- Consultation – most user groups recommend 9 months. Talk through implications.
- Discussion on closure of East Street – single and 2 person occupiers living nearby in poor health. Businesses such as audiologists and eyesight for people in need.
- ‘Public Transport is Active Travel’
- Leisure – people have a new flexibility. Opportunity to re-plan directions people are taking.
- Cllrs felt that quality of vehicles was considered key – rather than reliability or affordability.
- Tourist Levy – what more would that give us?
- Franchising Situation – money given by central government.
- First Group will be given bonuses around being carbon able, commuting by bus, green share portfolios.
- Social Good – public health aspect of public transport
- 9 months consultation was considered too ambitious
- Focus Groups – TravelWatch SW can link the Task and Finish group with bus user groups if so wished.
- First and Last Mile – Covid Parish Councils – Villages – 3 or 4 electric buses.
- First Bus Leeds – looking at getting more bums on seats – funding linked.
- CIL Cranbrook – Stagecoach – planning – transport and new homes.

5. Next Steps/Work Plan

- The Survey Questions had been revised by Councillor Mansell and were agreed for finalisation.

6. Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting was identified for the 15th March 2021.
The meeting closed at 6pm.