

Decision Report - Executive Decision

Forward Plan Reference: FP/23/05/11

Decision Date – 10 July 2023

Key Decision – Yes



Transport and Placemaking Policy Principles

Executive Member(s): Cllr Mike Rigby Executive Lead Member for Transport and Digital, and Cllr Ros Wyke Executive Lead Member for Economic Development, Planning and Assets.

Local Member(s) and Division: All

Lead Officer (s): David Carter Service Director for Infrastructure and Transport, and Paul Hickson Service Director for Economy, Employment and Planning.

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Summary

1. The purpose of this paper is to agree a set of policy principles for Somerset Council which will inform the development of the new Local Transport Plan (LTP), the new Local Plan, and our overall approach to transport planning, development management/consideration of planning proposals and other relevant policies and plans. The principles are intended to achieve a vision-led approach to planning and delivery which will promote high quality design, create better places, reduce transport carbon emissions and include a move away from increasing highway capacity for private cars which until recently has been the prime focus of much of our transport planning activity. This will support the Council’s declaration of a climate and ecological emergency and promote the transition to increased number of journeys by way of sustainable modes of transport e.g. walking and cycling.
2. Emerging Government policy and guidance for Local Transport Authorities (LTAs) has been directed towards modal shift and increasing active travel, however, capital funding for active travel, public transport and electric vehicle charging infrastructure continues to be significantly less than that for road building and road improvement in England. This is mirrored by advice on plan

making and decision making for development proposals set out in the National Planning Policy Framework 2021.

3. As a large rural county Somerset has many challenges including a large rural road network which people are reliant on to access basic services and widely dispersed communities, meaning that there is a heavy reliance on car travel to enable people to meet basic needs. In our more rural areas roads are often narrow, and there are frequently no pavements. This makes our decarbonisation challenge that much harder than in more urban areas, but creates an opportunity to be at the forefront of the development of rural solutions. Much of the Government's transport policy and funding has been directed at urban solutions, however we understand that a future of mobility rural strategy is likely to be released from Government soon which we hope will start to redress the balance of investment. Rurality will be a thread running through all our policy development.
4. This paradox presents an opportunity for Somerset Council to take a bold approach to changing travel behaviour by seeking an ambitious devolved long-term funding settlement with Government to deliver a range of interventions. This paper is the starting point of our conversations to achieve our ambitions, and detailed proposals will develop over time.
5. It is intended that the draft vision and placemaking and movement principles set out in Appendix A of this paper will be subject to further analysis and consultation prior to adoption as a material planning consideration for the preparation of masterplans, pre-application advice, assessing planning applications and any other development management purposes. It seeks to ensure that there is a consistent approach by the Local Planning Authority and Local Highway Authority on the approach to development proposals and their implementation. Both the new Local Plan and LTP will have to be iteratively developed to ensure they join up, as well as address the legacy of car dominated development across Somerset.

Background

Overview of Local Transport Plan and Quantified Carbon Reduction Guidance

6. The DfT has announced the requirement for authorities to renew their LTP and have developed new LTP guidance, expected to be published in Summer 2023. In the interim, they are gathering intelligence to understand where local authorities are in their LTP journey. Currently, the DfT is asking LTAs to publish

(at the very least) their high-level LTP vision and objectives, underpinned by a list of interventions, in Summer 2024. This will be followed by the adoption of a full plan by the end of 2024/2025. We are on track to deliver this within the timescales.

7. A key driver behind the requirement is the summer 2024 spending review. It is understood that DfT will use the evidence base supplied by LTAs to seek a multi-year funding package from Treasury which might cover a 3-5 year period; and to understand the potential carbon impacts of the funding programme. Funding allocations have yet to be considered and will be dependent on the outcome of the LTP process. There is a suggestion that allocations could focus on core funding and additional funding for carbon ambition. In the meantime we have been successful in securing capital and revenue funding to deliver bus service improvements (through the bus service improvement plan), and active travel (through Active Travel England's funding programme) which we are now implementing; and we have also secured an indicative funding allocation for Electric Vehicle charging infrastructure.
8. We are still waiting for the publication of Quantified Carbon Reduction (QCR) guidance from Government which will set out how the carbon impacts of proposed LTP programmes are to be measured and reported. This will also set out the legal status of the carbon reduction evidence base prepared by local authorities and how this might impact on other infrastructure providers such as National Highways and Network Rail.
9. Somerset has commissioned a technical study (in conjunction with the regional modelling work led by Peninsula Transport) which will enable an evidence-led approach to setting our decarbonisation pathway, while at the same time making it clear that it is not a statutory carbon budget.

Department for Transport and Somerset Vision, Priorities and Alignment

10. The DfT have set three strategic priorities which Somerset's LTP will need to consider:
 - Grow and level up the economy – improving connectivity and growing the economy by enhancing the transport network
 - Improve Transport for the user – improving users' experience, ensuring the network is safe, reliable and inclusive
 - Reduce environmental impacts – tackling climate change and improving air quality by decarbonising transport

11. Within this strategic context, there is a national shift away from the ‘predict and provide’ approach of increasing capacity in the network to accommodate forecast future growth – a concept that is now being challenged because more capacity generally leads to more traffic, not less. In its place, a more vision-led “decide and provide” paradigm is being championed by the DfT. It is an approach that enables authorities and decision makers to set a clear vision and ‘decide’ on the preferred future and ‘provide’ the means to work towards that vision. It prioritises place-shaping, sustainable mobility and accessibility, rather than focusing on peak commuter traffic.
12. A vision-led approach should allow us to develop a transport strategy which more fully reflects the needs of a large rural county and be more responsive than we have been to our wider priorities such as health, wellbeing and sustainable access to services. Whilst this paper highlights a key change in our strategic direction in relation to carbon, it is the start rather than the conclusion of this process. It deliberately provides an opportunity to shape the direction of travel before it is set in stone whilst marking a step-change from our approach to date. The aim is to ensure this new approach is embedded in all relevant policies, be it in transport policy (including safety, parking, freight management, public transport, changes to the road network etc), planning policy, economic growth strategy and our climate and ecological policies.

Key Policy Areas

Local Transport Plan

13. The LTP will communicate Somerset’s vision for 2050 and set the high-level pathway to achieving that vision between now, 2030 and 2050. There are opportunities for alignment between policy areas such as planning, economic development, infrastructure, transport, active travel, parking, public health and climate mitigation/ resilience.
14. LTPs will need to reference a range of sub-strategies, some mandatory (Bus Service Improvement Plans, Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans and Electric Vehicle Charging Strategies) and others based on mode or activity. It has been stated in current guidance that if there is no LTP policy, it is unlikely that authorities will receive significant funding.

Development Plan Documents

15. Development Plan Documents (including the Local Plan) set out the vision and framework for the future development of the area – it is a statutory requirement for the Council to have a development plan. There are different types of documents including the Local Plan, Minerals and Waste Plans and Neighbourhood Plans. The scope and timeline for the preparation of development plan documents will need to be agreed by the Executive and set out in a published Local Development Scheme and will be the subject of a future report. Until such time as a new local plan for Somerset is adopted, existing development plans will remain in place for the former District areas. We are considering the potential for specific planning policies in the shorter term to ensure that our planning and transport policies align and reflect our climate and ecological emergencies (e.g. our recently agreed tree strategy). The current position is set out on the Council’s website at [Planning and Policy Statement](#)
16. The development of a local plan for Somerset will address the needs and opportunities in relation to housing, the economy, community facilities and infrastructure as well as a basis for conserving and enhancing the natural and historic environment, mitigating and adapting to climate change, and achieving well designed places. The National Planning Policy Framework 2021 sets out the Government’s planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It provides a framework within which plans are produced. Section 9 ‘promoting sustainable transport’ provides advice that transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan making so that amongst other issues opportunities to promote walking cycling and public transport use are identified and pursued; the environmental impacts of traffic and transport infrastructure are identified and patterns of movement, streets, parking and other transport considerations are integral to the design of schemes, and contribute to making high quality places. Paragraph 105 states that the planning system should actively manage patterns of growth and significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes.
17. Planning policies should be prepared with the active involvement of local highways authorities and provide for attractive and well-designed walking and cycling networks with supporting facilities such as secure cycle parking (drawing on Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans). As a new unitary council with the planning and highway authorities part of the same organisation it will be possible to get much closer alignment on these matters than we have previously been able to. It is within the context of the national guidance and the

consideration that should be given to development proposals as set out in paragraph 112 of the framework that the planning and highway teams of the Council have jointly developed a draft vision and placemaking and movement principles (Appendix A). This will ensure a consistent approach by the Local Planning Authority and Local Highway Authority to the consideration of proposals including the preparation of masterplans, pre-application advice, assessing planning applications and other development management purposes.

Placemaking and movement principles

18. A draft set of policy principles have been developed for Somerset Council (see Appendix A) which will inform the development of the new Local Transport Plan (LTP), the new Local Plan, and our overall approach to transport planning, development management/consideration of planning proposals and other relevant policies and plans. The principles proposed in this paper are those which are necessary to inform the immediate policy needs and reflect the fact that most of the development on allocated sites is in or close to existing settlements; and will be further evolved as wider rural policy needs are developed. The principles have been developed in recognition of the vital role of street and highway design in the wider design of high quality, attractive, healthy and sustainable places. This is an important step forward from street/highway design focussing on the function of streets to facilitate movement. Agreement is sought in this report for the Council to consult with key stakeholders before finalising and adopting the principles.
19. Good street design can promote community cohesion, contribute to healthy lifestyles and an attractive environment. Designed well and as part of a wider, holistic approach to the design of high-quality places, they can be an important component of public space and as such contribute to community cohesion and well-being. The development of these principles departs from streets being designed principally as a means of moving motorised vehicles which are increasingly associated with negative impacts upon health, well-being, poorer air quality and reduced social connectivity. In contrast the vision led approach to the design of streets as places around people, promotes better air quality, a more attractive environment within which it is safer for people to walk, cycle and spend leisure time.
20. Through taking a vision-led approach to planning and delivery, high quality design is promoted, creating better places, reducing transport carbon emissions and moving away from increasing highway capacity for private cars which until recently has been the prime focus of much of our transport planning activity.

This supports the Council's declaration of a climate and ecological emergency and promotes the transition to increased number of journeys by way of sustainable modes of transport. It is recognised that there are a different set of challenges in more rural parts of Somerset compared with our urban areas. These include a sparsity of public transport options, poor physical connectivity including cycle and walking routes and poorer digital infrastructure. Substandard rural roads combined with greater distances between facilities act to reduce connectivity between rural services and communities. Per mile travelled, rural roads are the most dangerous for all kinds of road user. Application and interpretation of the placemaking and movement principles will take into account these variations between urban and more rural areas and where applicable, design codes will be used to provide additional guidance.

21. The Town and Country Planning Association is considering implications for rural areas, and once published, the Government's future of mobility rural strategy will also provide a much-needed framework for rural policy development. We will take account of best practice and experience in developing policy and guidance.

Decarbonisation

22. The LTP and QCR process will help establish a local transport decarbonisation pathway, quantifying the likely carbon impacts across different intervention and policy options, which will help the council choose appropriate interventions with which to form the new plans. Typical interventions to be considered will be those that reduce the need to travel in the first place by co-locating homes and employment, shops, healthcare facilities etc and designing development which is not car-dependent (e.g. interventions related to the planning system); those which enable travel by active modes (walking and cycling), public transport or multi-modal travel; those which seek to reduce demand for travel (such as parking restrictions, fees and charges, or re-allocating road space); and those which provide for alternative fuelled vehicles.
23. A key recommendation of this paper is to make reducing transport carbon emissions a key priority for the LTP, aligning with Somerset's Climate Emergency Strategy. Monitoring and evaluation methods will develop overtime to help quantify the impact of transport interventions and demonstrate our effectiveness to Government.

Electric Vehicles

24. The Somerset Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Strategy was approved by the Somerset Councils in 2020/21. It assessed the current infrastructure and uptake in Somerset and an indication of future demand. The strategy included proposals for fleet review, charge point installation at council premises, on street, workplaces, destinations and public car parks. Several delivery models were considered exploring private sector delivery and the role of the Council in facilitating delivery.
25. An Implementation Support document and Trailing Cables Review have also been developed, and an addendum that focuses on new developments and the highways impacts of EVCI for adopted highways is due to be published later this year. Our practical guidance for those wishing to charge their vehicles on-street can be accessed from <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/electric-vehicle-charging-cables/>
26. We will publish an updated EV Charging Infrastructure Strategy in 2024 in line with Government requirements for a statutory strategy, and will ensure this aligns with our rural needs, our parking strategy and provision of services such as car clubs.
27. We are to be allocated capital funding for EV infrastructure delivery through the Government's LEVI fund and are waiting to hear if we will receive funds in 2023/24 or 2024/25 having expressed an interest in being part of the first tranche in 2023/24 focussing on gaps in market provision. We have carried out some initial soft market testing to inform our sourcing strategy, specification, and approach to the market.
28. A more detailed update on EV infrastructure and associated recommendations is set out in Appendix B.

Parking Policy

29. Parking and Parking Policy have been identified as one of the key tools to help deliver the decarbonisation and placemaking aspirations. The current Parking Policy does not fully support these aspirations and it is intended to review and update the Policy in 2024.
30. The current parking policy includes flexibility in applying parking standards for new development, allowing fewer spaces for developments near urban centres

accessible by alternative means of travel to the private car. Standards allow more parking in rural areas where accessibility by other modes is more difficult. Standards are agreed on a case-by-case basis, and it is likely that this flexibility will continue. The design and management of parking within new development will be a key issue recognising that household composition is changing, sometimes leading to multi-generational car ownership within individual properties. Careful design, location and management of parking space will be needed within new development to ensure car dependency is not perpetuated and avoid situations where narrow streets become impassable due to inappropriate parking.

31. It is recommended that in the interim and then outlined in the new Parking Policy that parking interventions are appropriately used as a means of traffic management.

Road Safety Policy

32. The current Road Safety Strategy (2017) adopted a Safe System to road safety management; using the broadest possible foundations of work across many sectors to reduce collisions. Detailed implementation plans have been in development over the last few years. Somerset Council now needs to develop its own Safe Systems road safety strategy, alongside the development of the LTP, to reduce the number of people hurt in collisions, especially those killed and seriously injured, and adopt appropriate indicators to monitor progress.
33. A programme of highway engineering works targeted at improving highway safety is likely to continue to form part of the safe system approach, subject to agreement through the medium-term financial planning process and pressures on the capital programme; particularly in more rural areas where higher speed collisions can lead to more severe injuries.

Highway Lighting Policy

34. Highway lighting has a significant impact on energy consumption, carbon emissions, and cost; and can have adverse environmental effects such as light pollution and glare which can impact on people's quality of life, wildlife biodiversity and the night sky. The presence or absence of highway lighting is inconsistent across similar types of roads around the County depending on when the road was built, and the standards applied at the time.

35. The Council is developing a highway lighting policy that creates a default preference for part-night lighting, dimming and user activated lighting; seeking to progressively convert our existing lighting stock to part night in all areas where there are no safety critical issues, and to dim some systems of lighting after peak usage (e.g. isolated road junctions and roundabouts). This would also create a default of part-night lighting for new development and give the option for developers to choose not to have street lighting. Further consideration will be given to how to incorporate these objectives into planning conditions reflecting the rural feel of the countryside.

Rights of Way Policy

36. It is a statutory requirement to have a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) that is reviewed every 10 years. Somerset is now on its second plan which was published in 2015. The statutory guidance for RoWIPs encourages their integration with LTPs - Somerset's RoWIP will be an appendix to the new LTP.

37. Improving the rights of way network aligns with LTP objectives, including decarbonisation and active travel. The new LTP will support and refer to improving the walking, cycling and equestrian access network, much of which is provided for by public rights of way. It is important that the LTP looks at Somerset's non-motorised transport network in the round. It is recommended that the rights of way network should be a primary consideration for how movement within, and between, communities can be made more accessible to all users.

Outline Programme and Milestones

38. Local Transport Plan Outline Programme:

- Summer 2023: Initial member and key stakeholder engagement.
- Autumn 2023: High-level transport vision
- Summer 2024: Quantification of future policy impacts and potential costs
Supply evidence base to Department for Transport
- Winter 2024/ Spring 2025: Adoption of new Local Transport Plan
- Consultation and Engagement at key stages.

39. Local Plan Outline Programme:

The structural change order establishing Somerset Council requires the Council to have in place a new Local Plan within 5 years of 1 April 2023 i.e. by 1 April 2028. Work is underway to scope this and to develop a Local Development

Scheme for agreement by the Executive. There are a number of stages for the development of the Plan:

- Agree Local Development Scheme
- Agree Statement of Community Involvement (a draft Statement of Community Involvement was agreed by the Council for consultation and is programmed to be adopted at a future Executive meeting)
- Regulation 18 consultation – Draft Plan
- Regulation 19 publication of the Submission Plan
- Submission for Independent Examination by a Planning Inspector
- Adoption by the Council
- Consultation and Engagement throughout the plan making process

40. Recommendations

40.1 That the Executive agree to endorse and adopt the following set of guiding principles to inform the development of statutory policies and our overall approach to transport planning and development planning challenges and opportunities:

- a. Reducing carbon emissions will be the key priority for the transport and development plans including adoption of a transport decarbonisation pathway.
- b. We will adopt a holistic approach to policy and strategy development, working beyond just transport. We will ensure that all our policies are rural-proofed and will continue to build relationships with public health, education services, adults and children's social care and others within the organisation to deliver co-benefits.
- c. We will adopt a vision-led 'decide and provide' or 'vision and validate' approach to new development whereby a strong vision for great places to live with a reduced need to travel is agreed. This will involve co-locating housing and other facilities to create neighbourhoods where the natural first choice is to walk or cycle to access work, education, learning and healthcare etc.
- d. We will endorse the vision led approach to street and highway design as part of wider high quality placemaking; and agree the vision and principles as set out in Appendix A for consultation with key stakeholders. Having taken into account comments received authority is given to the Service Directors in conjunction with the Executive Lead Members to adopt the vision and principles as a material planning consideration for the preparation of masterplans, pre-application

advice, assessing planning applications and any other development management purposes.

- e. Subject to detailed analysis, priority policy interventions will be related to reducing the need to travel and promoting sustainable travel (active travel for shorter distances, e-bikes and micro mobility for slightly longer distances, shared transport, bus, demand responsive transport, and rail for longer distances; and policy interventions such as parking management that aim to reduce demand for travel by private car).
- f. We will expect developers to provide high quality active travel and public transport networks within and accessing new development areas, to ensure new development does not create significant additional congestion, rather than creating additional highway capacity for private car traffic. We will expect developers to implement high-quality sustainable travel plans which include a wide range of measures and incentives to enable active travel.
- g. Increasing highway capacity will only be considered as a last resort and in exceptional circumstances. We will continue to complete highway capacity improvements that are already in the pipeline as funded schemes but it is likely that we will not be seeking Government funding for improvements that increase capacity for private car travel beyond the current pipeline.
- h. We will build on the successful community -led approach to constructing rural multi-user paths between settlements and will co-develop a proposed network for community-based delivery. We will also consider how to create an improved environment for pedestrian movement in more semi-urban, rural locations where the environment can be dominated by high-speed traffic.
- i. We will aim to secure a devolved Government funding package to implement an ambitious sustainable transport programme, building on our current success with Bus Service Improvement Plan funding and Active Travel funding.
- j. We will oversee delivery of a comprehensive charging network for electric vehicles and will appoint a private sector delivery partner to ensure that public funding is only used where necessary to address market failure in a similar way to that adopted for Broadband rollout. EV recommendations are set out in Appendix B.
- k. The Council's own vehicles up to and including 3.1 tonnes GVW and those of our contractors will be electric vehicles as soon as this can be realistically, and cost effectively achieved; and we will adopt alternative fuels such as hydrogen for larger vehicles at the earliest opportunity in line with the evolution of emerging technology.

- l. We will work with bus operators to agree the most appropriate alternative fuels pathway for public transport operations and support them in implementing this.
- m. We will develop a new policy seeking greater consistency in highway lighting, creating a default preference for part-night lighting, dimming and user activated lighting.
- n. We will examine the implications of incorporating explicit requirements for carbon reduction and reduced travel across all the Council's services, including carbon reduction targets within our contracts with suppliers, with a view to implementing changes to our procedures at the earliest opportunity.

40.2 And the Executive agree to consult key stakeholders on the Vision and Principles to Placemaking as set out in Appendix A;

40.3 And taking all feedback received into account, Executive agree to delegate to the Service Directors for Infrastructure & Transport, and Economy, Employment & Planning in consultation with the Lead Members for Transport & Digital and Economic Development, Planning and Assets the adoption of the Vision and Principles to Placemaking as a material planning consideration.

Reasons for recommendations

41 To agree the principles upon which to base detailed development of statutory policies over the next few years and to inform our overall approach to transport planning and development planning.

Other options considered

42 The principles have been established via a dialogue between officers, directors and executive lead members. Detailed options for statutory policies will be developed and consulted on as part of the due process associated with the relevant area of policy development.

Links to Council Plan and Medium-Term Financial Plan

- 43 The recommendations will help achieve the Council Plan 2023-27 vision and priorities, in particular the priority for a greener, more sustainable Somerset which notes the importance of reducing carbon emissions from transport.
- 44 The principles will inform detailed development of policies and programmes in due course, and individual interventions will need to be costed and considered within the Medium Term Financial Plan process at the appropriate time once they have been developed. At this point in the process the detailed financial implications of the policy principles have not been established but they do set a clear direction of travel to enable the necessary detailed work to take place over the next few years.

Financial and Risk Implications

- 45 The immediate financial implication from adopting these principles will be to ensure that during the policy development period sufficient resources are allocated for robust policy and programme development, and development of sustainable transport networks. The detailed financial implications will be quantified as an outcome of the policy and delivery programme development process and will be considered as part of the process of adopting the new statutory policies in due course. It is likely that over time the Council's resources will need to be re-directed towards delivery of programmes aimed at reducing carbon emissions.
- 46 The keys risks in not adopting these principles are as follows:
- Failure to maximise the opportunity to attract future grant funding for transport measures.
 - Policies and programmes which continue to perpetuate the 'predict and provide' approach to planning, leading to continued growth in car traffic.
 - New development which is car-dependent and designed around space for car traffic rather than being great places to live.
 - Failure to address the need to reduce carbon emissions at the pace necessary to meet the Government's binding targets to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050.

Likelihood	4	Impact	3	Risk Score	12
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Legal Implications

47 There are no immediate legal implications in adopting a set of broad guiding principles. The development of policies and programmes such as the transport plan and development plans will each be subject to appropriate statutory and legal processes in due course.

HR Implications

48 There are no immediate HR implications in adopting a set of broad policy principles.

Other Implications:

Equalities Implications

49 An initial Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken and is appended to the report. This is a very high-level initial assessment since it only relates to broad guiding principles, and individual policy documents will be subject to detailed evidence-based equality impact assessments as part of their development in due course.

50 The initial assessment concludes that the guiding principles are likely to lead to positive benefits in respect of Age since they are designed to provide an improved environment for vulnerable members of our communities who may be older or younger people. For example improved access to local facilities and a safer environment for movement.

51 The initial assessment concludes that the guiding principles are likely to lead to positive benefits in respect of Disability since they are designed to provide an improved environment for people with disabilities. For example improved layout of new development and a safer environment for movement.

52 The guiding principles recognise that greater attention is needed within our future policy development in respect of challenges and opportunities in rural areas.

Community Safety Implications

53 The policy principles are likely to generally improve community safety as this is a core objective or co-benefit of most of the principles being agreed. The principles should lead to safer places with reduced traffic speeds, improved facilities for walking and cycling and reduced conflict between people and traffic.

Good design should also lead to reduced crime through thoughtful design of public space and lighting etc recognising that issues and solutions will vary between rural and urban areas.

Climate Change and Sustainability Implications

54 The policy principles are specifically targeted at addressing climate change mitigation and adaptation, and to create more sustainable places and transport systems in the future.

Health and Safety Implications

55 There are no specific health and safety implications for the organisation in adopting a high-level set of policy principles to inform future detailed policy.

Health and Wellbeing Implications

56 The policy principles are likely to generally improve health and wellbeing as this is a core objective or co-benefit of most of the principles being agreed. The principles should lead to better places to live places with reduced traffic speeds, improved facilities for active travel which has specific health benefits, and improved resilience to the health effects of climate change (such as an improved tree canopy to reduce the heat island effect in streets).

Social Value

57 The decision is not related to a procurement process.

Scrutiny comments / recommendations:

58 The proposed decision has not been considered by a Scrutiny Committee but the policy development processes that will be developed in due course will involve appropriate involvement of Scrutiny Committees.

Background Papers

59 None

Appendices

- Appendix A: Placemaking Principles.

- Appendix B: Electric Vehicle Recommendations

Report Sign-Off

	Officer Name	Date Completed
Legal & Governance Implications	David Clark	22/06/23
Communications	Chris Palmer	26/06/23
Finance & Procurement	Nicola Hix	26/06/23
Workforce	Chris Squire	26/06/23
Asset Management	Oliver Woodhams	26/06/23
Executive Director / Senior Manager	Mickey Green	16/06/23
Strategy & Performance	Alyn Jones	26/06/23
Executive Lead Member	Cllr Mike Rigby Cllr Ros Wyke	19/06/23 29/06/23
Consulted:		
Local Division Members	All	
Opposition Spokesperson	Cllr Diogo Rodrigues Opposition Spokesperson for Transport and Digital Cllr Mark Healey MBE Opposition Lead Member for Prosperity, Assets and Development	Sent 29/06/23 Sent 29/06/23
Scrutiny Chair	Cllr Martin Dimery Chair of Scrutiny Committee - Climate and Place	Sent 29/06/23

Appendix A – Placemaking and movement principles

Vision Statement

Streets and spaces will be designed to be attractive, pleasant and inclusive places that accommodate all users and feel safe for use by all walking and wheeling users. They should prioritise active travel and public transport, maximising connectivity, and permeability not only within the site itself, but also providing for wider connectivity. Crossings and junctions should always prioritise pedestrians in residential areas. Streets and spaces should also be designed to reflect a hierarchy where movement is related to land use and character.

Principles

- Reduce need to travel via private car (internal trips) by ensuring key facilities and services, existing and proposed, are within a 20-minute walking or wheeling time. Streets should link to existing roads and local services, ensure permeability, connectivity and not turn their backs on neighbours.
- In towns and more urban areas reduce parking provision in combination with hard and soft travel plan measures and include the provision of car/bike clubs, EV bikes/scooters, EV charging and public transport provision. Incorporate a mobility hub approach with mobility and non-mobility components as suitable for the site. The vision in these areas is for low car ownership and ambitious modal shift enabled by an increase in multimodal travel measures.
- Design parking to be unobtrusive in the public realm, avoiding dominance in the streetscene. Allow for the future phasing out of parking to reduce carbon emissions as ownership levels reduce. Prioritise car ports over garages. Secure cycle parking / infrastructure is to be provided with well-designed storage facilities either on street or within the property street frontage. Public cycle repair facilities should be incorporated into the scheme.
- Design an attractive and high-quality environment where streets incorporate trees in the highway and green spaces, avoiding large expanses of asphalt. Wherever possible streets should make positive use of existing natural features. Highway trees should be provided in tree pits rather than planters. The design should build in opportunities for biodiversity net gain, green infrastructure, surface water management (permeable surfaces, swales, SUDS) and opportunities to contribute to phosphate mitigation.
- Design using natural traffic calming to achieve speeds less than 20mph. Buildings and footways should be located to define junctions. Junction and

vehicle movement geometry, sightlines and tracking should be tightened to reduce vehicle speeds with priority given to pedestrians and cyclists.

- Careful consideration should be given to how children and parents are to access schools without reliance upon private cars, instead encouraging walking, cycling and public bus use. The design approach to school parking will reflect the desire to maximise active travel movements to school.
- Material palettes are to be simple, take the local context into account (not just black top). Material attractiveness, reducing carbon emissions as well as durability and ease of maintenance are to be considered.
- Design should seek to minimise street clutter and keep footways and cycleways clear of infrastructure. Lighting, signage and public EV charging should, where possible, be fixed onto a structure.
- Consider services and lighting at an early design stage to avoid impact on placemaking features like street trees and the quality of the movement network. Consider whether lighting is required (dark skies). Undefined strips of land should be eliminated at the design stage by fully allocating land to private ownership, highway adoption or stewardship with clear definition of public and private land.
- Consideration should be given to incorporating waste storage facilities to ensure sufficient storage capacity, convenient access and design solutions that complement the wider development.
- Within rural areas, the importance of safe connectivity within and between communities and facilities/services will be recognised whilst taking into account factors including landscape, character, appearance and ecology.

Interpretation

1. Ensure early engagement with and input from people with responsibility for approvals throughout the whole planning and delivery process.

Appendix B – Electric Vehicle Recommendations

Summary of the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) fund

Somerset Council are to be allocated £3.7m of capital funding via the LEVI fund, we have submitted our expression of interest to be entered into tranche one (2023/24). Our EOI is currently being reviewed and we hope to hear the outcome in early July. If approved for tranche one, we are required to submit our business case and draft tender documentation to LEVI in November 2023. Once approved 90% of our funding will be released (March 2024) and we can open procurement for a provider. The final stage is a contract review to determine whether the commercial arrangement meets the fund criteria. Once the criteria have been met, we will receive approval to sign contracts and the final 10% funding will be paid.

We have carried out some initial soft market testing to inform our sourcing strategy, and specification, we have also been looking at the frameworks available and the approach to the market and have not yet determined the specific framework we will use.

We will use our LEVI funding to leverage private investment into the less profitable and more rural areas of Somerset.

Recommendations

To adopt the principle of ‘right charge point, right location’.

To acknowledge new chargepoint power outputs definitions.

Low speed	0 - < 3.7 kW
Standard	3.7 kW - <8 kW
Fast	8 kW – 49 kW
Rapid	50 kW – 149 kW
Ultra-rapid	150 kW and over

Summary of new regulation related to contactless payment

Following a consultation, the government is now regulating and requiring contactless payment at new chargepoints that are 8kW and above, along with new and existing rapid chargepoints that are 50kW and above.

Subject to parliamentary passage, these public chargepoint regulations will be laid out in the coming months. The requirement for contactless payment capability at all new chargepoints 8kW and above will come into effect one year after the regulations begin.

All chargepoints installed through local electric vehicle infrastructure (LEVI) funding and the on-street residential chargepoint scheme (ORCS) must adhere to these regulations when they come into effect.

Recommendations

To future proof the LEVI investment we will include the requirement for contactless payment in our draft tender documentation, aligning with the new regulation when it comes into effect.

EVCP Webpage

We are creating a specific EV Charging Infrastructure webpage which will include Government policy, our existing Somerset Council EV strategy, programmes of work and links to EV charging location data and funding opportunities. The webpage will evolve and be developed over time. We will also use it to interact with our residents, business owners, as well as parish and town councils.