



## **Decision Report – Scrutiny Update**

Forward Plan Reference: n/a

Key Decision – no

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### **Report Title: Externally Funded Regeneration Projects**

Executive Member(s): Ros Wyke

Local Member(s) and Division: Various across the Authority

Lead Officer: Paul Hickson

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#### 1. Summary / Background

- a. This report seeks to update on the status of the externally funded regeneration projects that are being delivered across the Somerset Council.
- b. These projects have a combined value of over £100m, secured by teams in the previous five authorities prior to formation of the Unitary authority
- c. \*Update 14.11.23 – in light of the declaration of the Financial Emergency, all of the projects are being reviewed to determine if match funding commitments are deliverable, and any significant revenue burden is being created by the delivery of the schemes.

b. These projects have a combined value of over £100m, secured by teams in the previous five authorities prior to formation of the Unitary authority.

The projects and programmes include:

- Bridgwater Towns Deal programme: £23.2m (11 projects in total)
- Glastonbury Towns Deal programme: £23.6m (11 projects in total)
- Taunton Future High Street Fund: £13.9m (3 projects)
- Yeovil Refresh Future High Street Fund: £9.7m (2 projects)
- Somerset Academy for Health and Social Care Training, Levelling Up Fund round £19.7m (1 project)
  
- Bridgwater Northern Corridor upgrade: Levelling Up Fund round 1\* £10.06m (1 project)

\*Although technically a Highways / Infrastructure upgrade, the project is listed here for completeness, and the proximity to nationally significant projects such as Gravity and Hinkley Point C.

### **Links to Council Plan and Medium-Term Financial Plan**

9. As the schemes are externally funded (except for any match funding commitments), there is no impact to the Council MTFP with regard to the recommendation within.

10. This external funding helps to deliver the Council priorities on projects that would not otherwise have been deliverable. These include:

- Active travel schemes
- Improvements to community spaces, listed buildings, and leisure facilities
- Brownfield regeneration schemes
- Highways and infrastructure schemes
- Public realm improvements

## **1. Appendix A: Grant funding details: schemes, funding allocations, deadlines and governance**

### **2. Towns Deal Fund general:**

- Nov 2019: Fund announced, seeking to “drive long term economic and productivity growth through investment in connectivity, land use, economic assets including cultural assets, skills and enterprise infrastructure”
- Investment plans submitted in Jan 2020
- Grant funding awarded in Nov 2021
- Business cases (taking investment plan and providing greater detail around spend, match funding, programme and stakeholder engagement) submitted in Summer 2022.
- Grant funding agreements signed March 2023
- Spend deadline March 31<sup>st</sup> 2026

#### **Governance:**

The Towns Deal prospectus detailed how investment plans should be devised and governed through a locally convened Board. The board remit was:

- Develop and agree an evidenced based Town Investment Plan
- Develop a clear programme of interventions
- Coordinate resources and influence stakeholders

The Board is chaired by an independent chair, who is a non-elected council official. The Chair, in tandem with the Senior Responsible Officer and S151 for the Lead Local Authority, is responsible for signing off the six monthly monitoring and evaluation reports.

Reports and board meeting minutes are published on the Towns Deal website.

Town Deal projects are a mixture of third-party delivery (working through grant funding agreements and partnership arrangements) and self-delivered.

### 3. Bridgwater Town Deal:

a. **Lead officers:** Louise Darch, Jaycee Ellis, Nathaniel Lucas, Stuart Martin, Nick Tait

[Bridgwater Towns Deal website:](#)

Schemes making up the submission:

Scheme	Value 000s	Delivery Lead
Tidal Barrier (Active Travel element)	£2,000,000	EA
Dunball Junction	£400,000	SC (Highways)
Town Wardens	£1,000,000	SC
Celebration Mile (works)	£8,500,000	SC
Town Events	£500,000	SC
Bridgwater Step Up	£500,000	SC
Docks Regeneration	£4,200,000	SC
Walking and Cycling	£1,000,000	SC
Bridgwater Carnival	£3,000,000	External
Town Hall Theatre	£900,000	External
Arts Centre	£700,000	External
Engine Room	£500,000	External

#### 4. Glastonbury Towns Deal:

a. Lead Officer: Jane Sharp

[Glastonbury Towns Deal website:](#)

Schemes making up the submission:

<b>Scheme</b>	<b>Value 000s</b>	<b>Delivery Lead</b>
Baily's Buildings	6,310	External
Glastonbury Enterprise & Innovation Hub	1,170	SC
The Life Factory	2,890	External
Glastonbury Clean Energy	2,800	External
St Brigid's Chapel & Field	670	External
Glastonbury Food & Regenerative Farming	1,130	External
Enabling Project	1,460	SC
St Dunstan's Community Health & Wellbeing Centre	1,390	External
Glastonbury Abbey Piazza	930	External
Glastonbury Sports & Leisure Hub	2,090	SC
Robert Richards Initiative (3x projects)	2,800	SC
<b>Total</b>	<b>23,640,000</b>	

## **5. Future High Street Fund general**

- a. Dec 2018 Prospectus published
- b. The Future High Streets Fund was run in two stages:
  - Initial Expression of Interest stage, closing March 2019
  - Shortlisting of 101 places to continue to full application, for which a small amount of capacity support was provided
  - Of those 101 places, 72 were successful; of those, 15 received the full amount of funding they had requested, and 57 received a smaller proportion of their request
- c. Funding confirmation Dec 2020
- d. Funding award profiled over 3 years, based on mandated monitoring and evaluation reporting submitted six monthly.
- e. Initial spend deadline of March 31<sup>st</sup> 2024 (potential for deadline to be extended to Sept 30<sup>th</sup> 2024 subject to confirmation from DLUHC). Both Taunton and Yeovil FHSF schemes will be applying for extensions.

### **Governance**

There were no stipulated governance requirements outside of existing Local Authority governance processes. Each monitoring and evaluation report is signed off by a Senior Responsible Officer in conjunction with S151.

Grant funding agreements outlined the M&E requirements for the schemes, including the process for requesting changes to any of the approved schemes if required.

## **6. Yeovil Future High Street fund:**

**a. Lead Officers: Natalie Fortt, Ian Timms**

[Yeovil Refresh Website](#)

Schemes making up the original submission:

<b>Projects</b>	<b>Values</b>
Cattle Market	£3,000,000
Glovers Walk	£1,192,519
72/74 Middle Street	£780,000
Middle Street West	£1,534,695
Borough and High Street	£1,303,346
Triangle	£1,946,337
<b>Total</b>	<b>£9,756,897</b>

Of the schemes originally submitted, due to viability issues it was not possible to deliver the Cattle Market, Glovers and 72/74 Middle Street after the funding was approved. A Project Adjustment Request has been submitted to DHLUC via the Future High Street Funds team to divert the £4.972m from those schemes into a fund to deliver commercial to residential conversions in the town centre, focused on specific properties of note. At time of writing that PAR is under review with other potential options for use of the funding put forward after consultation with the community in Autumn 23.

Of the other schemes, it is expected that the full allocation will be spent. To date £8.453m has been received, of which £4.135m will be spent by the original spend deadline of March 31<sup>st</sup> 2024.



Works to the Borough and High Street and Triangle schemes are underway, with Middle Street West starting w/c 10<sup>th</sup> July.

<b>Projects</b>	<b>Totals</b>
Middle Street West	£1,534,695
Borough and High Street	£1,303,346
Triangle	£1,946,337
Revised schemes	
Under review	
Under review	
<b>Total</b>	<b>£9,756,897</b>

## 7. Taunton Future High Street fund:

### a. Lead Officers: Robert Downes, Joe Wharton

There isn't a website for the full Taunton FHSF bid, although separate documents outlining of the larger project elements are available online:

[Coal Orchard](#)

[Firepool](#)

Schemes making up the original submission:

Projects	Values
Coal Orchard	£1,000,000
Firepool including Amphitheatre	£10,705,583
Active Travel (5x interventions)	£2,257,398
<b>Totals</b>	<b>£13,962,981</b>

### Coal Orchard:

Of the schemes originally submitted, the Coal Orchard project is now completed, with a total of £1.25m coming from the FHSF (this was approved via a Project Adjustment Request in Q1 2022 when the main contractor on the scheme went into administration resulting in significant delay to the project completion).

## **Firepool:**

To enable the full scope of the Firepool site to be realised, a revised masterplan has been devised and approved (see link above) to bring the planning policy context up to date. Alongside the masterplan, separate detailed applications have been brought forward in parallel to enable the spend deadlines to be met, and other elements of the site funded by other mechanisms to be delivered (including the Trenchard Way / GWR car park junction and access)

The main elements of the FHSF spend on the site include:

Infrastructure (drainage and levels) circa £3m – now complete

Boulevard and amphitheatre: circa £6m

Utility upgrades (water, drainage, electrical substations) circa £1.9m - underway

At time of writing, the tenders back from the market indicate that the budget for the boulevard and amphitheatre do not cover the full cost of the scheme, which has been impacted by the inflationary pressure on the construction market as every other scheme in the authority has. An exercise to review procurement routes and any value engineering potential without significantly reducing the quality of the scheme is underway, with an appointment for the contractor to deliver the revised scheme starting in early 2024.

To date £10m has been received and a total of £4.08m has been spent.

## **Active Travel schemes:**

£2.257m was allocated to active travel schemes in the original submission, the purpose of which was to create a cycling and walking “corridor” from Taunton Station, through Firepool, along the riverside and through the town centre to Vivary Park. This vision aligned with the re-orientation of Taunton railway station to provide a newly provided drop off and pick up

facility on the south side of the station including a much-improved public realm and a multi-storey car park. The FHSF budget is supported by £1.5m of match funding (primarily CiL)

<b>Projects</b>	<b>Values</b>
Coal Orchard	£1,250,000
<b>Firepool</b>	
Infrastructure (drainage and levels)	£2.8m
Boulevard and amphitheatre	£5.5m
<b>Active Travel</b>	£2,257,398
Bridge	
Cycle storage	
Mobility Hubs	
Transforming Taunton programme	
Vivary Park crossing	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>£13,962,981</b>

## **8. Levelling Up Fund general**

- a. Announced late 2020, with prospectus released in March 2021;
- b. Three categories:
  - i. Transport investment,
  - ii. regeneration and town centre investment
  - iii. cultural investment
- c. Projects upto £20m, with £50m on large scale projects where justified.
- d. Bids based on parliamentary boundaries – MP support is strongly encouraged but not absolutely mandatory.
- e. LA's categorized into areas of need (1. Greatest need to 3. Least need). Additional revenue support to area 1 LA's to support bids
- f. First round announced alongside Autumn Budget 2021 (Bridgwater Northern corridor successful)
- g. Second round ran May – Dec 22, results announced Jan 23 (three months late). SDC Somerset Academy bid successful; three other district bids not successful.

## **9. Somerset Training Academy for Health and Social Care**

[Link to website:](#)

- a. Project Leads: Nathaniel Lucas, Joe Wharton, with support from Corporate Property, Adults / Childrens Services. Working in partnership with senior colleagues in the ICB, and Somerset Foundation NHS Trust
- b. Project Definition:

The creation of a training academy specifically for the health and social care sector, with a focus on real world, accredited training in this vital sector to support our vulnerable customers and underpin an undervalued workforce. This will be done in a refurbished and repurposed building in Bridgwater (the former infirmary site on Salmon Parade). This will include a library, café and creche, and key worker accommodation, with links into the Somerset Council Innovation network.

The project will also create an outreach site in Minehead that will provide the same services in that community.

Total capital project cost is estimated at £22.4m with £19.7m (88%) awarded through Levelling Up Fund (LUF) from government. This includes contributions to the Tidal Barrier, Public Realm improvements delivered through the Bridgwater Town Deal and site acquisition costs.

The significant level of LUF funding brings particular governance requirements on publicity and notices to be erected on sites including reference to government funding.

Somerset Council, as Accountable Body, is required to submit quarterly monitoring reports to Government setting out committed expenditure, forecasts and risk management.

The total build and fit-out cost estimates and allowances are shown here:

	<b>Bridgwater</b>	<b>Minehead</b>
Contributions to other schemes:	<b>£2.7m</b>	
Delivery	<b>£16,515,900</b>	<b>£500,000</b>

