

SWT Full Council

Tuesday, 15th December, 2020,
6.15 pm



Somerset West
and Taunton

[SWT VIRTUAL MEETING WEBCAST LINK](#)

Members: Hazel Prior-Sankey (Chair), Simon Coles (Vice-Chair), Ian Aldridge, Benet Allen, Lee Baker, Marcus Barr, Mark Blaker, Chris Booth, Paul Bolton, Sue Buller, Norman Cavill, Dixie Darch, Hugh Davies, Dave Durdan, Kelly Durdan, Caroline Ellis, Habib Farbahi, Ed Firmin, Andrew Govier, Roger Habgood, Andrew Hadley, John Hassall, Ross Henley, Marcia Hill, Martin Hill, John Hunt, Marcus Kravis, Andy Milne, Richard Lees, Sue Lees, Libby Lisgo, Mark Lithgow, Janet Lloyd, Dave Mansell, Chris Morgan, Simon Nicholls, Craig Palmer, Derek Perry, Martin Peters, Peter Pilkington, Andy Pritchard, Steven Pugsley, Mike Rigby, Francesca Smith, Federica Smith-Roberts, Vivienne Stock-Williams, Phil Stone, Andrew Sully, Nick Thwaites, Anthony Trollope-Bellew, Ray Tully, Terry Venner, Sarah Wakefield, Alan Wedderkopp, Danny Wedderkopp, Brenda Weston, Keith Wheatley, Loretta Whetlor and Gwil Wren

Agenda

1. Apologies

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting of Full Council

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

(Pages 7 - 30)

3. Declarations of Interest

To receive and note any declarations of disclosable pecuniary or prejudicial or personal interests in respect of any matters included on the agenda for consideration at this meeting.

(The personal interests of Councillors and Clerks of Somerset County Council, Town or Parish Councils and other Local Authorities will automatically be recorded in the minutes.)

4. Public Participation

The Chair to advise the Committee of any items on which members of the public have requested to speak and advise those members of the public present of the details of the Council's public participation scheme.

For those members of the public who have submitted any questions or statements, please note, a three minute time limit applies to each speaker and you will be asked to speak before Councillors debate the issue.

Temporary measures during the Coronavirus Pandemic

Due to the Government guidance on measures to reduce the transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19), we will holding meetings in a virtual manner which will be live webcast on our website. Members of the public will still be able to register to speak and ask questions, which will then be read out by the Governance and Democracy Case Manager during Public Question Time and will either be answered by the Chair of the Committee, or the relevant Portfolio Holder, or be followed up with a written response.

5. To receive any communications or announcements from the Chair of the Council

6. To receive any communications or announcements from the Leader of the Council

7. To receive any questions from Councillors in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 13

8. Petition - Skate Park Request

This matter is the responsibility of the Executive Councillor for Parks and Leisure, Councillor Richard Lees.

(Pages 31 - 38)

9. Decisions taken under the urgency rules regarding the Car Parking Christmas Charging 2020 (to note only)

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

(Pages 39 - 44)

The purpose of this report is to update Members on the urgent decision to suspend car parking charges on the three Saturdays leading up to Christmas for 2020.

10. Decisions taken under the urgency rules regarding the Test and Trace Payments Scheme (to note only)

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor for Corporate Resources, Councillor Ross Henley.

(Pages 45 - 74)

This report relates to a decision taken on 12 October 2020 by the Chief Executive under the urgency rules contained within paragraph 5 of the Budget and Policy Framework within the Council's Constitution.

11. Decisions taken under the urgency rules regarding the Additional Restrictions Grant Scheme (Pages 75 - 112)

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor for Asset Management and Economic Development, Councillor Marcus Kravis.

This report details the decision taken on 23 November 2020 by the Chief Executive under the urgency rules contained within paragraph 5 of the Budget and Policy Framework within the Council's Constitution.

12. Council Tax Support Scheme for 2021/22 (Pages 113 - 134)

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor for Corporate Resources, Councillor Ross Henley.

The purpose of the report is to ensure that we have an agreed scheme for the 2021/22 financial year, which means we are recommending we extend the existing scheme for working age CTS claims. Consequently as no changes are proposed (or feasible at this stage in the year) we are bringing this recommendation directly to Full Council.

13. Revised Political Allocation of Committee Seats (Pages 135 - 140)

This matter is the responsibility of the Leader of the Council.

The purpose of this report is to amend the Council's numerical political allocation due to Cllr Buller resigning from the Liberal Democrat Group and joining the Independent Group.

14. Somerset EV Charging Strategy (Pages 141 - 276)

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor for Climate Change, Councillor Peter Pilkington.

The Strategy explores a number of issues around EV charging, evidences and assesses different options, and recommends how the Somerset local authorities should work in partnership moving forwards in order to deliver and enable an EV charging network to come forward at pace to support our carbon neutrality ambitions.

15. 2020-21 In Year Revenue and Capital Budget Approvals (Pages 277 - 288)

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor for

Corporate Resources, Councillor Ross Henley.

This reports seeks approval from Full Council for the recommended changes to the Revenue Budget, Capital Programme and Reserves from the report.

16. Access to Information - Exclusion of the Press and Public

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

Recommend that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the next item of business on the ground that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 respectively of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, namely information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

17. Commercial Investment Review

(Pages 289 - 362)

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor for Corporate Resources, Councillor Ross Henley.

18. Re-admittance of the Press and Public

19. Motion on Fireworks

(Pages 363 - 368)

To consider a motion proposed by Councillor Mark Lithgow, seconded by Councillor Sarah Wakefield.

An assessment of the implications for the Council should the motion be carried has been included within the agenda pack.

20. To consider reports from Executive Councillors

(Pages 369 - 416)

Part I – To deal with written questions to the Executive.

Part II – To receive reports from the following Members of the Executive:-

- a) Councillor Federica Smith-Roberts – Leader of the Council
- b) Councillor Benet Allen – Deputy Leader & Communications and Culture
- c) Councillor Christopher Booth – Community

- d) Councillor Ross Henley – Corporate Resources
- e) Councillor Marcus Kravis – Asset Management and Economic Development
- f) Councillor Richard Lees – Sports, Parks and Leisure
- g) Councillor Peter Pilkington – Climate Change
- h) Councillor Mike Rigby – Planning and Transportation
- i) Councillor Francesca Smith - Housing
- j) Councillor Sarah Wakefield – Environmental Services

An Executive Councillor shall submit a report to an Ordinary Meeting of the Council as to current and future business of their portfolio for the information of and comment from the Council. Such reports are for discussion and comment only and no motion shall be put to the meeting as to any such item other than those closure motions described in Standing Order 5.



**JAMES HASSETT
CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

Please note that this meeting will be recorded. 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 taking part in the Council Meeting 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.

Following Government guidance on measures to reduce the transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19), we will be live webcasting our committee meetings and you are welcome to view and listen to the discussion. The link to each webcast will be available on the meeting webpage, but you can also access them on the [Somerset West and Taunton webcasting](#) website.

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

Any requests need to be received by 4pm on the day that provides 2 clear working days before the meeting (excluding the day of the meeting itself). For example, if the meeting is due to take place on a Tuesday, requests need to be received by 4pm on the Thursday prior to the meeting.

The Governance and Democracy Case Manager will take the details of your question or speech and will distribute them to the Committee prior to the meeting. The Chair will then invite you to speak at the beginning of the meeting under the agenda item Public Question Time, but speaking is limited to three minutes per person in an overall period of 15 minutes and you can only speak to the Committee once. If there are a group of people attending to speak about a particular item then a representative should be chosen to speak on behalf of the group.

Please see below for Temporary Measures during Coronavirus Pandemic and the changes we are making to public participation:-

Due to the Government guidance on measures to reduce the transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19), we will holding meetings in a virtual manner which will be live webcast on our website. Members of the public will still be able to register to speak and ask questions, which will then be read out by the Governance and Democracy Case Manager during Public Question Time and will be answered by the Portfolio Holder or followed up with a written response.

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 Full Council - 10 September 2020

Present: Councillor Hazel Prior-Sankey (Chair)

Councillors Simon Coles, Ian Aldridge, Benet Allen, Lee Baker, Mark Blaker, Chris Booth, Paul Bolton, Sue Buller, Norman Cavill, Dixie Darch, Dave Durdan, Kelly Durdan, Caroline Ellis, Habib Farbahi, Ed Firmin, Andrew Govier, Roger Habgood, Andrew Hadley, John Hassall, Ross Henley, Marcia Hill, John Hunt, Marcus Kravis, Richard Lees, Sue Lees, Libby Lisgo, Janet Lloyd, Dave Mansell, Simon Nicholls, Craig Palmer, Derek Perry, Martin Peters, Andy Pritchard, Steven Pugsley, Mike Rigby, Francesca Smith, Federica Smith-Roberts, Vivienne Stock-Williams, Phil Stone, Andrew Sully, Anthony Trollope-Bellew, Ray Tully, Terry Venner, Sarah Wakefield, Alan Wedderkopp, Danny Wedderkopp, Brenda Weston, Keith Wheatley, Loretta Whetlor and Gwil Wren

Officers: Dawn Adey, James Barrah, Nick Bryant, Lesley Dolan, Paul Fitzgerald, James Hassett, Luke Muir, Clare Rendell and Amy Tregellas

(The meeting commenced at 6.15 pm)

31. **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillors H Davies, M Lithgow, A Milne and N Thwaites.

32. **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 L Baker	All Items	Cheddon Fitzpaine & Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr M Blaker	All Items	Wiveliscombe	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr P Bolton	All Items	Minehead	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr C Booth	All Items	Wellington and Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr N Cavill	All Items	West Monkton	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr S Coles	All Items	SCC & Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr C Ellis	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr A Govier	All Items	SCC &	Personal	Spoke and Voted

		Wellington		
Cllr Mrs Hill	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr J Hunt	All Items	SCC & Bishop's Hull	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr R Lees	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr S Lees	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr L Lisgo	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr J Lloyd	All Items	Wellington & Sampford Arundel	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr S Nicholls	All Items	Comeytrove	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr C Palmer	All Items	Minehead	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr D Perry	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr M Peters	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr H Prior-Sankey	All Items	SCC & Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr M Rigby	All Items	SCC & Bishops Lydeard	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr F Smith	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr F Smith-Roberts	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr V Stock-Williams	All Items	Wellington	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr R Tully	All Items	West Monkton	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr T Venner	All Items	Minehead	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr A Wedderkopp	All Items	SCC & Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr D Wedderkopp	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr B Weston	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr L Whetlor	All Items	Watchet	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr G Wren	All Items	Clerk to Milverton PC	Personal	Spoke and Voted

The following Councillors further declared a personal interest as they were a member of the Facebook Group Unitary Somerset – Your Views:-
L Baker, M Blaker, C Booth, K Durdan, C Ellis, E Firmin, R Habgood, A Hadley, J Hassall, J Hunt, L Lisgo, F Smith, F Smith-Roberts, A Sully, L Whetlor and G Wren.

33. **Public Participation - To receive only in relation to the business for which the Extraordinary Meeting has been called any questions, statements or petitions from the public in accordance with Council Procedure Rules 14,15 and 16**

Mr Chris Mann spoke on agenda number 7, Stronger Somerset Business Case:- He was pleased that the four Somerset district councils were not opposed to a unitary authority because council tax was so expensive in comparison with income tax.

Firstly, because two tier caused misallocation of income and priorities between district and county that would not happen under a single unitary council. Whilst Somerset County Council had struggled with funding essential social and child care, Somerset West and Taunton seemed to have plenty of money for diverse projects.

Secondly, because the cumulative savings were huge. If councillors had voted for a unitary authority in 2007, they could have saved their citizens £200m in total annual savings plus £89m by not approving the defensive Southwest One, the unnecessary Ignite transformation and recent property renovation and speculation.

Devolving some services to parish and town councils if they wanted it would bring new clarity, focus, democracy and authority to the area where people actually live, especially to 30,000 Taunton citizens who didn't have a town council.

The four district councils proposed Stronger Somerset with two unitary councils. Each would then need staff to run all the important care and highway services now provided by our single county council. Stronger Somerset proposed a new additional Joint Enabling Service and an Integrated Delivery Service to combine two unitaries in a connected Somerset.

A single unitary Somerset council with 560,000 citizens would be better than two unitaries in matching the health system area critical to support an ageing population and thereby avoided the need for time-consuming negotiations across two authorities. One authority avoided unbalance and a larger concentration of deprivation in the west, and would also most reduce costs by properly utilising the massive improvements in communications and technology over the last 50 years. With one management team and 100 councillors, a single unitary had a big advantage over two unitaries of twice the annual transition savings, nearly four times the estimated five year savings and the shortest payback time. Of course, One Somerset also gave the strongest voice for Somerset.

The Leader of the Council thanked Mr Mann for his comments.

34. **To receive any communications or announcements from the Chair of the Council**

The Chair of the Council reminded Full Council of the procedural rules they needed to follow during the meeting and that they should be courteous to one another during the debate.

35. **To receive any communications or announcements from the Leader of the Council**

The Leader of the Council advised Full Council of some events that were taking place over the weekend that they might wish to attend and support. She also thanked officers for their continued hard work.

36. **To receive only in relation to the business for which the Extraordinary Meeting has been called any questions from Councillors in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 13**

No questions were received in relation to Procedure Rule 13.

37. **Stronger Somerset- Business Case**

During the discussion, the following points were raised:-

- The Chair of Scrutiny gave feedback from the discussions had at the Scrutiny Committee. This included comments that the New Council would need to be reformed for the community, concerns were raised on devolution of responsibilities to the Town and Parish Councils and the impact on their precepts and also concern on staffing levels. Overall the Scrutiny Committee gave their support for the Stronger Somerset campaign.
- Councillors highlighted that they believed the Stronger Somerset business case was a good representation and they also agreed with the East/West split. They wanted modern democracy and inclusion for all councillors.
- Councillors hoped that the Stronger Somerset business case was heard by Central Government.
- Councillors wanted to ensure that there was a good level of public involvement in the consultation period.
- Concern was raised on some of the service areas currently covered by Somerset County Council (SCC) and that further detail was required, especially for Education, Young People and Adult Social Services and Health Services.
- Councillors wanted to ensure that the Town/Parish Councils were encouraged to take part in the webinars and the consultation.
- Concern was raised that the timing was not great for the unitary debate, considering there was a global pandemic and that Somerset West and Taunton Council (SWT) had only been in operation for a year.
- Councillors went on to thank all the officers of SWT for their hard work over the past 18 months, through the creation of SWT and also through the challenges of the Covid Pandemic.
- Concern was raised on the disruption for the community and that a big part of the problem was the lack of funding provided by Central Government for local services.
- Councillors suggested that one unitary council would be too large for the area and that the local services would be cut.
- Councillors hoped that Central Government would decide on what was best for the community.

- Concern was raised on the amount of councillors and the allocation of those across the New Council area.
- Further concern was raised on how councillors would provide support for the remote areas of the New Council.
- Some Councillors highlighted that the unitary debate had been ongoing for many years and that it was good to have discussions on the different options.
- Councillors highlighted that they did not want to lose focus on the work being carried out on Climate Change.
- The Leader thanked all Councillors for their comments and support for the business case and gave her reassurance on the many points raised during the debate and wanted to ensure that the Town/Parish Councils were involved and that the best outcome was achieved for the community of Somerset.

Resolved that Full Council:-

- a) Approved the Business Case for the reform of local government including the creation of two unitary Councils within Somerset;
- b) Delegated authority to the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive, in consultation with the other Somerset District Leaders and Chief Executives, to make minor amendments to the Business Case as necessary and/or appropriate, ahead of its submission to the Secretary of State;
- c) Supported the continuing consultation with local stakeholders, above and beyond any programme of consultation that might be required by the Government in due course; and
- d) Noted that in the best interests of the communities and residents of Somerset West and Taunton, the Council would continue to work with colleagues across all tiers of local government and public service in Somerset.

(The Meeting ended at 8.05 pm)

SWT Full Council - 29 September 2020

Present: Councillor Hazel Prior-Sankey (Chair)

Councillors Simon Coles, Benet Allen, Lee Baker, Mark Blaker, Paul Bolton, Sue Buller, Norman Cavill, Dixie Darch, Dave Durdan, Kelly Durdan, Caroline Ellis, Habib Farbahi, Ed Firmin, Andrew Govier, Roger Habgood, Andrew Hadley, John Hassall, Ross Henley, Marcia Hill, Martin Hill, John Hunt, Marcus Kravis, Andy Milne, Richard Lees, Sue Lees, Libby Lisgo, Mark Lithgow, Janet Lloyd, Dave Mansell, Chris Morgan, Simon Nicholls, Craig Palmer, Derek Perry, Martin Peters, Andy Pritchard, Steven Pugsley, Mike Rigby, Francesca Smith, Federica Smith-Roberts, Vivienne Stock-Williams, Phil Stone, Andrew Sully, Nick Thwaites, Anthony Trollope-Bellew, Ray Tully, Terry Venner, Sarah Wakefield, Alan Wedderkopp, Danny Wedderkopp, Brenda Weston, Loretta Whetlor and Gwil Wren

Officers: Lesley Dolan, Marcus Prouse, Amy Tregellas, Andrew Pritchard, James Hassett, Nick Bryant, Gordon Dwyer, Chris Hall, Sarah Povall, Lisa Redston, Graeme Thompson, Jo Comer and Alison North

(The meeting commenced at 6.15 pm)

38. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Aldridge, Booth, Davies, Pilkington and Wheatley.

39. Minutes of the previous meeting of Full Council

(Minutes of the meeting of Full Council held on 7 July 2020 and Special Full Council on 25 August 2020 circulated with the agenda)

Resolved that the minutes of Full Council held on 7 July 2020 and Special Full Council on 25 August 2020 be confirmed as a correct record.

40. 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:-

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Cllr A Govier	All Items	SCC & Wellington	Personal	Spoke and Voted
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Cllr L Lisgo	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr M Lithgow	All Items	Wellington	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr J Lloyd	All Items	Wellington & Sampford Arundel	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr A Milne	All Items	Porlock	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr C Morgan	All Items	Stogursey	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr S Nicholls	All Items	Comeytrove	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr C Palmer	All Items	Minehead	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr D Perry	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
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Cllr B Weston	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted

Councillors Blaker, Kravis, Lithgow, Lloyd, Mansell, Milne, Thwaites and Whetlor declared personal interests in respect of Item 9, as they were all involved in their own localities in the groups set up to receive the proposed grants.

Councillor Buller, Thwaites and Trollope-Bellew declared a personal interest in respect of Item 10 as an owner of Solar Panels.

Councillor Cavill, Farbahi, Trollope-Bellew declared personal interests in respect of Item 11 as landowners in the District.

Councillor Wren declared a personal interest in respect of Item 11 as a Director of a Community Interest Company related to this matter.

41. **Public Participation**

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

42. **To receive any communications or announcements from the Chair of the Council**

The Chair advised the Council that it had been a quiet month in respect of Civic duties. The Chair notified Councillors of a charity walk being undertaken by Councillor Roger Habgood in aid of Somerset Wildlife Trust and how Councillors could make a donation if so wished.

43. **To receive any communications or announcements from the Leader of the Council**

The Leader advised that in relation to Covid-19, all Councillors were now in receipt of a dashboard this last week which showed that cases were rising in Somerset slightly and to be mindful of this. She urged Councillors to take care of themselves and their communities and remember the Hands, Face and Space guidance. In relation to the Stronger Somerset bid, a letter had been sent to Luke Hall MP, the minister who had replaced Simon Clarke in the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government setting out the District's position and how we awaited a letter from the Government. Finally, Somerset West and Taunton had just launched a tree planting scheme using the profits offset from the Ice Rink to enable Parish and Town Councils to come forward and have access to free trees to plant in their communities.

44. **To receive any questions from Councillors in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 13**

The Chair advised Councillors that no questions had been notified in advance under Procedure Rule 13.

45. **Small Scale Industrial Space Local Development Order Report**

The report was introduced by the Executive Councillor Mike Rigby, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transportation and the recommendations seconded by Councillor Sully.

During the discussion, the following points were raised:-

- The criteria based LDO was one of the recommendations of the Affordable Employment Land Task and Finish Group and was pleasing to see come to fruition.
- The Portfolio Holder assured Councillors that the Council material would emphasise the 'affordable employment land' aspect.
- Councillors felt there were risks associated with the project and were pleased to see a review stage built into the process.
- Concern was raised over the level of staff resources in planning enforcement.
- The Portfolio Holder reassured Councillors there a number of safeguards had been built into the Design Guide, and that after ten uses of this scheme there was an opportunity to pause and review, however there was a recognised need for more enforcement capacity.
- A query was raised as to the impact of the proposed Government Planning White Paper on this scheme.
- The Portfolio Holder confirmed that Live/Work Units were not specifically permitted under this scheme.
- Councillors queried the definitions of micro-businesses and SME's and the preciseness of the terminology.
- Councillors hoped this policy would help the entrepreneurs of the future.

Resolved to adopt as policy for the Somerset West and Taunton council area:

1. the Small Scale Industrial Space (Employment) Local Development Order;
2. the accompanying Design Guide;
3. and associated fees/charges.

Councillor Morgan abstained from voting.

46. **Emergency Town Centre Recovery and back-fill of Economic Growth and Prosperity Fund Report**

The report was introduced by the Executive Councillor Marcus Kravis, Portfolio Holder for Asset Management and Economic Development and the recommendations seconded by Councillor Lithgow.

During the discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Concern was raised over the time taken to implement the scheme and receive feedback on the proposed use of funding and authorisation to start spending.
- Councillors praised the scheme and stated that it was incumbent on the public sector to step up when major shocks take place to the economy.

- Councillor Lisgo wished to record her thanks to the Executive for taking on board the discussions that had taken place at Scrutiny.
- Further understanding of the allocations were sought.
- A query was raised as to the status of Taunton BID proposal.

Resolved that Full Council:

1. Noted that £535,000 has been repurposed for Emergency Town Centre Recovery following Covid-19 Lockdown utilising the Council's Economic Growth and Prosperity Fund held in earmarked reserves.
2. Approved a budget allocation of £500,000, funded from General Reserves, to backfill the Economic Growth and Prosperity fund.
3. Delegate authority to approve expenditure of the budget allocation of £500,000 to the Director of Development and Place in consultation with the Economic Development Portfolio Holder.
4. Agreed that the Director of Development and Place and Economic Development Portfolio Holder consult with councillors from the Taunton Charter Trustees alongside the Taunton Chamber of Commerce as part of the Working Group for Taunton.

47.

Motion to support the Local Electricity Bill. To consider a motion proposed by Councillor Peter Pilkington, seconded by Councillor Sarah Wakefield (attached). An assessment of the implications for the Council should the motion be carried will also be attached.

Councillor Wakefield proposed the motion in the absence of Councillor Pilkington, with Councillor Ellis seconding the motion. Councillor Wakefield stated that the intention of the bill was to address the monopoly of electricity companies in accessing spare capacity from solar panels, to enable it to be sold locally rather than back to the Grid and the expensive agreements to do so. It would be good for the environment and good for local producers. The second reading of the bill was not due until January 2021. The bill was widely supported by groups as varied as the National Association of Local Councils and Greenpeace amongst others.

Councillor Ellis stated this was a key part of tackling the Climate Emergency, which nationally the country was off track with only 11 percent of all energy coming from renewable sources. The Government had admitted that there was huge scope for renewables, but this could only be achieved if administrative barriers could be removed. Ofgem would create a system of local licenses for local businesses to start up and sell renewable local energy to local people. Community renewable energy delivered twelve to thirteen times social and community benefit than commercial installations due to more skilled jobs and money circulating in the local economy. This bill was a cross party initiative and she hoped that the Council would send a really strong message in backing community renewable energy and gather the support of local Members of Parliament.

During the discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Concern was raised that whilst change was needed this proposal had flaws within it, such as those around grid capacity and the bill not specifying renewables.
- Other Councillors understood improvements to the Grid were on track and were planned.
- It was felt that when writing to Members of Parliament and others, the lack of specific reference to renewables should be mentioned as a concern.

Resolved to;

1. Support the Local Electricity Bill, supported by 187 MPs which, if made law, would establish a Right to Local Supply which would promote local renewable electricity supply companies and co-operatives by making the setup and running costs of selling renewable electricity to local customers proportionate to the size of the supply operation; and
2. Inform the local media of this decision; and
3. Write to local MPs, asking them to support the Bill, and; 4. Write to the organisers of the campaign for the Bill, Power for People, (at 8 Delancey Passage, Camden, London NW1 7NN or info@powerforpeople.org.uk) expressing its support.

Councillor Mansell abstained from voting due to a declared prejudicial interest relating to his involvement with a community energy company.

48.

Motion to declare an Ecological Emergency. To consider a motion proposed by Councillor Dave Mansell, seconded by Councillor Dixie Darch (attached). An assessment of the implications for the Council should the motion be carried will also be attached.

Councillor Mansell proposed the motion with Councillor Darch seconding the motion. Councillor Mansell stated that the human and natural worlds were completely intertwined, with our reliance on nature to live and to stay healthy. Scientists have been telling us we have been over-exploiting the earth and altering it from a local to a global level. Between 1970 -2016, many wildlife populations reduced by two thirds. Species extinction rates are many times higher than historical averages. The causes of this include overuse and climate change. We currently face several global emergencies such as the climate crisis and Covid-19 which were linked in many ways. Somerset West and Taunton Council could play its part by backing the motion which pave the way for an Action plan and costed projects following on.

Councillor Darch stated that it was pleasing this was a cross-party initiative and that the declaration of an ecological emergency would complement the existing strength of the Council work in this area. She felt that the Climate Strategy coming forward meant that there was momentum to build on in this area. Expectations would have to be managed as the Council would still have to work within planning constraints. This motion would make our policy and actions around ecological impacts explicit and firmly embedded and push the Council to do more. The importance of bringing local community groups along was also important, such as Longrun Meadow, Wellington Transition Town and Netherclay Reserve.

During the discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Councillors suggested minor amendments to resolution seven which were all accepted for inclusion by the proposer and seconder.
- The Leader of the Council welcomed this motion which built on the work already being undertaken and that work was already underway e.g. Design Guide and Management Plan for Open Spaces and Parks including tree maintenance and the roll-out of the Recycle More scheme.
- Councillor Habgood read out statements obtained from the two local Members of Parliament.
- The importance of insects in pollination was noted.
- A suggestion was made of a campaign to increase the rates of recycling.
- Concern was raised of the state of England's rivers, with even the River Tone being polluted.
- A query was raised as to the difference between the Climate and Ecological emergencies.
- The link between the Planning system and ecology was discussed.

Resolved to:

1. Declare an ecological emergency.
2. Address ecological issues alongside climate emergency actions and ensure that opportunities to gain co-benefits from addressing both the climate and the ecological emergencies are maximised.
3. Add ecological implications alongside those for climate and sustainability in committee and council reports.
4. Where possible, embed climate action and ecological initiatives within all council work areas, including COVID-19 recovery projects and programmes.
5. Promote woodland planting and rewilding in the right places and with the right species, peatland restoration, natural flood management, wild flower meadows, and habitat creation and restoration. As well as being important for biodiversity, these actions can often have an important co-benefit of storing carbon, so helping to address climate change.
6. Reduce energy and material consumption by promoting waste reduction, reuse and recycling, product durability, energy efficiency and renewable energy generation. Avoid consumption that threatens further destruction of globally important wildlife habitats and the use of single-use plastics without effective and on-going recycling in place.
7. Work with local, county, regional and national partners, including land managers and DEFRA, Town and Parish Councils and the two Local Members of Parliament to increase wildlife habitats, green infrastructure and natural capital in Somerset West and Taunton.
8. Ensure that addressing the climate and ecological emergencies and nature recovery are strategic priorities for planning policies and design guides for new development, including by identifying appropriate areas for habitat restoration and biodiversity gain.
9. Manage Council services, buildings and land in a biodiversity-friendly manner, including by reviewing use of harmful chemicals, such as pesticides, and taking opportunities to create new wildlife habitats.

10. Provide advice for local communities on how to incorporate biodiversity, green infrastructure and natural capital into Neighbourhood Plans and other initiatives.
11. Encourage residents to take biodiversity measures in their own homes by, for example, wildlife gardening and home composting.
12. Agree with the principles set out in recommendations 1-11 and requests that officers do a feasibility study and draw up a costed plan as part of the budget setting process for 2021/22 onwards. This would be to allow the production of an ecological emergency action plan and to report annually to Scrutiny Committee, Executive and Full Council on progress, continuing work and future projects to address both the climate and ecological emergencies.

49. **To consider reports from Executive Councillors**

During the discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Executive Councillors were requested to limit the use of acronyms in their reports without first using the full term.
- A further specific update was requested into the repairs notice served at Tonedale Mill and it was confirmed a written answer could be provided.
- Further clarity was sought on how the s106 funding linked into the Unparished Area of Taunton.
- Further clarity was sought on the Taunton Cultural Forum and its membership and when a renewed Cultural Strategy could be expected.
- The Leader stated that the Stronger Somerset team were using a variety of communication channels and welcomed feedback on this.
- The Leader confirmed that the Council continued to work to the timescales in relation to Stronger Somerset despite not yet receiving a letter from government.
- It was confirmed that Planning training for Parish Councils had not yet taken place, with a priority on training for the Committee first.
- Concern was raised by a Councillor over the communications of key strategic plans for the Council, and the Leader invited those concerns to be shared with her afterward.
- Concern was raised over the provision of radios in Taunton, with it being reported as being out of action by businesses for several months.
- A written answer would be provided on the number of residents who had been living in the former Woolaway properties that had been re-housed in the Pyrland Fields development.

(The Meeting ended at 9.15 pm)

SWT Special Full Council - 26 October 2020

Present: Councillor Hazel Prior-Sankey (Chair)

Councillors Simon Coles, Ian Aldridge, Benet Allen, Lee Baker, Marcus Barr, Mark Blaker, Chris Booth, Paul Bolton, Sue Buller, Norman Cavill, Dixie Darch, Hugh Davies, Dave Durdan, Kelly Durdan, Caroline Ellis, Ed Firmin, Roger Habgood, Andrew Hadley, John Hassall, Ross Henley, Marcia Hill, John Hunt, Marcus Kravis, Andy Milne, Richard Lees, Sue Lees, Libby Lisgo, Mark Lithgow, Janet Lloyd, Dave Mansell, Chris Morgan, Craig Palmer, Derek Perry, Martin Peters, Peter Pilkington, Andy Pritchard, Steven Pugsley, Mike Rigby, Francesca Smith, Federica Smith-Roberts, Vivienne Stock-Williams, Phil Stone, Nick Thwaites, Anthony Trollope-Bellew, Ray Tully, Terry Venner, Sarah Wakefield, Alan Wedderkopp, Danny Wedderkopp, Brenda Weston, Keith Wheatley, Loretta Whetlor and Gwil Wren

Officers: James Barrahan, Lesley Dolan, Paul Fitzgerald, Chris Hall, Barry Hawkins, Alison North, Andrew Pritchard, Marcus Prouse, Clare Rendell, Sue Tomlinson and Amy Tregellas

(The meeting commenced at 6.15 pm)

50. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors H Farbahi, A Govier, S Nicholls and A Sully.

51. 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 L Baker	All Items	Cheddon Fitzpaine & Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr M Barr	All Items	Wellington	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr M Blaker	All Items	Wiveliscombe	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr P Bolton	All Items	Minehead	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr C Booth	All Items	Wellington and Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr N Cavill	All Items	West Monkton	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr S Coles	All Items	SCC & Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr H Davies	All Items	SCC	Personal	Spoke and Voted

Cllr C Ellis	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr Mrs Hill	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr J Hunt	All Items	SCC & Bishop's Hull	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr R Lees	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr S Lees	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr L Lisgo	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr M Lithgow	All Items	Wellington	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr J Lloyd	All Items	Wellington & Sampford Arundel	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr A Milne	All Items	Porlock	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr C Morgan	All Items	Stogursey	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr C Palmer	All Items	Minehead	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr D Perry	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr M Peters	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr P Pilkington	All Items	Timberscombe	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr H Prior-Sankey	All Items	SCC & Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr M Rigby	All Items	SCC & Bishops Lydeard	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr F Smith	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr F Smith-Roberts	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr V Stock-Williams	All Items	Wellington	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr R Tully	All Items	West Monkton	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr T Venner	All Items	Minehead	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr A Wedderkopp	All Items	SCC & Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr D Wedderkopp	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr B Weston	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr L Whetlor	All Items	Watchet	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr G Wren	All Items	Clerk to Milverton PC	Personal	Spoke and Voted

The following councillors further declared an interest:-

Councillor J Hassall as the Chair of Rail Future; Councillor A Trollope-Bellew as the owner of three sets of solar panels and land that was used for growing crops for bio-digester. Also as a member of Quantock Eco and Friends of the Quantocks; Councillor R Habgood as a member of Taunton Area Cycling Campaign, Somerset Wildlife Trust and Friends of the Quantocks; Councillor L Whetlor as a member of the Climate Change Task and Finish Group; Councillor C Ellis as a member of the Vegan Society, Animal Aid, Running 2020 for Somerset and Zero Carbon Social Housing Development; Councillor D Darch as a member of the Somerset Wildlife Trust, Friends of the Quantocks and the Climate Change Task and Finish Group; Councillor D Mansell as a member of the Climate Change Task and Finish Group, Somerset Wildlife Trust, Action on Climate and Brendan Energy; Councillor S Buller as a member of the Somerset Wildlife Trust; Councillor S Wakefield as a member of the Somerset Wildlife Trust; and Councillor B Weston as a member of the Climate Change Task and Finish Group.

52. **Public Participation - To receive only in relation to the business for which the Extraordinary Meeting has been called any questions, statements or petitions from the public in accordance with Council Procedure Rules 14,15 and 16**

Bryony Chetwode spoke on agenda item 7, Somerset Climate Emergency Strategy and SWT Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience Plan:-

Q1. Could the Council explain how it could both support the Climate Emergency Strategy at the same time as planning to develop the bus station into parking?

Q2. On behalf of our members we asked that the Council integrated their thinking and took a positive, meaningful, collaborative approach to connectivity for the people of the town and surrounding area.

Q3. Could those with responsibility for action addressing the Climate Emergency tell us how they planned to ensure other portfolio holders actively engaged with them to prevent counter-productive projects?

Q4. Could the Councillors involved promise to actively engage the community before deciding whether/how to implement schemes?

There wasn't a vision of a sustainable, working transport system for connecting us with work, place, and play within the Strategy which had left the door open for schemes which encouraged congestion, pollution and carbon. An urgent strong additional element of instruction needed in the strategy document. This would provide a prevailing vision which other teams would have to look to instead of planning for further carbonisation.

Bryony Chetwode, TravelWatch SouthWest CIC

Nigel Behan spoke on agenda item 7, Somerset Climate Emergency Strategy and SWT Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience Plan:-

In paragraph 3.4 it stated that:

“Despite the production of the CNCR Action Plan and Somerset-wide Strategy, Climate Change itself remained a major risk, and likely would do even if every identified action was delivered here because the issue was a global one. For this reason the Somerset-wide Strategy contained goals aiming at decarbonisation of the Councils themselves (mitigation); decarbonisation of Somerset as a whole (mitigation); and creating a resilient Somerset ready for projected impacts

(adaptation), and the CNCR Action Plan was entitled Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience and included actions aiming to ensure the Council and district were resilient to the projected impacts climate change.”

Q1. How could SWT ensure that cross boundary (other areas/councils etc.) actions didn't have an adverse impact and ensured there would be integrated working with other public bodies etc?

And Public Finance recently reported:

<https://www.publicfinancefocus.org/2020/10/covid-19-no-excuse-forget-about-climate-change>

“Many local authorities and governments had declared climate emergencies, but although responding to the coronavirus had taken up most of their attention for the past eight months or so, Bedford stressed that environmental issues had not gone away.

“This wasn't a new risk, but it's striking harder than many expected,” she said. Natural disasters such as heat waves, wildfires and droughts, which threatened lives as well as assets and supplies of necessities such as food, were becoming more frequent and more intense.

In recent years, threats from climate change had been steadily climbing insurers' risk lists, and Bedford said that Covid-19 must not allow them to fall back down compared to the more short-term (in relation to climate change) economic risks. Bedford said organisations should identify the risks climate change posed to them specifically, and ensured plans were not only fit for the situation now but future proof for the years to come.

She said proactive investment in climate resilience could be five times cheaper than reactive measures taken in the future. (our emphasis)

Climate change strategies should also consider procurement, in terms of whether the partner organisations were able to help the public body meet its climate goals, Bedford said, adding that it could also be important to consider whether procurement was necessary in the first place. (again, our emphasis)

“It's not always about doing things differently, but it could be about doing different things,” she said.

Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment Chief Executive Sarah Mukherjee said she had been “quite encouraged” by how seriously the public sector was taking climate, on a local and national level in the UK and internationally.

“In terms of action to take, the best thing to do was to plan, to make sure they had the understanding to process some of this very complex stuff, and incorporate it into their work,” she said.”

Q2. Would SWT (and other councils) consider whether Procurement (and commissioning/contracting etc...) “was necessary in the first place” when applying the proposed strategy?

Best Wishes, Nigel Behan, (Unite)

The Portfolio Holder for Climate Change thanked the speakers for their questions and advised that he would respond with a full written response which would be sent onto them after the meeting.

53. **To receive any communications or announcements from the Chair of the Council**

The Chair of the Council did not have any announcements to make.

54. **To receive any communications or announcements from the Leader of the Council**

The Leader of the Council highlighted the campaign to reinstate free meals for children during the school holidays and that she would keep the councillors updated of any progress made with the local councils in the Somerset area.

55. **To receive only in relation to the business for which the Extraordinary Meeting has been called any questions from Councillors in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 13**

No questions were received in relation to Procedure Rule 13.

56. **Somerset Climate Emergency Strategy and SWT Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience Action Plan**

During the discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Councillor P Pilkington, Portfolio Holder for Climate Change, proposed the recommendations and Councillor D Darch seconded.
- Councillors stated that the Climate Strategy was a well-researched document with broader input from all councils within the County, which they urged Full Council to approve.
- Councillors stated that the Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience Action Plan (CNCR) was a further detailed plan for the Somerset West and Taunton (SWT) area. The CNCR would be a working document that could be regularly reviewed and updated.
- Councillor D Mansell proposed the following two amendments during the debate:-

2.1) The Somerset Climate Emergency Strategy was adopted and a cross-party steering group be set-up to oversee delivery and development of the strategy, with quantified sector pathways to be established that worked towards a carbon neutral Somerset by 2030.

Proposed by Councillor Mansell and seconded by Councillor Lloyd.

2.5) A report on allocations for the £500k "Climate Change Fund" budget be taken at an early stage to Scrutiny Committee for comment.

Proposed by Councillor Mansell and seconded by Councillor Stone.

Councillors debated the amendments:-

- Concern was raised that the Working Group had been delayed several times due to the General Election in December 2019 and due to the Covid Pandemic.
- Further concern was raised that the Strategy did not highlight the urgency of the action required and that more work was required.
- Concern was raised that the section on public transport was lacking in-depth information.

- Concern was raised on the finances included in the report and further councillor involvement was requested, which was the reason recommendation 2.5 had been added.
- Councillors debated the role of the Scrutiny Committee and whether the additional recommendation 2.5 was required.
Clarification was given that there had been cross party involvement in both the Climate Strategy and the CNCR.
- The amendment was taken to the vote and recommendation 2.1 was lost and recommendation 2.5 was carried and became part of the substantive motion.
- Councillors debated the wording for recommendation 2.3.
The Assistant Director for Climate Change gave clarification that the Climate Strategy covered the county actions and the CNCR covered local actions for SWT. Amended wording was given, which the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and seconder of the motion accepted.
- Councillors agreed that lots of good work had been achieved on both documents and they thanked officers for their hard work.

Resolved that Full Council approved that:-

- 1) The Somerset Climate Emergency Strategy was adopted;
- 2) The Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience Action Plan was approved;
- 3) A local multi agency climate emergency task force was established to aid delivery and implementation of the Somerset wide Strategy;
- 4) A supplementary “Climate Change Fund” budget of £500,000 was approved within the General Fund 2020/21 Revenue Budget, funded from General Reserves, for the delivery of Somerset West and Taunton priority actions with delegated authority to the Director External Operations and Climate Change/Assistant Director Climate Change, Regulatory Services and Asset Management to agree those priority actions in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change. Council also be asked to approve the principle that any unspent balance of this Fund at the end of 2020/21 be carried forward to 2021/22 financial year; and
- 5) A report on allocations for the £500k “Climate Change Fund” budget be taken at an early stage to Scrutiny Committee for comment.

(The Meeting ended at 8.55 pm)

SWT Special Full Council - 3 November 2020

Present: Councillor Hazel Prior-Sankey (Chair)

Councillors Ian Aldridge, Benet Allen, Lee Baker, Marcus Barr, Mark Blaker, Chris Booth, Paul Bolton, Sue Buller, Dixie Darch, Dave Durdan, Kelly Durdan, Habib Farbahi, Ed Firmin, Andrew Govier, Roger Habgood, Andrew Hadley, John Hassall, Ross Henley, Marcia Hill, John Hunt, Marcus Kravis, Andy Milne, Richard Lees, Sue Lees, Libby Lisgo, Mark Lithgow, Dave Mansell, Chris Morgan, Craig Palmer, Derek Perry, Peter Pilkington, Andy Pritchard, Steven Pugsley, Mike Rigby, Francesca Smith, Federica Smith-Roberts, Vivienne Stock-Williams, Phil Stone, Andrew Sully, Nick Thwaites, Anthony Trollope-Bellew, Ray Tully, Sarah Wakefield, Alan Wedderkopp, Danny Wedderkopp, Brenda Weston, Keith Wheatley, Loretta Whetlor and Gwil Wren

Officers: Dawn Adey, Tim Bacon, Jo Comer, Lesley Dolan, Paul Fitzgerald, James Hassett, Alison North, Clare Rendell, Amy Tregellas and Joe Wharton

(The meeting commenced at 6.15 pm)

57. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors N Cavill, S Coles, H Davies, C Ellis, Mr M Hill, J Lloyd, and M Peters.

58. 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 L Baker	All Items	Cheddon Fitzpaine & Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr M Barr	All Items	Wellington	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr M Blaker	All Items	Wiveliscombe	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr P Bolton	All Items	Minehead	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr C Booth	All Items	Wellington and Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr A Govier	All Items	SCC & Wellington	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr Mrs Hill	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr J Hunt	All Items	SCC & Bishop's	Personal	Spoke and Voted

		Hull		
Cllr R Lees	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr S Lees	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr L Lisgo	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr M Lithgow	All Items	Wellington	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr A Milne	All Items	Porlock	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr C Morgan	All Items	Stogursey	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr C Palmer	All Items	Minehead	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr D Perry	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr P Pilkington	All Items	Timberscombe	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr H Prior-Sankey	All Items	SCC & Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr M Rigby	All Items	SCC & Bishops Lydeard	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr F Smith	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr F Smith-Roberts	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr V Stock-Williams	All Items	Wellington	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr R Tully	All Items	West Monkton	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr A Wedderkopp	All Items	SCC & Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr D Wedderkopp	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr B Weston	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr L Whetlor	All Items	Watchet	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr G Wren	All Items	Clerk to Milverton PC	Personal	Spoke and Voted

Councillor S Buller further declared an interest as an owner of an investment flat and Councillor F Smith-Roberts further declared an interest as an occupier of Auction House on the Firepool site.

59. **Public Participation - To receive only in relation to the business for which the Extraordinary Meeting has been called any questions, statements or petitions from the public in accordance with Council Procedure Rules 14,15 and 16**

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

60. **To receive any communications or announcements from the Chair of the**

Council

The Chair of the Council advised councillors that she had laid a wreath on behalf of Somerset West and Taunton in Vivary Park and then requested that Full Council marked a two minute silence for Remembrance Day.

61. **To receive any communications or announcements from the Leader of the Council**

The Leader of the Council reminded councillors that the country was due to head into its second period of lockdown on 5 November 2020 and that Somerset West and Taunton was ready to support the community as it had during the first lockdown.

62. **To receive only in relation to the business for which the Extraordinary Meeting has been called any questions from Councillors in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 13**

No questions were received in relation to Procedure Rule 13.

63. **Access to Information - Exclusion of the Press and Public**

Resolved that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the next items of business 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).

64. **Delivering Regeneration – Setting up a Special Purpose Vehicle**

Resolved that Full Council:

- 1.1 Approved the creation of (name to be confirmed) as a company limited by shares and wholly-owned by the Council in accordance with the principles of future business cases set out in the report;
- 1.2 Delegated authority to the Director of Development and Place (in consultation with the Executive) to register the name of (the SPV) and complete all practical, financial and legal matters to enable (the group SPV) to be established including approval of the final form of all necessary legal documentation and thereafter oversee operations of the Council; and
- 1.3 That Projects and services were added to the Group on a business case by business case basis as approved by Full Council and performance monitored through the Shareholder Agreement.

65. **Regeneration of Firepool: Business Case for Phase 1 delivery (Infrastructure and Block 1)**

Resolved that Full Council approved the recommendations contained within the confidential report.

66. **Purchase and development of Tangier Gas Works Site**

Resolved that Full Council approved the recommendations contained within the confidential report.

(The Meeting ended at 8.10 pm)

Draft

Galmington Skate Park Petition Covering Statement – 23/11/2020

Dear Councillors,

My name is Jack Collins and I am 11 years old and I live in Galmington. I love scooting, riding my BMX and skating with my friends, we don't have any skate parks near us and have to go to Hamilton Park and other places to skate. I would really love it if we could have some ramps put into one of the parks in Galmington so we don't have to travel.

All of my friends, all of their friends and people who live in Galmington have signed the petition and would really love to have a skate park here too, lots of people have also said they would be happy to help with looking after it and keeping it clean and tidy. Some people have also said they would sponsor it too, if we needed the money.

There are lots of parks here where we can play football but not much else, there is lots of space in the Gill Crescent park and the Galmington playing fields.

Please help us to get some ramps, we will look after it and it will help us practise and it will get used lots.

Thanks

Jack

Address of petitioner supplied along with 200 Signatures with addresses verified by the Governance Team.

Somerset West and Taunton Council

Petitions to Council – Assessment Form

On receipt of a Petition from the requisite number of people appealing to the Authority (more than 200 for it to be debated at the next ordinary Full Council), the Governance Team will ensure an assessment is made as to its contents to establish whether there are likely to be significant consequences to the Council should the request(s) in the Petition be approved at the subsequent Full Council meeting.

There are Excluded Matters which are matters that are excluded from the scope of the petitions duty and these are:

- a) Any matter relating to a planning decision, including about a development plan document or the community infrastructure levy;
- b) Any matter relating to an alcohol, gambling or sex establishment licensing decision;
- c) Any matter relating to an individual or entity in respect of which that individual or entity has a right of recourse to a review or right of appeal conferred by or under any enactment;
- d) Any matter which the Chair of the Council or relevant Committee believes to be scurrilous, offensive, improper, repetitious, capricious, irrelevant or otherwise objectionable.

Petitions submitted to the Council must include:

- a) A clear and concise statement covering the subject of the petition. It should state what action the petitioners wish the Council to take;
- b) The name and address and signature of any person supporting the petition;
- c) The name and address of the petition organiser

If valid, the first question to be addressed when assessing the Petition will be:-

“Can the request of the petitioner, if approved, be implemented without the need for any resource (financial and otherwise) to be identified outside existing budgets or staffing capacity?”

If the answer is ‘yes’, then the Petition can proceed towards discussion and potential resolution.

An example of a Petition which would fall into the above category would be where the Council is being asked to lobby the Government, Somerset County Council or other body on a particular issue. If the Petition is carried, the action required will usually involve no more than a letter being prepared and sent to the intended recipient.

However, as in the case of the recent Petitions on The Brewhouse and Extinction Rebellion, the answer to the above question would clearly be 'no'.

In such circumstances, detailed analysis of the wording of the Petition will be required to identify what will be needed if the Petition – when it comes before Full Council – is carried.

Such analysis will include:-

- What additional resource would be required to ensure the Petition (if approved) could be implemented?
- What needs to be done to identify the level of resource necessary both in financial and staff terms?
- Are any approvals needed to provide these resources?
- Will this require reports to be submitted through Scrutiny and the Executive? If a Supplementary Estimate is required, Full Council approval will be required too.

If such analysis is required, the Governance Team will arrange for the attached pro-forma to be completed and this will accompany the relevant Petition onto the agenda of the Full Council meeting so all Members are aware that further investigation will be required before the Petition – even if it is carried – can be implemented.

The Council will decide how to respond to the petition which may include;

- a) To take the action requested.
- b) Not to take the action requested for the reasons given in the debate.
- c) Refer the matter for further investigation.
- d) Refer the matter to the Council's Executive for final decision.

A petitioner has the right to request a review of the steps taken in response to the petition if they are unhappy and that request shall be made to the Council's Scrutiny Committee.

Petitions to Council – Assessment Proforma

(To be used in circumstances where it appears the wording of a proposed Petition will commit the Council to providing further financial or staffing resources which cannot be met from existing budgets)

Details of the Petition -

Petition

The Petition demands;

My name is Jack Collins and I am 11 years old and I live in Galmington. I love scooting, riding my BMX and skating with my friends, we don't have any skate parks near us and have to go to Hamilton and other places to skate. I would really love it if we could have some ramps put into one of the parks in Galmington so we don't have to travel.

All of my friends, all of their friends and people who live in Galmington have signed the petition and would really love to have a skate park here too, lots of people have also said they would be happy to help with looking after it and keeping it clean and tidy. Some people have also said they would sponsor it too, if we needed the money.

There are lots of parks here where we can play football but not much else, there is lots of space in the Gill Crescent Park and the Galmington playing fields. Please help us to get some ramps, we will look after it and it will help us practise and it will get used lots.

Questions to be addressed

- ***What additional resource would be required to ensure the Petition (if approved) could be implemented?***

A link to the document is here: <https://www.skateboard-england.org/skateboard-facilities-guide>

To summarise some relevant passages from the document:

Most UK skateparks are situated outdoors and are constructed from a variety of materials including concrete, metal, composite and timber. It is generally recommended that outdoor skateparks should be constructed in concrete because the material boasts a better and safer riding surface, significant durability with minimal maintenance, lower noise pollution and customisability of design.

Skate parks are broadly categorised by size, ranging from 'micro' to 'international'. As a ballpark figure, an outdoor concrete skatepark costs approximately £400 per m².

A 'small' skatepark (150m² – 500m²) will typically feature a minimal amount of ramps, bowls or street obstacles to skate, dependent on budget, design and requirements of local users, catering for limited styles of skateboarding. 5 to 20 users at any one time. Approximate cost £100,000 - £175,000.

A 'medium' skatepark (500m² – 1000m²) will typically feature a small selection of ramps, bowls or obstacles to skate, dependent on budget, design and requirements of local users, catering for several styles of skateboarding. 20 to 50 users at any one time. Approximate cost £175,000 - £300,000.

For comparison, the Council installed a concrete skate park in Hamilton Park some years ago, at a cost of approximately £300k.

At Hudson Way, which is 2 miles from Galmington Rec, the Council has a smaller, metal and wood constructed skate facility, which cost approximately £100k.

- **What needs to be done to identify the level of resource necessary both in financial and staff terms?**

It would be likely that a feasibility study would be required.

Skateboard England recommend a period of consultation with local communities and potential users of the facility to understand need and key design features, as well as other issues such as local residents' concerns, access issues, safety, conflict of activities etc.

Planning permission would also have to be obtained, and a formal tender process.

Skateboard England recommend flipping the procurement process, so that a contractor is secured up front:

Rather than employing a skatepark company to just design and build a skatepark, councils or community groups now typically work with contractors much earlier on in the skatepark process and tender for projects up front. This model allows the skatepark company to work closely with the council or community group, providing support in project consultation, design, planning and fundraising as required.

This support has proved invaluable and is a fast-track route to success. The council or community group commits to the contractor, while the contractor in turn has a responsibility to make the project happen. In short, the contractor works as a speculative partner, helping to both develop the project and to build it once planning and funding are in place. This is a mutually beneficial relationship working towards a common goal.

Other resource and liability issues that would need to be considered. With the skate park being built on council-owned land, the council that will ultimately take ownership of the facility with responsibility for and insurance and maintenance. This includes weekly safety checks undertaken by trained staff.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Are any approvals needed to provide these resources?</i>
<p>Yes – Executive approval would be required due to the costs involved.</p> <p>If a site was proposed at Galmington Playing Fields it would be required to go to Full Council as the trustees of the charity who would need to be sure that the build is in the best interests of the Galmington Fields Charity and its stated charitable objects. The land is held by the charitable trust which is where the decision relating to the land sits and not the Council.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Will this require reports to be submitted through Scrutiny and the Executive? If a Supplementary Estimate is required, Full Council approval will be required too.</i>
<p>Yes</p>

Likely timescale involved –

Subject to design, planning consent and securing a budget.

Somerset West and Taunton Council

Full Council – 15 December 2020

Decisions taken under the urgency rules regarding the Car Parking Christmas Charging 2020

This matter is the responsibility of the Portfolio Holder for Car Parking and Planning Cllr Mike Rigby

Report Author: Stuart Noyce, Assistant Director Commercial Services

1.0 Executive Summary / Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members on the urgent decision to suspend car parking charges on the three Saturdays leading up to Christmas for 2020.
- 1.2 This decision was taken on 27th November 2020 by the Portfolio Holder for Car Parking and Planning under the urgency rules contained within paragraph 5 of the Budget and Policy Framework within the Council's Constitution. The Decision is attached as Appendix A.
- 1.3 There was insufficient time to take this decision through the normal democratic processes for this year as with previous years due to uncertainty with the second lockdown. The scheme was therefore agreed under the urgency provisions by the Portfolio Holder for Car Parking and Planning with the consent of the Chair of Scrutiny. The Constitution provides that, where urgent decisions are taken, a full report is made to the next available Council meeting to explain the decision, the reasons for it and why it had to be treated as a matter of urgency.
- 1.4 The intention is in future years to build this expected annual suspension into the Car Parks Fees and Charges report every February Budget Setting Council, with member agreement.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Council notes the decision made to suspend parking charges as detailed in 4.5 - 4.8 of the report on the three Saturdays leading up to Christmas and Sunday 6th December in Dulverton.

3.0 Risk Assessment

- 3.1 If the Council were to not relax charging for parking at Christmas as it has in previous years at the current time this could potentially have a negative economic impact on the district, and in particular town centres, as other shopping destinations are offering free parking to attract customers.
- 3.2 The other risk to the Council is the impact on parking income.

4.0 Background and Full details of the Report

- 4.1 The schedule of fees for Off Street Car Parking for 2020/2021 was approved by the Council at its meeting on the 19th February 2020.
- 4.2 From the 23rd March 2020, the Country went into legally enforced lockdown due to the Coronavirus Pandemic. This resulted in members of the public being directed to stay at home, unless classed as a key worker.
- 4.3 Parking enforcement activity were suspended as the contracted enforcement services were withdrawn. Car parking charges were suspended until September as set out and agreed at full Council meeting on the 7th July.
- 4.4 From the 5th November 2020, the Country went into a second legally enforced lockdown due to the Coronavirus Pandemic. As the local economy starts to rebound from the second lockdown there is a cost to the Council, but the opportunity to help economic stimulus is one that should not be lost. Free parking for the three Saturday's in the run up to Christmas with the aim of increasing footfall, dwell time and spend in our town centers.
- 4.5 The proposed suspension of car parking charges will apply for the three December 2020 Saturdays before Christmas i.e. 5th, 12th and 19th and on Sunday 6th December in Dulverton
- 4.6 Free parking will apply all day; from 00:00 to 23:59 on the dates listed in paragraph 4.5 (subject to car park opening hours) in Minehead and West Somerset Car Parks.
- 4.7 Free parking will apply from 15:00 to 23:59 on the dates listed in paragraph 4.5 (subject to car park opening hours) in Taunton Car Parks.
- 4.8 Free parking will apply all day; from 00:00 to 23:59 on Sunday 6th December (subject to car park opening hours) in Dulverton Car Parks to support the Dulverton by Starlight events.
- 5.0 Links to Corporate Strategy** – This decision directly supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan objective of Economy and improving and regenerating our town centers.
- 6.0 Finance / Resource Implications** – The Coronavirus Pandemic lockdown and subsequent closing of town centres has impacted on the amount of car parking income that has come into the Council.
Car parking income for the periods of charging suspension proposed have been estimated at £19,000.
- 7.0 Legal Implications** - The Council has been following the guidance set out by the Government and Local Government Association in respect of managing car parking during the Coronavirus Pandemic.
- 8.0 Climate and Sustainability Implications** - There has been a decrease in car journeys through lock down. The Council is alive to the implication of promoting measures that support car journeys, striving to move forward more sustainable forms of transport across the District. The time limited nature of this relaxation of charging is balanced with the economic benefit to the local community.

9.0 Safeguarding and/or Community Safety Implications - None

10.0 Equality and Diversity Implications - None

11.0 Social Value Implications - None

12.0 Partnership Implications - None

13.0 Health and Wellbeing Implications – None

14.0 Asset Management Implications – None

15.0 Data Protection Implications - None

16.0 Consultation Implications - None

Scrutiny/Executive Comments / Recommendation(s) – None as this report is a matter for Full Council

Democratic Path:

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

Contact Officers

Name	Stuart Noyce
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Record of Decision taken by Executive Councillor

Decision title: Car Parking Christmas Charging 2020

Executive Councillor making the decision: Portfolio Holder for Car Parking and Planning – Cllr Mike Rigby

Author Contact Details: Stuart Noyce – Assistant Director
(s.noyce@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk)

Date of Decision: 27th November 2020

Details of decision: To suspend car parking charges on the three Saturdays leading up to Christmas for 2020 and Sunday 6th December in Dulverton as detailed below. There was insufficient time to take this decision through the normal democratic processes for this year as with previous years due to uncertainty with the second lockdown.

Free parking will apply:

- all day; from 00:00 to 23:59 on 5th, 12th, 19th December 2020 (subject to car park opening hours) in Minehead and West Somerset Car Parks.
- from 15:00 to 23:59 on 5th, 12th, 19th December 2020 (subject to car park opening hours) in Taunton Car Parks.
- all day from 00:00 to 23:59 on Sunday 6th December (subject to car park opening hours) in Dulverton Car Parks.

Reasons for proposed decision:

From the 5th November 2020, the Country went into a second legally enforced lockdown due to the Coronavirus Pandemic. As the local economy starts to rebound from the second lockdown there is a cost to the Council, but the opportunity to help economic stimulus is one that should not be lost. Free parking for the three Saturday's in the run up to Christmas with the aim of increasing footfall, dwell time and spend in our town centers.

This decision directly supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan objective of Economy and improving and regenerating our town centers.

Alternative funding options sourced:

None

The below has been completed:	Name(s)	Date
Relevant ward councillor(s) consulted	N/a as district wide	

The following are if appropriate / applicable: Yes/No. If yes the implications should be attached to this decision notice.

Finance implications	Yes	see notes below
Legal implications	Yes	see notes below
Links to corporate aims	Yes	see notes below
Climate and Sustainability implications	Yes	see notes below
Community Safety Implications	No	
Equalities Impact	No	
Safeguarding Implications		
Risk management	Yes	see notes below
Partnership implications	No	

Any conflicts of interest declared by Leader or Executive Members consulted on the proposed decision. No

Decision Maker

I am aware of the details of this decision(s), considered the reasons, options, representations and consultation responses and give my approval / agreement to its implementation.

Signed:

Name: Cllr Mike Rigby

Date: 27th November 2020

Note – This decision record is for decisions taken by Executive Councillors. The decision(s) can be implemented following publication and the period for any call-in has expired.

Notes:

Links to Corporate Strategy – This decision directly supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan objective of Economy and improving and regenerating our town centers.

Finance / Resource Implications – The Coronavirus Pandemic lockdown and subsequent closing of town centres has impacted on the amount of car parking income that has come into the Council.

Car parking income for the periods of charging suspension have been estimated at £19,000.

Legal Implications - The Council has been following the guidance set out by the Government and Local Government Association in respect of managing car parking during the Coronavirus Pandemic.

Climate and Sustainability Implications - There has been a decrease in car journeys through lock down. The Council is alive to the implication of promoting measures that support car journeys, striving to move forward more sustainable forms of transport across the District. The time limited nature of this relaxation of charging is balanced with the economic benefit to the local community.

Report Number: SWT 166/20

Somerset West and Taunton Council

Full Council – 15 December 2020

Decisions taken under the urgency rules regarding the Test and Trace Payments Scheme

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Member Ross Henley

Report Author: Richard Sealy, Assistant Director - Customer

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report relates to a decision taken on 12 October 2020 by the Chief Executive under the urgency rules contained within paragraph 5 of the Budget and Policy Framework within the Council's Constitution. The Decision is attached as Appendix A.
- 1.2 This decision related to agreeing the eligibility criteria for the discretionary element of the Test and Trace Payment Scheme recently introduced by Government to support the response to the Covid 19 crisis.
- 1.3 The Government required local authorities to have both mandatory and discretionary Test and Trace Payment schemes in operation by 12 October 2020.
- 1.4 There was insufficient time to develop, build and agree the discretionary element of the scheme through the normal democratic processes. Doing so would have significantly delayed our ability to quickly get vital financial support to people on low incomes who have been instructed to self-isolate. The scheme was therefore agreed under the urgency provisions by the Chief Executive with the consent of the Chair of Scrutiny. The relevant Portfolio Holder, Cllr Henley, was consulted on the content of the scheme.
- 1.5 The Constitution provides that, where an urgent decision is taken, a full report is made to the next available Council meeting to explain the decision, the reasons for it and why it had to be treated as a matter of urgency.
- 1.6 There are no direct climate implications arising from this decision.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Council are asked to note the decision made.

3 Risk Assessment

- 3.1 There is a key risk that individuals, who have been required to self-isolate, leave their homes to continue to work as they are forced to do so through economic necessity.

Both the mandatory and discretionary schemes seek to mitigate this risk by providing financial support to help enable them to self-isolate. Government have therefore required that we implement these schemes quickly.

4 Background and Full details of the Report

- 4.1 From 28 September 2020 the Government made it a legal requirement for anyone who had been required by Public Health England to self-isolate to remain at home.
- 4.2 At the same time Government recognised it needed to provide additional financial support to those people required to self-isolate who were on low incomes, could not work from home and whose income was reduced. Consequently local authorities were issued with detailed instructions in late September for both mandatory and discretionary Test and Trace Payment Schemes. Both schemes had to be in operation by the week commencing 12 October 2020.
- 4.3 The funding for both schemes is provided by Government together with New Burdens funding to assist with the additional administrative costs. We have been provided with £36k for the discretionary element of the scheme.
- 4.4 Both schemes require us to make one-off payments of £500 to each qualifying individual and for each period for which they are required to self-isolate.
- 4.5 Applications can be made via the telephone or the Council's website <https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/benefits/test-and-trace-support-payment/>
- 4.6 The number of applications anticipated per week by Government is low. To date (1 Dec 2020) we have paid 60 applications under the mandatory scheme and 72 in respect of the discretionary scheme.

The Mandatory Scheme

- 4.7 To qualify for a payment under the mandatory scheme applicants must:
 - Have been required to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace (and must provide their unique Test and Trace reference number to us, which we will then verify with NHS England);
 - Be employed or self-employed;
 - Unable to work from and will lose income as a result; and
 - Be currently receiving Universal Credit, Working Tax Credit, income-based Employment and Support Allowance, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Income Support, Housing Benefit and/or Pension Credit.

The Discretionary Scheme

- 4.8 Government recognised that there would be instances where individuals would not qualify for the mandatory scheme, but may still require financial assistance. Hence we have been provided with a small amount of discretionary funding (£36K), which enables us to make approximately 72 discretionary payments.

- 4.9 We have developed our discretionary scheme in conjunction with Sedgemoor District Council. We worked together in order to pool knowledge and resources and to provide some consistency across the two areas.
- 4.10 In developing the discretionary element we have sought to remain close to the Government's intention of providing help to those in financial need. The discretionary scheme is therefore targeted at people who are on a low income, but are not in receipt of one of the qualifying benefits for the mandatory scheme.
- 4.11 The additional qualifying criteria apply to the discretionary scheme:
- The applicant's loss of gross earnings is greater than £100 per week due to self-isolating; and
 - The applicant is employed or self-employed for at least 16 hours a week; and
 - The applicant must NOT possess capital of £3,000 or more; or
 - Individuals who have applied for a qualifying benefit but have not yet received a decision or have appealed against a decision not to award a qualifying benefit; and / or
 - Applicants who are excluded from qualifying benefits by the "Persons from Abroad" provisions within the welfare benefits schemes.
- 4.12 We have closely monitored the number of applications for discretionary payments and have amended the scheme due to a high number of successful applications and to ensure the remaining funds go to those most likely to suffer hardship.
- 4.13 We have topped up the funding for the discretionary scheme with a further £20k. This funding has come from a projected underspend on the £1.382m grant received in March 2020 from Government to award an additional £150 relief on Council Tax bills to working age customers getting Council Tax Support. This will allow us to make an additional 40 payments under this scheme.
- 4.14 To ensure that we target funding at those most in need for applications made on or after 30 November 2020, the following additional eligibility criteria will apply:
- An applicant must not possess capital of £1,000 or more;
 - An applicant must pay rent to a landlord who is not a close relative, or pay a mortgage (and not be on a 'mortgage holiday');
 - Only one Test and Trace Support Payment will be made per household
- 4.15 Full details of the discretionary scheme are provided as Appendix B to this report.

5 Links to Corporate Strategy

- 5.1 There are no specific links to the Corporate Strategy relating to this decision, which is being made in response to the Covid 19 crisis and a direct instruction from Government.

6 Finance / Resource Implications.

- 6.1 The grant funding is provided by Government and they will also be providing new burdens funding to help towards the administration costs. The discretionary funding is limited (£36k) and we have therefore built into the scheme the ability for us to review and change the scheme where required if we are running out of funding.

7 Legal Implications

- 7.1 The decision making process for agreeing the discretionary scheme is in alignment with the Constitution.

8 Climate and Sustainability Implications

- 8.1 There are no specific climate or sustainability implications relating to these decisions.

9 Safeguarding and/or Community Safety Implications

- 9.1 Both the mandatory and discretionary schemes are specifically aimed at helping to protect public health by providing financial assistance to people on low incomes who are required to self-isolate.

10 Equality and Diversity Implications

- 10.1 There are no specific equality and diversity implications relating to this decision.

11 Social Value Implications

- 11.1 There are no specific social value implications relating to these decisions. However, both the mandatory and discretionary schemes direct payments to assist both employed and self-employed people on low incomes.

12 Partnership Implications

- 12.1 We have worked in partnership with Sedgemoor District Council to pool knowledge and resource and to implement a common scheme in both areas.

13 Health and Wellbeing Implications

- 13.1 The payments are specifically intended to provide financial support to people on low incomes who are required to self-isolate, who cannot work from home and whose income is detrimentally impacted. These payments provide direct financial help to the claimants as well as protecting the wider community.

14 Asset Management Implications

- 14.1 There are no asset management implications relating to these decisions.

15 Data Protection Implications

- 15.1 Both the mandatory and discretionary schemes require us to share information with Public Health England to enable the verification of the requirement to self-isolate in individual cases. A specific Data Sharing Agreement has been agreed between SW&T and Public Health England to enable the sharing of data.

16 Consultation Implications

16.1 The timescales requested by Government prohibited any significant consultation. However, both discretionary schemes were developed in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder.

16 Scrutiny Comments / Recommendation(s)

16.1 These decisions were taken under the urgency rules within the Constitution and, as such, were not formally considered by Scrutiny. In accordance with the Constitution the Chair of Scrutiny was consulted regarding the requirement for urgent decisions and consented to both decisions being made by the Chief Executive.

Democratic Path:

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

Reporting Frequency: Once only

List of Appendices

Appendix A	Record of Decision taken by Chief Executive dated 12 October 2020
Appendix B	The Somerset West & Taunton Test & Trace Discretionary Payments Scheme

Contact Officers

Name	Richard Sealy, Assistant Director – Corporate Services
Direct Dial	01823 217558
Email	r.sealy@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk

Record of Decision taken by Chief Executive

Decision title: Discretionary Test and Trace Support Payments (TTSP)

Chief Executive / Director making the decision: James Hassett

Author Contact Details: Richard Sealy
Tel: 01823 217558
e-mail: R.Sealy@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk

Date of Decision: 12 Oct 2020

Details of decision:

The Chief Executive has approved the adoption of a Discretionary Test and Trace Support Payment Scheme for Somerset West & Taunton. The scheme is detailed in Appendix 1.

The discretionary scheme is additional to the standard Test and Trace Support scheme, in respect of which the Government have prescribed the rules.

Test and Trace Support payments are for people on low incomes who have been told to stay at home and self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace, either because they have tested positive for coronavirus or have recently been in close contact with someone who has tested positive, and who cannot work from home.

This decision has been taken in accordance with the urgent decisions provision contained in paragraph 5 of the Budget and Policy Framework of the Council's Constitution because it is not practical to convene a quorate Full Council meeting within the required timeframe.

The Chair of the Scrutiny Committee, Cllr Wren, has been consulted and agrees that this decision is required as a matter of urgency and that it is appropriate for it to be made under the urgency provisions. A report will be made to the next available Full Council meeting to explain the reasons for the urgent decision.

Background:

From 28 September 2020, central Government introduced legislation requiring certain people to self-isolate to reduce the spread of coronavirus.

It has introduced a package of measures to ensure those who need to self-isolate and are on a low-income can get help towards their finances to encourage compliance with the new rules.

From 28 September 2020, certain individuals will be entitled to a Test and Trace Support Payment (TTSP) of £500 if they meet prescribed criteria.

The scheme will be administered by local councils such as Somerset West and Taunton and, at the present time, will run until 31 January 2021.

Government has also provided SWT with £36k with which to make £500 payments to people who are required to self-isolate but do not meet the criteria within the Government's standard scheme. This funding will allow us to make a maximum of 73 £500 Local Discretionary Test and Trace Support payments.

In common with other Billing Authorities we are required to develop, publish and implement our local approach to awarding this funding.

Consequently we quickly developed a scheme in collaboration with Sedgemoor District Council and in consultation with the Portfolio Holder (Cllr Henley), and agreed with the Chair of Scrutiny (Cllr Wren) that this scheme could be signed off by the Chief Executive under the urgent decision powers. The Chief Executive's decision dated 12/10/2020 refers.

Full details of the discretionary criteria are set out in Appendix 1.

Reasons for proposed decision:

The scheme adopted, as detailed in the attached document, provides our approach to awarding the discretionary Test and Trace Support Payments in order to:

- Provide financial support for those on low incomes in order to practically support their ability to self-isolate, and thereby control the spread of Coronavirus;
- Ensure the total monies awarded remain within the limited funding made available;
- Include reasonable safeguards to avoid fraudulent claims;
- Ensure the scheme is manageable from an administrative perspective;
- Meet the expectations around purpose and timescale set by Government.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

We believe the approach chosen best targets the limited funding available to meet the objective of supporting those on low incomes to self-isolate, in a transparent, equitable and administratively efficient way. Other approaches were considered, but did not best meet these objectives.

The below has been completed:	Name(s)	Date
Relevant Portfolio Holder(s) consulted	Cllr Henley	8/10/2020
Relevant ward councillor(s) consulted	This potentially affects all wards & there is insufficient time to consult all Members	
The following are if appropriate / applicable: Yes/No. If yes the implications should be attached to this decision notice.		
Finance implications	No, as the proposed scheme allows us to keep the cost within the funding provided. Administrative costs will be met by New Burdens funding.	
Legal implications	These payments support compliance of self-isolation rules for those on low incomes who have been told to stay at home and self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace, either because they	

	have tested positive for coronavirus or have recently been in close contact with someone who has tested positive, and who cannot work from home.	
Links to corporate aims	Homes & Communities - tackle economic, social and health inequalities within the groups and communities that need extra support.	
Community Safety implications	The payments are to encourage compliance with self-isolation rules and thereby prevent the spread of Coronavirus within our communities.	
Environmental implications	No	
Equalities Impact Safeguarding Implications	A specific EIA has not been undertaken due to time constraints for implementing this scheme. No disproportionate impacts are anticipated to affect any of the protected groups. There are NO safeguarding implications	
Risk management	The proposed scheme contains appropriate measures to help prevent fraud and to keep expenditure within budget	
Partnership implications	The discretionary scheme has been co-created in collaboration with Sedgemoor District Council.	

Any conflicts of interest declared by Leader or Portfolio Holders consulted on the proposed decision. If Yes provide confirmation from Chief Executive to grant dispensation for the Leader's / Portfolio Holder's views to be considered.

The Portfolio Holder, Cllr Henley, has been consulted regarding this decision and has declared no conflict of interests.

Financial Implication Summary

The funding for this scheme is provided by Central Government. Our scheme has been designed in a way that presents us from spending more than the allocated funding.

Central Government will be providing funding under the New Burdens funding arrangements to cover the administration costs.

Decision Maker

I am aware of the details of this decision(s), considered the reasons, options, representations and consultation responses and give my approval / agreement to its implementation.



Signed:

Name: James Hassett

Date: 12/10/2020

Note – This decision record is for decisions taken by Chief Executive/Director. The decision(s) can be implemented in accordance with the approved delegations.

Note: A copy should also be sent to the Governance Team – governance@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk

Appendix 1 – Test and Trace Support Payments Discretionary Payments Scheme

Somerset West and Taunton Council

Test and Trace Discretionary Payments Scheme

**Document control
Revision history**

Version	Date	Summary of changes
V1.0	10/10/2020	Original scheme approved
V2.0	24/11/2020	Revisions approved by s151 officer following review and additional eligibility criteria to apply from 30/11/2020

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Definitions

The following definitions are used within this document:

‘Additional Eligibility Criteria’; means the additional criteria decided by the Council that need to be met, in order to receive a payment under the Council’s Test and Trace Discretionary Payments Scheme. These will be in addition to the standard criteria and are allowable under Government guidance;

‘Applicant’; means the individual making an application for a payment under this scheme;

‘Contact Tracing and Advice Service (CTAS)’; means the web-based system used by Public Health England to contact and trace individuals who are required to self-isolate;

‘CTAS Account ID’; means the unique number provided by Public Health England through the Contact Tracing and Advice Service (CTAS);

‘COVID-19’; means the infectious disease caused by the most recently discovered coronavirus;

‘face financial hardship’; a key criterion of the Test and Trace Discretionary Payments Scheme is that all applicants will, if not for the payment, face financial hardship solely due to their need to self-isolate;

‘Housing Benefit’; means the benefit administered by local authorities under either the Housing Benefit Regulations 2006 or the Housing Benefit (Persons who have attained the qualifying age for state pension credit) 2006;

‘income-related Employment and Support Allowance’; means the means-tested Employment and Support Allowance administered by the Department for Work and Pensions under the Welfare Reform Act 2007;

‘income-based Jobseeker’s Allowance’; means the means-tested Jobseekers Allowance administered by the Department for Work and Pensions under the Jobseekers Act 1995;

Income Support’; means the means-tested Income Support administered by the Department for Work and Pensions under the Income Support (General) Regulations 1987;

‘NHS Test and Trace’; means the service provided to the National Health Service in England, established in May 2020 to track and help prevent the spread of COVID-19;

‘Pension Credit’; means the means-tested Guarantee or Savings Credit administered by the Department for Work and Pensions under the State Pension Credit Regulations 2002;

‘Qualifying benefit’; means any of the following benefits: Housing Benefit, Income support, income-based jobseeker’s Allowance, income-related Employment and Support Allowance, Working Tax Credit or Universal Credit;

‘Self-isolation, Self-isolate’; means the legal requirement for an individual to self-isolate when told to by NHS Test and Trace or the NHS COVID-19 app and the legal duty to self-isolate under the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Self-Isolation) (England) Regulations 2020 which came into force on 28th September 2020;

‘Test and Trace Support Payment Scheme’ (‘Standard Scheme’); means the Standard Scheme introduced by Government on 28th September and administered by Local Authorities;

‘Test and Trace Discretionary Payments Scheme’ (‘Discretionary Scheme’); means the Test and Trace Discretionary Payments Scheme which has been agreed by the Council and which *may* be available for individuals who are unable to access the ‘Standard Scheme’.

‘Universal Credit’ means the means-tested Universal Credit administered by the Department for Work and Pensions under the Universal Credit Regulations 2013;

‘Working Tax Credit’; means the means-tested benefit administered by Her Majesty’s Revenues and Customs under the Working Tax Credit (Entitlement and Maximum Rate) Regulations 2002.

1. Background to Self-Isolation and the Test and Trace Payments

- 1.1 From 28th September 2020, Government has changed the legislation so that certain people will have to self-isolate due to the current COVID-19 crisis.
- 1.2 A package of legislative measures has been introduced to ensure that those who are required to self-isolate, do so and that those on a low income receive a payment to assist their finances and to encourage compliance with the legislation.
- 1.3 The Council, together with Government, recognises that self-isolation is one of the most powerful tools for controlling the transmission of the Covid-19 virus. The Government has set down the requirements for two payment schemes to be set up by the Council as follows:
 - (a) The **Test and Trace Support Payments Scheme (the Standard Scheme)** for those eligible applicants who are in receipt of Housing Benefit, Income support, income-based jobseeker's Allowance, income-related Employment and Support Allowance, Working Tax Credit or Universal Credit (the qualifying benefits); and
 - (b) The **Test and Trace Discretionary Payments Scheme (the Discretionary Scheme)** for those applicants who are **not** in receipt of any of the qualifying benefits but who are on a low income and will face financial hardship as a result of not being able to work while they are self-isolating.
- 1.4 This document details who will be eligible for a payment under the **Test and Trace Discretionary Payments Scheme**.
- 1.5 Any applicant who is in receipt of a qualifying benefit, should apply for a payment under the standard scheme details of which are available at <https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/benefits/test-and-trace-support-payment/>

2. An overview of the Test and Trace Discretionary Payments Scheme (the Discretionary Scheme).

- 2.1 From 28th September 2020, individuals will be entitled to a payment of £500 from the Council's Test and Trace Discretionary Payments Scheme if they meet the eligibility criteria listed below:
 - (a) Make an application to the Council in the prescribed form and provide all the evidence and verification required;
 - (b) Are a resident within the Council's area;

(c) Have been told to stay at home and self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace, either because they have tested positive for coronavirus or have recently been in close contact with someone who has tested positive;

(d) Are employed or self-employed;

(e) Are unable to work from home and will lose income as a result;

(f) Are **NOT** currently receiving any of the following benefits:

- Universal Credit;
- Working Tax Credit;
- income-based Employment and Support Allowance;
- income-based Jobseeker's Allowance;
- Income Support;
- Housing Benefit; or
- Pension Credit; **and**

(g) Meet the Council's additional criteria for a discretionary payment.

2.2 This particular scheme is designed for those individuals (applicants) who:

- meet the standard conditions 2.1 (a) to (g) above;
- are **not** receiving a benefit listed in 2.1(f); and
- comply with the self-isolation requirements laid down by Government;

2.3 Where individuals meet all the requirements but **are in receipt of a benefit stated in 2.1 (f)**, no payment can be made under the Discretionary Scheme; however, they may be able to apply for payment under the Standard Scheme which is available on the Council's website

<https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/benefits/test-and-trace-support-payment/>

2.4 Individuals will **NOT** be entitled to apply for both a payment under the Standard Scheme and under the Council's Discretionary Scheme.

3. Commencement of the scheme and scheme closure

Commencement

3.1 This scheme is available to all individuals who meet the eligibility criteria for a discretionary payment and who are told to self-isolate **on or after** 28th September 2020.

3.2 Individuals who are required to self-isolate **before** 28th September 2020 will not be eligible for a payment.

Scheme closure

- 3.3 At the present time, Government has stated that this Discretionary Scheme (and the Standard Scheme) will be available until 31st January 2021.

4. Applying for a Test and Trace Discretionary Payment (the Discretionary Scheme).

- 4.1 Individuals who are resident within the Council's area *may* make an application for a Test and Trace Discretionary Payment under this scheme. In all cases, the 'applicant' will be required to answer **all** of the questions asked and provide the information required by the Council in the specified timescale.
- 4.2 In order to receive a payment, all applicants must meet the full eligibility criteria, details of which are shown within Section 6 of this scheme. The applicant will be required to self-verify certain criteria and also confirm that they will comply with the self-isolation requirements set by Government.
- 4.3 Where the applicant fails to meet the eligibility criteria, they will not receive a payment and will be informed of this by the Council, either at the point of application or as soon as practicable thereafter.
- 4.4 Where the applicant is successful, the Council will notify them accordingly and make payment in line with the timings and methods shown in Section 8.
- 4.5 Applications can **only** be accepted from individuals who are resident in the Council's area.
- 4.6 Applications will be accepted from a third party in respect of any individual who meets all the eligibility criteria for a payment. However, the following should be noted:
- The person making the application will need to provide evidence of their identity and also the reason why they are applying on behalf of another person; and
 - That any payment **must** only be made by the Council to the person who is self-isolating. No payment will be made to a third party under any circumstance.
- 4.7 All applications shall be made online using the Council's dedicated webpage <https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/benefits/test-and-trace-support-payment/>
There are no paper or other types of application processes; however, should individuals experience difficulties in making any application, they should contact the Council on 0300 304 8000.

5. Time limits for making an application for a payment

- 5.1 No application for a discretionary payment can be made before the 28th September 2020 or for any individual who has been required to self-isolate before 28th September 2020.
- 5.2 Eligible individuals can apply for a Test and Trace Discretionary Payment at any time up to 14 days after their period of self-isolation ended. The Council will **not** accept any applications after this point.
- 5.3 Where an individual has been required to self-isolate on or after 28th September but before the Council's scheme opened on 12th October 2020, an application for a backdated payment must be made by 26th October 2020 (14 days after commencement of scheme).

6. Multiple claims within the household and from the same applicant

- 6.1 Individuals in the same household can each make an application to receive a Test and Trace Discretionary Payment, if they each meet all the eligibility criteria in full.
- 6.2 An individual may make an application more than once but only:
- If the individual is told to self-isolate multiple times; **and**
 - they meet the eligibility criteria for each individual application; **and**
 - the periods of self-isolation do not overlap.
- 6.3 The Council is mindful that this can be confusing for applicants and it will be essential, where multiple applications are made by an individual, to ensure correct eligibility. Therefore, a new application will need to be made for each distinct period of self-isolation.

7. The eligibility criteria and evidence required for a Test and Trace Discretionary Payment.

- 7.1 For payment to be made under this Discretionary Scheme, all of the criteria **must** be met. As with the application form itself, all evidence will need to be provided electronically. The Council provides facilities for all applicants to upload documents, evidence and photographs.
- 7.2 Where documentation is only held in 'hard copy' or paper form, the Council will accept digital images or photographs provided they show all the relevant information.
- 7.3 The Council will keep all information supplied by applicants, secure and in accordance with Data Protection legislation.

An individual must make a valid application to the Council in the prescribed form and provide all the evidence and verification required

7.4 As mentioned in Section 4, a valid application must be made via the Council's website:

<https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/benefits/test-and-trace-support-payment/>

All applicants will be required to provide details sufficient to identify themselves, their address and to allow the Council to contact them including:

- Full name;
- Address;
- National Insurance Number;
- Telephone number; and
- Email address.

7.5 In addition to the above, all applicants will be required to submit a copy of their current bank statement(s) in order to:

- Verify that their income has reduced due to having to self-isolate (see later); and
- Provide details of the bank account number and sort code of the account into which a payment would be made.

That they are a resident within the Council's area

7.6 The applicant will be required to verify that they have their sole or main residence in the Council's area. The Council will check other records held (and make other enquiries where appropriate) to determine this.

7.7 Where necessary, the Council will ask the applicant to provide additional evidence of residence.

Have been told to stay at home and self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace, either because they have tested positive for coronavirus or have recently been in close contact with someone who has tested positive

7.8 A key requirement of the scheme is that the applicant has been instructed by the NHS Test and Trace to stay at home and self-isolate either because:

- they have tested positive for COVID-19 (coronavirus); or
- have recently been in close contact with someone who has tested positive.

7.9 All applicants will be required to provide the 8-digit unique ID number which has been provided to them by NHS Test and Trace.

- 7.10 For information, the NHS Test and Trace service uses the Contact Tracing and Advice Service (CTAS) to record information about people who have tested positive for COVID-19 and their contacts. The CTAS Account ID is an 8-character identifier unique to each case (e.g. 3b1a3015c). Most individuals who test positive for COVID-19 or are a contact of someone who has had a positive test, will receive a digital invitation from the CTAS system to undertake the contact tracing journey.
- 7.11 All cases and contacts who have completed the contact tracing journey (including those who were ineligible for the digital invitation such as children or individuals with a landline number only) will receive a citizen advice message upon completion of the NHS Test and Trace questionnaire. The citizen message (sent either via a text message/email or postal service for people with no access to mobile phone or email) contains the 8-character Account ID.
- 7.12 The Council will check that the applicant has a valid Account ID produced by the Contact Tracing and Advice Service. Only this number will allow an application to be processed.
- 7.13 The Council will not make payment to anyone who does not have a valid notification (Account ID) from NHS Test and Trace. It should be noted that there is a legal duty to self-isolate which only applies to people who have been told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace.
- 7.14 The Council will not accept a notification from the NHS Isolation Note service. Where the applicant has provided this only, they will be given an opportunity to provide a valid NHS Test and Trace notification if they have one.
- 7.15 This scheme does not cover people who are self-isolating after returning to the UK from abroad, unless they have tested positive for COVID-19 (coronavirus) or have been instructed to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace.

All applicants must be currently employed or self-employed

- 7.16 Only those applicants who are currently employed or currently self-employed will be entitled to claim a Test and Trace Support Payment. For the sake of clarity, this scheme requires all applicants to provide sufficient evidence of their current employment or self-employment status. In the case of employed applicants, full details of their employer must be given on the application form including contact numbers.
- 7.17 The Council will also require applicants to provide proof such as listed below:

Employed

- Current wages or salary slips;
- Employment contract; or

- Letter from the employer confirming current employment.

Self Employed

- Self-assessment form;
- Details of HMRC registration as self-employed;
- Current accounts; or
- Current accounts and trading statements

7.18 The above list is not exhaustive.

7.19 As this is an essential requirement in order for a Test and Trace Discretionary Payment to be made, the applicant must satisfy the Council that they meet this criterion.

<p>Are NOT currently receiving any of the following benefits.</p>
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7.20 To receive a discretionary payment the applicant **must not be in receipt** of one of the following benefits:

- Universal Credit;
- Working Tax Credit;
- income-related Employment and Support Allowance;
- income-based Jobseeker's Allowance;
- Income Support;
- Housing Benefit; or
- Pension Credit.

7.21 Where applicants are in receipt of any of the above benefits, then payments can **ONLY** be made through the Standard Scheme. The Council has designed the application process so that the same form can be used to claim either payment (Standard Scheme or Discretionary Scheme) and applicants who fail to qualify for a Standard Scheme payment because they are in receipt of one of those benefits, will automatically be directed to the Discretionary Scheme.

7.22 Where an applicant has yet to apply for one of the benefits listed; is awaiting a decision on a benefit; is currently appealing a negative decision; or is unable to apply for a qualifying benefit, they *may* make an application under this Discretionary Scheme.

<p>Are unable to work from home and will lose income as a result and will face financial hardship as a result of not being able to work while they are self-isolating</p>
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7.23 All applicants will have to certify on the application form that they are:

- Unable to work from home;
- Will lose income as a result; **and**
- Will face financial hardship as a result of not being able to work while they are self-isolating

- 7.24 The Council will need to be satisfied that any applicants meet these conditions in full.
- 7.25 The Council will require applicants to give details about the nature of their work and whether they can undertake this work from home.
- 7.26 Only those applicants that cannot work from home whilst self-isolating will meet the criteria and therefore, each applicant will not only be required to verify the fact, but also provide details of the reasons why this is the case, together with details of the type of work that they would normally undertake.
- 7.27 The Council will also require all applicants making an application for a discretionary payment to provide evidence of financial hardship. All applicants will be required to demonstrate that the financial hardship is **solely** due to having to self-isolate.

Meet the Council's additional criteria for discretionary payments

- 7.28 Given that the funding for the Discretionary Scheme is limited (see Section 14), Government has stated that it will be up to each Council to determine additional criteria that have to be met if a payment is to be made. The additional criteria are shown in 7.29 and 7.30 below:
- 7.29 The additional criteria are as follows:
- (a) **An applicant's loss of gross earnings is greater than £100 per week due to self-isolating.** This figure is before any deductions for tax, national insurance, pension or other non-statutory items. This is a comparison of what the applicant would normally earn prior to self-isolation compared with earnings during self-isolation. Where an applicant loses earnings less than this level, then they would not normally be eligible unless there was an exceptional circumstance;
 - (b) **An applicant's is employed or is self-employed for at least 16 hours per week;**
 - (c) **An applicant must not possess capital of £3,000 or more.** Any applicant with capital above that level would not be eligible. For the sake of clarity, capital will be calculated in accordance with the rules for Housing Benefit;
 - (d) **Individuals who have applied for a qualifying benefit but have not yet received a decision or have appealed** against a decision not to award a qualifying benefit and are awaiting the outcome of the appeal will be eligible to claim provided they meet **all** other criteria within this section;
 - (e) **Applicants who are excluded from qualifying benefits by the "Persons from Abroad" provisions within the welfare benefit schemes** will be eligible to claim provided they meet **all** other criteria within this section; and

(f) Where further information or evidence is required to support the claim, this is provided within 14 days of the Council's request.

7.30 The following additional criteria applies to applications made on or after 30 November 2020:

- (a) An applicant must not possess capital of £1,000 or more. Any application with capital above that level would not be eligible. For the sake of clarity, capital will be calculated in accordance with the rules for Housing Benefit;
- (b) An applicant must pay rent to a landlord who is not a close relative, or pay a mortgage (and not currently be on a 'mortgage holiday'); and
- (c) Only one Test and Trace Support payment will be made per household.

8. How much discretionary payment will be paid, methods of payment and timings.

8.1 Where an applicant meets all of the eligibility criteria for a discretionary payment, a single payment of £500 shall be paid for each period of self-isolation. Payments will be made direct to the applicant's bank account within 3 working days, starting with the date of application.

8.2 Where further information or evidence is required from the applicant, the Council will look to make payment within 3 working days starting with the date when all of the required information is received.

8.3 Full details of the applicant's bank account must be supplied on the application form and this will be cross checked with the copies of the bank statements provided as part of the verification process.

8.4 As required by Government, payments can only be made to the applicant's bank account. No payments can be made to third parties whatsoever.

8.5 The Council is aware that in some cases, applicants may be overdrawn and may not be able to gain access to the payment. In these cases, the applicant may apply for protection. This protection is called a 'first right of appropriation of funds order'. More details of this can be obtained from:
<https://www.moneyadvicehub.org.uk/debtipedia/advice-and-information-debtipedia/debt-advice/debt-advice-topics/right-of-set-off-first-right-of-appropriation> or from Citizens Advice.

9. Notification of Decisions

9.1 Applications for discretionary payments will be considered by officers of the Council and all decisions made by the Council shall be notified to the applicant either in writing or by email.

10. Implications for other benefits and reductions

- 10.1 The Council has been advised by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) that all Test and Trace Support Payments (of any type) will be disregarded for the purposes of all means-tested benefits.
- 10.2 The Council has decided that any payment made under this scheme shall not affect entitlement to Council Tax Reduction.

11. Review of Decisions

- 11.1 Whilst there is no statutory appeal process, the Council will operate an internal review process and will accept an applicant's request for an appeal of its decision by a senior officer.
- 11.2 All such requests must be made in writing to the Council, within 3 days of the Council's decision, and should state the reasons why the applicant is aggrieved with the decision of the Council. New information may be submitted at this stage to support the applicant's appeal. The application will be reconsidered as soon as practicable, and the applicant informed in writing or by email of the decision.

12. Complaints

- 12.1 The Council's 'Complaints Procedure' (available on the Councils website) will be applied in the event of any complaint received about this scheme.

13. The Test and Trace Discretionary Payments Scheme and its relationship with the Standard Scheme

Standard Scheme

- 13.1 This 'Standard Scheme' has been determined by criteria set down by Government and is primarily aimed at all applicants who are working or self-employed; are unable to work from home and will therefore have a reduction in income and are in receipt of certain qualifying benefits (Universal Credit; Working Tax Credit; Income-based Employment and Support Allowance; income-based Jobseeker's Allowance; Income Support; Housing Benefit; or Pension Credit).
- 13.2 The receipt of one of those benefits is essential in order for a payment to be made.
- 13.3 Details of the Standard Scheme can be found at <https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/benefits/test-and-trace-support-payment/>

Discretionary Scheme

- 13.4 The Council's Test and Trace Discretionary Payments Scheme is for any individual who meets all the required criteria (including the Council's additional criteria) **except** that they are not currently in receipt of a qualifying benefit and they would face financial hardship due to self-isolation. The reason for this could be, for example, that a claim for a benefit has not yet been made or that the individual, whilst normally resident in the UK, is unable to gain access to public funds.

Claiming from the schemes

- 13.5 Individuals who are entitled to a payment from the Standard Scheme are unable to make a claim from the Council's Discretionary Scheme.
- 13.6 However, an applicant who is refused a 'Standard Scheme' payment on the basis that they meet all the criteria **except** that they are not in receipt of a qualifying benefit, will be directed to make an application for a discretionary payment. It should be noted that in all cases, where an individual applies for a discretionary payment, they will have to satisfy not only the basic criteria laid down by Government but also the additional criteria set by the Council.

14. Funding of the Discretionary Scheme

- 14.1 The Council will receive a fixed amount of funding from Government which will be for the four months that the Discretionary Scheme is intended to last. Government has confirmed that **no** additional monies will be given to the Council.
- 14.2 In view of this, and to ensure that discretionary payments are available throughout the period to 31st January 2021, the Council reserves the right to change the Test and Trace Discretionary Payments Scheme at any time to ensure funds go to those who face the most financial hardship.

15. Taxation and provision of information to HMRC

- 15.1 The Council has been informed by Government that all payments under this scheme are taxable. However, the payments will not be subject to National Insurance contributions.
- 15.2 The Council does not accept any responsibility in relation to an applicant's tax liabilities and all applicants should make their own enquiries to establish any tax position.
- 15.3 All applicants should note that the Council is required to inform Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) of all payments made to individuals.

16. Managing the risk of fraud

- 16.1 Neither the Council, nor Government will accept deliberate manipulation of the scheme and fraud. Any applicant caught falsifying information to gain payments will face prosecution and any payment issued will be recovered from them and this may also include other recovery costs.
- 16.2 Applicants should note that, where a Test and Trace Discretionary Payment is paid by the Council, details of each individual applicant will be passed to Government. Applicants should also note that the Council utilises a number of databases and Government systems to verify information in connection with any application submitted.

17. Recovery of amounts incorrectly paid

- 17.1 If it is established that any Test and Trace Discretionary Support Payment has been made incorrectly due to misrepresentation or incorrect information provided to the Council by an applicant or their representative(s), the Council will look to recover the amount in full.

18. The Council's duties in relation to self-isolation

- 18.1 The duty to self-isolate is an important one. Ensuring infected individuals and their close contacts isolate is one of our most powerful tools for controlling transmission.
- 18.2 We know that someone with the virus can remain infectious to other people for up to 10 days after developing symptoms. It can take up to 14 days for individuals to develop coronavirus symptoms after they catch the virus, and in this time, they can unknowingly pass it on to others, even if they don't have symptoms.
- 18.3 Self-isolating helps prevent family, friends and the community from contracting coronavirus, as well as helping to protect the health and care system.
- 18.4 The changes announced by Government on 20th September 2020 and brought into force on 28th September 2020 (as well as providing for the Test and Trace Support Payments Schemes):
- introduce a new legal duty on individuals to self-isolate if someone tests positive or is identified as a contact by NHS Test and Trace;
 - introduce penalties for those breaking the rules, including fines of at least £1,000 and up to a maximum of £10,000 for repeated or very serious offences; and
 - place a new legal obligation on employers that they must not knowingly enable or encourage their employees to break the law on self-isolation.
- 18.5 As part of this, the Council has a duty If it becomes aware, either through post-payment verification checks or through other means, that someone has not self-isolated, to refer the case to the police.

18.6 The Council has been informed by Government that, in order to ensure compliance with the new legislation NHS Test and Trace call handlers will be increasing contact with those self-isolating. Police resources will be used to check compliance in highest incidence areas and in high-risk groups, based on local intelligence including acting on instances where third parties have identified others who have tested positive, but are not self-isolating.

18.7 The Council will continue to focus on the principle of encouraging, educating and supporting self-compliance.

19. Delegated Powers

19.1 The Council has implemented this Discretionary Scheme in line with Government requirements and guidance.

19.2 Officers of the Council will administer the scheme and the Section 151 Officer is authorised to make technical scheme amendments to ensure it continues to meet the criteria set by the Council and, in line with Central Government guidance.

20. Data Protection and use of data

20.1 All information and data provided by applicants shall be dealt with in accordance with the Council's Data Protection policy and Privacy Notices which are available on the Council's website.

Report Number: SWT 167/20

Somerset West and Taunton Council

Full Council – 15 December 2020

Decisions taken under the urgency rules regarding the Additional Restrictions Grant Scheme

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Member Marcus Kravis

Report Author: Gordon Dwyer, Economic Development Specialist

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report details the decision taken on 23 November 2020 by the Chief Executive under the urgency rules contained within paragraph 5 of the Budget and Policy Framework within the Council's Constitution. The Decision is attached as Appendix A.
- 1.2 In summary, the decision related to agreeing schemes and eligibility criteria for the award of discretionary grant funding for businesses using £1,085,805 (or 35%) of the funding originally provided by the Government for the Covid-19 related Additional Restrictions Grant.
- 1.3 The Government outlined their expectation when providing this funding that local authorities should have schemes in operation to quickly get funding to businesses as soon as possible following the announcement on 31 October 2020 of the national lockdown order for 5 November to 2 December.
- 1.4 There was insufficient time to develop, build and agree our local schemes through the normal democratic processes as doing so would have significantly delayed our ability to get vital funding to businesses. The schemes were therefore agreed under the urgency provisions by the Chief Executive with the consent of the Chair of Scrutiny. The relevant Portfolio Holder, Cllr Kravis, was consulted on the content of the schemes.
- 1.5 The Constitution provides that, where urgent decisions are taken, a full report is made to the next available Council meeting to explain the decision, the reasons for it and why it had to be treated as a matter of urgency.
- 1.6 There are no direct climate implications arising from these decisions.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Council is asked to note the decision made by the Chief Executive on 23

November 2020 under paragraph 5 of the Budget and Policy Framework within the Council's Constitution in relation to the release of funds to the Additional Restrictions Grant Scheme.

2.2 To reflect this new expenditure within the approved Budgets for the current year and next year, Council is recommended to:

- a) Approve the creation of an Additional Restrictions Grant supplementary budget of £1,085,800 in 2020/21 and £2,016,500 in 2021/22, fully funded by £3,102,300 Government Grant income received in 2020/21;
- b) Approve the creation of an Additional Restrictions Grant supplementary budget of £1,085,800 in 2020/21 and £2,016,500 in 2021/22, fully funded by £3,102,300 Government Grant income received in 2020/21;
- c) Delegate authority to the S151 Officer to carry forward or bring forward the budget amounts between the two financial years to reflect timing of expenditure within the overall budget total of £3,102,300 across the two years.

2.3 To agree that decisions to reopen the scheme and to make any amendments to the scheme in response to changes to restrictions are delegated to the Portfolio Holder for Asset Management and Economic Development and the Director of Development and Place.

3 Risk Assessment

3.1 The key risk both we and Government are trying to mitigate through the award of grant funding is the damage to the local economy and community resulting from businesses ceasing to trade as a result of the financial impact of Covid-19. Consequently it was vital that our local discretionary scheme was brought into operation quickly, that the funding was directed to the categories of business identified as priorities by Government, as well as to any locally identified priorities.

4 Background and Full details of the Report

The Local Restrictions Support Grant (Closed) and Additional Restrictions Grant

4.1 On 31 October 2020 Government announced that they were going to provide local authorities with grant funding to help specific categories of businesses.

4.2 Funding of £3.5m was provided to us together with guidelines for operating a mandatory scheme – The Local Restrictions Support Grant (Closed). This scheme provided for businesses that had been ordered to close and which occupied rateable premises. Businesses qualified for payments of either £1,334, £2,000 or £3,000 depending on the rateable value of the business rated property.

4.3 In order to assist those businesses which did not qualify for LRSG(C), but

were still severely affected by the lockdown restrictions, Government also provided to SWT £3,102,300 (based on £20 per head of population) to operate a discretionary scheme – The Additional Restrictions Grant. Guidance was issued on 31 Oct 20 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-restrictions-support-grants-lrsg-and-additional-restrictions-grant-arg-guidance-for-local-authorities> with further FAQs issued in early November (Appendix B)

- 4.4 Government indicated that the ARG is a once only grant to Local Authorities to help with the impact of national lockdowns during 2020/21 and 2021/22. Therefore the implication is that these funds will provide SWT with the only discretionary amount to manage the situation during any further outbreaks up until March 2022.
- 4.5 Within the context of the unknown nature of future lockdowns, to ensure management of the ARG fund across two financial years it was decided to make a split of the fund into two broad allocations of 35% for the remainder of 2020-21, safeguarding 65% for next financial year. This was broadly proportional to the time period that the fund may need to cover, weighted marginally in favour of 2020-21 financial year to make provision for the immediate lockdown of 5th November 2020 to 2nd December 2020.
- 4.6 Whilst the guidance provided for some discretion a number of key qualifying criteria were prescribed by Government and had to be included within our scheme e.g. Businesses had to be trading on 4 November 2020; Businesses must be able to demonstrate a significant loss of income due to Covid-19
- 4.7 In addition Government also strongly encouraged Local Authorities to develop local schemes to help those businesses which – while not legally forced to close – are nonetheless severely impacted by the restriction put in place to control the spread of Covid-19. This could also include businesses outside the business rates system, or additional support for larger businesses of significance to the local economy.
- 4.8 In taking decisions on the appropriate level of grant, Government has encouraged Local Authorities to take into account the level of fixed costs faced by the business, the number of employees, whether the business is able to continue trading and the consequent scale of coronavirus losses.
- 4.9 A Policy for the scheme was developed (Appendix 2). The Main Scheme (30% of the overall fund) is open to all businesses that are not eligible for the LRSG(C).
- 4.10 All applications are put through the same scoring system to determine the level of support to provide to the business, with applicants providing information in three broad areas:
 - The fixed costs of the business
 - The number of employees of the business
 - How the business has been affected by the lockdown

- 4.11 There is a minimum qualifying score, above which the value of awards is set at £1000, £1500 or £2000. However the Council reserves the right to amend those values in the event of needing to balance demand against the amount of funding available.
- 4.12 SWT's Main ARG Scheme opened to applicants online on 27 November 2020 with the majority of assessments and payments expected to be made during mid-December.
- 4.13 The Exemptions element of the scheme (5% of the overall fund) will be open to businesses with over 10 employees on a case-by-case basis.
- 4.14 It should be noted that officers across the four Somerset local authorities have worked to align ARG policies as closely as possible in order to ensure a consistency of approach across the County. All four LAs have adopted the same or similar scoring mechanism to determine the level of award made in their main schemes.

Key considerations in developing SWT's Additional Restrictions Grant scheme

- 4.15 As this is a one-off grant to the Authority to support businesses throughout a period of unknown circumstances, potentially up until Mar 2022 a mechanism for measured spend of the fund was required. Options to manage this were considered as part of the urgent decision (Appendix 1). At present this is being managed through a financial year split of 35% for 2020-2021, safeguarding 65% for 2021- 2022.
- 4.16 The framework to develop the scheme was looser than for the discretionary grant during the previous lockdown. The ARG is aimed at supporting both rate-paying businesses that were not forced to close as well as non-rate-paying businesses that had been affected by the national lockdown. We hold very little data regarding many of these businesses especially those outside of the business rates system.
- 4.17 Predicting likely take-up was therefore difficult and consequently we needed to build in mechanisms to balance the available funding against demand. We were also aware of businesses that had not been given the opportunity to apply for support under previous schemes.
- 4.18 We therefore adopted a scheme which was open for all to apply to, but would award available funds against a points based assessment of need, with a view to reviewing if necessary. We were also able to learn from our own as well as other authority experiences of managing discretionary funds in order to develop criteria for the scheme.
- 4.19 The previous discretionary grant was open largely only to those sectors that were prescribed by Government. It also applied to a longer period of restriction and so we were able to manage the issue of limited funding by gradually opening the scheme to a wider set of business sectors.

- 4.20 By contrast the national lockdown from 5th November 2020 to 2nd December 2020 covered a 28 day period only. The time constraints to develop the scheme and award funds were therefore tighter.
- 4.21 We considered whether to make payment on a first come first served basis or to invite applications over a two week period. Given the unknown level of applications we concluded that the two-week window would provide a mechanism to assess the level of demand against the funds available and if necessary modify the level of awards made. As we could still assess eligibility over the two week window this would mean that once the window had closed the final decision could be made on the level of awards to be paid out and payments made shortly afterwards.
- 4.22 We had to develop our own definitions and scoring mechanisms for elements of the criteria. These were discussed with officers within other authorities and the final policy refined and finalised with input from external expertise.
- 4.23 We were conscious that we needed to keep the application process as simple as possible. Consequently we are allowing claimants to make declarations for elements of the process (e.g. a 25% loss or expected loss during the COVID lockdown), but also requiring documentary evidence to confirm things such as bank account details and the fact that they are paying the fixed property-related costs which they claim to be making.
- 4.24 Our external auditors at SWAP have been involved with developing verification processes and are assisting us in processing the applications. Other checks are built into the process at relevant points to prevent fraud including use of the 'Spotlight' system provided by Government which checks against limited company registrations and our own internal checks to pick up any duplication of bank accounts against all applications within the ARG and LRSG applications.
- 4.25 Our scheme was developed in consultation with the Portfolio Holder. Corporate Scrutiny were also provided with an informal verbal overview of the initial proposed scheme.

5 Links to Corporate Strategy

- 5.1 The effective and quick distribution of grant funding supports the economic and community objectives in our strategy.

6 Finance / Resource Implications.

- 6.1 The grant funding is provided by Government and they will also be providing new burdens funding to help towards the administration costs. The ARG scheme has been designed in such a way as to limit the availability of grants against the funding provided by Government.

7 Legal Implications

- 7.1 The decision making process for agreeing the schemes is in alignment with

the Constitution. The schemes clearly state that our decision around individual awards is final.

8 Climate and Sustainability Implications

8.1 There are no specific climate or sustainability implications relating to these decisions.

9 Safeguarding and/or Community Safety Implications

9.1 There are no direct safeguarding or community safety implications relating to these decisions, although the scheme could enable us to provide financial support to help maintain businesses or charities which offer medical services or other community support services.

10 Equality and Diversity Implications

10.1 There are no specific equality and diversity implications relating to these decisions, but the scheme could enable us to provide financial support to businesses which offer support services.

11 Social Value Implications

11.1 There are no specific social value implications relating to these decisions. However, one of the ARG grant schemes principal purposes is to help target funding at small locally based/independent businesses.

12 Partnership Implications

12.1 There are no specific partnership implications relating to these decisions. However, we have worked closely with organisations such as the Taunton Chamber of Commerce and Minehead Bid Group in order to publicise the availability of grants. We are also working closely with the Economic Development departments of other Somerset Local Authorities to align schemes where possible.

13 Health and Wellbeing Implications

13.1 The grant funding is specifically intended to support businesses and help them to survive through very uncertain times. This has positive knock-on benefits for the employees of those businesses and the wider community. Our local qualifying criteria has been defined with this in mind.

14 Asset Management Implications

14.1 There are no asset management implications relating to these decisions.

15 Data Protection Implications

15.1 There are no specific data protection implications relating to these decisions.

16 Consultation Implications

16.1 The timescales requested by Government prohibited any significant consultation. However, both discretionary schemes were developed in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder.

16 Scrutiny Comments / Recommendation(s)

16.1 These decisions were taken under the urgency rules within the Constitution and, as such, were not formally considered by Scrutiny. In accordance with the Constitution the Chair of Scrutiny was consulted regarding the requirement for urgent decisions and consented to both decisions being made by the Chief Executive.

Democratic Path:

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

Reporting Frequency: **Once only**

List of Appendices

Appendix A	Record of Decision taken by Chief Executive on 23 rd Nov 2020
Appendix B	Frequently Asked Questions provided by BEIS
Appendices of the Decision	
Appendix 1	Additional Restrictions Grant Summary and Options
Appendix 2	SWT Policy on Additional Restrictions Grant

Contact Officers

Name	Gordon Dwyer, Economic Development Specialist
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Record of Decision taken by Chief Executive/Director

Decision title: Rules and Guidance for applications to Somerset West and Taunton Council's Discretionary Business Grants Fund

Chief Executive/Director making the decision: James Hassett

Author Contact Details: Gordon Dwyer
Tel: 07881 218 674
e-mail: g.dwyer@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk

Date of Decision: 23 November 2020

Details of decision:

The Chief Executive has approved the adoption of an Additional Restrictions Grant (a discretionary grant) scheme for Somerset West & Taunton. The scheme is detailed in Appendices 2 and 3.

This decision has been taken in accordance with the urgent decisions provision contained in paragraph 5 of the Budget and Policy Framework of the Council's Constitution because it is not practical to convene a quorate Full Council meeting within the required timeframe.

The Chair of the Scrutiny Committee, Cllr Wren, has been consulted and agrees that this decision is required as a matter of urgency and that it is appropriate for it to be made under the urgency provisions. A report will be made to the next available Full Council meeting to explain the reasons for the urgent decision.

The support announced by Central Government on 31 October 2020 provides funding for local authorities to grant funds to businesses to provide financial support where they have suffered financial loss as a result of the Government's Covid-19 restrictions. This guidance can be viewed at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/935130/additional-restrictions-grant.pdf

Government have prescribed elements of the eligibility criteria for this funding, but have also left elements of this to the discretion of individual Local Authorities. Consequently we have to develop, publish and implement our local approach to awarding this funding.

Government have also been clear that their intention is for Local Authorities to quickly start to process applications and make payments. Consequently to meet Government expectations we have had to very quickly devise a scheme and make a decision under our emergency powers provisions. The scheme has been developed in consultation with the Portfolio Holder and the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee have been provided with an overview.

Full details are set out in the following documents, which are attached:

- Appendix 1 - Summary and Options
- Appendix 2 - ARG - Policy
- Appendix 3 – Main Additional Restrictions Grant Scoring and Exceptions Fund scheme
- Appendix 4 - FAQs issued by BEIS

Further Government guidance:

The Government has also issued further guidance (in the form of Frequently Asked Questions) regarding the intended operation of this scheme. These are attached as appendix 4.

Where any further subsequent guidance requires adjustments to minor elements of the scheme the Chief Executive is delegating, through this decision notice, powers to the Acting Director – Director of Development and Place to make any minor changes required.

Reasons for proposed decision:

The scheme adopted, as detailed in the attached documents, provides an approach to awarding the discretionary grant funding that provides for:

- Our delivering on the Government expectation of a quick response
- Managing use of the fund to ensure budget is available for the immediate situation during the current Covid Lockdown as well as for future Lockdowns (potentially up until 31 March 2022).
- Ensuring the total monies awarded remain within the limited funding available
- Reasonable safeguards to ensure we target assistance to the categories specified by Government & to avoid fraudulent claims
- Is manageable from an administrative perspective
- Helps to manage the expectations of businesses & avoid unnecessary claims

Alternative options considered and rejected:

These are set out in Appendix 1

The below has been completed:	Name(s)	Date
Relevant Portfolio Holder(s) consulted	Cllr Kravis	17/11/2020
Relevant ward councillor(s) consulted	This potentially affects all wards & there is insufficient time to consult all Members	NA
The following are if appropriate / applicable: Yes/No. If yes the implications should be attached to this decision notice.		
Finance implications	No, as the proposed scheme allows us to keep the cost within the funding provided	
Legal implications	No	
Links to corporate aims	Yes, helps to support the local economy	
Community Safety implications	No	
Environmental implications	No	

Equalities Impact Safeguarding Implications	A specific EIA has not been undertaken due to time constraints for launching this scheme. No disproportionate impacts are anticipated to affect any of the protected groups. There are NO safeguarding implications	
Risk management	The proposed scheme contains appropriate measures to help prevent fraud	
Partnership implications	None	

Any conflicts of interest declared by Leader or Portfolio Holders consulted on the proposed decision. If Yes provide confirmation from Chief Executive to grant dispensation for the Leader's / Portfolio Holder's views to be considered.

Financial Implication Summary


The funding for this scheme (£3,102,300) is provided by Central Government. Our scheme has been designed in a way that prevents us from spending more than the allocated funding.

Central Government will be providing funding under the New Burdens funding arrangements to cover the administration costs.

Decision Maker

I am aware of the details of this decision(s), considered the reasons, options, representations and consultation responses and give my approval / agreement to its implementation.

Signed:



Name: James Hassett

Date: 23rd November 2020

Note – This decision record is for decisions taken by Chief Executive/Director. The decision(s) can be implemented in accordance with the approved delegations.

Note: A copy should also be sent to the Governance Team – governance@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk



Department for
Business, Energy
& Industrial Strategy

Additional Restrictions Grant – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)



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This document/publication is also available on our website at <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-business-energy-and-industrial-strategy>

If you have any enquiries regarding this document/publication, to us at: enquiries@beis.gov.uk

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About this document

1. The Additional Restrictions Grant was announced on 31 October 2020 to enable Local Authorities to support businesses in their areas under Local Covid Alert Level Very High (LCAL 3) or national restrictions and to provide support to businesses alongside the Local Restrictions Support Grant. Guidance on this scheme has been published on GOV.UK.
2. This document aims to provide Local Authorities with answers to Frequently Asked Questions regarding the criteria and management of the fund.
3. For further information on business support, please see www.gov.uk/coronavirus/business-support

General

4. What is the purpose of this funding?

This funding is being made available to support local economies and businesses that have been adversely impacted by national and LCAL Very High restrictions imposed to prevent the spread of Covid-19.

5. How much funding will be provided?

Under the Additional Restrictions Grant, Local Authorities will receive a one-off lump sum payment amounting to £20 per head of population (ONS 2019 Mid-Year population estimates) in each eligible Local Authority when LCAL Very High or widespread national restrictions are imposed. In some cases, Combined Authorities will receive the funding when a group of Local Authorities enter LCAL Very High restrictions at the same time and agree to a package of support together. In these cases, the Combined Authority will be subject to the same conditions and obligations under this guidance as Local Authorities.

6. When does a Local Authority become eligible to receive this payment?

On the day that national or LCAL Very High restrictions are imposed on a Local Authority they will become eligible for payment under the Additional Restrictions Grant. All Local Authorities in England are now eligible under the scheme due to the national restrictions coming into force on 5 November 2020.

7. If a Local Authority exits National or LCAL Very High restrictions and then re-enters at a later date, will it receive an additional payment?

No, the Additional Restrictions Grant is a one-off lump sum payment.

8. When must Local Authorities use this funding by?

Funding provided under the Additional Restrictions Grant can be used across Financial Years 20/21 and 21/22.

9. Will Local Authorities within Combined Authorities where it is the CA that receives the Additional Restrictions Grant be eligible for additional funding via this scheme?

No, these Local Authorities will not receive further payments under the ARG and should access funds for business support through the payments made to the Combined Authorities.

10. Is this scheme UK-wide?

This grant funding scheme is only for English Local Authorities affected by local restrictions. However, The Chancellor announced on 5 November an increase in the upfront guarantee of funding for the devolved administrations from £14 billion to £16 billion. This uplift will continue to support workers, business and individuals in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The Barnett formula will apply in the usual way to any additional funding provided to departments in relation to this intervention.

11. Are grants made under the scheme subject to tax?

Grant income received by a business is taxable, therefore the Local Restrictions Support Grant will be subject to tax. Only businesses that make an overall profit once grant income is included will be subject to tax.

12. How will Local Authorities know when they become eligible for this grant?

Guidance on local restrictions is published on GOV.UK, setting out the extent of restrictions. As England will be under national restrictions from the 5 November 2020, all Local Authorities in England will be eligible from this date if an enhanced package wasn't already agreed (as was the case in Liverpool City Region, Lancashire, Greater Manchester, South Yorkshire, West Yorkshire, Warrington and Nottinghamshire at the time of publication).

13. Are there any conditions attached to this grant funding?

Recipients of grant funding must comply with all the scheme conditions, including State aid requirements and the provision of information to the Local Authority to support monitoring and assurance. By accepting the grant each recipient confirms that they are compliant with the conditions for the scheme. If a Local Authority subsequently finds that this self-declaration is incorrect, it will be able to take action and the business would be liable for clawback.

14. How long does this scheme run for?

The Additional Restrictions Grant provides funds for the financial years 2019/20 and 2021/22. There will be a review point for the scheme in January 2021.

15. How are Local Authorities expected to identify the types of businesses they wish to support within their area?

SCAT codes and property descriptions could assist Local Authorities to identify businesses that might be eligible. The SCAT codes and property descriptions can give an initial grouping, then we would encourage Local Authorities to use their local knowledge and existing records to assess which businesses they wish to support. It is ultimately for the Local Authority to decide how best to administer the grant in their area. Local Authorities could also run an application process to identify businesses that – while not legally closed – have been particularly affected by national restrictions.

16. What is the difference between ARG and LRSG (Open) as both schemes provide funding for discretionary grants?

The Additional Restrictions Grant is for discretionary grants and wider business support measures. The grant funding will be made available to Local Authorities at the point that national restrictions are imposed or at the point the Local Authority enters LCAL Very High restrictions. It is a one-off lump-sum payment.

The Local Restrictions Support Grant (Open) applies only to Local Authorities that have entered LCAL High or LCAL Very High and is suspended during widespread national restrictions. It is provided for every 28-day period that an area remains in LCAL High or Very High. The funding is intended to support hospitality, accommodation and leisure businesses.

Eligibility

17. Which businesses are eligible for grants through the Additional Restrictions Grant?

Local Authorities have discretion to determine which businesses to support and how much funding to provide. However, Local Authorities are encouraged to support businesses that have been severely impacted by the restrictions but may not qualify under the Local Restrictions Support Grant scheme.

18. Should Local Authorities use this funding to support business that have been required to close?

As businesses required to close will also be receiving support under the Local Restrictions Support Grant (Closed), Local Authorities may wish to focus on other businesses when allocating this fund. However, Local Authorities do have the freedom to use funds from the ARG to provide top-up grants to businesses that are in receipt of grants under other schemes.

19. What conditions must Local Authorities meet when distributing the grants?

Local Authorities using the ARG for direct business support grants are subject to the same conditions that apply to the Local Restrictions Support Grant (Closed). However, Local Authorities will have the discretion to alter the amount of funding offered to individual businesses and the frequency of payment.

In taking decisions on the appropriate level of grant, Local Authorities may want to take into account the level of fixed costs faced by the business in question, the number of employees, whether they are unable to trade online and the consequent scale of coronavirus losses.

20. If a hereditament does not resume trading after the restriction period is it still eligible for a cash grant?

Yes, so long as the business is not in liquidation or dissolved or is subject to a striking off notice when the grant is awarded.

21. Will Parish councils be eligible for this fund?

Yes, Town and Parish councils are eligible if they meet all the scheme criteria (the precepting authority exclusion does not apply to this fund). Each application must be assessed on its individual facts.

22. Can non-rated businesses receive support under this scheme?

Yes, Local Authorities can use this scheme to support businesses outside of the business rating system.

23. Can Local Authorities use ARG funding to provide top-up grants for businesses receiving LRSG grants?

Yes. Local Authorities have the freedom to use funds from the ARG to provide top-up grants to businesses that are in receipt of grants under other schemes.

24. Could a Local Authority make an agreement with site operators/owners, that host multiple non-rated retail businesses, for them to distribute funding amongst their tenants?

No. Both non-rate paying and rate paying businesses should apply for grants individually. The different elements of ARG and Local Restriction Support Grant (Closed) Addendum are designed so both rate paying and non-rate paying businesses will have access to grants.

25. If ARG is unspent can Local Authorities use it to support new businesses in 21/22 or must it be used to support businesses impacted by the outbreak of Covid-19 and the restrictions imposed by Government?

Local Authorities have the discretion to use funds for wider business support. However, we advise that Local Authorities allocate funds in line with the broader purpose of the scheme and therefore funds should be used to support businesses affected by the pandemic.

26. Are self-employed businesses eligible to receive funding under the ARG scheme?

Yes, at their discretion, Local Authorities can provide grants to self-employed businesses.

27. Can Local Authorities use ARG funding to support home-working businesses?

Yes, at their discretion Local Authorities can provide grants to home-working businesses.

Grant recipients

28. Can businesses that are eligible but don't want or need funding opt out?

A business may decline the grant.

29. What happens where there is more than one liable party per property? Do they get a grant each, or are they expected to share?

ARG is a discretionary grant scheme and Local Authorities will decide whether to pay the business ratepayer or the occupying business (or both).

30. How should grants be administered where a business is in administration or liquidation?

These grants have been created to provide support to active businesses. Businesses will need to confirm they are not in liquidation in order to receive the grant. Some businesses that fail the undertaking in difficulty test on 31 December 2019 are also ineligible for payments under the COVID-19 Temporary Framework for UK Authorities.

31. Is there a date by which a business needs to have been trading in order to be eligible to receive grants under this scheme?

The business must have been trading the day before restrictions came into force.

32. How does this funding work with shared space/serviced offices where tenants are not the rate payers?

Local Authorities will be able to provide grants to businesses not on the rating list that have been forced to close and/or those that have been severely affected by closures.

33. Will Local Authorities have to publish details of their schemes on their websites as with previous Covid-19 business support grant schemes?

Yes, Local Authorities are required to set out the scope of their discretionary grant scheme on their website and provide clear guidance to businesses on who is eligible and how they can apply.

34. What if the ARG grant does not cover the cost of supporting all severely impacted but not closed businesses?

The Additional Restrictions Grant can be administered at a Local Authority's discretion to any business that has been severely impacted. Local Authorities will need to determine how best to distribute funds among such businesses according to local needs.

35. Are the £20 per head calculations made on the total population or working age population?

The calculation is based on ONS 2019 Mid-Year Population Estimate for the total population within a Local Authority.

Payment

36. How will the funding for Local Authorities be calculated and paid?

Local Authorities will receive a one-off lump sum payment amounting to £20 per head in each eligible Local Authority when LCAL Very High or widespread national restrictions are imposed. Payments will be made in line with the grant offer letter sent to Local Authorities (using a grant under section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003).

37. Will New Burdens payments be provided for this funding?

We are committed to meeting the New Burdens costs to Local Authorities for this scheme. A New Burdens Assessment will be completed, and funding will then be provided to Local Authorities.

38. When will Local Authorities receive the agreed funding from Government?

Local Authorities, or the Combined Authority in receipt of the ARG, will receive the funding on Friday 13 November.

39. Can Local Authorities use funding left over as underspend from previous Covid-19 grant schemes to award grants under this scheme?

While awaiting payment of the funding for the Additional Restrictions Grant, Local Authorities may use underspend from previous grants to cover costs. However, underspend for each grant must ultimately be returned through each respective grant's reconciliation process.

40. How should Local Authorities split the allocation of this funding between grants and other business support activities?

As this is a discretionary grant scheme, it will be for Local Authorities to determine how best to split the funding between grant schemes and other business support schemes.

41. What is the appeals process for businesses under this scheme?

There is no appeals procedure. It is up to Local Authorities to apply the guidance as they see fit.

42. Can Local Authorities have an overall discretionary scheme that covers both ARG and LRSO (Open)?

Yes, but Local Authorities will still be responsible for monitoring and reporting the schemes separately.

Fraud

43. What should a Local Authority do if it detects or suspects fraud through this scheme?

If Local Authorities detect fraud (successful, rather than attempted), or if they suspect fraud (attempted, as well as actual) that is organised, large scale systematic, or which crosses Local Authority boundaries, they must report it in real time. We recommend Local Authorities report it simultaneously to the dedicated inboxes at the National Anti Fraud Network (intel@nafn.gov.uk) and the National Investigation Service (report@natis.pnn.police.uk). Local Authorities may be contacted for further information to assist with lines of enquiry being pursued.

44. If a payment subsequently turns out to have been made due to fraud or error, will Government expect the council to meet the cost?

The Government will not accept deliberate manipulation and fraud – and any business caught falsifying its records to gain additional grant money will face prosecution and any funding issued will be subject to claw back, as may any grants paid in error. We will provide further guidance on payment assurance, including financial accountability.

State aid

45. Do State aid rules apply to business grants provided under this scheme?

Yes. State aid applies to these schemes, and all recipients are required to comply with the maximum permitted funding under the relevant State aid rules – EUR 200,000 over three years under the De Minimis Regulation, or EUR 800,000 under the COVID-19 Temporary Framework for UK Authorities (lower thresholds apply to agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture business). The De Minimis aid and the Temporary Framework can be combined to bring the aid per company to up to €1 million. Any business that has reached the limits of payments permissible under the De Minimis and the UK Covid-19 Temporary State Aid Framework will not be able to receive further grant funding.

Excluding small and micro undertakings (fewer than 50 employees and less than EUR 10 million of annual turnover and/or annual balance sheet), a business receiving grant paid under the Temporary Framework must also confirm that they were not an undertaking in difficulty on 31 December 2019. This exemption for small and micro undertakings does not apply if the undertaking is subject to collective insolvency proceedings under national law, has received rescue aid that has not been repaid, or is subject to a restructuring plan under State aid rules.

Grants provided under the Local Restrictions Support Grant scheme can be made under either the De Minimis Regulation (where the relevant conditions are met), or under the COVID-19 Temporary Framework for UK Authorities where for example, the De Minimis threshold has been reached. Local Authorities must ensure all relevant State aid law requirements are complied with, including any relevant reporting requirements to the EU Commission under State aid rules.

46. What checks are councils expected to make regarding State aid?

Businesses will be required to confirm that they comply with the scheme conditions, for example that they did not fall within the definition of an undertaking in difficulty on 31 December 2019 (excluding small and micro businesses), and have not received more than the maximum permitted funding for State aid. Local Authorities will write to businesses to ask for confirmation of this. Annex B of the Guidance provides a sample letter for Local Authorities to send to grant recipients.

47. What does it mean to be an Undertaking in Difficulty?

An 'undertaking in difficulty' is defined² as an undertaking in which at least one of the following circumstances occurs:

- a. In the case of a limited liability company (other than an SME that has been in existence for less than three years), where more than half of its subscribed share capital has disappeared as a result of accumulated losses. This is the case when deduction of accumulated losses from reserves (and all other elements generally considered as part of the own funds of the company) leads to a negative cumulative amount that exceeds half of the subscribed share capital.
- b. In the case of a company where at least some members have unlimited liability for the debt of the company (other than an SME that has been in existence for less than three years), where more than half of its capital as shown in the company accounts has disappeared as a result of accumulated losses.
- c. Where the undertaking is subject to collective insolvency proceedings or fulfils the criteria under its domestic law for being placed in collective insolvency proceedings at the request of its creditors.

- d. Where the undertaking has received rescue aid and has not yet reimbursed the loan or terminated the guarantee, or has received restructuring aid and is still subject to a restructuring plan.
- e. In the case of an undertaking that is not an SME, where, for the past two years:
 - i. The undertaking's book debt to equity ratio has been greater than 7.5; and
 - ii. The undertaking's earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortisation (EBITDA) interest coverage ratio has been below 1.0.

This test only applies to payments made under the Temporary Framework, but excludes small and micro businesses (less than 50 employees and less than EUR 10 million of annual turnover and/or annual balance sheet). This exemption for small and micro undertakings does not apply if the undertaking is subject to collective insolvency proceedings under national law, has received rescue aid that has not been repaid, or is subject to a restructuring plan under State aid rules.

48. Are there any plans to increase the State aid limit from 800,000 Euros, in line with the change in EU State Aid rules on 13 October that allowed an increase to 3m Euros an undertaking?

On 13 October 2020 the European Commission (CION) announced further amendments to its State aid Temporary Framework - introducing a new measure enabling further support to companies facing a decline in turnover during the eligible period of at least 30% compared to the same period of 2019 due to the coronavirus outbreak. The support can be provided for up to 70% (90% in case of micro and small companies) of the beneficiaries' fixed costs that are not covered by their revenues or other specified sources, up to a maximum amount of EUR 3 million per undertaking. The aid under this measure cannot be cumulated with other aid for the same eligible costs and is subject to further conditions set out in the Temporary Framework. The U.K. Government has notified the CION of its intention to use the new provision and must await approval from the CION to do so. The Covid-19 Temporary Framework for UK Public Authorities will need to be amended before aid under this new measure may be provided. All Local Restrictions Support Grants guidance documents will be updated to reflect the new provisions if and when they are applied to the LRSG schemes once the U.K. Government has approval. See announcement: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_1872

Assurance / reporting

49. What are the expectations for reporting back to central government? Could not returning all details risk grant repayments?

Local Authorities will be required to report to BEIS on the fund. Reports will cover the number of businesses eligible for the scheme, the number of actual payments per restriction period and any issues encountered in implementing the scheme.

Please refer to Annex A of the Guidance for full details of Post-Payment Reporting. The return will be completed using the DELTA reporting system.

DELTA returns serve two main purposes:

- a. Local Authorities continue to have enough cash to pay grants to businesses;
- b. There is a huge amount of interest (including ministerial) in the performance of this grant scheme. We will be reporting this information to ministers on a regular basis.

50. Will Local Authorities be expected to provide returns on a constituent basis?

Local Authorities should organise their reporting such that returns on a constituency basis can be provided, if required.

51. When will LAs receive the Risk Assessment/Assurance Plan templates?

Further advice on assurance will be provided shortly.

Use and Division of Funds for the Additional Restrictions Grant

Background

Following new national restrictions being imposed in England, for the period 5 November 2020 to 2nd December 2020, the Government has provided Councils with funding to help support businesses affected by the restrictions. This help falls in two parts;

i. Local Restrictions Support Grant (Closed)

The first is for a mandatory grant scheme, where the Government has set the eligibility rules. This will apply to business premises which must close, (and includes non-essential retail, leisure, personal care, sports facilities and hospitality businesses); and appear on the local rating list, compiled by the Valuation Office Agency.

This scheme is officially known as the Local Restrictions Support Grant (Closed) - Addendum and only applies during the period of national restriction.

Payments:

For the Local Restrictions Support Grant (Closed) the following amounts apply:

Rateable Value of Property	Amount awarded per four week period
£15k or under	£1,334
Over £15k and below £51k	£2,000
£51k or over	£3,000

ii. Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG)

The second funding amount is an Additional Restrictions Grant. Councils will be able to decide how best to use this money to help support businesses affected by national restrictions (whether the business is open or closed and whether they occupy properties rated for business rates or not).

The Additional Restrictions Support Grant is a once only grant to help with the impact of national lockdowns during 2020/21 and 2021/22. SWT has been awarded a funding pot of £3,102,300 to implement the grant. The implication within current guidance is that these funds will need to be used to manage the situation during any further outbreaks up until March 2022.

The funds can be used to support business directly, for those that do not qualify for the mandatory funding, to assist further those that qualify for the mandatory scheme, or to provide other forms of indirect business support that are considered appropriate.

Broad Allocation of ARG Funds

Given the one-off nature of the funding, the unknown nature of future lockdowns (if any), there has been a need to assess and prioritise how this resource is best utilised. Three options on broad use and management of the funds over time are set out below. Option 3 has been put forward as the preferred option and this approach was agreed at a Senior Management Team meeting of 18/11/20.

Option 1 – Distribute all funds directly to businesses as soon as possible. (REJECTED)

Time Period	Type of support	Percentage of ARG funding pot	Amount (£)
Lockdown 1 (Nov 2020)	Direct financial grant to businesses	100%	3,102,300
Advantages			
Ensures support goes directly to businesses quickly			
Disadvantages		Mitigating action	
Makes no provision for future outbreaks			
Makes no provision for strategic planning for recovery			
May be difficult to distribute funds fairly			
Council may be criticised if there is no support available during future lockdowns			

Option 2 – Manage funds making provision for 3 further lockdowns and making 20% of the funds available for a wider recovery (REJECTED)

Time Period	Type of support	Percentage of ARG funding pot	Amount (£)
Lockdown 1 (Nov 2020)	Direct financial grant to businesses	20%	620,460
Lockdown 2 (or continuation of L1)	Direct financial grant to businesses	20%	620,460
Lockdown 3	Direct financial grant to businesses	20%	620,460
Lockdown 4	Direct financial grant to businesses	20%	620,460
Recovery Fund	Could take the form of indirect business support such as: Business training support Grants for innovation Place-shaping support	20%	620,460
Advantages			
Ensures provision is made for timely direct financial support to businesses if and when required			
Makes provision for future outbreaks			
Makes provision for strategic planning for recovery			
Disadvantages		Mitigating action	
Diverts funds away from direct business support. In the case of further lockdowns this would limit the direct financial support available			

Option 3 – Allocate funds broadly by financial year with periodic checks in place to ensure funds are providing appropriate support to the business community. (Chosen Option)

Time Period	Type of support	Percentage of ARG funding pot	Amount (£)
Nov 2020 to Mar 2021	Direct financial grant to businesses	35%	1,085,805
April 2021 to Mar 2022	Direct financial grant to businesses A changed form of direct business support or indirect business support could be made available in the event of the direct financial support not being required	65%	2,016,495

Advantages	Mitigating action
Manages funds across the time period prescribed by Government	
Ensures provision is made for timely direct financial support to businesses if and when required	
Provides flexibility to reallocate funds over time for the most appropriate forms of business support.	
Disadvantages	
In case of no further lockdowns, it may be difficult to distribute funds.	Review periodically, potentially allocating some funds to recovery type activity should future lockdowns not occur.

Additional Restrictions Grants (ARG) Scheme

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Definitions

The following definitions are used within this document:

‘Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG)’ means the additional funding provided by Government. Funding will be made available to eligible Local Authorities at the point that national restrictions are imposed or at the point the Local Authority first entered LCAL 3 local restrictions;

‘COVID-19’ (coronavirus); means the infectious disease caused by the most recently discovered coronavirus;

‘Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS)’; means the Government department responsible for the scheme and guidance;

‘Effective date’; means, for eligibility of the grant, the date of the local restrictions or the date of widespread national restrictions. For the purpose of this scheme the date cannot be before 14th October 2020;

‘Hereditament(s)’; means the assessment defined within Section 64 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988;

‘Local Covid Alert Level’ (LCAL) means the level of alert determined by Government and Local Authorities for the area. LCALs have three Tiers. Tier 1 (Medium): Tier 2 (High) and Tier 3 (Very High). For the purposes of these schemes the definitions used are LCAL1, LCAL2 and LCAL3.

‘Local lockdown’; means the same as **‘Local restrictions’**;

‘Local rating list’; means the list as defined by Section 41 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988

‘Local restrictions’; and **‘Localised restrictions’** means legally binding restrictions imposed on specific Local Authority areas or multiple Local Authority areas, where the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care requires the closure of businesses in a local area under regulations made using powers in Part 2A of the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984 in response to the threat posed by coronavirus and commonly as part of a wider set of measures;

‘Local Restrictions Support Grant Scheme (Closed)’; means the grant scheme developed by the Council in response to an announcement made by the Secretary of State for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy made on 9th September 2020 and amended on 9th October 2020 and which is applicable to businesses forced to close under either LCAL3 or where national restrictions are in place;

‘Local Restrictions Support Grant Scheme (Closed) Addendum’; means the changes made to the Local Restrictions Support Grant Scheme (Closed) due to widespread nationwide restrictions;

‘Ratepayer’; means the person who, according to the Council’s records, was the ratepayer liable for occupied rates in respect of the hereditament at the date of the local restrictions or widespread national restrictions;

‘State Aid Framework’; means the Temporary Framework for State aid measures to support the economy in the current COVID-19 outbreak published on 19 March 2020; and

‘Temporary Framework for State aid’; means the same as the **‘State Aid Framework’**.

1.0 Purpose of the Scheme and background.

- 1.1 The purpose of this document is to determine eligibility for a payment under the Council's Additional Restrictions Grant Scheme (ARG). The Council, as the Business Rates Billing Authority is responsible for payment of these grants.
- 1.2 This discretionary grant scheme has been developed by the Council in response to an announcement made by the Secretary of State for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy made on 31st October 2020 which sets out the basic circumstances whereby an additional restriction grant payment may be made by the Council to a business which has to close or are severely affected due to localised or widespread national restrictions being put in place to manage coronavirus and save lives.
- 1.3 Whilst the awarding of grants will largely be at the Council's discretion, the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) has set down criteria which **must** be met by each business making an application.
- 1.4 The scheme applies where local restrictions (LCAL3) are put in place **or** where a widespread national lockdown is announced.
- 1.5 Localised restrictions are legally binding restrictions imposed on specific Local Authority areas or multiple Local Authority areas, where the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care requires the closure of businesses in a local area under regulations made using powers in Part 2A of the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984 in response to the threat posed by coronavirus and commonly as part of a wider set of measures.
- 1.6 National restrictions are nationally binding widespread restrictions imposed by Parliament under legislation. The current national restrictions are made under the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) (No. 4) Regulations 2020.
- 1.7 The allocation of funds for this scheme is available for the 2020/21 and 2021/22 financial years only.
- 1.8 No grant shall be paid for any period where the localised restrictions were in place prior to 14th October 2020 or 5th November 2020 in the case of widespread national restrictions.

2.0 Funding

- 2.1 Under the Additional Restrictions Grant Scheme (ARG) provisions, Local Authorities will receive a one-off lump sum payment amounting to £20 per head in each area when local restrictions (LCAL3) or widespread national restrictions are imposed.
- 2.2 Once the Council's area is removed from local restrictions (LCAL3) or widespread national restrictions, no additional funding for this scheme (ARG) will be received from Government even if either the local restrictions or widespread national restrictions are re-instated.

3.0 The design of the Council's Additional Restriction Grant (ARG) Scheme

Background to Government Guidance

- 3.1 The Council is able to use this funding for business support activities and Government envisage that this will primarily take the form of discretionary grants although it can be used for wider business support.
- 3.2 If Local Authorities use the Additional Restriction Grant for direct business support grants, Government has stated that the same conditions of grant must apply as for the Local Restrictions Support Grant (Closed) scheme. However, the Council will have the discretion to alter the amount of funding offered to individual businesses and the frequency of payment.
- 3.3 In accordance with Government guidance, the Council *may* also consider making grant payments to those businesses which, while not legally forced to close are nonetheless severely impacted by the restrictions put in place to control the spread of COVID-19. Government has also stated that the Council may also wish to assist business which are outside of the rating system and which are effectively forced to close.

Allocation of funding with financial years

- 3.4 The Council is keen to ensure that the funding available not only supports local businesses now but is available to businesses through the coming year should the need arise. With this in mind, the Council will make an appropriate split of funds over each financial year.

The Main Scheme and the Exceptions Grant Scheme

- 3.5 The Council has decided that, within each financial year, funds shall be provided through two schemes; the (ARG) Main Scheme and the (ARG) Exceptions Grant Scheme. Each scheme is distinct and will provide assistance to businesses that are experiencing financial difficulties due to the COVID-19 crisis.

Eligibility criteria that have to be met for both schemes

- 3.6 Applications will be accepted from businesses within all sectors including home based businesses and to obtain an Additional Restrictions Grant award, the business must meet the following eligibility criteria in full:
- (a) Applications will be accepted from businesses that have been required to close or, where they are allowed to remain open, have suffered significant loss in trade;
 - (b) The business must have fixed ongoing costs which are unavoidable and must be able to provide evidence. It should be noted that homeworkers will be able to apply, as well as mobile workers, but claims must relate to fixed costs as this is not a wage substitution scheme;

- (c) The business must have experienced a reduction in income due to the crisis and not through a general failure in the business;
- (d) The business must have been trading at the effective date;
- (e) In all cases, the business must prove that it is a clearly defined business, undertaking a recognised trade. All businesses must provide evidence of trading such as VAT registration, business bank accounts, business accounts or details of company registration if appropriate; and
- (f) The business must not be excluded from the grant scheme as prescribed by Government (Section 4)

The Council's (ARG) Main Scheme eligibility, scoring and awards

- 3.7 Businesses who are entitled to an award under either the Council's Local Restrictions Support Grant Scheme (Closed) or, where appropriate the Local Restrictions Support Grant Scheme (Open) will not be eligible for an award under the Council's (ARG) Main Scheme.
- 3.8 In all cases, businesses applying for an award will need to provide evidence that it has experienced a loss in income as a result of the imposition of either the local restrictions (LCAL3) or widespread nationwide restrictions.
- 3.9 In all cases, the Council will require evidence from businesses to support any application.
- 3.10 The Council has decided that businesses that are primarily home based may be awarded a grant. However, the business must, at the effective date, have provided services that are wholly or mainly 'in person' and which cannot be provided remotely.
- 3.11 The scoring criteria shown below shall be used to assess need and to determine the level of any award. In all cases, the Council may require evidence from businesses to support any application.

The (ARG) Main Scheme scoring criteria

Criteria
1. Has your business been legally required to close?
1a. Does your business mainly supply or trade with businesses required to close?
1b. Has your business experienced significantly reduced customer spend?
2. How much are your fixed property costs i.e. What does the business pay in rent /lease / business rates per annum for commercial premises?
Paying over £51,000pa
Paying between £15,000pa - £51,000pa
Paying less than £15,000pa
Not paying for commercial premises, but other business expenses (such as leased van/car/machinery)
No fixed business costs (for the purposes of this question we do not accept phone, broadband, insurance, home mortgage as fixed business costs)
3. Number of Employees (include part-time employees)

Criteria
250 or more employees
50 – 249 employees
10 – 49 employees
5 - 9 employees
2 -4 employees
1 employee or sole trader

(ARG) Main Scheme Award Levels

- 3.12 The grants awarded will be based on the total score achieved by the business in line with the scoring mechanism in 3.11. The Council expects to award grants to a value of between £1000 and £2000 to qualifying applicants. However, in the event of the scheme being over or undersubscribed, the Council reserves the right to amend those values as it sees fit, in order to balance the demand against the amount of funding available.
- 3.13 Businesses will be entitled to one award only from the Council's (ARG) Main Scheme for any single period of widespread national or local restriction (LCAL3). Where the Council's area is subject to more than one period of restriction, the Council reserves the right to allow further applications for (ARG) Main Scheme awards subject to funds being available.

The Council's (ARG) Exceptions Grant Scheme, eligibility and awards

- 3.14 The Council has ringfenced a sum of the original Government allocation for Additional Restrictions Grants to enable additional support to be given to business where the Council is of the opinion that the failure or closure of that business would be of significant impact to the local economy.
- 3.15 Any business with over 10 employees may apply for an award under this part of the scheme and this may be granted in addition to any other award subject to the exclusions listed in Section 4 below.
- 3.16 The Council will take a range of factors into account when deciding whether to award a grant including (but not limited to);
- The potential loss of employment;
 - The effect on services provided to residents within the Council's area; and
 - The effect on the local economy.
- 3.17 Each application will be considered by the Director of Development and Place or those delegated by him/her on its own merits and the Council may award a grant under this scheme up to £10,000 on a case-by-case basis.

4.0 Excluded businesses – both local and national restrictions

- 4.1 The following businesses will **not** be eligible for an award from any of the schemes:
- (a) Businesses in areas outside the scope of the localised restrictions, as defined by Government and not subject to a widespread national restriction;
 - (b) Businesses that have chosen to close but not been required to, will not be eligible;
 - (c) Businesses which have already received grant payments that equal the maximum levels of State aid permitted under the de minimis and the COVID-19 Temporary State Aid Framework; and
 - (d) Businesses that were in administration, are insolvent or where a striking-off notice has been made at the date of the local restriction or widespread national restriction.

5.0 The Effective Date

- 5.1 The effective date for eligibility (for either schemes under the Additional Restrictions Grant provisions is the date of the widespread national or local restrictions (LCAL3). Businesses **must** have been active and trading on the day before the date of national or LCAL3 restrictions to be eligible to receive grant support.

6.0 Who can receive the grant?

- 6.1 Government has stated that the person who will receive the grant will be the person who, according to the Council's records, was the ratepayer in respect of the hereditament at the effective date. Where there is no entry in the rating list for the business, the Council will have discretion to determine who should receive the grant.
- 6.2 Where the Council has reason to believe that the information it holds about the ratepayer at the effective date is inaccurate, it may withhold or recover the grant and take reasonable steps to identify the correct ratepayer.
- 6.3 Where, it is subsequently determined that the records held are incorrect, the Council reserves the right to recover any grant incorrectly paid.
- 6.4 Where any business or individual misrepresents information or contrives to take advantage of the scheme, the Council will look to recover any grant paid and take appropriate legal action. Likewise, if any ratepayer is found to have falsified records in order to obtain a grant.

7.0 How will grants be provided to Businesses?

- 7.1 The Council is fully aware of the importance of these grants to assist businesses and support the local community and economy. The Council's Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) scheme together with the Local Restrictions Support Grant (Closed) will offer a lifeline to businesses who are struggling to survive during to the COVID-19 crisis.

- 7.2 Details of how to obtain grants are available on the Council's website:
<https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/business-rates/national-lockdown-support-grant/>
- 7.3 In all cases, businesses will be required to confirm that they are eligible to receive the grants. This includes circumstances where the Council already has bank details for the business and are in a position to send out funding immediately. Businesses are under an obligation to notify the Council should they no longer meet the eligibility criteria for any additional grants.
- 7.4 The Council reserves the right to request any supplementary information from businesses, and they should look to provide this, where requested, as soon as possible.
- 7.5 An application for an Additional Restriction Grant is deemed to have been made when a duly completed application form is received via the Council's online procedure.
- 7.6 All monies paid under this scheme will be funded by Government and paid to the Council under S31 of the Local Government Act 2003.

8.0 EU State Aid requirements

- 8.1 Any grant is given as aid under the Temporary Framework for State aid measures to support the economy in the current COVID-19 outbreak published on 19 March 2020. This means that businesses receiving support under these provisions can receive up to €800,000 in aid over three years (being the current and the previous two years).
- 8.2 Any grant awarded is required to comply with the EU law on State Aid. This will involve the applicant declaring to the Council if they have received any other de minimis State aid or aid provided under the EU Commission COVID-19 Temporary Framework.
- 8.3 If the applicant has not received any other de minimis State aid, they are not required to make that declaration to the Council or to complete any declaration statement.

9.0 Scheme of Delegation

- 9.1 The Council has approved this scheme.
- 9.2 Officers of the Council will administer the scheme and the Director of Development and Place or those delegated by him/her is authorised to make amendments to the scheme to ensure it meets the criteria set by the Council and, in line with Government guidance.
- 9.3 The Council will keep this policy under review throughout the life of the scheme.

10.0 Notification of Decisions

- 10.1 All decisions made by the Council shall be notified to the applicant either in writing or by email. A decision shall be made as soon as practicable after the application window is closed.

11.0 Complaints

11.1 The Council's 'Complaints Procedure' (available on the Councils website) will be applied in the event of any complaint received about this scheme.

12.0 Taxation and the provision of information to Her Majesty's Revenues and Customs (HMRC)

12.1 The Council has been informed by Government that all payments under the scheme are taxable.

12.2 The Council does not accept any responsibility in relation to an applicant's tax liabilities and all applicants should make their own enquiries to establish any tax position.

12.3 All applicants should note that the Council is required to inform Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) of all payments made to businesses.

13.0 Managing the risk of fraud

13.1 Neither the Council, nor Government will accept deliberate manipulation of the schemes or fraud. Any applicant caught falsifying information to gain grant money or failing to declare entitlement to any of the specified grants will face prosecution and any funding issued will be recovered from them.

13.2 Applicants should note that, where a grant is paid by the Council, details of each individual grant will be passed to Government and its departments for the purpose of analysis and also to prevent fraud.

14.0 Recovery of amounts incorrectly paid

14.1 If it is established that **any** award has been made incorrectly due to error, misrepresentation or incorrect information provided to the Council by an applicant or their representative(s), the Council will look to recover the amount in full.

15.0 Data Protection and use of data

15.1 All information and data provided by applicants shall be dealt with in accordance with the Council's Data Protection policy and Privacy Notices which are available on the Council's website.

Somerset West and Taunton Council

Full Council – 15 December 2020

Council Tax Support scheme for 2021/22

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Ross Henley

Report Author: Mark Antonelli, (Benefits Specialist)

1 Executive Summary / Purpose of the Report

1.1 Executive summary

- 1.1.1 Council Tax Support (CTS) scheme is an income-related local discount scheme that helps people on low incomes to pay their Council Tax.
- 1.1.2 The rules for pension age people are set in regulations prescribed by the Government (the 'prescribed regulations'). The Council is responsible for designing a CTS scheme for working age people.
- 1.1.3 The prescribed regulations are updated each year by Government to take into account changes to the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Housing Benefit regulations and wider policy measures. Apart from including the amended prescribed regulations each year, there is **no statutory obligation** for a billing authority to revise or replace its local CTS scheme.
- 1.1.4 The regulations do however require that the Council formally considers whether it wants to review or revise its scheme for each new financial year.
- 1.1.5 In view of the Covid 19 crisis this year we have not had the capacity and the time to undertake a review of our scheme for working age people, which would include the need for significant consultation for any proposed changes. To ensure that we have an agreed scheme for the 2021/22 financial year, we are recommending we extend the existing scheme for working age CTS claims. Consequently as no changes are proposed (or feasible at this stage in the year) we are bringing this recommendation directly to Full Council.
- 1.1.6 It is our intention during the 2021/22 financial year to review the working age CTS scheme and undertake a full consultation exercise for any changes proposed. We will seek to undertake this review in conjunction with the other Somerset districts, as, logically, we will need to align in due course in preparation for any unitary changes.
- 1.1.7 The report also outlines a provisional budget cost for next year of £9,198,976. (our proportion is £1,057,882). The final estimates for 21/22 will be determined in December 2020 based on the actual caseload data position as at 30 November 2020.

1.2 Purpose of the report

1.2.1 To advise and update members on the current CTS scheme.

1.2.2 To propose no changes to the CTS scheme for working age customers for 2021/22 other than to ensure continued alignment and uprating with national allowances and regulations for pensioners.

2 Recommendation

2.1 To formally agree that the current CTS scheme for working age customers be retained for 2021/22.

3 Risk Assessment

Risk Matrix

Description	Likelihood	Impact	Overall
Risk: Potential growth in the number of claimants.	5	4	20
<i>Mitigation: Caseload Monitoring and realistic budgeting</i>	5	3	15
Risk: Council incurs an unacceptably high level of debt because of people's inability to pay their Council Tax bill	4	4	16
<i>Mitigation: Increased use of 'Nudge theories' Maximise take-up of all discounts/exemptions/hardship relief. Monthly monitoring of performance against targets. Build increase capacity, resilience and efficiencies within the benefits team to minimise the risk of backlogs occurring</i>	4	3	12

Risk Scoring Matrix

Likelihood	5	Very Likely	Low (5)	Medium (10)	High (15)	Very High (20)	Very High (25)
	4	Likely	Low (4)	Medium (8)	Medium (12)	High (16)	Very High (20)
	3	Feasible	Low (3)	Low (6)	Medium (9)	Medium (12)	High (15)
	2	Unlikely	Low (2)	Low (4)	Low (6)	Medium (8)	Medium (10)
	1	Very Unlikely	Low (1)	Low (2)	Low (3)	Low (4)	Low (5)
			1	2	3	4	5
			Negligible	Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic
			Impact				

Likelihood of risk occurring	Indicator	Description (chance of occurrence)
1. Very Unlikely	May occur in exceptional circumstances	< 10%
2. Unlikely	Is unlikely to, but could occur at some time	10 – 25%
3. Feasible	Fairly likely to occur at same time	25 – 50%
4. Likely	Likely to occur within the next 1-2 years, or occurs occasionally	50 – 75%
5. Very Likely	Regular occurrence (daily / weekly / monthly)	> 75%

4 Background and full details of the report

- 4.1 The Council has an obligation, under paragraph 5 of Schedule 1A to the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as inserted by Schedule 4 to the Local Government Finance Act 2012 to **consider** whether to revise or replace its scheme. The same scheme (with the exception of any changes to the prescribed regulations) could therefore remain in place for multiple years, as long as the authority considers each year whether to revise or replace it.
- 4.2 A summary of the key elements of our CTS schemes since 2013/14 can be found in Appendix 1.
- 4.3 Appendix 2 provides a summary of the current CTS scheme in operation for 2020/21.
- 4.4 Appendix 3 provides comparative data for each year since the introduction of CTS on 1 April 2013. The table provides information on caseloads and expenditure.
- 4.5 As at 21 October 2020, 11,318 customers were in receipt of reduced Council Tax charges through CTS discounts.

Claimant type	Caseload	% of total caseload	CTS costs	% of total spend
Working age	6,855	60.57%	£4,631,842	49.86%
Pension age	4,463	39.43%	£4,657,596	50.14%
Total	11,318	100%	£9,289,428	100%

- 4.6 Costs for 2019/20 were forecast at £8,628,545 in the report to full Council on 3 December 2019. The 2020/21 Council Tax Base approved in December 2019, based on updated data at 30 November 2019, included a budget estimate of £8,850,200 for LCTS costs in 2020/21.
- 4.7 As at 21 October 2020 our expenditure to date for 20/21 is £9,289,428, which is £439,228 above the budget estimate. This is largely due to a significant increase in the working age caseload following the impact of Covid. We have seen an increase in our CTS caseload from 10,799 before Covid to a current caseload of 11,307. Following measures to support working age customers in employment with furlough payments many of our existing customers have seen an increase in their weekly award following reductions in their income. It is difficult to predict how the future of Covid will affect our current CTS scheme as our customers face an uncertain future with increased unemployment and lower future job prospects. Given these conditions, there is a risk that the final costs for the year will exceed the current estimate. As the costs are expected to exceed the budget estimate, this is likely to result in a deficit in the Collection Fund in 2020/21, which will need to be reflected in the 2021/22 budget. SWTC will be liable for 11.5% of any such deficit.

5 Links to Corporate Strategy

- 5.1 The provision of a CTS scheme is a statutory duty and helps the Council meet its objectives for the strategic themes of 'a transparent and customer-focused Council' and 'homes and communities'.

- 6.1 The costs of the CTS scheme are shared between Council Tax precepting authorities through the Tax Base calculation. Council Tax income is credited to the Collection Fund which is then distributed to local authorities based on their approved precept. Any surplus or deficit on the Collection Fund – if tax collected is more or less than the precepts paid for the year – is recovered from local authorities in subsequent years. Town and parish councils are not liable for any surplus or deficit, with their share of risk borne instead by SWTC.
- 6.2 The table below summarises the relative share of collection fund total income for 2020/21. This shows that the majority of the risk on the other local preceptors.

Preceptor	2020/21 share of Collection Fund
Somerset West and Taunton Council	9.08%
Parishes	2.42%
Somerset County Council	71.08%
Police and Crime Commissioner for Avon and Somerset	12.56%
Devon and Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority	4.86%
Total	100%

- 6.3 The costs of the scheme in 2021/22 will be affected by the rate at which the preceptors increase their Council Tax charges next year, as well as volatility in customer entitlement to discounts under the scheme.
- 6.4 The estimated total costs for CTS next year that has been included in the provisional tax base calculation for 2020/21 is £9,198,976. The final tax base for 2020/21 will be calculated in December, based on the actual caseload data position as at 30 November 2020, and reflected in the calculations for the Council's draft 2021/22 Budget and Medium Term Financials Plan.

7 Legal Implications

- 7.1 Paragraph 5 of Schedule 1A to the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as inserted by Schedule 4 to the Local Government Finance Act 2012, requires the authority to consider whether, for each financial year, the CTS scheme is to be revised or replaced.

8 Climate and Sustainability Implications

- 8.1 There are no direct carbon/environmental impacts arising from the recommendations.

9 Safeguarding and/or Community Safety Implications

- 9.1 There are no safeguarding or community safety implications arising from the recommendations.

10 Equality and Diversity Implications

- 10.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) was carried out in 2018/19 when we updated and consulted on the Council Tax Support Scheme and an action plan was produced and formed part of the report to full council last year on the CTS scheme for 2020/21. With the recommendation to continue with the current scheme for 2021/22, this EIA is still valid.
- 10.2 Within the original EIA it was highlighted that care leavers would receive additional

support to meet their Council Tax shortfall. Within the Revenues team we have now addressed this to provide a full exemption for care leavers.

- 10.3 Due to changes made to our CTS scheme we have seen a significant increase in the support we give to our working age claimants. In 2017/18, 49% of our CTS caseload were of working age compared to 61% in 20/21. The impact of Covid-19 has also seen an increase in our current caseload, largely due to reductions in salaries through furlough payments, more customers making Universal credit claims, the impact of our self-employed customers and overall increase in unemployment. This will need to be considered when we look to consult in 2021 to update our scheme for 2022/23.
- 10.4 Overall the public are satisfied with the Council Tax Support Scheme and we have received very few complaints or criticisms of the scheme.

11 Social Value Implications

- 11.1 There are no social value implications arising from the recommendations.

12 Partnership Implications

- 12.1 Changes to the CTS scheme will need collaborative working between Somerset West and Taunton Council and the major precepting authorities. We will also promote greater collaborative working with our Local Authority partners to prepare for any future unitary changes.

13 Health and Wellbeing Implications

- 13.1 There are no health and wellbeing implications arising from the recommendations.

14 Asset Management Implications

- 14.1 There are no asset management implications arising from the recommendations.

15 Data Protection Implications

- 15.1 There are no data protection issues arising from the recommendations.

16 Consultation Implications

- 16.1 If the Council wishes to revise or replace its current scheme, it must consult with precepting authorities (Somerset County Council, Avon and Somerset Police, and Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority), publish a draft scheme and then consult with such persons as are likely to have an interest in the operation of that scheme prior to determining the scheme. If any proposed revision is to reduce or remove a reduction to which a class of person was entitled, the revision must include such transitional provision as the Council sees fit.

- 16.2 Case law has confirmed that consultation must

- be undertaken when proposals are at a formative stage;
- include sufficient reasons for particular proposals to allow those consulted to give intelligent consideration and an intelligent response;
- give consultees sufficient time to make a response; and
- be conscientiously taken into account when the ultimate decision is taken.

16.3 We last carried out a public consultation between 16 July 2018 and 10 September 2018 before the adoption of the current CTS scheme. As well as the public, we sought views from the major preceptors, welfare support agencies and advisory groups.

Democratic Path:

- **Scrutiny / Committees – No**
- **Executive – No**
- **Full Council – Yes**

Reporting Frequency: **Annually**

List of Appendices (delete if not applicable)

Appendix 1	The evolution of the CTS scheme since 1 April 2013
Appendix 2	The 20/21 CTS income band scheme for working age customers
Appendix 3	Comparative data on caseload and expenditure
Appendix 4	Equalities Impact Assessment 2018/19

Contact Officer

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Appendix 1 – The evolution of the CTS scheme since 1 April 2013

From 1 April 2013, the CTS scheme for people of working age included the following key elements:

- Maximum support reduced to 80% (TDBC) or 85% (WSC) of Council Tax - everyone of working age had to pay something
- Increased non-dependant deductions
- No second adult rebate
- Increased earned income disregards to provide an additional work incentive

Between 2014/15 and 2018/19, the CTS schemes for both TDBC and WSC for working age people were amended by:

- Removing entitlement to customers with capital or savings over £6,000
- Applying a minimum income for self-employed applicants
- Paying CTS at a level that would be no more than for a Band D property for Taunton Deane residents and no more than for a Band C for West Somerset residents
- Disregarding maintenance received for children
- Reducing the maximum backdating of a CTS award from 6 months to 1 month
- Removing the family premium in the applicable amount for new applicants, or existing recipients who would otherwise have a new entitlement to the premium
- Removing the Work Related Activity component in the applicable amount for new claimants of Employment and Support Allowance
- Removing the child allowance in the applicable amount for third and any subsequent children born after 1 April 2017 (some customers were protected)
- Reducing the allowable period of temporary absence outside Great Britain from 13 weeks to 4 weeks

In 2018/19, both TDBC and WSC decided to change their scheme for working age customers by removing applicable amounts and instead awarding CTS in the form of a discount based on 'income bands'. The scheme recognised the additional needs of multi-person households and families. The scheme also allowed for:

- a flat rate deduction of £5 a week for each non-dependant
- disregarding carers' allowance from the income used to work out CTS
- providing extra assistance for single young people who had left local authority care

The new 'income bands' scheme also mitigated the challenges presented from being within an area that saw the roll out of full service Universal Credit (UC). In particular:

- UC claimants not making a prompt claim for CTS, leading to loss of financial assistance
- The number of changes to UC awards received through the DWP's data hub requiring a change to CTS awards. Approximately 40% of UC customers have between 8 and 12 changes to their award each year. These changes result in changes to Council Tax liability, the re-calculation of instalments, delays and the demonstrable loss in collection

Both these issues would have increased the costs of administration. The income bands are wide enough to ensure small changes to UC awards do not result in changes to CTS awards and subsequent changes to Council Tax liabilities and the issuing of new bills.

Appendix 2 – The current income band CTS scheme for 2020/21

Further changes to the income band scheme were made for 2019/20, namely:

- Disregarding the Housing Element of UC in working out income
- Additional income disregards for families with more than 2 children and those customers with a disability
- Reducing the maximum award of CTS to 80% for those falling in the lowest income band

Band		Household composition						Discount (%)
		Single person	Couple with no children	Couple with one child	Lone parent with one child	Couple with two or more children	Lone parent with two or more children	
1	Assessed weekly income	£0 to £74.99	£0 to £114.99	£0 to £164.99	£0 to £124.99	£0 to £214.99	£0 to 174.99	80
2		£75.00 to £124.99	£115.00 to £164.99	£165.00 to £214.99	£125.00 to £174.99	£215.00 to £264.99	£175.00 to £224.99	70
3		£125.00 to £174.99	£165.00 to £214.99	£215.00 to £264.99	£175.00 to £224.99	£265.00 to £314.99	£225.00 to £274.99	55
4		£175.00 to £224.99	£215.00 to £264.99	£265.00 to £314.99	£225.00 to £274.99	£315.00 to £364.99	£275.00 to £324.99	40
5		£225.00 to £274.99	£265.00 to £314.99	£315.00 to £364.99	£275.00 to £324.99	£365.00 to £414.99	£325.00 to £374.99	25
6		£275.00 to £324.99	£315.00 to £364.99	£365.00 to £414.99	£325.00 to £374.99	£415.00 to £464.99	£375.00 to £424.99	10

Appendix 3 – Comparative data

Caseload and expenditure

Year	Caseload	Working age caseload	Pensioner caseload	Total expenditure	Discretionary support
2012/13 *	11,455	-	-	£10,001,604	-
2013/14	11,540	5,739	5,801	£8,759,233	£38,174
2014/15	11,000	5,494	5,506	£8,360,408	£50,156
2015/16	10,468	5,147	5,321	£8,101,902	£36,300
2016/17	9,974	4,938	5,036	£7,917,814	£54,723
2017/18	9,698	4,760	4,938	£7,854,233	£56,107
2018/19	10,751	6,026	4,725	£7,872,789	£62,384
2019/20 ^	10,799	6,199	4,600	£8,647,764	£25,792
2020/21**	11,318	6,855	4,463	£9,289,428	£32,251

*final year of Council Tax Benefit

^year to date figures

** As at 21 October 2020

Appendix 4 - Equality Impact Assessment Form and Action Plan

Officer completing EIA Form	Job Title	Team/Service	
Heather Tiso	Revenues & Benefits Manager	Revenues & Benefits Service	
Why are you completing the Equality Impact Assessment? Please ✓ as appropriate			
Proposed new policy or service	Change to policy or service	New or change to budget	Service review
	✓		
1 Description of policy, service or decision being impact assessed:			
<p>Background</p> <p>From 2013/14 district councils have operated localised Council Tax Support (CTS) schemes to provide assistance to people on low income. CTS replaced the previous Council Tax Benefit scheme that was administered by the council on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). Councils are responsible for the design and implementation of these schemes and need to consider if they are to be revised or replaced on an annual basis. The subsidy reimbursement for CTS reduced nationally by 10% in 2013/14 with councils having the option of funding the shortfall or designing a CTS scheme that is cost neutral. The Government state any CTS scheme must protect pensioners at the existing level of support. That decision means the burden falls disproportionately upon those of Working Age.</p> <p>From 1 April 2014, funding for localised CTS is incorporated in Settlement Funding Assessment (SFA) and not separately identified. The SFA has reduced by 15.7% in cash terms since 2013/14. In applying this methodology, the funding available for Localised CTS has reduced by £2,792,307 to £3,317,773. In 2016/17, we paid CTS of £5,377,970, meaning that if there is no change to the existing CTS scheme, we estimate we will have a funding shortfall of £2,060,197, with our share of that shortfall being £197,985. The financing risk of the scheme is shared with other precepting Authorities through the tax base calculation. Taunton Deane's share of the collection fund in 2017/18 is 9.61%.</p> <p>Historically, the administration of our localised CTS scheme was administratively efficient as many claims were assessed using information supplied by claimants for a Housing Benefit claim or directly from the Department for Work and Pensions. However, CTS administration has become increasingly difficult since the roll out of the "full service for Universal Credit (UC), with the number of customers claiming UC significantly increasing. We receive information from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) on any variations to the customer's income and for many customers, such changes occur every month. Our previous CTS scheme did not contain any "de-minimus" for income variances, we need to reassess the amount of CTS entitlement leading to multiple bills, direct debit changes and increased administration.</p> <p>For the reasons outlined above, the cost and administration of the previous CTS scheme could have become progressively financially burdensome, as well as being increasingly complex for customers. Taunton Deane Borough Council and West Somerset Council therefore implemented a banded income CTS scheme for 2018/19.</p> <p>2018/19 Council Tax Support Schemes</p>			

The banded income scheme removed Applicable Amounts in calculating CTS and instead awarded entitlement based on Income Bands. To recognise the additional needs of multi-person households and families the table on the following page shows the income limits for each band in 2018/19.

CTS Band		Single people	Couple no Children	Couple with one child	Lone Parent with one child	Couple with two or more children	Lone Parent with two or more children
85%	1	£75.00	£115.00	£165.00	£125.00	£215.00	£175.00
75%	2	£125.00	£165.00	£215.00	£175.00	£265.00	£225.00
60%	3	£175.00	£215.00	£265.00	£225.00	£315.00	£275.00
45%	4	£225.00	£265.00	£315.00	£275.00	£365.00	£325.00
30%	5	£275.00	£315.00	£365.00	£325.00	£415.00	£375.00
15%	6	£325.00	£365.00	£415.00	£375.00	£465.00	£425.00

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In addition to these changes, TDBC and WSC also decided to:

- apply a flat rate deduction of £5 a week for each non-dependant;
- disregard carers' allowance from the income used to work out CTS
- provide extra assistance for young people who had left local authority care by increasing maximum support to 100% of the Council Tax liability for single applicants up to the age of 25 where their weekly income falls within Band 1.

The banded income scheme has been largely successful. We have listened to feedback from customers, identified best practice and considered the impact of the scheme to identify areas that could be changed. In light of this it is proposed to amend the scheme to ensure fairness, encourage work, protects our vulnerable customers, and is affordable.

2 People who could be affected, with particular regard to the legally defined protected characteristics¹:

Our localised CTS scheme affects all claimants who are of working age (and those of working age currently not in receipt of CTS but who may apply in the future). Limited equality data is held within the CTS computer system (as the collection of such information has not been necessary for administering CTS) given the caseload can come from all sections of the community it is likely there will be claimants (and their household members) that contain the full range of protected characteristics 1 as defined within the Equalities Act 2010 and include:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion and belief
- Sexual orientation

The Government expect local authorities to establish schemes that minimise the impact on vulnerable groups. The Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements) Regulations 2012 include provisions for those of working age but none of those prescribed requirements set out the level of support to be given.

3 People and Service Area who are delivering the policy/service/decision:

Council Staff

4 Evidence used to assess impact: Please attached documents where appropriate.

We have obtained data relating to people affected from our Council Tax Support processing system. The data available has allowed us to analyse impact on people according to their age, disability, family circumstances and level of income. We have modelled options on scenarios with “live” data based on actual entitlements and CTS recipients at that point in time. We asked general diversity questions as part of the consultation exercise.

The impact of implementing any changes to our local Council Tax Support Scheme in 2019/20 for each of the protected groups, is considered below and on the following pages.

Equality Impact Assessment (by protected characteristic)

¹ For protected characteristics, please visit:

<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/private-and-public-sector-guidance/guidance-all/protected-characteristics>

Age

Pensioners are still entitled to claim up to 100% of their Council Tax liability through CTS. The Council's general equality duty is lessened to an extent with regard to older people as Government has prescribed that pensioners are not affected by CTS. However, we have a responsibility to foster good relationships between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. There is a risk of harming the relationship between pensioners and working age claimants of CTS as pension age claimants are not affected and working age claimants have a greater reduction to their CTS to cover the shortfall in funding.

At 31 March 2018, just 136 (3%) CTS recipients of pension age had Council Tax arrears contrasting with 1,841 (34%) for those of working age - see Table 1 below.

Table 1

	Number of cases	Cases with debt	% of cases with debt	Average debt for those in arrears	Total arrears
Pension Age	4,755	136	3%	£103.75	£14,110.16
Working Age	5,354	1,841	34%	£235.72	£433,968.40
Total	10,109	1,977	20%	£226.65	£448,078.56

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in conducting consultation for our CTS scheme

For all options to change our scheme, we would continue to disregard Child Benefit in income calculations meaning that the added income this provides will not reduce the CTS that an applicant receives.

To mitigate any of the effects in changing our CTS scheme in 2019/20, officers could apply a discretionary reduction in Council Tax liability through exceptional hardship as appropriate and in accordance with our policy.

Disability

Disabled people have a limited ability to work and are likely to have higher level disability related living expenses. This group in particular find it difficult to access and sustain employment and therefore improve on their current financial situation. This group of people is less resilient to the impact of recession and unemployment and are often living in poverty. These further impacts on the individual's mental health.

Paragraph 2.1 (e) of this report will increase the support provided to this particular protected characteristic by applying a disregard of £50 from the income used to work out CTS where the qualifying conditions for the disability premium is met.

Gender

There are a greater number of female recipients of CTS within our caseload (either single, lone parents or part of a couple) than male recipients. Consequently, more females will be impacted by changes made to our CTS scheme than males. This is not deliberate but is simply a product of the makeup of our caseload. However, gender will not be a direct factor in any part of the assessment of CTS as it is not considered to be a characteristic that requires greater assistance when assessing support.

The majority of lone parents in receipt of CTS are female.

Gender Reassignment

We hold no data on our Council Tax system to identifying the names or numbers of current CTS applicants who share this protected characteristic. Gender reassignment is not a factor in any part of the assessment of CTS and it is not considered to be a characteristic which requires that requires greater assistance when assessing support. In common with other working age CTS applicants, transgendered people may receive less CTS under the proposals for change in 2019/20. However, these are not such as to introduce disproportionately adverse effects on transgendered people as a specific group.

Marriage and Civil Partnership

Marital or civil partnership status is not currently a factor in determining CTS as it is not considered to be a characteristic that requires greater assistance when assessing support. Options for changing our CTS scheme for 2019/20 do not introduce disproportionately adverse effects on people based on their marriage or civil partnership status.

Religion and Belief

We do not gather data on religion or belief as part of the CTS application process; we do not hold full data specific to religion or belief within our caseload. Religion and belief is not a factor in any part of the assessment of Council Tax Support as it is not considered to be a characteristic which requires greater assistance when assessing support. Some working age CTS applicants, people of all or no religion or belief, may receive less CTS under the proposals for change in 2019/20. However, these are not such as to introduce disproportionately adverse effects on people based on their religion or belief status.

Race

Race is not a factor in the assessment of CTS and it is not considered to be a characteristic that requires greater assistance when assessing support. Some people of all races, may receive less CTS under the proposals for change in 2019/20. However, these are not such as to introduce disproportionately adverse effects on people based on their race status.

Pregnancy and Maternity

Pregnancy alone is not a factor in the current assessment of CTS as it is not considered to be a characteristic that requires a higher level of support. Providing that the child (or children) forms part of the mother's household composition once it is born, the application for CTS will then include the child (or children) as

part of the household and the CTS available will increase which, once other income changes have been taken into account may provide for a more generous assessment of CTS and reduced Council Tax payments.

The CTS scheme would retain the current disregard of Child Benefit in income calculations for all the options in changing our scheme for 2019/20. This will mean the income that Child Benefit provides will not reduce the amount of CTS that a recipient receives as a result of having a baby.

Sexual Orientation

Sexual orientation is not a factor in any part of the assessment of CTS as it is not considered to be a characteristic which requires a higher level of support when assessing CTS. Some working age CTS applicants may receive less CTS under the proposals for change in 2019/20. However, these are not such as to introduce disproportionately adverse effects on people based on their sexual orientation.

Children and duties under the 2010 Child Poverty Act

The minimum age for receiving CTS is 18 and so people under the age of 18 will not be impacted directly by the CTS scheme. Indirect impact has been considered as people under the age of 18 are included as part of a claimant's household and the Council has a duty to prevent child poverty as outlined in the Child Poverty Act 2010.

Paragraph 2.1 (d) of this report will increase the support provided to this particular protected characteristic by applying an additional £50 disregard from the income used to work out CTS for each child where there are more than two children in the household.

Other Groups (non-statutory)

Employment

For people of working age that are not in employment, the benefit cap restricts the amount in certain benefits that a household can receive. Any household receiving more than the cap will have their Housing Benefit reduced to bring them back within the limit. The Benefit Cap is £20,000 for households living in the Taunton Deane area. This reduction in income may mean Council Tax is more difficult to collect from those households.

Armed Forces

Veteran Benefits will continue to be fully disregarded in the means test for Council Tax Support. Our scheme does not appear to have a differential impact but we are aware some ex veterans experience mental health issues and have physical disabilities.

5 Conclusions on impact of proposed decision or new policy/service change:

In considering options to change our CTS scheme we have tried hard to balance the reality of a significant cut in Central Government funding to protecting the most vulnerable members of our community as far as practicable. The proposed options acknowledge that recipients of CTS need to contribute more to meet the funding shortfall but also looks to protect people with protected characteristics as much as possible.

In mitigating any disproportionate effect through implementing any of the proposed options to change our CTS scheme, officers could apply a reduction in Council Tax liability through exceptional hardship as appropriate and in accordance with our discretionary policy.

6 Recommendation based on findings. These need to be outlined in the attached action plan.

Adjust the policy/decision/service.

Equality Impact Assessment Action Plan					
Group Affected	Action required	Expected outcome of action	Person to undertake action	Service Plan - for monitoring	Expected Completion date
Age	Young people leaving care may who fall outside income band 1 may need additional support to help with Council Tax costs. Liaison is to be established with Somerset County Council to identify care leavers aged up to 25 to ensure they receive extra support.	Flagging affected individuals as “vulnerable” with Revenue IT systems to ensure collection of debt is appropriately managed	Case Manager / Specialist	Customer	On-going
Disability	No issues identified that would result in a disproportionate effect through proposed changes.	No issues identified that would result in a disproportionate effect through proposed changes.	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
Marriage and Civil Partnership	No issues identified that would result in a disproportionate effect through proposed changes.	No issues identified that would result in a disproportionate effect through proposed changes.	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
Pregnancy and Maternity	No issues identified that would result in a disproportionate effect through proposed changes.	No issues identified that would result in a disproportionate effect through proposed changes.	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
Race	No issues identified that would result in a disproportionate effect through proposed changes.	No issues identified that would result in a disproportionate effect through proposed changes.	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
Gender Re-assignment	No issues identified that would result in a disproportionate effect through proposed changes.	No issues identified that would result in a disproportionate effect through proposed changes.	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
Religion and Belief	No issues identified that would result in a disproportionate effect through proposed changes.	No issues identified that would result in a disproportionate effect through proposed changes.	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
Sex	There are a greater number of female CTS recipients within our caseload (either single, lone parents or part of a couple) than male recipients. Consequently, more females will be	Provide short-term help for instances of hardship.	Case Manager / Specialist	Customer	On-going

	impacted by changes made to our scheme However, gender is not a direct factor in any part of the assessment of CTS as it is not considered to be a characteristic that requires a higher applicable amount when assessing support.					
Sexual Orientation	No issues identified that would result in a disproportionate effect through proposed changes.		No issues identified that would result in a disproportionate effect through proposed changes.	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
Rurality	No issues identified that would result in a disproportionate effect through proposed changes.		No issues identified that would result in a disproportionate effect through proposed changes.	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
Author's Signature:		Report Title	Review of CTS scheme for 2019/20	Date		EIA Version
Contact Details:	Tel:		Email:			

Report Number: SWT 169/20

Somerset West and Taunton Council

Full Council– 15 December 2020

Somerset West and Taunton Council amended Political Allocation and Councillor Appointments to Committees

This matter is the responsibility of the Leader of the Council

Report Author: Amy Tregellas, Governance Manager and Monitoring Officer

1. Executive Summary / Purpose of the Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to amend the Council's numerical political allocation due to Cllr Buller resigning from the Liberal Democrat Group and joining the Independent Group.

2. Recommendations

2.1 The Council approves the revised:

- a) Political allocation as attached (Appendix A)
- b) Councillor appointments to Committees (Appendix B)

3. Risk Assessment

3.1 There are no risks associated with this report

4. Background and Full details of the Report

4.1 The Council last agreed the political allocation at the Annual General Meeting in May 2020.

4.2 The purpose of this report is to amend the Council's political allocation due to Cllr Buller resigning from the Liberal Democrat Group and joining the Independent Group.

4.3 As a result of this the political allocation has changed (attached as Appendix A) and there are some changes to the Councillor appointments to Committee (attached as Appendix B)

5. Links to Corporate Strategy – N/A

6. Finance / Resource Implications - None

- 7. **Legal Implications** - None
- 8. **Climate and Sustainability Implications** - None
- 9. **Safeguarding and/or Community Safety Implications** - None
- 10. **Equality and Diversity Implications** - None
- 11. **Social Value Implications** - None
- 12. **Partnership Implications** - None
- 13. **Health and Wellbeing Implications** - None
- 14. **Asset Management Implications** - None
- 15. **Data Protection Implications** - None
- 16. **Consultation Implications** - None
- 17. **Scrutiny/Executive Comments / Recommendation(s)** – N/A as this is a Council Report

Democratic Path:

- **Scrutiny / Corporate Governance or Audit Committees – No** not applicable as Council function only
- **Cabinet/Executive – No** not applicable as Council function only
- **Full Council – Yes**

Reporting Frequency: Ad-hoc

List of Appendices (delete if not applicable)

Appendix A	The revised Political Allocation
Appendix B	Councillor appointments to Committee

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POLITICAL ALLOCATION – December 2020

	Totals	Liberal Democrats (LD) 31	Independent + Green (I+G) 16	Conservative (Con) 9	Labour (Lab) 3
% based on current membership of 59	100	52.54 (53)	27.11 (27)	15.25 (15)	5.08 (5)
Committee Seats	56	29.68 (30)	15.12 (15)	8.40 (8)	2.84 (3)
Committee	No on Committee	LD 30	I+G 15	Con 8	Lab 3
Scrutiny	15	8.03 (8)	4.02 (4)	2.14 (2)	0.80 (1)
Audit, Governance & Standards	11	5.89 (6)	2.94 (3)	1.57 (2)	0.58 (0)
Planning	15	8.03 (8)	4.02 (4)	2.14 (2)	0.80 (1)
Licensing	15	8.03 (8)	4.02 (4)	2.14 (2)	0.80 (1)
Total	56	30	15	8	3
		0	0	0	0

APPENDIX B - COMMITTEE COMPOSITION 2020-21

Executive	Portfolio Holder
Councillor Benet Allen	Communications and Culture
Councillor Chris Booth	Community
Councillor Ross Henley	Corporate Resources
Councillor Marcus Kravis	Asset Management and Economic Development
Councillor Richard Lees	Sports, Parks and Leisure
Councillor Peter Pilkington	Climate Change
Councillor Mike Rigby	Planning and Transportation
Councillor Francesca Smith	Housing
Councillor Federica Smith-Roberts	Leader of the Council
Councillor Sarah Wakefield	Environmental Services

Scrutiny
Vacancy
Councillor Dixie Darch
Councillor Habib Farbahi
Councillor Ed Firmin
Councillor Derek Perry
Councillor Phil Stone
Councillor Danny Wedderkopp
Councillor Keith Wheatley
Councillor Ian Aldridge
Councillor John Hunt
Councillor David Mansell
Councillor Gwil Wren
Councillor Norman Cavill
Councillor Nick Thwaites
Councillor Libby Lisgo

Planning
Vacancy
Councillor Simon Coles
Councillor Dixie Darch
Councillor Marcia Hill
Councillor Mark Lithgow
Vacancy
Councillor Andrew Sully
Councillor Ray Tully
Councillor Ian Aldridge
Councillor Mark Blaker
Councillor Craig Palmer
Councillor Loretta Whetlor
Councillor Roger Habgood
Councillor Chris Morgan
Councillor Brenda Weston

Licensing
Councillor Simon Coles
Councillor Caroline Ellis
Councillor John Hassall
Councillor Marcia Hill
Councillor Sue Lees
Councillor Mark Lithgow
Councillor Martin Peters
Councillor Ray Tully
Councillor Marcus Barr
Councillor Paul Bolton
Councillor Kelly Durdan
Councillor Libby Lisgo

Audit
Councillor Lee Baker
Councillor Simon Coles
Councillor Caroline Ellis
Councillor Martin Hill
Councillor Derek Perry
Councillor Andrew Sully
Councillor Hugh Davies
Councillor Janet Lloyd
Councillor Terry Venner
Councillor Steven Pugsley
Councillor Vivienne Stock-Williams
Vacant Independent Person
Vacant Independent Person
Vacant Parish Representative
Vacant Parish Representative

Report Number: SWT 170/20

Somerset West and Taunton Council

Full Council – 15 December 2020

Somerset EV Charging Strategy

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Peter Pilkington (Climate Change)

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1 Executive Summary / Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 A Somerset EV (Electric Vehicle) Charging Strategy has been produced by consultants WSP on behalf of the five Somerset Councils and Exmoor National Park Authority, working in partnership. The Strategy explores a number of issues around EV charging, evidences and assesses different options, and recommends how the Somerset local authorities should work in partnership moving forwards in order to deliver and enable an EV charging network to come forward at pace to support our carbon neutrality ambitions. The Strategy considers the range of constraints presented by the electricity network, the predominantly rural nature of the area and areas without sufficient off-street parking provision, as well as the opportunities presented by Council assets and planning policy for new Local Plans. It recommends approaches to take with regards to charge point types in different locations, funding and delivery models to use in different circumstances, and on-going governance arrangements to aid partnership working through delivery. The Strategy has been produced in consultation with internal and external experts including Western Power Distribution (WPD). This report summarises some of the key points and recommendations arising from the Strategy and recommends that the Strategy is adopted and brought forward into the Council's Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience Action Plan.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Somerset Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy is adopted and brought forward into the Council's Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience Action Plan.

3 Risk Assessment

- 3.1 'Climate Change Planning' is identified on the Council's Corporate Risk Register as having a score of '9' (Impact = '3', Probability = '3'), with the entry identifying that there is a risk associated with not achieving carbon neutrality by 2030. Development of this Strategy puts the Council in an informed position to be able to maximise the role of EVs in helping to achieve that target locally and mitigate some of that risk. However, the risk of not achieving carbon neutrality by 2030 will remain, and the Strategy

highlights quite how extreme the adoption of EVs might have to be to realistically reach carbon neutrality by 2030. As noted in the committee report supporting the CNCR Action Plan, we should be under no illusions as to how difficult achieving that target will be. Both the CNCR and Climate Emergency Strategy highlight the importance of EVs to our ability to make significant progress towards our carbon neutrality target and identify production of the EV Charging Strategy as an action. Adoption of and subsequently delivery against the EV Charging Strategy will further help to mitigate this risk.

- 3.2 There are risks to the Council involved with delivery of charge points themselves. The Strategy identifies the broad risks associated with different delivery models that need to be weighed up against the benefits (including revenue generation) in each case. The report proposes the establishment of joint working groups between the Somerset authorities to help ensure that opportunities for collaboration and economies of scale are taken, links into related topics covered by the Somerset Climate Emergency Strategy are considered, as well as to ensure a consistent and coherent charging network is developed across Somerset. There is a risk that taking our own path could result in these opportunities not being taken and the resulting customer experience not being as good as it could be, though there are potential benefits to doing so also.
- 3.3 EVs themselves are not without risks associated with them. They reduce direct and indirect Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions (particularly when combined with a renewable/low carbon electricity source), and reduce air quality issues associated with the emission of nitrogen dioxide compared to petrol and diesel vehicles. However, they do not eradicate GHG emissions (associated with the production and disposal of the vehicles), or air quality issues (some pollutants and particulate matter does continue to be emitted from road, tyre and break sources for instance). However, the climate and air quality benefits of encouraging a switch to EVs over traditional internal combustion vehicles is great enough that this residual risk is worth taking. EVs are an important part of the solution for mitigating transport emissions nationally, and are likely to play an increased role in a predominantly rural area. However, EVs are not the panacea for this mitigation, and any strategy to encourage uptake of EVs should therefore also be accompanied by a strategy to reduce the need to drive and to reduce personal vehicle miles travelled as well as increase availability and use of public and shared transport modes. Both the CNCR and Somerset Climate Emergency Strategy contain outcomes and actions associated with this.
- 3.4 Other alternative fuels for vehicles already exist (e.g. hydrogen) and more will likely develop in future years. Therefore electric vehicles are not necessarily the only way to achieve our targets, but it is a proven and increasingly established technology. The UK Government's independent advisor, the Committee on Climate Change, clearly identifies the important role that EVs must and will play in achieving net zero by 2050, nationally. The Strategy explores different options for different types of vehicles and advises accordingly.
- 3.5 There have also been social and environmental risks documented associated with the extraction of minerals used in the production of batteries used in EVs. However, similar social and environmental risks are often associated with mineral extraction for use in conventional internal combustion engine vehicles, and this does not affect the fact that EVs are an important part of the answer in achieving our carbon neutrality targets. These are issues of great importance that the Council should be aware of and seek to avoid when sourcing new EVs itself. The Council should also use its position of influence to lobby Government to address these issues within the supply chain.

4 Background and Full details of the Report

Context

- 4.1 Local authority data on Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) emissions, produced by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) shows that in 2018, 3.3MtCO₂ was produced in Somerset. Of this 3.3MtCO₂, 1.5MtCO₂ (46%) resulted from the transport sector (0.4MtCO₂, 53% in SWT district). This is compared to the UK total of 28% from transport. The main source of emissions from this sector is the use of petrol and diesel in road transport. This is primarily down to the rural and dispersed nature of much of the county, poor public transport connectivity and presence of major through-routes on the strategic road network. A significant element of this is the M5 motorway, which contributes 12% of all CO₂ emissions in Somerset (and nearly 18% of all CO₂ emissions in SWT district).
- 4.2 Somerset is a rural county with a dispersed population. This has meant that public transport has historically struggled to remain viable in both financial terms and journey times for many parts of the county. Sustainable modes such as walking and cycling are often unattractive options or not possible for much of the population outside of the main towns, which need to travel significant distances to access jobs and services. Therefore, personal vehicle movements account for a significant amount of these carbon emissions.
- 4.3 The Committee on Climate Change Net Zero Report:
- Identifies that the roll out of EVs is one of the core measures necessary to meet the net zero target by 2050, but that a serious accelerated take-up of technologies is required through the 2020s to facilitate the electrification of transport;
 - It recommends that the ban on new fossil-fuelled vehicles from sale needs to be brought forward from 2040 to 2035, with an earlier-still switchover being desirable – Government has since advised that it will bring this date forward;
 - It recommends that the Government must continue to support strengthening of the charging infrastructure including for those without access to off-street parking;
 - It highlights the scale of the gap between leaders such as Norway (where 47% of new vehicles were plug-in electric in the 12 months to September 2018) and the UK where the same figure was just 2%. The factors impacting this are wider than simply infrastructure (primarily tax and other incentive related), but the infrastructure element is important to facilitating strong growth in EVs and is something where local government is identified as having an important role;
 - It recognises the constraints of the electricity grid and the need to strengthen this to cope with more EVs and meet demands through renewable generation;
 - It suggests that “electric cars and vans will reach parity with petrol and diesel vehicles on a social basis during the 2020s and that charging infrastructure should be developed in a way that enables a rapid transition to EVs. By 2030, at least 1,200 rapid chargers near major roads and 27,000 chargers around local towns and regions are likely to be required to meet current service levels. Although this would provide good coverage, further installations will be required after 2030, to keep pace with the increasing size of the electric vehicle fleet as the stock turns over.”;
 - It suggests that “to reach net-zero emissions by 2050 it will be necessary for HGVs to move away from combustion of fossil fuels and biofuels to a zero-emissions solution (e.g. hydrogen, battery vehicles). Given the current evidence on lead-times for infrastructure and the time taken to turn over vehicle stocks, the government will need to make decisions how HGVs will be decarbonised in the second half of the 2020s. This will necessitate small scale trial deployments of hydrogen HGVs in a

variety of fleets prior to this, in the UK or elsewhere. As HGVs need to travel internationally, the eventual choice is likely to need to be consistent with equivalent decisions made elsewhere in Europe.”

- 4.4 Taking account of the above, and considering the more exacting target to work towards carbon neutrality by 2030 that we have set locally, facilitating the transition to electric vehicles (EVs) has been identified as a priority outcome for the transport workstream of the Climate Emergency Strategy: *“By 2030, carbon emissions generated on Somerset’s roads are reduced through the change to electric vehicles, ultra-low emission commercial vehicles and an overall reduction in road use (no. of miles travelled)”*.
- 4.5 In addition to this, the energy workstream of the Somerset Climate Emergency Strategy recognises the need to facilitate the electrification of transport, including through the scaling up of charging infrastructure, but notes potential concerns around capacity constraints of the electricity grid in Somerset which might be a barrier.
- 4.6 As a result, a key action identified in the Somerset Climate Emergency Strategy and SWT’s CNCR Action Plan is to produce a Somerset EV Charging Strategy with a view to tackling barriers, identifying and making the most of opportunities, and aiding the proliferation of EVs in Somerset. The Somerset local authorities (SWT, Sedgemoor, South Somerset and Mendip district councils, Somerset County Council, and Exmoor National Park Authority) jointly commissioned WSP to produce this strategy.

Summary

- 4.7 The Strategy provides a basis for the Somerset local authorities to:
- Develop and deliver specific projects on their own land and assets as appropriate, informed by the best way to futureproof investment, maximise opportunities and benefits;
 - Influence investment in the grid and work to release capacity in the grid by WPD;
 - Set policies and guidance and allocate specific sites for charge point development through Local Plans and other means;
 - Lobby Government and others on what prerequisites are required in order to proliferate EVs in Somerset; and
 - Understand what their role should be on delivering charge points going forward.
- 4.8 The Strategy paints a picture of what the future of mobility might look like, with connected, automated, electric (and alternative fuel) and shared vehicles. It considers what the role of EVs will be, concluding that the greatest carbon reductions from transport emissions in Somerset can be made from tackling longer distance trips, with EVs playing a leading role. They are also identified as having an important role in reducing harmful local air pollution from nitrogen dioxide. Public charge points are identified as key to reducing range anxiety and signalling confidence in the emerging market. Whilst only 5% of charges are made at publicly available charge points, in time, this may shift as residents of areas with no off-street parking (and who are therefore more likely to be dependent upon such charge points) take up EVs.
- 4.9 Concerns are often raised around capacity constraints within the local electricity grid. Individual charge points can have the potential to overload secondary substations if there is a cluster of chargers in the same street or estate, if demand is not managed. However, the report identifies that, although grid reinforcements may be necessary in

some locations, some demand can be deferred through “smart charging”, increasing demand diversification, by deferring the load, and reducing the load during the times at which the network is busiest (peak demand). Western Power Distribution (WPD) has been effectively engaged in the production of the strategy and has also produced its own charging strategy for its network area. As such, WPD do not perceive the grid to be a major constraint to the proliferation of EVs in Somerset. Furthermore, this Strategy will be used by the Somerset authorities to continue engaging with WPD and influencing their future business plan for network upgrades.

- 4.10 The Strategy explores the role and potential of alternative fuelled vehicles (including hydrogen and biofuel) as well as different forms of Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs), (including Battery Electric Vehicles (BEVs) and Plugin Hybrid Electric Vehicles (PHEVs). It concludes that there is significant scope for EVs to play the lead role with cars, taxis and vans. EVs may play a role for buses in Somerset in the future, though hydrogen and bio-methane are also options worth exploring. A number of different technologies are being explored with HGVs, including BEVs, overhead charging, and hydrogen. E-bikes and e-scooters are identified as offering real opportunities to tackle emissions from shorter to medium journeys, though public charging points are not expected to be necessary beyond those necessary for sharing schemes.
- 4.11 The Strategy assesses different charge point types and where and when they should be used:

Charge point type	Power output	Uses
Domestic socket	2.4kW	Not recommended (for occasional use by visitors or a back-up)
Slow	3.7kW	Home
Standard	7.4kW	Home and long stay destination
Fast	11-22kW	Short stay destination
Rapid	20-50kW	Short stay destination and on route
Ultra-rapid	100kW+	Short stay destination and on route

- 4.12 Alternatives to the “traditional” charge point were also considered, including inductive charging, mobile charging, vehicle to grid (V2G) and battery swap. Such alternatives should be monitored, but are not considered to currently be mainstream options. Experiences, ideas and options from other countries are also considered.
- 4.13 Issues around on-street charging are explored and options are weighed up for charge point types (including freestanding, lampposts, cable covers, cable ducts and other emerging options) depending on circumstances, and supplements this with the results of a trial in Oxford. This will enable the authorities to be better informed about how best to tackle on-street charging in necessary areas going forwards. Areas that will likely need to rely on on-street charging and which are projected to have high demand for EVs going forwards are identified in maps to help the authorities begin to target and prioritise future action.
- 4.14 Different delivery approaches available to the Councils for installing charge points on Council assets have been considered, ranging from public ownership to concessionary models to fully funded revenue share models. Examples of how different models have

been employed by Councils in different locations are given, and the strategy identifies the advantages and disadvantages of each. Recommendations are then made for the approach to take for different circumstances. The primary initial role for the Somerset authorities is to attract public sector grant funding combined with private sector investment, to help develop the network. The table below summarises the different delivery approaches and recommended circumstances for use.

Delivery approach	Summary	Potential Income	Potential Risk	Recommended circumstance for use
Public ownership	All costs borne by Council, back office and operation outsourced for fixed fee.	Highest ↑ ↑ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ Lowest	Highest ↑ ↑ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ Lowest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council depots
Concessionary – publicly funded	All costs borne by Council, operation and maintenance outsourced for agreed period under profit share arrangement.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A
Concessionary – public/private funded	Part funded by public and private sectors, operation and maintenance outsourced for agreed period under profit share arrangement.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council offices • On-street • P & R sites • Public car parks
Fully funded – revenue share	All costs borne by private sector, long term lease/licence.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rapid charge points

Forecasting

4.15 The Strategy looks at existing ULEV registrations, publicly available charge point infrastructure, and local electricity grid capacity constraints in Somerset. It then considers planned charging infrastructure projects (including DC Share and SWT’s Community Charge Point Fund amongst others), and factors in outputs from engagement with key stakeholders and the results of the recent public EV survey*.

* It should be noted that the EV Survey was produced by the graduate officers employed on the Somerset Local Government Graduate Scheme (Amy Maggs – now employed at SWT, Izzie Jeffrey – previously at SWT, and Stacey Tizzard) and appreciation and kudos for this element should go to them. The survey ran for 2 weeks in June and received a total of 1,034 completed responses, making it very successful and robust.

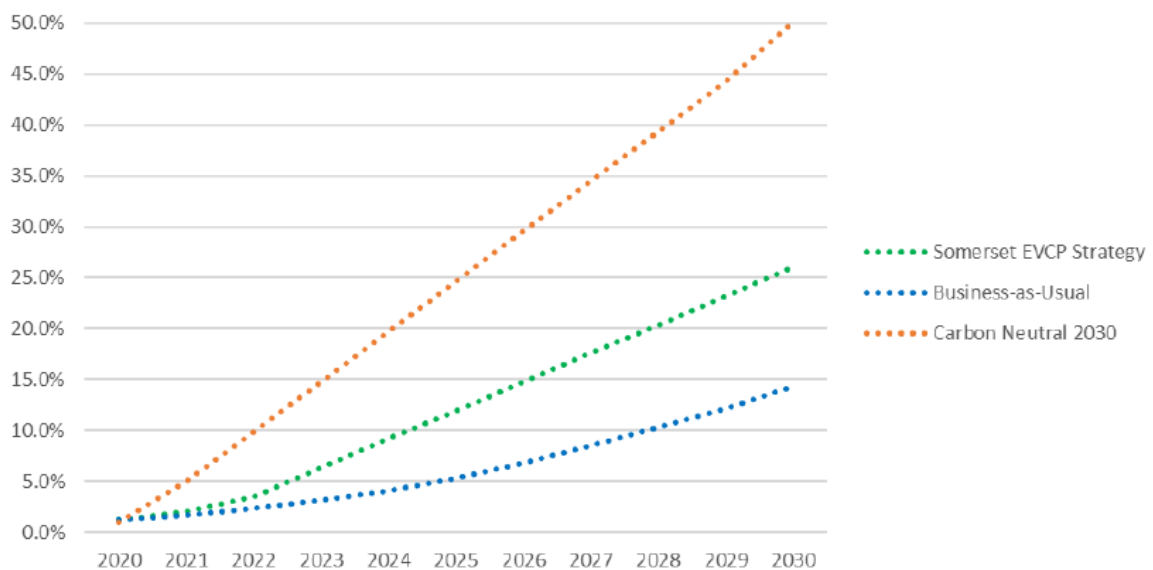
4.16 Three scenarios were modelled for forecasting EV uptake in the county using WSP’s *EV:Ready* tool: 1) Business as usual; 2) Carbon Neutral 2030; and 3) Somerset EV Charging Strategy. The forecast for a number of factors in determining

localised variations in EV uptake, these include:

- Propensity to register an EV – socio demographics and consumer attitudes based on the latest version of Experian’s Mosaic UK (Generation 6 datasets);
- Car ownership – based on ONS data by household; and
- Reliance on on-street parking – based on the typical property types of the predominant mosaic group at a postcode level.

4.17 The graph output is reproduced below for information. In summary, the Business as usual scenario would result in approximately 12.4% of car km travelled in 2030 being EV. The Carbon Neutral 2030 scenario assumes a number of unlikely interventions are made, predominantly at the national level, and leads to approximately 50% of car km travelled in 2030 being EV. Following through the recommendations of the Somerset EV Charging Strategy is expected to result in around 25% of car km travelled in 2030 being EV.

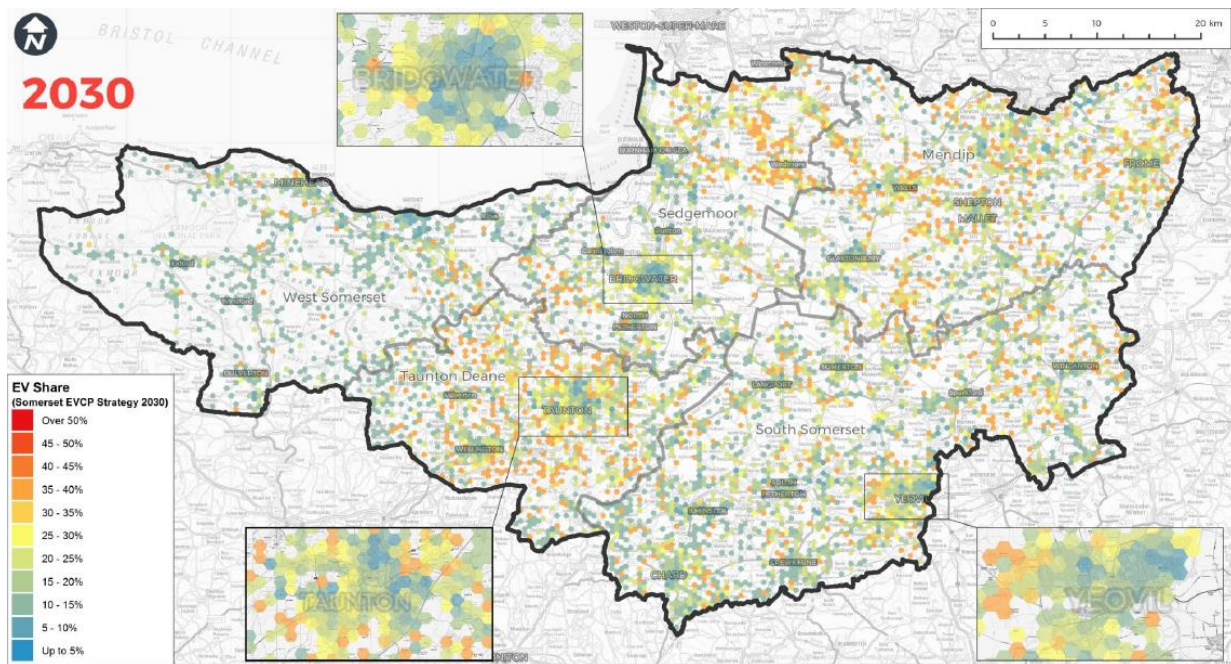
Figure – Proportion of total car km in Somerset that are EV



4.18 The CNCR Action Plan includes a section which focuses on EVs, and an indicative routemap of potential actions. That routemap includes reference to working towards an EV target by 2030, and states that that target will be evidenced by the EV Charging Strategy. It is recommended that the CNCR target should be to “work towards 25% of car km travelled in Somerset in 2030 being EV”.

4.19 In addition, the Strategy includes maps which demonstrate how these scenarios for EV uptake are forecast to be distributed across Somerset by 2030, accounting for localised variations in consumer profiles, socio-demographics, availability of off-street parking, vehicle ownership and vehicle sales and turnover. The reproduction below shows the percentage of all vehicles which are EV in 2030, assuming delivery against the recommendations of the Strategy. Each hex represents a cluster of postcodes and households, to provide a clear view of the variations in uptake across the County. Areas not covered by a hex feature no, or very few, households.

Figure – Somerset EVCP Strategy (2030) - % EV of total vehicles



4.20 Competing influences of propensity for switching to EV, car ownership levels, and reliance on on-street parking, serves to create a nuanced picture of EV ownership across the County, as areas with high propensity towards EV ownership are often partly offset by also being areas of lower car ownership and greater reliance on on-street parking. In Somerset however, as on-street parking generally presents less of an issue than in other parts of the UK, individuals' propensity for EV uptake and variations in vehicle ownership levels have a greater bearing on localised uptake. In broad terms, the areas of higher forecast uptake in Somerset are projected to be focused around the Taunton area, Burnham-on-Sea and the northern portion of Sedgemoor District, and the wider areas around Frome and Yeovil. EV uptake is forecast to be slower in the West of the County.

4.21 The Strategy identifies the total number of EVs predicted in each scenario and uses this to indicatively identify how many publicly available charge points might be needed in each scenario. This element of the forecasting is based on a large number of assumptions and as such should be used with caution, but it provides a useful context for the scale of public charging infrastructure that might be needed, and how this changes with each scenario. It is important to note that the majority of public charge points would likely be delivered on private land such as at supermarkets, retail destinations, and other publicly accessible locations, rather than delivered directly by the public sector.

Figure – Indicative public EV charge point (EVCP) requirement in each scenario in 2030

District	Business as Usual		Somerset EV Strategy		Carbon Neutral 2030	
	EVs	Public EVCPs	EVs	Public EVCPs	EVs	Public EVCPs
Mendip	13,500	160-200	23,500	280-350	45,000	550-680
Sedgemoor	11,500	140-170	21,500	260-320	46,500	560-700
South Somerset	14,000	170-210	28,000	340-430	65,500	800-1000
Somerset West & Taunton	11,000	130-170	22,500	280-340	55,500	680-840
SOMERSET TOTAL	50,000	600-750	95,500	1160-1440	212,500	2590-3220

4.22 The table above identifies that assuming delivery against the recommendations of the Strategy, there could potentially be 22,500 EVs registered in Somerset West and

Taunton district by 2030, indicatively requiring 280-340 publicly available charge points. For context, the Strategy notes that in Q1 2020, there were a total of 392 ULEVs registered in the district. In July 2020, there were 32 public charge points in the district (see <http://maps.dft.gov.uk/ev-charging-map/>). Due to the large number of assumptions involved in these forecasts, it is not recommended that we set a target in relation to specific numbers of charge points.

Recommendations

4.23 The Strategy identifies a total of 24 recommendations for the Somerset local authorities to take forward. Many of these fit with and begin to flesh out actions identified in the Council's CNCR Action Plan, some are new and will need to be brought forward into the CNCR as part of the plan's iteration.

4.24 The recommendations can be summarised as follows:

- Lead by example:
 - 1) Undertake a review of Council fleet;
 - 2) Install charge points at Council depots with associated driver awareness and training;
 - 3) Install charge points at Council offices.
- Lobby Government and industry:
 - 4) Urge Government to bring forward the ban on sales of new petrol and diesel cars and vans to 2030 or earlier (note, that the Government has now confirmed that this will happen);
 - 5) Urge Government to further reduce the costs of electric vehicle purchase, leasing and ownership compared to petrol and diesel vehicles;
 - 6) Explore additional local incentives (e.g. marketing and promotion, differential parking permits and car park charges, local scrappage schemes and zero emission zones);
 - 7) Support research and innovation in EVs in Somerset.
- Home charging:
 - 8) Adopt planning policy to ensure that every new home with a parking space has a smart EV charge point (model policy is included within the strategy);
 - 9) Promote the OLEV EV Homecharge Scheme;
 - 10) Promote home charging share schemes such as Zap-Home;
 - 11) Provide guidance on use of cable covers and cable ducts for on-street charging;
 - 12) Bid to the OLEV On-street Residential Chargepoint Scheme to install on-street charge points in priority locations (with Firepool a suggested opportunity);
 - 13) Adopt design standards for on-street chargers to enable and manage private sector roll-out.
- Workplace charging:
 - 14) Adopt planning policy to require charge points in new workplaces (model policy included within the strategy);
 - 15) Promote the OLEV Workplace Charging Scheme;
 - 16) Promote the Energy Saving Trust fleet reviews;
 - 17) Promote workplace charging share schemes such as Zap-Work
- Other destination charging:
 - 18) Adopt planning policy to require charge points in other non-residential developments (model policy included within the strategy);

- 19) Develop charging hubs at both Taunton P&R sites;
- 20) Install charge points in council owned public car parks (primarily 22kW points capable of smart charging, but 7kW where sufficiently long enough dwell time allows, in line with the priority ranking included within the strategy);
- 21) Encourage stakeholders to deliver public charge points at other key destinations (e.g. supermarkets and train stations);
- 22) Engage with tourist destinations and explore tourism opportunities associated with EV;
- 23) Consider potential to integrate EV charging with other energy and transport services as part of new Mobility Hubs;
- On route charging:
 - 24) Engage a private sector supplier to deliver rapid charge points, where there are gaps in provision including town centres near taxi ranks (Minehead an explicit example).

Conclusion

- 4.25 In conclusion, the strategy provides a holistically thought through strategy for how the Council should work with its partner authorities to develop an EV charge point network across Somerset. It will enable the Council to take advantage of the opportunities presented by our assets, whilst futureproofing investment and maximising benefits; engage with and influence investment in the local electricity grid by WPD; ensure the New Local Plan sets appropriate policies; lobby Government and others to bring forward other actions; and effectively understand what our role should be in delivering the network.

RECOMMENDATION – That the Somerset Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy is adopted and brought forward into the Council’s Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience Action Plan.

Delivery

- 4.26 The Council is well-placed to hit the ground running with many of the strategy’s recommendations due to the inclusion of many of the recommendations within the CNCR Action Plan, and the general focus that the Plan has on EVs. The Council’s involvement in the DC Share project, experience of the Community Charge Point Scheme, and advanced nature of explorations to install charge points at Deane House and other locations means that we are resourced, informed and aware to begin delivery relatively quickly.
- 4.27 Having said this, it is important that we have the end-user in mind and take opportunities to achieve economies of scale etc. moving forwards. Therefore it is important that we now continue to work closely with the other Somerset authorities on delivery.
- 4.28 A delivery focused workshop was held on 24th September 2020, facilitated by WSP and attended by officers from each of the authorities relevant to future delivery of many of the above recommendations. As a result of this, the Strategy includes reference to an intention for an EV working group to be established within the wider Somerset Climate Emergency response governance structure, reporting to a transport working group. The Strategy recommends that an EV lead from each authority sits on that working group, bringing in wider officer support and expertise where needed to ensure that EV work across the authorities is coordinated, links to wider climate and energy workstreams and that there is an overall responsibility for maintaining momentum and

delivering on the recommendations of the Strategy. It also suggests that a stakeholder forum of key external stakeholders and delivery partners could also be established, to help guide delivery of the strategy. For example, this could include Highways England, EV users, local EV businesses, and others.

4.29 Discussion of this item at Scrutiny Committee on 4th November 2020 prompted the Committee to recommend that further detail is added to this “delivery” section of the committee report on how the strategy will be delivered in SWT before the report is considered by Full Council (see below):

4.30 Upon adoption of the Somerset EV Charging Strategy, the Strategy recommendations will be brought forward into the CNCR Action Plan. These will be split across the four timescales of the CNCR. The Action reference numbers referred to in the second column are taken from the Indicative Action Plan to 2030 (appendix 1 to the CNCR):

Strategy Recommendation	CNCR Action	Commentary / Update on progress
1) Undertake a review of Council fleet	Already identified in action 77 and 200.	Fleet review has already begun (independent of EST) and procurement of 2 x electric pool vehicles is already progressing with the remainder of the pool car fleet to transition following formal procurement.
2) Install charge points at Council depots with associated driver awareness and training	Already identified through actions 66 and 202	Officers are investigating installation of Solar PV and battery storage at the DLO depot. Once installed, this would help to service charging of vehicles and at this stage installation of EV charge points will be pursued.
3) Install charge points at Council offices	Already identified in actions 48 and 66.	In process of leasing 2x parking bays at Deane House for installation of 50kW rapid charge points. Expected to be operating towards the end of Q1 2021 and will be accessible to the public 24/7.
4) Urge Government to bring forward the ban on sales of new petrol and diesel cars and vans to 2030 or earlier	N/A	The Government has now confirmed that it will bring the ban on sale of new petrol and diesel vehicles forward to 2030.
5) Urge Government to further reduce the costs of electric vehicle purchase, leasing and ownership compared to petrol and diesel vehicles	New – can become an “Immediate” action.	We can lobby Government in response to their confirmation about the 2030 ban by referring to the need to really step up policies and action on reducing the cost differential so that there can be a just transition on EVs.
6) Explore additional local incentives (e.g. marketing and promotion,	Already identified in actions 78, 203, 204 and 213.	Actions already refer to incentives for staff and lower income groups as well as general promotional communications. Actions also refer to revising the Parking

differential parking permits and car park charges, local scrappage schemes and zero emission zones)		Strategy for Taunton to incentives EVs. Additional local incentives will continue to be considered as the CNCR iterates.
7) Support research and innovation in EVs in Somerset	Already identified in action 38 and 94.	The DC Share Pilot supports research and innovation in EVs here in Taunton and may assist us in securing further such opportunities. Actions already refer to fostering innovation in the low carbon / sustainability sector. The Gravity Smart Campus near Bridgwater is positioning itself to focus on R&D in relation to future mobility including EVs.
8) Adopt planning policy to ensure that every new home with a parking space has a smart EV charge point	Already identified in action 67.	Adoption of any new local planning policy will be a few years away due to Local Plan production processes. In the meantime, a draft of “Climate Positive Planning” has been published referring to the EV Charging Strategy standards and SCC travel planning guidance, which is being updated to refer to the Strategy standards.
9) Promote the OLEV EV Homecharge Scheme	New – could be included in a revision to action 203.	A communications campaign is already proposed as a short-term action. This recommendation will inform development of that campaign.
10) Promote home charging share schemes such as Zap-Home	New – could be included in a revision to action 203.	A communications campaign is already proposed as a short-term action. This recommendation will inform development of that campaign.
11) Provide guidance on use of cable covers and cable ducts for on-street charging	New – could be included in actions 17 and 72.	This action is primarily the responsibility of SCC as the Highways Authority. However, the District-wide Design Guide and Taunton Garden Town Public Realm Design Guide could make appropriate reference in consultation with the Highways Authority.
12) Bid to the OLEV On-street Residential Chargepoint Scheme to install on-street charge points in priority locations	Already identified in actions 199 and 324.	This action is primarily the responsibility of SCC as the Highways Authority. The CNCR already identifies the need to work with partners to deliver public charge points across the district in line with the EV Charging Strategy, but it could be made more explicit to work with SCC to develop on-street chargepoint proposals for priority areas and bid to OLEV accordingly as a short-term action. There is potentially an opportunity to install on-street charge points in the Firepool development

		which will be explored. The OLEV ORCS is also available for local authorities to use towards installing charge points in public car parks, and an application is currently being prepared for this purpose.
13) Adopt design standards for on-street chargers to enable and manage private sector roll-out.	New – could be included in actions 17 and 72.	This action is primarily the responsibility of SCC as the Highways Authority. However, the District-wide Design Guide and Taunton Garden Town Public Realm Design Guide could make appropriate reference in consultation with the Highways Authority.
14) Adopt planning policy to require charge points in new workplaces.	Already identified in action 67.	Adoption of any new local planning policy will be a few years away due to Local Plan production processes. In the meantime, a draft of “Climate Positive Planning” has been published referring to the EV Charging Strategy standards and SCC travel planning guidance, which is being updated to refer to the Strategy standards.
15) Promote the OLEV Workplace Charging Scheme	Already identified in action 201.	Identified to be pursued in years 2-3.
16) Promote the Energy Saving Trust fleet reviews	New	Could be included in a revision to action 201.
17) Promote workplace charging share schemes such as Zap-Work	New	Could be included in a revision to action 201.
18) Adopt planning policy to require charge points in other non-residential developments	Already identified in action 67.	Adoption of any new local planning policy will be a few years away due to Local Plan production processes. In the meantime, a draft of “Climate Positive Planning” has been published referring to the EV Charging Strategy standards and SCC travel planning guidance, which is being updated to refer to the Strategy standards.
19) Develop charging hubs at both Taunton P&R sites.	Already identified in actions 51, 53 and 199.	The development of charging hubs at the P&R sites could be explored as part of work to put the P&R service on a financially sustainable footing and to explore the transition of the P&R service to alternative/electric fleets. However efforts in this regard have been stalled by COVID with patronage of the service down significantly. Re-procurement of the P&R service provider is to re-start in the New Year.

20) Install charge points in council owned public car parks.	Already identified in actions 47, 48 and 199.	In process of leasing 2x parking bays at Deane House and 2x parking bays at Blackbrook Leisure Centre for installation of 50kW rapid charge points. Expected to be operating towards the end of Q1 2021 and will be accessible to the public 24/7. In addition to this, we have recently invited expressions of interest from prospective charge point suppliers through a nationally recognised procurement framework to tender to investigate the suitability and, where appropriate, to supply charging points at multiple car parks throughout the district.
21) Encourage stakeholders to deliver public charge points at other key destinations (e.g. supermarkets and train stations).	Already identified in action 199.	A more explicit action(s) could be identified.
22) Engage with tourist destinations and explore tourism opportunities associated with EV	New	Could be included in a revision to action 199.
23) Consider potential to integrate EV charging with other energy and transport services as part of new Mobility Hubs	Already identified in action 336.	Action already exists to explore mobility hubs. More explicit reference to EVs is necessary as part of this.
24) Engage a private sector supplier to deliver rapid charge points, where there are gaps in provision including town centres near taxi ranks.	New – could be included in action 199.	The CNCR already identifies the need to work with partners to deliver public charge points across the district in line with the EV Charging Strategy, but it could be made more explicit to work with private sector suppliers to deliver rapid charge points in priority locations.

4.31 Action 199 of the CNCR is referred to in multiple places in the above table. This action states “*Work with partners to deliver additional public charge points across the district in line with the Somerset EV Charging Strategy*” and is identified as a short-term action (years 2-3).

4.32 We have begun the process for delivering charge points to our Council-owned car parks, and we are due to re-launch the Community Charge Point Fund in the New

Year. Beyond this, the Council is unlikely to be directly involved with delivery of charge points in the district, which are far more likely to be delivered by other organisations (SCC in the case of on-street charge points, and the private sector in the case of rapid charge points, electric forecourts and destination charge points). However, the Council has a role to play in enabling and encouraging the delivery of these charge points in the right places at the right time.

- 4.33 The EV Charging Strategy helps us to know where the greatest demand for EVs is likely to occur, where is likely to be more reliant on on-street charging, and where rapid charge points already exist. We will use this information to inform engagement with SCC and private sector partners when enabling and encouraging delivery of charge points around the district. However, our immediate focus will be on delivery in our own car parks and on the specific actions identified as “immediate” in the CNCR and in the table above.

5 Links to Corporate Strategy

- 5.1 Addressing climate change is identified as the Council’s primary objective in the Corporate Strategy and provision of EV charging points is explicitly given as an example. The Somerset EV Charging Strategy picks up on and will influence delivery against many of the other objectives across all four strategic themes of the Corporate Strategy.

6 Finance / Resource Implications

- 6.1 The Somerset EV Charging Strategy is an evidence document and it sets out recommendations for our approach to delivering an EV charging network in Somerset. It does not set policy in itself, and does not commit the Council to any specific actions. It will inform the delivery of the Council’s CNCR Action Plan and future reviews. Future project development arising from the recommendations of the Strategy will be subject to business case development and approval and be the responsibility of the Council’s Climate Service to fund from established and future budgets.

7 Legal Implications

- 7.1 There are no direct legal implications associated with the adoption of the strategy and it being brought forward into the CNCR Action Plan. However, there may potentially be legal implications associated with delivery of charge points themselves, particularly where private sector partners are being sought as part of a concessionary or fully funded delivery approach, but such implications would be considered as projects are developed.

8 Climate and Sustainability Implications

- 8.1 The Somerset EV Charging Strategy is identified as an action within both the Council’s CNCR Action Plan and the Somerset Climate Emergency Strategy. The production of this strategy and delivery of charge points are intended to directly lead to carbon reductions from the most significant source of CO₂ emissions in the district. The report clearly identifies the important role that EVs will need to play in achieving our carbon neutrality target.

9 Safeguarding and/or Community Safety Implications

- 9.1 The strategy itself has no safeguarding or community safety implications. Risks in

delivery, for instance associated with vandalism of charge points will need to be considered and addressed as projects are developed and progressed. EVs present a potential risk to those with visual or hearing impairments in that they are much quieter than petrol/diesel cars, however, such risks are beyond the scope and implications of the strategy.

10 Equality and Diversity Implications

- 10.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been produced to accompany the Somerset EV Charging Strategy (see Appendix B). Officers within the Council with an overview of the Equalities function, who have experience of identifying impacts on those with protected characteristics have been consulted for this initial identification of potential impacts. The assessment identifies at a high level where there is potential for negative, neutral and positive outcomes as a result of the Strategy recommendations depending on the detail as subsequent projects develop.
- 10.2 The Strategy itself makes recommendations on actions to take, though the detail of what, how, where and when is not determined by the Strategy, and will evolve as specific projects are developed. Having said that, the strategy will provide guidance on how these questions are answered during project development. The CNCR Action Plan already incorporates a number of potential actions of a similar nature to some of those recommended by the Strategy, though the Strategy recommends additional actions and provides more detail to others. The CNCR has previously been assessed for equalities impacts, identifying in general terms the likely impacts on different groups in the round, rather than on an action-by-action basis.
- 10.3 At this stage it is difficult to understand specific impacts and no significant negative impacts are identified. Generally, actions were expected to have broadly positive outcomes, but would require further assessment and wider external consultation in relation to delivery plans of some of the actions where an individual or group would see or experience a direct physical change as a result of an action.

11 Social Value Implications

- 11.1 There are multiple co-benefits including social and health benefits associated with enabling growth of EVs in the district. The strategy recommends delivery models for use by the Councils in different circumstances, but does not set detailed criteria for procurement of any private sector partners to follow. Social value will need to be considered as projects develop and procurement exercises are designed.

12 Partnership Implications

- 12.1 The strategy has been produced in partnership between the Somerset authorities and has involved close engagement with stakeholders. As set out in the delivery section of the report, above, the intention is to continue working closely with partners across Somerset in delivery.

13 Health and Wellbeing Implications

- 13.1 EVs present an opportunity to reduce air quality issues associated with nitrogen dioxide in comparison to traditional petrol and diesel vehicles. However, they are just a part of the puzzle in terms of tackling air quality issues and in reducing CO₂ emissions. EVs continue to emit particulate matter from road use, tyre and brake wear for instance. EVs also continue to perpetuate a sedentary, personal travel mode. As such

it is essential that the Council continues to make strides on delivering active travel infrastructure and supporting and encouraging our communities to make active choices, particularly for shorter trips. The CNCR Action Plan identifies a number of actions in this regard.

14 Asset Management Implications

- 14.1 The strategy considers a number of Council assets, particularly our public car parks, and recommends how and in what priority these can be utilised to deliver charge points. Specific asset management implications will need to be considered as site specific projects are developed.

15 Data Protection Implications

- 15.1 The strategy includes no personal data. A public EV survey was conducted in June 2020, and was fully GDPR compliant. The strategy refers to this survey and includes aggregated and summarised outputs, but no responses are directly attributable to individuals.

16 Consultation Implications

- 16.1 The strategy has been informed by key stakeholder engagement, including with electricity Distribution Network Operators, Highways England, community energy groups, community EV driving groups and businesses as well as internal officers. It has also been influenced by the public EV survey referred to above. The strategy itself has not been consulted upon, but it is primarily technical in nature. As noted in the consultation reports supporting the CNCR Action Plan and Somerset Climate Emergency Strategy, the overwhelming response to consultation on early drafts of these documents was to 'stop talking about what you *could* do and asking us what we think, and tell us what you are *going* to do and get on with it'. Therefore, no public consultation is proposed on the strategy, and instead it will enable us to get moving on delivering against it.

17 Scrutiny Comments

- 17.1 During the discussion at Scrutiny Committee, the following points were raised:-
- Councillors praised the report and its balanced account of the benefits of EV Charging, and it was commented that it was felt worth proceeding with but would not be the whole solution.
 - Councillors expressed a wish that that this Strategy was translated into a plan for action, and officers confirmed if approved these measures would be programmed into the Councils Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience Plan.
 - It was commented that only 22% of EV Charging points would be placed in the SWT area, despite this being the largest geographic district in the County.
 - Further information was sought on the trends relating to private car ownership and the placing of points where cars would be owned and not travel to. Officers confirmed that the locations were based on propensity and would not be the final locations. The purpose of the Strategy and the Councils role would be as an enabler in the delivery.
 - It was raised that there was Government grant funding in this area that the Council needed to pursue e.g. EV Charging points in SWT staff car parks.

- It was commented that the Delivery section of the report needed further refinement before this went to Full Council, to better reflect the need for a further spread of points in the rural centres.

17.2 The Scrutiny Committee **RECOMMENDED** to the Executive to;

- 1) That Executive recommend to Full Council that the Somerset Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy is adopted and brought forward into the Council's Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience Action Plan.
- 2) Requested that the Report to Full Council contains more detail on how the Strategy will be delivered in the SWT area.

18 Executive Comments

18.1 During the discussion at Executive Committee, the following points were raised:-

- Councillors were delighted to see the report coming forward.
- Councillors highlighted that not all charging points would be council led but it was a good document to assist in the implementation process.
- Councillors queried how and where the charging points would be installed. *Council owned car parks would be looked at and then work with other partners to encourage and enable delivery of destination and on-street charge points in other locations across the district. The Strategy would inform these conversations, but the Council would almost certainly not be the body delivering these.*
- Concern was raised on areas that had very limited or lack of off-street parking.
- Concern was raised on other types of fuel being introduced in the future. *It was noted that the report considered alternative fuels including the role that hydrogen is currently expected to play. Working to bring forward EVs is seen as a least regret option.*
- Councillors queried how could planning policy be changed to implement all the positive parts of the document. *The Climate Positive Planning document discussed in the previous item refers to how we can use existing planning policies to ensure EV charge points in new development. More explicit reference in planning policy would be explored through the new Local Plan, although it was noted that the Government has consulted previously on amending Building Regulations to make charge points a mandatory requirement.*
- Councillors wanted all local areas to be included and encouraged to take part. *Officers would liaise with local town/parish councils and chambers of commerce etc to assist them.*
- Councillors queried how payment would be made for the charging points. *There are several apps available to make payments.*

18.2 The Executive Committee **RECOMMENDED** to Full Council;

- 1) That the Somerset Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy is adopted and brought forward into the Council's Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience Action Plan.

Democratic Path:

- **Scrutiny – Yes**
- **Executive – Yes**
- **Full Council – Yes**

Reporting Frequency: Once only**List of Appendices**

Appendix A	Somerset EV Charging Strategy
Appendix B	EqlA of the Somerset EV Charging Strategy

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Somerset Councils

ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING STRATEGY

Final Report

October 2020

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QUALITY CONTROL

PROJECT NO. 70072426

OUR REF. NO. 70072426-05

DATE: OCTOBER 2020

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

We are facing a climate crisis and all Somerset authorities have declared a climate emergency, working towards carbon neutrality by 2030. The emerging Somerset Climate Emergency Strategy recognises that a reduction in total vehicle miles travelled and electrification of surface transport is needed to meet both climate and air quality goals, and that Electric Vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure in Somerset needs to scale up significantly.

The number of EVs in Somerset is growing rapidly, with nearly three times as many EVs registered in Somerset compared to just three years ago. There are high levels of interest in EVs in the county, combined with high levels of potential tourist demand for EV charging infrastructure. A range of EV charging infrastructure projects are already underway to support and enable this growth.

Being a mostly rural county, Somerset faces a number of specific challenges and there is a risk that more rural locations are left behind in the shift to EV. However, there is greater dependence on car travel, with longer trip distances than urban areas, providing a significant opportunity to reduce carbon emissions.

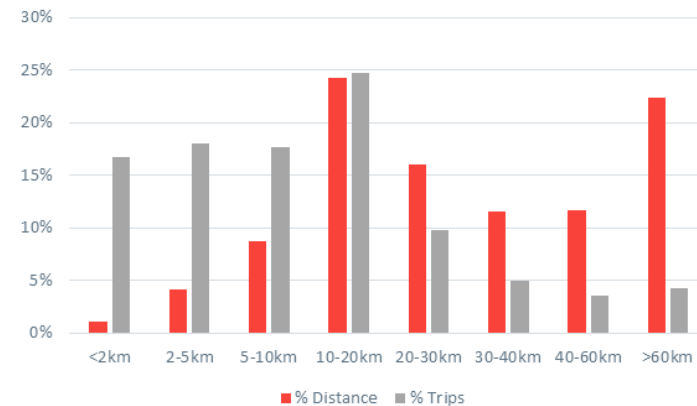
This document sets out a strategy for the Somerset local authorities to help effectively deliver the necessary electric vehicle charging network for Somerset.

SETTING THE SCENE

The United Nations says we could have less than 10 years to limit a climate catastrophe. Transport is responsible for 46.5% of carbon dioxide emissions in Somerset and is now the largest source of emissions nationally. Electric vehicles will have a significant role to play in tackling emissions from transport,

especially for longer distance trips and in more rural areas less well served by public transport. The majority of carbon emissions from transport come from longer distance trips, with over 80% of emissions from car commuting in Somerset from trips of 10km (6.25 miles) or more. Tackling these longer distance trips offers the greatest potential for carbon reductions

Commuting trips by distance in Somerset (Source: Census 2011)



MARKET REVIEW

The registration of electric vehicles is increasing year on year, with more makes and models coming to the market, costs decreasing, and range increasing. In the next few years, the purchase price of electric vehicles is expected to reach parity with, and then become cheaper, than the equivalent petrol or diesel vehicles, and uptake of electric vehicles will increase dramatically. A second-hand electric vehicle market is already emerging, making the vehicles affordable for more people.

A range of electric taxis, vans, lorries, and buses are already on the market, with new models planned, opening up wider possibilities for an electric future.

Similarly, the range of charging solutions for electric vehicles is evolving rapidly and reflects the ongoing technological developments and increasing investment in this market. There are now a range of well established off-street and on-street charging solution to cater for a range of use cases.

With the number of EVs on the road increasing, private sector investment in charge point provision is also increasing. This gives local authorities a number of delivery approaches with a sliding scale of risk and reward, ranging from full public ownership and operation, concessions based approaches, to options fully funded and delivered by the private sector.

SOMERSET BASELINE REVIEW

There were 1,667 Plug-In Electric Vehicles registered in Somerset in June 2020, with this number growing rapidly. To support this there are currently 87 non-domestic based electric vehicle charge point locations, providing 223 non-domestic charge point connections. Of these, there are 16 slow chargers (3kW), 149 fast chargers (7-22kW) and 56 rapid chargers (43+ kW).

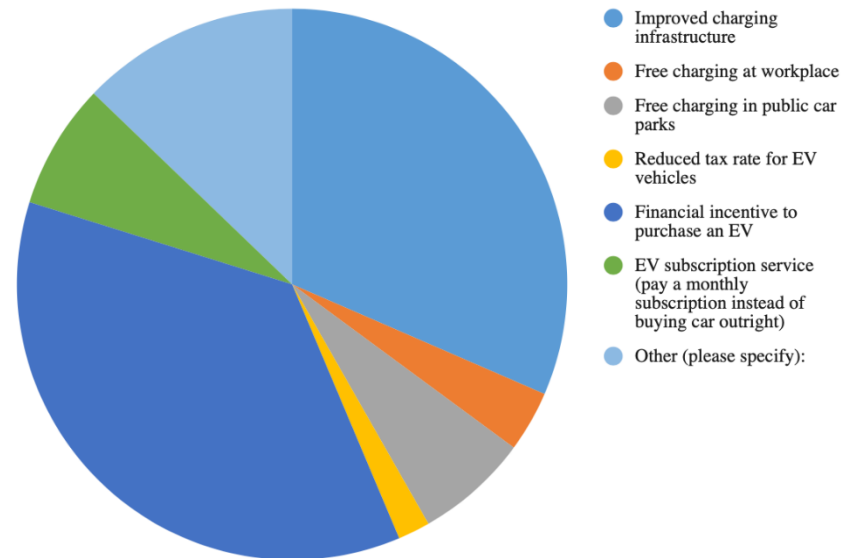
Electric grid capacity was reviewed, and found that grid capacity is unlikely to be a significant barrier to the roll out of clusters of slow/fast EV charge points. However, specific local circumstances may result in the need for grid reinforcement in a limited number of locations. The installation of new rapid charge points is much more likely to result in grid capacity issues, although there is currently spare capacity on the majority of primary and secondary level substations.

A range of internal and external stakeholders have contributed to this strategy through a series of virtual meetings. This includes a range of representatives from the Somerset authorities, Highways England, the Western Power

Distribution and Scottish and Southern Energy Networks, local employers, and a community energy group.

The strategy is also informed by a Somerset Electric Vehicle Survey undertaken in June 2020, with over 1,000 responses from residents across Somerset. The high response rate reflecting the strong interest in EVs locally. 63% of respondents stated they have either switched to an EV or have considered it, with 78% of respondents considering EVs to be positive in general terms. The survey confirmed national research that the largest barriers to EV uptake in Somerset are charging infrastructure and cost of purchase.

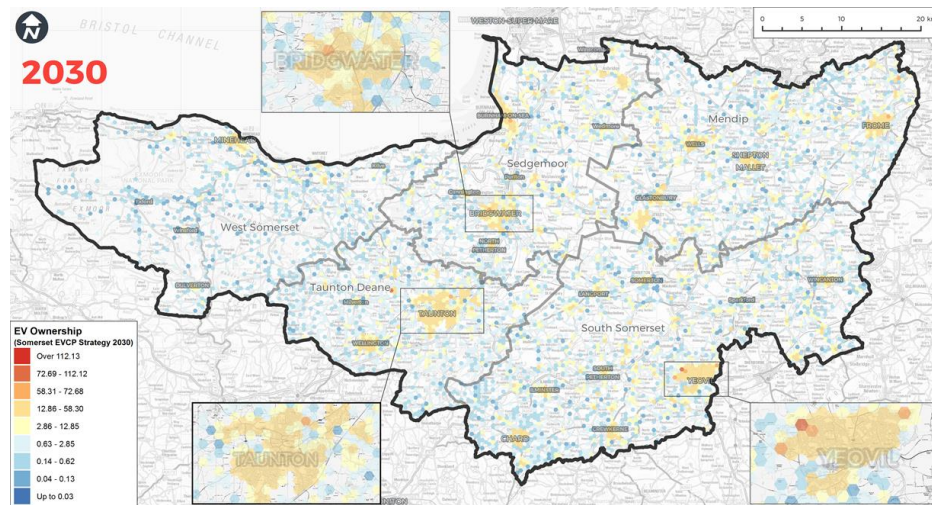
Please select one initiative that would most likely persuade you to buy/lease an EV in the next 5 years.



FORECASTING

In order to inform our recommendations for charge point rollout, a range of EV uptake scenarios for Somerset were developed using WSP's EV:Ready tool. A "Somerset EVCP" scenario, reflects the impact of increased action at a local level, and crucially, bringing forward the ban on the sale of new petrol and diesel vehicles nationally to 2032. In this scenario around 30% of the vehicle fleet is converted to EV by 2030, compared to just 14% in a business as usual scenario. The Figure below shows the forecast distribution of EV ownership in 2030 under this scenario, with hotspots in the main urban areas of Taunton, Bridgewater, and Yeovil.

Somerset EVCP Scenario (2030) – EV Ownership



Areas of high potential EV demand and on-street parking were also identified to help inform the future roll-out of on-street charge points. These locations include Minehead, Taunton, Bridgewater, Burnham-on-Sea, Yeovil, Chard, Street, Glastonbury, and Frome.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Drawing on the findings of the market review, baseline review, stakeholder engagement, and EV forecasts, a total of 24 recommendations were identified:

Lead by example

1. Undertake a Fleet Review to identify opportunities
2. Install charge points at Council depots, with associated driver training
3. Install charge points at key Council offices

Work with central government and industry to increase uptake of EVs

4. Urge Government to bring forward the ban on sales of new petrol and diesel cars and vans to 2030 or earlier
5. Urge Government to further reduce the costs of EV purchase and ownership compared to petrol and diesel vehicles
6. Explore additional local incentives to increase EV uptake beyond additional charge point infrastructure
7. Identify opportunities to support research and innovation in EVs in Somerset

Home charging

8. Explore additional local incentives to increase EV uptake beyond additional charge point infrastructure
9. For existing households, promote the Homecharge Scheme
10. Promote home charging share schemes such as Zap-Home
11. Provide guidance for the use of cable covers and covered ducts by residents
12. Submit a bid to the OLEV On-street Residential Chargepoint Scheme
13. Adopt design standards for on-street chargers to enable and manage future private sector roll-out of charge points



Workplace charging

14. Adopt EV parking standards for new workplaces
15. For existing workplaces, promote the OLEV Workplace Charging Scheme
16. Promote the Energy Saving Trust fleet reviews
17. Promote workplace charging share schemes such as Zap-Work

Other destination charging

18. Adopt EV parking standards for other new non-residential developments
19. Develop charging hubs at Taunton Gateway and Silk Mills Park & Ride
20. Install charge points at council owned public car parks
21. Encourage stakeholders to deliver EV charge points at other key destinations including supermarkets and rail stations
22. Engage with tourist destinations and explore tourism opportunities associated with EV
23. Consider the potential to integrate EV charging with other energy and transport services as part of new Mobility Hubs

On route charging

24. Engage a private sector supplier to deliver rapid charge points where there are currently gaps in provision (specific areas based on mapping) and to explore delivery of rapid chargers for use in urban centres including by taxis in locations near to taxi ranks

The intention is for a cross-authority EV working group to be established within the wider Somerset Climate Emergency response governance structure. This should help ensure that EV work across the authorities is coordinated, and links to wider climate and energy workstreams. The EV working group will have overall responsibility for maintaining momentum and delivering the recommendations. A stakeholder forum of key external stakeholders and delivery partners could also be established, to help guide delivery of the strategy.

The EV market is continually changing and rapidly evolving, and as such this strategy should be regularly monitored and reviewed.



1 INTRODUCTION

CONTEXT

We are facing a climate crisis and all Somerset authorities have declared a climate emergency, working towards carbon neutrality by 2030. The emerging Somerset Climate Emergency Strategy recognises that a reduction in total vehicle miles travelled and electrification of surface transport is needed to meet both climate and air quality goals, and that Electric Vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure in Somerset needs to scale up significantly.

The number of EVs in Somerset is growing rapidly, with nearly three times as many EVs registered in Somerset compared to just three years ago. There are high levels of interest in EVs in the county, combined with high levels of potential tourist demand for EV charging infrastructure, both for local destinations and on strategic routes connecting to the wider South West.

A range of EV charging infrastructure projects are already underway to support and enable this growth. This includes a world first pilot of a new type of rapid charging hub in Taunton, the roll out of charge points across public car parks in South Somerset, and the “Gravity” smart campus near Bridgwater which aims to attract world-leaders in EVs. The private sector is showing increasing interest in delivering charge points across Somerset, and there is a need for the public sector to lead and enable ongoing investment.

Being a mostly rural county, Somerset faces a number of specific challenges and there is a risk that more rural locations are left behind in the shift to EV. These include a lack of mobile coverage, and an ageing population, who may need different support to transition to EVs than younger urban populations. However, there is greater dependence on car travel, with longer trip distances than urban areas, providing a significant opportunity to reduce carbon emissions.

The impact of the coronavirus crisis on travel patterns is still unclear but is likely to result in increased travel by private car, at least in the short term, increasing the need for EVs. However, industry and the public may be less willing to invest in EV in a period of economic uncertainty. The “green recovery” from the crisis provides a once in a generation opportunity to shift to more sustainable lifestyles, with additional national funding made available for the transition to zero carbon transport. The strategy will need to consider these issues and is set within the wider Future Mobility context including increased automation, new business models, data & connectivity, and changing attitudes.

Concerted additional action is needed from the whole community, locally, nationally, regionally and internationally – working together. Close partnership working with Government, industry, and other stakeholders will be needed to bring about change.

This document sets out a strategy for the Somerset local authorities to help effectively deliver the necessary EV charging network for Somerset. The authorities considered are Somerset County Council (highway authority), Mendip District Council, Somerset West and Taunton District Council, Sedgemoor District Council, South Somerset District Council and Exmoor National Park Authority. The strategy will provide a basis to:

- Develop and deliver specific projects on their own land and assets as appropriate, informed by the best way to futureproof investment, maximise opportunities and benefits;
- Influence investment in the grid and work to release capacity in the grid by the Distribution Network Operators;
- Set policies and guidance and allocate specific sites for charge point development through Local Plans and other means;



- Lobby Government and others on what prerequisites are required in order to proliferate EVs in Somerset; and
- Understand what their role should be on delivering charge points going forward.

The EV sector is rapidly changing, and this strategy will need to be regularly reviewed and updated.

DOCUMENT STRUCTURE

Following this brief introduction, the report is structured as follows:

2. **Setting the scene:** relevant context including the role of EVs and their potential impacts on the electric grid
3. **Policy review:** outlines existing national and local policy relevant to electric vehicle charging
4. **Market review:** existing and emerging vehicle technologies, charging point infrastructure and related technologies.
5. **Somerset baseline review:** existing uptake of EVs and charging point infrastructure in Somerset.
6. **Stakeholder engagement:** summary of stakeholder engagement, issues and options raised
7. **Forecasting:** EV uptake forecasts specific to Somerset to inform the options appraisal.
8. **Recommendations:** Makes recommendations relating to the provision of EVs for the Somerset authorities to consider.

In this document the term electric vehicles is applied to refer to the following vehicle types:

Battery Electric Vehicles (BEV)

100% pure or battery electric vehicles are powered by a battery which drives the electric motor.

Plug in Hybrid Electric Vehicle (PHEV)

Plug-in hybrid or range-extended electric vehicles also have a conventional diesel or petrol engine to provide generating capability, meaning they can have a longer range than with a battery alone.

Fuel Cell Electric Vehicle (FCEV)

Hydrogen fuel cell electric vehicles have a fuel cell which uses hydrogen to produce electricity to power the drivetrain. They are currently significantly more expensive than other types of electric vehicle and face other barriers to widespread adoption.

2 SETTING THE SCENE

THE FUTURE OF MOBILITY

Over the last few decades our society has changed dramatically. How we work, learn, play, shop and stay healthy has radically shifted, largely due to the digitisation of many of our day-to-day activities.

In the not-too distant future, further changes bought upon by automation, cleaner transport, new business models, new modes, increasing availability of data and connectivity and a change in transport attitudes could have an even greater radical impact.

The potential for cleaner forms of transport, balancing supply and demand, and tailored to the customer could provide for a very different future for our built environment.

Figure 1 Future mobility diagram



Connected

Digital connectivity is already underpinning many of our daily activities where access to communications networks (fixed or mobile) is possible. Music, video and other streaming services are now available on the move and journey planning is readily available to all.

Equipping the transportation network with high quality, continuous digital connectivity will aid the delivery of capacity, safety and productivity benefits. Continuous connectivity also provides the foundations (in some use cases) for autonomous functionality. Digital connectivity will be essential in providing the digital backbone that will allow many other innovations to be fully developed in both mobility and wider applications across the economy.

Opportunities

- Improved safety through sharing of traffic / movement data
- Using 'big data' to manage supply and demand
- Improved productivity on the move
- Enhanced customer and user experience on the move
- Access to goods, services and activities irrespective of location
- Improved personal and community connectivity
- Reduced 'traditional' infrastructure needs (e.g. information, signals, signage)

Risks

- Cost of access / functionality precludes those with low incomes
- Danger of digital inequity, particularly in hard to reach and/or rural areas
- Potential reduction in face-to-face human interactions
- Resilience of digital networks, key to maintaining service
- No escape from always 'being connected'



- Dependence upon (in some cases) 3rd party communications infrastructure

Automated

The automated agenda is gathering pace with advances in computing power and sensor capabilities having led to well publicised advancements in road, rail, water and aerial technology. Automation in the transport sector will significantly impact how they function and perform as well as having potential impacts on place-making and utilisation of space.

Opportunities

- Potential safety benefits as a result of autonomous systems (between 80% and 95% of vehicle collisions are due to human error, depending on source)
- Productivity benefits on the move (with high levels of automation)
- Capacity benefits once large-scale fleet penetration is established
- Removal of humans from undesirable industrial applications
- Improved access to independent mobility for those currently excluded (the young, the elderly, the disabled)

Risks

- Inequality and social exclusion due to cost of access / ownership of autonomous vehicles and service models
- Disparity between urban and rural take-up and deployment for automated solutions.
- Automated systems would need to be fit for rural areas, such as navigating narrow lanes, absence of road markings and other potential hazards
- Potential trend to increase single occupancy and zero occupancy vehicles and resultant increased traffic
- Potential to reduce active transport

Electric & Alternatives

Alternative propulsion systems in transport are rapidly expanding. Fully electric and plug-in hybrid electric cars are readily available. Hybrid, electric and hydrogen buses are on the UK roads and hybrid, battery and hydrogen trains have been tested on the rail network. Battery shipping is also being trialled. Fuel cell vehicles (FCV) or fuel cell electric vehicles (FCEV), which generally use hydrogen instead of / in combination with a battery, are due to be available in the next few years. Advances in LGV and HGV technologies will see wider deployment of alternative fuelled freight including on railway.

E-bike sales are on the increase with electric bikes being used for personal and commercial cargo use, and the UK is beginning widespread trialling of shared e-scooters.

This shift away from fossil fuels, driven in part by policies such as taxation, low emission zones and the planned phasing out of petrol and diesel will lead to new infrastructure needs in terms of electricity generation, distribution and storage and in the case of hydrogen, new distribution and filling networks. There may also need to be different service operating patterns to allow for difference in fuelling frequencies. Whilst the benefits are obvious there will be challenges for rapid and wide scale deployment.

Opportunities

- Zero emissions at point of use and associated air quality improvements
- Reduced noise at point of use
- Reduced maintenance cycles and consumables
- Parked EVs could be an opportunity for V2G (vehicle to grid) and energy storage/balancing for a local community

Risks

- Exclusion from EV modes due to high vehicle costs and/or lack of off-street parking



- Current EV vehicles not suitable for all use cases
- Street clutter with EV charging infrastructure
- Impacts on and capabilities of local electricity grids
- Taxation impacts and associated incentives

Shared

Sharing of assets between users has been a developing and disruptive trend in transportation over the last few years. Facilitated by digital connectivity solutions match demand (customers) with supply (available assets or journeys) generally via app-based solutions. Many feature on-account payment systems streamlining the customer experience, and some encourage feedback or incentivise positive customer behaviours. Shared access to mobility solutions in the form of bike hire, car hire, taxi or pooled transit and bus offer people alternatives to 'owning' a car particularly in urban areas where services are accessible most of the time. Many shared mobility solutions are blurring traditional transport modes and testing existing regulatory and other frameworks.

Opportunities

- Provides alternative to low utilised vehicles
- Reduced dependency on the private car and could potentially reduce overall numbers
- Provides a suite of choices for different mobility needs and circumstances
- Provides sustainable solutions (in the case of bike hire)

Risks

- Impact of 'parked' assets on the built environment
- Competing suppliers in some areas confuses the overall offer
- Ease of engagement for new or traditional customers
- Dependency of app-based technology may exclude some

Business Models

With the trends above disrupting the traditional models of booking, paying for and access transport and mobility new business models are starting to emerge offering improved customer choice, flexibility and experience. Largely driven by underlying data aggregation such solutions not only simplify ticketing but also provide tailored and personalised travel information. In addition, bundled energy generation and storage solutions are being offered with new EVs offering a completely different mobility model.

Opportunities

- Truly seamless and integrated access to a choice of mobility solutions
- On account, single payment across multiple (or ultimately all) modes
- Improved operator understanding of customer choices
- Potential ability to balance supply and demand across all modes

Risks

- Public acceptance and willingness to use
- Privacy and data concerns
- Cyber security and fraud

Conclusion

These changes are already beginning to impact the shape and form of Somerset's workplaces and high streets. The Somerset Electric Vehicle Strategy aims to help Somerset County Council and the District Authorities reduce transport related emissions and make sure that transport is sustainable in the long-term. The Strategy can act also as a tie-in for boosting travel by active modes, increasing public transport uptake and help with the provision of interventions such as mobility hubs which could combine access to services.



THE ROLE OF ELECTRIC VEHICLES

The United Nations says we could have less than 10 years to limit a climate catastrophe. All Somerset councils and the Exmoor National Park Authority have now declared a climate emergency, aiming at working towards carbon neutrality by 2030.

The majority of emissions are generated by the most affluent citizens, both globally and at a local level. Across the UK, the highest income group has more than three times the household emissions of the lowest income group. Figure 2 shows UK household emissions from different sources by income decile. It shows that the most affluent in society have by far the largest share of transport emissions, primarily because of increased travel distances both by car and aviation.

The Somerset Climate Emergency Strategy (2020) states that transport is responsible for 46.5% of carbon dioxide emissions in Somerset and is the now the largest source of emissions nationally. EVs will have a significant role to play in tackling carbon emissions from transport, especially for longer distance trips and in more rural areas less well served by public transport.

Figure 3 shows car commuting trips by distance in Somerset. It shows that although over a third of car commute trips within Somerset are under 5km (approx. 3 miles) in length and within walking or cycling distance for many, these only account for 5% of car commute distance travelled. Many of these journeys come under the government aim that journeys of under 2 miles should be made on foot or by bike. Trips over 20km (12.5 miles) account for under a quarter of car commute trips, but account for 62% of the total car commute distance travelled and a similar proportion of carbon emissions.

Figure 2 UK household emissions from different sources by income decile (1 – lowest income households, 10 – highest income households) - Source: CSE (2019)

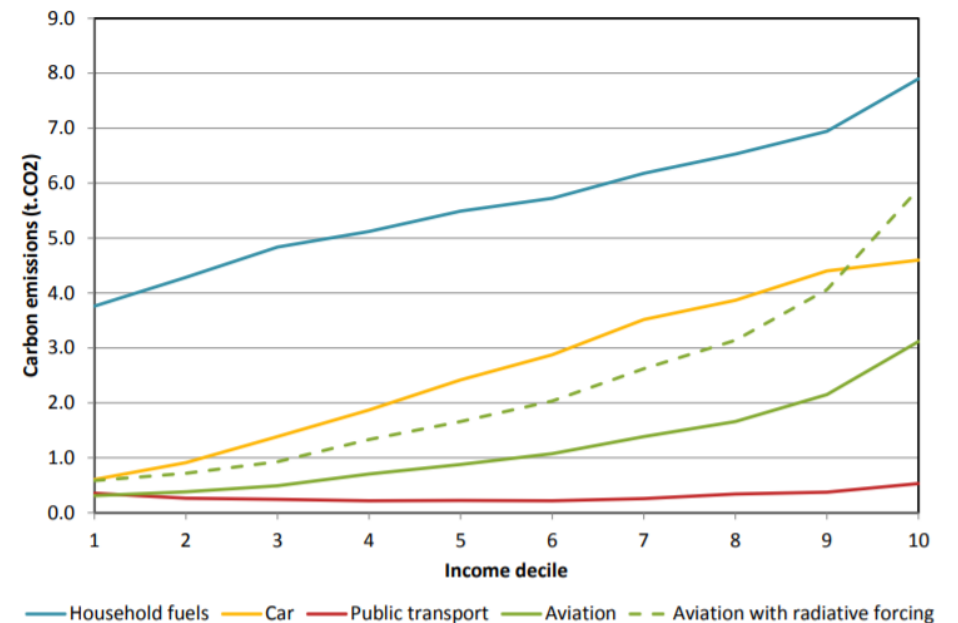
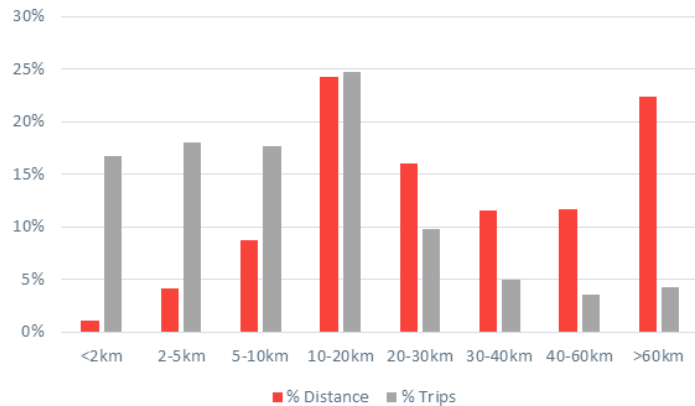


Figure 3 Commuting trips by distance in Somerset (Source: Census 2011)



Therefore, tackling longer distance trips offers the greatest potential for carbon reductions, and EVs can play a leading role. Locally EVs also have an important role in reducing harmful local air pollution, in the form of nitrogen dioxide, from our streets.

Whilst the EV sector has matured considerably over the past few years, it remains an emerging and fast changing market. It has long been recognised that key barriers to a transition to EVs is the lack of a comprehensive charging network, and the higher purchase price of the vehicles, as will be detailed in the EV questionnaire carried out by SCC graduates in Section 6.

ROLE OF PUBLIC CHARGE POINTS

EV charging infrastructure in Somerset needs to scale up significantly to enable the growth in EVs and meet personal and commercial charging needs. Research shows that the availability of publicly available EV charge points is currently a key factor affecting the decision to buy an EV. Research from Green et al (2020) published in Transport & Environment states that public charging infrastructure has both a tangible effect in reducing range anxiety (which is one of the biggest barriers to widespread EV adoption) and an intangible effect in signalling confidence in the emerging market.

Research from Transport Environment (2018) states that only 5% of charges are made at publicly available charge points, and as such a small number of public charge points are able to serve a relatively large number of EVs. Increases in battery size are likely to reduce the dependence on public charge points for some groups, however, this is likely to be offset by the widespread adoption of EVs by residents with no off-street parking who are dependent on public charge point infrastructure.

There is an element of ‘chicken and egg’ in this scenario as people want the security that there are sufficient charge points to make the switch. However, commercial charge point providers also want the security that there are enough EVs on the road to justify the investment in infrastructure. Research from Deloitte (2017) states that at present most charge points do not make a profit due to low EV adoption rates. Once an initial public charging network is in place to overcome range anxiety concerns, the link between the number of public charge points and the number of EVs becomes less clear.

IMPACT ON ELECTRIC DEMAND

In the UK, Distribution Network Operators (DNO) are responsible for the distribution of electricity from the transmission network to end users. Electricity is distributed at different voltages, which are stepped up and down using transformers at various substations. The analysis in this report considers “primary” substations, which generally have a higher voltage of 11kV or 6.6kV and “secondary” substations, which have a lower voltage of 400V and distribute electricity to domestic properties.

Individual chargers, such as single domestic or fast chargers typically have a demand of 3kW-7kW (single phase) to 22kW (three phase) and will typically connect to the low voltage network (240v AC). Individual chargers have the potential to overload the secondary substations if there is a cluster of chargers in the same street or estate, if demand is not managed.

Table 1 Types of charge point

Type	Typical Kilowatt per hour
Domestic (3 pin socket)	2.3
Slow charging point	3.7
Fast charging point	22
Rapid charging point	50
Ultra-rapid charging point	100

Large groups of chargers or rapid charging hubs will likely connect to the 11kV network or direct to primary substations.

The county of Somerset encompasses 61 primary substations, of which 80% are owned and operated by Western Power Distribution (WPD), whilst the remainder belong to Scottish and Southern Energy Networks (SEN).

The uptake of EVs across the county will increase the demand on the network. Electrification of other sectors including home heating, as use of gas is replaced with heat pumps and other technologies, will also increase demand on the grid. This may require reinforcements to be made to the electrical network to ensure that the grid can supply and match the nationwide demand. However, a large proportion of demand from EVs could be deferred through “smart charging.” This refers to charging stations monitoring, managing, and restricting the use of charging devices to optimize energy consumption shifting demand consumption away from periods where the energy network is busiest (peak demand).

Figure 4 Electric vehicles impact on energy demand

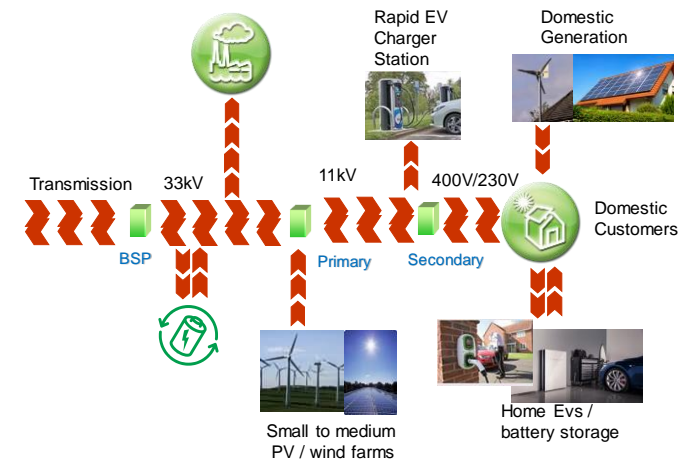


Figure 5 Typical EV charging profile (source: HM Government, Electric Vehicle Smart Charging, 2019)

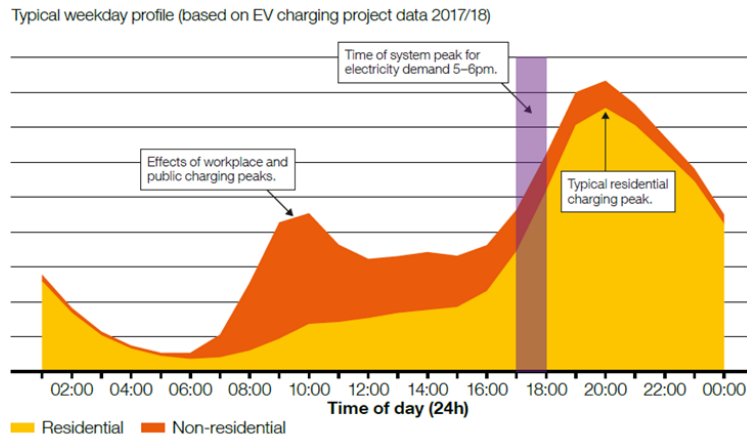
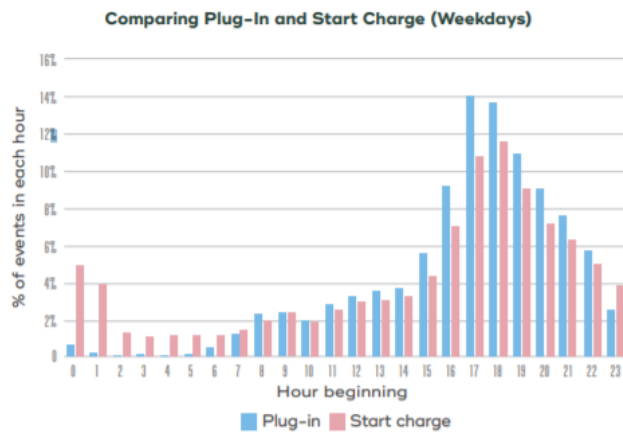


Figure 6 Residential charging profile (source: Electric Nation, Powered Up, 2019)



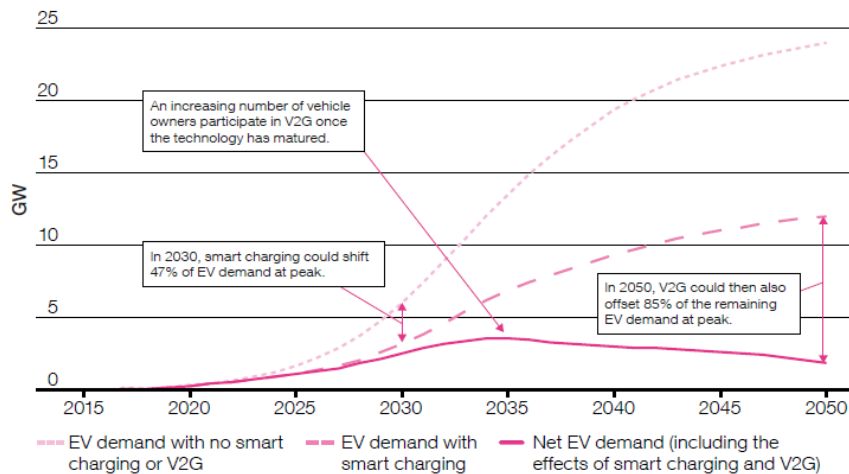
Various smart technologies have been developed which focus on tackling the problems associated with EVs and charging strategies. Smart EV charging can reduce grid constraints by, for example, utilising various Time of Use (ToU) tariffs – which offer cheaper electricity rates during off-peak hours (e.g. 12am – 5am).

Charging an EV during these hours offsets the demand of the customer and flattens the load demand profile. However, this is a fairly simple way of deferring demand and has the potential to create a new peak when the cost decreases. Smarter load deferring would involve communications between the network operator or potentially constrained equipment and chargers to reduce charging rates as appropriate.

If local renewable energy sources were to be used in conjunction with this technology it would reduce demand on local networks, providing a higher capacity for EV charging. Both technologies would be advantageous during a power outage (caused by storms, falling trees, vehicle collisions etc.) as (EV) battery storage could aid the supply of electrical demand through vehicle to grid (V2G) technology as described later in Section 4. Smart charging vehicles could enable the storage of roughly one fifth of GB’s solar generation for when this energy is needed.

Figure 7 Impact of smart charging and vehicle to grid solutions on EV electricity grid demand (source: National Grid, Future Energy Scenarios July 2020)

Community Renewables



batteries for energy storage purposes, and the development of a recycling industry for EV batteries, will all further enhance their sustainability.

The study also highlights that, contrary to some speculation, access to critical metals and rare earth minerals are not likely to be constrained in the coming decades, and so will not present a barrier to EV transition. However, supply of these materials will have to be closely monitored and diversified. The study notes that cleaning up road transport should not come at the price of the environmental catastrophes the oil industry has become familiar with, such as the Exxon Valdez or Deepwater Horizon oil spills, or the social and environmental damage in Nigeria. The study suggests the EV supply chain should be closely monitored, for instance through certification schemes.

Lifecycle impacts

A lifecycle analysis of Electric Vehicles by Transport & Environment shows that even when powered by the most carbon intensive electricity in Europe, they emit less greenhouse gases than an ICE vehicle. The additional carbon emissions during manufacture of the batteries are quickly offset during operation.

As more renewable electricity enters the grid, and as smart charging enables vehicles to charge overnight when grid emissions are lowest, the climate impact of EVs will further diminish.

Likewise, technological improvement of battery chemistry and battery energy (meaning more energy can be stored in smaller batteries), the reuse of EV



3 POLICY CONTEXT

This section summarises a review of relevant policies, plans, strategies and legislation undertaken with regards to Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs).

Nationally, central government has a key role to play in legislation for the emergence of EVs, in order to achieve national targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and improving air quality in the country as a whole.

The 2018 Automated and Electric Vehicles Act makes provision for the creation of regulations relating to the installation and operation of charging points for EVs.

The diagram overleaf gives an overview of national policy, strategy and legalisation.

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National Electric Vehicle incentives

Company car tax savings

From April 2020, zero emission cars pay no Benefit in Kind tax in 2020/2021, just 1% in 2021/22 and 2% in 2022/23, with savings of up to £1,000 per month compared to a petrol equivalent. With around half of new cars purchased as company cars, this represents a very effective way for government to encourage adoption of the lowest emission vehicles.

Plug-in Vehicle Grant Scheme

Residents of the UK are eligible to get a discount on the price of new electric vehicles:

- Cars – 35% of the purchase price up to £3,000 for cars less than £50,000 (inclusive of VAT and delivery fee's)
- Vans – 20% of the purchase price up to £8,000
- Large vans and trucks – 20% of the purchase price up to £20,000
- Motorcycles – 20% of the purchase price up to £1,500
- Mopeds – 20% of the purchase price up to £1,500
- Taxis – 20% of the purchase price up to £7,500

Green Fleet Reviews

Green Fleet Reviews are funded by the Department for Transport and are delivered by the Energy Saving Trust. These are provided at no charge for eligible organisations including SME businesses operating between 20 – 100 vehicles (cars/vans under 3.5 tonnes) based in England, as well as all public sector organisations in England.

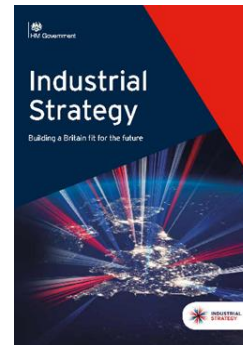
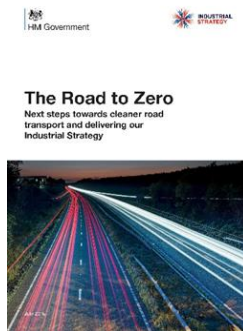
Road tax savings

Fully electric cars costing up to £40,000 are exempt from all road tax in the UK.

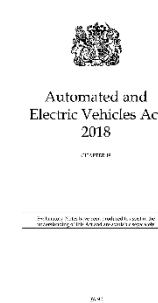
OLEV infrastructure grants

Detailed later in the document.

National policy and strategy



Legislation



Page 179

Outlines the approach the Government will take to reduce all sources of pollution, not just road transport pollution, leading to a healthier country.

Aims to cement the UK as a leader in the design and manufacturing of EVs. States that all new cars and vans to be zero emission by 2040, and almost every car to be zero emission by 2050.

The target for ending the sale of new diesel and electric was bought forward to 2035 at the COP26; and expanded to include hybrid cars and vans. Recent announcements from government hint that this could be brought further forward.

The NO₂ plan outlines the government's plan to bring NO₂ air pollution within its statutory limits in the shortest possible time.

It also outlines the aims and funding that the Government have committed to.

Sets out Grand Challenges to put the UK at the forefront of the industries of the future, including clean growth and the future of mobility.

This puts emphasis on cleaner economic growth from low carbon technologies and focusing on the UK's road network to dramatically reduce carbon emissions.

Details new opportunities and the implications of current travel trends across the whole transport system leading up to 2040, building four plausible future scenarios to help guide mobility decisions.

The Future of Mobility: Urban Strategy sets out the governments approach to to maximising the benefits from transport innovation in cities and towns.

The Act will enable consumers to benefit from improvements in transport technology.

The act will make provision for the creation of regulations relating to the installation and operation of charging points for electric vehicles.

Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV) have consulted on changes to Building Regulations to ensure every new home and new non-residential development with over 10 spaces has a charge point.

Proposals are fir all spaces at new homes to have a charge point and for at least one active charging point in existing non-residential buildings from 2025.



LOCAL POLICY CONTEXT

Local Authorities have a role to play in helping EVs to overcome these barriers, and in turn achieving their own objectives for improving local air quality and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Local Authorities have a variety of mechanisms for influencing EV uptake; as custodians of the local road network, the authors of policy, as planning authorities, land owners, fleet operators, asset managers, major local investors and influencers in their own right. The charging ecosystem is still evolving, with a range of charging technologies, formats and business models emerging. Their suitability for a user or area is subject to a wide range of factors, including:

- Population demographics and density;
- Land uses;
- Commuting patterns;
- The existing charging network;
- Availability of off-street parking; and
- Planned development.

As such the local context is often key in shaping this charging ecosystem, and typically requires intervention from the public sector to secure access to local authority managed roads and parking.

Somerset’s Climate Emergency Strategy (2020)

The Strategy is Somerset’s response to the Climate Emergency. Led by Somerset’s five Local Authorities, the strategy serves as:

1. An evidence base, setting out how our climate is changing and the challenges and opportunities we face
2. A policy document, outlining goals and ambitions for tackling Climate Change in Somerset
3. A high level action plan, setting out the critical actions needed

Four transport sector outcomes are set by the Strategy, comprising:

1. Change in Vehicle Types: By 2030, carbon emissions generated on Somerset’s roads are reduced through the change to electric vehicles, ultra-low emission commercial vehicles and an overall reduction in road use.
2. Behaviour Change: By 2030, carbon emissions from transport are reduced by encouraging and facilitating behaviour change, including reducing single occupancy vehicle journeys, increased public transport use, combining trips, and increased walking and cycling.
3. Adaptation Planning: To build and maintain the resilience of Somerset’s transport infrastructure.
4. Spatial Planning: Reducing the need for car travel through improved spatial planning, public transport options/availability and public service delivery

The Strategy notes that barriers and challenges to delivering these outcomes include: funding and capacity to deliver; lack of national standards for electric vehicle infrastructure; and, cost of electric vehicles preventing wider adoption.

Somerset County Council

Key Somerset County Council policies relating to EV charging are set out below. Overall, local policy is already supportive of EVs, with several policies including specific requirements to support the role-out of EVs. However, this could be strengthened in some areas, as set out in the recommendations in section 8.

Future Transport Plan 2011-2026 (2011), Somerset County Council

- SCC will consider how EVs, responsibly sourced biofuels, and other new technologies could help us meet our goals and challenges.

Parking Strategy (2013), Somerset County Council

- Developers will be encouraged to install electric charging points in new developments. (Policy PM2.4)
- Residential standards have been developed to ensure charge point provision is sufficient to meet the needs of both current and future occupiers including 16 amp charging points, or any future standardised equipment, for electric cars, (Policy PP2)
- Offer preferential parking spaces for disabled parkers and car sharers and/or EVs where appropriate. (Policy PP 3.3)
- Electric car charging facilities for on-street parking spaces will be encouraged. (Policy PM7.4)



Travel Planning Guidance (2011), Somerset County Council

- Developers must provide a proportion of car parking spaces (to be agreed on a case by case basis) in employment sites for dedicated uses such as car sharing and low carbon vehicles with EV charging points. (Policy TPG-TVS10)



Towards a Delivery Plan for Tourism in Somerset 2015-2020 (2015), Somerset County Council

- The delivery plan for tourism states that the ceremonial county of Somerset (i.e. including North Somerset) receives approximately 25.63 million day and staying visits per year, spending approximately £1.28 billion, supporting around 26,000 full time job equivalents
- Somerset's main assets are its attractive rural countryside and coastline (including seaside towns of Minehead and Burnham-on-Sea), together with a wide distribution of attractions and heritage sites (such as Glastonbury and Wells).
- There are some 184 visitor attractions, a number of which are quite sizeable such as the world renowned Cheddar Gorge and Caves. Around 30 sites in the County of Somerset receive over 50,000 visitors per year.
- Whilst the plan does not explicitly mention EV, the Delivery Plan aspires to promote the provision and use of public transport and other forms of sustainable travel. The plan notes that the current level of visit arrivals by car in Somerset (80%) is higher than the average for other destinations benchmarked through visitor surveys.

It should be noted that the policies described above are beginning to age and are due to be refreshed.

District Council and National Park Authority Policy

Key local authority policies relating to EV charging are detailed below.

Mendip District Council

- The Mendip District Council **Local Plan** (2014) does not make explicit reference to either EVs or de-carbonising transport.
- The Mendip District Council **Climate Emergency** (2020) document acknowledges MDC as one of 265 councils to have declared a 'Climate Emergency' and acknowledges commitment made to make best endeavours to enable the district to be carbon neutral by 2030. The document states that the transport sector accounts for 34% of Mendips carbon footprint and identifies that the number of ULEVs in Mendip stands at approximately 250 in 2018 (0.3% of all registered cars in the district.)
- The **Climate Emergency Plan** (2020) aims to support and enable the transition to zero emission transport in the district.
- A **report to cabinet** recommends authority is delegated to allow the Group Manager and Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services to undertake a procurement exercise seeking suppliers willing to apply EV charging infrastructure (for no more than 4 EV units across the district) at no cost to the council, focusing on areas where EV facilities are not in high concentration. The report recommends that above noted procurement will take account of the risks associated with exclusivity and agree a maximum exclusivity period of 5 years. This option would be considered to be in line with the Climate Change & Ecological Emergency Group (CEEG) action plan and as such would evidence to the public that the Council is looking to meet its noted commitment.
- The **electric vehicle infrastructure specification** states, in brief, that the supplier must:

- Deliver all infrastructure associated with charging EVs at no onward cost to the council in support of the infrastructure.
- Ensure that they can deliver a range of charging options to manage the needs of the district residents both now and in the future.
- The supplier must ensure that there is both a robust annual and a robust reactive maintenance plan in place.
- The council will explore all options associated with exclusivity (if required) arrangements for any land in its ownership including car park.



ADOPTED 15TH DECEMBER 2014

South Somerset District Council

- Policy TA1 of the **South Somerset Local Plan (2015)** states that all new residential / employment developments should provide for the charging of EVs with an external charging point of at least 16 amps.
- Policy YV5 states that car parking management at the Yeovil Sustainable Urban Extensions should give priority to EVs, low emission and shared vehicles and non-car modes to discourage car use for these short journeys. It should be noted that the Local Plan is currently under review. The Local Plan Preferred Options Consultation report indicates that the above policy approach is likely to be taken forward, although may evolve as new evidence emerges.
- The **SSDC Charging Point Locations & Specifications (2019)** report show that 23 locations have been identified as capable of delivering a grand total of 48 charging points subject to connection viability. These locations are aimed at covering numerous journey purposes in the largest towns in South Somerset (Yeovil, Chard, Crewkerne, Wincanton, Ilminster and South Petherton).
- The specification states that the EV charging point provider should deliver approximately 40 units across 20 sites by 2021, providing a range of charging options including ultra-fast charging vehicle grid charging for both alternate and AC/DC. The supplier is to own, maintain, operate and upgrade all network assets and take on all responsibility dealing with DNO's on grid access.

SOUTH SOMERSET LOCAL PLAN (2006 – 2028)



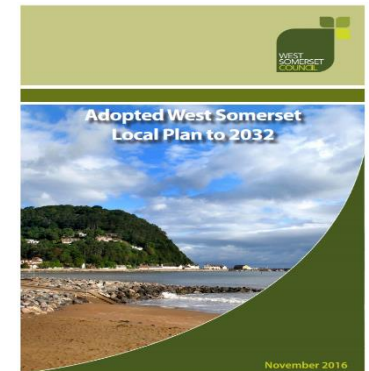
ADOPTED MARCH 2015



- The **SSDC Environment Strategy (October 2019)** commits SSDC to reduce their carbon emissions by 80% by 2030. SSDC aim to reduce their reliance on fossil fuels, reduce emissions, minimise waste and increase recycling and offset any residual carbon emissions.

Somerset West and Taunton District Council – Former Districts Local Plans

- Policy CP6 of **Taunton Deane Borough Council's Core Strategy (2012)** mentions that transport policy should help to mitigate climate change; but does not explicitly refer to EVs.
- Policy A2 sets requirements around travel planning, which may result in the need for charge points, but this is not explicitly required.
- Policy TR1 of **West Somerset District Council's Local Plan (2016)** sets requirements around travel planning, which may result in the need for charge points, but this is not explicitly required.
- SWT is now in the process of merging and renewing the former districts Local Plans. An Issues & Options Document consulted on in Spring 2020 gives clear direction of intent with regards to EVs and climate related policy more generally.
- Additional policy approach 1C/2 references the need to future proof new developments including the requirement to provide for EV charging in all new residential parking spaces.
- Additional policy approach 1C/4 references the need to support community de-centralised renewable energy schemes and micro-generation.





Somerset West and Taunton District Council – Emerging Plans for New District Council

- SWT is also in the process of developing a **Taunton Transport Strategy** to update and improve upon the **Connecting Our Garden Town** (2017) document.
- The **Garden Town Vision** (2019) document mentions the need to provide ‘*ample electric vehicle charging points in public places,*’ the need to ‘*de-carbonise transport and proliferate electric vehicles*’ and to provide ‘*charging points for electric vehicles in new neighbourhoods.*’
- SWT’s emerging **Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience Plan** will sit underneath the emerging Somerset Climate Emergency Strategy.
- A Framework CNCR Plan was consulted on in January 2020, clearly identifying the important role that EVs are likely to play in meeting our targets. The emerging “final” Action Plan will have a focus on Year One action and identification of broad Year 2+ route maps for key issues including EVs.

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Taunton: Connecting Our Garden Town

DRAFT FOR APPROVAL
DECEMBER 2017



www.taunton.uk.com





Somerset West and Taunton District Council – Electric Vehicle Projects

- SWT is currently administering a £20k **Community Charge Point Fund** (2020) which has been available for town and parish councils to apply to for grant funding to support installation of community charge points around the district. So far SWT have approved 4 schemes, 2 of which have been installed and gone live (Luxborough and Brushford). Some have now already been installed (e.g. Brushford).
- SWT has been chosen as the "Host Authority" for WPD's Electricity Network Innovation Competition winning DC Share project. This project will provide an opportunity to explore the utilisation of latent capacity in distribution networks and how distribution networks will provide rapid charging facilities at scale and in the locations where they are needed.
- SWT are working with the local transport authority (SCC) to identify ways to put the Taunton Park and Ride Service on an economically and environmentally sustainable footing. The strategic location of the Gateway P&R site in particular, as well as the potential for decarbonising the bus fleet, may present an opportunity for development of a fast charging hub that could help support the economic viability of the service.
- SWT has been approached by multiple charge point providers offering their various business models to install charge points on Council assets and share the profits. In response, the Council is in the process of exploring options and opportunities with regards to its car parks.

Sedgemoor District Council

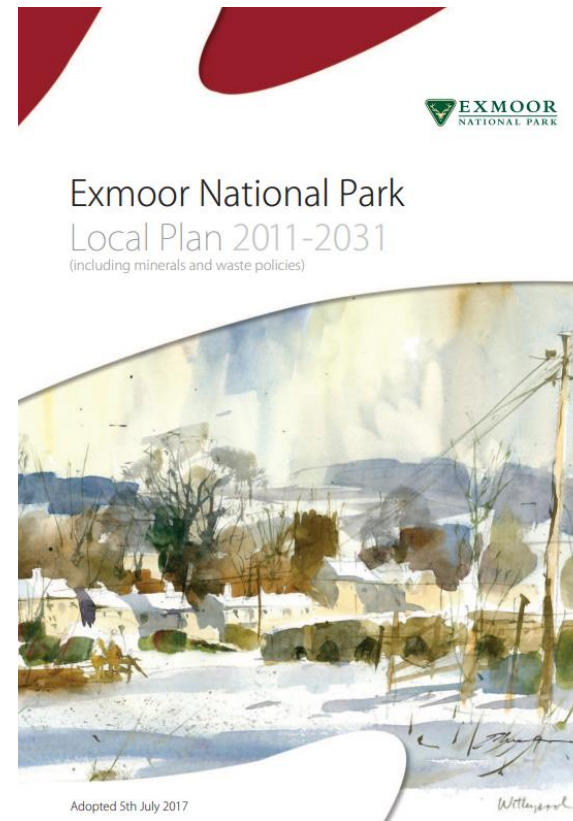
- EVs are not mentioned explicitly in the **Local Plan**. Policy S5 of the Local Plan states that developments should contribute to mitigating and adapting to climate change and reduce carbon emissions.
- Other planning policy documents produced by SDC were investigated for references to EVs and associated infrastructure. Section 1.27 of the **Sedgemoor 2050 Transport Investment Strategy Report** states that the District Council will require the promoting of sustainable transport measures through planning policies and guidelines for developers, including EV charging points.
- Policy EV1 states that Sedgemoor will support the transition to cleaner fuels through the provision of EV charging infrastructure and by encouraging developers to provide fast charging infrastructure for all forms of electric transport in domestic, commercial and public areas throughout Sedgemoor.





Exmoor National Park Authority

- Policy AC-S1 of the **Local Plan** states the National Park Authority will encourage sustainable modes of transport. Section 9.3 & Policy AC-D1 of the Local Plan states that the National Park Authority will encourage the provision of electric charging points in new developments where these are in keeping with local character (para 9.10 Local Plan p256)
- Policy AC-S2 states the street furniture should be constructed such that the beauty of the National Park is conserved/enhanced, using materials and finishes that are appropriate to the character of the National Park.
- Policy AC-D6 (Fixed Line Transmission Infrastructure) states that any development proposals that require electricity or telecommunication service lines will be expected to provide underground routing subject to policies CE-S1 Landscape and Seascape Character, CE-S3 Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure and CE-S4 Cultural Heritage and Historic Environment.



DNO POLICY CONTEXT

Scottish and Southern Energy Networks released an Electric Vehicle Strategy in March 2020 outlining their commitments to help the rollout of EVs with the overarching aim of decarbonising transport.

SSEN have committed to:

- Cut carbon intensity of electricity generated by 50% by 2030, compared to 2018 levels.
- Help accommodate 10million EVs in Great Britain by 2030
- Treble renewable energy output (to 30trillion Watts a year)
- SSEN will release these goals by the following principles:
 - Using data and analytics to anticipate issues, support decision making and make sure our networks are ready for EV uptake
 - Having a suite of tools (including self-connection tests, tourism hotspot analysis and offering active network management) available to support widespread EV uptake
 - Using Local Development Plans inform and establish strategic investment programmes
 - Using innovation, digitalisation, new skill sets and operational capabilities to meet the forecast growth
 - Supporting stakeholder and customer ambitions to decarbonise



Western Power Distribution released an Electric Vehicle Strategy in April 2020. As part of the strategy WPD have committed to the following commitments:

- Releasing existing network capacity – The existing network includes a finite amount of spare capacity to accommodate charging infrastructure. WPD have developed a heatmap of capacity at each local distribution transformer (as detailed for the study area in Section 5).
- Motorway services and major road filling stations – WPD have developed a NIA project to help fulfil the governments targets regarding major charging hubs at large fuel retailers.
- New and existing homes – WPD continue to evolve their practices to accommodate charging at new homes and to improve the methodology of retro-fitting capacity improvements to old homes
- On-Street Charging - To prepare the infrastructure required for charging WPD are expecting to provide bespoke street lighting mains cable in new streets.
- WPD are trialling emerging forms of charging including vehicle to grid, smart charging, and EV clustering.





4 MARKET REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

This section reviews market trends in relation to EVs, off-street and on-street charge point technology, upcoming developments, delivery approaches, and case studies setting out progress in neighbouring authorities and best practice in the UK and internationally.

VEHICLES

Electric vehicles

The registration of EVs is increasing year on year, with more makes and models coming to the market, costs decreasing, and range increasing. In the next few years it is expected we will reach the tipping point where a battery costing under \$100 (£78) per kilowatt hour will be developed. When this happens, the purchase price of EVs is expected to reach parity with, and then become cheaper, than the equivalent petrol or diesel vehicles, and uptake of EVs will increase dramatically. A second-hand EV market is already emerging, making the vehicles affordable for more people.

Declining battery costs and larger batteries are improving vehicle ranges and can also enable faster charging. Table 3 shows numerous vehicles with a range of over 300 miles, with 400-500 mile range vehicles expected to be announced soon. Longevity of batteries is also increasing, with most car batteries currently offering warranties for 60,000-150,000 miles. Contemporary Amperex Technology (CATL), a company that supplies many auto manufacturers, has recently claimed to have developed a battery that will last over a million miles.

In the UK, Government incentives include the plug-in vehicle grant, recent changes to the company car tax treatment of EVs, and the upcoming ban on petrol and diesel new cars sales currently planned for 2035, which are all likely

to further boost uptake in the short term. The number of EVs in the UK is still small, comprising less than 1% of the total car fleet and approximately 6% of new car sales in 2020. As the average car in the UK remains in use for around 13 years after purchase, there is a need to rapidly increase the uptake of EVs to meet all Somerset Councils carbon neutrality target for 2030.

Other emerging low carbon vehicle technologies

Whilst EVs could be considered the most well established emerging technology, it should be noted that there are other emerging fuels with the capability of decarbonising transport.

Hydrogen fuel cell powered vehicles emits pure water at the tailpipe and take the same amount of time to fill the tank as it would a petrol or diesel car and have a similar range. However, one of the main reasons why hydrogen fuel vehicles have not yet established a strong market is that (at present) the cost of vehicles is prohibitively expensive and public fuelling infrastructure is very sparse. The indicative fuel cost of travelling 100km (62.5 miles) by each 'fuel' type for a standard car is shown below; on the basis of a study done by AutoTrader in 2018.

**Table 2** Fuel costs to travel 100km by fuel type

Fuel Type	Fuel Cost	Cost per kw/ kg / litre	Fuel efficiency assumptions
Hydrogen	£11.40	£12 per kg	0.95kg per 100km
Electricity	£2.28	16 pence per kilowatt (approximate household rate) <i>Note: charging is free at some charge points or can raise to around 40 pence for rapid charge points.</i>	14.3 kWh per 100km
Petrol	£7.11	£1.27 a litre	5.6 litres per 100km
Diesel	£5.81	£1.32 a litre	4.4 litres per 100km

At present there are only 13 re-fuelling stations offering hydrogen fuel in the UK.

It is expected that as the technology improves and economies of scale can be achieved that the price of hydrogen fuel could decrease by as much as 70%; although this would still mean that electricity used to power EVs is cheaper per kilometre. The vast majority of hydrogen fuel is currently converted from natural gas, which has associated carbon emissions. In future commercial production of hydrogen via electrolysis from clean electricity sources offers the potential for zero carbon fuel.

There are other renewable forms of fuel (collectively referred to as biofuels including biogas). The supply of biofuels is measured annually as required under the Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation (RTFO). Figures for each reporting year are updated and published quarterly and revised several times until final.

In 2019, Renewable fuels made up approximately 5.1% of total road and nonroad mobile machinery fuel used. These fuels were commonly biodiesel (mainly made from used cooking oil) and bioethanol (mainly derived from feedstocks such as corn). Verified renewable fuels achieved an average greenhouse gas saving of 82% compared to the use of vehicles powered by petrol. It should be noted that biofuels do little to improve local air quality as nitrous oxide is still emitted in similar quantities per kilometre. This, combined with land-use impacts primarily in developing countries, is likely to inhibit the growth of the market going forward.

Cars

As of July 2020, there are over 130 models for sale in the UK, and it is expected that many more will be released over the coming year. There are models available at nearly all price points, ranging from the Renault Twizy at £7,000 to electric supercars such as the Rimac C Two at almost £2 million.

Most electric car manufacturers are now focusing on BEV production in the medium term, shifting away from petrol and diesel, and also from PHEV cars which are being made redundant by increasing battery range. Table 3 shows a selection of ULEVs established on the UK market in the 2020s.

Table 3 Selected recently released and upcoming EVs






Make	Model	Release date	Indicative price*	Type	Battery size (kWh)	Zero Emission Range (miles)	Slow (3.7kWh) charging time (hrs)	Fast (7Wh) charging time (hrs)	Rapid (50kWh) charging time (hrs)	Government Grant Eligibility
Audi	e-tron GT	2021	£100,000	BEV	90	255	24.5	13.0	1.8	No
Audi	Q4 e-tron	2020	£47,000	BEV	82	260	22.0	11.5	1.6	No
DS (Citroen)	Crossback E-Tense	Jan-20	£32,350	BEV	50	199	13.5	7.0	1.0	Yes
Kia	Soul EV 39 kWh	2020	£28,000	BEV	39	172	10.5	5.5	0.8	Yes
Nissan	Leaf mk2	2018	£22,000	BEV	40	235	11.0	5.5	0.8	Yes
Mini	Electric	Mar-20	£24,400	BEV	30	144	8.0	4.5	0.6	Yes
Peugeot	e-2008 SUV	2020	£30,000	BEV	50	170	13.5	7.0	1.0	Yes
Peugeot	e-208	2020	£26,500	BEV	50	211	13.5	7.0	1.0	Yes
Polestar	2	Mar-20	£49,000	BEV	78	311	21.0	11.0	1.6	Yes
Porsche	Taycan	2020	£120,000	BEV	96	245	26.0	13.5	1.9	No
Renault	Zoe	2020	£28,800	BEV	52	245	14.0	7.5	1.0	Yes
Seat	Mii Electric	Feb-20	£16,000	BEV	37	162	10.0	5.5	0.7	Yes
Skoda	CITIGOe iV	Jan-20	£16,000	BEV	37	165	10.0	5.5	0.7	Yes
Skoda	Vision iV	2020	£30,000	BEV	83	310	22.5	12.0	1.7	Yes
Tesla	Semi	TBC	£135,000	BEV	1000	600	270.5	143.0	20.0	Yes
Tesla	Roadster	2020	£170,000	BEV	200	620	54.0	28.5	4.0	No
Tesla	Model 3	2019	£40,500	BEV	50	250	13.5	7.0	1.0	Yes
Tesla	Model Y (Long Range)	2021	£47,000	BEV	75	336	20.5	10.5	1.5	Yes
Vauxhall	Corsa-e	2020	£26,490	BEV	50	211	13.5	7.0	1.0	Yes
Volvo	XC40 Electric	2020	£49,000	BEV	75	245	20.5	10.5	1.5	Yes
VW	ID.3 Long Range	2020	£37,000	BEV	82	295	22.0	11.5	1.6	Yes



Taxis

Electric Hackney Carriages, such as the London Electric Vehicle Company TX and the Nissan Dynamo, can now cost less than petrol and diesel equivalents once running costs, maintenance, and other costs are considered. Table 5 below is based on data from The Low Emission Taxi Guide (LowCVP 2018), and compares the total running costs of BEV, PHEV, and ICE taxis, assuming 30,000 miles driven per year over four years.

Table 5 Selected recently released and upcoming EVs

	 Nissan Leaf Acenta 40kW	 Hyundai Ioniq 1.6h GDI Premium PHEV	 Skoda Octavia 1.6 TDI S	 LEVC TX	 LTI/LTC TX4
Fuel Type	BEV	PHEV	ICE	PHEV	ICE
Fuel cost (4 years)	£5,020	£10,380	£11,744	£10,852	£24,376
VED cost (4 years)	£0	£390	£585	£390	£3,110
Vehicle price (OTR)	£25,190	£25,345	£19,810	£55,599	£45,955
Total (4 years)	£30,210	£36,115	£32,139	£66,841	£73,441

Taxi licencing is the remit of local authorities, meaning there are around 350 taxi licencing authorities in the country. There are currently no national minimum standards and licencing authorities may develop their own policies.

Private Hire Vehicles may be licensed anywhere and operate anywhere providing the driver, vehicle and operator are licensed by the same licencing authority. Hackney Carriages must do more than half of their business within the licencing authority. Coordination is needed at the national level to develop a joined up national strategy for taxi licencing to promote electric taxis.

Current taxi licencing policy in Somerset requires all licensed hackney carriages to be wheelchair accessible. Several authorities have a minimum requirement for a minimum 1250cc engine, which could currently exclude the use of EVs.

Vans

There are several electric vans already available, such as the Renault Kangoo ZE. Electric vans are currently marketed as a “last mile” delivery option, and while purchase costs are still high, this is offset by lower running costs. The number of larger electric vans available is set to increase substantially over the next few years with Citroen, Ford, Man, Mercedes and Volkswagen among those launching new models soon. The Arrival electric van has secured a £340 million order for UPS for 10,000 vehicles.

Business users benefit from favourable tax rates for electric vans, including up to £8,000 off list price from the Government Plug-in Van Grant.

Heavy Goods Vehicles

For Heavy Goods Vehicles there are a number of emerging technologies, with a range of options in early stages of development and deployment.

Tesla are planning to release an all-electric Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) in 2020, which the company claim will have a 600-mile range when fully loaded with 36 tonnes of cargo. New high speed “Mega chargers” will allow the trucks to add about 400 miles in 30 minutes. However, the 44 tonne weight limit in the UK means the weight of batteries required is likely to be a significant barrier, reducing the available storage capacity per vehicle.

In Germany, trials are underway to test overhead lines on strategic roads so that HGVs can charge on-route and allow for smaller battery sizes and increased loads. The Centre for Sustainable Road Freight has suggested that a UK equivalent would cost £19.3 billion and could recap that cost in 15 years through electricity sales.

Hydrogen fuelled HGVs could potentially offer increased range, maintain load capacities, and minimise time spent re-fuelling. Compared to diesel powered HGV overall maintenance costs are cheaper (as they are for electric trucks) because there are fewer moving parts. The disadvantage of hydrogen powered



HGVs is that, at present and as recapped in Table 2, the fuel cost is prohibitively expensive. As the cost and sustainability of hydrogen fuel improves it is thought it will play a substantive role in the HGV fleet going forward. Hyundai are currently trialling hydrogen fuel cell powered HGV's in Switzerland; delivering 1,600 trucks between 2020 and 2025.

Buses

Electric buses are already operating on the roads of London and other areas of the UK, with electric buses operator and/or manufactured by companies such as Optare, Wrightbus, Volvo and Irizar. In 2020, local authorities were invited to apply to become the UK's first all-electric bus town, which will be awarded up to £50m funding to convert its entire bus fleet to electric. The Confederation of Passenger Transport, which represents most bus operators in the UK including the big five firms (Arriva, FirstGroup, Go Ahead, National Express and Stagecoach), has pledged to buy only ultra-low or zero emission buses from 2025 onwards for markets in the UK.

In Bristol, First have two hybrid electric buses operating with GPS technology enabled such that the buses run on electric only mode in areas of low air quality. These buses charge at a wireless induction plate installed at UWE's Frenchay Campus. Additional biomethane powered busses have been introduced on routes across Bristol in 2020 after the implementation of such buses on the Number 2 bus route in the city.

In Somerset, it is anticipated that bus vehicle charging would initially be undertaken by the bus operators at their depots at charge points they own and maintain. This option is thought to be the less costly and would allow overnight charging. However, other options including terminal/layover charging, hydrogen fuel and bio-gas fuel solutions that can be zero carbon (also trialled in Bristol) may also warrant consideration.

E-bikes and micro-mobility

E-bikes are growing in popularity and can help achieve carbon neutral transport goals, making it easier for people to switch to cycling and increasing the distances it is possible to cycle. In 2019, Co-bikes launched the UK's first on-street electric bicycle hire scheme in Exeter, with plans to expand to new sites across the city including at additional rail stations, new housing developments and key employment hubs. E-bikes charge from a normal 3-pin socket and have minimal charging infrastructure requirements. Many e-bikes are equipped with a 36V battery, taking approximately 4 hours to fully charge with a 3-pin socket.

Privately owned e-scooters are currently illegal on public roads in Great Britain as they do not comply with a number of legal requirements. As of 4th July 2020, rental e-scooter are legal on public roads subject to some strict conditions. Some local authorities have received government backing to trial schemes for a 12 month period, with TROs changed by the highways authority for designated trial areas only for scooters provided by an e-scooter rental provider only and not for private owners. Trial areas include Taunton, Yeovil, Milton Keynes, Greater Norwich, and Gloucestershire. The government is currently reviewing the regulations as part of its Future Transport Programme. As with e-bikes, domestic e-scooters are charged through a standard 3-pin socket. However docked, rental versions may have proprietary solutions.

E-motorcycles and e-mopeds are also coming to the market, with existing manufacturers including BMW, and models from Harley-Davidson and Ducatti expected in the early 2020s. E-motorcycles currently represent less than 0.2% of all registered motorcycles in the UK and may remain a niche vehicle type for some time to come.












OFF-STREET CHARGE POINTS

The range of charging solutions for EVs is evolving rapidly and reflects the ongoing technological developments and increasing investment in this market. The suitability of a particular charging technology is dependent on a wide range of factors, including the use case of the individual, their vehicle type, the type of location and the available power supply. The table below provides a summary of the key charge point types currently available.

Most EVs are supplied with two cables for slow and fast AC charging; one with a three-pin plug and the other with a Type 2 connector charger-side, and both fitted with a compatible connector for the car's inlet port. These cables enable an EV to connect to most untethered charge points, while use of tethered units require using the cable with the correct connector type for the vehicle.

Table 6 Off-Street Charge Point Types

Picture	Charge Point Types	Power Output	Supply Type	Socket / Plugs	Connector types	Typical Charge Rates (per KWh)	Typical use-case
	Domestic Socket	2.4 kW	AC	Type 1/2	Type 1 	<u>Typical domestic rates</u> ~14p flat tariff ~5p off peak	Not recommended (for occasional use by visitors or a back-up)
	Slow	3.7 kW	AC	Type 1/2	Type 2 	Can be paid to charge if linked to feed-in-tariff renewables or using time of use tariffs <u>Typical commercial charge point rates</u> ~20-30p	Home
	Standard	7.4 kW	AC	Type 1/2			Home & Long stay destination
	Fast	11-22 kW	AC	Type 2	CHAdeMO 	Free at some sites Some sites include parking charges	Short stay destination
	Rapid	43 kW	AC	Type 2	CCS 	~Up to 50p	Short stay destination & On-route
		20-50 kW	DC	CHAdeMO / CCS			
	Ultra-rapid	100 kW+	DC	Type 2		~Up to 50p	



Key considerations

Installation costs

The costs of installing charge points are typically significantly lower for new builds as opposed to retrofits of existing sites, particularly where trenching would otherwise be required. Costs can be split in to charge point unit costs, grid connection costs, and ongoing operating and maintenance costs.

Typical unit costs for new build slow, standard, and fast charge points range from £1,000 to £5,000 with 7kW wall mounted chargers at the lower cost end, and 22kW dual ground mounted chargers at the higher end. Rapid chargers are significantly more expensive, typically between £15,000 and £25,000 for the unit itself. There are typically opportunities for cost reductions through negotiated deals with suppliers, often linked to wider commercial agreements, or through bulk-buying.

There can be significant variability in the grid connection costs, subject to the local conditions and available power supplies as shown in Figure 7. Where grid reinforcement is needed costs can quickly escalate, and in some cases a new substation is needed costing hundreds of thousands of pounds. In these cases, it is often advisable to find an alternative site. Due to the large power requirements, rapid chargers are most likely to require significant grid upgrades. Smart charging, load balancing, on-site generation and renewables and battery storage can all help to reduce grid connection costs.

Annual operating and maintenance costs will also vary by site and by size of network but are typically in the region of £200-£300 per annum per charge point.

Figure 8 Illustrative DNO costs and timescales (source: UK EVSE Making the right connections (2019))

Small (up to 70kVA)	Medium (200kVA - 1,000kVA)	Large (above 1,000kVA)
Number of charge points		
1-3 Fast or 1 Rapid	10-50 Fast, 4-20 Rapid or 1-6 Ultra-Rapid	50+ Fast, 20+ Rapid or 6+ Ultra-Rapid
Approximate Connection Time		
8-12 Weeks	8-12 Weeks	6 Months +
Approximate Connection Cost		
£1,000 - £3,000	£4,500 - £75,000	£60,000 - £2 million
Other Consideration Affecting Cost		
- Street work costs	- Street work costs - Legal costs for easement and wayleaves	- Street work costs - Legal costs for easement and wayleaves - Planning Permission - Space for a Substation



Smart charging

All charge points deployed in the UK must now be capable of smart charging in order to access grant funding. Smart chargers enable active communications between the charging point and the car (so called Mode 3 charging), which requires suitable mobile network coverage in the area in order for these chargers to be implemented. This communication includes information on the available charge rates, the ability for the car to instruct the charging point to turn off the power when the car is fully charged and can enable faster charging. Crucially, smart chargers can also enable charge scheduling, so for example, users can benefit from lower electricity prices by charging overnight and provide usage reports. From a wider grid balancing perspective. It will also be possible to control groups of chargers to manage demand in peak periods. They also enable remote diagnostics, and remote resolution of technical faults by the back-office support team. Much like a smart phone, their connectivity means they are able to receive “over the air” (OTA) updates to software, to ensure they are kept up to date, and can account for subtle differences in how new vehicles to market behave while charging or benefit from the rollout of software enhancements or new product features.

Scalability

Scalability is a key consideration in ensuring that beyond the initial tranche of charge points installed, additional points can be added later, in line with demand. If the first units that are installed are dumb sockets rather than smart chargers, and not able to optimise their use of the available electricity supply, this will significantly limit the number of additional charge points that can be added, before a costly upgrade will be required to the grid connection.

Load management & phase balancing

Load management is a critical function in supporting scalability. The charging station automatically divides the available power over the vehicles that are actively charging, potentially delaying the need for expensive grid upgrades. This maximises the number of vehicles that can charge simultaneously, while

enabling faster charging when only a small number of vehicles are charging. Dynamic load managing of the power usage can reduce the load by around two-thirds relative to a static load managed installation. Phase balancing works in a similar way and the charge point is able to balance the load across a 3-phase electric supply, selecting the phase with the most space capacity.

Technical Standards

The Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV) have produced minimum technical specifications for a range of charge points types including workplace and home charge points, and on-street charge points (unrestricted and access restricted to residential use).

Relevant British Standards include BS 61851 Electric vehicle conductive charging system and BS 62196 Plugs, socket-outlets, vehicle connectors and vehicle inlets. Installations should also be accordance with IET Wiring Regulations (BS 7671) and the recommendations of the IET Code of Practice for Electric Vehicle Charging Equipment Installations (as amended). For lamppost charge points, regulatory approval for working in the UK with unmetered supplies is also required.

Open Charge Point Protocol

The Open Charge Point Protocol (OCPP) is an application protocol for communication between EV charging stations and a central management system, also known as a charging station network, similar to cell phones and cell phone networks.

From 2019 the use of OCPP (or equivalent) is required for new chargepoints in the UK. The aim of OCPP is to improve the user interface of charging stations and increase interoperability between providers; avoiding a situation where an EV user has to have many different applications on a mobile device in order to use nearby charge points.

The latest version of OCCP (v2.0.1) integrates ISO 15118, which allows for 'plug-and-go' charging (i.e. no additional user authorization needed in the form of an app) and enables co-ordination across projects using a small number of preferred suppliers / delivery partners.

Enforcement and Signage

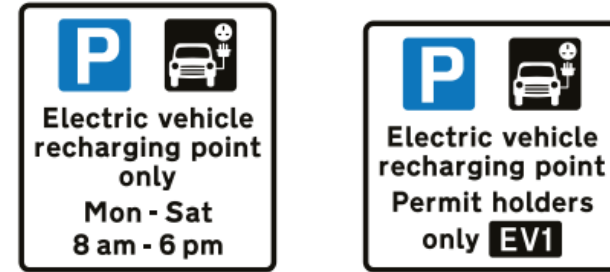
The Somerset Councils already have the enforcement powers necessary to enforce on-street and off-street EV charging bays under current legislation (Traffic Management Act), including contravention code 14 for on-street parking, and contravention code 71 for off-street parking. To enable enforcement, a relevant Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) must be put in place by the local authority.

For on-street parking, some local authorities have marked out dedicated EV Charging Bays, supported with an accompanying TRO to enable enforcement. However, the TRO process adds cost, uncertainty, and delay to the installation process, and a range of options to avoid the use of TROs could be considered, including clustering on-street charge points to help ensure that one is available when needed.

Relevant signage and bay marking for on-street EV bays is set out in Chapter 3 (Figure 13-44) of the Traffic Signs Manual. An on-street parking place may be reserved for EVs, with examples of the relevant signage shown below.

Some authorities including Bristol City Council are preparing bespoke design guidance for EV charging bays to promote best practice and ensure high quality design.

Figure 9 Examples of EVCP signs (source: Traffic Signs Manual Figure 13-44)



Upcoming developments

There are a number of upcoming developments for charge points, as more innovative solutions are sought to further encourage the uptake of EVs. These new charging innovations should be monitored but are not currently mainstream options.

Inductive charging

The wireless system uses the principle of electromagnetic induction. A magnetic field generated by an alternating current in a nearby secondary coil (the EV). The charging pads can be embedded within parking bays. Whilst inductive charging technologies have been around for a number of years, the issues have always been cost and efficiency. A lack of standardisation and interoperability means bespoke kit is required for each vehicle type which does not come as standard on vehicles. The market is however beginning to catch up with the technology in this area and in the medium term may begin to be more prevalent for off-street charging. In Bristol an inductive charging solution is used to serve the two hybrid-electric buses operating route 72 and the number 7 route in Milton Keynes charges close to its termini.

Mobile Charging

In 2018 BP invested in US-based manufacturer FreeWire Technologie, the founder of the Mobi mobile charger units. The units are pre-charged, then wheeled over to the vehicle in need of charging. Their models include a 15kW and 50kW DC model. The most likely application for these units are as part of a concierge service and in workplaces.

Vehicle to Grid (V2G)

V2G enables certain EVs to feed electricity back into a home, workplace, or grid, when demand is at its highest, before then charging at off-peak times

during the day or night. In effect, using an EV as a portable energy storage system, enabling the user to generate revenues when cars are parked (the majority of the time). Energy company EDF offers V2G revenue to participating businesses and is aiming to roll this out to residential customers soon. However, EV owners will need to consider the higher price of a V2G charger, and current uncertainty amount impacts on battery life that several trials are exploring further. The wider application and benefits of the technology are currently being explored in several UK trials, with National Grid suggesting just 2% of EVs will provide V2G services by 2030.

Battery Swap

A number of companies, including NIO in China, are exploring battery swap technologies ecosystems. This is because, in part, because as EV ranges increase and batteries get larger, ultra-rapid charging becomes more challenging.



Left: A drive through battery swapping facility



Right: Mobile charging unit to allow for charging away from a chargepoint



Co-location with battery storage and renewable generation

The current indicative cost of installing a 50kW rapid charge point is highly dependent on the connection costs which may include grid upgrades. High grid upgrade costs are likely to become an even greater issue as more charge points are added per site, and with higher power capacities. Installing batteries at the rapid charging sites is a method of avoiding these costly grid upgrades.

The batteries act as a buffer, charging at a low rate during off-peak times or when on-site renewable generation is available, and then discharging to support the grid connection when demand exceeds the site's capacity limit. This enables the charging site to access low cost electricity, while the revenues could also be supplemented through using the batteries to provide grid services.

Through the DC Share project in Taunton and a project at Exeter Services, Western Power Distribution are exploring alternative ways to minimise grid connection costs associated with rapid charge points.

ON-STREET CHARGE POINTS

As with off-street charging, the range of on-street charging solutions for EVs is evolving rapidly and reflects the ongoing technological developments and increasing investment in this market. The table below provides a summary of the key charge point types currently available.

Table 7 Established On-Street Charge Point Options






Picture	Charge Point Types	Power Output	Typical Charging Duration (40 kw battery)	Typical Installation Costs	Access type	Commercial Maturity	Advantages / Disadvantages
	Conventional freestanding public charger	3.5 – 22 KW	2 – 11 Hours	Approximately £10,000 (incl. unit, civils and electricity connection)	Public	Established	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Familiar charging method for existing ULEV owners Relatively easy to install and upgrade Can support fast and rapid charging speeds Additional street clutter that may negatively impact pedestrians Needs to be cited such that wires are as unobtrusive as possible Previous case studies have highlighted issues with vandalism
	Lamppost	3.5 – 5.5 KW	11 Hours	Approximately £2,000 for retro-fitting (incl. unit, civils and electricity connection; with no capacity constraints)	Public	Established	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cost effective to install, although may require upgrades to street lighting cables Makes use of asset which is already installed and maintained Little additional space requirements A small accompanying charging bollard can be used for lampposts at the rear of the footway to avoid trailing wires Limited number of lampposts limits the total number of charge points Less flexibility when installing to suit existing parking situations

Table 8 Emerging On-Street Charge Point Options

Picture	Charge Point Types	Power Output	Typical Charging Duration (40 kw battery)	Typical Installation Costs	Access type	Commercial Maturity	Advantages / Disadvantages
	Emerging solutions including "Connected Kerb" and Pop-up chargers	7 KW	6 Hours	Not available	Public	Not established	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Potentially overcomes street clutter issues associated with other on-street options, particularly for historic and sensitive locations or locations where mobility could otherwise be impaired by conventional chargers ▪ Can be used to monitor local real time traffic and air quality data ▪ Not established in the market and technology still at trial stage ▪ Concern over trip hazard and equity of access for elderly / infirmed for some technologies
	Cable cover from residential charge point	3.5 – 7kW	6- 11 hours	Starting £300 for unit and cable cover	Private	Improvised solution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Could be installed by residents ▪ Enables access to lower domestic energy prices, reducing vehicle running costs ▪ Concerns over street access for pedestrians if these are commonplace They can constitute a trip hazard and cause issues for wheelchair users, pushchairs and other groups ▪ Risk of public indemnity to resident and local authority ▪ Requires a guaranteed parking space outside of property for regular use
	Covered duct/cable channel from residential charge point	3.5 – 7kW	6-11 hours	Approximate £1,800 (incl. unit and civils)	Private	Improvised solution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Similar to the cable cover option above, however, this option creates a more even footway, reducing issues for wheelchair users, pushchairs and other groups ▪ Risk of public indemnity to resident and local authority

Case study: Oxford on-street charging trials

Between 2017 - 2019 Oxford City Council and Oxfordshire County Council trialled five on-street electric vehicle charging technologies across 28 locations on public streets via OLEV funding.

Oxford City Council developed a bespoke concessions framework that considers the relatively lower income generated by on-street chargepoints. The Council will retain ownership of the chargepoints, which are leased to a commercial operator for four year periods. All units are Open Charge Point Protocol (OCCP) compliant, ensuring they are compatible with a single back-office system provider. The following on-street options were trialled:

- 29 lamppost chargers on 11 streets. No dedicated bays were allocated.
- Three types of bollard charger
- Home charger
- Co-wheels electric car club vehicle, with a dedicated bay.

Key findings from the trial were:

- **Lamppost chargers performed best.** They are a low cost solution which proved popular amongst users, being reliable and easy to use. Even when sited away from the kerb, the existing electricity supply can be directed through a paired small bollard or cable channel. Promotional signage should be deployed to boost usage and promote uptake.
- **Privately funded home chargers and cable channels should be encouraged with clear guidance for installation.** There were no reports of trips or accidents associated with trailing cables.
- **The business case for installing on-street charging bollards in residential areas considered in not currently attractive.** The requirement for new electric grid connections, dedicated parking bays, make the cost of installation high when compared with lamppost conversions or home chargers. Over the course of the trial the free-standing bollard chargers were subject to a high level of vandalism, ranging from graffiti to critical damage.
- **TROs were perceived negatively by many stakeholders and residents, and were cited as the cause of substantial delays during the trial.** Several options are available for local authorities to avoid issuing TROs. These include deploying multiple installations simultaneously; encouraging residents to negotiate parking themselves; and the use of informal arrangements such as advisory signage. Where a TRO was put in place, signage caused confusion, particularly when EV bays were within a Residents Parking Zone.

Lamppost chargers

Type: Ubitricity Lamppost Charger
 Power output: 3.2 – 5.5kW
 Access: Accessible with smart cable only.
 Payment: Ubitricity payment account
 Features: Can be retrofitted into existing lampposts. 1 socket per installation. 3 per site.



Bollard chargers

Type: Zeta Smartscape Charging Bollard
 Power output: 7.2kW
 Access: RFID card and app access
 Payment: New Motion payment account
 Features: Slim-line design suitable for narrow footways. 1 socket per bollard. This is a prototype, developed by a local Oxfordshire company.



Type: eVolve e-Post Charging Bollard
 Power output: 7.4kW
 Access: RFID card and app access
 Payment: New Motion payment account
 Features: Instructions available on-screen. 2 sockets per bollard.



Type: Chago Station Charging Bollard
 Power output: 7.4kW
 Access: RFID card and app access
 Payment: New Motion payment account
 Features: Load balancing available to manage output. 2 sockets per bollard.



Home chargers

Type: APT eVolt Home Charger and Cable Channel
 Power output: 3.7kW
 Access: Smart energy meter
 Payment: Domestic electricity tariff
 Features: Resident can use own home power supply



CASE STUDIES – NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL

This section explores national and international best practice for EV charging projects. Case studies more local to Somerset can be found in the following section discussing delivery approaches.

UK

In the UK, London is leading the way, with 3% of new car sales in 2018 registered as an EV (national average of 2%) in 2018 and 0.8% of the total vehicle fleet (national average of 0.5%) being electric. Elsewhere, most local authorities delivering EV charge points have received significant funding from OLEV. For example, Nottingham City Council have launched 'Go Ultra Low Nottingham' initiative to help support the uptake of ULEVs in the wake of being awarded £6.1 million by OLEV.

Nottingham is installing over 400 charge points to support the switch to EVs, has the UK's first Bus and ULEV lane, converted a significant proportion of the Council fleet to EV, launched an electric taxi 'try before you buy' scheme, and a local authority run ULEV service centre. The Council will be providing a procurement pack and toolkit to assist other local authorities with EV rollout.

North of the border Dundee is leading the way; with the city having one of the highest concentrations in the UK. Dundee City Council has installed 4 x 50kw chargers and 14 x 22kw chargers into the surrounding region meaning that you are never more than 20 minutes from a public EV charging point. In Falkirk, WSP recently supported delivery of the largest EV charging station in Scotland, with capacity for 26 electric vehicles (10 rapid 50kW, and 16 fast 22kW), generating 30% of its power from a solar canopy over the car park.

Additional UK case studies can be found in the 'Procuring electric vehicle charging infrastructure as a local authority' document produced in 2019 by the Energy Saving Trust.

Taxi Fleets (OLEV funded)

A number of authorities have included conversion of taxi fleets in the OLEV funded projects, including:

- West Yorkshire – taxi and private hire drivers can book time slots at new charge points, in one of the biggest charge points for taxi projects outside London
- Birmingham – taxi drivers will be offered a payment grant towards the purchase or lease of a ULEV taxi. The council is also looking to purchase a fleet of ULEV taxis to lease.
- Coventry – Taxis receive preferential charge point rates and discounts



Norway

Norway is the world leader in the adoption of electric cars. The country has set a 2025 deadline for a ban on new petrol and diesel cars. The progressive tax system makes most EV models cheaper to buy compared to a similar petrol model, even if the import price for EVs are much higher. This is why the Norwegian EV market is so successful compared to any other country. Petrol and diesel vehicles are also subjected to increased taxation through low emissions zones, residential parking zone payments, congestion taxes and increased toll road charges.

In March 2019, 60% of new car sales in Norway were EVs, with ULEVs now representing over 11% of the total passenger car fleet compared to just 1% in the UK. For more information visit: <https://elbil.no/english/norwegian-ev-policy>

Austria

Austria has announced EVs will be able to keep travelling at 80 mph on motorways, even when other vehicles have to slow down to 62 mph to reduce their harmful air pollution emissions.

A reduced speed limit on higher speed roads could be proposed until the climate emergency is averted, with EVs exempt from this. This could be a highly effective way to tackle the longest distance car trips that contribute the most to the climate crisis. The measures would encourage modal and vehicle shift for the longer journeys undertaken by the richest in society who would be less impacted by road charging but would also require new powers and would be controversial.



Mobility hubs

Mobility hubs create space designed specifically to house public and shared mobility modes and improve the public realm for local residents and businesses as well as travellers. The concept is being applied to the streetscape in many European and North American cities, with the West of England, Plymouth and other local authorities in the region developing mobility hub projects.

Mobility hubs raise the profile and visibility of a range of shared and sustainable transport modes, providing a convenience and a choice of modes for the user. For example, this could involve bringing together public EV charge points, e-bike sharing, bike parking, car sharing, bicycle pumps, seating, bus stops, and transport information in to a single location. Mobility hubs can be used to improve public realm, reduce street clutter, and may also provide a local attractor helping to regenerate declining highstreets.





DELIVERY APPROACHES

The majority of public charge points installed in the UK to date have been funded by public sector grants from the Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV) and elsewhere. However, private sector partnerships and revenue share arrangements are becoming increasingly common and can be a good choice for some local authorities. There are a number of payment models available for delivering charge point infrastructure, which are summarised below.

In the longer term, EV charge points are likely to be commercially delivered in response to the growing EV market, and the public sector role is likely to increasingly shift to an enabling one; helping to provide infrastructure for other use cases such as car clubs.

Table 9 Summary of Delivery Approaches

Delivery Model	Description	Potential income	Potential risk	Advantages	Disadvantages
Public ownership	All charge point costs are paid for by the public sector, with capital and maintenance costs recouped from usage charges. Charge points are owned by the public sector, with back-office and operation of charge points typically contracted to a private sector partner (PSP) for a fixed fee.	Highest	Highest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highest potential income • Local authority can determine locations, irrespective of commercial viability ensuring equity of access • Easiest to incorporate wider environmental and social value goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires significant grant funding which may not be available or may require local match funding (typically 25%). • Highest risk in terms of ongoing liability, stranded assets, and maintenance costs • Use of public funds comes with accountability to taxpayer and political risk • PSP has least incentive to repair faults
Concessionary Model – public funded	Charge points are installed and funded by the public sector, using available grant funding, and then operated and maintained by a PSP for an agreed period under a profit share arrangement.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some income shared (higher levels of potential public sector income from higher initial public sector investment) • PSP incentivised and responsible for maintenance of the network, leading to better end-user experience • Reduced risk for public sector • Depending on agreement, public sector may maintain ongoing ownership, and can incorporate wider goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced income share compared to full ownership • Requires a greater understanding of what the market can offer, and tender process may be more complex than public ownership • Risk that PSPs will not accept the agreement terms, leading to negotiation or a failed tender • Needs to be a relatively large number of sites (>25) so that PSP can balance risk across sites. • Potential for disputes over responsibility for site failures and expensive termination clauses
Concessionary Model – public/private funded	Charge points are part funded by the public sector, with a PSP also investing in capital costs. The PSP then operates and maintains the charge points for an agreed period under a profit share agreement.				
Fully funded options – revenue share	All costs are borne by the PSP, with a long-term lease/licence over which the PSP can recover their costs.	Lowest	Lowest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lowest risk. Rental agreements can provide guaranteed income over a number of years. • PSP heavily incentivised to provide good end user experience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lowest potential income • Least control and ability to incorporate wider goals • Likely to involve long agreement periods or exclusion areas • Many areas currently unlikely to be commercially viable without public investment



Public sector funding

A large amount of public charging point schemes in the UK have been funded by the Office for Low Emission Vehicles. This included £40m funding announced in 2016 to deliver charge point networks in Nottingham, Bristol, Milton Keynes and London.

Current OLEV funding streams for charge points include:

- The Electric Vehicle Homecharge Scheme (EVHS) provides grant funding of up to 75% (up to a maximum of £350) towards the cost of installing EV charge points at domestic properties (which have off-street parking) across the UK.
- The On-Street Residential Chargepoint Scheme, for local authorities, provides a 75% contribution towards the cost of the charge point (£7,500 limit per charge point). Alternative sources of funding include the £400 million Charging Infrastructure Investment Fund or developing a framework for suppliers.

To encourage businesses to install charging points, the Government also offers the Workplace Charging Scheme grant. This is up to £350 (formerly £500) for each charging socket, up to a limit of 20. The Government has also previously awarded the 'Ultra Low Emission Taxi Infrastructure Scheme' to local authorities via a competition fund.

In addition to OLEV, public sector funding for charge points has also been awarded by:

- Innovate UK
- European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)
- Local authority budgets

Existing frameworks

Various national frameworks are available to simplify chargepoint procurement for public sector bodies and ensure that the procurement process is compliant with UK/ EU legislation. The main examples are:

- ESPO Framework 636 Vehicle Charging Infrastructure. The ESPO Framework allows both the purchase and lease of chargepoints.
- Crown Commercial Service Traffic Management Technology 2, Lot 10 Sustainable Transport Infrastructure.
- Central Southern Regional Electric Vehicle Charging Framework by Hampshire County Council, already used by over 50 organisations, and open to public bodies across the South of England.

In addition to existing frameworks, previous specifications for electric vehicle charging can be modified to create a bespoke framework agreement. For example, both Nottingham City Council and Devon County Council are due to produce a procurement toolkit for local authorities, based on their experiences of procuring charge points under a concessions arrangement.

Fully funded options

As the EV market matures and more vehicles enter the fleet, private sector investment in charge points becomes increasingly viable, as costs can be recouped from usage charges. At present, this typically involves long leases of 10 to 20 years, with charge point providers aiming to make a return at the end of this period by banking charge point sites in the short term and establishing themselves in the market. Most fully funded options have focused on rapid chargers due to the higher potential cost per charge and turnover, however, fully funded options for "fast" chargers are also becoming more common.

A typical fully funded offer is likely to include the most attractive charge point sites in an area, with income to the landowner through a flat rate rental income, percentage profit share, or combination of both.



While these options can be very attractive, with terms constantly improving, key issues to consider with fully funded offers include:

- Length of contract - Minimum contract lengths in Somerset are likely to be between 10 and 20 years, with some operators and rapid chargers requiring longer commitments, potentially up to 30 years.
- Response times - With some landowners suffering from charge points that are out of action with no effective way to enforce.
- Ownership of the grid connection, ducts/cables, and charge points at the end of the agreement period. The aim should be to avoid being tied to the provider after the end of the initial agreement period and all underground equipment and grid connection points should revert to the landowner.
- Termination damages - The aim should be to minimise any damages payable if the landowner needs to cancel the lease/concession. If termination damages are required by the operator, these should ideally be capped and not linked to forecast revenue.
- Exclusivity. Some operators require exclusive rights over a site or wider area, which may prevent the installation of additional charge points at a later date.
- Other impacts - Maximising the “green” credentials and social value of the charge points. For example, including use of green tariffs or local renewables, considering lifecycle impacts, and local job creation.
- Advertising - Suppliers are increasingly gaining money from advertising, with one supplier including advertising on 6-inch screens on EV charging units.
- Interoperability - Provision of AC charging accounts for approximately 70% of the market. Some free rapid charger offers include only DC charging, which can exclude some vehicle types. Similarly, some charge points only provide a tethered connection for a limited number of vehicle types.

CASE STUDIES – REGIONAL

West of England

Go Ultra Low West (Public Ownership)

Go Ultra Low West is a £7m OLEV funded project that aims to accelerate the purchase of EVs. The project will install over 120 new charge point connections, branded as the “Revive” charging network, which is fully owned by the West of England Councils and operated by a contracted private sector supplier. The majority of charge points will be supplied with 100% renewable energy provided by Bristol Energy. The project will also install four rapid charging hubs, new electric car clubs, business grants, and conversion of council fleets to EV.

The “Revive” network launched in November 2019, to coincide with the opening of the region’s first rapid charging hub. Each hub will house four to eight rapid charging connections that can charge an EV up to 80% from 30 minutes charging. For more information visit: www.revivecharging.net



Devon

A number of chargepoint schemes in Devon are progressing, using a range of delivery models.

Deletti (Concessionary model – public/private funded)

DELETTI (DEvon Low carbon Energy & Transport Technology Innovator) is a European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) part-funded programme that will develop EV charge points and solar car ports across Devon and South Somerset. A minimum of 50 EVCPs will be delivered, primarily in public car parks, with a total public sector contribution of £10k per site.

A charge point provider will be procured to design, build, operate, and maintain chargepoints through a concessions agreement, and will be granted a 10 year lease for the EVCP locations, with an option to renew. Specific requirements of the tender include a minimum of 100% green energy tariff, with a preference for use of local renewable energy and reduction in lifecycle emissions, a minimum 22kW charge point specification, passive provision for additional charge points in future, industry leading response times, and caps on any termination damages in the event some of the car parks are redeveloped for housing or other uses.

StreetHUBZ (Fully funded - private sector led with public funding)

StreetHUBZ is a private sector led project with ZAPINAMO, Gamma Energy, and Devon County Council. The £4m scheme is funded by Innovate UK, and aims to install and operate 150 on-street EVCPs in Exeter. ZAPINAMO will design, build, and maintain the EV 'StreetHUBZ' chargers that fit around existing street furniture and Gamma Energy will own and operate the infrastructure. The project will roll out "semi-rapid" 35KW EV chargers. Co-cars car clubs will provide on-street pay as you go EV rental cars to boost awareness and EV adoption.



Mid-Devon Instavolt (Fully funded - private sector led and funded)

Mid Devon District Council appointed InstaVolt to install rapid EV charging points at a limited number of locations across the district. The chargers were delivered at no cost to the taxpayer and Mid Devon Council will receive rental income from InstaVolt for the next 30 years.



Dorset (Fully funded – private sector led and funded)

JoJu Central Southern Regional Electric Vehicle Charging Framework

Dorset County Council have used the Central Southern Regional Electric Vehicle Charging Framework to partner with EV charge point provider, JoJu. The supplier has undertaken all feasibility work and will be rolling out 22kW charge points at 25 public car parks across Dorset in 2020. Management of the Council's existing rapid charge points will also transfer to JoJu. Key elements of the agreement include:

- No Council funding required, with small amount of profit share returned to the Council
- 15 year lease on the sites, with a 300 meter exclusion area
- Renewable energy supply
- Strong service level agreement, with termination costs limited to the cost of installation.



5 SOMERSET BASELINE REVIEW

ULEV UPTAKE IN SOMERSET

The rate of uptake of ULEVs has been described with use of the Department for Transport Vehicle Licensing Statistics.

It should be noted that the postcode reflects the postcode of the registered keeper. This is the keeper's address for privately owned vehicles or the company's registered address for company owned vehicles. The address does not necessarily reflect where the vehicle is kept.

It should also be noted that postcode districts lie across county and district boundaries. The most obvious issue this presents is the postcode of BA3 which is situated within both the County of Somerset and the County of Bath and North East Somerset. This postcode has been included in the below table for Somerset.

Table 10 shows the number of ULEVs registered in Somerset as well as other local authority areas and the UK average. This has been obtained from the DfT's Vehicle Licensing Statistics Table 0134A which records the number of ULEV's (battery electric, plug-in hybrid electric and fuel cell electric vehicles) registered in each UK postcode area district per quarter from 2012. This dataset is the most complete for detailing information regarding the rate of uptake of ULEVs.

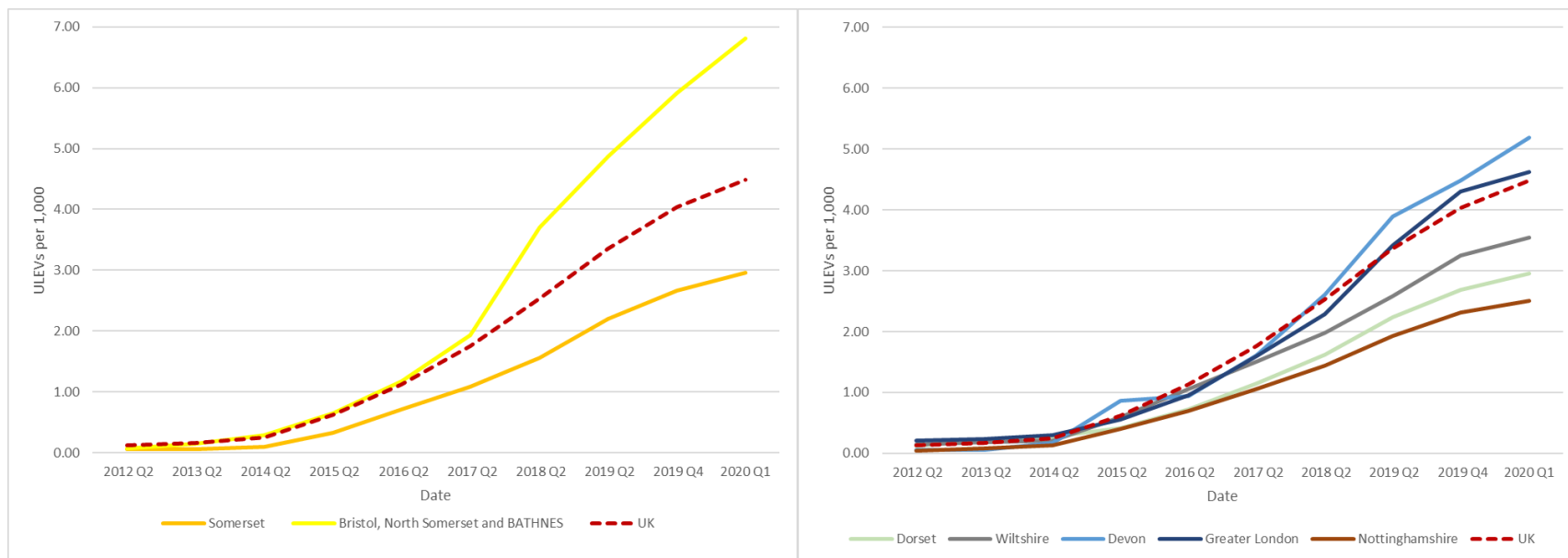
Figure 10 shows the number of ULEVs registered per 1,000 persons (based on ONS mid-year population estimates). Figure 10 shows that at present, per capita, Somerset has a lower rate of ULEVs registered than neighbouring counties. Uptake per capita is approximately two thirds that of the UK average.



Table 10 ULEV's registered in Somerset and nearby

Area	2012 Q2	2013 Q2	2014 Q2	2015 Q2	2016 Q2	2017 Q2	2018 Q2	2019 Q2	2019 Q4	2020 Q1
Somerset	33	32	53	180	392	606	870	1,239	1,501	1,667
Dorset	44	81	100	156	270	428	608	848	1,017	1,119
Wiltshire	70	87	102	288	519	744	985	1,295	1,627	1,775
Devon	25	29	81	427	466	809	1,324	1,996	2,300	2,665
Bristol, North Somerset and Bath and North East Somerset	57	123	241	544	1,002	1,664	3,219	4,250	5,153	5,937
Greater London	1,708	1,878	2,480	4,552	7,969	13,442	19,497	29,255	36,776	39,564
Nottinghamshire	44	90	151	454	799	1,208	1,657	2,245	2,687	2,913
UK	8,156	10,554	16,156	40,748	74,114	116,193	168,324	224,695	269,350	299,853

Figure 10 ULEVs registered per 1,000 persons



The table below shows the number of ULEVs restricted in each local authority district. It can be seen that the number of ULEVs registered in South Somerset and Mendip is higher than in other local authorities. As above, it should be noted that the postcode district data does not exactly align with district authority boundaries.

Table 11 Number of Registered ULEVs in each District

District Council	2012 Q2	2013 Q2	2014 Q2	2015 Q2	2016 Q2	2017 Q2	2018 Q2	2019 Q2	2019 Q4	2020 Q1
Mendip	0	5	9	36	89	143	231	356	453	510
Sedgemoor	0	0	5	19	63	93	142	210	254	277
Somerset West and Taunton	18	14	21	56	103	183	226	298	357	392
South Somerset	15	13	18	69	137	187	271	375	437	488
Grand Total	33	32	53	180	392	606	870	1,239	1,501	1,667

Figure 11 ULEVs registered per 1,000 persons in each District

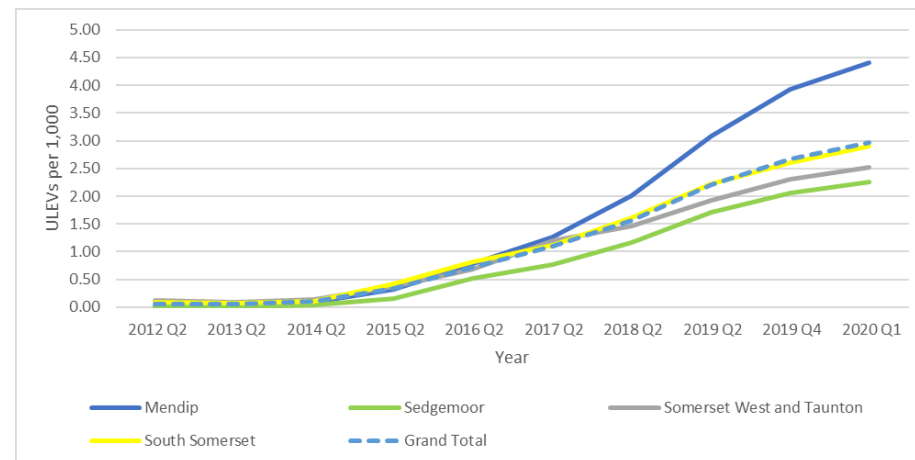


Figure 12 shows the number of ULEVs registered in Somerset by postcode district. Figure 12 shows that Mendip has the highest number in ULEVs in Somerset.

Figure 12 ULEVs registered in Somerset by postcode district (Q1 2020)

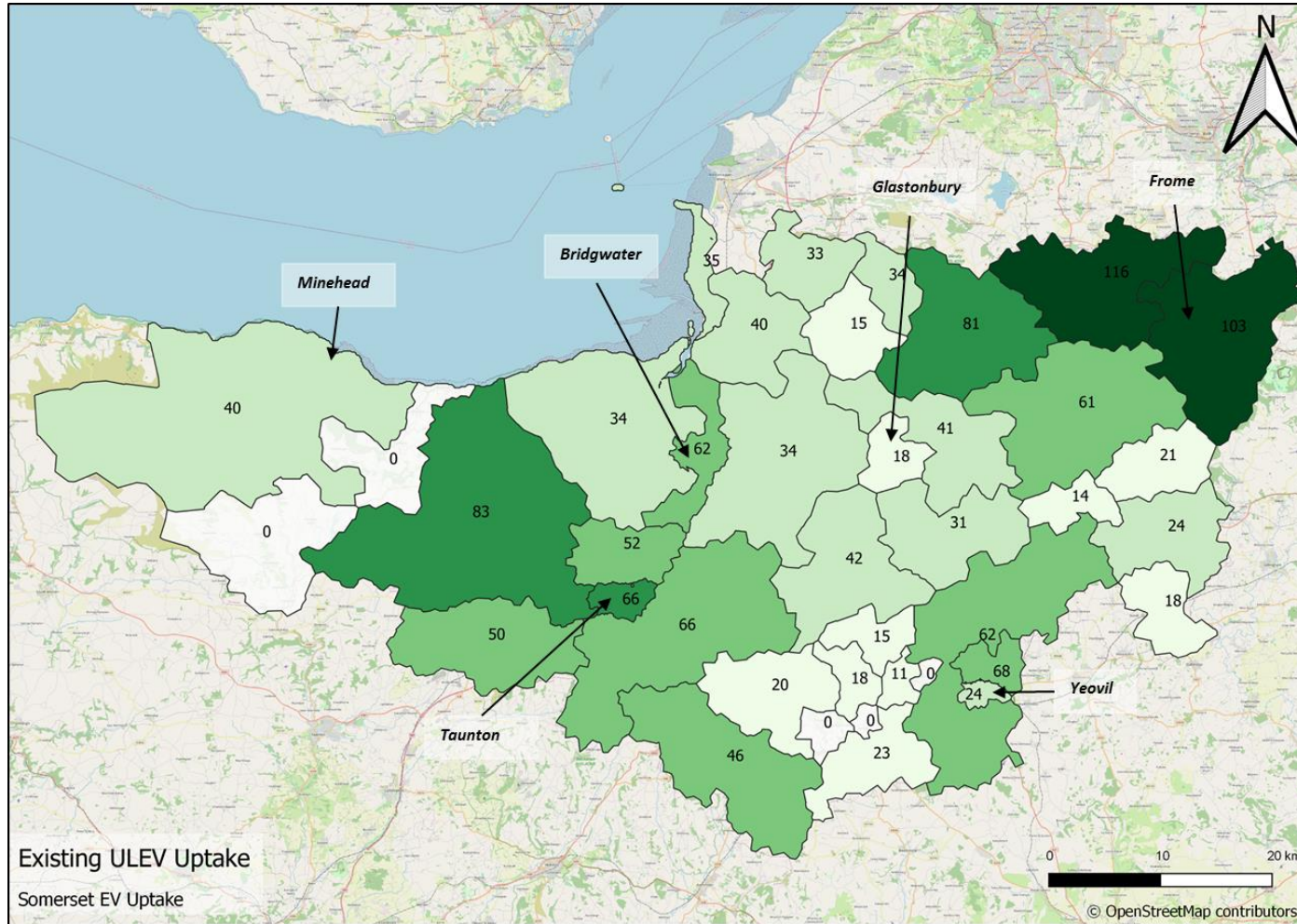
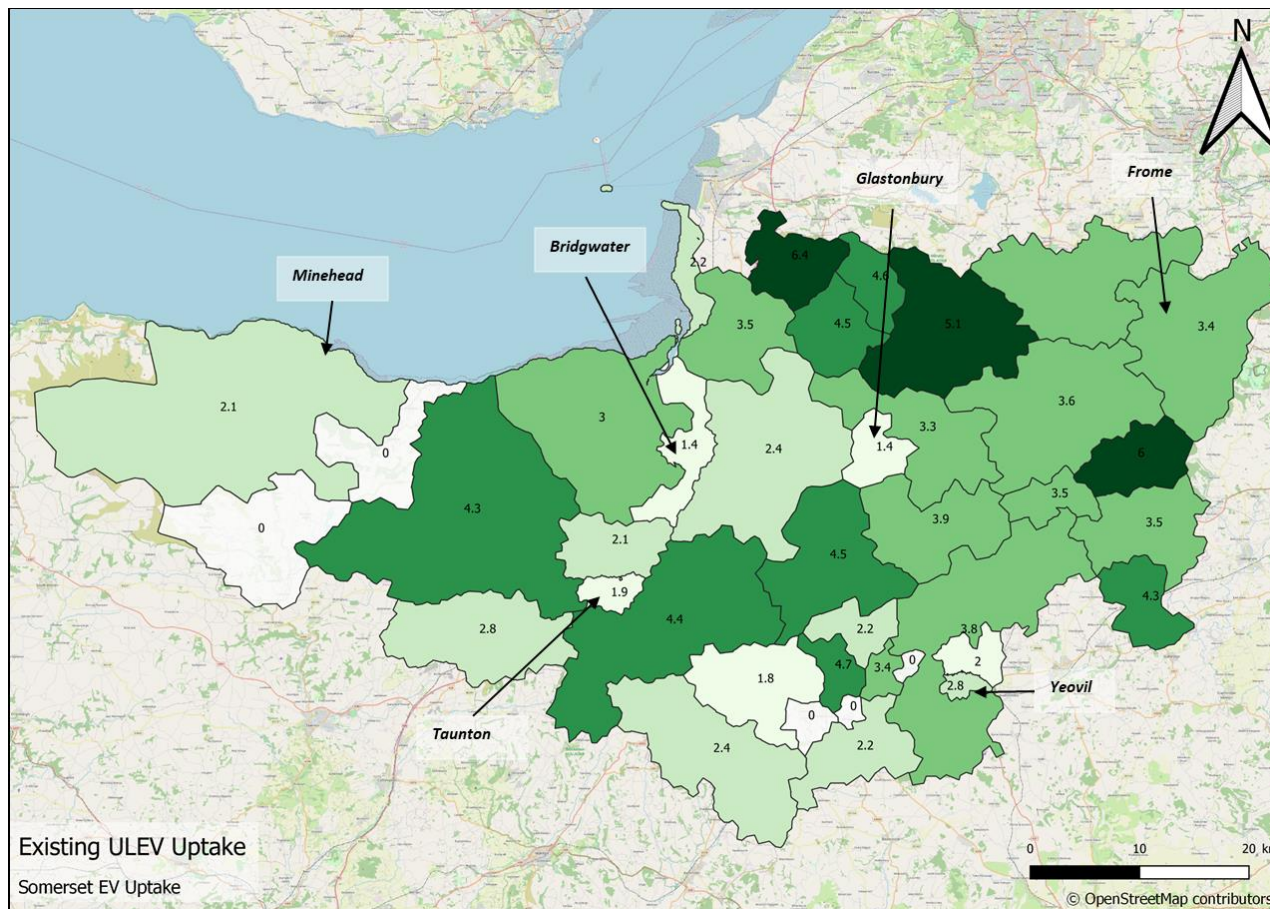


Figure 13 shows the number of ULEVs per 1,000 persons registered in Somerset by postcode district. The ONS does not provide population estimates by postcode district. The only data which provides population per postcode district is the 2011 census. In order to get a population estimate for each postcode district in Q1 2020, the 2011 census population for each postcode district has been multiplied by the growth in population in each local authority district. Figure 13 shows that Mendip has the highest number of ULEVs per capita.

Figure 13 ULEVs registered in Somerset by postcode district (Q1 2020)





EXISTING CHARGE POINT PROVISION

According to www.zap-map.com, across the UK there were 31,849 charge point connectors, in 18,319 devices, at 11,401 locations as of June 2020. The total number of connectors increased from just over 13,000 in November 2017 to more than 19,000 in December 2018. Of the 31,849 charge point connectors, 7,813 of these are rapid. To see charge point locations visit <https://www.zap-map.com/live/>.

The European Alternative Fuels Observatory states the number of EV charge points per 100km (62.5 miles) of road in the UK has increased from 42 in 2011 to 570 in 2019. The Committee on Climate Change, however, argues this figure will need to increase further to match the rising number of ULEVs on the road.

Across Somerset there are a total of 87 non-domestic based electric vehicle charge point locations, providing 223 non-domestic charge points. There are 16 slow chargers (3kW), 149 fast chargers (7-22kW) and 56 rapid chargers (43+kW). This total includes charging points at locations which may only be publicly accessible if you are a visitor / customer of that facility i.e. at supermarkets and hotels; and also includes the Taunton Park & Ride charge points which are not currently operational.

The locations are shown overleaf in Figure 14. The map shows that the M5 corridor encompassing Bridgwater and Taunton is comparatively well served; as is the A361 corridor from Glastonbury to Frome. Charging point provision in South Somerset is in line with the average; whilst charging points are few and far between in Exmoor National Park and the former district of West Somerset.

It should be noted that this map includes public and semi-public locations (such as hotels and restaurants) but excludes private locations (residential charging points).

Charge points with reasonable public accessibility (i.e. including motorway service areas and superstores but excluding hotels) are shown Figure 15. Charge points known to be inactive (specifically, the charge points at SCC offices and at each Taunton P & R site) have been removed.

Figure 16 shows where there are no rapid chargers within 10km (6.25 miles).

The former district of West Somerset is the area which suffers from a lack of electric vehicle charge point accessibility the most.

Figure 14 All non-domestic ULEV charging points in Somerset.

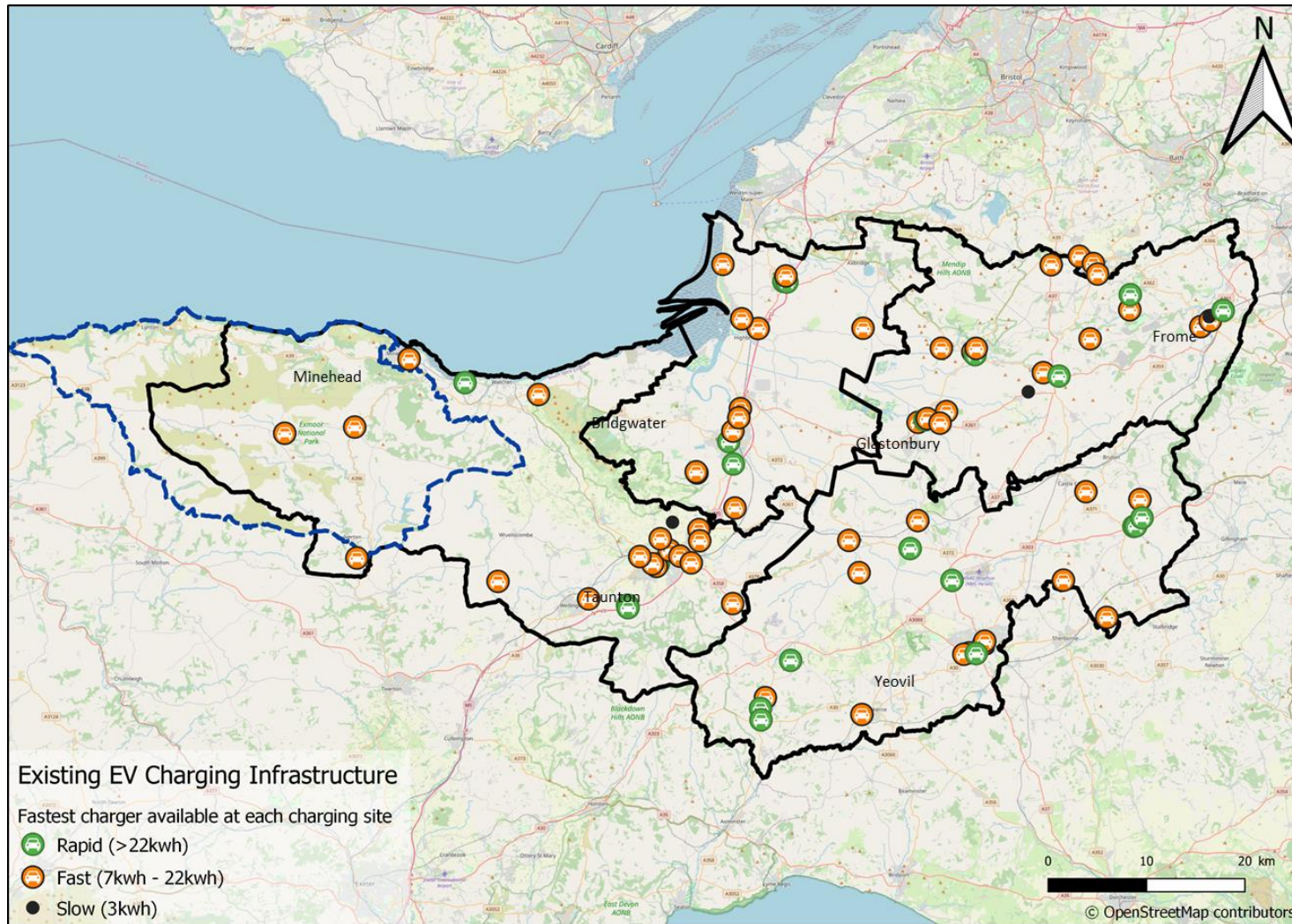


Figure 15 All semi-publicly accessible ULEV charging points in Somerset (i.e. public car parks, Motorway Service Areas (MSAs) and food superstores, excluding hotels and local shops).

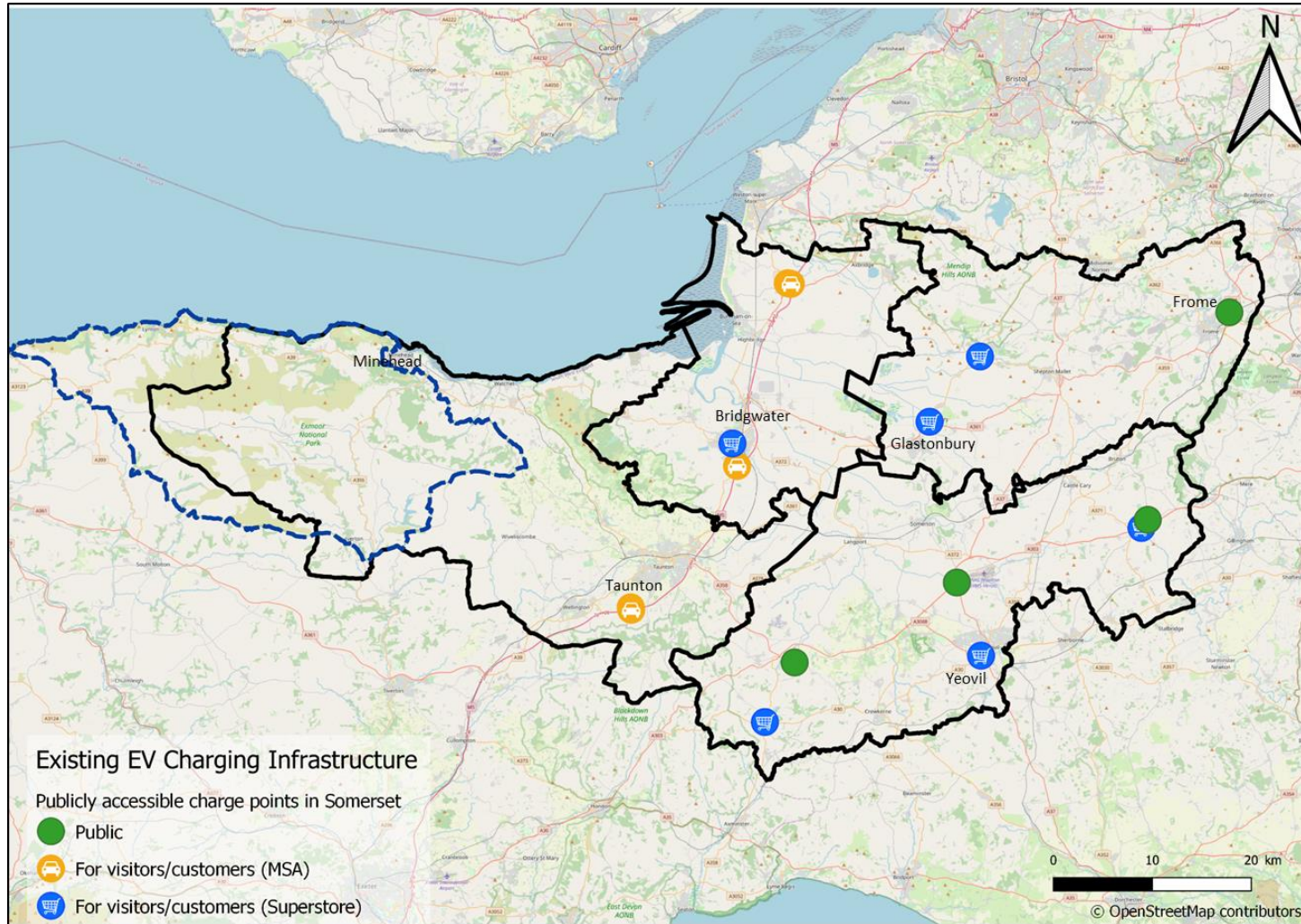
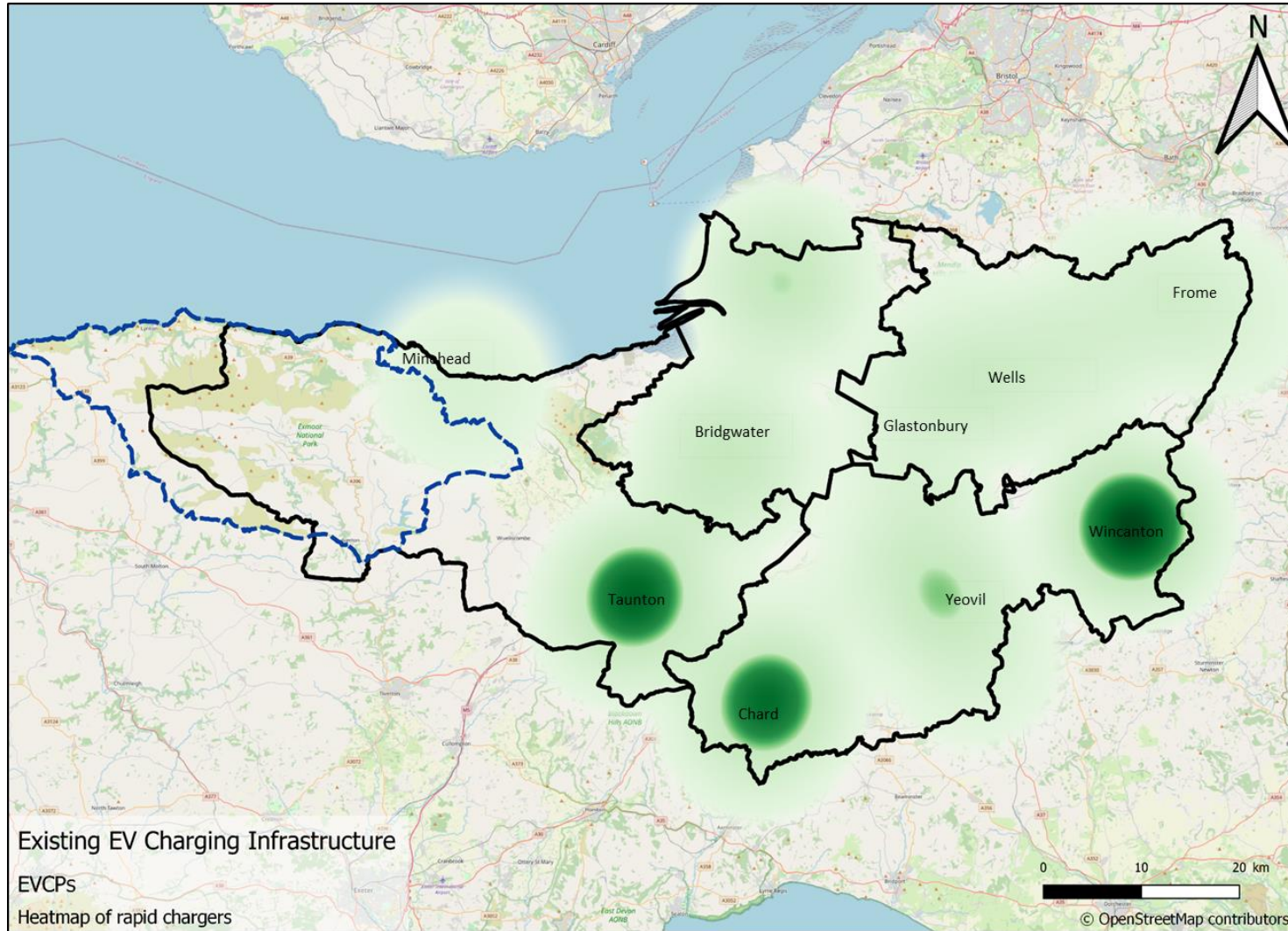


Figure 16 Locations within 10km (6.25 miles) of a rapid charger





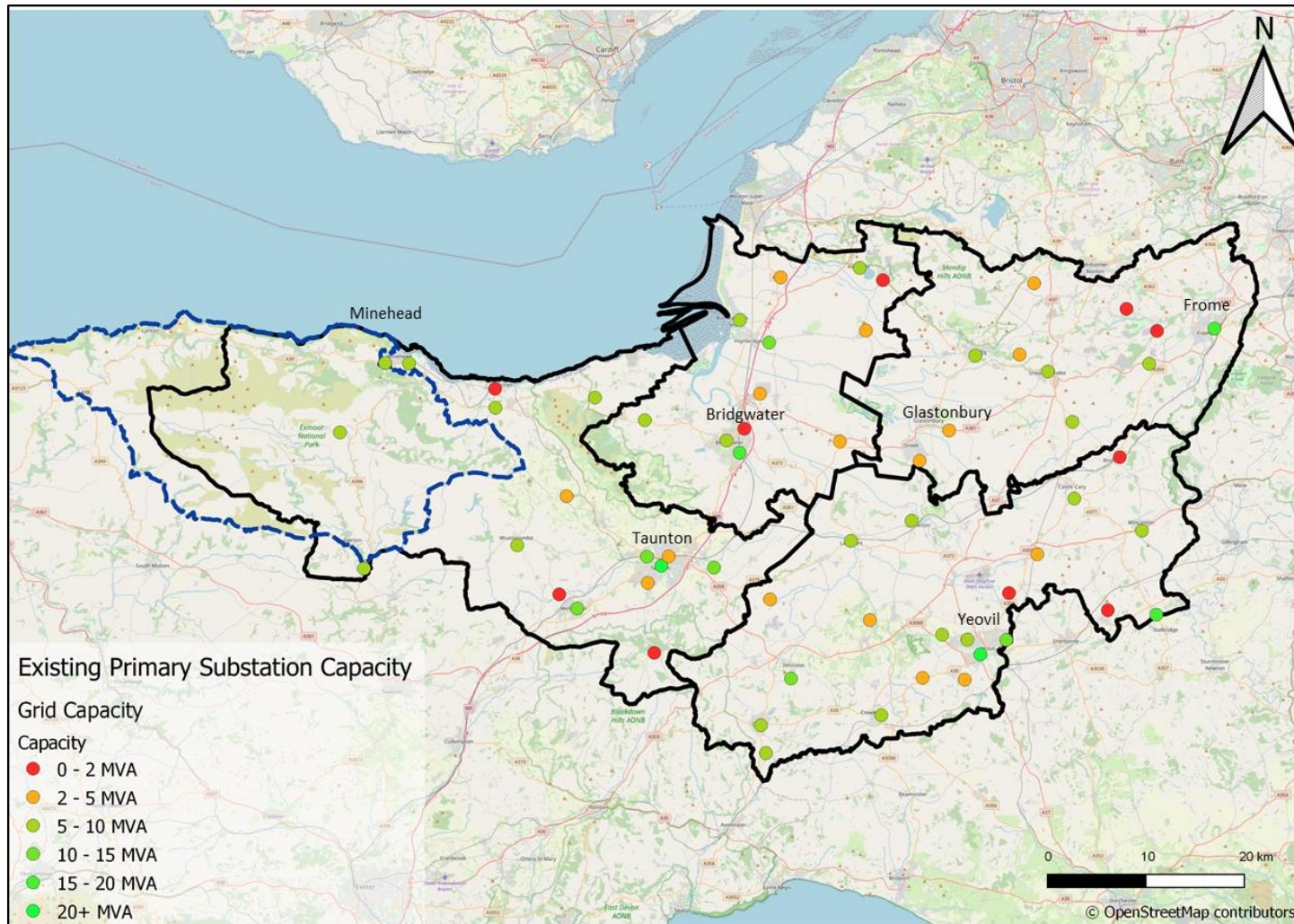
Grid Assessment

Section 2 details how electricity is distributed from the transmission network to end users in the UK.

The county of Somerset encompasses 61 primary substations, of which 80% are owned and operated by Western Power Distribution (WPD) whilst the remainder belong to Scottish and Southern Energy Networks (SEN). By analysing data published by each of these DNO's, the estimated available capacity (MVA) can be approximated by taking the maximum forecasted demand and the amount of capacity available at each primary substation. This gives a worst-case high-level indication of how much further demand can be added at this level before network reinforcements would be required. Some of the primary substations in this area are limited by availability in voltage levels above the connection point - at the Bulk Supply Point (BSP), i.e. the higher voltage substations that supply these primary substations have no capacity, even though the primary itself has available capacity. Therefore, expensive reinforcements at higher voltages would be required to increase demand headroom at these substations.

Figure 17 shows a constraint map of Somerset, listing the estimated available spare capacities at each primary substation.

Figure 17 Primary Substation Constraint Map



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It should be noted that, although there may be no spare capacity at the primary level (unless reinforcements are introduced), there may be spare capacity at the secondary substation level for small-scale chargers. Throughout Somerset, a significant proportion of primary substations show no/limited spare capacity, however by analysing further data from WPD, it is shown that there is EV capacity at the secondary substation level.

WPD have advised that both the capacity and EV maps, alongside Long Term Development Statement (LTDS) data, are based on a worse-case scenario, i.e. assuming maximum load at all times. Additionally, the EV capacity map (for available capacity) assumes 7kW fast chargers are to be connected into the network.

Table 12 shows each category that WPD have used to define the amount of EV capacity at each secondary substation. WPD secondary substations have a maximum capacity of 500kVA (though older ones could be as low as 25kVA), thus those substations with extensive capacity available could facilitate larger charging stations.

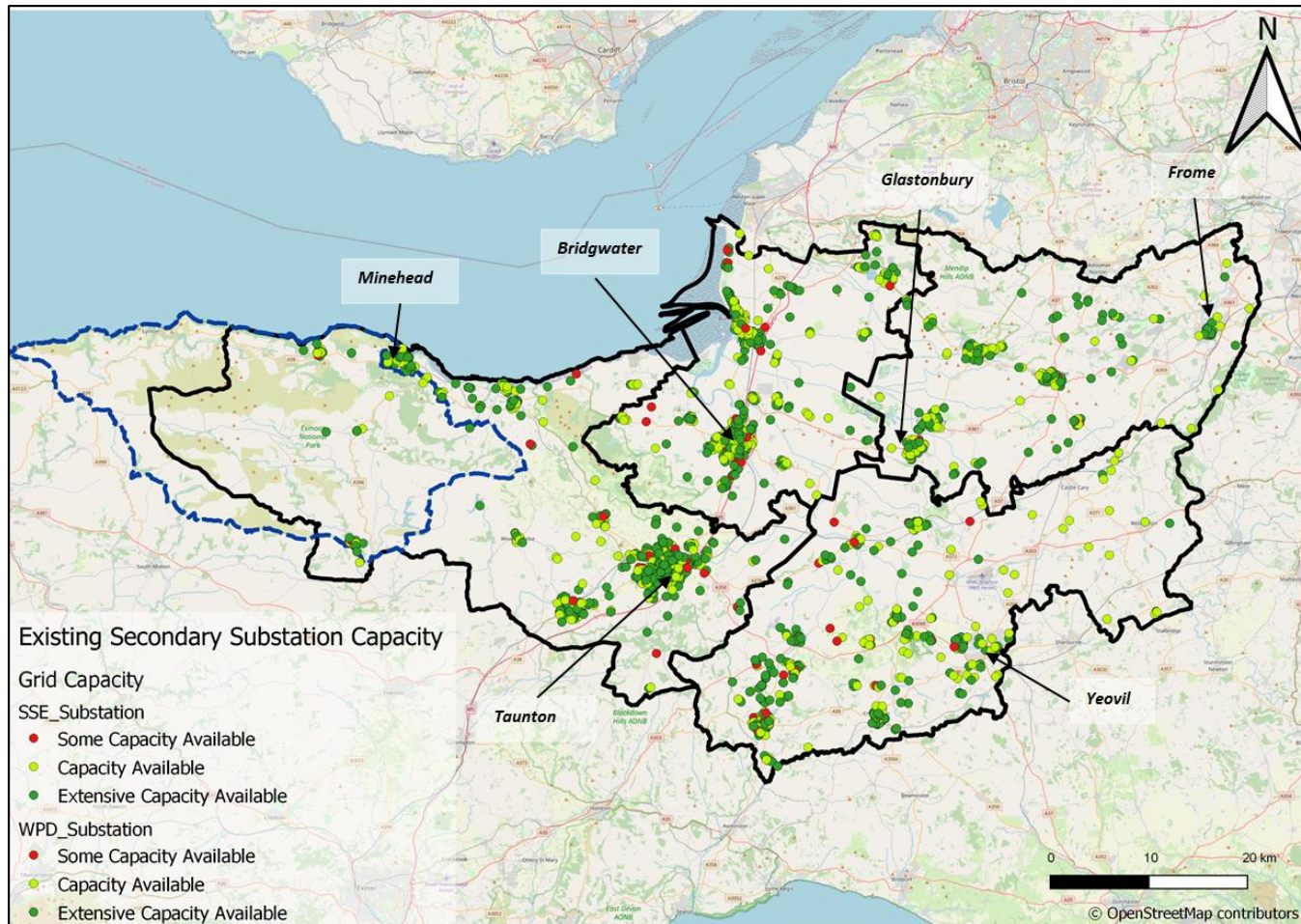
The uptake of Electric Vehicles (EVs) across the county will increase the demand on the network and will likely require reinforcements be made to the electrical network to ensure that the grid can supply and match the nationwide demand. Although reinforcements will be necessary, some demand could be deferred through “smart charging”, increasing demand diversification, by deferring the load, and reducing the load during the times at which the network is busiest (peak demand), including through use of local renewable energy generation.

Table 12 Banding of available EV capacity at secondary substation level

Capacity	Description
Extensive Capacity Available	Significant overhead capacity available when network at full demand.
Capacity Available	Capacity available when network at full demand however reaching upper limit of transformer limitations.
Limited Capacity Available	Little capacity available when network at full demand and transformers are at limits. There may be potential to connect a small number of chargers depending on quantity/rating.

Figure 18 shows the secondary substations across Somerset and their corresponding availability for EV capacity.

Figure 18 Secondary Substation Constraint Map of Substations



EXISTING EV CHARGE POINT SCHEMES

Through engagement with Council officers, a number of EV charge point schemes in development in Somerset have been identified:

Table 13 Existing EV Charge Point Schemes in Somerset

Scheme Name	Description	Charge points delivered
DC Share, Taunton	In a UK first pilot, Western Power Distribution will explore a novel solution to provide a rapid charging hub in Taunton. The project will balance spare grid capacity across a number of nearby substations to reduce the costs of rapid charging hubs. For more information visit: https://www.westernpower.co.uk/projects/dc-share	15 rapids, Taunton
DELETTI, South Somerset	South Somerset District Council has joined the DELETTI project, a partnership project of Devon County Council and Devon District Councils. The project will deliver two 22kW charging points in up to 25 car park locations in South Somerset, delivered through a concession agreement in 2021/22.	25 fast, public car parks, South Somerset
Highways England Rapids	Highways England have recently delivered a project ensure that 95% of the Strategic Road Network is within 20 miles of a rapid charge point, including new 3 new sites on the A303 in Somerset.	3 rapids, A303

Mendip Charge Points	Mendip District Council have begun a procurement exercise, seeking suppliers willing to install EV charging infrastructure at no cost to the Council, focused on areas where EV facilities are not in high concentration.	Minimum 4 units (type not specified)
SWT Grants	Somerset West and Taunton Council has awarded grants from a £20,000 fund to parish and town Councils to install EV charge points. Following an initial round of applications 3 grants were awarded for up to £1,000 each.	Up to 20 standard/fast units
Others	Other schemes identified through stakeholder engagement include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Installation of charge points at supermarkets including Morrisons and Tescos in Somerset • Community led charge points in Wedmore in a local pub • Some Parish and Town Councils within South Somerset have accepted “fully funded” charge point offers. 	

We understand several Somerset District Councils have been approached by a range of charge point operators, offering “fully funded” charge points, indicating the market is willing to invest in EV charge points in Somerset.



6 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

STAKEHOLDER MAPPING & METHODOLOGY

The project team identified relevant internal and external stakeholders, identified an engagement approach and invited each stakeholder to give their input into the emerging Somerset Electric Vehicle Strategy.

Relevant staff from the County / District Councils were invited to a 1 hour long virtual meeting. Stakeholders who could not make the meeting were asked to email through their views. The stakeholders were asked for their views on the following:

- Issues and / or opportunities that you can identify regarding electric vehicle infrastructure in Somerset;
- Any existing EV charge point (EVCP) schemes;
- Any approaches from EVCP suppliers/ operators;
- Current and emerging local authority asset/investment plans (e.g. street lighting renewal programmes);
- Any forthcoming renovation works to local authority assets including car parks that could be early wins; and
- Any residential areas which you think may be particularly suitable for on-street charging and hubs; based on your local knowledge of both the demographics of the local area and based on the suitability of the street scene.

The project team also engaged with Western Power Distribution, Scottish and Southern Energy Networks, and Somerset Community Energy. These groups were asked for their views on the following:

- Understanding of grid capacity opportunities and constraints in Somerset in the short term.
- Understanding of grid capacity opportunities and constraints in Somerset in the long term; i.e. any potential upgrades.
- Availability of free / paid for online mapping of substation capacity.

The project team also engaged with local employers to understand what their fleet plans are; and Highways England who were asked about their plans regarding providing for electric vehicles on or near to the SRN.

A summary of the stakeholder engagement exercise results are shown overleaf for topics not covered elsewhere in this report.



STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT EXERCISE RESULTS

Delivery approach

Somerset County Council is awaiting the outcome of this study to help inform the Council's roles and responsibilities in relation to EV charging and noted that it considers its role is likely to be to provide electric vehicles charging points in areas where the private sector at the moment will not.

A number of the district councils have been approached from the private sector and in the process of developing their own specifications. Specifically, Mendip District Council stated that their preference is a revenue gain share model with a preferred minimum contact of 7 years.

All district councils expressed a desire for consistent provision and coordination across project and acknowledged the need to create a legible network for users whilst avoiding a monopoly of supply.

WSP note that there is the potential for a framework agreement which can be accessed by both the county and district councils, standardising the delivery approach and partners. This would enable co-ordination across projects and avoid delays.

EV parking standards for new developments

Somerset County Council Highways Development Control (HDC) stated that they would like recommendations on EV parking standards for new Somerset County Council Parking Strategy and Travel Plan Guidance. It was noted that Somerset County Council HDC recommendations/standards not always implemented by the Local Planning Authority (a standard two tier authority issue). Somerset County Council HDC and the districts acknowledged that most new residential parking spaces in Somerset are off-street; which is useful in facilitate at-home charging.

South Somerset District Council are intending to reflect building regulation proposals in new EV parking standard guidance.

Off-street Charge Points

All county and district authorities felt that off-street charging was better suited to providing for EV infrastructure at the moment.

All district councils have, at a minimum, begun preliminary investigation regarding the viability of EV charging points at certain public off-street car parks (subject to connection viability).

Sedgemoor District Council stated their preliminary investigations have thrown up issues regarding electricity capacity in the area. However, they were keen to incorporate EV charging at Northgate car park as part a council led redevelopment.

Exmoor National Park Authority are currently investigating the viability of EV charging points at Simonsbath (Ashcombe) car park, Exford car park and Tarr Steps car park.

A number of authorities noted that charge points would be best placed in town centres and areas of high tourist demand.

On-street Charge Points

Somerset County Council and all district authorities are much keener to focus on off-street charging first with less emphasis placed on on-street. The most common reasons cited were that the rurality of the districts would inhibit demand for on-street charging, and that where there could feasibly be some demand (such as town centres) pedestrian footways and roads were too narrow and constrained to the point of reducing the viability of on-street parking charging facilities.

Sedgemoor District Council & South West & Taunton District Council have mentioned the upcoming King Street development in Bridgwater and Firepool development in Taunton respectively as examples of where on-street charging or a mobility hub tie-in could work.



Exmoor National Park Authority reiterated the need for any on-street design in Exmoor to be sympathetic to the sites National Park status.

Approaches from operators

Somerset County Council has not engaged in any operator discussions. This is because Somerset County Council are awaiting the outcome of the EV strategy in order to ensure that the overall strategic approach and requirements are clear before engaging with the market.

Fleet

Somerset County Council manage an annual rolling fleet replacement programme for all service departments within SCC where consideration for electric vehicles is taken seriously. The SCC fleet management team study the electric vehicle market closely and attend various industry trade events throughout the year which showcase emerging technology.

Somerset County Council note that procuring the right electric vehicle, which not only brings the environmental benefits but also meets their specific operational needs whilst demonstrating best value; is the ultimate goal.

Somerset County Council note that their energy team have entered a partnership with EDF to explore V2G solutions at County Hall. It is expected that this will be installed by the middle of 2021.

South West & Taunton District Council are converting 90% of pool car fleet (30 vehicles) to EV by 2022 using the DC Share schemes as the primary chargers. There are no plans for 130 light commercial vehicles nor the fleet of for heavy vehicles.

Most other district authorities and the National Park Authority had small-scale plans to electrify their pool car fleet. In the majority of cases this is to be done on a piecemeal basis replacing ICE vehicles with electric vehicles when they reach the end of their current lease / lifespan. No plans for full scale adoption given lack of charging facilities at the district councils.

Park & Ride

South West & Taunton District Council were keen to find additional income to support Taunton P&R.

Somerset County Council were keen to find EVCP solutions at the park and ride. SCC noted that their in-house minibuses are stored at Silk Mills but noted that previous dialogue with the DNO has suggested there is not enough capacity to charge these vehicles without a transformer being installed.

Enforcement

There is single county wide enforcement contract, which is how EV parking bays should be enforced.

South West & Taunton District Council stated that their existing car park TRO doesn't cover EVs and would need to be updated.

Mendip District Council have installed EVCP in car parks where there would not need to be any change to parking order.

SRN in Somerset

Highways England (HE) have installed 3 rapid EV charge points in Somerset (SWARCO installed in Wincanton, Ilminster and Ilchester).

Highways England have met their criteria to have 95% of the SRN within 20 miles of a rapid charge point in Somerset and note that funding via this avenue has closed for the moment. Any future HE charging points are likely to be delivered at Motorway Service Areas (Sedgemoor and Taunton Deane in Somerset) in line with demand rather than to stimulate demand.



DNO's

Consultation with the DNO's highlighted that in general there is a reasonable amount of grid capacity in many areas, particularly when compared to cities. Taunton's capacity has recently upgraded.

WPD don't see EV growth as a big problem as the demand load can be managed as 'it is easy to incentivise load to move to off-peak when needed.'

There is capacity for growth in fast charging most areas, but individual sites need to be confirmed on a site-by-site basis. However, rapid charging hubs will come up against grid constraints quite quickly in many areas.

Other

A number of districts mentioned that the mobile network coverage in Somerset presented issues with regard to app-based charging solutions.

A number of district authorities stated that a key prohibitor in providing EVCP's was lead times and legal issues (such as developing the tender and negotiating revenue share and exclusivity arrangements). They stated a preference for a solution like DELETTI's in which all the legal's have already been completed.

South Somerset District Council and Mendip District Council both identified electric taxis and electric car clubs as an option to stimulate EV demand.

Mendip District Council would like real-time data on usage (only 25% of suppliers they talked to could do this).

Mendip District Council keen to colour EVCP bays green in public car parks.

Mendip District Council are developing an on-street parking strategy, which could incorporate consideration of on-street charge points.

Districts have received approaches from Town & Parish councils regarding EVCP's.

Community energy groups find it hard to see their role in EV at present but can see a potential role in providing local renewable energy to serve the charge points.

BP, Shell, and Tesco all have rolling programmes to roll out EV charge points at petrol stations and supermarkets, however, information on exactly which locations are due to be delivered and when is not readily available.

SOMERSET ELECTRIC VEHICLE SURVEY

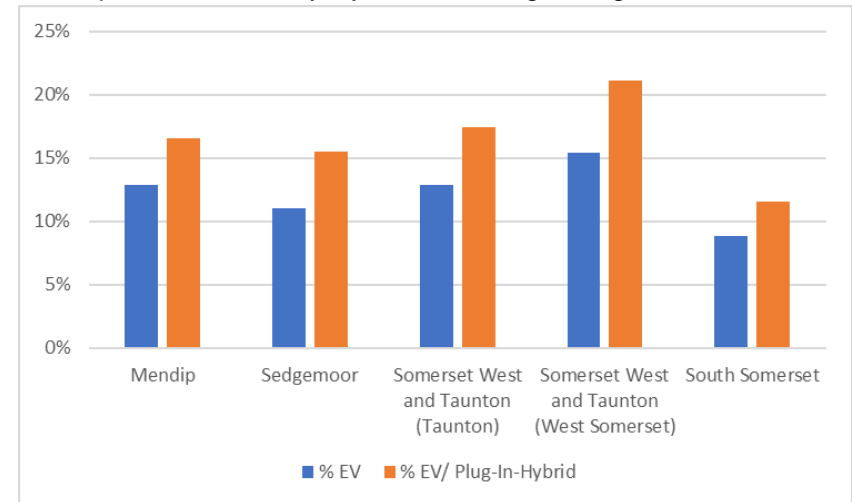
The Somerset Local Government Graduate Scheme published the ‘Somerset Electric Vehicle (EV) Survey’ with the aim of better understanding the environmental behaviours and attitudes of residents across Somerset towards EVs.

The EV Survey was published on Monday 8th June 2020 and was open for responses for two weeks, before closing on Monday 22nd June 2020. The EV Survey was publicised through various communications channels at each of the local authorities in Somerset, namely Somerset County Council, Mendip District Council, Sedgemoor District Council, Somerset West and Taunton District Council and South Somerset District Council.

The EV survey received 1,034 completed responses from residents across Somerset, which was a relatively high response rate given the short time period that the survey was live. A short summary of the findings is included below.

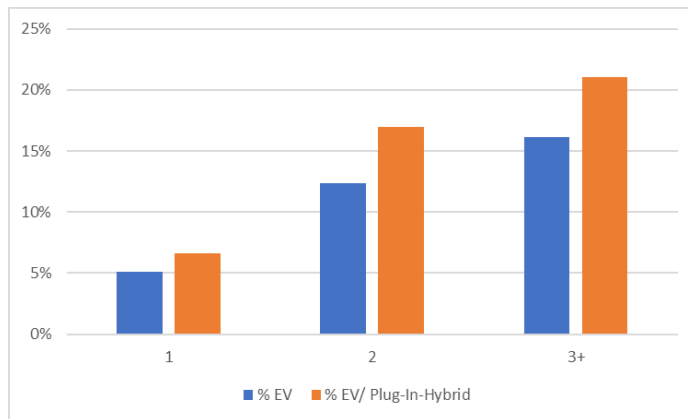
Demographics and EV Propensity

- Overall, middle-aged males were the most likely respondent group to already own EVs.
- The respondents from the former district of West Somerset showed the greatest EV ownership rate (15% fully electric and 21% either electric or plug-in hybrid). Respondents from South Somerset respondents had the lowest EV ownership rate (9% fully electric and 11% either electric or plug-in hybrid).
- A much higher level of respondents overall have EVs than in the Somerset population as shown in Table and Figure 12 in this report. This is to be expected given the self-selected nature of sampling; i.e. you are more likely to complete an EV survey if you have strong feelings in either direction.



Vehicle Ownership and Behaviour

- Those with 3+ cars in their household were more likely to already own an EV (15%) than those who 2 cars in their household (12%) or 1 car in their household (5%).

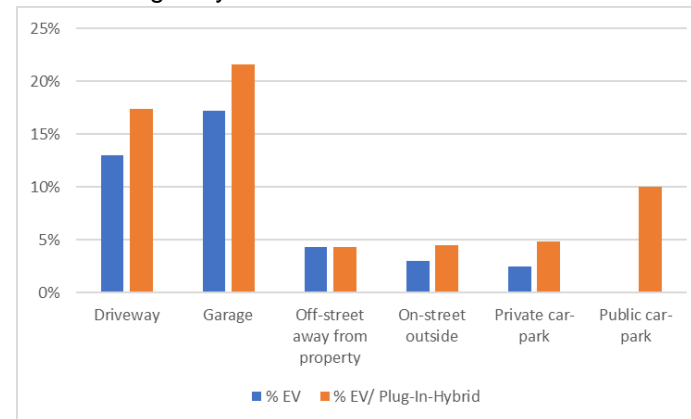


Vehicle Use

- The average annual mileage of respondents was higher than the national average annual mileage reflecting the rurality of the county and likely reflecting the demographics of residents that responded to the survey.
- The highest proportion of respondents who already own an EV drive more than 10,000 miles per annum. 18.44% of respondents who drove 10,000 miles per annum or more already own an EV compared with 7.8 % of those who drove 100 – 7,000 miles per annum and 13.4% of those who drove 7,000 miles per annum to 10,000 miles per annum.
- There were no significant differences found between distance travelled and considering purchasing an EV in the next five years (once owners who already own an EV are removed).

Parking

- Respondents with private parking were more likely to purchase an EV in the next 5 years (26.83%), compared to those with on-street parking (21.26%).
- Respondents with private / garages parking were more likely to already own an EV / Plug in hybrid as shown below.



Barriers to EV use in Somerset

- Respondents reported a willingness to switch to and embrace EV technology; with 515 out of 807 respondents (63%) indicating that they have either switched to an EV or have considered it. 78% of respondents considered EVs either good or very good in general terms.
- Cost to charge, performance, range per charge, environmental benefits and initial purchase cost are key factors that influence the choice to buy or lease an EV.
- Respondents also reported that charging infrastructure, including public, private and accessible charging infrastructure, to be a barrier to EV uptake in Somerset.



- The average salary in Somerset means that the initial cost and maintenance costs of EVs are a key barrier to EV uptake within the county. This barrier of cost is compounded by the lack of a second-hand EV market.
- Incentive schemes, both local and national, could facilitate EV uptake in Somerset.
- Respondents reported that EV batteries are a key barrier to EV uptake in Somerset.
- The perceived environmental impact of manufacturing and disposing of EVs is a barrier to EV uptake in Somerset.
- Figure 19 shows that a high proportion of the respondents in Taunton, Minehead, Yeovil and Wells are considering buying an EV.

Attitudes towards Environmental Impacts

- More respondents considered the environmental impact of their vehicle use (85%) than the number of respondents who reported willingness to reduce their vehicle use to reduce their environmental impact (64.6%).

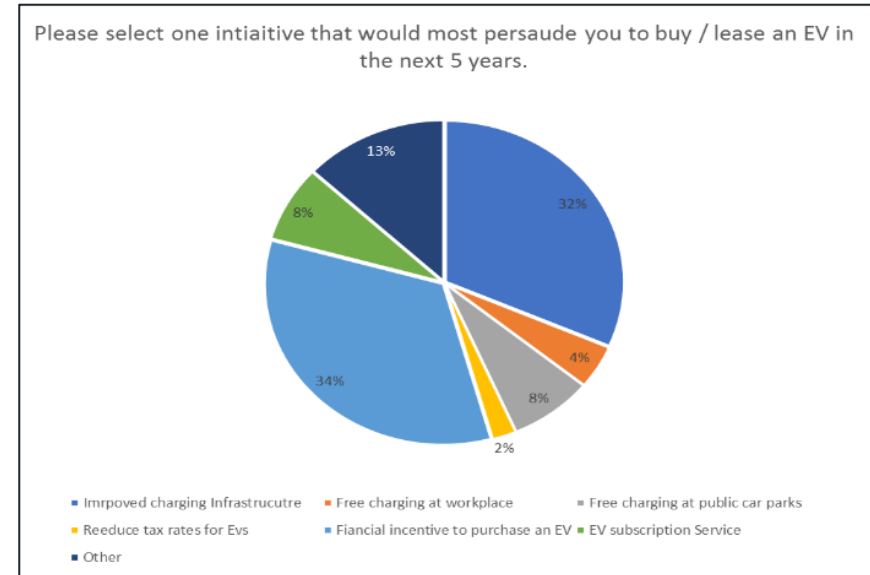
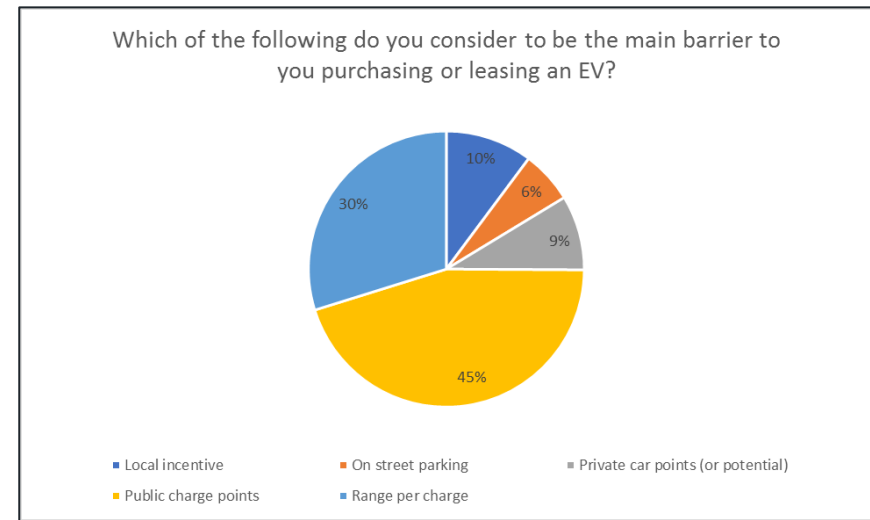
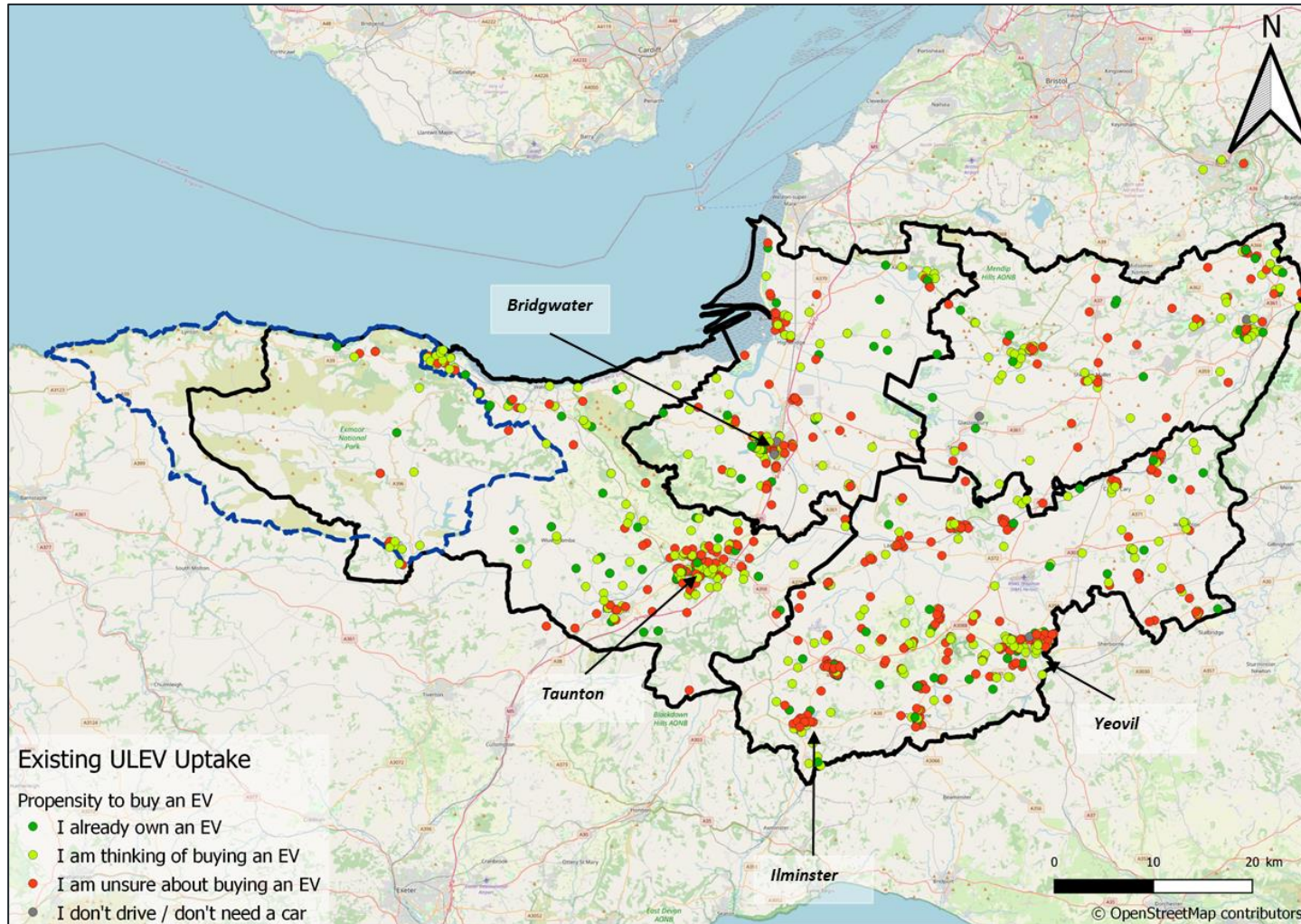


Figure 19 Stated intention to buy an EV by location





Conclusions

To conclude, the EV survey carried out by the Somerset Local Government Graduate Scheme had an extremely good response rate. The sample contains a greater percentage of people who own EVs than the DfT data shows for Somerset – indicating that the method of deriving the sample (open response, advertised by local districts websites) skews the sample towards those who are favourable to EVs.

It should be noted that the survey data relating to EV ownership within the districts does not align with the DfT vehicle licensing statistics.

The survey showed both some results that are in line with the expectations. For example, the survey showed that those with more cars are more likely to own EVs and that respondents who have access to private parking facilities are more likely to own EVs.

The survey highlighted that most respondents had considered switching to an EV (if they haven't already) and that their general perception of EVs were positive. The survey highlighted the lack of charging infrastructure, including public, private and accessible charging infrastructure, was considered to be a barrier to EV uptake in Somerset. The survey therefore backs up research from the literature and opinions from the stakeholder engagement that public charge points play an important role in overcoming range anxiety and that on-street parking is not a key consideration.



7 FORECASTING

INTRODUCTION

In order to inform our recommendations for charge point rollout, a range of EV uptake scenarios for Somerset were developed using WSP's *EV:Ready* tool. The tool enables EV uptake forecasting and flexible scenario testing, to generate forecasts to a neighbourhood level. It accounts for highly localised spatial variations in the key determinants of EV uptake rates, including:

- Consumer profiles and socio-demographics
- Availability of off-street parking
- Vehicle ownership
- Vehicle sales and turnover

The scenarios developed for this strategy included two reference case scenarios, and a third 'do something' scenario, which reflects the impact of recommendations proposed within this strategy.

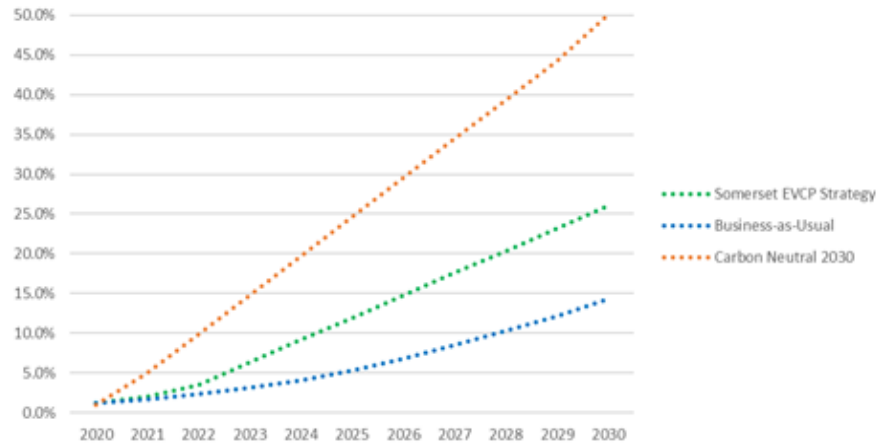
- **Business-as-Usual** - which takes the DfT WebTAG forecast percentage share of miles completed by electric vehicle vehicles within the recently revised (Table A 1.3.9, July 2020) figures.
- **Somerset EVCP Strategy** - this scenario reflects the impact of the recommendations proposed in section 8 over and above the Business-as-Usual baseline, including a ban on the sale of new petrol and diesel vehicles from 2032, the rollout of a comprehensive public charging network, further tax incentives and supportive measures from national Government, as well as local incentives.
- **Carbon Neutral 2030** – is a hypothetical scenario for a very rapid uptake of electrical vehicles, as would be required to come as close as possible to achieving the aspirations for being carbon neutral by 2030.

For each scenario a national level EV uptake forecast was defined, which either referenced a recognised industry forecast (DfT WebTAG) or were a derived forecast for uptake based on meeting a particular policy goal (Carbon Neutral 2030).

Existing EV registrations were then input at a district level using DfT data published quarterly. The national level forecasts are then assigned to a localised neighbourhood level using Experian Mosaic UK Generation 6 datasets, which are detailed to full postcode level. This latest version of Mosaic UK includes a wealth of richly detailed information on all individuals in the UK and the neighbourhoods in which they reside, as well as property and tenure information, economic indicators, census data. As well as earnings, demographics and lifestyles, they also account for technology adoption and attitudes to environmental issues, and EV and hybrid ownership (derived from DVLA data).

The scenarios also account for vehicle ownership based on ONS data by household, and importantly the extent which areas have access to off-street parking or are reliant on-street parking. In the Carbon Neutral and Somerset EVCP Strategy scenarios the deflator factor applied for on-street parking reliance is reduced based on more public electric vehicle charging points being provided.

Figure 20 Proportion of car distance travelled that is by EV in each scenario



The Figure above compares the uptake rates for EVs as a proportion of the total distance travelled by car in Somerset for each of the scenarios.

The **Business-as-Usual** based scenario projects that around 12.4% of total car distance travelled will be EVs by 2030.

The **Somerset EVCP Strategy** scenario projects that with the comprehensive package of measures outlined within this strategy enacted, and in particular the 2032 ban on the sale of new petrol and diesel vehicles, around 25% of the car distance travelled could be EVs by 2030.

The **Carbon Neutral 2030** scenario reaches around 50% of car distanced travelled by 2030, reflecting the maximum possible change based on standard vehicle turn over and sales rates. This scenario would require an immediate ban on the sale of new petrol and diesel cars, and significant carbon offsetting would be required to achieve carbon neutrality. To achieve an even higher uptake of EVs, extreme measures such as widespread roll-out of zero emission zones and national vehicle scrappage schemes would be required, with accompanying social and environmental impacts.

The figures on the following pages demonstrate how these scenarios for EV uptake are forecast to be distributed across Somerset by 2030, accounting for localised variations in consumer profiles, socio-demographics, availability of off-street parking, vehicle ownership and vehicle sales and turnover. Each hex represents a cluster of postcodes and households, to provide a clear view of the variations in uptake across the County. Areas not covered by a hex feature no, or very few, households.

Figure 21 Business-as-Usual 2030 Scenario - % EV Share

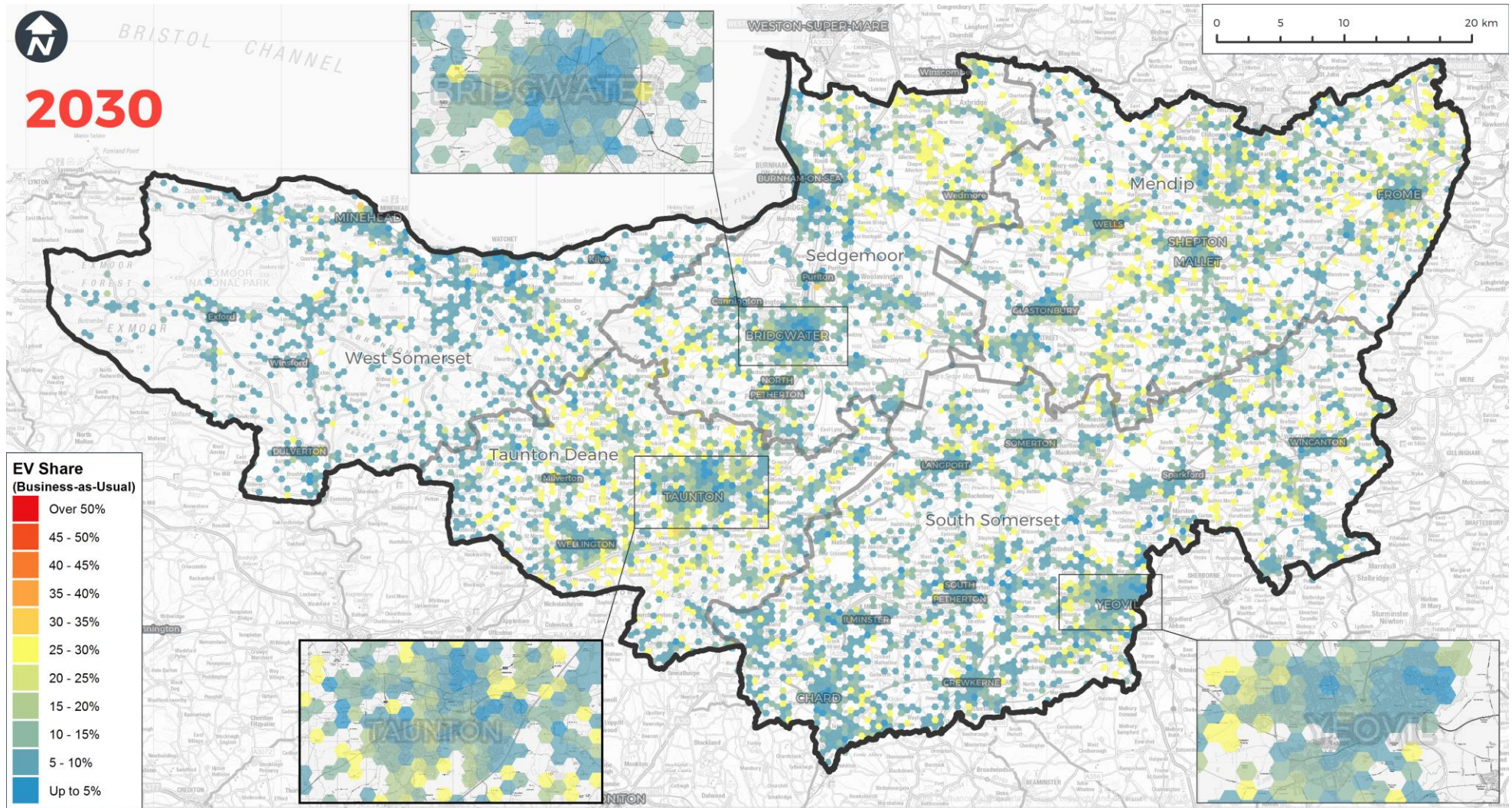




Figure 22 Business-as-Usual 2030 Scenario - Total EVs Registered

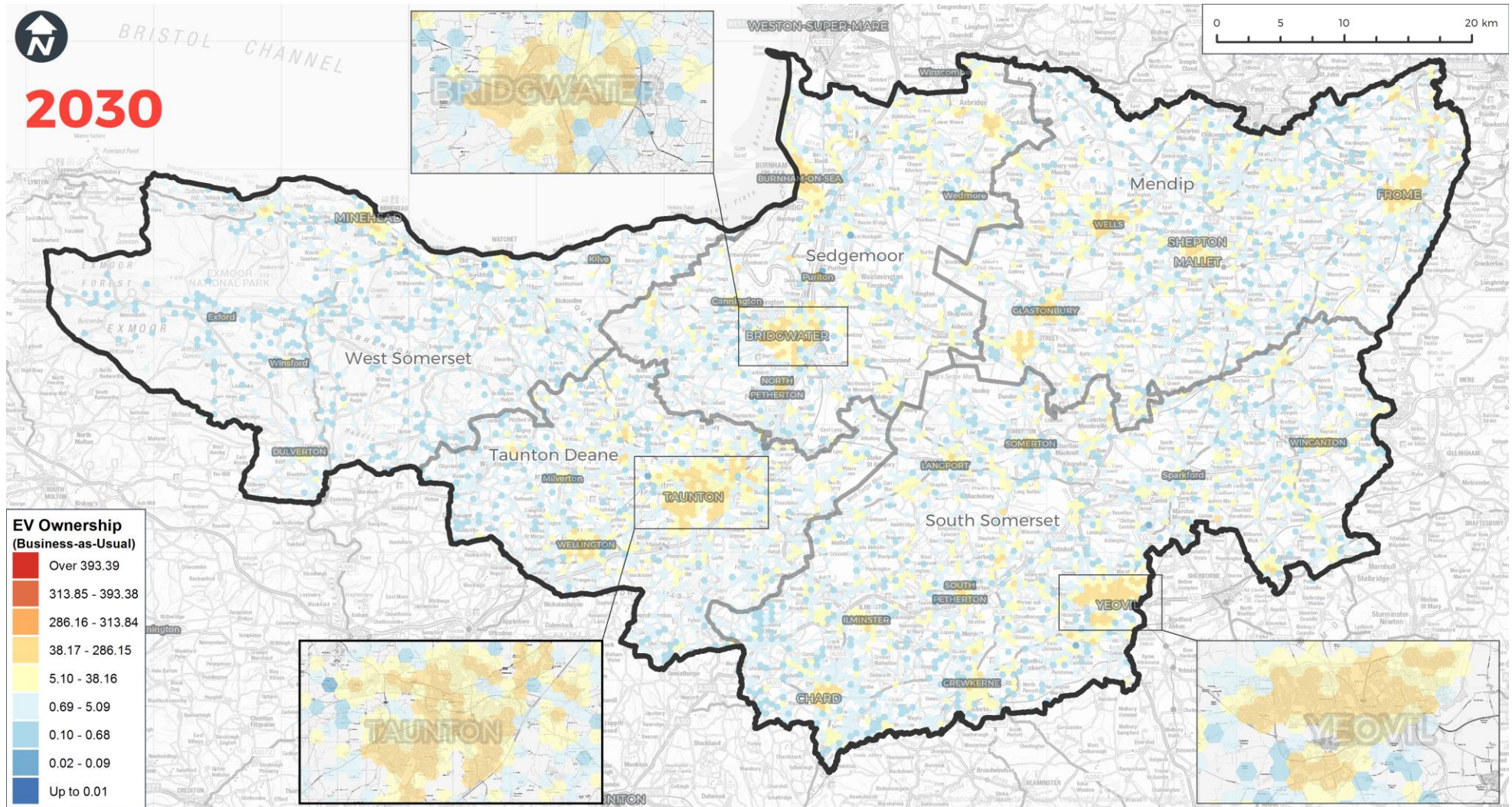




Figure 23 Somerset EVCP Strategy (2030) - % EV Share

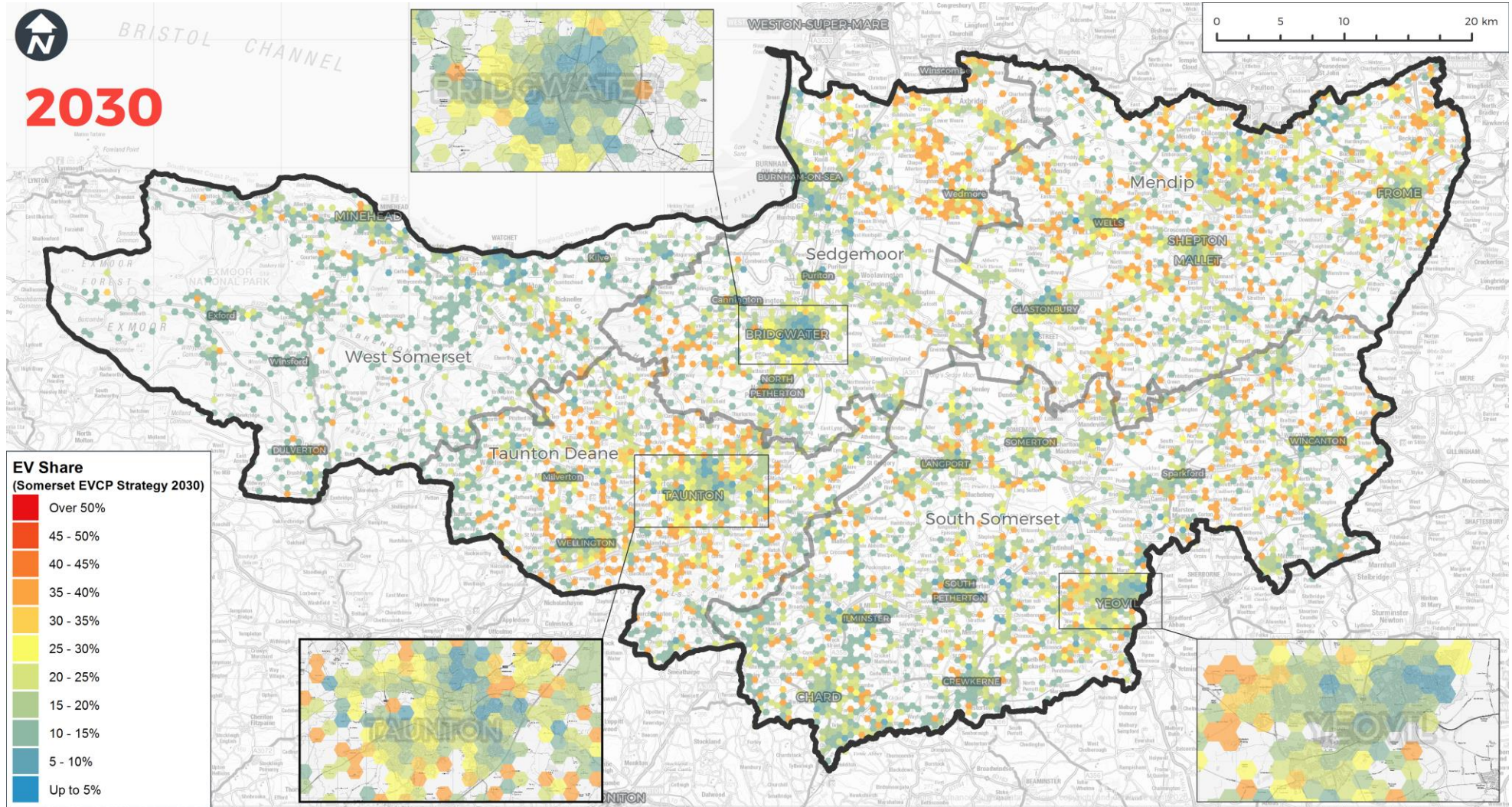




Figure 24 Somerset EVCP Strategy (2030) - Total EVs Registered

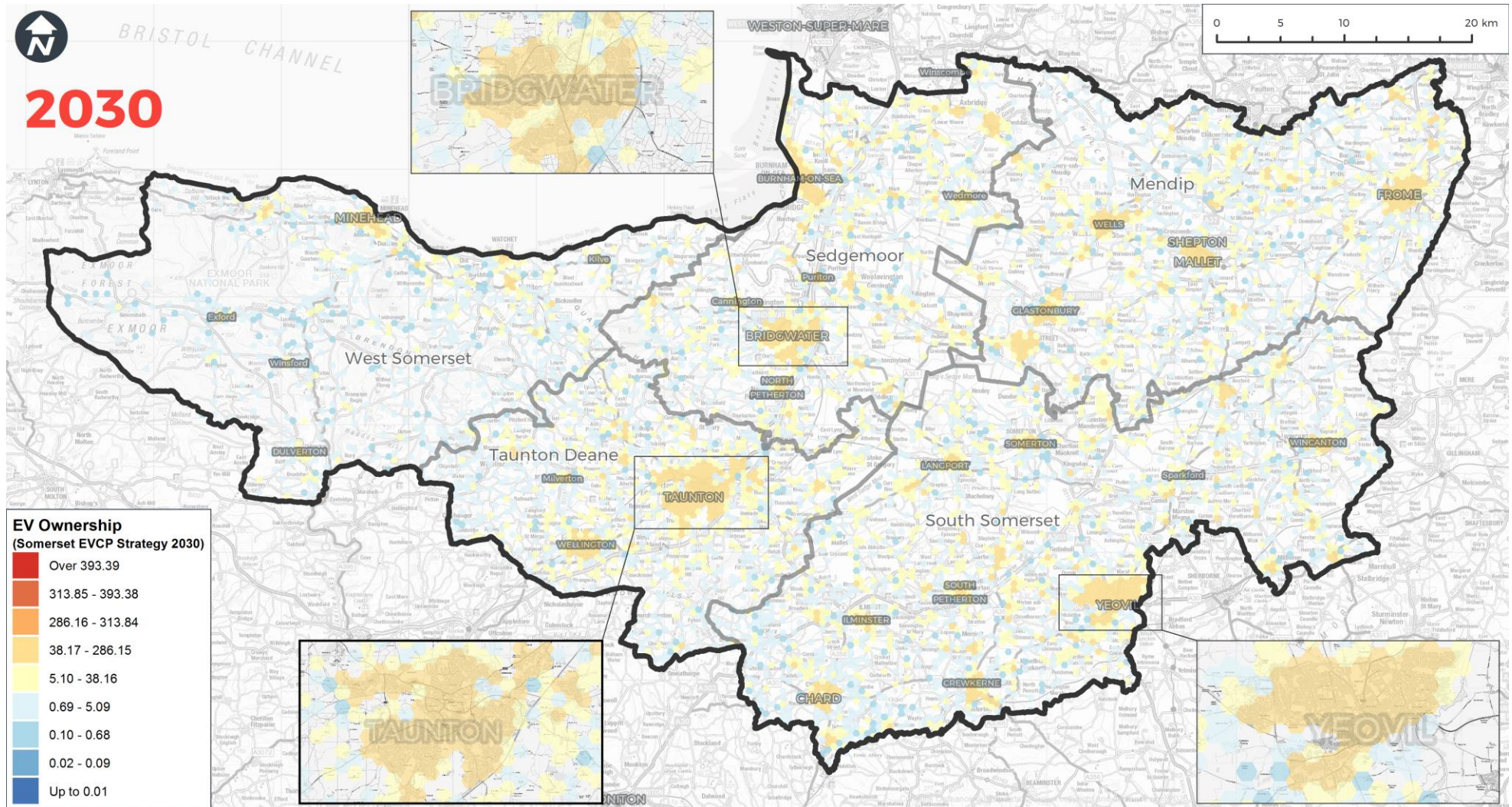


Figure 25 Carbon Neutral 2030 Scenario (2030) - % EV Share

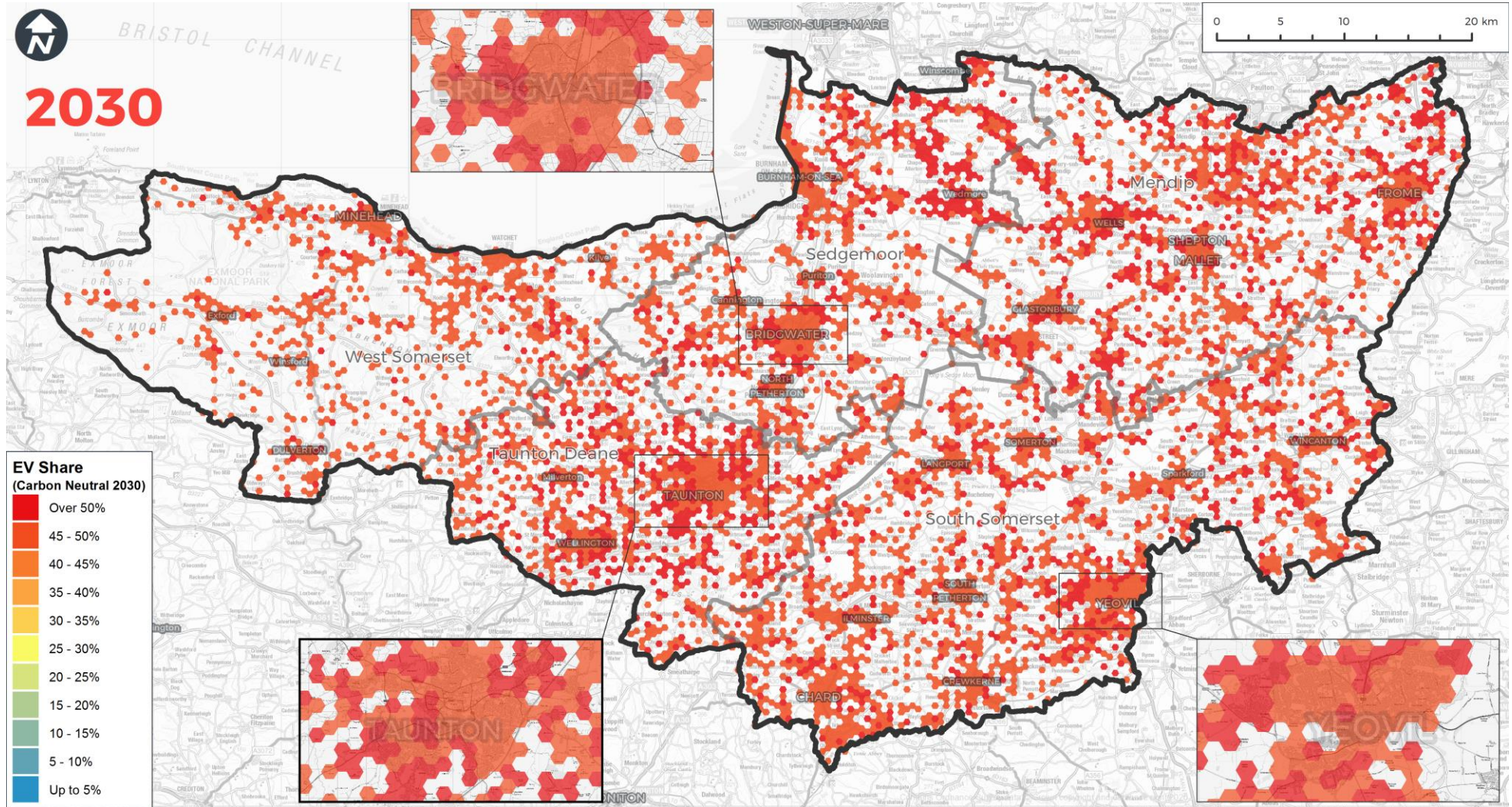
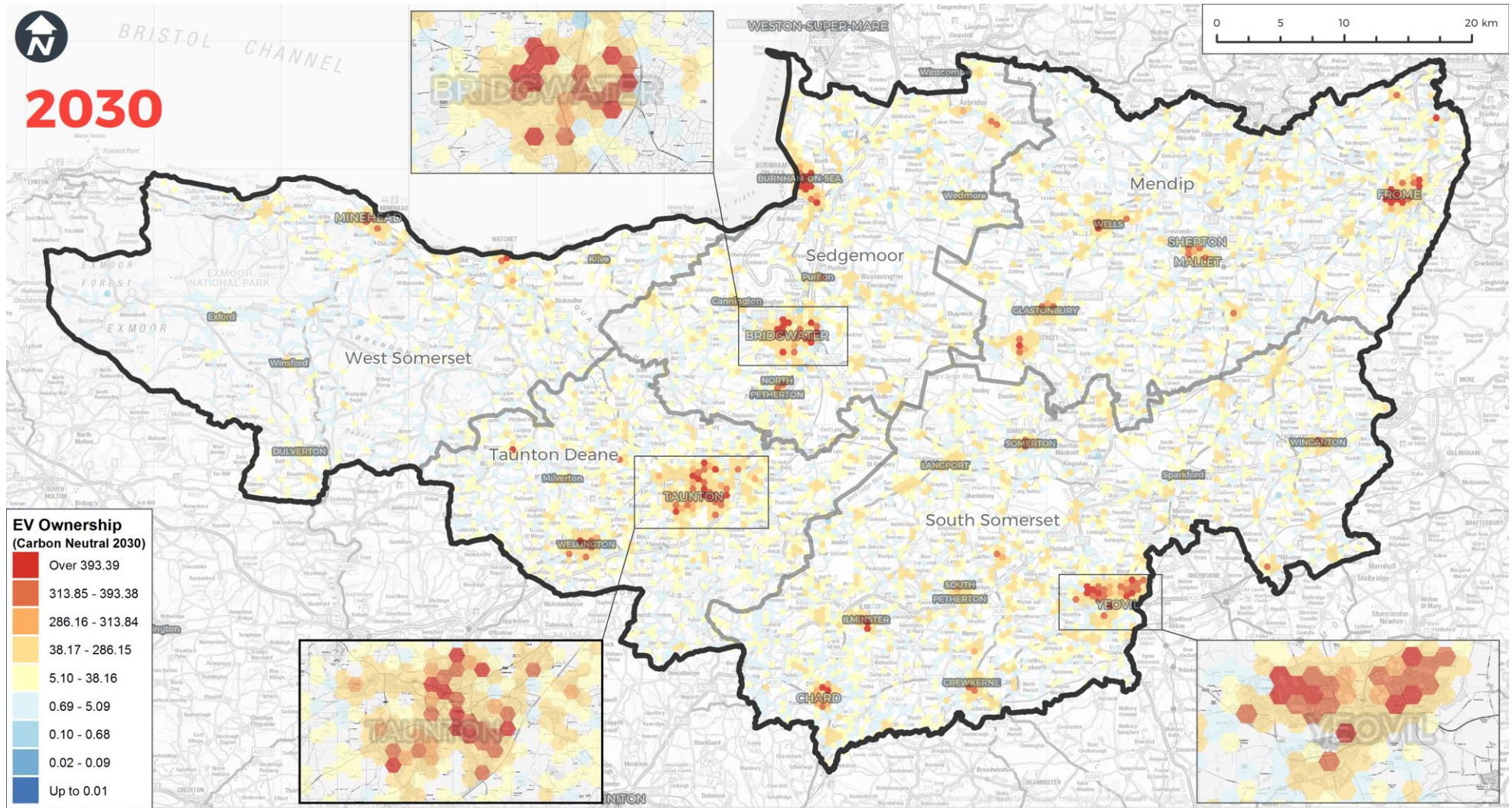


Figure 26 Carbon Neutral 2030 Scenario (2030) - Total EVs Registered





The *EV:Ready* forecasts account for a number of factors in determining localised variations in EV uptake, these include:

- Propensity to register an EV - socio demographics and consumer attitudes
- Car ownership
- Reliance on on-street parking

The differing attitudes and socio-demographic circumstances of local populations were analysed to identify their likely propensity for registering an electric vehicle, using the latest version of Experian’s Mosaic UK (Generation 6 datasets). This includes a wealth of richly detailed information on all individuals in the UK and the neighbourhoods in which they reside, detailed to full postcode level as well as property and tenure information, economic indicators, census data. As well as earnings, demographics and lifestyles, they also account for technology adoption and attitudes to environmental issues, as well as their likelihood to buy a new vehicle and have vehicle, and hybrid vehicle ownership (derived from DVLA data). Each of the 66 Mosaic UK consumer groups is scored for the propensity to switch to an EV based on 10 different indices, which provide a statistical measure of variation across a representative group of individual data points. In Somerset the average propensity is slightly higher than the UK average. The highest propensities towards EV uptake were forecast in Taunton, and lowest in Somerton.

The scenarios also account for vehicle ownership based on ONS data by household, as whilst the household may fit the characteristics of an early adopter in terms of their propensity, but if they are not a vehicle owner, they would not be expected to become one just to purchase an EV. In Somerset the average vehicle ownership is above the UK average, with some the highest levels of vehicle ownership concentrated in South Somerset, and lowest in Taunton, though there is considerable variation within each district.

A further important factor is the extent which areas have access to off-street parking or are reliant on-street parking. To date those with access to off-street parking where they can conveniently and reliably charge their vehicle overnight

have been over 3 times more likely to switch to an EV, with 93% of EVs estimated to have access to home charging by NextGreenCar in the Committee on Climate Change’s (CCC) ‘Plugging the Gap’ (2018) study, despite between 20-40% of vehicles nationally having no such access to off-street parking. The detrimental impact of a lack off-street parking is however expected to lessen over time as EV ranges increase, recharging times shorten, and public infrastructure improves.

The likelihood of an area having access to off-street parking is assessed based on the typical property types of the predominant mosaic group at a postcode level, and assumes that terraced dwellings and converted flats would be reliant on on-street parking. All other housing types, such as detached dwellings, semi-detached dwellings and purpose-built flats, are assumed to have dedicated off-street parking and therefore not reliant on on-street parking. In Somerset fewer homes are estimated to be reliant on on-street parking than the UK average. The more urban areas are not surprisingly the areas with the highest proportion of households reliant on on-street parking, including Bridgewater, Yeovil and Taunton.

The competing influences of the local populations propensity for switching to EV, their car ownership levels, and the extent to which they are reliant on on-street parking, serves to create a nuanced picture of EV ownership across the County, as areas with high propensity towards EV ownership are often partly offset by also being areas of lower car ownership and greater reliance on on-street parking. In Somerset however, as on-street parking generally presents less of an issue than in other parts of the UK, individuals’ propensity for EV uptake and variations in vehicle ownership levels have a greater bearing on localised uptake.

In broad terms, the areas of higher forecast uptake in Somerset are projected to be focused around the Taunton area, Burnham-on-Sea and the northern portion of Sedgemoor District, and the wider areas around Frome and Yeovil. EV uptake is forecast to be slower in the West of the County.



INDICATIVE NUMBER OF PUBLIC CHARGE POINTS

Table 13 Indicative public EVCP requirement in each scenario in 2030

District	Business as Usual		Somerset EV Strategy		Carbon Neutral 2030	
	EVs	Public EVCPs	EVs	Public EVCPs	EVs	Public EVCPs
Mendip	13,500	160-200	23,500	280-350	45,000	550-680
Sedgemoor	11,500	140-170	21,500	260-320	46,500	560-700
South Somerset	14,000	170-210	28,000	340-430	65,500	800-1000
Somerset West & Taunton	11,000	130-170	22,500	280-340	55,500	680-840
SOMERSET TOTAL	50,000	600-750	95,500	1160-1440	212,500	2590-3220

Table 13 summarises the total number of EVs predicted in each scenario, by district, in 2030. The number of EVs was used to calculate an indicative number of public charge points needed. The number of EVCPs is based on a large number of assumptions and as such should be treated with caution. However, it does provide an indication of the scale of public charging infrastructure needed, and how this changes in each scenario. It is important to note that the majority of public charge points would likely be delivered on private land such as at supermarkets, retail destinations, and other publicly accessible locations, rather than delivered directly by the public sector.

Assumptions informing the number of public EVCPs include:

- Average mileage of vehicles in 2030;
- Miles per kW of various vehicle types in 2030;
- Proportion of plug-in hybrids, and assumed distanced travelled in pure EV mode in 2030;
- Proportion of charging undertaken at public charge points in 2030, assumed to rise from 5% in 2020 to 9% in 2030;
- Maximum number of charging events per charge point per day; and,
- Ratio of fast to rapid chargers in 2030, assumed to be 95% fast, 5% rapid.

AREAS OF HIGH POTENTIAL EV DEMAND AND ON-STREET PARKING

Of the forecast uptake detailed in the preceding scenarios, the key areas that are likely to require intervention from the public sector are areas of the County where there is a:

- High propensity to switch to electric vehicles
- Moderate or high vehicle ownership
- High proportion of on-street parking

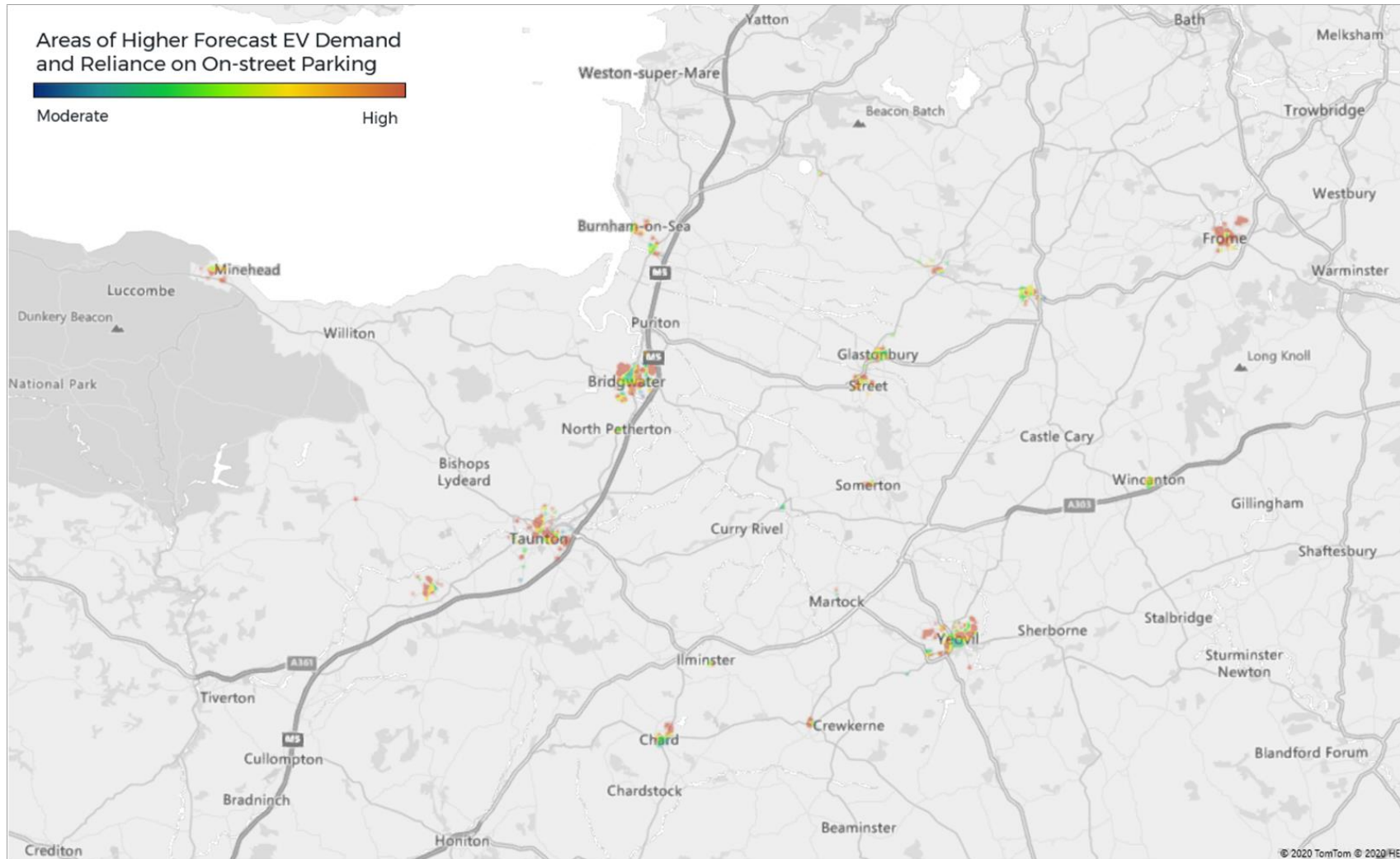
Figure 27 on the next page highlights areas where residents are more reliant on on-street parking, and are also forecast to be areas of moderate to high EV ownership, based on the 'Somerset EVCP Strategy (2030) Scenario'.

The areas shown in blue and green represent areas with moderate levels of EV growth, whilst the yellow and red areas highlight areas with relatively high levels of forecast EV growth. In order to support and enable EV uptake in these areas, prospective EV owners will need to be able to access convenient publicly accessible charge points, to remove any barriers posed to those without access to off-street parking, which will otherwise stifle uptake.

The towns of Minehead, Taunton, Bridgwater, Burnham-on-Sea, Yeovil, Chard Street, Glastonbury and Frome have a greater need for intervention given there is a greater reliance on on-street parking and a greater propensity to switch to EVs.

On-street charging points at these locations should be considered, where the street layout can accommodate the infrastructure. Alternatively, residential charging hubs in nearby off-street car parks could be considered where they are located nearby and readily accessible.

Figure 27 Areas of high potential EV demand and on-street parking (Somerset EVCP Strategy 2030 Scenario)



8 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following section sets out recommendations to deliver the Somerset EV charge point network, drawing on the findings of the market review, baseline review, stakeholder engagement, and EV forecasts for Somerset.

Lead by example

1. Undertake a Fleet Review to identify opportunities

As identified through the stakeholder consultation, the Somerset authorities are at different stages of converting their vehicle fleets to EV. We recommend the authorities undertake a fleet review and adopt a stretching but achievable target to convert fleets to EV, recognising that not all vehicle types, use cases and duty cycles currently have a viable EV alternative. For example, we understand around 70% of SCC fleet comprises larger vehicles (>3.5tns). Consider the potential for cross-district collaboration and sharing of fleet vehicles.

2. Install charge points at Council depots, with associated driver awareness and training

Linked to the findings of the Fleet Review, install appropriate charge points and other infrastructure at Council depots to support the conversion to a low carbon fleet. We recommend these charge points are fully owned and operated by the Council. It should be noted that these two devices are currently installed at County Hall; albeit they are out of service at time of writing.

3. Install charge points at key Council offices

To show the councils commitment to electric vehicles it is recommend that all council offices have charge points installed, which are made available for

public use where possible. It is recommended that the charge points are installed at the following sites:

- Somerset West and Taunton - Killock Way in Williton
- Exmoor National Park Authority - Exmoor House in Dulverton
- Somerset West and Taunton – Belvedere House in Taunton
- Sedgemoor – Bridgwater House in Bridgwater
- South Somerset – Byrmpton Way Offices in Yeovil
- Mendip – Canards Grove in Shepton Mallet

The recommendation is made on the basis that Somerset West and Taunton, as well as Sedgemoor, have a lack of publicly available charging points. County Hall already has two charge points installed.

These sites could be delivered as part of a wider charge point project as set out later in the recommendations and could utilise funding from the Workplace Charging Scheme.

Work with central government and industry to increase uptake of Electric Vehicles

Central government has the most powerful levers available to accelerate the uptake of Electric Vehicles, which in turn will drive demand and uptake of EV charge points. To achieve carbon neutral 2030 goals the Somerset Councils will need to work with central government and industry to bring about change over and above requirements for the National Net Zero 2050 target.

4. Urge Government to bring forward the ban on sales of new petrol and diesel cars and vans to 2030 or earlier



The Committee on Climate Change recommends that the ban should be brought forward to 2032 to meet existing UK Net Zero 2050 climate goals. However, to meet the more ambitious carbon neutral 2030 goal, the date will need to be brought forward further to as soon as practicably possible.

5. Urge Government to further reduce the costs of electric vehicle purchase, leasing and ownership compared to petrol and diesel vehicles

For example, this could include changes to vehicle sales tax, stopping the freeze on fuel duty which has seen fuel duty in real terms reduce by around 30% since the year 2000, and national scrappage schemes. A House of Commons Briefing Paper (2020) states that as the proportion of electric vehicles on our roads increases, total taxation from fuel duty will fall significantly and some form of road user charging or other taxation is likely to be required to replace this tax income.

6. Explore additional local incentives to increase EV uptake beyond additional charge point infrastructure

Local authorities across the country are developing non-charge point based measures to encourage take up of Electric Vehicles, for example through OLEV funded projects, Clean Air Plans, carbon neutral 2030 plans, and other initiatives. These range from:

- Marketing and promotion of EVs, linked to wider travel behaviour projects
- “Try an EV” schemes and EV experience centres (such as at Milton Keynes)
- reduced cost of parking permits and public parking for EVs
- local scrappage schemes and mobility credits; and,
- Zero Emission Zones in Oxford and London.

As set out in section 4, Austria is already using differential speed limits to help incentivise Electric Vehicles, linked to the need to tackle poor air quality. A reduced speed limit on higher speed roads, such as the Strategic and Major Road Networks, could be proposed until the climate emergency is averted, with EVs exempt from this. This could be a highly effective way to tackle the longest distance car trips that contribute the most to the climate crisis, but would require changes to legislation at the national level. The measures would encourage modal and vehicle shift for the longer journeys undertaken by the richest in society who would be less impacted by road charging but would also require new powers and would be controversial.

7. Identify opportunities to support research and innovation in Electric Vehicles in Somerset

For example, by encouraging EV specialist industries to local in Somerset, including at the Gravity campus, and fostering collaboration within the sector. This could also include further engagement with educational establishments in Somerset on EV issues.

Home charging

Around 80% of EV charging is currently done at home, and as set out in this document, charging at home offers the cheapest cost per charge for users. With smart charging, it offers the biggest potential to shift electricity demand to the middle of the night, when demand on the grid is at its lowest and the proportion of low carbon energy in the grid is at its highest.

8. Adopt EV parking standards to ensure every new home with a parking space has a smart EV charge point

This recommendation brings forward Governments existing proposals for changes to building regulations. The detailed recommendations and supporting text are contained in Appendix A.



9. For existing households, promote the OLEV Electric Vehicle Homecharge Scheme

The scheme can contribute up to £350 towards the installation of a home charging unit.

10. Promote home charging share schemes such as Zap-Home

Combined with increased roll-out of home chargers through recommendations 8 and 9, this measure could significantly increase the public charge point network at minimal cost. Research from ZapMap suggests 50% of EV drivers are willing to share their home charge point with other users.

11. Provide guidance for the use of cable covers and covered ducts by residents

As detailed in section 4, cable covers and covered ducts offer residents the opportunity to charge their vehicle relatively easily with little Council intervention, and benefit from domestic electricity prices.

Hampshire Council has issued guidance to residents wishing to use cable covers, including length and placement of the cable, and avoiding creating a public nuisance. The guidance also states that any legal liability arising from the placement of the cable or protector is the resident’s responsibility, and advises residents to speak to their home insurer to confirm their home insurance policy covers this situation Further details can be found at the following hyperlink: <https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/ev-charging-points/ev-charging-guidance>

We recommend the use of cable covers would only be acceptable in areas of extremely low or zero footfall to avoid creating a public nuisance, and only in areas of low parking stress where a resident can park outside their address with reasonable certainty.

Similarly, the Oxford on-street charging trial recommended that the use of cable channels is encouraged, with the installations undertaken by a suitably qualified contractor. We recommend the use of cable channels would be acceptable in areas of low to medium footfall, and in areas of low parking stress where a resident can park outside their address with reasonable certainty.

12. Submit a bid to the OLEV On-street Residential Chargepoint Scheme

The OLEV On-street Residential Chargepoint Scheme pays for 75% of the capital costs of charge points, with an indicative limit of up to £100k per district authority. OLEV set out minimum technical specifications for on-street charge points that any provider would need to adhere to. A private sector partner can contribute the remaining 25% of funding, meaning charge points can be delivered with no local authority investment. We would recommend a private sector delivery partner is identified prior to the funding bid submission. Applications to install charge points in public car parks in residential areas will be considered provided that an option is available for local residents looking to charge their car both during the day and overnight.

Areas of potential demand for on-street charging has been identified through the public survey and in Section 7. Requests to the Council for on-street charge points should be logged, and an additional public survey to identify hotspots of demand for on-street charge points could also be used to inform a bid.

Section 7 identified that the main towns in Somerset (Taunton, Minehead, Bridgwater, Yeovil, Street, Glastonbury, Chard) would be suitable for on-street residential charegpoint schemes. The stakeholder engagement exercise also identified the following locations for on-street charge points:

- Kings Square in Bridgwater
- Upcoming Firepool Development in Taunton



A range of on-street solutions charge point solutions are likely to be needed. As set out in section 4, trials in Oxford showed that lamppost charge points performed best, however, standalone bollard charge points may need to be considered in some areas. The Oxford trial recommended against the use of enforcement via Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) if possible.

13. Adopt design standards for on-street chargers to enable and manage future private sector roll-out of charge points

Key principles should be to maintain minimum footway widths of 2m, provide accessible charge points for disabled users, and avoid trailing wires. The London EV Charge Point Design Guidance provides a useful reference point.

<http://ruc.content.tfl.gov.uk/london-electric-vehicle-charge-point-installation-guidance-december-2019.pdf>

Workplace charging

Workplace charging provides an opportunity to charge vehicles where they are routinely parked for long periods of time during the day, reducing the demands on the electric grid.

14. Adopt EV parking standards for new workplaces

This recommendation brings forward Governments existing proposals for changes to building regulations, with 10% active provision and 20% passive provision at new workplaces. The detailed recommendations and supporting text is contained in Appendix A.

15. For existing workplaces, promote the OLEV Workplace Charging Scheme

The scheme can reduce the cost of workplace chargepoints by up to £10,000. The grant is capped at £350 per socket, up to a maximum of 40 sockets

16. Promote the Energy Saving Trust fleet reviews

Green Fleet Reviews are carried at no cost for most private and public sector organisations. They evaluate how sustainable a fleet operation is and identify opportunities to reduce emissions, fuel costs and expenditure.

17. Promote workplace charging share schemes such as Zap-Work

Similar to home charging share schemes, this measure could significantly increase the public charge point network at minimal cost. Research from ZapMap suggests 30% of workplaces are willing to share their charge point with other users.

Other destination charging

While only a small percentage of charging is currently conducted away from the home or workplace, with only 5% of charges undertaken at public charge points. However, 35% of survey respondents stated that lack of public charging infrastructure was a barrier to them purchasing an EV.

At this stage, the geographical distribution and availability of public charge points is far more important than the total number of charge points provided. With the roll-out charge points recommended in this section, there is likely to be ample overall charging capacity, however, there may be localised demand hotspots that are extremely challenging to predict. Therefore, the recommended approach is to ensure a wide geographical spread of charge points, with passive provision at each site allowing for expansion of the number of charge points per site at a later date where the observed real world demand supports this.

18. Adopt EV parking standards for other new non-residential developments

This recommendation brings forward Governments existing proposals for changes to building regulations, with 10% active provision and 20% passive



provision. The detailed recommendation and supporting text is contained in Appendix A.

19. Develop charging hubs at Taunton Gateway and Silk Mills Park & Ride

Park & Ride sites could be transformed into EV charge point hubs, creating an additional incentive to use them and reduce traffic volumes in congested central areas. Due to the long length of stay, relatively low power charge points can be used, and in the longer term the charge points can provide an additional income stream to help support Park & Ride services. Our grid assessment shows there is spare capacity in the vicinity of both Park & Ride sites, however, the potential to use local renewables generation at or near the sites could also be explored to further reduce the impact on the grid.

20. Install charge points at council owned public car parks

A prioritised list of public car parks is contained in Appendix C and shown in Figure 28. Sites have been prioritised based on:

- EV uptake forecasts in the surrounding area, as outlined section 7
- Areas subject to higher tourist / visitor demand
- Car park size
- Car park stay length

While there is likely to be sufficient local grid capacity at the majority of sites, a further sift will be required based on detailed assessments of each site individually by the DNO.

The right charge point for the right place is required. For most public car parks identified this is likely to be a 22kW charge point capable of smart charging and load balancing. The cost of 22kW charge point equipment is not significantly different from 7kW units and the ability to load balance means that

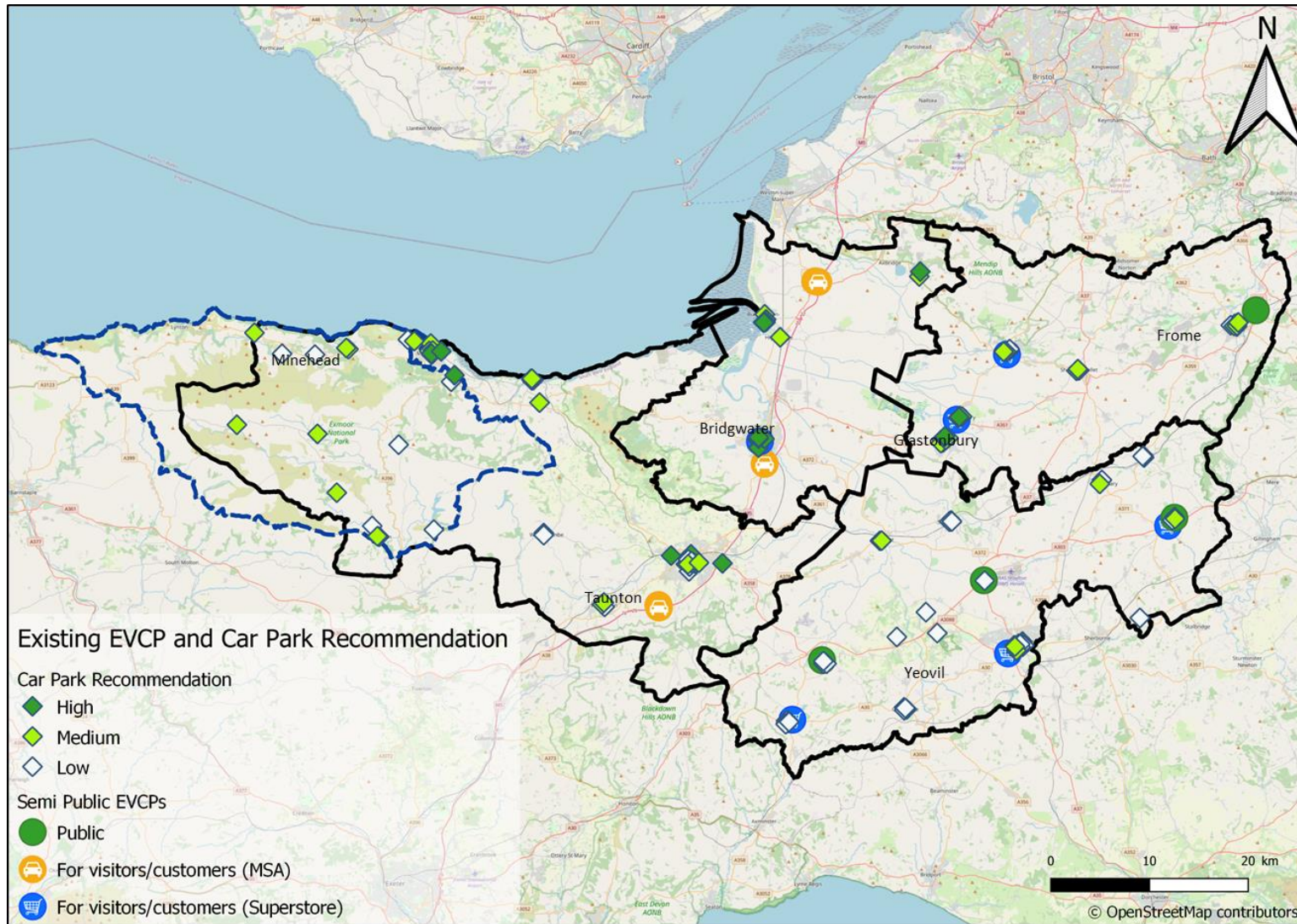
impacts on the grid can be minimised. Having said this, in car parks with long dwell times, 7kW may also be sufficient.

Following the preferred approach with the DELETTI project in Devon, we would recommend parking charges continue to apply for all vehicles including EVs to help manage congestion. At present provision of EV charging bays at each car park, with passive provision for a further six bays is likely to accommodate existing demand and allow for future expansion, whilst minimising the need for grid upgrades that may not be needed. Once charge points are installed, their usage can be monitored, and additional sockets added if there is sufficient demand.

As with all charge point delivery that the Somerset authorities can influence, key elements of the specification should include:

- Service levels – service level agreements (that can be enforced) should seek to ensure the charge point is operational all of the time
- Interoperability – charge points should work with the maximum number of vehicle types.
- Accessibility – for disabled and mobility impaired users, including accessible user interfaces for any app-based payment solutions
- Easy of payment - with the ability to make ad-hoc payments by standard payment card (including over the phone), with no preferential rates for membership schemes
- Renewable energy – electric sourced from renewable sources to further minimise the climate impact of EVs
- No exclusivity or exclusion zones, with reasonable termination clauses

Figure 28 Public charge point priorities shown with existing semi-public existing EVCPs.





21. Encourage stakeholders to deliver EV charge points at other key destinations including supermarkets and rail stations

Supermarkets and railway station car parks offer an excellent opportunity for EV charging. Supermarkets typically visited several times a week for 30 minutes or more, offering a potential alternative to home charging, with many supermarket chains already rolling out charge points. Similarly, rail stations attract frequent repeat visits by longer staying customers, which are well suited to use by EVs.

22. Engage with tourist destinations and explore tourism opportunities associated with EV

EV charge points in Somerset could play an important role for tourism, both for visitors to Somerset and for people travelling through Somerset on the M5 and A303 towards Devon and Cornwall. Key tourist and shopping destinations including, Glastonbury, Clarks Village and Street, and English Heritage properties offer strong potential for the uptake of EV charge points in a similar way to the National Trust’s planned roll-out of charge points. EV charge points may also help attract visitors and build on the “green tourism” offer.

23. Consider the potential to integrate EV charging with other energy and transport services as part of new Mobility Hubs

At public car parks and other locations, there may be opportunities to co-locate car-clubs, bike hire, bike storage, and other transport services to create new mobility hubs and multi-modal transport solutions for people that need more than one form of transport to reach their destination. EV car clubs in particular,

could offer more people the opportunity to try and have access to an electric car, removing the purchase cost barrier.

There is also the potential to group EV charge points with local renewable energy generation to reduce the impact on the grid. Rooftop solar on nearby buildings or wind power is likely to be the most cost effective approach, although battery storage and solar car ports may become more competitive in future. Future adoption of Vehicle-to-Grid (V2G) technology could also be used to minimise grid impacts, linked to EV charging hubs.

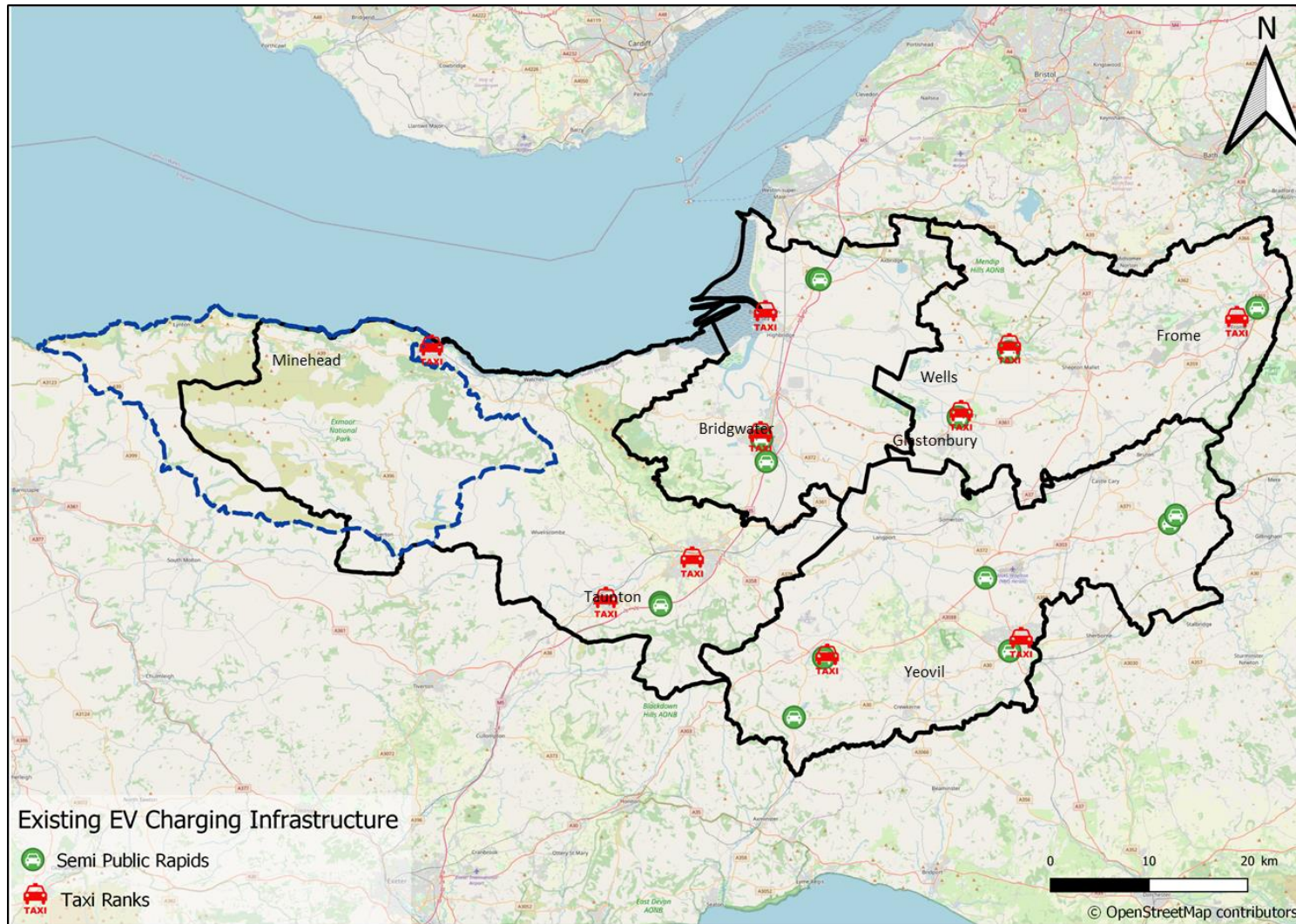
On route charging

On route charging using rapid chargers can help overcome range anxiety issues and can also provide an alternative, if expensive, means of charging for people without access to home or destination charging. Many “fully funded” charge point offers focus on rapid charging, with a market preference for highly trafficked routes with good waiting facilities.

24. Engage a private sector supplier to deliver rapid charge points where there are currently gaps in provision (specific areas based on mapping) and to explore delivery of rapid chargers for use in urban centres including by taxis in locations near to taxi ranks

Figure 29 shows that the taxi ranks in Minehead, Burnham-on-Sea and Wells are not located near to a semi-publicly accessible rapid charger; thus, inhibiting taxi drivers operating in those towns from switching to EVs.

Figure 29 Taxi ranks proximity to semi-public rapid charge points (i.e. including MSAs and superstores, excluding hotels)





Governance

The proposed governance approach to deliver the recommendations of this strategy was discussed at a stakeholder workshop. While the final governance arrangements are to be confirmed, the intention is for an EV working group to be established within the wider Somerset Climate Emergency response governance structure, and reporting to a transport working group. It is recommended the EV working group is formed from an EV lead from each authority, bringing in wider officer support and expertise where needed.

This should help ensure that EV work across the authorities is coordinated, and links to wider climate and energy workstreams. The EV working group will have overall responsibility for maintaining momentum and delivering on the recommendations.

A stakeholder forum of key external stakeholders and delivery partners could also be established, to help guide delivery of the strategy. For example, this could include Highways England, EV users, local EV businesses, and others.

Delivery approach

The Somerset authorities are relatively early in the journey towards delivery of a comprehensive EV charging network. There is an initial role for the authorities to attract public sector grant funding combined with private sector investment, to help develop the network.

Based on engagement with officers in the Somerset authorities the preference appears to be for a low risk approach, recognising limited Council funds and resources, particularly for revenue funding that would be needed to operate and maintain a public charge point network. The coronavirus crisis is likely to further reduce public sector budgets, limiting the options available. There is a general desire for a long-term delivery partner to assist with EV roll-out. Some Somerset authorities, including South Somerset District Council, have shown a willingness to invest Council funds in charge points, and there have been a

number of private sector approaches to Councils for fully funded delivery models. As such, we recommend the following delivery approaches:

Public ownership

The recommended approach to deliver charge points at Council depots, giving full control and ownership. If used entirely for fleet purposes the management of the charge points can be undertaken in-house.

Concessionary model – public/private funded

A concessionary model would be the preferred approach to deliver the following recommendations:

3. Install charge points at key Council offices
12. Submit a bid to the OLEV On-Street Residential Chargepoint Scheme
19. Develop charging hubs at Taunton Gateway and Silk Mills Park & Ride
20. Install charge points at council owned car parks

This approach will maximise the effectiveness of public sector funding for charge points, leveraging private sector investment in charging infrastructure in Somerset. We would recommend a revenue sharing arrangement is used to share the potential benefits, with a maximum concession period of 10 years allowing the Somerset authorities to take stock and review once the EV market has matured. A private sector partner should be procured, with the simplest mechanism being to use an existing framework arrangement.

Fully funded

Delivery of rapid charge points via a fully funded offer should be considered, either as a standalone contract or, as Dorset Council have done, as a bolt on to their main charge point contract. Provision of rapid chargers should be market led.



9 CONCLUSIONS & NEXT STEPS

We are facing a climate crisis and all Somerset authorities have declared a climate emergency, working towards becoming carbon neutral by 2030. The emerging Somerset Climate Emergency Strategy recognises that extensive electrification of surface transport is needed, and that Electric Vehicles (EV) charging infrastructure in Somerset needs to scale up significantly.

This document sets out a strategy for the Somerset local authorities to help effectively deliver the necessary electric vehicle charging network for Somerset. It has considered:

- relevant policy context
- the potential role of electric vehicles
- existing and emerging vehicle and charge point technologies
- the local context in Somerset
- stakeholder views
- EV uptake scenarios and forecasts

A total of 24 recommendations have been made to help deliver a comprehensive charge point network for Somerset. A draft implementation plan showing the Council's role for each recommendation, responsibilities, timescales, is shown in Table 14 overleaf.

The EV market is continually changing and rapidly evolving, and as such this strategy should be regularly monitored and reviewed. It is proposed that this strategy is reviewed every 3-4 years to account for the rapidly evolving electric vehicle market.



Table 14 Action Plan

Workstream	Council role	Action by	Recommended Timescales
Review fleet			
1. Undertake a Fleet Review to identify opportunities	Lead	All authorities Fleet managers	Short term (by end of 2021) / Ongoing
2. Install charge points at Council/EPNA depots, with associated driver awareness and training			
Work with central Government			
4. Urge Government to bring forward the ban on sales of new petrol and diesel cars and vans to 2030 or earlier	Encourage	All authorities Cllrs/MPs/Chief Execs	Ongoing
5. Urge Government to further reduce the costs of electric vehicle purchase and ownership compared to petrol and diesel vehicles			
(6. Urge Government for additional funding and powers to implement local EV incentives if required following action 6).			
Update EV Parking Standards and Design Standards			
8. Adopt EV parking standards to ensure every new home with a parking space has an EV charge point	Require	SCC Highways Development Control Lead with support from all authorities	Short term (by end of 2021)
14. Adopt EV parking standards for new workplaces			
18. Adopt EV parking standards for other new non-residential developments	Require / Encourage		Medium/ Long term (by end of 2023)
13. Adopt design standards for on-street chargers to enable and manage future private sector roll-out of charge points			
11. Provide guidance for the use of cable covers and covered ducts by residents	Enable	Short term Short term (by end of 2021)	
Promotion & information			
9. For existing households, promote the OLEV Electric Vehicle Homecharge Scheme	Encourage	All authorities Comms/Engagement Teams (link to wider travel behaviour change programmes if possible)	Ongoing
10. Promote home charging share schemes such as Zap-Home			
15. For existing workplaces, promote the OLEV Workplace Charging Scheme			
16. Promote the Energy Saving Trust fleet reviews			
17. Promote workplace charging share schemes such as Zap-Work			



Workstream	Council role	Action by	Recommended Timescales
21. Encourage stakeholders to deliver EV charge points at other key destinations including supermarkets and train stations	Encourage	All authorities	Ongoing
22. Engage with tourist destinations and explore tourism opportunities associated with EV			
Procure charge points			
3. Install charge points at key Council offices	Lead	All authorities working in partnership, with coordination by SCC	Short term (by end of 2022)
20. Install charge points at council owned public car parks			Short term Short term (by end of 2021)
19. Develop charging hubs at Taunton Gateway and Silk Mills Park & Ride			Medium term (by end of 2023)
12. Submit a bid to the OLEV On-Street Residential Chargepoint Scheme			Short term (by end of 2021)
24. Engage a private sector supplier to deliver rapid charge points			Medium term ((by end of 2023)
23. Consider the potential to integrate EV charging with other energy and transport services as part of new Mobility Hubs	Explore		Ongoing
Explore wider measures			
6. Explore additional local incentives to increase EV uptake beyond additional charge point infrastructure	Explore	SCC Transport Lead with support from all authorities	Ongoing
7. Identify opportunities to support research and innovation in Electric Vehicles in Somerset	Enable	All authorities Transport & Economy Teams	Ongoing



Appendix A: Recommended parking standards

Land Use	Active Provision	Passive Provision
Residential	All new residential developments with an allocated car parking space to have a charge point.	n/a
	All new residential developments with more than 10 unallocated off-street and/or on-street car parking spaces to have active provision for 10% of unallocated spaces.	20%
Non-residential	All new non-residential buildings with more than 10 car parking spaces to have at least one charge point, with active provision for 10% of spaces.	20%
	At least 1 charging unit should be provided for every 5 disabled parking spaces.	20%
	Where 50 parking spaces or more are provided then 1 rapid charging unit (minimum 43 kW) per 50 spaces shall be provided and parking time limited to 1 hour.	

Charge point specifications

- Minimum 7kW charge point for both residential and non-residential buildings, to ensure some future proofing to service increasing battery sizes. Most new homes have a 100 Amp connection as standard, and in most cases, it will be possible to accommodate a 7 kW charge point within this connection.
- Capable for at least Mode 3 charging, to enable smart charging. The Automated and Electric Vehicles Act 2018 mandates out that all new charging points should be smart-capable.
- Untethered connections (i.e. only a socket, no built in cable)
- Location of the charge point must comply with the Equality Act 2010
- Meet relevant safety standards
- On-street charge points should be designed to ensure a minimum of 2m footway width is maintained, either through provision of wide footways or by provision of footway build-outs to accommodate charge points.

Definition of passive provision

- Passive provision refers to the installation of cable routes only.
- NOTE: Cenex are developing proposals for a standard ducting/charge point interface, likely to comprise of a concrete pad and a standardised socket connector. This requirement could be included in the requirements if/when the Cenex recommendations are finalised.

Costs

- Installing charge points in new residential buildings will incur an additional cost of approximately £976 per car parking space for the average home (compared to £2,040 for a retrofitted charge point).
- New homes requiring significant electrical capacity reinforcements to accommodate charge points may be exempted from the requirement to provide a charge point, with an indicative maximum limit of reinforcement costs of £3,600 per charge point.



- 7kW charge points for non-residential developments typically cost around £1,500, in addition to grid connection costs which are typically between £1,000-£10,000.
- 43kW+ rapid charge points can cost up to £35,000, and electric grid constraints may make rapid chargers unviable in some areas.
- Installing charge points in new buildings is around £1,100 less expensive than retrofitting a charge point at a later date.
- If applied nationally, the savings to society of installing charge points up front in new residential developments is estimated at £434.6 million over 31 years, and £255.9 million for non-residential developments over the same time period.
- The costings have been derived from the HM Government document Electric Vehicle Charging in Residential and Non-Residential Buildings from 2019 available from the following source:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/818810/electric-vehicle-charging-in-residential-and-non-residential-buildings.pdf



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Appendix C: Prioritised List of Car Parks

Note: This list does not contain Exmoor National Park Authority car parks which are located in the county of Devon.

Car Park Name	Location	x	y	Spaces	Recommendation for EVCP	Stay
Blake	Bridgwater	329693	136161	66	High	Long
Eastover & St. John Street	Bridgwater	330314	137049	94	High	Long
Mount Street (East)	Bridgwater	329719	137207	216	High	Long
Mount Street (West)	Bridgwater	329637	137166	93	High	Long
Northgate	Bridgwater	329709	137087	162	High	Long
High Street	Burnham-on-Sea	330569	148736	112	High	Long
Oxford Street	Burnham-on-Sea	330628	149008	103	High	Long
Pier Street (South)	Burnham-on-Sea	330415	148693	186	High	Long
Cliff Street	Cheddar	346110	153604	129	High	Long
Dunster Steep	Dunster	299321	143941	161	High	Long
St John's	Glastonbury	349869	139012	142	High	Long
Summerland	Minehead	297054	146155	125	High	Long
Warren Road Upper	Minehead	298037	146353	129	High	Long
Clarks Village, Grange One	Street	348372	137008	368	High	Long
Clarks Village, Grange Two	Street	348397	137068	441	High	Long
Belvedere Road	Taunton	322559	125196	117	High	Long
Canon Street	Taunton	323017	124726	304	High	Long
Enfield	Taunton	322373	124577	141	High	Long
Firepool	Taunton	322760	125459	120	High	Long
High Street	Taunton	322784	124313	269	High	Long
Kilkenny	Taunton	322751	125557	224	High	Long
Orchard	Taunton	322784	124313	573	High	Long
Tangier	Taunton	322230	124575	209	High	Long
Taunton P & R Gateway	Taunton	325909	124607	850	High	Long
Taunton P & R Silk Mills	Taunton	320749	125460	760	High	Long
Wood Street	Taunton	322468	124927	162	High	Long
Box Factory	Yeovil	355876	115842	150	High	Long
Court Ash	Yeovil	355622	116182	104	High	Long
Goldcroft	Yeovil	356019	116385	114	High	Long
Petters Way	Yeovil	355463	115751	214	High	Long
Discount Berrow Road	Burnham-on-Sea	330499	149518	73	Medium	Long



Pier Street (East)	Burnham-on-Sea	330417	148737	58	Medium	Long
Milbrook Gardens	Castle Cary	363924	132178	100	Medium	Long
Church Street	Cheddar	346009	153114	64	Medium	Long
Exmoor House	Dulverton	291254	127945	45	Medium	Long
Lion Stables	Dulverton	291422	127886	35	Medium	Long
Exford	Exford	285450	138350	30	Medium	Long
Cattle Market	Frome	377797	148236	339	Medium	Long
Merchants Barton	Frome	377777	147960	68	Medium	Long
North Parade	Frome	377899	148277	87	Medium	Long
South Parade	Frome	377482	147946	33	Medium	Long
Butt Close	Glastonbury	350141	139047	74	Medium	Long
Norbins Road	Glastonbury	349941	139115	53	Medium	Long
Northload Street West	Glastonbury	349747	138939	35	Medium	Long
Tarr Steps	Hawkridge	287262	132405	120	Medium	Long
Bank Street	Highbridge	332009	147203	109	Medium	Long
Cocklemoor (East)	Langport	341947	126682	117	Medium	Long
County Gate	Malmsmead	279362	148617	47	Medium	Long
Alexandra Road	Minehead	297066	146042	93	Medium	Long
Clanville	Minehead	296841	146424	40	Medium	Long
North Hill Moor Wood	Minehead	295353	147436	98	Medium	Long
North Road	Minehead	297185	146449	59	Medium	Long
Quay West	Minehead	297004	147162	32	Medium	Long
Doverhay	Porlock	288750	146772	36	Medium	Long
Porlock Central	Porlock	288527	146897	71	Medium	Long
Commercial Road	Shepton Mallet	361679	143535	131	Medium	Long
Great Ostry	Shepton Mallet	361805	143704	78	Medium	Long
Simonsbath (Ashcombe)	Simonsbath	277386	139449	54	Medium	Long
Cranhill Road	Street	348000	136408	316	Medium	Long
Northside	Street	348181	136719	245	Medium	Long
Southleaze	Street	348090	136789	272	Medium	Long
Southside	Street	348216	136469	106	Medium	Long
Strode Road	Street	348765	136918	31	Medium	Long
Wilfrid Road	Street	348484	136735	46	Medium	Long
Castle Street	Taunton	322443	124565	44	Medium	Long
The Crescent	Taunton	322579	124328	234	Medium	Short
Victoria Gate	Taunton	323540	124708	71	Medium	Long
Anchor Street	Watchet	307063	143273	31	Medium	Long
Harbour Road	Watchet	307213	143305	40	Medium	Long
Market Street	Watchet	307065	143448	53	Medium	Long



Swain Street	Watchet	307128	143320	41	Medium	Long
Longforth Road	Wellington	313910	120841	167	Medium	Long
North Street	Wellington	313721	120668	107	Medium	Long
Princes Road	Wells	354648	145507	69	Medium	Long
Tucker Street	Wells	354384	145510	71	Medium	Long
Williton Central	Williton	307795	141035	102	Medium	Long
Memorial Hall	Wincanton	371461	128628	130	Medium	Long
Brunswick Street	Yeovil	355401	115500	59	Medium	Long
Fairfield	Yeovil	355257	115893	91	Medium	Long
Goldenstones	Yeovil	355405	115443	144	Medium	Short
Huish	Yeovil	355209	116035	223	Medium	Short
Stars Lane	Yeovil	356007	115868	200	Medium	Short
West Hendford	Yeovil	355488	115923	153	Medium	Short
Dampiet Street	Bridgwater	329978	136954	49	Low	Short
Eastover	Bridgwater	330150	137164	26	Low	Long
Market Street	Bridgwater	329578	137010	29	Low	Long
Higher Backway	Bruton	368330	134972	10	Low	Long
Packhorse Bridge	Bruton	368383	134798	7	Low	Long
Tolbury Mill	Bruton	368246	134924	28	Low	Long
Pier Street (West)	Burnham-on-Sea	330327	148714	130	Low	Short
Catherines Close	Castle Cary	364135	132576	38	Low	Long
Bath Street	Chard	332115	108434	120	Low	Short
Boden Street	Chard	332289	108488	60	Low	Short
Combe Street	Chard	332095	108654	29	Low	Long
Crowshute	Chard	332054	108322	65	Low	Long
Essex Close	Chard	332293	108703	92	Low	Short
Market Field	Chard	332400	108548	71	Low	Long
The Minnows	Chard	332072	108407	43	Low	Long
Abbey Street	Crewkerne	344024	109882	55	Low	Long
Henhayes	Crewkerne	344278	109702	33	Low	Long
Market Square	Crewkerne	344144	109802	14	Low	Short
South Street (Lidl)	Crewkerne	344235	109727	64	Low	Short
South Street (Waitrose)	Crewkerne	344275	109674	273	Low	Short
West Street	Crewkerne	344036	109593	70	Low	Long
Guildhall	Dulverton	291307	127938	28	Low	Long
Marsh Bridge	Dulverton	290744	128987	6	Low	Long
Park Street	Dunster	298967	143291	22	Low	Long
Badcox	Frome	377149	148008	22	Low	Short
Cork Street	Frome	377562	148147	65	Low	Short



Vicarage Street	Frome	377755	147863	17	Low	Short
Limington Road	Ilchester	352266	122553	33	Low	Long
Orchard Vale	Ilminster	335950	114361	33	Low	Long
Shudrick Lane	Ilminster	336257	114373	43	Low	Long
West Street	Ilminster	335941	114629	44	Low	Long
Cocklemoor (West)	Langport	341934	126685	33	Low	Long
Stacey's Court	Langport	341767	126666	27	Low	Long
Moorlands	Martock	346325	119442	70	Low	Long
Town Hall	Milborne Port	367871	118686	7	Low	Long
North Hill Burgandy Combe	Minehead	294717	147602	12	Low	Long
Robbers Bridge	Oare	282086	146459	45	Low	Long
Porlock Common	Porlock	285383	146293	23	Low	Long
Quarme Hill	Quarme Hill	293571	137089	2	Low	Long
Regal Road East	Shepton Mallet	361926	143576	17	Low	Long
Brunel Shopping Precinct	Somerton	348871	128531	92	Low	Short
Half Moon	Somerton	348767	128532	47	Low	Short
Market Square	Somerton	349023	128531	11	Low	Short
Paddock House	Somerton	348949	128642	56	Low	Short
Unicorn	Somerton	348852	128571	55	Low	Short
Prigg Lane	South Petherton	343365	116976	26	Low	Long
Ham Hill Road	Stoke Sub Hamdon	347435	117327	34	Low	Long
Greenbank Swimming Pool	Street	348501	136724	22	Low	Long
Ash Meadows	Taunton	322579	124328	39	Low	Short
Coal Orchard	Taunton	322788	124871	22	Low	Short
Duke Street	Taunton	323125	124630	58	Low	Short
Elms Parade	Taunton	322469	125044	28	Low	Short
Fons George	Taunton	322534	123849	79	Low	Short
Whirligig	Taunton	322827	124659	37	Low	Short
Haddon Hill	Upton	296938	128486	45	Low	Long
West Pier	Watchet	307005	143455	16	Low	Long
South Street	Wellington	313979	120414	93	Low	Long
Market Place	Wells	354982	145764	21	Low	Short
South Street	Wells	354979	145623	40	Low	Short
Carrington Way	Wincanton	371413	128812	99	Low	Long
Church Fields	Wincanton	371185	128496	36	Low	Long
Croft Way	Wiveliscombe	307972	127729	80	Low	Long
North Street	Wiveliscombe	307976	127940	45	Low	Long
Earle Street	Yeovil	355955	116136	69	Low	Short
Market Street	Yeovil	355778	116133	27	Low	Long



Newton Road	Yeovil	356188	116004	16	Low	Short
North Lane	Yeovil	355619	116138	50	Low	Short
Park Street	Yeovil	355823	115842	15	Low	Short
Peter Street	Yeovil	355809	115897	19	Low	Short
South Street East	Yeovil	355877	115890	28	Low	Short
South Street Market	Yeovil	355575	115858	45	Low	Short



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Somerset Equality Impact Assessment

Organisation prepared for	Somerset West and Taunton Council		
Version	0.1	Date Completed	15/10/2020

Description of what is being impact assessed

Somerset EV Charging Strategy

The Strategy explores a number of issues around EV charging, evidences and assesses different options, and recommends how the Somerset local authorities should work in partnership moving forwards in order to deliver and enable an EV charging network to come forward at pace to support our carbon neutrality ambitions. The Strategy considers the range of constraints presented by the electricity network, the predominantly rural nature of the area and areas without sufficient off-street parking provision, as well as the opportunities presented by Council assets and planning policy for new Local Plans. It recommends approaches to take with regards to charge point types in different locations, funding and delivery models to use in different circumstances, and on-going governance arrangements to aid partnership working through delivery. The Strategy is proposed to be adopted and brought forward into the Council’s Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience (CNCR) Action Plan.

The Strategy itself makes recommendations on actions to take, though the detail of what, how, where and when is not determined by the Strategy, and will evolve as specific projects are developed. Having said that, the strategy will provide guidance on how these questions are answered during project development.

The CNCR Action Plan already incorporates a number of potential actions of a similar nature to some of those recommended by the Strategy, though the Strategy recommends additional actions and provides more detail to others. The CNCR has previously been assessed for equalities impacts, identifying in general terms the likely impacts on different groups in the round, rather than on an action-by-action basis. The CNCR EqIA identified that *“(specifically where an individual or group would see or experience a direct physical change as a result of an action with the Action Plan), specific EIAs will be necessary in order to help shape the relevant delivery plan for that action”*.

It also needs to be recognised that not all people sharing a protected characteristic within SWT will necessarily experience the same impact (be it positive or negative) from a particular action. For example, impacts may be directly felt by those who drive, but not by those who do not.

Evidence

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

The Somerset EV Charging Strategy has been reviewed.

DfT statistics on mode of travel available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/nts03-modal-comparisons>

As explained below, a review of data as well as wider consultation will be necessary at a later point when it comes to detailed design of actions that will have a direct physical impact on individuals and groups with protected characteristics.

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

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

Wider external consultation will be necessary in relation to delivery plans for some of the recommendations within the Strategy where an individual or group would see or experience a direct physical change as a result of an action

Analysis of impact on protected groups

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

Protected group

Summary of impact

**Negative
outcome**

**Neutral
outcome**

**Positive
outcome**

<p>Age</p>	<p>The factors that make people vulnerable to the impacts of climate change are most acute amongst particular groups; older people are one of these categories. Older people are physiologically at most risk of health impacts from extreme heat and cold. It is hoped that delivery of the recommendations within the EV Charging Strategy will lead to proliferation of EVs across the district, which will help to mitigate the effect and risk of climate change on older people within this protected group and should be seen as delivering, over time, a positive impact.</p> <p>Older people statistically make less trips by car as a driver than working age groups. Younger people statistically make less trips by car as either a driver or passenger than working age groups. People under 16/17 years of age are unable to drive by law. This may mean that these age groups benefit less directly from actions to incentivise adoption of EVs. Though, younger age groups may benefit more in future years.</p> <p>E-bikes potentially open up a route for greater levels of active travel from older age groups, up to a point, dependent upon mobility. Though the Strategy identifies that public charging infrastructure is unlikely to be that relevant to e-bikes with the exception of any future e-bike share schemes.</p> <p>Older age groups are more likely to utilise electric mobility vehicles. The Strategy does not address these vehicles, though public charging infrastructure is again unlikely to be particularly relevant.</p>	<p>X</p>		<p>X</p>
<p>Disability</p>	<p>The factors that make people vulnerable to the impacts of climate change are most acute amongst particular groups; people with disabilities are one of these categories. People with certain disabilities (particularly circulatory and respiratory conditions) are physiologically at most risk of health impacts from extreme heat and cold. It is hoped that delivery of the recommendations within the EV Charging Strategy will lead to proliferation of EVs across the district, which will help to mitigate the effect and risk of climate change on people with disabilities within this protected group and should be seen as delivering, over time, a positive impact.</p>	<p>X</p>		<p>X</p>

	<p>Air pollutants can worsen respiratory conditions such as asthma. This proposal will, over time, help improve air quality within the Taunton Town Centre and should therefore, have a particularly positive impact for those with such conditions.</p> <p>Certain sub-groups within this group are potentially more likely to be reliant upon private vehicles for transport, and less likely to be able to switch to active travel modes or public transport. As such, this proposal will, over time, support these people to make the switch to EVs.</p> <p>However, other sub-groups within this group are potentially less likely to make trips by car at all due to specific conditions. As such, this may mean that these sub-groups do not benefit so much from such actions.</p> <p>Encouragement of electric modes of transport such as e-bikes and e-scooters have posed particular risks to people with visual impairment in other areas. Particularly short-term rentals of e-scooters. Their speed and almost silent operation are an issue as is inconsiderate parking, where there have been numerous examples of them being left dumped on pavements, creating a significant trip hazard for the visually impaired. Separation of pedestrians and e-scooter and bike riders within any pedestrianised space will help mitigate this risk together with dedicated parking bays / racks for these modes of transport.</p> <p>There may be cases currently whereby people living in areas reliant upon on-street parking use trailing cables between their homes and vehicles to charge them. People with disabilities are likely to be particularly affected by such arrangements. Recommendations around cable covers, ducts and associated design guidance could help to reduce such impacts. 'Street clutter', more generally can be an issue for blind people and people with visual impairments in particular and therefore careful thought will need to be given to the siting and design of all aspects of on-street charging points in particular, both in relation to the positioning of the points themselves and any obstruction caused by the charging cables, so as to not to present hazards / inconvenience for this particular group</p>			
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Gender reassignment	Mitigating the impacts of climate change and enabling the development of an EV charging network and proliferation of EVs in the district should be seen as delivering, over time, a positive impact for everyone, including people within this group. No additional impacts, from the Strategy, have been identified that would disproportionately affect this group.			X
Marriage and civil partnership	Mitigating the impacts of climate change and enabling the development of an EV charging network and proliferation of EVs in the district should be seen as delivering, over time, a positive impact for everyone, including people within this group. No additional impacts, from the Strategy, have been identified that would disproportionately affect this group.			X
Pregnancy and maternity	Air pollutants can cause respiratory illness in pregnant women and also lead to low birth weight or pre-term birth. This proposal will, over time, help improve local air quality and should have a positive impact on some pregnant women. No additional impacts, from the proposed Strategy, have been identified that would disproportionately affect this group.			X
Race and ethnicity	Mitigating the impacts of climate change and enabling the development of an EV charging network and proliferation of EVs in the district should be seen as delivering, over time, a positive impact for everyone, including people within this group. No additional impacts, from the Strategy, have been identified that would disproportionately affect this group.			X
Religion or belief	Mitigating the impacts of climate change and enabling the development of an EV charging network and proliferation of EVs in the district should be seen as delivering, over time, a positive impact for everyone, including people within this group. No additional impacts, from the Strategy, have been identified that would disproportionately affect this group.			X
Sex	Mitigating the impacts of climate change and enabling the development of an EV charging network and proliferation of EVs in the district should be seen as delivering, over time, a positive impact for both men and women. No additional impacts, from the Strategy, have been identified that would disproportionately affect men or disproportionately affect women.			X

<p>Sexual orientation</p>	<p>Mitigating the impacts of climate change and enabling the development of an EV charging network and proliferation of EVs in the district should be seen as delivering, over time, a positive impact for everyone, including people within this group. No additional impacts, from the Strategy, have been identified that would disproportionately affect this group.</p>			<p>X</p>
<p>Other, e.g. carers, veterans, homeless, low income, rurality/isolation, etc.</p>	<p><u>Low Income</u> - Mitigating the impacts of climate change and enabling the development of an EV charging network and proliferation of EVs in the district should be seen as delivering, over time, a positive impact for everyone, including people within this group.</p> <p>Individuals and households on low incomes may be particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change during prolonged periods of hot or cold weather in particular; due to their inability to afford fuel for adequately heating or cooling their homes. This Action Plan aims to help mitigate the effect and risk of climate change so should be seen as delivering, over time, a positive impact.</p> <p>EVs promise cheaper running costs than traditional internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles, which may, in time, be particularly positive to low income households. However current costs of purchasing or leasing EVs are significantly more expensive than ICE vehicles, meaning that this group may, by definition, be least likely to be able to find the resources to make the transition and may miss out on the opportunity, at least to begin with, thereby being disadvantaged. Over time, initial purchase and leasing costs are likely to become more aligned and potentially cheaper than ICE vehicles, and as such this is likely a temporary impact.</p> <p>Recommendations relating to urging the Government to bring forward the ban on sales of new petrol and diesel cars and vans to 2030 or earlier have the potential to disadvantage lower income groups. However, recommendations to urge Government to reduce costs of purchase compared to ICE vehicles, and to establish local incentives could potentially balance this impact out if appropriately designed.</p> <p>Suggestions around use of differential parking charges or differential speed limits for EVs as local or national incentives have the potential to disadvantage lower income groups who may be less able to benefit.</p>	<p>X</p>		<p>X</p>

	<p><u>Carers</u> - Mitigating the impacts of climate change and enabling the development of an EV charging network and proliferation of EVs in the district should be seen as delivering, over time, a positive impact for everyone, including people within this group. No additional impacts, from the Strategy, have been identified that would disproportionately affect this group.</p> <p><u>Rural Isolation</u> - Mitigating the impacts of climate change and enabling the development of an EV charging network and proliferation of EVs in the district should be seen as delivering, over time, a positive impact for everyone, including people within this group.</p> <p>People living in rural areas are generally further away from Council-owned car parks and other public locations where public charge points are most likely to be located. In addition to this, mapping suggests that many rural areas have a combination of lower propensity to register an EV and lower reliance upon on-street charging. This appears particularly starkly in relation to the most rural parts of West Somerset and Exmoor. This may result in such areas not benefiting so much from provision of public charge points.</p>	X		X
				X

Report Number: SWT 171/20

Somerset West and Taunton Council

Full Council – 15 December 2020

2020/21 In Year Revenue and Capital Budget Approvals

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Henley, Corporate Resources

Report Author: Emily Collacott (Lead Finance Business Partner & Deputy S151 Officer)

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 COVID-19 has had a wide ranging impact on the financial risks, costs and income for this Council this year. The picture has evolved during the year with the implementation of emergency financial assistance to businesses and council tax payers. In addition, the Council has experienced additional costs of service delivery and a significant reduction in income particularly from fees and charges. The Senior Management Team (SMT) and Finance Officers have closely monitored developments through the year to ensure the financial implications and risks are effectively managed.
- 1.2 The forecast impact on the General Fund has been extremely volatile during the year, however a reasonable degree of confidence in the forecast position at the time was reflected in the Month 4 Financial Performance Report presented to Scrutiny Committee on 30 September and the Executive on 28 October 2020. This included an estimated net financial pressure this year of £657,000 due to COVID impact.
- 1.3 In addition to assessing the immediate financial implications, the SMT and S151 Officer have reviewed and updated the Financial Strategy in light of these risks, both in terms of managing short term costs, and updating the forecast longer term budget requirement where the implications of COVID is likely to have a lasting effect on costs and income.
- 1.4 The strategy included updated proposals around financing of the capital programme and use of revenue reserves, and was reported to Scrutiny and the Executive at the same time as the Month 4 report.
- 1.5 This reports seeks approval from Full Council for the recommended changes to the Revenue Budget, Capital Programme and Reserves from the above reports.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Full Council approves a supplementary estimate of £657k from General Reserves to fund the estimated overspend related to COVID.

- 2.2 Full Council approves the realignment of budgets for COVID related income and expenditure to offset the reported variances that net off to zero when including the £657k in 2.1 above. In addition, Council also approves delegated authority to the CEO and S151 Officer to further realign affected budgets during the year in view of potential volatility in forecasts due to COVID.
- 2.3 Full Council approves the reallocation of reserves to provide increased resilience and flexibility to mitigate COVID related financial pressures, and to support the Revenue Budget in the medium term, as follows:
- (a) To transfer £3.949m of New Homes Bonus reserve to General Reserves, and agree alternative financing for relevant capital schemes through Community Infrastructure Levy and borrowing as set out in para 7.5.
 - (b) To transfer £1.0m from the Business Rates Volatility Reserve to General Reserves.
- 2.4 Full Council approves amended Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Allocation Principles as set out in paragraph 7.9.
- 2.5 Full Council approves changes to the General Fund Capital Programme by a total of - £1.370m for the following headings as referred in para 7.3:
- a) £295,000 reduction to Major Transport Schemes budget from NHB-funded programme
 - b) £375,000 reduction to remove budget for Creech Castle Road Improvements contribution from NHB-funded programme
 - c) £200,000 reduction to Employment Site Enabling schemes budget from NHB-funded programme
 - d) £1,000,000 reduction to Public Transport Improvements budget from NHB-funded programme as Housing Infrastructure Fund bid not successful
 - e) £500,000 increase to Education Provision budget funded by Community Infrastructure Levy.
- 2.6 Full Council approves the revised Budget Total for the Growth Programme of £3.56m to be funded by New Homes Bonus as set out in para 7.6 Table 3, and CIL-funded Infrastructure Capital Programme totalling £16.262m as set out in para 7.10 Table 4.
- 2.7 Full Council approves a supplementary estimate to the Capital Programme, in 2020/21, for grant-funded repairs at Toneworks in Wellington up to £500k, which is the maximum value of the grant funding applied for from the Historic England.

3 Risk Assessment

- 3.1 The Council is exposed to increased financial risks both within the current financial year and in its Medium Term Financial Plan forecasts and assumptions, due to the impact of COVID-19 on service demand, income reduction, and wider impact on the economy and our communities. The Senior Management Team and S151 Officer have continued to monitor and assess the scale of risk, and reflected this both within financial control and financial planning assumptions. Decisions have been made since March which focus on

maintaining the financial health of the Council whilst delivering essential support to local businesses and vulnerable residents.

- 3.2 The forecasts included in the Month 4 budget monitoring report presented to the Executive Committee on 28 October 2020 are considered reasonable given the extra element of risk around COVID, and based on experience it is feasible the year end position could change. It is common for underspends to emerge during the last quarter, reflecting an optimism bias within previous forecasting as well as new information. Salient in year budget risks were included in sections 8 and 11 of the Month 4 report. The Council manages financial risk in a number of ways including setting prudent budgets, carrying out appropriate monitoring and control of spend, operating robust financial procedures, and so on. The Council also holds both general and earmarked reserves which include contingencies to manage budget risk.
- 3.3 The financial strategy and medium term financial plan reflect known risks and assumptions regarding future service costs and income. COVID impact increases the risk of these varying to budget estimates to a greater degree than under pre-COVID conditions.

4 Background and Full details of the Report

- 4.1 The full details of the budget monitoring forecasts and the financial strategy are set out in detail in the reports to Scrutiny Committee on 30 September and Executive Committee on 28 October. This report summarises the salient points from those reports to support the recommendations to Full Council for approvals.

5 General Fund Revenue Budget – Proposed In Year Changes Due to COVID

- 5.1 As at Month 4 the Council forecast an overall net overspend of just over £1m (4.8% of £21m Net Budget). This pressure has been analysed between:
- £657k pressures relating to COVID additional costs and income reductions (see Table 1 below).
 - £355k early forecast variances from 'normal' course of business. SMT aims to manage and contain this pressure by the end of the financial year.
- 5.2 Overall forecast financial pressures in the current financial year are significant at an estimated £4.8m. This is reduced by £3.2m actual and projected emergency funding from Government and an early initial allocation of £1m from the Council's earmarked reserves. It is proposed to allocate £657k from General Reserves to update the budget and offset the projected residual pressure.
- 5.3 The impact of COVID remains a potential area of volatility throughout the year (and beyond), as demonstrated by the implementation of a further national lockdown in November and move to the system of tiered restrictions before and after then. It is therefore proposed to request the Council approves a delegation to the CEO and S151 Officer to adjust the allocation of budgets as appropriate within the new total budget this year to reflect updated information through the remainder of the year.

Table 1 - Summary of COVID Related Forecast Variances for the Year

Budget heading	£'000	Revised Comment
D&P - Economic Development	80	Consultancy with Hardisty Jones in the development of a new strategy and plans to deliver economic recovery following the huge impact of COVID and lockdown on the local economy and High Street Recovery initiative. The output from this work will be an economic recovery and growth plan for the whole of Somerset to 2030 and beyond, built around the three themes of housing, economy and environmental sustainability. It is anticipated that the cost will be shared by the four Councils.
EO&CC - Bereavement Services	167	Labour and machinery to expand the capacity of the cemetery, additional crematorium equipment and PPE costs.
EO&CC - Major Contracts	1,326	This includes the assistance package to support SLM to enable safe opening of leisure facilities at earliest opportunity after initial lockdown in line with Government guidance, and additional waste contract costs incurred by the Somerset Waste Partnership due to the delay in roll out of Recycle More and increased capacity needed due to increased recyclable materials arising during lockdown.
EO&CC – Parking Services	2,798	Reduction in income due to the provision of free parking April to August 2020 and the expectation that parking income may be diluted to the end of the financial year due to a reduction in usage of the car parks due to the ongoing COVID situation.
H&C - Homelessness	132	The Council incurred significant up-front costs in the set-up and initial operation of Canonsgrove, following the Government’s “everyone in” requirement. At time of reporting, income from government grants was uncertain and without this income we were projecting an overspend of £132k. [Note - We have since had grant income confirmed from MHCLG, plus payment from SCC (also from MHCLG grants) which largely offsets this overspend, however other pressures have emerged as reported in Month 6 budget monitoring.]
IO - Comms and Engagement	65	Additional staffing requirements to support our response to COVID both customers and staff as follows: 1. Increased internal communications capacity supporting the senior management team and managers. Keeping staff up to date with vital information and instructions re home schooling, Health & Safety, symptoms, shielding. Caring responsibilities working arrangements etc. Also ensuring wellbeing was supported during changes to working arrangements to ensure safety of staff and customers. 2. Increase of hours for external communications lead to full time to ensure full availability for cross partner communications cells, press responses and coordination of vital messages to the public.

Budget heading	£'000	Revised Comment
IO - Internal Change	20	Additional staff costs needed as a result of the COVID situation to ensure the transition of the technology solution to Microsoft Teams for staff was done as quickly as possible. The team accelerated a 6 month delivery programme into two weeks and we needed this additional resource to make that happen.
IO - ICT	101	SWT incurred additional costs due to upgrading the Civica software to administer the business grants and the discounts for the Council tax hardship allowance. The implementation of Microsoft 365 was accelerated at an additional cost, specifically to provide Teams to support working from home / remotely as staff self-isolate.
Senior Management Team	130	This is the cost of the expanded leadership team capacity to drive forward economic recovery and provide the facility to contribute to the County-wide Strategy, as well as lead the COVID emergency and ongoing response.
Gen - Interest Receivable	200	Due to the economic climate this is expected to be below budget, with a reduction in income from investment funds and short term treasury cash balances.
Gen - Interest Payable	-158	We have not had to externally borrow for everything that was budgeted for and therefore there is a saving in interest costs. This has benefitted in part by the receipt of cash through Government funding in advance of making payments e.g. for business grants and council tax hardship and early receipt of other grant funding such as New Homes Bonus.
Sub-Total – Net Financial Pressures	4,861	Estimated Pressures as at Month 4 forecast
Gen - COVID Emergency Grants and New Burdens Grants	-3,204	The Government has provided additional funding to local authorities to assist with immediate COVID response and related impact on General Fund service costs and income losses. This grant has not been ring-fenced, providing local flexibility to decide how best to direct the funds. The Council had received 3 tranches of emergency grant since April, totalling £1.882m when the Month 4 report was prepared. New Burdens Grant of £170k has also been received towards the costs of administering the business grants schemes for small businesses and the retail, hospitality and leisure sector. Government has also announced a scheme to compensate some losses through reduced sales, fees and charges income. A reasonable estimate of additional grant income had been included in the forecast based on our understanding of the outline of the scheme at the time. Any changes to these assumptions are included in the next budget monitoring report.
Gen - Transfer from earmarked reserves	-1,000	Agreed contribution from the NHB reserve to mitigate COVID-related financial pressure, approved by the Leader and CEO using emergency powers in March 2020.
Net Overspend	657	

Budget heading	£'000	Revised Comment
Proposed allocation from General Reserves	-657	Allocation from reserves to revise the budget for estimated net costs of COVID not covered by external funding and reallocated earmarked reserves

Key:

D&P = Development and Place Directorate

EO&CC = External Operations and Climate Change Directorate

H&C = Housing and Communities Directorate

IO = Internal Operations Directorate

Gen = General Costs and Income

6 Reallocation of Reserves

6.1 The impact and financial risks in respect of COVID rapidly increased around the turn of the financial year, with the country moving into national lockdown mid-March 2020. The Council set its budget for 2020/21 in February which did not anticipate a national pandemic shortly after then. During the period March to June SMT and the S151 Officer considered the rapidly increasing scale of financial risks, and undertook a range of actions aimed at strengthening the Council's financial resilience and flexibility to reprioritise resources to respond to the emergency situation. These actions included:

- Fully allocating the reported 2019/20 underspend to general reserves, with no carry forwards of underspend to commit to individual services expenditure this year.
- Reviewing earmarked reserves to identify scope for releasing balances to general reserves, to provide flexibility to meet and underwrite financial pressures this year.
- Reviewing capital programme priorities and financing arrangements, with some legacy schemes being removed, and some schemes funded by Community Infrastructure Levy and borrowing instead of New Homes Bonus (NHB) reserves.

6.2 Among the changes proposed, the Executive has supported a recommendation to Council to reallocate £3.949m from NHB reserves (in addition to £1m reprioritised under emergency decision from this reserve at the start of the year), and £1m from Business Rates Volatility Reserve, to increase general reserves.

6.3 These proposals were set in the context of estimated costs this year, particularly before Government announced the majority of its emergency grant funding to councils, but also with the view to providing flexibility to support the budget for services in the next 2-3 years. Various allocations have been made from reserves this year as approved by officers, the Executive or Council according to delegated authority. As at the Month 4 forecast, included the recommended transfers on 6.2 above, the projected General Reserves balance is estimated to be £8.7m, with earmarked reserves reducing to £16.7m. These figures are updated in subsequent budget monitoring reports to Scrutiny and the Executive.

7 General Fund Capital Programme Changes

7.1 The original capital budget for 2020/21 was £66.49m and £30.57m has been carried forward from 2019/20 giving a total budget of £97.06m. At the start of the year £2.23m

was approved for Firepool. A supplementary budget of £0.02m for IT was approved by officers.

7.2 The leadership team has undertaken a review of the capital programme budgets earlier this year, primarily with the objectives of:

- a) clearing legacy budget approvals that have rolled forward from the predecessor councils and no firm commitments are currently defined,
- b) identifying opportunities to consider alternative financing arrangements to reduce the requirement for New Homes Bonus for capital purposes so that it can be reallocated to meet revenue costs.

7.3 The outcome of this review is that a number of changes are recommended to reduce or remove budgets for a number of capital schemes. These are summarised as follows:

Table 2 – Proposed Changes to Capital Budget Approvals

£	Description
-295,000	Major Transport Schemes – reduction in general budget allocation due to less New Homes Bonus income being available. Leaves £580,000 budget within the Growth Programme for major transport schemes, proposed to be funded through borrowing instead of New Homes Bonus.
-375,000	Creech Castle improvements anticipated capital contribution from historic commitments made several years ago, not currently required, reducing requirement for New Homes Bonus funding.
-200,000	Employment site enabling – lower provisional budget allocation for innovation centres as no clear commitments to use this proportion of funding, reducing requirement for New Homes Bonus funding.
-1,000,000	Public Transport Improvements allocated contribution to SCC scheme no longer required as Housing Infrastructure Fund bid not successful.
500,000	Increase in allocation to CIL-funded education provision, related to Staplegrove urban extension.
-1,370,000	Total Budget Reduction for 2020/21 Capital Programme

7.4 The leadership team has also developed and proposed some changes to the planned financing of the Growth Programme and Community Infrastructure Programme. This is in line with one of the objectives set out in the updated Financial Strategy, enabling the release of New Homes Bonus (NHB) funds to support revenue costs, recognising that NHB funding is expected to reduce to zero in the Medium Term Financial Plan, and there is an opportunity to utilise more of the projected Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) for growth and infrastructure schemes.

7.5 Full Council is therefore recommended to approve updated medium term plans for growth and infrastructure programmes and funding as set out below. The main changes are:

- a) The planned financing of the Flood Alleviation budget of £6m is amended to remove £2.762m from NHB Reserve and use CIL instead.

- b) The planned financing of £2.08m Major Transport Schemes contributions to Junction 25 (£1.5m) and Toneway Corridor (£0.58m) improvements from borrowing instead of NHB.

Growth Programme – New Homes Bonus Funded Schemes

- 7.6 In view of the above changes, the amount of New Homes Bonus funding available to support the Capital Programme for the period 2019/20 to 2021/22 is £3.56m. It is recommended that Full Council approves this revised allocation per theme, with allocations to individual projects continuing to be confirmed under agreed delegations.

Table 3 – Growth Programme Funded by NHB

	Actual 2019/20 £k	Estimate 2020/21 £k	Estimate 2021/22 £k	Totals 2022/23 £k
Major Transport Schemes	98	60	0	158
Town Centre Regeneration	724	1,124	985	2,883
Employment Site Enabling and Innovation	0	505	0	505
Flood Alleviation	14	0	0	14
TOTALS	836	1,689	1,035	3,560

- 7.7 The main projects planned to be funded within these themes include:
- Major transport schemes – is the contribution to the Park & Ride and there is provision for SWT to contribute to the costs of the SCC led feasibility study at Wellington Station.
 - Town Centre Regeneration – mainly consists of the Firepool development costs, NHB funding of the Coal Orchard project as per the approved business case, and an allocation to support the Heritage sites.
 - Employment enabling sites – is the SWT contribution to the SCC led development of an Innovation Centre and the SWT contribution to the Broadband SEP project.
 - Flood alleviation – is the residual cost of the Phase 2 project to determine the flood intervention strategy, incurred last year.

Infrastructure Programme – CIL Funded Schemes

- 7.8 Included within the Financial Strategy is a review of the CIL Principles. These include the delegations for approving schemes. The main change in terms of planned spending principles is to enhance the exceptions to the thresholds – of maximum CIL funding per scheme of £3.5m and maximum of 50% of scheme costs – to include flood schemes and education provision.
- 7.9 The proposed revisions to the **CIL Allocation Principles** are as follows:

- 1) A business case for infrastructure project funding should be provided to the Director for External Operations Head of Strategy and relevant Portfolio Holder

for Asset Management and Economic Development outlining the required CIL funds for a specific infrastructure project (within the limits approved by Council outlined in Table X above)

- 2) The overall CIL allocation for each infrastructure project, includes the value of any land required for the project and taken as payment in lieu of CIL cash. For example if land for a new school is provided by a developer this is netted off against their CIL liability. In this instance the value will be netted off against or included in the proposed CIL allocations for education outlined in Table 16.
- 3) No more than 50% of the total cost of an infrastructure project, to a maximum allocation of £3.5m, will be allocated for any one project.
- 4) The only exceptions to the 50% of cost and £3.5m threshold, is the strategic flood alleviation scheme and new school builds. This project serves a much wider infrastructure function for the benefit of all Taunton residents and businesses and therefore at present the overall CIL cap for this project is proposed to be set at £10m.
- 5) To ensure project delivery, strategic CIL funding will only be committed to infrastructure projects where the balance of the funding has been identified.
- 6) Indicative CIL allocations can be made for years 2-5 on a rolling programme to provide infrastructure delivery partners some certainty and to assist external infrastructure funding applications. CIL funding will only be committed to infrastructure projects when the CIL funding has been received and subject to Director of External Operations and, where required, Head of Strategy and relevant portfolio holder approval.
- 7) Committed CIL funds will remain available for a period of 2 years and then will be subject to review.
- 8) The profile of spending shown is indicative and with the approval of the Director of External Operations Head of Strategy and relevant Portfolio Holder for Asset Management and Economic Development (in consultation with the S151 officer), spend may fall outside of the indicative years shown, but within the overall sum allocated by infrastructure type and subject to sufficient CIL funding being available.
- 9) Any committed CIL funds will be published in the Weekly Bulletin and be subject to the usual 'call in' process.

7.10 Following the review of the CIL programme, and the planned reductions in use of New Homes Bonus to finance the capital programme, it is recommended that a revised capital programme for CIL-funded schemes is approved. The following table sets out an updated Programme commencing in 2020/21, which has increased from £15.5m to £16.262m.

Table 4 – Community Infrastructure Levy Projects and Infrastructure Budget

	2020/21 £	2021/22 £	2022/23 £	2023/24 £	2024/25 £	2025/26 Onwards £	Totals £
Funding Forecast:							
Balance 1 April 2020	5,034,532						5,034,532
Projected Net CIL Income	1,861,240	1,711,240	1,711,240	1,461,240	1,461,240		8,206,200
Additional CIL requirement to meet expenditure plans					21,368	3,000,000	3,021,368
Total Income Projection	6,895,772	1,711,240	1,711,240	1,461,240	1,482,608	3,000,000	16,262,100
Capital Expenditure:							
Cycle and Pedestrian Improvements	500,000			1,000,000			1,500,000
Education Provision	1,000,000		1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	3,000,000	7,000,000
Public Transport Improvement							0
Taunton Town Centre Regeneration	500,000	1,000,000					1,500,000
Surface Water and Flood Risk Mitigation*	2,262,100	2,500,000		1,000,000			5,762,100
Community Development				500,000			500,000
Total Expenditure	4,262,100	3,500,000	1,000,000	3,500,000	1,000,000	3,000,000	16,262,100
Projected Funding Balance	2,633,672	844,912	1,556,152	-482,608	0	0	0

*The total budget approved by Council for Surface Water and Flood Risk Mitigation schemes is £6m, with the balance of funding allocated from S106 income.

7.11 As the table shows, the current projected CIL income for the period to 2024/25 is c£13.2m. This is driven by the scale and pace of development within the areas that CIL applies. The intent is to seek approval for the £16.626m commitment in principle, subject to annual review, which effectively prioritises the currently projected CIL income and further CIL income that arises up to the new total. The timing of this will depend on the pace and scale of relevant growth.

7.12 The total allocation for infrastructure investment funded by CIL has increased by a net £762k. This reflects a reduction of £2m for public transport as the related HIF Forward Fund bid was not successful for strategic infrastructure in Taunton (Rapid Bus Link etc), and an increase of £2.762m related to funding of Surface Water and Flood Risk Mitigation.

Heritage Assets Repair Grant

7.13 Somerset West and Taunton have applied for a Repair Grant of £300k (with possible extension to £500k) for building works at Toneworks in Wellington. This grant is funded by Historic England. If successful the grant can only be used for the purpose of restoration of this heritage asset and will need to be spent by the end of the financial year. It is recommended that a supplementary budget is added to the Capital Programme for the building works at Toneworks of £500k, which is the maximum grant available. The total amount of building works spend will reflect the successful amount of the grant received.

8 Links to Corporate Aims / Priorities

- 8.1 The allocation of resources and financial performance of the Council underpins the delivery of corporate priorities and therefore all Corporate Aims.

9 Partnership Implications

- 9.1 A wide range of Council services are provided through partnership arrangements e.g. SLM for leisure services and Somerset Waste Partnership for Waste and Recycling services. The cost of these services is reflected in the Council's financial outturn position for the year.

10 Scrutiny Comments / Recommendations

- 10.1 Scrutiny comments related to both the Month 4 Financial Performance and Financial Strategy reports were considered by the Executive on 28 October. Salient comments from those, related to the recommendations within this report, are included below.
- 10.2 In the light of the recent adoption by Council of policy on an Affordable Employment Land Local Development Order, the Scrutiny Committee recommend to the Executive a new fund of £575,000 is allocated towards Employment Site enabling schemes to support that policy. SMT and the Executive will explore this proposal as part of the budget and medium term financial plan preparation.
- 10.3 During the debate at Scrutiny a number of clarification questions were addressed. The following comments also arose during the discussion:
- 10.4 The view was provided that creating more employment in the district was where finance needed to be directed. Further support was needed for businesses to address the Covid-19 impact.
- 10.5 Covid-19 funding from central government was discussed at Scrutiny, and the Committee was advised that not all costs and loss of income incurred by Councils would be covered by central government. The situation remains volatile but the Covid-19 expenditure would be monitored.
- 10.6 The Committee supported the Financial Strategy report and recommendations as printed. During the debate a number of clarification questions were addressed. Salient comments noted included:
- a) The budget gap looks challenging in particular due to significant reductions in projected funding. The savings targets as set out in the report were highlighted, which focus on the 2nd and 3rd year of the 3-year strategy. This included modernisation, efficiencies and sharing services expecting to deliver 10%-15% savings. The scale of uncertainty makes longer term planning more difficult, with later years' targets to be considered in future reports.
 - b) Members noted the ongoing risk to business rates in respect of NHS Foundation Trusts, which is subject to ongoing legal process and not likely to be resolved this financial year. The Council holds a business rates volatility reserve which seeks to

mitigate potential losses.

- c) CIL funding was discussed. Members were advised that whilst CIL provides essential funding towards infrastructure costs needed to support local development, it provides only a fraction of the funding needed. Spending of CIL through the Capital Programme is prioritised to meet impact of development as far as possible, usually as part of a wider match-funding arrangement.

Democratic Path:

- **Scrutiny – 30 September 2020**
- **Executive – 28 October 2020**
- **Full Council – 15 December 2020**

Reporting Frequency: Once Off

Contact Officers

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

Agenda Item 17

Document is Restricted

Full Council – 15 December 2020

Motion on Fireworks

Motion proposed by Councillor Mark Lithgow, seconded by Councillor Sarah Wakefield

This Council resolves:

1. To strongly recommend and advise that all public firework displays within this local authority boundaries be advertised effectively at least 7 days in advance of the event, to allow our residents particularly those living in the vicinity to take precautions for their animals and vulnerable people.
2. To actively promote a public awareness campaign about the impact of fireworks on animal welfare, vulnerable people and our environment - including the precautions that can be taken to mitigate those risks.
3. To write to the UK Government urging them to introduce legislation to limit the maximum noise level of fireworks sold to the public for private displays in order to protect and safeguard animals and vulnerable people.
4. To encourage local suppliers of fireworks to stock 'quieter' fireworks for public display.

Somerset West and Taunton Council

Motions to Council – Assessment Form

On receipt of a Motion from a Councillor, the Governance Team will carry out an assessment as to its contents to establish whether there are likely to be significant consequences to the Council should the Motion be carried at the subsequent Full Council meeting.

The first question to be addressed will be:-

“Can the Motion, if approved, be implemented without the need for any resource (financial and otherwise) to be identified outside existing budgets or staffing capacity?”

If the answer is ‘yes’, then the Motion can proceed towards discussion and resolution.

An example of a Motion which would fall into the above category would be where the Council is being asked to lobby the Government, Somerset County Council or other body on a particular issue. If the motion is carried, the action required will usually involve no more than a letter being prepared and sent to the intended recipient.

However, as in the case of the recent Motion on ‘Climate Change’, the answer to the above question would clearly be ‘no’.

In such circumstances, detailed analysis of the wording of the Motion will be required to identify what will be needed if the Motion – when it comes before Full Council – is carried.

Such analysis will include:-

- What additional resource would be required to ensure the Motion (if approved) could be implemented?
- What needs to be done to identify the level of resource necessary both in financial and staff terms?
- Are any approvals needed to provide these resources?
- Will this require reports to be submitted through Scrutiny and the Executive? If a Supplementary Estimate is required, Full Council approval will be required too.

If such analysis is required, the Governance Team will arrange for the attached pro-forma to be completed and this will accompany the relevant Motion onto the agenda of the Full Council meeting so all Members are aware that further investigation will be required before the Motion – even if it is carried – can be implemented.

Motions to Council – Assessment Proforma

(To be used in circumstances where it appears the wording of a proposed Motion will commit the Council to providing further financial or staffing resources which cannot be met from existing budgets)

Brief Details of the Motion -

Motion on Fireworks

This Council resolves:

1. To strongly recommend and advise that all public firework displays within this local authority boundaries be advertised effectively at least 7 days in advance of the event, to allow our residents particularly those living in the vicinity to take precautions for their animals and vulnerable people.
2. To actively promote a public awareness campaign about the impact of fireworks on animal welfare, vulnerable people and our environment - including the precautions that can be taken to mitigate those risks.
3. To write to the UK Government urging them to introduce legislation to limit the maximum noise level of fireworks sold to the public for private displays in order to protect and safeguard animals and vulnerable people.
4. To encourage local suppliers of fireworks to stock 'quieter' fireworks for public display.

Questions to be addressed

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What additional resource would be required to ensure the Motion (if approved) could be implemented?</i> |
|---|

Answer –

1, 2 and 4. – No additional resource save for officer time in the Environmental Health and Licensing team in drafting the relevant advice for our website and liaising with Customer enquiries if received. There would also be an additional spend of officer time on the Communications team to promote the public awareness campaign.

3. No additional resource save for Office time in drafting and sending the letter to the relevant Government Dept./Minister.

- ***What needs to be done to identify the level of resource necessary both in financial and staff terms?***

Answer –

1, 2 and 4. It would be expected that Officers in the Environmental Health and Licensing team would if these were supported take the Council's resolutions and identify how within their service area this advice could be implemented. Further work with the Communications team would also be required to identify the exact nature of the campaign requirement.

3. No work required save for an officer identified to draft the letter and send it.

- ***Are any approvals needed to provide these resources?***

Answer – No.

- ***Will this require reports to be submitted through Scrutiny and the Executive? If a Supplementary Estimate is required, Full Council approval will be required too.***

Answer – No, The setting off of fireworks does not constitute a 'licensable activity' under the Licensing Act 2003, nor any other Act that Somerset West and Taunton is authorised to enforce. Therefore any minimum period of advertisement for displays would be a recommendation/advice only. It is suggested that this is made part of the public awareness campaign; so some communications targeted at businesses/premises would be required.

Likely timescale involved –

3. Immediately if the motion is supported.

1, 2 and 4 require liaison between the Communications Team and the Environmental Health and Licensing team to put in place but expected to be enacted fairly swiftly if Council decision to support, however, targeted communications with businesses/premises may take longer.

Full Council Meeting – 15 December 2020

Report of Councillor Federica Smith-Roberts – Leader of the Council

Covid-19

Covid-19 continues to present a challenge for both the organisation and our district as a whole.

From a workforce perspective I have been working with the Senior Management Team to maintain staff safety whilst continuing to deliver services. I am pleased to say that our service standards have not dropped throughout this difficult time.

I would like to take a moment to thank Members and staff alike for all of the help and support we have mutually provided to each other and our community through this difficult time.

Remembrance

We were not able to follow our usual programme of events for this year's Remembrance commemorations as we needed to adhere to Government guidelines and keep the community safe. Instead the annual observation of Remembrance was marked with a series of videos which were shared on social media. Members of the public were invited to lay wreaths at Taunton's War Memorial in Vivary Park throughout the Day on Remembrance Sunday. SWT also observed the 'pause' on Armistice Day.

Ex-Councillor, Past Mayor and Freeman of the Borough John Meikle, MBE

It was very sad to hear that John Meikle MBE passed away in early November. John Meikle was a true gentleman and was universally respected for his wisdom and his unparalleled contribution to public life. His dedication to the community he served and the legacy he has left across the wider area has been immense. It was fitting that his tremendous achievements during over 50 years of public service were recognised when he was made a 'Freeman of the Borough' – an honour granted to only a handful of recipients. His passing will be a huge loss to his family and the community that he loved to serve.

Funding for Rough Sleepers Accommodation

SWT has been awarded Government funding to continue providing interim accommodation for rough sleepers during the Coronavirus pandemic. SWT and partners have been providing self-contained accommodation at Canonsgrove for rough sleepers and tenants of homeless hostels who find it difficult to self-isolate and practice social distancing. A whole range of organisations have been working with us to make this possible. The financial support from central government will allow us to build on our work to date. Working closely with partners and with the direct delivery of many supportive services has made fundamental positive changes to the individuals we work alongside.

Great British Sept Clean

I took part in a litter pick at Longrun Meadow and French Weir Park on 12 September. The event was organised by the Taunton Neighbourhood Policing Team

and was supported by the Friends of Longrun and staff from Coach. I was particularly pleased to see SWT's parks and open spaces included in the local clean up. We hear much about the problems caused by litter but we do not very often hear about the efforts of staff and volunteers working all year round to ensure we can all enjoy our parks and open spaces.

Topping Out Ceremony at Quantock House, Taunton

On 29 September I was invited to attend the Topping Out Ceremony at Quantock House, Taunton. The development is due for completion in the summer of 2021. Whilst there I climbed an external staircase to the roof for a photo-shoot and it was amazing to see the skyline of Taunton with all the different cranes and to see how everything is moving forward.

Southwest Tech Gathering

On 24 September I attended the Southwest Tech Gathering and was part of a panel on digital technology and economic recovery in the South West. I was very pleased to be asked to take part and present my views on how local government can shape and use digital innovation to make this happen.

Visit to Arc

On 26 October I attended the opening of Arc's in-house GP surgery which forms part of The Reach Centre – Arc's Wellbeing Hub. Arc is now able to offer this service to rough sleepers and other people who are homeless in the area. As well as a GP service, the clinic and treatment room will be available for use of many healthcare providers enabling homeless individuals to also access support with areas such as mental health, sexual health and more.

Full Council Meeting – 15 December 2020

Report of Councillor Benet Allen – Deputy Leader and Communications & Culture

Communications

The Communications Team continues to be busy supporting functions throughout the organisation with publicity requirements and keeping people informed about service provision, corporate initiatives and achievements.

Press releases have also been issued jointly with our colleagues in the district councils where we have been working together; and from the districts and the county council where appropriate.

Alongside Covid-19 messaging, we are now beginning to share Government messaging around the EU Transition.

Our Remembrance plans were stood down due to COVID-19 restrictions so commemorations were virtual this year with a variety of videos shared across our social media platforms. Our Civic Officer worked collaboratively with local veterans, Church representatives, military organisations and key civic dignitaries to create a virtual service. The social media content was well received.

Working towards Christmas, we are exploring the possibility of a virtual 'Carols around the Bandstand' service. This will keep momentum going for the successful concerts held over the last two years in aid of the Mayor's charities. Updates to follow as plans evolve.

We continue to share content from our partners, Public Health England and the Government across all our platforms.

Our platforms are also used to keep the public informed of services changes and provision across SWT and to support campaigns and initiatives.

Our social media officer created many videos for the virtual Remembrance event, and provided guidance, subtitles and images for those that were submitted.

The virtual Christmas lights switch-on is also being shared across social media along with a video made by our officer of the tree being transported and put in place. This has received a lot of engagement with a large number of shares and likes.

Social media banners are also being changed periodically to reflect our commemorations and events.

Our events officer has been working alongside the Environment Health Team and Public Health at Somerset County Council to ensure that any events could be managed safely.

As the first lockdown restrictions eased prior to the second lockdown there were three successful market events held in Castle Green, Taunton.

Channel Events organised the 'Moonlit Meadow Run' which successfully took place in French Weir Park in Taunton at the end of October. We worked with the organisers of this and the Minehead Triathlon which went ahead in line with Government advice and received some very positive feedback on how well organised it was.

Following the sharp increase in coronavirus cases, we have been continuing to work alongside Environmental Health and Public Health with organisations who had events planned for November and December. Many of these were unable to continue or are awaiting further information on easing of the latest restrictions in the hope that they can still take place.

The Christmas offer in Taunton is very different this year. The Christmas tree and lights have been installed by our Localities Team. The lights would usually be turned on as part of the annual Winterfest event but due to Covid restrictions this is not taking place this year. Instead, the Mayor of Taunton will be switching on the lights 'virtually' across our social media platforms.

Window dressing is also taking place in prime empty shop units in Taunton, Minehead and Wellington to help bring a festive feel to the towns; and production of a shop safely, shop locally advert to support our retail offer has been filmed, ready to air on Sky in early December.

Work continues on rolling out ShopAppy and encouraging businesses to sign up. ShopAppy is now present and operating in Minehead, Taunton and Wellington. Dulverton has now been added to the ShopAppy platform as well.

Culture

The Cultural Forum reconvened at the end of October and was well attended by our partners and representatives across the culture and creative sectors. Despite the extremely challenging environment these sectors have faced throughout 2020, and still continue to face, there is a great deal of positivity and a commitment to work together to develop and implement an action plan that delivers on the emerging priority objectives in the council's draft Cultural Strategy (to be approved in the next few weeks).

SWT is pleased to be able to support cultural organisations and projects where possible, and is proud to have recently approve some grant funding, for example:

- Arts Taunton's TYCA Festival (Taunton Youth Culture Arts – which was a huge success this year despite the obvious challenges), and
- a consortium who are running a hybrid performance project presenting a new version of Cinderella to a socially distanced audience in six arts centres across Somerset, then broadcast this to a wider audience on social media via January's Theatre Nights (hosted by Somerset Film & the Brewhouse). This innovative project will create the opportunity for local audiences to experience the tradition of

Christmas pantomime within a C19 context – a great example of the cultural and creative sector providing a much needed festive boost!

A report from the Taunton Theatre Association, operator of the Brewhouse Theatre, is attached.

TTA | The Brewhouse Theatre & Arts Centre

Q3 report | July – September 2020 | Cllr B. Allen

Following the extended National Lockdown due to the COVID19 Pandemic, The Brewhouse reopened in July, the staff and volunteers having worked tirelessly to welcome audiences safely. The following operating processes were amended:

- Box office issued electronic tickets only
- Our auditorium capacity was reduced by 2/3 to ensure people were seated 2m apart
- Arrival times were staggered to reduce the risk of bottlenecks
- A one-way system was put in operation to ensure people could stay 2m apart, with extensive signage installed to explain the new system, and a requirement that face coverings were in use in the foyer and auditorium
- Our bar operation was amended to ensure social distancing was maintained, and a new payment system ensured electronic transactions only
- Staff and volunteers were equipped with PPE and training for the new operating system
- Hand-sanitisation stations were installed throughout the foyer
- Cleaning was increased to ensure public areas were addressed regularly

With little or no live performance touring in the UK, the film programme was prioritised, with mainstream, independent and event cinema on offer for audiences.

We worked outdoors during the summer months with special Take Part activity that included a community mural project, walkabout performance with The Natural Theatre Company, and a community-made willow sculpture that now sits in front of our main entrance. We also moved a majority of our regular Take Part classes online, which was especially important for our older participants who were particularly at risk in the health crisis. In addition to our regular classes, we ran a series of Youth Masterclasses over the school holidays.

We applied for and were successful in our bid to Arts Council England's Emergency Response funding, which enabled us to upgrade our digital capacity as well as commission four regional artists and companies to create new work as part of *HomeBrew*, which also featured a virtual community gallery of visual art work. We also applied for ACE's Culture Recovery Fund during this quarter, and in October, learned we were successful in our application for £194k to support our core costs and invest in our organisation's development and communication strategy.

Behind the scenes, our staff undertook the huge administrative task of rescheduling many months of events and performances, supporting our customers during this period of uncertainty. We continued to work in partnership with others, including Wassail Theatre, Take Art, GoCreate, and others to support regional creative activity.



Amy Bere

Chief Executive

26 November 2020

Full Council Meeting – 15 December 2020

Report of Councillor Chris Booth – Community

I just want to start off with a big thank you again to all those in our various communities across our district for once again coming together through the November Lockdown to provide for those most in need and assist where possible. From this bleak year has come a silver lining of how important it is to be able to help your neighbour or support those less fortunate than yourself.

Community Chest

As of 24 November 2020 we have approved and spent £137,649 from the £250,000 (I can provide a current update if Council wishes) - almost exactly 55% - benefitting 37 different schemes/projects at an average grant of just under £4,000 each. We have had a range of proposals, the majority of which (surprisingly) have come from the western side of the district. They are typically being paid 15 days from the date of application.

At the time, the team discussed that to complete our objective of covering as many parts of our district as possible, we wish to see more bids come from the likes of the Blackdowns, Neroche, East Deane, Norton Fitzwarren, the rural areas surrounding Wellington, and Cotford St Luke.

CCTV

The majority of cameras are now fully working again in West Somerset (with the exception of three, which we are working on). We are now working towards securing the longevity of these, as well as reviewing those in Taunton Deane.

Equality and Diversity Group

In October, we had a first meeting to discuss what areas we'd like to discuss and outcomes we'd like to achieve. We are hoping to have our next meeting soon to start addressing particular issues of concern to members.

DISC Scheme and Radio Networks

I understand that members are concerned at the current state of things as neither seems to be running as to pre-Covid standard which is immensely frustrating. Our officers are trying to make sense of what Sedgemoor is planning, which ultimately runs the contract, and what this means for local businesses. I am disappointed at the lack of progress that has been made, as Sedgemoor has been going through staffing changes and not through lack of trying our end. I will continue to ensure I apply pressure in having a conclusion to this for you as soon as possible or relay what options we may seek to take.

Food Larder

On 26 November 2020, SWT hosted a virtual information event on food provision and the community pantry scheme. It was well attended, about 30 people, and well received. The speakers were informative and inspirational, and I'm hopeful there will be some new projects emerging. Slides are available if members wish to see them. We are hoping to have at least one Community Pantry in the district by Spring 2021, the keys to this being; a secure weekly food source and a partner organisation. Thank to you to the councillors who attended this fantastic meeting.

Public Space Protection Order (PSPO)

Since the initial consultation was set up and pulled because of Covid for a potential PSPO in Taunton, things have changed hugely. Partnership working with the Police has increased since Covid, allowing us more flexibility and often current legislation does cater for a lot of the issues being encountered. It's thought best at present to hold PSPO to save costs and at a time where police resources are too stretched to be able to enforce it. Of course, we are happy to work with any parish or town council that still believes that such an order would benefit their area.

Somerset Health and Wellbeing Board

Obviously Covid remains the main priority which you are routinely updated on but elsewhere from the Board:

Signing of the MoU - Improving Health and Care Through the Home in Somerset: the commitment for health, care and housing services to work together to support the vulnerable.

There is a commitment to establish a Somerset Homelessness Reduction Board.

Joint Strategic Needs Assessment on Climate Change agreed - a county-wide recognition of the impacts on health from Climate Change after all councils declared a Climate Emergency.

Domestic Violence is a high priority and SWT, amongst others, is supporting the national initiative '16 Days of Action' which asks employers to support their staff.

There has been progress in improving adult safeguarding across Somerset but still work to be done in areas such as recognising abuse and recognising risk through data.

Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Panel

Main updates include an extra £200,000 that was allocated to the Commissioner's Community Fund to help organisations and groups affected by the Covid downturn. There has also been money secured from the Ministry of Justice to employ a new Sexual Violence Advisor to support in this constabulary area, as well as additional funding for protecting vulnerable children and £400,000 from the Home Office to protect and tackle rises in burglary.

Obviously, the budget has been completely thrown by the pandemic and with money being pumped into more police time as well as dealing with matters such as court delays. Unfortunately, the forthcoming budget for next year does stand to be quite bleak after shoots of growth had shown in the current year's budget.

The biggest contention recently has been a long on-going issue around the Lloyds Victim Group and their relationship to Lloyds Bank HQ in Bristol (please search online for more information), in that they feel the decision that nothing illegal had taken place in the Bristol, compared to in Reading where fraud was encountered, was incorrect because of missed evidence and failure to investigate particular people. They naturally have put a lot of pressure on the Police and Crime Commissioner and the panel over the last couple of years. Recently, the board and I had fake 'summons' sent to our addresses which, while I am very sympathetic to their cause, I didn't appreciate as it felt like I was being treated like a criminal. We had an emergency meeting as to whether we needed to re-discuss this but the majority agreed that the role of the panel is to scrutinise the Police and Crime Commissioner and scrutinising the Constabulary as a whole fell outside our remit.

Free School Meals

Free School Meal Provision has been a big topic recently and during October half term was a concern as local businesses and organisations stepped up and distributed food where there were gaps. Lack of timely communication from Somerset County Council was a concern and expectation that families were expected to contact CV helpline to be referred to a village agent to get access to frozen meals seemed a bit odd. However, we're glad to say we know that at Christmas, families will be receiving 2 x £15 food vouchers per child via government funding with the continuing of emergency food parcels to those most vulnerable. We hope there will be more to come forward in the future as we collectively try to tackle this unacceptable situation.

One Team

North Taunton

Window Wanderland family, covid friendly activity launched <https://www.windowwanderland.com/event/east-north-taunton-2020/> in North & East Taunton 21st November till 2nd December - in brief, a window and garden light displays put up in the area so everyone can go out and enjoy seeing the displays. This was featured on the Somerset Gazette website and an interview on The Breakfast Show on BBC Somerset.

Primary schools in NT had free workshops and good engagement from Priorswood Community Centre, Library and Brook Green Nursery.

Taunton North Youth Club only running activities that can take place outdoors so a lot less going on for C&YP.

Police are noticing increases in ASB in parks, particularly Lyngford Park and increasing their patrols to those areas. Community feeling that the park is somewhere children and families can't go to after late afternoon.

10 YP (aged 13-18) have been attending Activity Days at Kilve once a week for 5 weeks along with PCSOs. YP identified by police in consultation with partner agencies. Funded activities, lunch and transport were provided by Quantock Landscaping Partnership Scheme. This was very successful and well attended.

Halcon

Police being asked to increase patrols around Lambrook after a spate of vandalism and anti-social behaviour.

The Link Centre continues to be an incredible link to the community in providing meals and support.

Hoping to get planter regeneration project back on track to help improve the appearance of the area, as well as potentially leading to a food-planting project that could help with food poverty.

Wellington

A massive thank you to the amount of local businesses and organisations that came together over the past months to ensure that enough food and supplies are provided to those most in need, whether it be via businesses or through schools, the imbedded sense of community that already existed in Wellington has really shown through as a model of how a town can work to the betterment of its people.

Locality Update

The weekly newsletter continues to be published to members and parish councils. We are currently pulling together the 36th edition! The newsletter continues to be well received by the intended audience and we are very grateful to our partners who make regular weekly contributions.

Claire Thackray has been working with SWT operatives and Ruishton and Creech St Michael Parish Councils to address flood prevention issues. She has also been working with Friends of Netherclay (FON) who are taking the necessary steps with SWT to be able to register for Government external funding. Before FON can apply for a Woodland Management Plan or Countryside Stewardship, the land needs to be registered with the Rural Payment Agency (RPA). Once this application has been submitted / successful the FON will be able to apply for a grant which will contribute to the cost of creating a woodland management plan. Ultimately we hope to empower this group to manage this area on our behalf, thus reducing the demand on Open Spaces and extending community involvement and ownership.

There is a very similar situation over at the Children's Wood, Taunton. Here we have a willing group of people, a ready-made management plan and some labour via Somerset Wildlife Trust project. SWT is very keen to support the up and coming

Friends Group, again for the similar reasons outlined in the paragraph above. Both Jonathan Stevens and myself are in the process of arranging an onsite meeting in December 2020 when lockdown restrictions are eased. As Engagement Lead, I have been tasked with pulling this project together. I hope to have some good news for you soon!

Sam Murrell is aware of the ongoing works at Blue Anchor Bay and the Watchet Harbour / dredging: more extensive details no doubt will be provided by Chris Hall. Sam continues to provide ongoing support to the parishes, community groups, and businesses in the former West Somerset area by way of signposting others to further information and advice about SWT services.

Full Council Meeting – 15 December 2020

Report of Councillor Ross Henley – Corporate Resources

ICT Services

Infrastructure Team - The Infrastructure team are now preparing the deployment of equipment for the Infrastructure Refresh Project, replacing major networking and server hardware components. A review of Cyber Security is currently underway to ensure that all appropriate controls are in place and to identify improvements where required.

Service Desk Team - Working hard providing support to the remote workforce and have completed the upgrade of all laptops to Windows 10 Enterprise operating system, supporting the delivery of the new Microsoft 365 suite of software.

Applications Team - A major upgrade of the Finance E5 system has recently been completed. The Application team have been working with the Business Analysts creating further integrations for the Firmstep platform to facilitate COVID grants and payments. The team have also been supporting both the Digital Modernisation and Service Improvement Projects.

Information Management

Personal Drives and Migration to One Drives - All Windows 10 upgrades have been completed which has enabled the Digital Modernisation Team to implement One Drives as a phased delivery. This is nearing completion having included the following:

- Messaging and communication to clean personal drives to under 300mb
- Track, Trace, Cleanse and Delete core business data from high risk silos (personal drives)
- Implementing One Drive licence
- Train and migrate
- Directors have cleansed and have been migrated.

The New Corporate File Plan (SharePoint EDRMS) - This has been built to mirror the new Retention and Disposal Schedule and Information Asset Register. This has been signed off by all Managers and Leadership Team.

Shared Drive Cleansing - 48 workshops conducted over 5 weeks to support team cleansing of Shared Drives. Risk gradually being reduced.

Migration - Third party tool being installed November 18th to analyse state of current drives. Report to identify high risk redundant data will be run in the first instance.

Partnership working - Contact has been made with the Records Manager at Sedgemoor for first collaboration meeting for Information Governance.

National Exemplar - A national article released this week, SWT has also hosted virtual reference site visits from numerous councils including; Belfast City Council and Nottingham County Council. The solution was also demonstrated at a national Microsoft Forum with over 900 attendees.

Risk Reduction - Michele Noad presented to Audit Committee to provide assurance that Information Risk is being reduced following their audit.

People & Human Resources

Recruitment - During the last quarter, SWT budget was for 585.5 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff. The average for the period was 549.2 FTE with 51.2 FTE vacancies.

October has been a quieter month for recruitment compared with September with a number of vacancies being held:

	Starters	Leavers
September	28	15
October	6	10

A Neurodiversity Working Group has been set up as part of plans to offer greater inclusivity to potential employees. Recruitment practices are being reviewed to offer an engaging and encouraging process to those with neurodivergent challenges.

I have just heard that the work we have launched as a District council on Neurodiversity has been recognised by the local government association. The local government association have highlighted our Neurodiversity work as good practice and have sent the presentation with a covering narrative to all English local authorities. This work is continuing and I have already met with staff who are working on all the different workstreams involved. I'm so pleased that Somerset's and Taunton has gained national record on this work.

Casework - The number of HR cases continues to be managed under a new system of working with HR and the People Business Partners making progress in case resolution

	New Cases	Open Cases During Period	Cases Closed During period	Total Cases
September	2	14	12	28
October	6	16	6	28

Sickness Absence - There has been a small decrease in reported sickness absence during October: September – 2.49% // October – 2.03%

The number of staff who have been on long term sickness absence i.e. > 4 weeks of continuous absence has reduced to 6 individuals who are included in the case management numbers above.

Reward & Recognition - A paper was presented to Executive to look at the viability of gaining accreditation with the Real Living Wage Foundation. Further analysis is being carried out with our suppliers to understand affordability.

A review of our pay policy is being scoped out to ensure we are meeting our obligations under equal pay reporting. This will include a review of pay protection, market factor and honoraria.

Learning & Development - The current learning and management system, Learning Pool, will be upgraded in the coming months giving managers greater access to training and development for their teams, including forward planning for mandatory training.

Apprenticeship scheme - We are currently in discussions with local colleges and educational providers to further develop our apprenticeship scheme for 2021.

People Business partners will be working with Directors to identify opportunities for new apprenticeships as well as offering our existing staff apprenticeships to support development in their current roles.

Wellbeing - We continue to support staff health and wellbeing with the following activities:

- Weekly Wellbeing Bulletin.
- Weekly Carefirst Webinars around a variety of Mental Health Issues
- World Mental Health Day campaign in October both internal and externally through Facebook, Instagram and Twitter sites.
- Providing guidance around schools and their rules for self-isolation.
- Wellbeing Survey conducted and feedback to staff.
- Produced a Winter Lockdown guide – lots of links and support offered.
- Working with our charity partner Mind, staff were sent a link to the Mental Health Guidance Video
- Learning Wellbeing Steering Group, which includes UNISON representation took place to discuss where support is required.

Change Team

Business Analysts

Test and Trace support payments process built and implemented with integration to Finance system.

Housing Benefit and Council Tax support claim on-line form launched in Firmstep to improve customer experience, reducing failure demand and providing a productivity saving compared to previous paper based process through channel shift.

Council Tax Support on-line calculator launched, providing customers the ability to self-serve by checking eligibility themselves

Procurement completed for out of contract spend relating to print and postage. New contract projected to save £22K per year, £66K over the life of the contract based on current spend.

Plotbox software implemented for the Crematorium providing integration into the finance system for sales invoices removing manual process and duplication of effort

Digital Enablement – Microsoft 365 Project

17 Change Champions ‘recruited’ from across the organisation, who will receive training and access to new digital tools and products and then help embed them into the different functional areas as part of an orchestrated change management approach

Testing of Microsoft 365 desktop apps (Word, Excel and PowerPoint) and InTune mobile device management software completed. In early stages of planning 365 training, with Microsoft 365 Learning Pathways Portal being deployed shortly.

Governance

The team continue to support and administer the normal schedule of Committee meetings as well as the further Special meetings currently scheduled.

The Council Governance Arrangements Working Group has now met three times and is analysing the feedback from the Member Survey and also considering the various models of Governance that are available.

Continuing to plan for the elections scheduled for May 2021 which are - Police & Crime Commissioner, Somerset County Council and any Town and Parish By-elections, which would potentially take place on Thursday 6th May 2021. Also reviewing arrangements to consider Covid-19 secure working practices in terms of the Election process – postal votes, polling stations and the count.

Health and Safety

National Lockdown - the H & S Team continued to support employees working from home, with particular emphasis around protecting the Clinically Extremely Vulnerable group. Access to corporate buildings was reduced to 'essential support service' teams only and COVID risk assessments were reviewed for all activities involving working within the community and working in tenant's homes.

The Safety Action Notice Policy was implemented alongside the performance management processes, to incorporate a robust process for managing H & S consequence, with a view to develop ownership and accountability.

H & S training courses. Work continues to develop a suite of courses, each with a corresponding e-learning package. Programme of delivery being planned for the next 3-6 months.

Risk Assessments. A project to centralise the risk assessment process continued, with the development of a cataloguing system to capture all risk assessment types, owners and review dates. The objective of the project is to improve the risk management processes moving forward and to make the information visible and accessible across the organisation.

H & S Committee processes for sub-meetings were reviewed and the groups were restructured according to the remodelling of the organisation. This included a review of representation across high risk areas and also some redefining of agendas, to improve the effectiveness of the groups.

Finance and Procurement

Among the key achievements for the procurement function includes

- Successful Procurement of Concession Contract for the 12 month trial of Electric E-Scooters.
- Commercial NEC4 contract negotiations with EA Framework contractors to enable completion of Watchet Harbour emergency and final repair works. Incorporating into the contract the emergency cliff stabilisation and rock armour works at Blue Anchor.
- Conclusion of contract Addendum negotiation with Capita for the upgrade of the Academy Housing Management System and migration of existing contracts into single contract for limited term to enable full procurement exercise to be undertaken for inclusive Housing Management System

The finance service has been focussing heavily on

- Continued preparation and support for the completion of the external audit of last year's accounts. The timetable for this has expanded this year due to COVID, meaning finance and other key officers are continuing to prioritise this requirement for a longer period than normal.
- Continued monitoring and reporting of COVID impact on costs and income. This has included the first periodic claim under the Government's income loss compensation scheme for which we have received £1.2m in grant to help mitigate fees and charges income reductions for April to July this year. The team is also supporting the financial arrangements for managing £6.6m of additional funding to assist local businesses adversely affected by lock down and tiered restrictions through to the end of next financial year.
- The finance business partners have worked extensively to embed improvements in our monthly budget monitoring and reporting arrangements, helping budget holders to effectively manage and control their budgets and report risks and issued to the leadership team through the monthly

Performance Board. The forecast against budget is brought to the Executive, through Scrutiny, on a quarterly basis with the Quarter 2 report presented in the December committee cycle.

- The senior leadership team and the Executive are continuing to develop the budget and medium term financial plan forecasts for next year. This is particularly challenging due to the impact of COVID both on services and financial planning uncertainty.
- The Customer AD area has been focussed on maintaining business as usual and over the past few weeks in preparing for the new national lockdown. Work has also been undertaken in each service area to identify our budget requirements for next year.

Business Grants

- The Government have announced new grant schemes (mandatory and discretionary) to cover both local and national lockdowns. We have been provided with a further £6m in funding under the national scheme for the current national lockdown. The Revenues team within Customer will administer the mandatory element of this scheme. We are working closely with the Economic Development team in Development & place who are picking up the discretionary scheme. Both schemes have had to be developed and implemented at short notice.

Benefits

- We are continuing to process new applications and changes of circumstance for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support and continue to see an increase in Council Tax Support claims resulting from the economic impact of Covid.
- The Benefits team are also picking up the processing of the Test & Trace payments scheme introduced by Govt. to recompense people on low incomes who are required to self-isolate. This has both a mandatory and discretionary element. This scheme has been developed and implemented in conjunction with Sedgemoor DC.
- The roll out of the improvements identified through the Lean Process Review is continuing and has seen the rollout of an online Benefits claim form. This can be completed either directly by customers or, over the phone, by our Benefits team. The form can be viewed at [https://my.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/en/service/Council Tax Support and Housing Benefit claim](https://my.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/en/service/Council_Tax_Support_and_Housing_Benefit_claim)
- Work is underway to plan for the year-end processes in March 2020. As part of this we are in the process of renewing the Council Tax Support Scheme for next year.

Business Intelligence

- The BI team have recently refreshed the dataset to help identify vulnerable people who may require assistance through the current lockdown.
- We are continuing to progress the development of corporate governance processes for performance, risk and audit actions.
- Significant progress has been made in conjunction with Property Services in clearing the backlog of work relating to our Property Terrier.

Strategy Specialist

- The Internal Operations Strategy Specialist is overseeing the development and launch of the mandatory element of the new national lockdown business grants scheme.
- We are progressing the development of the Customer Access & Experience Programme. The programme will be a key pillar of the ambition for SWT '*To be known for effortless and trusted customer service and for us to do it in a financially sustainable way*'.
- A half yearly progress review against the 2020/21 Corporate Annual Plan actions has been completed and progress is being reported to the December Scrutiny and Executive meetings. Work is commencing in drafting Directorate plans for 2021/22, upon which the 2020/21/22 Annual Corporate Plan will be created in order that the public have sight of the key projects and actions the Council will be pursuing for the year ahead (from 1 April 2021).

Customer Services & Deane Helpline

- Call answering times have been well within target for the second quarter of the financial year (target of 90% answered in under 60 seconds and we're achieving 96%).
- In view of the second national lockdown we have had to close the Deane House reception desk and the Visitor Centre. The Customer Contact staff are in the process of contacting people classed as being extremely vulnerable to Covid to see if they require help or assistance.
- Work is being undertaken to progress the changes identified from the recent review of corporate complaints. This includes bringing in additional resourcing in the short term to respond to complaints, implementing computer software changes to improve the process and the development and delivery of training to services across the organisation.
- We are in the process of migrating the Deane Helpline call answering function to a solution that enables home working.

Income

- We are continuing to process and collect direct debits for our major income streams without Covid having any major impact. Invoicing and collection activity for miscellaneous income is ongoing. The administration of the 'right to buy' function continues as normal.
- We are closely monitoring our recovery activity and approach for Council Tax and Business Rates in view of the ongoing impact of Covid. The emphasis is very much on getting customers experiencing problems to contact us in order that we can provide advice and make payment arrangements.
- Planning has started in relation to the Rents year-end processes and we are putting in place additional contingency arrangements in view of Covid.

Operational Support

- Additional support has been provided recently to the Environmental Health team to help them to contact all of our local food businesses in preparation for EU Exit.

- The team continue to maintain business as usual activity around ensuring prompt payment to suppliers, processing purchase orders, scanning of incoming post.

Programme Management Office (PMO)

- Work is progressing to implement a new reporting and monitoring framework for our major programmes and projects. This will, in due course, provide for quarterly reporting to Members and will link to the delivery of the Corporate Strategy objectives.

Revenues

- The team are picking up the processing of the mandatory business grants scheme for the current national lockdown. We have designed the scheme to work with information already collected from businesses during the first lockdown in order to speed up the claims and payment processes.
- The team were on top of the day-to-day processing of liability changes prior to stating processing the business grants, but the necessity of diverting resource may impact on day-to-day processing.
- We are also now actively preparing for the year-end new year billing process in March 2020. This year, because of Covid, we are having to put in place additional contingency arrangements and are looking to undertake as much of the process as possible remotely.
- Work is ongoing with Sedgemoor to assist with their in-house Revenues & Benefits system rebuild.

Full Council Meeting – 15 December 2020

Report of Councillor Marcus Kravis – Asset Management and Economic Development

Major and Special Projects

Coal Orchard

Work continues on the project, with significant progress made on all of the buildings. Work will start on the riverside steps, a vital part of the public realm and flood mitigation measures, in the New Year. The revised programme is now to complete all three blocks and the public realm for May 2021.

Seaward Way light industrial build

The main build is all but finished with some minor highway works being pushed back due to the ground conditions. Snazaroo have started their tenant fit out, with fixtures fittings and signage now being installed.

The design of the residential build is being progressed by the Housing team and is being debated at Full Council on 1st December 2020.

Firepool

GWR building / cycle path

The GWR refurbishment work has now commenced, aiming to secure and return the building to active use as a site office by Q1 2021. Plans for the cycle path are being adapted to allow for the build programme and construction footprint of the Innovation Centre which overlaps with the original temporary route. Access will be made available from Trenchard Way to Canal Road for pedestrians and cyclists in Spring 21 as planned.

Digital Innovation Centre

SWT are continuing to work in collaboration with SCC on delivery of a 3000m² Digital Innovation centre on the Firepool site. The project teams are working up the detailed infrastructure and services plans, and aligning respective build programmes to allow delivery of the Innovation Centre alongside the key infrastructure work.

Special Purpose Vehicle

SWT have been exploring the most efficient delivery route for large projects such as Firepool and a dedicated development arm which will be solely focussed on delivery of key regeneration projects was approved a Full Council on 3rd November. The detailed work to progress this key component is now underway, with a view to formation of the new company in the next quarter.

Infrastructure, Utilities and Flood work

Work continues on the detailed design and specification work to address the many civil and engineering issues on the main Firepool site has been continuing, and work will start in earnest in Q1 2021.

Bus Station

The planning application to convert the Bus Station to a temporary car park will be submitted before the end of calendar year.

Heritage

The Heritage team have been particularly busy throughout the quarter, working alongside owners, funding bodies and consultees on projects across the district.

Tonedale Mill

The S48 Repairs notice has been served and discussions continue with the owners on their response to the notice and the emergency works required on site.

Assets

Dulverton Weir

SWT continues to work with the Dulverton Weir and Leat Conservation Trust and other stakeholders to investigate future options for the repair and long term future of the site.

Norton Hillfort

Work continues to secure the transfer of the site to the South West Heritage Trust for long term guardianship.

Full Council Meeting – 15 December 2020

Report of Councillor Richard Lees – Parks and Leisure

At the time of writing this report, we are still in the Lockdown, but hopefully it won't be for too long.

Service: Commercial Services

Parks and Open Spaces

- Green Flag Awards
 - Taunton's Vivary, Victoria and French Weir Parks have retained their Green Flags along with Swains Lane Nature Reserve in Wellington, which is managed by the Swains Lane Community Group. Wellington Park has retained a Green Flag Heritage Award (one of only two in the West Country). Comeytrove Park managed by the Friends of Comeytrove Park also retained a Community Green Flag Award.
 - Minehead's Blenheim Garden has also received a Green Flag. This is the first Green Flag Award in West Somerset.
- Sports Pitches
 - We look forward to welcoming team sports back onto our playing fields once lockdown ends in December.

Leisure (Everyone Active)

- Reopening of Centres
 - In line with Government guidelines, Everyone Active reopened its leisure centres, swimming pools, but due to lockdown 2, all leisure facilities were closed again during November. All centres will have reopened from the 2nd December with large amounts of communications planned to ensure our customers know.
 - When the facilities were open, Blackbrook, Wellington and Wellsprings offered the use of its gyms and classes, whilst the pools offered lane swimming and lessons; all proved extremely popular. Each gym session was for a 50 minute period, allowing a 10 minute period for staff to clean equipment before the next session.
- Annual Report
 - Everyone Active gave a presentation at the All Members' Briefing in November, which updated all Councillors on the partnerships progress since the commencement of the leisure contract in 2019 and how they have managed leisure during Covid. The presentation was extremely well received and prompted lots of good questions and discussions. Further community ideas were raised, which Everyone Active now contacts details and are liaising with them.

Roundabouts:

I was informed that the visibility at Cross Keys Roundabout in Taunton was causing problems for cars and people crossing the road nearby due to the trees etc. blocking visibility. This has now been rectified.

By the time you get this report, we should now be out of the lockdown, and are approaching Christmas. May I hope that you all have as good a Christmas as possible, but remember, "Stay Safe"

Full Council Meeting – 15 December 2020

Report of Councillor Peter Pilkington – Climate Change

- **Countywide Somerset Climate Emergency Strategy**

The strategy was adopted by Council on 26th October 2020. Since then it has been through each of the other Councils and adopted. Conversations are ongoing with regards to the governance arrangements for the delivery phase of the Strategy, which will be reported to Members in due course.

- **CNCR Action Plan**

The SWT CNCR Action Plan was approved by Council on 26th October 2020. This provides us with a more detailed plan of aspirational actions which our Climate Change Programme will look to deliver against.

- **Somerset EV Charging Strategy**

A pan-Somerset EV Charging Strategy has been produced, as an early product of the Climate Emergency Strategy work. It is currently on its way through the democratic path towards adoption both here and in the other Councils. The Strategy provides us with projections for EV adoption in Somerset and identifies the actions that we need to take and facilitate to influence this positively. As a result of the Strategy, we will be aiming to work towards 25% of vehicle kms travelled being EV in Somerset by 2030.

- **Electric Vehicle Charge Points**

SWT are planning to lease four car parking bays to an electric vehicle charging point (EVCP) operator, installing 50kw, rapid charge points at Deane House and Blackbrook Sports Centre. Both are expected to be operating towards the end of Q1 2021 and will be accessible to the public 24/7. A number of further sites are being investigated with the same EVCP operator.

In addition to this invitations for expressions of interest have been requested using a nationally recognised procurement framework. Prospective EVCP suppliers will tender to investigate the suitability and, where appropriate, to supply charging points at multiple car parks throughout the district.

- **DC Share**

Western Power Distribution and SWT are finalising the cable routes to the 15 charge points, seeking permissions from stakeholders and landowners across the three locations, Canon Street, Firepool & Coal Orchard.

- **Fleet Transition to Electric Vehicles**

Following the positive use of demo vehicles officers are progressing the procurement of 2 x electric pool vehicles to align with the implementation of the charge points at Deane House, these vehicles will be the first of our pool vehicles to be switched to electric.

- **CDP Annual Disclosure**

Officers submitted our annual disclosure to CDP in August, based on the emerging CNCR Action Plan and Countywide Somerset Climate Emergency Strategy, and recently confirmed that these have now been adopted. In 2019 (our first year of disclosure) we received a score of “C” (Awareness) reflecting the fact that we had declared a climate emergency, and were beginning work on understanding what was necessary to tackle it. In the CNCR we set ourselves a target to work towards a score of “A” (Leadership) by 2023, expecting that we might achieve a “B” (Management) this year. We have now received our 2020 score of “A-” (Leadership) which means we have exceeded our expectations and are now very close to achieving our 2023 goal ahead of time. However, the scoring methodology progressively tightens and there are many things we can and need to do to continue to improve, so we should not become complacent.

- **Interim Policy Statement on Planning for the Climate Emergency**

A Draft Interim Policy Statement has been produced to provide additional explanation and guidance on our existing planning policies in relation to the climate emergency. Its principal purpose is to reiterate existing adopted planning policies and ensure that we are applying them to the best of their effect in tackling the Climate Emergency. The Draft Statement is due for consultation from 23 November 2020 – 4 January 2021.

- **Ecological Emergency**

In September 2020, the Council declared an Ecological Emergency. Work has recently begun, scoping out where the Council should go from here in terms of strategy and action planning as well as how we are already taking action in this regard. A further update report will be presented to Council in due course.

- **Zero Carbon Pilot**

The pilot has commenced pre app stage and has gone out to the market for a main modular build contractor. Seaward Way and Oxford Inn zero carbon projects are being considered by members in December and if approved a total of 115 zero carbon homes will be built over the following 3 years. The low carbon standard for NTWP is being discussed and a report by Hydrock will be produced on the options prior to a works cost being agreed for phase A.

- **EScooter Trial**

The Taunton scheme went live on the 30th October 2020 and the first three weeks stats from Zipp Mobility show that this new form of public transport is extremely popular.

	15/11/2020 - 22/11/2020	Cumulative Total
Total number of rides	2063	4910
Total distance travelled (km)	7734	19076
Average trip length (km)	3.74	
Average trip duration	0:27:14	
Total time spent on scooters (hours)	936:25:55	2404.00
New users last 7 days	903	
Total users signed up since launch	4073	

- **Free Trees**

The free trees scheme was launched in September and was open to all Parish / Town Councils to request free trees for National Tree Planting week, November 2020. SWT supplied and delivered a total of 223 trees.

- **Water Refill Stations**

We are continuing to work with Wessex Water on this project and have identified two town locations to install 3 water refill stations, further detail will be available in the New Year.

Full Council Meeting – 15 December 2020

Report of Councillor Mike Rigby – Planning and Transportation

SWT Local Plan Review:

We consulted on the Local Plan Issues and Options document at the beginning of 2020. An initial Consultation Report Part 1 summarising online responses was published in July and Part 2 reporting the more lengthy responses was published in October. As part of the “trawl for sites” we have received 103 suggestions from developers and others with interest in land. These have been logged and sorted into areas. Details can be found at:

<https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/media/2454/swt-lp-io-consultation-report-stage-2-appx2.pdf>

I would urge councillors to familiarise themselves with the details. While there is no guarantee that a suggested site will ultimately be accepted into the local plan and from there be the subject of a successful planning application, it is likely that, Government intervention notwithstanding, most of the sites coming forward in the period to 2040, will be amongst this number.

The timetable of the Local Plan has been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and so further evidence gathering and the Regulation 19 Draft Plan stage anticipated for Summer 2020 (as set out in the Local Development Scheme) has been delayed. Furthermore, the Government’s recent Planning Reform proposals and change to the calculation of housing need will impact upon the content and scope of the Local Plan so we need to review what this means for our Local Plan if the proposed changes are confirmed.

Additionally, the timetable is likely to be affected by the outcome of the unitary proposals for Somerset. Whichever unitary scenario emerges, a Local Plan would need to be produced to cover the whole of the new Local Planning Authority area. The background work and consultation so far on the Local Plan 2040 will still be of relevance to any new Local Plan for a unitary authority.

Wellington Station:

Work continues on the Strategic Outline Business Case for Wellington Station, which is due to be complete by the end of the year. This work is being funded by the Restoring Your Railways Fund. The Government’s recent spending review includes plans for a third round of the New Stations Fund, with an expanded pot of £32 million, which the project team intends to make a submission to.

Interim Policy Statement on Planning for the Climate Emergency:

A Draft Interim Policy Statement has been produced to provide additional explanation and guidance on our existing planning policies in relation to the climate emergency. Its principal purpose is to reiterate existing adopted planning policies and ensure that we are applying them to the best of their effect in tackling the Climate Emergency. The Draft Statement is due for consultation from 23 November 2020 – 4 January 2021.

Vacancies

Planning Specialist – the role was advertised for a 2nd time but attracted no applicants. The role will be re-advertised in January 2021.

Phosphates

We have recently advised Members that a number of planning applications will require a Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) due to the letter we had received from Natural England about the high levels of phosphates in the Somerset Levels and Moors Ramsar Site. A copy of the advice letter/ advice note from Natural England provides a helpful explanation of the issues and the types of development affected and is available on our website at:

<https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/planning/phosphates-on-the-somerset-levels-and-moors/>

Somerset Levels and Moors Ramsar Site

In light of a court Judgement (known as Dutch N), Natural England have advised SWT that, in light of the unfavourable condition of the Somerset Levels and Moors Ramsar Site, before determining a planning application that may give rise to additional phosphates within the catchment, competent authorities should undertake a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA).

To date, we have only been able to conclude one HRA and that is because mitigation was not required as it was concluded that the development would not create additional phosphates.

In order to move this matter forward we have commissioned consultants to undertake work on developing a phosphates calculator. This should then allow for an assessment and mitigation of the phosphates impacts in proposed new developments. The calculator will allow applicants to calculate their phosphate budget and mitigate to show with sufficient and reasonable certainty that the development does not adversely affect the Somerset Levels and Moors Ramsar Site. While this piece of work is being undertaken we will not be able to determine any of the affected planning applications unless developers are able to provide their own solution.

It is anticipated that this work will be concluded prior to Christmas but at present, I cannot guarantee that it will be achievable.

Planning Committee - I have formed the view that meetings of the Planning Committee continue to be lasting significantly longer than ought to be the case. I am working with the Chairman of the Committee and officers to devise means to see the smoother functioning of these meetings.

The reviews of the council's car parks continue with the first examining the future charging regime, including the 'first hour free' trial. I expect to report the initial findings and recommendations in the first quarter of 2021. The second undertaking will shadow the first but may take slightly longer to conclude and that will determine the adequacy of long-term strategic car parking availability across the district - Do we have the correct amount of parking in the right places?

East Street Pedestrianisation - We undertook a survey to gauge views of the pedestrianisation of East Street in order to determine how to manage this issue

going forward. It was the council's largest consultation ever, with in excess of 2,000 responses. A majority of respondents felt that the closure was a success and should be extended. Full details of the questions and responses can be found here:

<https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/media/2458/east-reach-consultation-results.pdf>

Together with SCC, we decided to keep the street closed through Lockdown 2.0 given that many of the shops were fully open and many of those that weren't were open for click and collect. Given the short duration of Lockdown 2.0, it was also felt reopening it would cause confusion and disrupt reconfigured travel patterns. I will provide a verbal report on the next stages.

Active Travel - East Street

Extensive work consultation work has taken place on the scheme implemented over the summer. Following this, design work has started to change the scheme to allow for timed opening of the road at peak times, and to allow blue badge holders to park on the street during specific hours. This work will be subject to further consultation and Road Safety Audit verification, prior to implementation.

Government guidance and award of Active Travel P2 funding was published in November. The County wide active travel cell are absorbing this information with a view to deciding on which of the schemes submitted by the individual districts meet the revised criteria for grants before Christmas.

The Gateway Park and Ride reopened on 2 November 2020, following SCC's completion of highways works at the site. We continue to discuss how to improve the park and rides, the operation of which we subsidise, though the plan to take ownership of them has been severely dented first by Covid and then by local government reorganisation.

As a council we have objected to the Government's proposed changes to the Standard Method for calculating housing numbers, which would have an enormous impact on the district with as many as 24,000 homes needing to be built in the period to 2040. Likewise we have objected to the deeply unsatisfactory Government proposals to effectively do away with local plans and instead designate lands into three simple categories. Indeed the consultation appears to be trying to fix a problem that does not exist and we have responded accordingly.

Feasibility work - Cycling schemes

SWT are continuing to work towards feasibility studies with local cycling groups and other stakeholders on cycling infrastructure projects in the district, including links from Taunton to Wellington and Bishops Lydeard/Cotford St Luke. Dedicated resource is now working through the many complex issues, such as land ownership(s), funding and planning, with a view to bringing together detailed proposals.

Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan

SWT continue to work with colleagues in SCC on refining and prioritising schemes within the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan, with the intention of developing detailed project delivery proposals.

Full Council Meeting – 15 December 2020

Report of Councillor Fran Smith – Housing

Housing Development and Regeneration Team **Housing Strategy**

- The establishment of the Homelessness Reduction Board is progressing to commence its work early 2021
- A comprehensive demand study is being undertaken to inform SWT housing supply. The study is looking at the demand for general and specialist accommodation including homelessness, accessible homes, other specialist accommodation (working closely with SCC)
- A delivery officer is being recruited to the team to deliver and oversee the Hinckley point C Housing Action Plan
- The revised Private Sector Renew Policy to be considered by members in December

Housing Enabling

- Significant achievement in increasing the supply of homeless accommodation in Minehead through securing £1m grant fund for YMCA and progressing discussions with Home Group
- Rural Housing enabler has been appointed to support community led housing particularly in the Exmoor area
- Significant time committed in relation to Planning Authority matters phosphates and delay in planning approvals, planning white paper, new S106 data base
- Continue to investigate new models of low cost home ownership and their potential role in the District

HRA New Homes

- Laxton Road Development competition date expected late December
- Zero Carbon Pilot – Procurement of modular contractor has formally started, planning pre-app discussions commenced with 39 units likely to be possible through the first five sites.
- New Low Carbon Employers Requirements (ER) have been developed to support all future developments
- North Taunton Woolaway Project – Final designs issued for phase A, Pre Construction Services Agreement (PCSA) to conclude in December with a fixed works cost and specification agreed for phase A. Next steps report with Council for consideration in December
- Seaward way and Oxford Inn reports to be considered by members in December
- Single Homeless and Rough Sleeper option appraisal underway
- Up to four new market acquisitions for HRA to support Right to Buy 1:4:1 spend and provide new affordable council owned homes underway.

Housing Property Team **Responsive and Void Repairs**

- All responsive repairs (both emergency and non-emergency) are being undertaken, with measures in place to keep both residents and staff safe from COVID-19 whilst work is carried out.
- The backlog of non-emergency repairs following the previous lockdown is still being addressed and, whilst reducing, it is challenging to eliminate due to both difficulties in recruiting additional competent trade people and access problems during the current lockdown.
- Void repairs are continuing, although again undertaking the required works to bring up to the Lettable Standard within agreed timescales whilst at the same time keeping staff safe from COVID-19 whilst work is carried out poses additional challenges.

Property Safety Compliance

Ongoing progress on property safety compliance includes:

- A review of all common areas for flat blocks being undertaken to validate existing safety actions.
- Recruitment to a new post within the Property Compliance team - a Mechanical and Electrical Manager.
- Asbestos management survey programme to flat blocks completed, and dwelling asbestos management surveys and re-inspections being undertaken.
- Procurement and commencement of an additional programme of Fire Risk Assessments (FRAs).
- Continuing to undertake recommended remedial actions from previous FRAs, and maintenance inspections.
- Continuing with Gas Safety checks.
- Undertaking a programme of Water Risk assessments.
- Carrying out electrical checks to communal areas, and checks to dwellings procured and due to start shortly.
- New stair lift safety check and service contract procured and started.

Housing Asset Management

- Stock condition surveys due to recommence have been put on hold due to COVID-19 restrictions in the new lockdown period.
- Procurement of external resource to undertake additional energy surveys has been undertaken, but again this work has been put on hold due to COVID-19 restrictions in the new lockdown period.

Capital Programmes

- All capital programmes currently continuing during this lockdown period following government guidance. Measures in place to keep both residents, SWT staff and contractors safe from COVID-19 whilst work is carried out.
- Additional procurement for future capital programmes being undertaken.

- Existing external painting and replacement soffits and gutters contract completed.
- Kitchen, bathroom, window, insulation and door entry programmes on site.
- Heating programme to commence shortly.
- Condensed timeframe to complete all planned capital works programmes likely to be a challenge by end of March 2021.

Housing and Communities Teams

Extra Care Housing

- SWT has 2 Extra Care Housing sites. Both have an on-site care provider, Way Ahead Care, who are commissioned by SCC. SWT staff sit on the Extra Care Housing panel meetings, which consider all extra care housing applications. These meetings have continued to take place online. SWT has noticed that there is a higher level of need and care being referred for extra care housing, than previously and are monitoring the impact of this on the schemes.
- SWT staff have worked alongside Way Ahead Care throughout the pandemic, to ensure that all maintenance and gardening works can be safely undertaken and have continued to be available to meet with tenants, regarding any tenancy or neighbour concerns. The care teams have done a great job of keeping both sites COVID free, adapting the care and support they offer to tenants, to ensure all concerned are kept safe.

Sheltered Housing

- The Sheltered Housing Team have continued to be affected by long term staff sickness and reduced working hours. The remaining team have been working across the whole of sheltered housing, making welfare calls to tenants, updating their personal and health information and making home visits where necessary, to complete aids and adaptations assessments, tenancy sign ups, install Lifelines and support tenants who find using the phone challenging due to hearing impairment for example.
- During any visits all staff wear PPE and are required to follow the relevant risk assessment guidance for these visits. Although tenants have appreciated the phone contact and visits, many remain very anxious and nervous about having anyone in their home, due to concerns about COVID-19. Tenants have also reported concerns for cancelled hospital appointments and fears around attending hospital. Staff offer reassurance and remind tenants of the precautions hospitals are taking, in addition to the importance of having their health needs met.
- Many tenants have also continued to have less contact with family and friends. In some cases, this has left them feeling lonely and isolated. Where appropriate and helpful, we have encouraged the tenants to have regular welfare calls from Deane Helpline, which allows tenants to have regular calls and a check on their welfare and a brief chat. Deane Helpline report any concerns for a tenants welfare or health back to the team, and a member of staff calls the tenant, to find out more and complete relevant referrals etc. In many cases, this includes liaising with family members and next of kin, who have also been appreciative of the follow up we have provided.
- The team has continued to respond to crisis and emergencies, as they arise. There have been several tenants who have needed to be admitted to hospital and we have working with Adult Social Care and hospital staff, to ensure that their capacity is fully assessed and any additional needs identified. In some cases, tenants have

been successfully returned home, with some aids and adaptations a care package of daily support, which allows them to maintain their independence.

- We have also had some cases where tenants' health and capacity has declined to the point where they are requiring ongoing support within a different type of housing setting, due to brain injury, dementia, confusion etc. We have worked alongside family members and other professionals to support referrals to more suitable housing and end their SWT tenancies. Staff have supported and advised family members during these processes, which is often a challenging and upsetting time for them.
- We had planned to have a partial reopening of the meeting halls within the sheltered schemes, for staff to be on-site for one day a week, to complete pre-arranged meetings with tenants and complete home visits. Unfortunately, the ongoing staffing constraints meant that we haven't had capacity to sustain this. We have reviewed this each month and will do so again after the current lock down. The meeting halls continue to have weekly health and safety checks, completed by the Facilities team.

Lettings

- Property advertising and lettings that were suspended at the beginning of the first lockdown have now resumed. Properties are now being advertised on Home Finder Somerset on the weekly cycles. For example in the week commencing 26th October we advertised 7 properties in the week commencing 9th November we have placed 12 adverts which equates to 16 properties including the New build flats in Laxton Road.
- The Lettings team are still working to COVID-19 risk assessments and procedures, ensuring they are in line with the SWT safe working practices. Verifications are carried out remotely, and viewings take place by the prospective tenant independently, in a COVID-19 compliant manner. Enabling the viewings not only to be able to take place but in the safest possible way for all concerned staff and tenants alike.
- The Home Moves Plus officer (HMP) started on 2/11/2020. The officer has already commenced working with both internal and external partners to collect data on those SWT tenants that fall within the downsizing remit for the role. To date there are a potential 64 cases that he will be working on in the coming weeks. Letters have already been sent to some of those tenants.
- Laxton Road Flats: The Lettings team have carried out a site visit with the project manager and the builders. There were some concerns over the potential delay with builders caused by one of their suppliers not being able to supply the doors. This has been overcome and no longer appears to be an issue. The flats were advertised on Home Finder Somerset (HFS) in the advertising cycle on 11/11/2020. We have shortlisted applicants in line with the agreed local lettings plan for those properties and are now in the process of verifying them.

Somerset Independence Plus (SIP)

- Only essential and outdoor work continues and all other construction has ceased due to the return of lockdown. The team have revisited the various risk assessments and updated them accordingly.
- The SIP managers have reverted to the Recovery Plan and brought emergency measures into play. The plan makes provisions for this scenario and has been rehearsed on a number of occasions.

- Contractors have been issued with work instructions and Purchase Orders for work to commence in client's homes from the 2nd December subject to any further Government guidance.
- With the pressure now on the hospital with the numbers of flu and COVID-19 related illnesses intermixed with patients who have been admitted following abstention from hospital in the summer for fear of contracting COVID-19, has meant a tenfold increase in workload for the Hospital Resettlement Coordinator. The hospital is desperate for beds to be freed in order to accommodate more admissions.
- In the last quarter hoarding has become an increasing problem as families have been trying to cope mentally and physically with lockdown. The hoarding service provided by the Independent Living Officers of SIP have proven to be a welcome lifeline for the individuals concerned, their families and wrap around agencies. The SIP Recovery Plan has contingencies built in to manage the threat of clients regressing with no contact whilst in the second lockdown.
- As it stands, there is nobody on a waiting list in either Somerset West & Taunton, Sedgemoor or Mendip. At the end of May 2020, there were approximately 180 clients waiting for a visit or at various stages of their application for a Disabled Facilities Grant. Thanks to the dedication and hard work of the team, all those clients have been processed and Somerset West & Taunton now have just two new cases to be allocated.
- A revised Private Sector Renewal Policy will be presented to the SWT Council on the 1st December 2020. The change includes introducing a range of grants and assistance to help vulnerable owner occupiers with essential repairs and increasing the DFG from £30k to £40k. There are also comprehensive measures for assistance with renewables and other energy efficiency measures to improve people's homes.

Homelessness and Rough Sleepers

- The provisions for rough sleepers at Canonsgrove in Trull and The Beach Hotel in Minehead, both managed by the YMCA are still operational, Canonsgrove is currently accommodating 51 clients and there are 21 at the Beach.
- There are 14 rough sleepers across the district. All but 2 have been verified and of those 12 who have been verified, all have been made offers of accommodation or cannot be accommodated in SWT emergency provision because they have been evicted due to their behaviour.
- The annual rough sleeper count took place on Friday 20th November and identified 18 verified Rough sleepers across the District. All have been made offers of accommodation or cannot be accommodated in SWT emergency provision because they have been evicted due to their behaviour. The Rough Sleepers team continues to engage and support those who request help.
- A monthly meeting is now convened and chaired by Jerry Davis with voluntary sector partners to share information on rough sleepers in the district and how services can work in partnership to coordinate support.
- Severe Weather provisions were activated in October and 2 rough sleepers were brought in as part of this provision. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, it was not possible to use the usual voluntary sector partners to host this such as Canons

Street Church and Open Door. Accommodation was provided at Canonsgrove as an alternative.

- We have developed an isolation facility at Canonsgrove where singles homeless households who are symptomatic or positive can be housed safely. We have had one client exhibiting symptoms who we were able to isolate and test. Their test result was negative.

NSAP Funding

- We are working with ARC and Second Step via the MHCLG Next Steps Bid funding to pro-actively move on those who are currently in COVID-19 accommodation and who are identified as being ready to move on into more permanent accommodation. The scheme will offer intensive tenancy sustainment support to ensure that future accommodation is successfully maintained. The aim of this work is to move-on those who no longer need the higher levels of support provided at these accommodations in order to ensure there is a “flow” through the system. This will help us to meet future demand as this is expected to increase going into the winter and with a second lock-down.

Housing Options:

- Housing Options have seen 354 homeless approaches between June and October.
- Of these 24 have had a full duty accepted and 20 cases have had their homelessness prevented.
- We have had no families in B&B for over 6 weeks between June and October.
- We are seeing a rise in presentations recently from families and friends who are no longer willing or able to accommodate. This appears to be as a direct result of COVID-19 and the 2nd lockdown, with increased anxiety being felt about the risk of virus transmission. In addition we are seeing an increase in non-violent relationship breakdowns.
- Adverts are appearing this week for the remaining three vacancies within the team; a Private Rented Sector Worker, a Tenancy Sustainment Officer and a Senior Case Manager. Our aim is to have these vacancies recruited into by December 20.

B&B Spend:

June	July	August	September	October
£2268	£7478	£11629	£10749	£6509

- Spend on Bed and Breakfast has reduced since the beginning of COVID-19. This is primarily as a result of having specific accommodation for single homeless households at Canonsgrove and The Beach Hotel. The availability of temporary accommodation for families has been increased by the availability of accommodation at the North Taunton Project which has led to less need to use commercial B&Bs. However, we have seen an increase in the complexity of cases coming through the Duty to Refer routes from Hospital and Prison discharge. Often the only accommodation options available for these clients is commercial B&B.

Homefinder

- Homefinder continues to have a backlog of approximately 8 weeks although the team has worked hard to get this down. We have taken the decision to employ a

temporary member of staff for a period of 4 months in order to address both this and the processing of renewals. The new member of the team started on 11th November and having worked with the system previously has quickly got up to speed and is helping us reduce our backlog.

- A bulk email was sent to 1100 applicants needing a 1, 2 or 3 bed property who had not accessed their application or bid in over a year. Only 61 responded and so the remainder will be closed down. This goes a long way to address the data that needs cleansing and we can then continue to run renewals in smaller batches for the rest of the register.
- In order to ensure we address time-limited banded applications in good time I have allocated a named officer to work on these so that there is no delay in move-on, Emergency band and Harassment band applications are being processed and monitored for bidding.
- The contract for the procurement of the new system for Homefinder Somerset has been finalised and the invitation for contract was issued on the 23rd October and the tenders are due in on the 30th November. Presentations from those who are shortlisted will be delivered via Teams the week commencing the 14th December.

Income

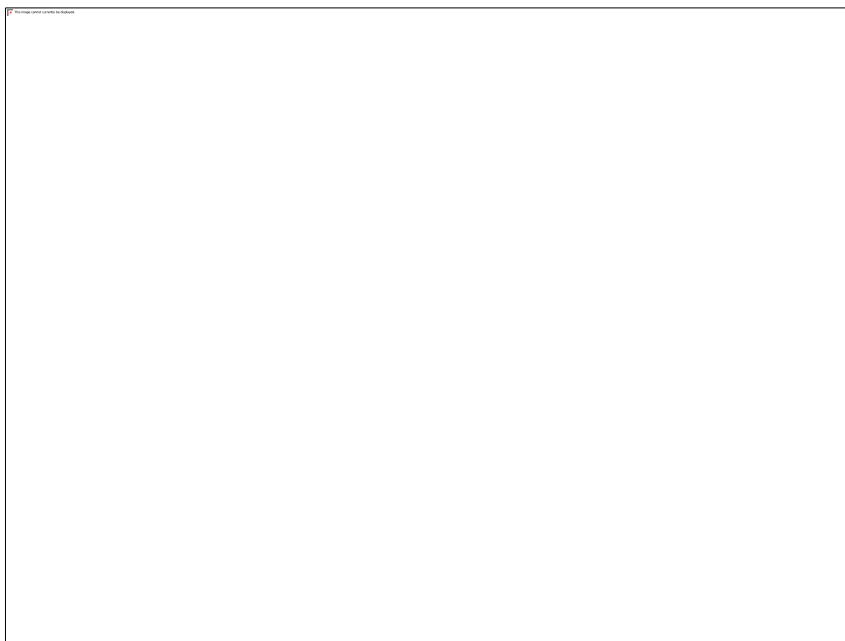
- The Rent Recovery team are still working continually to help and support those tenants who are effected by a reduction in income due to COVID-19. Rent arrears have reduced to 586k (as of 06/11/20) which is a fantastic result for the team and show the hard work and dedication they have all committed through the pandemic
- The Team will soon be working on a Christmas Rent Campaign which will include sending text messages, providing information on paying rent on the website and also taking part in the Talking Café held by the Village Agents to promote priority payments over the Christmas period.
- We have recruited a second Debt and Benefit Officer who started on 16th November and is strengthening the support we can give to our tenants. This will mean we can help a larger number of tenants quicker. We want to ensure that our tenants are claiming all the benefits they are entitled to and are maximising their income.

Anti-Social Behaviour

- Serious ASB/neighbour nuisance is still high on the team's agenda in particular we are currently dealing with a hate crime (racially aggravated) and a serious incident of harassment and intimidation. These cases will need to have enforcement action taken against them and this in turn is extremely work intensive.
- The lockdown again has caused minor nuisance cases coming to our attention; and we will utilise our COVID-19 nuisance letters from the last lockdown to try to deal with this. If these does not settle down then we will work with the Police to carry out joint visits and take any necessary action to get the perpetrators to amend their behaviour.
- Many of our low level complaints are about noise nuisance and we have been exploring a mobile noise app. We have researched with other registered housing providers who have been using the noise app successfully for some time and have had good success when cases have been presented into court. Our trial period will be coming to end in the next few weeks so we will be able to provide more details on whether we are going to be buying into this service.

Tenancy/Estate Team

- The team have now prepared schedules for re-introducing Estate Walkabouts and block inspections and these have now been published on our website. We have prepared a process and monitoring sheets and managers will work closely with officers to ensure that we have consistency in all areas across the district. During a recent inspection of the area within North Taunton we have picked up that a number of pathways need to be made safe; moss to be cleared from some pathways; trees need cutting back from flats; new street signage is needed; pot holes in garage areas need to be repaired. Once the orders have been raised we will be providing feedback to residents of our findings.
- The estates team and open spaces team have been working together to help improve the areas where our tenants live. These photos show a before and after of some work carried out to the front gardens at Style Flats in Wiveliscombe:



- We will continue to work on completing proactive Annual Tenancy Checks with an officer visiting households to assess the condition of the tenancy and property. Various addresses are now coming to our attention from estates walkabouts.
- Staff are also working on improving our sign up pack for new tenancies and we hope to be able to roll this out in the next couple of weeks.
- We have successfully recruited one member of staff; and her induction period has now ended and I am confident that she will be very successful in her role covering the Wellington patch. Sadly, on the start date the other person recruited declined the offer. We have still retained two temporary officers so we can still provide a full service in all areas.
- We are also going to introduce a rota system for the tenancy team. This system will ensure that someone is available to take any emergency calls as they happen and to work on our Firmstep cases as they come in. Firmstep is an area where we are behind in dealing with general enquiries. We are hoping that this will help us see an improvement in this area during November and December.

Housing Performance Team

- The Housing Performance Team has been created to drive service improvements in our customer experience and service delivery as well as oversee housing governance, risk and performance. Recruitment of the team is almost complete and six staff are now in post.
- Directorate performance and governance meetings are underway.
- We have produced and sent to all tenants and leaseholders a newsletter to inform everyone about the Unitary issue and to signpost to more information and the way in which tenants can comment on both the Stronger Somerset and the One Somerset proposals.
- Key pieces of work to be completed by Christmas are:
 - Christmas Newsletter to tenants and leaseholders
 - STAR survey council tenants and leaseholders. This is a comprehensive satisfaction survey completed every two years by an independent company. Results will be published in the new year.
 - 2019-20 Annual Report to tenants
 - Restarting meetings of our Tenants' Strategic Group and Tenants' Action Group.
 - Review of our complaints process including self-assessing our performance against the new Housing Ombudsman code.

Thank you to all the officers in the Council who have worked so hard during this exceptionally difficult year and especially the support given by all of the Housing Teams. I would like to wish everyone a very Happy Christmas and peaceful New Year.

Full Council Meeting – 15 December 2020

Report of Councillor Sarah Wakefield – Environmental Services

Service: Commercial Services (Assistant Director Stuart Noyce)

Parks and Open Spaces

Trial of Electric Hand Tools

- A trial has started within the operations team using electric hand tools (blowers, strimmer's, chainsaws etc) so when the scheduled replacement of equipment is due next year a view to replacing our petrol equipment with battery powered equivalents can be made. This should both contribute to our climate change emergency and reduce noise.

Programmes of work

- Grass cutting for the season has now concluded. Complaints about the cutting service has reduced by a third over the summer compared to the previous year, from 47 complaints in 2019 to 29 in 2020.
- The winter maintenance programme is now underway, focusing on shrub, stream and weed maintenance.
- As part of the winter programme, the team are sowing wildflower seeds across various locations within the district. Over 60kg of seed is being sown in areas including Seaward Way and Mollie's Patch in Minehead, Hoyles Road and the Rec in Wellington, and Leycroft Grove, Wellsprings and the Grange in Taunton. The team have also prepared a bed outside of Deane House for wildflower sowing.
- 70,000 winter bedding plants and 25,000 bulbs have been planted across our parks, open spaces and housing land.
- The nursery team have been supporting the Council's Free Trees programme, sourcing trees and distributing to Parish Councils and Friends Groups.

Street Cleansing (IdVerde)

- The contractor implemented Covid secure working practices to provide continuity to service delivery throughout the contract. The staff have continued to be flexible and supportive, working within Government and company guidelines with the aim of delivering service and support wherever it may be required.
- The contractor continued to support community litter picks by providing litter pick kits (pre-Covid) collecting the waste collected.

Refuse (Somerset Waste Partnership)

- Recycle More phase one has now been rolled out in the Mendip area, which has so far been a huge success, increasing the diversion of waste to new collection streams and promoting further recycling. Some lessons have been learnt from the first phase which officers are meeting to discuss to ensure when Somerset West and Taunton roll out the new scheme in phases 3 and 4 in 2021/22 these will inform and improve the roll out in our district.

- The new contractor is now performing well and above the levels of the previous contractor. Most of the issues experienced at the contract start (which did occur at the same time as the first lockdown) have now been resolved with performance in line with the contract targets.
- There were no changes to collections or recycling sites due to the current lockdown, although the Reuse Shop at Taunton Recycling Centre has been closed until further notice.
- Somerset's 16 recycling sites have been on their winter timetables from Thursday 1 October, with 9am-5pm weekday opening hours while weekends remain 9am-4pm. With an impressive average recycling rate of well over 77%, Somerset's network of recycling sites is open every day of the year except Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day.

Service: Coastal Protection, Harbours and Licensing (Assistant Director Chris Hall)

Coastal Protection

- Blue Anchor - the emergency works at the toe of the cliffs has been progressing in earnest since it started in the middle of November with the arrival of the rock armour by sea (1800 tonnes). I was extremely impressed with the progress they had made when I visited the site on 28 November and by the time this report reaches Full Council that work should have been completed. The next stage - the design and build of the protection for the public highway immediately adjacent to this cliff - should be able to proceed provided it was passed by Full Council on 1st December. That work is also urgently needed and it is hoped that it will be able to start some time in 2021.
- The work to the East Quay wall at Watchet near Splash Point is due to finish early in December and at the time of writing just the final finishing works were needed. The work to provide the new staircase access is also in hand and although some re-design was needed the works at this location have all been completed within budget and within a year of the original collapse. Thanks are due to my fellow Cllrs at SWT for their support for this repair and to the officers for their work in getting it carried out.

Harbour Board and Flood Board

- I have attended a couple of meetings of the Harbour Board and am pleased to report that the new harbour master has taken up his duties - albeit from a distance as he is not based on the Somerset Coast but his work is ably assisted by the assistant harbour master Craig Butler who is on site at Watchet and Minehead (as required). Dredging has been carried out and completed at the outer harbour and a scientific survey carried out. In places as much as a metre of material has been removed. This work needs to be carried out annually to maintain the improvement. I understand that all other ports along the Bristol Channel also need to and do the carry out regular dredging'
- I will have attended and chaired a meeting of the Flood Board (3 December) and am proposing that it changes its name to include coastal protection work

in its advisory remit. The West Somerset Flood Group, the SRA and drainage board amongst others have input into that body.

Licensing

The work of the licensing team is progressing well and they have been tasked, these last six months, with managing the on street licensing for cafes and food outlets in addition to the usual taxi and liquor and other licensing activities. It is now hoped that the backlog work of integrating the old West Somerset and TDBC licensing policies and procedures will be able to be progressed together with the strategic thinking required. Also planned is the updating of SWT's policies in several areas early in 2021 (such as street trading and gambling) and this will involve, where necessary, the setting up of working groups of Cllrs to advise on these matters.

Building Control

I have attended another meeting of the Somerset Building Control Partnership Joint Committee - which deals with the jointly operated building control functions for Mendip, Sedgemoor and SWT. It is hoped that SSDC might now be interested in joining this group which itself has met with considerable success in turning what was a loss making function into one which contributes to our council's finances while offering the service at a reasonable and competitive rate both to developers and home builders and improvers.

Crematorium Services

The service remains fully functional and is coping with the issue arising from Covid 19 and lockdown restrictions. A new heating system is going to be installed following a breakdown of the boiler and a recent inspection indicated that some re-wiring needs to be carried out. This work will be programmed in as soon as funds are available. Infrastructure work has been able to be carried out on a new part of the grounds well in advance of being needed to be used.

Seagulls

Seagulls living in towns can cause damage to property and nuisance to people too. Work to replace seagull eggs had to be cancelled this year but a licence will be applied for to replace eggs in the 2021 breeding season to cover parts of the district where this is needed (mostly parts of Taunton and Minehead).

