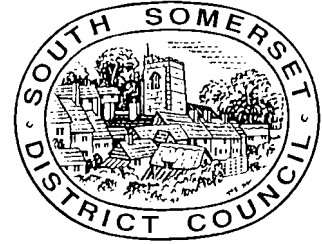


# South Somerset District Council

*Notice of Meeting*



## District Executive

*Making a difference where it counts*

**Thursday 7th December 2017**

**9.30 am**

**Council Chamber  
Council Offices  
Brympton Way  
Yeovil  
Somerset BA20 2HT**



Disabled access and a hearing loop are available at this meeting venue.

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Members listed on the following page are requested to attend the meeting.

The public and press are welcome to attend.

If you would like any further information on the items to be discussed, please contact the Democratic Services Manager on 01935 462148 or [democracy@southsomerset.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@southsomerset.gov.uk)

This Agenda was issued on Wednesday 29 November 2017.

**Alex Parmley**, *Chief Executive Officer*

This information is also available on our website  
[www.southsomerset.gov.uk](http://www.southsomerset.gov.uk) and via the mod.gov app



# District Executive Membership

Ric Pallister  
Peter Gubbins  
Henry Hobhouse  
Val Keitch  
Jo Roundell Greene  
Sylvia Seal  
Peter Seib  
Angie Singleton  
Nick Weeks  
Derek Yeomans

## Information for the Public

The District Executive co-ordinates the policy objectives of the Council and gives the Area Committees strategic direction. It carries out all of the local authority's functions which are not the responsibility of any other part of the Council. It delegates some of its responsibilities to Area Committees, officers and individual portfolio holders within limits set by the Council's Constitution. When major decisions are to be discussed or made, these are published in the Executive Forward Plan in so far as they can be anticipated.

Members of the Public are able to:-

- attend meetings of the Council and its committees such as Area Committees, District Executive, except where, for example, personal or confidential matters are being discussed;
- speak at Area Committees, District Executive and Council meetings;
- see reports and background papers, and any record of decisions made by the Council and Executive;
- find out, from the Executive Forward Plan, what major decisions are to be decided by the District Executive.

Meetings of the District Executive are held monthly at 9.30 a.m. on the first Thursday of the month in the Council Offices, Brympton Way.

The Executive Forward Plan and copies of executive reports and decisions are published on the Council's web site - [www.southsomerset.gov.uk](http://www.southsomerset.gov.uk).

The Council's Constitution is also on the web site and available for inspection in Council offices. The Council's corporate priorities which guide the work and decisions of the Executive are set out below.

Questions, statements or comments from members of the public are welcome at the beginning of each meeting of the Council. If a member of the public wishes to speak they should advise the committee administrator and complete one of the public participation slips setting out their name and the matter they wish to speak about. Each individual speaker shall be restricted to a total of three minutes. Answers to questions may be provided at the meeting itself or a written reply will be sent subsequently, as appropriate. Matters raised during the public question session will not be debated by the Committee at that meeting.

Further information can be obtained by contacting the agenda co-ordinator named on the front page.

# District Executive

**Thursday 7 December 2017**

## Agenda

### 1. Minutes of Previous Meeting

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the District Executive meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2017.

### 2. Apologies for Absence

### 3. Declarations of Interest

In accordance with the Council's current Code of Conduct (as amended 26 February 2015), which includes all the provisions relating to Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI), personal and prejudicial interests, Members are asked to declare any DPI and also any personal interests (and whether or not such personal interests are also "prejudicial") in relation to any matter on the Agenda for this meeting.

Members are reminded that they need to declare the fact that they are also a member of a County, Town or Parish Council as a Personal Interest. Where you are also a member of Somerset County Council and/or a Town or Parish Council within South Somerset you must declare a prejudicial interest in any business on the agenda where there is a financial benefit or gain or advantage to Somerset County Council and/or a Town or Parish Council which would be at the cost or to the financial disadvantage of South Somerset District Council.

### 4. Public Question Time

### 5. Chairman's Announcements

#### Items for Discussion

6. **Somerset Waste Partnership Annual Report and Draft Business Plan 2018 - 2023**  
(Pages 5 - 26)
7. **Community Infrastructure Levy - Guidance and Governance** (Pages 27 - 37)
8. **SSDC Review of Operational Office Accommodation** (Pages 38 - 71)
9. **The Wincanton Neighbourhood Plan Referendum** (Pages 72 - 145)
10. **Corporate Performance and Complaints Monitoring Report 2017/18: 2nd Quarter**  
(Pages 146 - 156)
11. **Purchase of land adjoining Boden Street Car Park, Chard** (Pages 157 - 160)
12. **Yeovil Refresh - Delivery Arrangements** (Pages 161 - 169)

**13. Westlands Revised Business Plan** (Pages 170 - 175)

**14. District Executive Forward Plan** (Pages 176 - 180)

**15. Date of Next Meeting** (Page 181)

# Agenda Item 6

## **Somerset Waste Partnership Annual Report and Draft Business Plan 2018 - 2023**

*Executive Portfolio Holder:* Jo Roundell Greene, Environment & Economic Development  
*Director:* Clare Pestell, Commercial Services and Income Generation  
*Service Manager:* Chris Cooper, Streetscene Manager  
*Lead Officer:* Mickey Green, Managing Director, Somerset Waste Partnership  
*Contact Details:* Chris.cooper@southsomerset.gov.uk or 01935 462840

### **Purpose of the Report**

1. This report seeks a decision from South Somerset District Council on the Somerset Waste Partnership's Draft Business Plan 2018-2023. The plan provides a framework within which the Somerset Waste Board can make decisions and steer the delivery of waste partnership services. The Business Plan is attached as Appendix A
2. The actions in the draft business plan sets out the most significant set of changes to Somerset's waste services since SWPs inception in 2007. Co-ordinated for maximum impact and value the changes span all three major contracts for waste collection, treatment, disposal and infrastructure (including vehicles). It also develops SWP's capability, in some instances working in partnership with others, to support Somerset residents in wasting less and recycling more, with residual waste becoming a fuel stock to generate energy.
3. Following all partners' approval to implement Recycle More, the original delivery plan was to negotiate this with our current collection contractor (Kier). As it was not possible to reach agreement with Kier in a way which delivered the benefits that partners required, SWB have, by mutual consent with Kier, agreed to bring forward the expiry date of our current collection contract from September 2021 to 27 March 2020. SWB has undertaken a major review of the commissioning options and proposes to undertake a competitive dialogue procurement to secure a new collection contractor following the expiry of the contract with Kier.

### **Forward Plan**

4. This report appeared on the District Executive Forward Plan with an anticipated Committee date of 7<sup>th</sup> December 2017

### **Public Interest**

5. This report is to inform the Council of the work that is proposed to develop the waste and recycling functions across the area managed by the Somerset Waste Partnership which includes South Somerset, giving reasons behind the proposed future of the services.

### **Recommendations**

6. That the District Executive:
  - a. Approves the Somerset Waste Partnership's Draft Business Plan 2018-23, in particular the proposed approach to the procurement of a new collection contract as set out in this report
  - b. Notes that, in line with their delegated authority and in order to implement Recycle More as requested by partners, Somerset Waste Board have agreed with Kier to bring forward the expiry date of the current collection contract from September 2021 to 27 March 2020.

- c. Approves the projected budget for 2018/19 subject to the comments in section 7 of the SWP Business plan relating to the finalisation of the budget.

## **Background**

7. The Somerset Waste Partnership (SWP) is responsible for providing waste and recycling services on behalf of all six local authorities in Somerset. The partnership is governed through a Joint Committee known as the Somerset Waste Board (SWB). The SWB Constitution requires the preparation of a Business Plan on an annual basis. The plan has a five year horizon with particular focus on the next 12 months, and it provides a framework within which the board can make decisions and steer the delivery of waste partnership services. The Board has delegated authority for decision making across all services and therefore must make proposals to the partners on how savings can be made, taking into account any requirements to make savings and proposals on how this can be achieved.
8. The Board's business planning cycle usually requires a draft report to be approved by the Board in December and circulated to partners for comment prior to the adoption of the Board's Annual Budget the following February. Further to decisions taken by the Board in September 2017 the timetable for approving this plan will change for one year only, with the Draft Business plan presented for Board Approval in November 2017, scrutinised by partner authorities in November and early December and presented for final approval at the December Board meeting. Once approved or noted by all partners, the plan will be formally adopted by the Board to provide a framework within which the Board can make decisions and steer the delivery of Waste Partnership services.

## **Somerset Waste Partnership Annual Report**

9. South Somerset District Council, along with other partners in the Somerset Waste Partnership, is consulted on the draft plan prior to the final decision on the being taken by the Somerset Waste Board at their December meeting. The timetable for this consultation has been brought forward, for one year only, to ensure that members are provided with a timely update on the implementation of Recycle More, and to seek their approval to the approach proposed to be taken to securing a new collection contractor.
10. All partner authorities have previously endorsed the implementation of Recycle More and delegated their waste collection functions to Somerset Waste Board. Whilst the original delivery plan was to implement Recycle More with Kier, despite considerable efforts it was not possible to reach acceptable terms with Kier. Recycle More depends upon having a new fleet of vehicles in place. Due to the importance of aligning the procurement of a new fleet with the implementation of Recycle More and due to the need to have sufficient time to undertake a robust procurement process SWB have, by mutual consent with Kier, agreed to bring forward the expiry date of our current collection contract from September 2021 to 27 March 2020.

## **Draft Business Plan 2018-2023**

11. The actions in the draft business plan sets out the most significant set of changes to Somerset's waste services since SWPs inception in 2007. Co-ordinated for maximum impact and value, the changes span all three major contracts for waste collection, treatment, disposal and infrastructure (including vehicles). It also develops SWPs capability, in some instances working in partnership

with others, to support Somerset residents in wasting less and recycling more, with residual waste becoming a fuel stock to generate energy. The business plan sets out three related areas of activity which together will enable us to realise SWP's vision:

a. Building capability

Actions in this area aim to ensure that SWP works intelligently to enable it to realise the Board's vision and includes, improving how the partnership uses data, developing and implementing a technology roadmap and doing more to understand people's behaviour. SWP is working closely with all partners to implement a new website, a new customer service system and a mobile app in order to improve the way we support customers.

b. Action on waste prevention, reuse, recycling and recovery

These actions aim to improve Somerset's recycling rate from 52% towards 60% and potentially beyond, leading to a reduction in residual waste generated per household, and generating energy from materials that cannot be recycled, thus ending the county's long reliance on landfill. Whilst the single most significant driver for these changes will be the implementation of Recycle More, an expanded focus on waste prevention and behavioural change is also a key driver. A pilot reintroduction of working with schools to promote the 'reduce, reuse, recycle' message to children and their parents (funded by Viridor) is a key element of this work in 2018/19. Close working with all partners will be necessary to maximise the impact of our work to change people's behaviours, focussing on reducing the 50% of recyclable waste that is still included in our residual waste.

c. Maintaining services and operational effectiveness

These activities ensure the day to day functions of the SWP are delivered effectively and safely. SWP must give focus to maintaining the quality of services, predicting risks and preventing issues arising from these. It includes a review of SWP's core services contract with Viridor ahead of its expiry in 2022, focussing on whether there is value for money in extending this agreement.

## **Route map to Recycle More**

### ***Background***

12. Recycle More was approved by SWB in February 2017 following consultation with all partner authorities.
13. Recycle More involves:
  - Enhanced recycling collections, including; food and beverage cartons, plastic tubs and trays (including black plastic), small items of waste electric and electronic equipment (SWEEE) and domestic batteries.
  - 3 weekly refuse collections
  - Additional capacity for properties with children in nappies or for adult absorbent hygiene products (AAHP).

### ***Early expiry of the current contract***

14. A lengthy period of negotiations was undertaken with Kier in order to implement Recycle More through them. Despite considerable efforts, it was not possible to secure an agreement which either delivered the financial benefits required by partners or that offered the full range of materials that we wanted to see collected each week (in particular black plastic and food and beverage cartons – e.g. Tetrapaks).
15. Were we to carry on with our current collection contract with Kier to its planned expiry date of September 2021 then we would need to procure a new fleet of recycling and refuse vehicles ahead of that. However, to procure those vehicles without having procured a new contractor to deliver our collection services would be a major risk – we may end up with a fleet of vehicles which did not match how a contractor delivered services. Given that a new fleet of vehicles will cost in excess of £15m this would have been a major risk to all partners. It would also have meant that the implementation of Recycle More would be delayed to at least September 2021.
16. Updates to the Somerset Waste Board in June and September 2017 identified a significant change in the risk profile of the planned implementation and recommended negotiating with Kier to agree early expiry on mutually acceptable terms. This opened up an opportunity to align major improvements in collection services, disposal processes and waste infrastructure to create a fresh, new start for Somerset’s waste services from 2020. This opportunity will bring together enhanced recycling collections; the end of landfill and start of energy-from-waste, and a new fleet of collections vehicles operating out of refreshed depots.
17. To enable this, the SWP have agreed to bring forward the expiry date of our current collection contract with Kier to 27 March 2020. The decision was reached by mutual consent with Kier. Whilst most of our contract with Kier will remain unchanged (in particular the service standards to which they must deliver) to enable this to happen a number of changes to our contract have been agreed through a Deed of Variation, the key elements of which are:
  - The contractual obligation for Kier to only use vehicles less than seven years old has been removed and it enables them to utilise non-branded vehicles (for example those from North Somerset and Bridgend i.e. vehicles appropriate to our service model) but does not relax in any way their service or safety requirements.
  - Leases for depots will be transferred at no cost and SWP will purchase the plant and equipment at the depots.

### ***Options following expiry of the current contract***

18. Following a major review of the commissioning options open to SWP, the SWB has agreed to undertake a competitive dialogue procurement to secure a new collection contractor following the expiry of the contract with Kier. The other options considered in detail were:
  - a) providing the services “in house” (DSO/DLO)
  - b) forming a Local Authority Company (LAC)
  - c) out-sourcing the services through a procurement process (and which procurement process was most suitable).
  - d) continuing with the current contract until its expiry in September 2021
19. The outcome of this research was presented to SWB at an informal workshop on 15 September and at the Board meeting on 29 September 2017.



20. A summary of the reasons for rejecting alternative options is provided below:

- **In-house/DSO:** This option was discounted at an early stage because of the additional pension costs of the transferred staff being eligible to join the LGPS. It is estimated that this would add around £1.8M pa to the cost of the services. This makes the DSO option unattractive when compared to a LAC which could exclude membership of LGPS.
- **Local Authority Company:** Whilst cost modelling indicated that the LAC and out-sourced options were very similar, the risk profile of the LAC was significantly higher. For example District Council partners would be exposed to 100% budgetary risk on the fluctuation of materials values, fuel price rises, costs associated with delivering the service in severe weather, materials values, workforce issues. These and other risks (e.g. expertise acquisition, focus on strategic priorities and likelihood in securing the efficiencies which will be crucial to a cost-effective service) meant that the board did not consider an LAC its preferred option. It did recognise that an LAC may be an appropriate contingency plan, and that this should be considered at key milestones during the project.
- **Other procurement options** were discounted because a competitive dialogue procurement procedure would give bidders the opportunity to develop and refine their proposals, drive efficiencies and mitigate risks. It was recognised that this is time consuming but it was preferred for complex procurements where innovation and flexibility were required.
- **Procuring an outsourced service to coincide with the expiry of the existing contract** has the disadvantages that any service improvements and savings related to Recycle More would be delayed and the procurement of a new fleet and the procurement of a new contractor would be misaligned, leading to:
  - Complex buy-back arrangements (depending on who purchased the vehicles) with the outgoing contractor
  - Limiting the choice of the incoming contractor to use their preferred manufacturer and specification of vehicles. This is likely to be reflected in their pricing.

### **Approach to procurement**

21. A robust procurement process will be necessary to optimise the level of financial savings to partners and improve our environmental performance by reducing residual waste and increase our recycling rate.

22. The critical success factors for this project are:

- Achieving best value for SWP member authorities (including any partners that borrow to purchase vehicles/assets) through the procurement and cost sharing;
- Securing a provider who shares SWP's values and vision;
- Attracting and sustaining the interest of credible bidders before and during the procurement process;
- Managing the procurement to ensure compliance with procurement legislation and governance procedures, and to ensure that we progress through the phases of the procurement in a timely and effective way;
- Managing the interdependencies with other key elements of SWP's business plan, in particular:

- SWP’s wider communications and engagement strategy (in particular how we will engage with partners and the public to improve recycling capture ahead of the move to recycle more);
- ICT strategy (including how we improve the way we manage customer and performance data in order to improve our customer service, help target and drive behavioural change, and more effectively predict and manage service issues).
- Day to day collection contract service/performance management (especially given we are entering the final years of our current contract with Kier).

23. The overall timetable and phasing have been informed by discussion with the commercial and procurement team at SCC and with Eunomia. Whilst it is manageable, the pace at which we will be required to work in order to make this timetable work should not be underestimated.

**Table 1: Procurement Timetable**

Phase	Time	Comments
Soft market engagement	Nov 2017 – Feb 2018	To ensure SWP maximises market interest, to help shape our approach
Pre-qualification	Mar 2018 – May 2018	Mandatory phase
<i>Outline Solutions</i>	-	<i>Phase removed as not considered sufficiently beneficial</i>
Dialogue on proposed solutions	May 2018 – Dec 2018	Focussed conversations on key issues (e.g. assets, risk, efficiency and consideration of possible variants)
Final tenders	Jan 2019 – April 2019	Includes, evaluation, governance (ahead of pre-election period for DC elections in 2019) and standstill period.
Mobilisation	May 2019 – end March 2020	New provider gearing up to commence service. Note that a phased transition to Recycle More will be required from April 2020 onwards.

24. It is proposed that the project will be managed with existing resources from SWP and the administering authority (SCC – in particular procurement and legal support) with external support on key commercial and technical matters. It is proposed that the costs associated with the project will be funded from the accrued income generated from the hire of refuse collection vehicles to Kier since 2015. This fund (£421k) was previously identified as providing support for overall roll-out costs for Recycle More.

**Table 2: Actual and forecasted expenditure:**

Item	£
Recycle More ear-marked reserve funding	421,824
Commissioning options appraisal	14,942
Develop Procurement Strategy (forecast)	7,700

Support for depot optimisation and service modelling	20,000
Commercial and technical support during procurement (forecast based on initial advice and benchmarking similar processes)	250,000
Purchase of baling plant and equipment (committed subject to early expiry)	110,000
Residual Balance	19,182

25. In addition to these costs there will be further expenditure associated with the rollout of Recycle More (in particular from additional recycling containers, communications and operational support during a phased transition). These will be more fully explored throughout the procurement process as the scale and timing of these costs will depend upon the precise scope of the services we procure (i.e. what the contractor does and what SWP has to do), how the contractor proposes to phase and manage the transition and how these costs are spread over the life of the contract. The SWB has previously agreed that savings will not be realised until the costs of implementation are covered.
26. The project will be managed in line with the administering authorities' project management procedure and Contract Standing Orders.
27. The key roles and responsibilities in the project structure are shown in the table below:

**Table 3: Key roles and responsibilities**

<b>Role</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
New Service Task & Finish Group	Members from each partner authority	Political steer ahead of key decision points and holding the project true to the SWB's vision.
Senior Responsible Owner	Mickey Green	Ownership of the project. Responsible for direction and ensuring that member task and finish group are consulted appropriately
Project Manager	Bruce Carpenter	To plan, budget, oversee and document all aspects of the project to ensure that the project delivers its aims on time and on budget
Project Board	SMG (senior officers from each partner)	To support the SRO in providing overall direction and management for the project by bringing together a range of expertise

## **Risks**

28. In addition to the corporate risk register maintained by SWP a project risk register is being maintained. The key risks to the project and their mitigation are detailed below:

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
Kier continue to change their stance on matters that were considered agreed – this places the deed of variation at significant risk and prevents SWP progressing the approval with partners to procure a new provider, and prevents early market engagement taking place eating further into the timeline.	Kier and SWP have agreed that 13 <sup>th</sup> November will be the day that the deed is sealed. This is an operational decision to achieving Recycle More which was approved by each partner. Having the final deed signed preventing further changes on Kiers' part and allows the SWP to gain the partner approval required to procure a new service model.
We fail to have a competitive procurement process and achieve our objectives due to a lack of interest from one or more of the limited set of contractors who have significant experience in delivering comparable kerbside sort recycling collections (and in particular three weekly refuse collections).	We need to attract and maintain interest from the market in order to maximise competition, and this is being reflected in the procurement strategy, in particular in the way we will approach soft market engagement stage and the competitive dialogue stage, and how we reflect the procurement pipeline for similar services from other local authorities. An LAC remains our contingency plan.
We fail to achieve the project objectives (economic, efficiency and environmental/social) through the procurement	The competitive dialogue approach is designed to maximise the likelihood of us securing our aims by ensuring that we can explore key elements of the contract (including round efficiency, materials and yield) to ensure that we maximise our chances of securing our objectives. An LAC remains our contingency plan.
Due to the time it takes to procure Recycle More member authorities decide to no longer support recycle more.	Member task and finish group close involvement in the process helps ensure that our approach reflects the collective desires of partners.
Depot configuration and optimisation required for most efficient delivery of RM doesn't align with current sites and we are unable to secure suitable alternatives within time and/or budget	Depot optimisation strategy being developed as part of initial phase of procurement, and to be reflected in dialogue stage of procurement.
Administering authority contract standing orders are not appropriate to the specific circumstances of this procurement (in particular a 70:30 price : quality split)	Close working with SCC's commercial and procurement team as we develop the detailed procurement strategy, informed by expert commercial advice and soft market testing.
The costs of procurement exceed those currently forecast.	Careful ongoing management of expenditure and close review through project board and member task and finish group.

## Alternative Options

29. The only alternative option is to not approve the draft business plan. The risk of not approving the draft business plan is that this leads to a failure by the Somerset Waste Partnership to agree the business plan, and possibly the budget – leading to considerable negative financial and reputational implications for all partners.

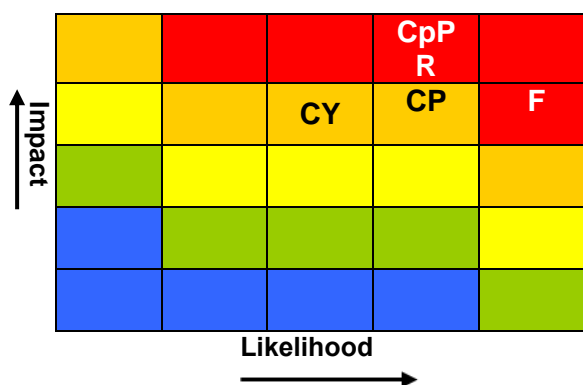
## Financial Implications

30. The Board is almost exclusively funded from contributions from partners and, apart from one-off funding bids, has no automatic block grant from Central Government. It is therefore dependent on agreement between partners on the level of funding provided by each of them in line with the cost sharing formula. Business planning and budget setting are therefore usually part of the same process but, due to the revised timetable, this year the Business Plan will be approved in December 2017 and the Budget finalised in February 2018 as is normal practice. The budget presented in this report will remain draft until February and is for one year only.
31. Section 7 of the Business Plan shows the projected year budget for Somerset Waste Partnership. A draft Annual Budget for the forthcoming year will be brought to the December meeting of the Somerset Waste Board. While the figures shown here are subject to refinement, historically projections at the stage have been very close to the final budget due in February 2018, particularly for collection partners, with only minor variations for final customer numbers. It is therefore considered a very low risk to approve the Business Plan ahead of the final Annual Budget for 2018/2019.
32. The current estimate for collection partners is that there will be between a 4.1% and 5.3% budget uplift from the 2017/18 budget. The projection varying for each collection partner, primarily according to household growth and garden waste customer growth. All recycle more one-off costs are excluded from these figures (these are set out later in the report).
33. The key drivers for the variance are:
- Collection inflation – estimate 2.66% (mostly fixed). The key drivers for this are CPI and fuel increases.
  - Household growth estimated average 0.95% (final figures will be available on 1st December).
  - Garden customers growth estimated at 3% (although this provides a corresponding income to each partner).
  - Recycling credits – whilst no growth is assumed, a 3% price increase is reflected in current assumptions.
34. The most significant element of the business plan relates to Recycle More. The work that has been undertaken to review future service models has demonstrated that Recycle More is lower cost than our current collection operations, as well as delivering environmental benefits. The scale of savings will inevitably be subject to the tendering process and what the market will offer in terms of contract price, on the efficiencies which a new contractor will bring (the potential for which SWP believe to be significant) and on the actual tonnages of new material that can be diverted. SWP's aim is to continue to meet with the Partner authority's approval in terms of cost reduction. A robust procurement process will be essential to drive the former, and strong

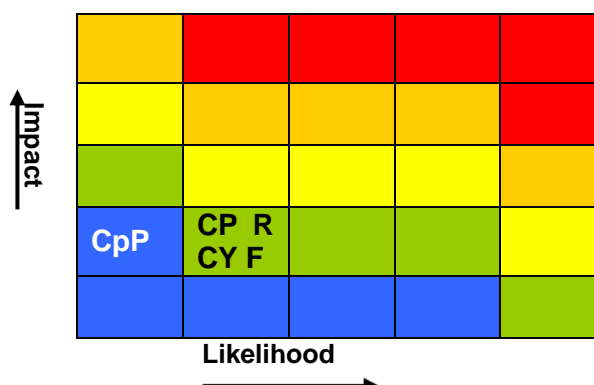
communications with residents will be essential for the latter. The savings delivered will also depend to some extent on the agreement reached with the incoming contractor on dry recycle and material volumes. It is proposed that the project will be managed with existing resources from SWP and the administering authority (SCC – in particular providing procurement and legal support) with external support being sourced on key commercial and technical matters. It is proposed that the costs associated with the project will be funded from the accrued income generated from the hire of refuse collection vehicles to Kier since 2015. This fund (£421k) was previously identified as providing support for overall roll-out costs for Recycle More.

## Risk Matrix

Risk Profile before officer recommendations



Risk Profile after officer recommendations



## Key

Categories	Colours (for further detail please refer to Risk management strategy)
R = Reputation	Red = High impact and high probability
CpP = Corporate Plan Priorities	Orange = Major impact and major probability
CP = Community Priorities	Yellow = Moderate impact and moderate probability
CY = Capacity	Green = Minor impact and minor probability
F = Financial	Blue = Insignificant impact and insignificant probability

## Council Plan Implications

\*High quality cost effective services - Work with partners to achieve economies, resilience and influence.

\*Environment - Increase recycling

## Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications

Moving to Recycle more will result in capturing more recycling and generating less residual waste. Amongst other environmental benefits, fewer refuse vehicles will be required and these will be more efficient and generate lower emissions than our current fleet. Through the procurement the possibilities of using bio-fuels or other more environmentally beneficial power sources will be generated.

The diversion of waste from landfill to become a fuel source for energy production significantly reduces the overall environmental impact of Somerset's residual waste and has huge implications for carbon emissions. More details will become available as the project develops.

Other elements of the business plan, including the programme of schools visits promotion and the emphasis on waste prevention should also contribute to promoting the message of the need to take action to combat climate change

### **Equality and Diversity Implications**

Equalities Impact Assessments will be carried out as appropriate with the development of each Business Plan activity prior to proceeding with that activity. In most cases the decision to proceed based on the outcome of the impact assessment will be delegated to the Managing Director and Senior Management Team of SWP. Where significant issues are identified through the assessment process that would have implications for major projects or programmes the decision to proceed will return to the Board prior to commencing development.

### **Privacy Impact Assessment**

A Privacy Impact Assessment is not essential to accompany this report as the information will fundamentally be the same as is currently used and managed. Looking forwards, as the SWP looks to build capacity and use technology to understand people's behaviour to reduce waste and improve recycling, we will need to assess the management of personal information and an impact assessment may need to be carried out if we are to ensure compliance with both the current and future data protection regimes – the latter of which will be much more stringent.

### **Background Papers**

District Executive report and minutes 1<sup>st</sup> February 2017

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# **SWP Business Plan 2018 – 2023**

*Draft for Approval for Partner Authority Consultation*



<b>Table of Contents</b>	
Page 3	About Somerset Waste Partnership; Key Stakeholders; SWP Vision
Page 4	Key Issues and Challenges
Page 6	Key Aims and Priorities
Page 7	Action Table
Page 10	Draft Budget Table 2018/19

<b>Change History</b>	
25/10/2017	Draft for Approval for Partner Consultation

## **1. About Somerset Waste Partnership**

### **1.1 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

October 2017 saw the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the formalisation of the Somerset Waste Partnership (SWP) and the signing of the inter-authority agreement between the six partner authorities. The authorities had been working together for ten years prior to that, but the formalisation cemented the relationship, enabling service developments that have saved millions of pounds in avoided costs for Somerset.

Somerset still has the first and only county-wide waste partnership, including all collection and disposal authorities, in the country. Since working together Somerset has increased its recycling rate three-fold, putting the county at or near the top of the national rankings for several years running.

### **1.2 Background to SWP**

Somerset Waste Partnership (SWP) was established in 2007 to manage waste services on behalf of Mendip, Sedgemoor, South Somerset and West Somerset District Councils, Taunton Deane Borough Council and Somerset County Council. This made it the first county-wide waste partnership in the country.

SWP has delegated authority to deliver household waste and recycling services throughout Somerset, including management of kerbside collections, recycling sites and disposal sites. These duties are in turn contracted to Kier (collection services) and Viridor Plc (recycling sites, landfill sites and recycling or disposal of food waste, garden waste and residual waste).

SWP is accountable to the Somerset Waste Board (SWB), which consists of two members from each of the partner authorities.

For further information about Somerset Waste Partnership and the Somerset Waste Board please visit [www.somersetwaste.gov.uk](http://www.somersetwaste.gov.uk)

## **2. Key Stakeholders**

- Residents of Somerset
- Members and officers of partner authorities
- Kier MG CIC
- Viridor Plc

## **3. The SWP Vision**

We will:

- Drive material up the waste hierarchy and, where sustainable markets exist, into the circular economy\*.
- Avoid landfill and encourage high participation in waste avoidance, reuse, recycling and food waste collection schemes.

## Business Plan

- Engage with local people, support economic wellbeing and use efficient, sustainable and affordable solutions at every stage of the process.
- Encourage and facilitate innovation, joined up strategy, policy and operations across the county

\*A circular economy is one where resources once used are not disposed of, but become feedstock materials or energy for making new products, thus reducing reliance on raw materials and waste disposal. A “closed loop process” is a variation of this where recovered materials are recycled into the same product. The benefits of a circular economy include reduced energy consumption, resource security and lower environmental impacts. A circular economy works most effectively where there are clear incentives for all persons on the loop (manufacturers, retailers, consumers, local authorities, reprocessors) to move the material around the loop.

### 4. Key Issues and Challenges

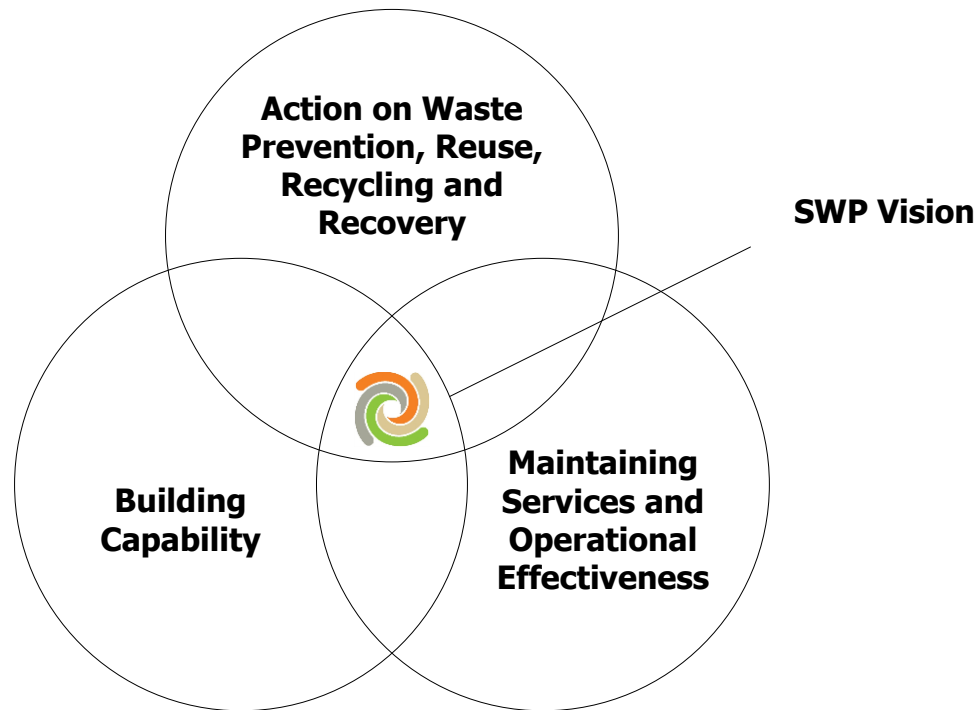
<b>Issue</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Proposed Response</b>
Legislative impact of withdrawal from the EU	The Great Repeal Bill will see all EU legislation not already enshrined in domestic law transferred to UK statute. This is likely to include the Circular Economy Roadmap, which will be passed into EU law before Britain exits.	No early changes to legislative framework identified. SWP will continue to monitor.
DCLG and non-household waste charging	The Department of Communities and Local Government continue to indicate they intend to stop Local Authorities charging for DiY waste, currently classified as “Industrial”. This intent has been reinforced in the 2017 Anti Littering Strategy, which included the statement “Stopping councils from charging householders for disposal of DIY household waste at civic amenity sites (rubbish dumps) – legally, household waste is supposed to be free to dispose of at such sites.”	SWB may decide to put the case to the DCLG for retaining current arrangements, or accept the financial gap (estimated at up to £600k p/a) with subsequent decisions to be made on how that will be managed. This risk will be addressed as part of the scheduled review of the Core Services contract scheduled in this Business Plan. SWP and the SWB will continue to monitor communications from the DCLG on the matter and engage where appropriate.
Community Recycling Site Charges	In 2015 DCLG brought in an order to prevent local authorities from designating some sites (known in	SWB must consider the impact of this change and how it will affect the network of recycling sites. This will

## Business Plan

	<p>Somerset as “Community Recycling Sites (CRSs)” as provided under discretionary “wellbeing” powers within the Local Government Act 2003. This removed the option to introduce charges for entry to sites (even where this option was promoted by the community as an alternative to closure). The effect of this is that the charging at Dulverton and Crewkerne CRSs will not be permitted after April 1<sup>st</sup> 2020</p>	<p>be done as part of a wider review of the Core Services contract.</p>
WRAP Consistency Framework	<p>The framework, which strives to increase consistency in collection services across the country, continues to be a topic for discussion at governmental level.</p>	<p>SWP to monitor and adopt appropriate recommendations with implementation of service changes.</p>
Deposit/Return Schemes	<p>“Deposit/Return” schemes for items such as glass and plastic bottles are being considered for England by the government following announcement of a scheme to be adopted in Scotland. This initiative could affect the requirements for kerbside services with, if implemented, a potential drop in material volumes.</p>	<p>While supportive of the need to explore these options SWP’s considerations will be highlighted in a response to the “call for evidence” issued by Defra. SWP to monitor developments and consider impact on service design as part of any future procurement strategy for future collection service arrangements.</p>
Financial Pressure	<p>Ongoing financial constraints continue to impact all partner authorities.</p>	<p>SWP will continue to consider cost as a priority issue in all decisions.</p>
Somerset Demographic changes	<p>Somerset’s population is growing and, combined with longer life expectancies and an increased emphasis on community based care, there will be pressure on waste services. Some of the pressures will be on specific services, such as clinical waste (including an increase in adult hygiene waste) and assisted collections.</p>	<p>SWP will consider strategic impacts of demographic changes on waste services as part of the procurement process for future service arrangements.</p>

## 5. Key Aims and Priorities for 2018/19

The action table sets out the most significant set of changes to Somerset’s waste services since SWPs inception in 2007. Co-ordinated for maximum impact and value the changes span all three major contracts for waste collection, treatment, disposal and infrastructure (including vehicles). It also develops SWPs capability, in some instances working in partnership with others, to support Somerset residents in wasting less and recycling more, with residual waste becoming a fuel stock to generate energy.



5.1 Building Capability	Outcome	Timing, Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving Intelligence                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Review performance data procedures</li> <li>○ Improve integrity of service data</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Developing systems: -                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Develop ICT strategy</li> <li>○ New Customer Service systems (ITouch)</li> <li>○ Website Upgrades (e.g. self service)</li> <li>○ Develop and Launch Mobile App</li> <li>○ Round Management and performance software</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Understanding behaviour                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Waste Composition Analysis (rolling three year cycle to commence with Waste Transfer Stations)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Internal Review                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Review SWP staffing structures</li> <li>○ Manage SWP Office move</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>SWP is an organisation that is able to work intelligently to improve delivery of the financial, social and environmental benefits of an effective resource management service.</p>	<p>These activities will run through the financial year. In the main costs will come from existing budgets.</p> <p>Items that fall outside of existing budgets are: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- New Customer Service System. This will result in a circa £24,000 annual increase in overall budget but should deliver significant efficiencies in terms of customer request handling, and will provide a means which we can build a mobile App to support delivery of future service changes.</li> <li>- Round management and Performance Software. Because of the potentially significant and direct contribution to the delivery of the new service arrangements, the costs will initially be drawn from the Recycle More Earmarked Reserve (as described in previous Board papers) and estimated at £20,000.</li> </ul>

<p><b>5.2 Action on Waste Prevention, Reuse, Recycling and Recovery</b></p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementing future collection arrangements (Recycle More model)             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Should the Board decide to tender the opportunity, procure provider for collection services (including appropriate risk management and mitigation arrangements)</li> <li>○ Explore early introduction of household battery collections and trialling ways to increase capture of small waste electricals</li> <li>○ Initiate vehicle procurement</li> </ul> </li>   <li>• Reducing cost and impact of waste             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Targeted waste prevention and minimisation activities (including tested approach of Food waste stickers on bins)</li> <li>○ Pilot SWP Education Service</li> <li>○ Continue to explore effective media for communicating messages (including insert in Council Tax mailings)</li> <li>○ Refresh SWP Waste Prevention Strategy, to focus on systemic implementation of activities with a significant measurable benefit over the full five year period of this plan</li> <li>○ Develop SWP Communications Strategy</li> </ul> </li>   <li>• Infrastructure             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Oversee development of infrastructure required to deliver new residual waste treatment.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Somerset’s recycling rate improves from 52% towards 60% and potentially beyond; residual waste per household reduces, and energy is recovered from materials that cannot be recycled ending the county’s long reliance on landfill.</p>	<p>These activities will be funded either from existing budgets or from the Recycle More Earmarked Reserve, with the exception of the trial reintroduction of education services, which will be funded via the Community Sector Integration Plan fund provided through the Viridor contract.</p>

<p><b>5.3 Maintaining Services and Operational Effectiveness</b></p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Viridor Core Services Contract Review             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ This contract, which includes management of the Recycling Centre network, ends in 2022 and SWP has the opportunity to extend it to 2031, should we choose to do so.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Active management of collection service contract (monitoring performance to ensure no degradation in tail end of contract)</li> <li>• Review waste service Fees and Charges structures and implications of varying charges (including inclusion of administration costs)</li> <li>• Recycling Site Maintenance</li> <li>• Assess impact of changes to legislative framework, including removal of powers to designate Community Recycling Sites and to charge for non-household waste at Recycling Sites.</li> <li>• Plan for Broadpath Landfill Site closure</li> <li>• Plan for Dimmer transition (from landfill to Waste Transfer Station – scheduled Feb 2019)</li> </ul>	<p>These activities ensure the day to day functions of the SWP are delivered effectively and safely. SWP must give focus to maintaining the quality of services, predicting risks and preventing issues arising.</p>	<p>These items are funded through existing budgets.</p>



## **7. SWP Budget 2018 - 19**

The following table shows the projected year budget for Somerset Waste Partnership. A draft Annual Budget for the forthcoming year will be brought to the December meeting of the Somerset Waste Board. While the figures shown here are subject to refinement, historically projections at the stage have been very close to the final budget due in February 2018, particularly for collection partners, with only minor variations for final customer numbers. It is therefore considered a very low risk to approve the Business Plan ahead of the final Annual Budget for 2018/2019.

### **7.1 Revenue Not Included**

Control of income from residents for waste related services is retained by the collection authorities and is therefore not shown in this paper. The most significant portion of this is annual Garden Waste subscriptions, which will generate income for the district council of around £55.40 for each wheeled bin subscription in 2018/23. This is a significant offset of the cost of providing the service. Other income streams are Bulky Waste collection fees and sale of Garden Waste sacks.

7.2 Full Draft Budget Summary 2018/19

Summary Annual Budgets 2018/2019								
	Rounded £000s	Total	SCC	MDC	SDC	SSDC	TDBC	WSC
<b>Expenditure</b>			£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Salaries & On-Costs	972		481	110	111	155	108	7
Other Head Office Costs	275		126	30	32	45	31	11
Support Services	125		54	14	15	22	15	5
Disposal - Landfill	11541		11541					
Disposal - HWRCs	9484		9484					
Disposal - Food waste	1481		1481					
Disposal - Hazardous waste	225		225					
Composting	1811		1811					
Kerbside Recycling	9162			1878	1893	2812	1848	731
Green Waste Collections	2579			500	619	691	640	129
Household Refuse	6155			1264	1269	1880	1265	477
Clinical Waste	119			24	26	36	25	8
Bulky Waste Collection	84			19	16	24	18	7
Container Maintenance & Delivery	228			51	42	72	51	12
Container Supply	447			98	90	144	96	19
Pension Costs	69			2	2	62	2	1
Depot Costs	186			38	40	56	39	13
Village Halls	6				6			
Transfer Station Avoided Costs	321		321					
Recycling Credits	2460		2460					
Capital Financing Costs	231			52	41	78	39	21
<b>Total Direct Expenditure</b>	<b>47961</b>		<b>27984</b>	<b>4080</b>	<b>4202</b>	<b>6077</b>	<b>4177</b>	<b>1441</b>
<b>Income</b>			£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Sort It Plus Discounts	-80			-16	-17	-24	-17	-6
Transfer Station Avoided Costs	-321			-65	-69	-97	-67	-23
May Gurney Secondment Saving	-44		-20	-5	-5	-7	-5	-2
Recycling Credits	-2432			-520	-487	-757	-494	-174
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-2877</b>		<b>-20</b>	<b>-606</b>	<b>-578</b>	<b>-885</b>	<b>-583</b>	<b>-205</b>
			£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<b>Total Net Expenditure</b>	<b>45084</b>		<b>27964</b>	<b>3474</b>	<b>3624</b>	<b>5192</b>	<b>3594</b>	<b>1236</b>

# Agenda Item 7

## **Community Infrastructure Levy - Guidance and Governance**

*Executive Portfolio Holder:* Cllr Angie Singleton, Strategic Planning (Place Making)  
*Director:* Martin Woods, Service Delivery  
*Service Manager:* David Norris, Development Manager  
*Lead Officer:* David Norris, Development Manager  
*Contact Details:* david.norris@southsomerset.gov.uk or 01935 462382

### **Purpose of the Report**

1. To provide members with more detailed information about the Community Infrastructure Levy and to seek their endorsement of the proposed governance structure.

### **Public Interest**

2. The Community Infrastructure Levy will provide an important funding stream for infrastructure projects across the district. As such, it is essential that the council has in place a robust system of governance that will ensure that the monies collected are responsibly managed and monitored.

### **Recommendations**

3. That the District Executive note and consider the contents of the report and endorse the governance structure suggested and in particular:
  - a) Production of an annual CIL report to District Executive Committee that along with an updated Regulation 123 list identifying the key projects
  - b) Production of an infrastructure Business Plan that will provide further detail on the individual infrastructure projects
  - c) Delegation to the Local Development Scheme Board consideration of applications from services or external bodies for infrastructure funding against the Infrastructure Business Plan.

### **Summary/Background**

4. Members will be aware that the District Council implemented the South Somerset CIL charging regime on April 1<sup>st</sup> 2017. A requirement of the CIL regulations is that the local authority will establish a governance structure to oversee the collection, auditing and spending of CIL monies. South Somerset will therefore produce an annual report detailing CIL receipts, balances and spend for each financial year.
5. This report proposes a governance structure that will be the principal means by which CIL receipts are spent on the infrastructure necessary to support new development.
6. In order to justify adopting a CIL charge the council was required to demonstrate that there was a funding gap. This was calculated by carrying out an assessment of the infrastructure required to meet the needs of future development. This forms the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) that has been produced following consultation with a wide range of stakeholders including the providers of services such as health and highways.

7. The detailed viability assessment was considered by a Planning Inspector in 2016 and he concluded that the council's draft charging schedule was robust and reasonable. The key points from the charging schedule are:
- Residential development is charged at £40 per sq. m
  - Commercial/industrial development is not sufficiently profitable to make a CIL contribution
  - Out of town large retail is charged at £100 per sq. m
  - The urban extensions in Yeovil and the eastern growth area in Chard should be exempt from CIL as they will be making an equivalent contribution through the Section 106 requirements
  - Affordable housing and self-build are normally exempt from the charge
8. As part of the submission to the Inspector the council was required to submit what is known as a Regulation 123 list. This identifies the infrastructure that will continue to be funded by Section 106 contributions rather than through CIL. This is attached as **Appendix 1**.
9. Members should be aware that there has been a national review of CIL and extensive reform has been recommended. The suggested changes would result in a simpler low level Local Infrastructure Tariff (LIT) that covers all development but with a continuation of S106's for the larger strategic sites.

### **Estimated CIL Receipt for 2018/2019**

10. For the purposes of this illustration and simplicity the figure of 600 dwellings per annum has been used. Members will be very aware that not all new dwellings will be required to pay CIL and the reality is that it is likely that less than half of new dwellings will make a contribution. The reasons for this are:
- Most dwellings that will be constructed over the next 2 financial years will be a result of planning permissions granted under the previous S106 regime (this includes the existing key sites in Yeovil that are under construction and those sites in our market towns that haven't yet been implemented)
  - Single dwellings are treated as 'self-build' and are exempt under the Regulations (estimated at 20% of supply)
  - Affordable housing is exempt (likely to be in region of 35%)
  - The regulations give 'credit' for existing buildings/uses that are to be lost to redevelopment
11. It is likely that the income will increase as the historic permissions are completed. However, it also needs to be borne in mind that the major sites in Yeovil and Chard are not liable for CIL on the basis that they will be providing the required mitigation and facilities on site and these will be secured through the Section 106 process.
12. At the time of writing this report, 6 months after the introduction of CIL, the Council has not received any CIL monies. This is to be expected because nearly all of the new development constructed across the district was approved prior to the council charging CIL.
13. It is not considered appropriate to include an estimated receipt from large scale retail as any monies that are received are unlikely to be significant.

Table showing estimated CIL Receipts for next 3 years

	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021
Units Completed	600	600	600
Eligible Units (approved post CIL and not within urban extensions)	200	300	400
Qualifying units remaining after removal of: -affordable housing @35% - self-build @15% - vacant building credit @ 5%	90	135	180
Estimated annual CIL @ £40 per sq. m (*based upon 80 sq. m unit)	£288,000	£432,000	£576,000
<b>Total amount available to SSDC after 15% passed to Parish or Town Council (inc 5% admin fee)</b>	<b>£244,800</b>	<b>£367,200</b>	<b>£489,600</b>

14. Members will note that the receipts likely to result through CIL are far smaller than the New Homes Bonus already received by the council as a result of delivering new housing development. Many local authorities have opted to invest their New homes Bonus in infrastructure related projects on the basis that it will facilitate additional development which will then generate its own social and economic benefits.

### What can the Local Authority CIL Receipts be Spent on?

15. The levy can be used to fund a wide range of infrastructure, including transport, flood defences, schools, hospitals, and other health and social care facilities. This definition allows the levy to be used to fund a very broad range of facilities such as play areas, parks and green spaces, cultural and sports facilities, district heating schemes and police stations and other community safety facilities. This flexibility gives local areas the opportunity to choose what infrastructure they need to deliver their Local Plan. Charging authorities may not use the levy to fund affordable housing.
16. South Somerset's [Regulation 123](#) list excludes education as the County Council was of the view that it would be preferable to request education contributions through the existing Section 106 regime.
17. Local authorities must spend the levy on infrastructure needed to support the development of their area, and they will decide what infrastructure is needed. The levy is intended to focus on the provision of new infrastructure and should not be used to remedy pre-existing deficiencies in infrastructure provision unless those deficiencies will be made more severe by new development.
18. The levy can be used to increase the capacity of existing infrastructure or to repair failing existing infrastructure, if that is necessary to support development.
19. It is important for members to bear in mind that CIL receipts should be reinvested in infrastructure to allow further growth to occur. These receipts are not some form of 'compensation' for the district accepting new development but instead are an important element in creating conditions whereby further economic benefits can be facilitated.

## Proposed Structure for Spending

20. It is proposed that the council will produce an **Infrastructure Business Plan (IBP)** that is updated annually. The CIL Annual Report will be appended to the IBP which will
  - Identify the projects from the Regulation 123 Infrastructure List that will benefit from CIL receipts;
  - Set out the process and criteria to enable members to prioritise infrastructure;
  - Identify other funding sources
  - Provide a cash-flow and spending plan;
  - Provide a review of the infrastructure that is contained within the Regulation 123 list
21. The IBP will provide members, officers and external stakeholders with a list of the projects that are suitable for CIL investment. Members should be aware that these may not all be SSDC projects.
22. It is suggested that until the CIL receipts reach a meaningful level that the Local Development Scheme (LDS) Board ( which comprises the four area Chairs , Chair of Scrutiny ,and Leader ) can monitor the CIL collection and formulate with officers spending plans. It is further suggested that this is an appropriate group to consider the allocation of CIL receipts, against the Infrastructure Delivery Plan. A formal annual report can be made from this group to District Executive Committee, to inform proposed priority schemes and overall funding proposals for these including CIL contributions – as part the annual capital programme budget process.
23. All allocations of Levy money will be made in response to the submission of applications to the District Council as charging body and decisions made subsequently by the Council. Applications will need to be made in accordance with standardised formats, the final details of which will need to be agreed.
24. To ensure the appropriate and timely delivery of projects, conditions will be attached to the allocation of CIL funding from the centralised pot to a Strategic or infrastructure requirement. The infrastructure provider who has secured CIL from the centralised pot will be required to enter into a grant agreement which will confirm the detail of conditions. The grant agreement will include a commitment to complete monitoring returns to the Council. These returns will form the basis of monitoring reports to the Joint Member/Officer Working group. When CIL funding is allocated to infrastructure provider, the CIL funding can only be used to deliver the agreed infrastructure type or project. As the Charging Authority, the Council will retain the right to recover CIL receipts that have been 'misapplied' or not spent within agreed timescales.
25. There will be a transitional period between the new and old S106 systems of planning obligations and as such a constant flow of annual CIL receipts is not expected until sometime into the implementation period. It is therefore possible that the above CIL group will not need to meet or if so will not be called upon to make recommendations for a while. In any event allowing for a centralised pot to grow to meaningful levels enabling potential project allocations to be considered would make sense. Initial meetings therefore will likely involve explaining and agreeing procedure and offering an opportunity to updating members on the level of receipts received to date and progress with infrastructure generally across the District.

## Parish and Town Councils

26. Parish councils will receive 15% (referred to as a 'meaningful proportion' of all CIL received within their administrative boundary. This rises to 25% if the town or parish has a 'made' Neighbourhood Plan. A simple illustration below:

10 x 80 sq m 3 bed house @£40per sq. m = £32,000.  
Parish/Town receive 15% = **£4,800**

27. The neighbourhood portion of the levy can be spent on a wider range of things than the rest of the levy, provided that it meets the requirement to 'support the development of the area'. The wider definition means that the neighbourhood portion can be spent on things other than infrastructure. For example, the pot could be used to fund affordable housing where it would support the development of the area by addressing the demands that development places on the area.
28. Once the levy is in place, parish, town and community could work closely with their neighbouring councils and the charging authority to agree on infrastructure spending priorities. If the parish or town shares the priorities of the charging authority, they may agree that the charging authority should retain the neighbourhood funding to spend on that infrastructure. It may be that this infrastructure (e.g. a school) is not in the parish or town's administrative area, but will support development.
29. Payment periods associated with the transfer of the meaningful proportion to the parish/town council will be in accordance with regulation 59D of the CIL Regulations:
- The charging authority must make payment in respect of the CIL it receives from 1st April to 30th September in any financial year to the local parish/town council by 28<sup>th</sup> October of that financial year.
  - The charging authority must make payment in respect of the CIL it receives from 1st October to 31st March in any financial year to the local parish/town council by 28<sup>th</sup> April of the following financial year.
30. A Parish Council will be free to spend these funds on facilities that serve to address the demands that development places on its area, but will be obliged to report annually on CIL expenditure. The District Council would expect to receive annual financial reports four working weeks of the end of financial year.
31. Once the levy is in place, Parish and Town Councils should work closely with their neighbouring councils and the charging authority to agree on infrastructure spending priorities. If the Parish or Town Council shares the priorities of the charging authority, they may agree that the charging authority should retain the neighbourhood funding to spend on infrastructure that benefits their area.
32. If a parish or town does not spend its levy share within 5 years of receipt, or does not spend it on initiatives that support the development of the area, the charging authority may require it to repay some or all of those funds to the charging authority.

### **How is payment of the Community Infrastructure Levy enforced?**

33. Almost all parties liable to pay the levy are likely to pay their liabilities without problem or delay, guided by the information sent by the collecting authority in the liability notice. However, where there are problems in collecting the levy, it is important that collecting authorities are able to penalise late payment and discourage future non-compliance.

34. The regulations provide for a range of proportionate enforcement measures, such as surcharges on late payments. In most cases, these measures should be sufficient.
35. In cases of persistent non-compliance, collecting authorities may take more direct action to recover the amount due. For example, a collecting authority may issue a Community Infrastructure Levy Stop Notice which prohibits development from continuing until payment is made and the stop notice is withdrawn.

### **Monitoring**

36. The Development Management service currently administers the CIL process and it is recommended that this continues however the Transformation process will be considering this in more detail.
37. Officers are currently using the existing planning database however they are currently investigating procuring a bespoke system (Exacom) that is used by many other local authorities.
38. The regulations allow the council to retain up to 5% of CIL receipts for the administration of the system thereby reducing the burden on the council tax payer.

### **Reporting**

39. Regular reporting on the progress and management of the CIL process will be combined with our existing S106 management and be delivered together to give a comprehensive picture of monies and infrastructure secured through planning obligations. This will ensure continued transparency and provide the latest position of monies collected through to delivery.

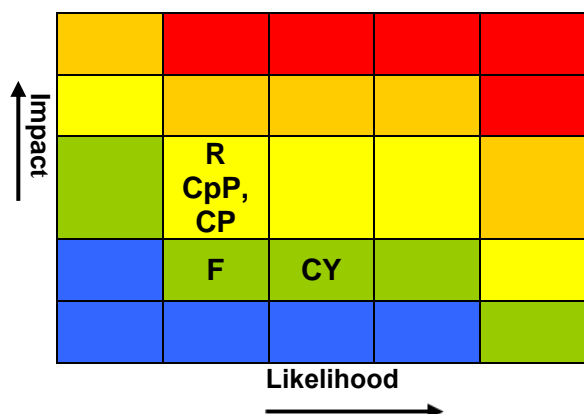
### **Financial Implications**

40. The Regulations recognise that the implementation of a CIL charging regime does have a cost and as such local authorities are entitled to use 5% of receipts for administering the process. It is considered that CIL can be managed using existing staff and this will be taken into account during the creation of the new operating model and the 5% CIL allocation will contribute to these costs within the budget.
41. It is likely that there will be a requirement for a further resource once the council has accrued sufficient CIL receipts to enable proposed projects to be considered. This is likely to be a project management role which may be funded from the 5% administration if receipts are sufficient and more likely be a cost to individual capital schemes.
42. The funding of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan will exceed the CIL receipts (net of town and parish allocations and 5% admin costs). It is therefore envisaged that proposals for 42. schemes will be presented with the CIL forming a proportion of the funding alongside other resources such as capital reserves, grants/contributions from other organisations and prudential borrowing. It is also conceivable that the Council may consider using CIL to fund capital grants towards relevant schemes that are delivered by other bodies such as the County Council. This would be set out early through the capital budget process.

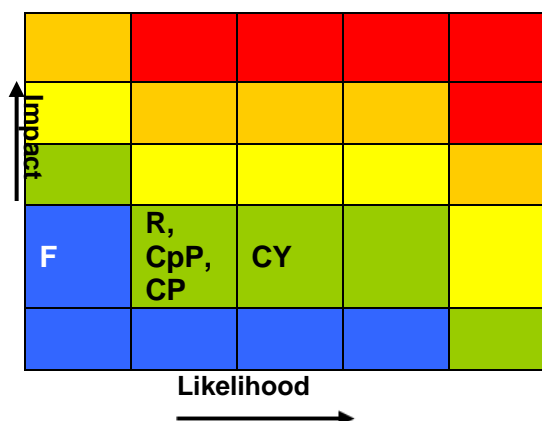


## Risk Matrix

Risk Profile before officer recommendations



Risk Profile after officer recommendations



### Key

Categories	Colours (for further detail please refer to Risk management strategy)
R = Reputation	Red = High impact and high probability
CpP = Corporate Plan Priorities	Orange = Major impact and major probability
CP = Community Priorities	Yellow = Moderate impact and moderate probability
CY = Capacity	Green = Minor impact and minor probability
F = Financial	Blue = Insignificant impact and insignificant probability

### Council Plan Implications

The delivery of infrastructure to facilitate appropriate levels of quality growth is fundamental to creating prosperous, healthy communities.

### Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications

No obvious implications

### Equality and Diversity Implications

No obvious implications

### Background Papers

<https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/spatial-policy/community-infrastructure-levy/>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/community-infrastructure-levy>

## **APPENDIX 1**

South Somerset

Community Infrastructure Levy

Regulation 123 List

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**November 2016**

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. This document sets out South Somerset District Council's Regulation 123 List relating to its approved Charging Schedule.
- 1.2. The levy and the Charging Schedule will be implemented from the 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2017, and the Regulation 123 List will be followed from that day forward, until such time as it is amended.

## 2. Regulation 123 List

- 2.1. The Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended) require the Council to set out a list of those projects or types of infrastructure that it intends to fund, or may fund, through the Community Infrastructure Levy.
- 2.2. The Regulation 123 List limits the use of planning obligations. The Regulations restrict the use of pooled contributions towards items that may be funded via the levy. From April 2015, no contributions may be collected in respect of a specific infrastructure project or a type of infrastructure through a Section 106 Agreement, if five or more obligations for that project or type of infrastructure have already been entered into since 6 April 2010.
- 2.3. The Council's Regulation 123 List is set out in Table 1 below.
- 2.4. The Regulation 123 List does not signify a commitment from the Council to fund all the projects listed, or the entirety of any one project through the CIL funds – it just signifies projects that will be considered by the Council in its decision as to what might receive funding.

**Table 1: Regulation 123 List**

Infrastructure type	Infrastructure that may be partly or wholly funded by CIL	Exclusions (funded by S106 or S278 payments or alternative measures)
<p><b>Transport</b></p>	Millfield Link Road, Chard.	<p>Improvements or provision of highways or highways access works related to a specific development site.</p>
	Link road from Oaklands Avenue to A358 Furnham Road, Chard.	
	Link road connecting A30 with Oaklands Avenue, Chard.	
	Improve Stop Line Way cycle route between Chard and Tatworth.	
	Yeovil Sustainable Transport Interchange	
	Chard Sustainable Transport Interchange	
<p><b>Flood risk management</b></p>	<p>Off-site flood risk management works</p>	<p>Improvements or provision of flood risk management works related to a specific development site.</p>
<p><b>Outdoor Play Space, Sports, Community and Cultural facilities</b></p>	<p>Arts and entertainment facilities and improvement in Yeovil</p> <p>Swimming pool improvements or provision in Yeovil, Primary and Local Market Towns</p> <p>Sports hall improvements or provision in Yeovil, Primary and Local Market Towns</p> <p>3G Artificial Grass Pitch improvements or provision in Primary and Local Market Towns</p> <p>Community hall improvements or provision</p> <p>New cemetery space to serve Yeovil</p>	<p>Improvements or provision of outdoor play space, sports, community and cultural facilities or building related to a specific development site.</p>
<p><b>Open Space and Public Realm</b></p>	<p>Off-site open space and public realm</p>	<p>Improvement or provision of open space or public realm related to a specific development site.</p>

- 2.5. Where site-specific exclusions are identified, they will be subject to statutory tests set out under Regulation 122 of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended), which stipulates the following:

*“A planning obligation may only constitute a reason for granting planning permission for the development if the obligation is –*

- a) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;*
- b) directly related to the development; and*
- c) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development”.*

- 2.6. Site-specific infrastructure which is required to make the development acceptable in planning terms, and satisfies the requirements set out in Regulation 122, will be secured through Section 106 Agreements for sites such as: North-east Yeovil Sustainable Urban Extension, South Yeovil Sustainable Urban Extension, and each of the development sites which constitute the Chard Eastern Development Area.

- 2.7. Affordable housing will continue to be secured through Section 106 Agreements, and is not liable for the CIL.

# Agenda Item 8

## **SSDC Review of Operational Office Accommodation**

*Executive Portfolio Holder:* Cllr Henry Hobhouse, Property, Climate Change & Income Generation  
*Director:* Clare Pestell, Director – Commercial Services and Income Generation  
*Service Manager:* Caroline White, Commercial Property, Land and Development Manager  
*Lead Officer:* Clare Pestell, Director – Commercial Services and Income Generation  
*Contact Details:* Clare.Pestell@southsomerset.gov.uk or 01935 462520

### **Purpose of the Report**

1. This report has been prepared to update members on the findings and recommendations of the David Lock Associates report on SSDC Review of Operational Office Accommodation, in order for members to agree the principles and next steps in considering the future of area offices and head quarters offices for the council.

### **Forward Plan**

2. This report appeared on the District Executive Forward Plan with an anticipated Committee date of 7<sup>th</sup> December 2017.

### **Public Interest**

3. Following on from the approval of the Commercial Strategy in August 2017, District Executive agreed that a more detailed operational property review and report would be undertaken to assess the current needs of the council's offices against its future requirements post Transformation across the District, including a review of the Council's Head Quarters requirements.
4. The attached report was undertaken by property consultants David Lock Associates and looks at the usage and costs of our current operational offices against what the future requirements and likely costs / savings might be after the council has completed its Transformation programme at the end of 2018 and into early 2019.
5. In doing so, it considers the current running costs, occupation levels now and likely future capital costs of retaining these offices in the next few years against potential savings. The report reviews the possibilities for the future of these offices and whether retention, alternative use, subletting or disposal is appropriate and which of these could be explored further to deliver the most benefit.
6. Potential savings can be used towards retaining the key services that the council provides to its customers and communities and to improve and enhance these services further to meet its ambitious plans for the future of South Somerset.

### **Recommendations**

7. That the District Executive:
  - a. Note the findings and recommendations in the David Lock Associates report – SSDC Review of Operational Office Accommodation November 2017 attached in Appendix 1.
  - b. Agree the principle that there is surplus office accommodation for council operational requirements at present and this will increase further post Transformation, and that the Council

should therefore seek to rationalise operational property or seek alternative commercial or strategic use for it.

- c. Task the Members Leadership & Development Project Group (Locality Working) to consider the report recommendations made in regard to Area Offices with input from Area Development Officers lead by the Locality Manager and report back to District Executive in February 2018 with findings and recommendations in respect of office / building requirements to meet the new model of delivery.
- d. Task the Commercial Property, Land and development Manager with undertaking a full feasibility study for the future council Head Quarters office to be located at Petters Way, to be funded through One Public Estate budget and brought back to District Executive with findings and recommendations by February 2018.

## **Background**

8. Following on from the approval of the Commercial Strategy and associated documents in August 2017, District Executive agreed that a review and report of the council's operational office property would be undertaken to assess the council's future requirements post Transformation, including reviewing the Council's Head Quarters.
9. The attached report was undertaken by property consultants David Lock Associates and looks at the usage and costs of our current operational offices against what the future requirements and likely costs and savings might be after the council has completed its Transformation programme at the end of 2018 and into early 2019.
10. This report is intended to provide sufficient detail for principles and next steps to be agreed, as to the way forward for each of these of these properties, following further debate and approval by the council.

## **Report Detail**

11. The David Lock Associates report attached considers the current running costs, occupation levels now and likely future capital costs of retaining each of our operational offices over the short term future. The report reviews the possibilities for the future of these offices and whether retention, alternative use, subletting or disposal is appropriate and which of these could be explored further to deliver the most benefit.
12. In addition, the report gives guidance on the potential savings that could be made by working in the proposed new ways under the Transformation model. This includes more agile working by officers and better use of IT to enable our customers and communities to access the council services that they need and when they need them, in the most convenient way. In some cases alternative uses for some of the properties are set out, if the recommendations were applied, to give assurance as to potential future use and value and that the savings are achievable.
13. These potential savings could then be used towards retaining the key services that the council provides to its customers and communities and to improve and enhance these services further to meet its ambitious plans for the future of South Somerset.
14. Without making savings and generating more revenue the council may have to consider cuts to its services in light of central government cuts and increased costs. Therefore, the future of how the council property is managed and used, in particular its operational offices, has an important role in the financial future of the council; and in the council's ability to deliver its own functions and services to customers and communities across the district.

15. The report is not intended to be a final decision on the future of these properties, including the Council Head Quarters, but to give sufficient management data and facts as well as potential options to enable the Council to make the next steps towards making a decision.
16. Members and Officers now have a detailed base and direction from which to discuss the options in more detail and revert with their own findings and recommendations to enable the District Executive to take a final decision on these properties in early 2018.

### **Operational Properties Assessed in the Report**

17. The properties considered in the report are:

Area offices:

Holyrood Lace Mill, Chard  
 Petters House, Yeovil  
 Churchfields, Wincanton  
 Bridge Barns, Langport  
 Boden Centre, Chard  
 North Street, Ilminster

Head Quarters office:

Brympton Way

#### **Summary Report Conclusions:**

18. The Council's current primary office accommodation is now too large and is under utilised in the context of significant changes in the past few years and through Transformation. Usage by members of the public is falling year on year.
19. The Council's current primary office accommodation represents a significant annual **revenue cost** which is at risk of increasing. Of the buildings occupied, the single biggest revenue cost is Brympton Way and the area offices do not represent value for money when assessed as a cost per SSDC employee accommodated.
20. The Council's current primary office accommodation represents a significant **capital investment risk** i.e. if retained, they will need considerable investment in the next few years. Of the buildings occupied, the single biggest anticipated capital cost is Brympton Way. The area offices do not represent value for money when assessed as a cost per SSDC employee accommodated or customer served.
21. The Council's current primary office accommodation represents a significant opportunity for redevelopment to generate revenue, capital and to contribute to wider policy objectives, as well as secure savings. Of the locations, the biggest anticipated potential future revenue generator is Brympton Way.
22. Yeovil offers the most suitable location for the Council's long-term HQ, as it is the largest centre of population, is most accessible to the majority of customers and staff and maintains continuity of local representation. A town centre site is likely to offer the most locational advantages, supporting customer access, staff access and regeneration.
23. Remaining at Brympton Way offers the lowest overall financial benefit of the future HQ options.
24. The existing area based offices are disproportionately expensive and provide too much space for future service delivery need. Disposing of or finding alternative uses for existing area offices does not mean removing an area presence or discontinuing local service delivery – both of which are



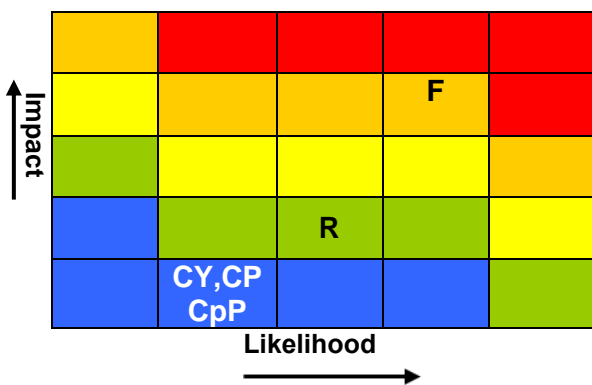
important to the Council's operating model under Transformation. The most cost-effective alternative for future provision is to work with public sector and community partners to secure more flexible accommodation and working space that will enable good customer access, effective area based agile and mobile working, and support the transformation to a leaner HQ provision.

## Financial Implications

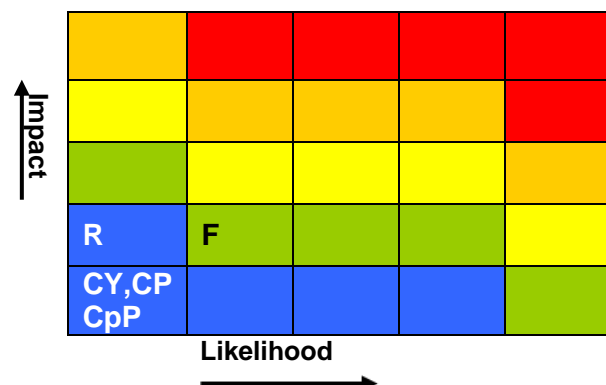
- None at present until a final decision is recommended for approval at District Executive upon the future of each property, yet to be decided.

## Risk Matrix

Risk Profile before officer recommendations



Risk Profile after officer recommendations



### Key

Categories	Colours (for further detail please refer to Risk management strategy)
R = Reputation	Red = High impact and high probability
CpP = Corporate Plan Priorities	Orange = Major impact and major probability
CP = Community Priorities	Yellow = Moderate impact and moderate probability
CY = Capacity	Green = Minor impact and minor probability
F = Financial	Blue = Insignificant impact and insignificant probability

## Council Plan Implications

- Our Strategy for 2017-18  
To create a modern, responsive, pro-active council serving South Somerset through a Transformation Programme, developing the culture and working practices needed to support a flexible, customer focused council with a modern, commercial approach.
- Our Priority Projects for 2017-18  
To implement the Transformation programme.

## Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications

Reducing the Council's operational property portfolio will support a reduction in Council carbon emissions.

## Equality and Diversity Implications

None that apply to this report.

### **Privacy Impact Assessment**

Not applicable.

### **Background Papers**

David Lock Associates Report – SSDC Operational Property Review November 2017. Excluding Confidential Appendix

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South Somerset District Council

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# **Review of Primary Office Space and Options for Future Accommodation Post Transformation**

## **Final Report**

by **David Lock Associates**

November 2017

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1.0 INTRODUCTION and SCOPE

*Property Strategy*

- 1.1 The District Executive agreed the requirement for a priority review of the Council's primary office space and the options for meeting future accommodation needs post transformation when it recently adopted a Commercial Property Strategy. This review therefore builds on the initial analysis of the Council's portfolio undertaken as part of the development of the Strategy. It also reflects the clear financial requirement to secure revenue savings and capital capacity for investment, with the overall aim of underpinning the Council's financial sustainability post transformation.

*Transformation*

- 1.2 The Council's Transformation Programme aims to put in place a revised operating model for the delivery of Council services by early 2019. The Operating Model is based on a lean, outcomes and output driven approach underpinned by the introduction of a technology platform that improves workflow and enables services to be delivered by a more mobile and agile workforce. It breaks down service silo barriers, and reduces the reliance on office based interface with both the public and other organisations.
- 1.3 The Accommodation workstream of the Transformation process addresses the needs of the future workforce, which will require less accommodation and fewer workstations. The analysis to date indicates that the organisation will have a future need for 132 workstations (desk spaces) on the assumption that the move to agile working is successful, and that all those expected to work in a mobile/agile way will do so, and will have been adequately enabled to do so. The 132 desks includes all workforce currently accommodated at both Brympton Way, Petters House, and other current office accommodation, and adopts a ratio of 6 desks to 10 members of staff, i.e. accommodation for in total some 220 people. This figure of 132 desk spaces has been used in this review to assess future need.

*Properties in scope*

- 1.4 The properties assessed as part of this review are as follows:

**Brympton Way Headquarters**, Yeovil: Purpose built office building circa 1988, providing in total some 4543 M2 of accommodation over 4 floors, and including a Council Chamber and Canteen. Site area 1.94 ha (4.8 acres). Located on the edge of Yeovil and accessed via the Lynx Trading Estate.



**Petters House**, Yeovil: Purpose built office building circa 1987, providing in total some 1030 M2 of accommodation over 3 floors. Located in central Yeovil adjoining a large surface car park.



**Churchfield and Stable block**, Wincanton: Converted former parsonage circa 19<sup>th</sup> C with additions circa 2000 providing in total some 1188 M<sup>2</sup> of accommodation over 3 floors plus basement. Located close to central Wincanton, with on-site car parking.



**Holyrood Lace Mill**, Chard: Converted Grade II listed former Lace Mill built 1829, providing some 2110 M<sup>2</sup> of accommodation in total. Located in central Chard, close to the Chard Regeneration site, with on site car parking. Currently accommodates Chard Library.



**Boden Centre**, Chard: Former Library building circa 19<sup>th</sup> C, converted for use as a Healthy Living Centre, and accommodating Somerset Skills and Learning, and meeting spaces/hall for hire, occasional use by SSDC officers. Located in Central Chard close to the Chard Regeneration site. This is not strictly one of the Council's core offices, but was included in the review as a building with office use potential in Chard. Building provides some 288 M<sup>2</sup> in total. With DDA access (lift).



**Unit 10, Bridge Barns**, Long Sutton: Part of a complex of former barns converted to modern office space in 2005, rented by SSDC for Area North offices, but in third party ownership. Area leased comprises some 77 M2 in total. Rural location on the edge of Long Sutton, accessed via A372.



**Iminster Community Office**, 6 North Street, Iminster: Former Fire Station Building 1935, converted for office use. Provides some 127 M2 of accommodation in total. Located in central Iminster, no parking and not DDA compliant.



*Purpose of the review*

- 1.5 The purpose of this review is to assess the space the Council currently owns and occupies in the buildings within scope, and the suitability of these buildings for ongoing use post Transformation. It is also to identify and consider alternative options for accommodating the Council's future operational needs, and for shaping the future of any buildings that may become surplus to maximise their value. The review is based on the most up to date information available from the Council,

consultation with relevant Council officers, and technical desk top assessments of the land and buildings involved.

- 1.6 The overall aim is for this review to inform the Council in its decision making in relation to the future of this part of its portfolio, and how best to accommodate the future model of working going forward. It forms part of the overall drive for efficiency and effective financial management to secure the long-term sustainability of the Council.

2.0 CURRENT USAGE AND UTILISATION

- 2.1 A key starting point in assessing the on-going suitability of the buildings for future use is to understand how and to what extent they are currently being used by the Council. The utilisation of the buildings as they currently stand has therefore been analysed, and considered in the context of the space that will be required post transformation. The information relates to the whole of the building, as the Council owns the entire building. The areas occupied by third parties are reflected in the financial analysis in section 3.0 below.
- 2.2 The utilisation analysis has involved an assessment of the overall space provided by each building, the amount of this that is pure office space, and the amount of the building that is being used for other purposes. A summary of this information is set out below:

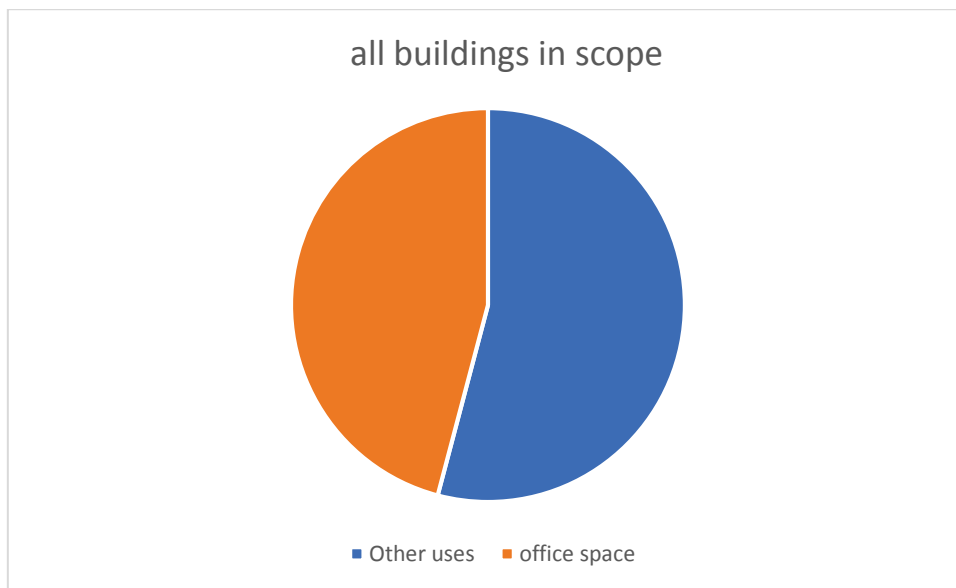


Figure 1 Overall % of office floorspace

Location	“Other”	Offices
<b>Brympton Way</b>	40%	60%
<b>Petters House</b>	54%	46%
<b>Churchfields, Wincanton</b>	58%	42%
<b>Holyrood Lace Mill, Chard</b>	75%	25%
<b>Boden Centre, Chard</b>	92%	8%
<b>Bridge Barns, Long Sutton</b>	32%	68%
<b>North Street, Ilminster</b>	85%	15%

Table 1: Offices as a % of overall floorspace by location: Red = below average, green = above average, amber = average

- 2.3 The information above indicates the amount of the existing buildings that comprise office space – that being the space occupied by desks / work stations. It should be noted that “other” space includes meeting rooms, democratic space, circulation space, reception areas, canteen space, plant and servicing space, stores and other areas that are not offices. This floorspace is not all unused by any means, but can give an indication of the overall efficiency of a building.
- 2.4 Overall, only some 46% of all the floorspace provided by the buildings in scope comprises office floorspace. Figure 2 below shows the British Council of Offices assessment of overall office floorspace budget for 1995, compared to more flexible working arrangements in 2015. This indicates that the 2015 budget suggests that circa 60% of floorspace should be allowed to accommodate desks, with circa 40% for



meeting space and other support uses. Where desks are allocated, as in the 1995 model, it is indicated that some 70% of floorspace should be used to accommodate desk space, and only circa 30% for other uses.

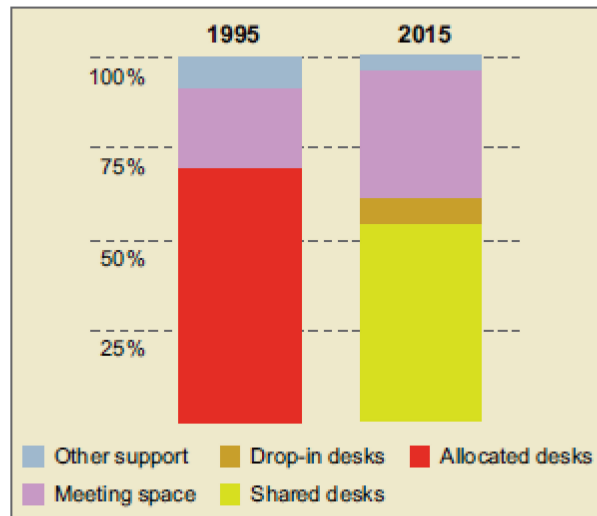


Figure 2 Model of contrasting space budgets<sup>1</sup>

- 2.5 The Council's current model of operation has allocated desks, more in keeping with the 1995 model, but in each case has office space as a percentage of overall space provided of less than 70%. The most efficient existing floorspace against this measure is unit 10 Bridge Barns, which is also the most modern office space. Second, and more in line with the more flexible model in terms of space is Brympton way, but at 60% offices with allocated desks, this still indicates that the amount of overall floorspace given over to "other" uses appears generally high.
- 2.6 Having identified broadly what the offices comprise, the next stage is to look at how they are currently being used by the Council. The usage of office space is the best information available, and so has been analysed as the comparator to establish an indication of utilisation:

Office provision	Total building M2	Current office space M2	Current office space occupied by SSDC M2	% of total by location	% of offices by location	Future need post transformation
Brympton Way	4543	2706	1333	29%	49%	132 permanent desk spaces, current density = 598, say 600 plus say 40% break out, meeting, support etc. say 1000
Petters House	1030	471	260	25%	55%	
Churchfields	1188	495	50	4%	10%	
Holyrood lace mill	2110	527	50	2%	9%	
Boden Centre	288	23	10	3%	43%	
Bridge Barns	77	53	10	13%	19%	
Ilminster	127	100	17.1	13%	17%	
	<b>9363</b>	<b>4375</b>	<b>1730.1</b>			<b>1000</b>
		Percent of total building	18%			11%
		Percent of offices	40%			23%

Table 2: % of office space used by SSDC, by location

<sup>1</sup> BCO Occupier Density Study 2013

- 2.7 Table 2 shows that of the office floorspace provided in the existing buildings, overall only 40% of this is being used by SSDC for office purposes. 60% of the available office floorspace is not currently being used by SSDC. Whilst some of this may be in use by third parties, this indicates that the existing primary office portfolio is currently too large for SSDC's needs. The impact of lettings to third parties is considered in s.3.0 Cost Profile and Analysis.
- 2.8 Looking forward to an anticipated future requirement of only 132 fixed desk spaces, the amount of floorspace required will fall considerably. For example, Brympton Way currently accommodates some 294 allocated desks in circa 1333 M2 of floorspace, which represents some 4.53M2 per desk, excluding all supporting space such as meeting rooms, circulation etc. At this density, again excluding supporting space, then the amount of pure office floorspace required post Transformation would be in the order of 600M2. If we assume the ratio suggested in the 2015 space budget above, then if this is 60% of all future floorspace, including supporting space and provision for plant etc, then the overall requirement going forward would be some £1,000 M2. **The building overall is therefore over 4 times the space that the Council needs, assuming it retains none of the other buildings.**
- 2.9 This indicates that the current primary office portfolio is far too large for the Council's needs, with an overall provision of some 9363 M2 against an actual future requirement of around 1000 m2 based on current desk space densities. This demonstrates that the Council can afford to be a little more generous in its future space provision to ensure that the future model of working can be properly accommodated, whilst still securing a very significant reduction in the space it has available. Allowing for say 1320 M2 in future, to provide a better quality overall working environment for staff, would still represent only 14% of the current space provided by these buildings.
- 2.10 A further area of utilisation to consider is use by the public. Figures are available for the buildings other than Brympton Way, Bridge Barns and the Boden Centre for the number of visits per annum, as follows:

SSDC offices review															
Public usage of area office locations															
	Total service footfall			Change	SSDC core services			Change	Cash machine		Change	Housing advice		Change	
Location	2015-16	2016-17	%	2015-16	2016-17	%	2015-16	2016-17	%	2015-16	2016-17	%	2015-16	2016-17	%
<b>Brympton Way</b>	No Information														
<b>Petters House</b>	11317	8189	72%	8294	5958	72%	8965	7056	79%	7473	5850	78%			
<b>Langport</b>	1244	1430	115%	692	597	86%									
<b>Churchfields</b>	4651	3815	82%	2114	1535	73%									
<b>Holyrood</b>	9500	6476	68%	5047	3677	73%	6539	5105	78%						
<b>Crewkerne</b>	6752	5396	80%	2498	1885	75%									
<b>Bridge</b>	No Information														
<b>Boden</b>	No Information														
<b>Ilminster</b>	1061	875	82%	802	601	75%									
<b>Totals</b>	34525	26181	76%	19447	14253	73%	15504	12161	78%	7473	5850	78%			
<b>Fall in usage</b>			<b>24%</b>			<b>27%</b>			<b>22%</b>			<b>22%</b>			<b>22%</b>
<b>Overall total for all reasons</b>															
	57502	44192	77%												
<b>Fall in usage</b>			<b>23%</b>												

Table 3: Public usage of buildings

- 2.11 This demonstrates that overall, visits to the buildings made by members of the public over the last year have fallen by 23%. Visits made to access core SSDC services have fallen across all measured locations, and have dropped overall by some 27%. This reinforces the need for a change in the way that services are delivered, as being addressed through the Transformation Programme, reflecting that there is a trend towards access to Council services being made increasingly via digital and other remote means of communication.

**Conclusion 1: The Council's current primary office accommodation is too large and is under utilised. Its usage by members of the public is also falling.**

### 3.0 COST PROFILE AND ANALYSIS

3.1 The second area of analysis is to consider what the primary office portfolio represents in terms of cost to the Council. It is here that the impact of lettings of space to third parties is initially taken into account. The overall cost profile is made up of revenue costs and anticipated capital investment. The figures included in the analysis have been provided by the Council's finance, property and IT officers, and represent the best information currently available.

#### *Revenue costs*

3.2 The Council's primary office portfolio attracts a range of costs, some of which are fixed, such as National Non Domestic Rates (NNDR, also known as Business rates) applicable to the floorspace of the building whether it is occupied fully or not when the building is in use, and some of which will vary according to the number of staff in the building, such as utility costs. The revenue costs associated with each of the buildings in scope have been assessed for the following heads of cost: Rent paid, Utility costs, IT costs, NNDR and premises related day to day maintenance costs.

3.3 In terms of the actual cost of the buildings to the Council, it is important to reduce these costs by the benefit of any revenue received in relation to the use and occupation of the building. Therefore, in assessing the net annual revenue cost, the following areas of income have been assessed and taken into account: Rental income from third party occupiers, income from Energy systems – photovoltaic Cells installed at the office sites, incidental income, such as that from hall or meeting room lettings, and income paid by tenants to cover service charges.

3.4 The overall summary of revenue costs is set out below:

Location	Total income	Total Outgoings	Net revenue cost
<b>Brympton Way</b>	£240,632	£397,417	£156,785
<b>Petters House</b>	£47,088	£94,563	£47,475
<b>Churchfields, Wincanton</b>	£22,728	£65,394	£42,666
<b>Holyrood Lace Mill, Chard</b>	£15,500	£77,925	£62,425
<b>Boden Centre, Chard</b>	£7,800	£21,700	£13,900
<b>Bridge Barns, Long Sutton</b>	0	£9,124	£9,124
<b>North Street, Ilminster</b>	£4,601	£11,800	£7,199
<b>Total</b>	<b>£338,349</b>	<b>£677,923</b>	<b>£339,574</b>

Table 4: Analysis of net revenue cost by location

3.5 This indicates that overall, the buildings in scope are costing circa £340,000 pa in net revenue. Of this overall cost, the single largest net cost is Brympton Way, contributing a cost of over £150,000 pa, and representing some 46% of the total revenue cost. The second highest cost is Holyrood Lace Mill. Together these two properties constitute around 65% of the overall revenue cost of the buildings in scope.

3.6 Looking at the income, of the total sum generated by the properties, some £172,660 represents rent paid by third parties to occupy parts of the Council's buildings. This amounts to just over 50% of the income accounted for. A further £135,460 represents service charges paid by occupiers, associated with their renting of space from the Council. In total the amount related to third party rental amounts to some £308,120, or over 90% of the total income. The Council is therefore reliant to some extent on the continued occupation of this space by these other organisations to keep the revenue costs of their buildings down. These occupiers are largely other public-sector bodies, who themselves are under pressure to rationalise their office

occupation and to reduce costs. There is therefore a significant risk that some of the space currently occupied by these bodies could become vacant within the foreseeable future. In fact, during the course of the review one organisation has served notice of its intention to quit<sup>2</sup>. There is therefore a real risk that the overall impact of these buildings on the Council's revenue account could rise in the future.

- 3.7 There is, however, also the opportunity for further vacant or underused space to be let to third parties looking to relocate out of their own inefficient buildings.

*Revenue cost per SSDC employee accommodated*

- 3.8 Another useful way of analysing the costs of the existing buildings is to assess how much this represents per full time equivalent (FTE) employee, as this will also inform the overall efficiency of the use of that cost. The analysis of cost per SSDC FTE employee is set out below:

Location	Net revenue cost	No of FTE staff generally in the building	Cost per person accommodated
<b>Brympton Way</b>	£156,785	294	£533.28
<b>Petters House</b>	£47,475	50	£949.50
<b>Churchfields, Wincanton</b>	£42,666	4	£10,666.50
<b>Holyrood Lace Mill, Chard</b>	£62,425	4	£15,606.25
<b>Boden Centre, Chard</b>	£13,900	0.5	£27,800.00
<b>Bridge Barns, Long Sutton</b>	£9,124	2	£4,562.00
<b>North Street, Ilminster</b>	£7,199	0.5	£14,398.00

Table 5: Analysis of revenue cost per annum per FTE equivalent at each location

- 3.9 This table demonstrates that overall, Brympton Way, whilst the most expensive in terms of actual money spent per annum currently represents the best value for money per employee accommodated, at just over £530 per person, or per desk space. The next most efficient is Petters Way, at just under 950 per person/desk space. It is clear from the analysis above that the financial efficiency of the area based offices is far lower, as the costs per employee are significantly higher in all cases. Ignoring Boden Centre for the moment, which is mainly used by others, the most expensive is the Holyrood Lace Mill in Chard, which represents a cost of almost 30x the amount per employee of Brympton Way.
- 3.10 Looking to the future, the picture at Brympton way changes. If the analysis is per person in the building at any one time, i.e. per desk space under Transformation, then at 132 future desk spaces the revenue costs per space of the Brympton way HQ rise to circa £1,188. Even allowing for up to 150 people in the building working flexibly and using the meeting and break out spaces, the overall cost per person is anticipated to be in excess of £1,000 per space, and would exceed the current per person costs of Petters House up to the point of there being 165 people in the building. This indicates that going forward, Petters House could be more cost effective to run than Brympton Way, particularly if it could be refurbished and re-planned to accommodate more SSDC staff.
- 3.11 In theory, based on current occupancy densities, as set out at paragraph 2.7, Petters House could accommodate all the Council's future office requirements. This would however require the relocation of all the existing partners in the Petters building, and the loss of their income. The total net revenue cost of Petters House on this basis,

<sup>2</sup> Somerset Skills and Learning, currently based at the Boden Centre.

but still allowing for the PV income, would be circa £86,400 per annum, which would represent some £655 per desk space, which would be considerably lower than the future potential cost of Brympton Way calculated on this basis. Assuming a more generous future space allowance of circa 1320M2 overall, then Petters House would only accommodate circa 100 desks, and the cost would be in the order of £864 per desk. At around 1,500M2, with refurbishment and extension of Petters House the existing occupiers could be kept, and the post transformation requirement accommodated. The cost of such an extension and refurbishment is estimated to be in the order of £1.2 million. If this were to be funded through borrowing at say 4% interest, then a standard mortgage repayment of the full figure over a 25-year period would cost in the order of £76,000 pa. Allowing for additional revenue costs per annum for the additional space of say £30,000 pa, the total additional annual cost to the Council would be circa £106,000 pa, still lower than the cost of retaining the Brympton Way offices. The building would also be fully utilised and could offer modern refurbished accommodation of a quality appropriate to a transformed organisation.

**Conclusion 2: The Council's current primary office accommodation represents a significant annual revenue cost which is at risk of increasing. Of the buildings occupied, the single biggest revenue cost is Brympton Way, and the area offices do not represent value for money when assessed as a cost per SSDC employee accommodated.**

#### *Anticipated capital costs*

- 3.12 As well as revenue costs, the primary office portfolio represents a capital cost to the Council in terms of anticipated investment need to address identified wants of repair, or necessary improvements to enable ongoing service delivery. As part of the review, the latest anticipated investment need for each location over the next 5 years has been considered, based on the latest condition surveys carried out by the Council's in-house professional building surveyors. This information is set out below:

Location	Anticipated capital costs
<b>Brympton Way</b>	£2,726,831
<b>Petters House</b>	£126,211
<b>Churchfields, Wincanton</b>	£91,237
<b>Holyrood Lace Mill, Chard</b>	£422,000
<b>Boden Centre, Chard</b>	£33,928
<b>Bridge Barns, Long Sutton</b>	£0
<b>North Street, Ilminster</b>	£7,025
<b>Total</b>	<b>£3,407,232</b>

Table 6: Anticipated capital investment need/anticipated costs

- 3.13 This table indicates a potential need for investment of circa £3.4 million within the immediately foreseeable future. Of this figure, the highest estimated cost by a considerable margin is for Brympton Way. The anticipated capital investment need for this building represents some 80% of the total figure identified, and relates principally to works that may be required to address the obsolescence of the existing

air handling system, together with other works to support the fabric of the building for ongoing service use. Clearly, this money will only have to be spent if the need for such works arises during the period, but it is indicative of a risk of failure of elements of the building's plant and general wear to its overall fabric. These shortcomings would have to be addressed to ensure the long-term sustainability of the building as a head quarters for the Council if a decision is made for it to be retained for this purpose, as the building is approaching the end of the average design life for an office of this era (Circa 30 years)

- 3.14 The second highest cost relates to anticipated capital investment required for the Holyrood Lace Mill in Chard. This is a Grade II listed building and therefore requires ongoing investment to protect it as a heritage asset. It is however under-used, as demonstrated earlier, and therefore raises a question as to whether such ongoing investment liability represents value for money to the Council.
- 3.15 It is also important to recognise that even if a decision were to be made to dispose of buildings in scope, there will still be an ongoing responsibility for maintenance and repair until such time as disposal or change of use can be effected. The need for relocation of services, and the lead in work involved in preparing the property to secure best value, together with property realistic timescales and uncertainty as to the level of demand suggests that it will be prudent to make an allowance for some ongoing capital investment in all the buildings for the next 18-24 months. An indicative level of investment suitable to the ongoing maintenance of a building for its current use will depend on the age of the building, its fabric, its use and whether it is to be held for the long term. In general, an allowance of between 2% and 5% of the value of the asset should be invested. To reflect this, an allowance of 5% of the existing asset value has been identified for ongoing maintenance over the period identified. This will reduce the potential level of capital savings that could be achieved through rationalisation of the portfolio as follows:

Location	Anticipated capital costs	Assumed ongoing cost of 5% of asset value until asset disposed of
<b>Brympton Way</b>	£2,726,831	£273,750
<b>Petters House</b>	£126,211	£55,000
<b>Churchfields, Wincanton</b>	£91,237	£31,000
<b>Holyrood Lace Mill, Chard</b>	£422,000	£46,000
<b>Boden Centre, Chard</b>	£33,928	£7,650
<b>Bridge Barns, Long Sutton</b>	£0	0
<b>North Street, Iminster</b>	£7,025	£3,750
<b>Total</b>	<b>£3,407,232</b>	<b>£417,150</b>

Table 7: allowance for ongoing short-term investment

- 3.16 This indicates that an allowance of circa £400,000 would be prudent for ongoing capital investment in the short term, reducing the overall potential for capital savings that could be derived from these properties to circa £3m.
- 3.17 As for revenue cost analysis, in assessing the relative value for money of each location requires consideration of the cost per desk space. This has been analysed as follows:



Location	Anticipated capital costs	No of staff generally in the building	Cost per person accommodated
<b>Brympton Way</b>	£2,726,831	294	£9,275
<b>Petters House</b>	£126,211	50	£2,524
<b>Churchfields, Wincanton</b>	£91,237	4	£22,809
<b>Holyrood Lace Mill, Chard</b>	£422,000	4	£105,500
<b>Boden Centre, Chard</b>	£33,928	0.5	£67,856
<b>Bridge Barns, Long Sutton</b>	£0	2	£0
<b>North Street, Ilminster</b>	£7,025	0.5	£14,050
<b>Total</b>	<b>£3,407,232</b>		

Table 8: Anticipated capital cost per desk/person accommodated

- 3.18 This demonstrates that based on the current usage of the buildings (with the exception of Bridge Barns which is leased in) Petters House represents the best value for money when measured on a per desk/per person basis. Going forward, if Brympton Way were to be retained as the long-term HQ for the Council, a reduction to only 132 desk spaces would increase the potential capital investment need per desk to over £20,000.
- 3.19 It is also clear that in terms of capital risk, the area offices located outside of Yeovil, in particular the Holyrood Lace Mill and the Boden Centre, do not represent value for money for the level of use to which they are currently being put. In terms of potential savings, the potential capital expenditure estimate for the area based buildings amounts to in the order of £465,000:

Location	Net revenue cost	Assumed ongoing cost of 5% of asset value until asset disposed of
<b>Churchfields, Wincanton</b>	£91,237	£31,000
<b>Holyrood Lace Mill, Chard</b>	£422,000	£46,000
<b>Boden Centre, Chard</b>	£33,928	£7,650
<b>Bridge Barns, Long Sutton</b>	£0	£0
<b>North Street, Ilminster</b>	£7,025	£3,750
<b>Total</b>	<b>£554,190</b>	<b>£88,400</b>
<b>Total potential capital saving</b>	£465,790, which represents circa £42,344 per person accommodated	

Table 9: Anticipated potential capital savings from area based offices.

- 3.20 Overall, it is clear that there is potential for foreseeable capital expenditure to the Council of some £3 million, a significant amount of which could be saved if the estate is rationalised to meet future operational need.

**Conclusion 3: The Council's current primary office accommodation represents a significant capital investment risk. Of the buildings occupied, the single biggest anticipated capital cost is Brympton Way, and the area offices do not represent value for money when assessed as a cost per SSDC employee accommodated.**

#### 4.0 VALUE PROFILE AND POTENTIAL FOR ALTERNATIVE USE

- 4.1 To complete the analysis of the overall financial picture it is important to consider how the buildings might be used in the future if no longer required by the Council for ongoing service delivery, and the value that this could generate, either as revenue or capital, to the Council. Each of the buildings in scope has been considered against its existing asset value, and its wider market potential and opportunity for change of use.
- 4.2 As well as the financial benefit that could be derived from these properties, we have also considered their ability to contribute to the Council's wider objectives.
- 4.3 The analysis contains information of a commercially sensitive nature, which if made public could be prejudicial to the Council's future financial position. The detailed analysis is therefore provided in a separate private and confidential appendix to this report.

##### *Summary of Asset Values*

- 4.4 Each of the buildings owned by the Council has an up to date asset value for accounting purposes. These are set out at Table 10 below. The asset values are indicative of an open market value assuming that there is demand in the open market for the properties. This does not mean that if offered to the market they would be guaranteed to secure a level of value, or indeed any interest at all. It is however a useful starting point in assessing an indication of the relative value tied up in the existing assets, and the overall opportunity cost of their ongoing retention.

Location	Asset Value
<b>Brympton Way</b>	£ 5,475,000.00
<b>Petters House</b>	£ 1,100,000.00
<b>Churchfields</b>	£ 620,000.00
<b>Holyrood lace mill</b>	£ 920,000.00
<b>Boden Centre</b>	£ 153,000.00
<b>Bridge Barns</b>	Nil, Leased in
<b>Ilminster</b>	£ 75,000.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>£ 8,343,000.00</b>

Table 10: Summary of latest asset values

- 4.5 This indicates that the Brympton Way HQ building currently represents the biggest potential opportunity cost, which is to be expected as this is the largest of the buildings in the office portfolio.
- 4.6 Overall, this analysis demonstrates that the Council's primary office portfolio offers considerable opportunity for future revenue and capital generation, and to contribute to the delivery of wider policy requirements for housing and economic regeneration.

**Conclusion 4: The Council's current primary office accommodation represents a significant opportunity for redevelopment to generate revenue, capital and to contribute to wider policy objectives, as well as securing savings. Of the locations, the biggest anticipated potential future revenue generator is Brympton Way.**

## 5.0 OPTIONS ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 This section explores the options for accommodating the Council's ongoing Head Quarters office accommodation needs, and for enabling area based/locality working, post transformation. As these areas have discrete characteristics, they are considered separately.

### *Future HQ provision*

- 5.2 The options for the future Council HQ office requirement has been identified by the transformation process to date as the need to accommodate 132 desk spaces, supported by the meeting facilities and break out spaces required to enable more flexible working. Consideration also needs to be given to accommodating the Council's democratic functions.

- 5.3 Looking firstly at the future HQ provision, consideration has been given to the characteristics that might be required for a site/building to be suitable for long term sustainable use as the Council's HQ. The following qualities have been identified:

- Accessible to members of the public and businesses
  - On foot
  - By car
  - By public transport
  - Convenient
  - DDA compliant
- Accessible to staff
  - On foot
  - By car
  - By public transport
  - Convenient for local services
- Efficient
  - Right size
  - Energy efficient and sustainable
- Value for money
  - Running costs
  - Capital costs
  - Long terms sustainability
  - Flexibility
- Positive impact on the Council's reputation
  - Business like
  - Likely to attract and help retain high quality staff
  - Not overly ostentatious
  - Comfortable environment with the right facilities for face to face interaction
  - Contributes positively to wider policies and aspirations

- 5.4 In developing the options for the future, we have assessed our views of the buildings in scope against these criteria, ranking each across a range of 1-7 with 1 being good and 7 being poor. The outcome of our views, based on our analysis of the buildings as set out in this report, is as shown in Table 11 below:

Location	Accessible to public	Accessible to staff	Efficiency	Value for money	Image	Totals
Brympton Way	6	2	1.5	2.5	2	14
Petters House	1	1	1.5	2	1	6.5
Churchfields, Wincanton	4	5	6.5	5.5	3	24
Holyrood Lace Mill, Chard	2	3	6.5	7	5	23.5
Boden Centre, Chard	3	4	4	3	4	18
Bridge Barns, Long Sutton	7	7	3.5	2.5	7	27
North Street, Ilminster	5	6	5	5.5	6	27.5

Table 11: DLA assessment of relative qualitative scores

- 5.5 Our analysis suggests that of the buildings in scope, that which best meets the qualitative criteria for a future HQ building is Petters House. This is however to some extent a subjective assessment and may not represent the views of all. It does however strongly suggest that both Petters House and Brympton Way are the only buildings likely to offer a long-term option for the future. These have therefore been included in the options to be explored. It has also been assumed that any future HQ will be located within Yeovil, as this is the largest centre of population and commerce within the District, and accommodates the largest concentration of staff within easy travelling distance, according to the staff Post Code survey.
- 5.6 The qualitative criteria also suggest that a town centre location is likely to be more suitable than an edge or out of town location, as it is more accessible by a wider number of means of transport for more people, a more visible presence to a larger number of people, and can contribute to wider regeneration and sustainability objectives, and provides better links to other public and private sector services.

**Conclusion 5: Yeovil offers the most suitable location for the Council's long-term HQ, as it is the largest centre of population, is most accessible to the majority of customers and staff and maintains continuity of local representation. A town centre site is likely to offer the most locational advantages.**

*Options for future HQ provision*

- 5.7 The following options have been identified for accommodating the Council's future HQ requirements:
- i) Status Quo – Remain at Brympton Way
  - ii) Remain in existing SSDC building in Yeovil – Petters House
  - iii) Build a new HQ facility
  - iv) Occupy an alternative existing building
- 5.8 For each of these options, the advantages and disadvantages have been considered and are set out in table 12 overleaf:

Option	Advantages	Disadvantages
<b>Status Quo – Remain at Brympton Way</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No upheaval/decant costs</li> <li>No change for customers</li> <li>Lots of free car parking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not cost effective - need for significant capital investment for the space to be suitable for the long term</li> <li>Risk of losing future SCC income and costs increasing</li> <li>Too big</li> <li>Poor location compared to town centre</li> <li>Poor image</li> <li>Loss of development opportunity</li> <li>No regenerative benefits</li> </ul>
<b>Remain in existing SSDC building in Yeovil – Petters House</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Significant revenue cost savings at Brympton Way, even taking into account costs of extension to Petters House</li> <li>Reduced capital cost risk</li> <li>Capital cost savings</li> <li>Available car parking close by</li> <li>Town centre location – linkage to wider regeneration, sustainability and better accessibility</li> <li>Only limited newbuild, and clear reduction in overall office space to justify cost</li> <li>Releases development/investment potential at Brympton Way</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Upheaval and decant costs</li> <li>Existing building is dated and its current layout inefficient, and will need refurbishment</li> <li>Existing building not big enough – either split site with Lufton/Westlands or investment in extension and refurbishment of circa £1.2 million</li> <li>May need to relocate partners if operating on split site</li> <li>Need to extend to accommodate partners and future HQ capacity</li> <li>Car parking is not free</li> </ul>
<b>Build a new HQ facility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Modern flexible building built to current energy efficient standards</li> <li>Potential for greater long term revenue savings BUT impact on revenue account greater if construction cost is borrowed</li> <li>New image for a transformed council</li> <li>Releases development/investment potential at Brympton Way</li> <li>Town centre location – linkage to wider regeneration, sustainability and better accessibility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Upheaval and decant costs</li> <li>Open to Criticism as a “Vanity project”</li> <li>Greater capital cost than extending Petters (Circa £3-3.5 million)</li> <li>Need to relocate partners to dispose of Petters</li> <li>Need to identify site – probably adjacent to Petters, - little advantage over extending</li> <li>Reduced overall capital savings</li> </ul>
<b>Occupy an alternative existing building</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refurbished flexible open plan space</li> <li>Reduced capital cost risk</li> <li>Potential to release space as requirements continue to change in the future</li> <li>Town centre location – linkage to wider regeneration, sustainability and better accessibility but no advantage over Petters House</li> <li>Releases development/investment potential at Brympton Way</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Upheaval and decant costs</li> <li>Only suitable available option is Maltravers House</li> <li>Baggage and public perception associated with previous occupation</li> <li>Only currently available to rent</li> <li>Anticipated revenue costs on rental basis likely to exceed current net revenue costs of Brympton Way</li> </ul>

Table 12: Analysis of options

5.9 Ignoring for the moment the impact of any change to the area office provision, which will be common to all HQ options, the overall financial impact of each option can be summarised as follows:

Option	Potential Revenue savings	Potential Capital savings	Potential future revenue costs	Potential future capital costs
<b>Status Quo – Remain at Brympton Way</b>	Saving of circa £47,500 pa revenue costs of Petters House, assuming it can be fully let or sold	Circa £71,200 net savings of investment need in Petters House	Ongoing revenue cost of Brympton Way circa £156,000 pa, which could increase if SCC vacates or reduces occupation, but could be mitigated IF space can be shared with Blue Light facility (unlikely)	Circa £2,727,000 investment need. May be reduced if not all the space is brought up to modern standards, but this may impact on image/reputation and ability to attract and retain staff
<b>Remain in existing SSDC building in Yeovil – Petters House</b>	Saving of circa £156,000 pa from closure of Brympton Way,	Circa £2,453,000 allowing for some ongoing costs for Brympton Way as set out at Table 7 para 3.15	Ongoing revenue costs of circa £153,000 per annum including existing revenue costs, additional revenue costs for running extended space and revenue funding of capital investment. If capital investment funded direct from capital this would reduce to circa £77,000 pa	Circa £1.2 million for refurbishment, and then ongoing maintenance of modernised building. (NB capital investment only to be considered if not funded by borrowing, otherwise double counting with revenue costs)
<b>Build a new HQ facility</b>	Saving of circa £156,000 pa from closure of Brympton Way, plus £47,500 from closure of Petters House, overall circa £203,000	Circa £2,453,000 for Brympton Way plus circa £71,200 for Petters House allowing for some ongoing costs as set out at Table 7 para 3.15. Total say £2,524,200	Revenue costs of new building (unknown, but reflecting better efficiency) say £50,000 - £60,000 and costs of borrowing for newbuild circa £200,000 pa if revenue funded.	Circa £3,000,000 - £3,500,000 for new build, plus cost of site, and ongoing maintenance of new building. (NB capital investment only to be considered if not funded by borrowing, otherwise double counting with revenue costs)
<b>Occupy an alternative existing building</b>	Saving of circa £156,000 pa from closure of Brympton Way, plus £47,500 from closure of Petters House, overall circa £203,000	Circa £2,453,000 for Brympton Way plus circa £71,200 for Petters House allowing for some ongoing costs as set out at Table 7 para 3.15. Total say £2,524,200	Revenue costs of renting at Maltravers House estimated at circa £240,000 - £250,000 pa including rent, NNDR and running costs	Ongoing maintenance of rented space under lease obligations

Table 13: Summary of financial implications of HQ options – excluding future potential revenue/capital generation – see table in Private and Confidential appendix

- 5.10 Based on the above analysis, remaining at Brympton Way appears to offer the least in terms of saving and future value generation. The two most financially beneficial options appear to be either remaining in SSDC property at Petters House and extending/refurbishing it, or building a new purpose-built HQ. The latter option is however less financially beneficial if land outside the existing Council ownership were to be acquired for the new development. It also carries a greater risk than extending, as it involves a larger project and more overall capital investment. It does however potentially generate the greatest capital saving, and would offer long term running cost benefits as it would be modern sustainable space.

**Conclusion 6: Remaining at Brympton Way offers the lowest overall financial benefit of the future HQ options.**

*Democratic space*

- 5.11 The Council's current HQ building provides a purpose-built Council Chamber for democratic activities. It is not anticipated that such a space would be provided in any future HQ building, as the current space is underused, so it would not represent value for money to build or retain a dedicated Council chamber. There is however the potential for an area of a future building accommodating meeting rooms to have the flexibility for the size of the space to be changed to accommodate some Executive and Committee meetings. This will be a matter for a detailed design stage. For larger public meetings it is not uncommon for Local Authorities to have to use external spaces. In Yeovil there is potential for meetings to be held at Westlands, and possibly at the Octagon Theatre, or at other private buildings such as local hotels.

*Future of area office accommodation and options for area based /locality service delivery*

- 5.12 The utilisation and financial analysis set out at section 2.0 and 3.0 indicate that the existing area offices do not provide value for money, as they are serving a falling number of visitors accessing services via the buildings, rather than via other means, and represent a disproportionate cost per member of full time staff accommodated. That said, the area based approach to working in SSDC is well established, and offers local access to services that may otherwise be hard for certain sectors of the population to reach if they were not available.
- 5.13 Therefore, there is a strong political will to maintain area based service delivery, but an increasing recognition that this is about people rather than buildings, and about establishing the right working arrangements to enable mobile/agile staff to work effectively and to offer the right facilities for the public in each location, such as a warm, dry and private place for face to face discussions. This could be in someone's home, or in a building with suitable facilities available for use by SDDC staff, but does not need to be in an SSDC building.
- 5.14 The Transformation process has also highlighted that for mobile and agile working to succeed, and to deliver the reduction in permanent desk spaces being planned for, staff working outside of the HQ need access to desk spaces and meeting spaces that enable them to be effective. It is recognised that not all mobile staff can use their own homes as a desk base when one is needed, so space needs to be identified that can be used across the district as part of post Transformation working arrangements.
- 5.15 This has been assumed as a requirement in considering the options for the future of the Council's area office accommodation. The options identified are as follows:
- i) Maintain the status Quo
  - ii) Secure new area based buildings that are cheaper/more efficient



- iii) Share space with other public-sector bodies for customer facing services

5.16 In terms of the Status Quo, the current revenue costs of the existing accommodation, compared to an allowance for ongoing costs of making arrangements for alternative space to be available for local use by staff, and for District Executive Meetings, is set out in Table 14 below:

Location	Net revenue cost	Potential alternative costs – per desk space	Potential hire of meeting room for major meetings (12 pa)	Net potential savings from each area
Churchfields, Wincanton	£42,666	£3,600	£4,800	£34,266
Holyrood Lace Mill, Chard	£62,425	£3,600	£4,800	£67,925
Boden Centre, Chard	£13,900			
Bridge Barns, Long Sutton	£9,124	£3,600	£4,800	£724
North Street, Ilminster	£7,199	£3,600	£4,800	-£1201
<b>Total</b>	<b>£135,314</b>	<b>£14,400</b>	<b>£19,200</b>	<b>£101,714</b>
<b>Total potential saving pa</b>	<b>£101,714 say £100,000</b>			

Table 14: Potential net revenue savings from existing area offices

5.17 This indicates that revenue amounting to some £100,000 per annum could be saved if the existing offices are replaced by an alternative way of delivering a local service. As for the HQ options, the relative advantages and disadvantages of the options for future area based working have also been considered, as set out below:

Option	Advantages	Disadvantages
Maintain the status Quo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No change to service delivery</li> <li>No need to communicate change to public</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No revenue or capital savings</li> <li>Ongoing disproportionate expense for a reduced visitor demand</li> <li>Does not represent or maximise benefits of transformation and improved digital working platform/agile approach to service delivery</li> <li>Inflexible and inefficient as demand for services changes</li> <li>Some buildings (Ilminster) unfit for purpose, far too large (Lace Mill) or remote (Bridge Barns)</li> </ul>
Secure new area based buildings that are cheaper/more efficient	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing physical representation in areas, with identifiable SSDC "Front door"</li> <li>Could contribute to local regeneration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expensive, as alternative buildings need to be found and made fit for purpose</li> <li>Does not represent or maximise benefits of transformation and improved digital working platform/agile approach to service delivery</li> <li>Inflexible and inefficient as demand for services changes</li> <li>Will require change management and communication</li> <li>Not so convenient to members of the public looking for joined up services</li> </ul>
Share space with other public-sector bodies for customer facing services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In accordance with OPE principles – more joined up service delivery for the public</li> <li>Lots of public sector accommodation potentially available – some arrangements already in place</li> <li>Significant cost savings – both revenue and capital</li> <li>Grater long term flexibility for change to meet future service demands</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reliant on third parties for space used in delivering the services</li> <li>Increased reliance on effectiveness of IT platform</li> <li>Will require change management and communication</li> </ul>

Table 15: Advantages and disadvantages of area provision options

5.18 A move away from area based offices does not have to result in any diminution in local service delivery, but could in fact offer a more tailored personal service to customers, including more home visits, or meetings in areas they are going to anyway, such as libraries and town halls. **Similarly, it does not need to impact negatively on the ability for area committees to be held locally – this will require planning and research, but there is a range of public venues available for such meetings where regular programmed bookings by the Council, possibly including an element of investment support, could help to support the long-term sustainability of existing community facilities and local halls.**

5.19 In terms of the types of accommodation that are available for use for area based service delivery/locality working, here are libraries, town halls, museums, Police buildings, County Council buildings and a wide range of community and third sector buildings that could be used. As for the meeting spaces, this will require dedicated planning and some investment to ensure availability of the right type of space in the right locations on terms that will enable effective service delivery. An example of

where this is working in other nearby authorities is Mendip, where Council access points are provided in libraries, town halls and other community buildings, as set out at Figure 10 below:

- 5.20 Overall, there does not appear to be any justifiable reason to retain the existing portfolio of area based offices for the long term, however there is the opportunity for some short to medium term ongoing provision through the identified potential for conversion of the Stable Block at Wincanton for the police and SSDC as mobile working space for officers providing a local service, and for the retention of the Boden Centre as a local focus for Chard until such time as the financial liability for repayment of the Lottery Funding has expired or (if possible) been renegotiated.

**Conclusion 7: The existing area based offices are disproportionately expensive and provide too much space for future service delivery need. The most cost-effective alternative for future provision is to work with public sector and community partners to secure more flexible accommodation and working space that will enable effective area based agile and mobile working, good customer access and support the transformation to a leaner HQ provision.**

## Council Access Points

Council Access Points around the district provide a face to face, single point of contact service for the general public. The officers are able to offer advice relating to all Mendip District Council services such as benefits, council tax and housing.

They are located in Mendip's five main towns; Shepton Mallet, Frome, Glastonbury, Street and Wells. Opening times can be found below, but **please note** that on the first Thursday of every month they will open later in the morning. Shepton Mallet staff are generally available from 9.45am on training days, whilst staff operating at the other offices are available from 11am.

Please see below opening times of the Council Access Points.

Opening Times					
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<b>Shepton Mallet</b> The Council Offices, Cannards Grove Road, Shepton Mallet, BA4 5BT <a href="#">Find Mendip District Council, Shepton Mallet</a>	08:30-12:00 and 14:00-16:30	08:30-12:00 and 14:00-16:30	08:30-12:00 and 14:00-16:30	08:30-12:00 and 14:00-16:30	08:30-12:00 and 14:00-16:30
<b>Frome</b> Frome Library, Justice Lane, Frome, BA11 1BE <a href="#">Find Mendip District Council, Frome</a>	09:30-13:00 and 14:00-16:30	09:30-13:00 and 14:00-16:30	09:30-13:00 and 14:00-16:30	09:30-13:00 and 14:00-16:30	09:30-13:00 and 14:00-16:30
<b>Glastonbury</b> Glastonbury Library, 1 Orchard Court, Glastonbury, BA6 5JB <a href="#">Find Mendip District Council, Glastonbury</a>	CLOSED	10:00-13:00 and 14:00-16:30	10:00-13:00 and 14:00-16:30	10:00-13:00 and 14:00-16:30	10:00-13:00 afternoon CLOSED
<b>Street</b> Crispin Community Centre, Leigh Road, Street, BA16 0HA <a href="#">Find Mendip District Council, Street</a>	10:00-13:00 and 14:00-16:30	CLOSED	10:00-13:00 and 14:00-16:30	10:00-13:00 and 14:00-16:30	CLOSED
<b>Wells</b> Wells Town Hall Market Place, Wells, BA5 2RB <a href="#">Find Mendip District Council, Wells</a>	CLOSED	10:00-13:00 and 14:00-16:30	CLOSED	CLOSED	10:00-13:00 and 14:00-16:30

Figure 3: Example of Council Access Points in Mendip

- 6.0 INITIAL CONCLUSIONS
- 6.1 Our initial conclusions from the study have been identified in the body of the report, and are summarised as follows:
- 6.1.1 **The Council's current primary office accommodation is too large and is underutilised. Its usage by members of the public is also falling.**
  - 6.1.2 **The Council's current primary office accommodation represents a significant annual revenue cost which is at risk of increasing. Of the buildings occupied, the single biggest revenue cost is Brympton Way, and the area offices do not represent value for money when assessed as a cost per SSDC employee accommodated.**
  - 6.1.3 **The Council's current primary office accommodation represents a significant capital investment risk. Of the buildings occupied, the single biggest anticipated capital cost is Brympton Way, and the area offices do not represent value for money when assessed as a cost per SSDC employee accommodated.**
  - 6.1.4 **The Council's current primary office accommodation represents a significant opportunity for redevelopment to generate revenue, capital and to contribute to wider policy objectives, as well as securing savings. Of the locations, the biggest anticipated potential future revenue generator is Brympton Way.**
  - 6.1.5 **Yeovil offers the most suitable location for the Council's long-term HQ, as it is the largest centre of population, is most accessible to the majority of customers and staff and maintains continuity of local representation. A town centre site is likely to offer the most locational advantages.**
  - 6.1.6 **Remaining at Brympton Way offers the lowest overall financial benefit of the future HQ options.**
  - 6.1.7 **The existing area based offices are disproportionately expensive and provide too much space for future service delivery need. The most cost-effective alternative for future provision is to work with public sector and community partners to secure more flexible accommodation and working space that will enable effective area based agile and mobile working, good customer access and support the transformation to a leaner HQ provision.**
- 6.2 These conclusions indicate that remaining at Brympton Way for the long term does not represent value for money to the Council, and that it does not address the reputational risk associated with an overly large, poorly located building that does not provide a modern working environment suitable to a modern forward-thinking organisation. To remain in the current HQ building could have a negative impact on the Council's ability to attract and retain younger highly qualified staff in the future, and will require significant capital investment to overcome the increasing obsolescence of the building and its services.
- 6.3 There are risks and costs associated with all options for the future of the Council's principle office building, however the options that appear to represent the best balance between risk and cost are relocation to an extended Petters House, or investment in a new purpose-built facility, subject to having an appropriate Council owned site.
- 6.4 All options will require ongoing detailed work and detailed planning, to ensure future effective service delivery

## 7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Based on the findings of this review, we recommend that the evidence supports a decision in principle that Brympton Way no longer represents a suitable location for the ongoing provision of the Council's HQ, and that an alternative option will be explored in more detail.

7.2 Based on the findings of this review, we recommend that a detailed plan is put in place for area working to be delivered via use of wider public-sector buildings, enabling inefficient area offices to be released for disposal, redevelopment and regeneration uses going forward.

## 8.0 DEVELOPING A PROJECT PLAN

8.1 This report seeks to establish the principles to enable an in-principle decision to be made to move to an alternative primary office provision in future, but due to the timetable for the study, and the extent of the information available it is clear there is still a lot of work to be done before a clear implementable plan can be executed.

8.2 We are of the opinion that two clear workstreams arise from this report:

8.2.1 One focussing on developing the HQ options, and establishing a clear preferred option of Petters House for an alternative future location and undertaking detailed investigation of this, and

8.2.2 The second focussing on developing a network of suitable working arrangement to enable effective mobile and agile area working in the post transformation environment.

8.3 In each case the following process will be required:

- Further detailed analysis of the remaining options
- Decision
- Actions required
- Resources
- Dependencies
- Programme
- Implementation

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# Agenda Item 9

## **The Wincanton Neighbourhood Plan Referendum**

*Executive Portfolio Holder:* Angie Singleton, Strategic Planning (Place Making)  
*Ward Member(s)* Wincanton; Nick Colbert and Colin Winder  
*Director:* Martin Woods, Director, Service Delivery  
*Service Manager:* Jo Wilkins, Acting Principal Spatial Planner  
*Lead Officer:* David Clews, Spatial Planner  
*Contact Details:* david.clews@southsomerset.gov.uk or 01935 462054

### **Purpose of the Report**

1. To note the progress that has been made on the preparation of the Wincanton Neighbourhood Plan; to agree the independent Examiner's report and recommendations for Proposed Modifications; and to set out the process for 'making' the plan following a favourable local referendum to be organised by the District Council.

### **Forward Plan**

- 2 This report appeared on the District Executive Forward Plan with an anticipated Committee date of December 2017.

### **Public Interest**

- 3 The Neighbourhood Plan represents the views of Wincanton Town Council and other stakeholders on the preferred approach to future development in the town. This has been the subject of Independent Examination by a qualified person and if the Council agree with the Examiner's report and recommendations for Proposed Modifications, the Plan will then be subject to a referendum of all those in the community on the Electoral Register. The referendum will be on whether they agree with the modified Plan's content and if it should be used in the determination of planning applications.
- 4 The Neighbourhood Plan has been the subject of resident and business surveys, public meetings and consultation events; and the Town Council have a dedicated section on its website in association with this process.

### **Recommendations**

- 5 That the District Executive
  - a. agrees to the Examiner's report and recommendations for Proposed Modifications to the Wincanton Neighbourhood Plan.
  - b. agrees to the Council organising a referendum for local people on the Electoral Register as to whether they want South Somerset District Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Wincanton to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area.
  - c. delegates responsibility to the Director for Service Delivery in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning to make any final minor text amendments to the Neighbourhood Plan, in agreement with Wincanton Town Council and the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

### **Background**



- 6 Neighbourhood planning aims to help local communities play a direct role in planning the areas in which they live and work. The plan can show how the community wants land to be used and developed in its area. If a plan is 'made' following a successful referendum, it becomes part of the development plan for that area. Planning applications are determined by local planning authorities in accordance with the adopted development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. A development plan sets out the planning policies for the development and use of land.
- 7 The Wincanton Neighbourhood Area designation was approved by the District Council in March 2014. Since then, the Neighbourhood Plan for the area has been prepared and a 'Pre-Submission' Plan was consulted upon in November 2016 (Regulation 14). This was followed by formal submission of the Plan in April 2017 and the District Council carried out formal consultation in line with procedures set out in the relevant Regulations (Regulation 16). The Plan has now been the subject of independent examination and this report relates to the District Council's decision on the Examiner's recommendations and the next step of a local referendum.

## **The Wincanton Neighbourhood Plan**

- 8 The Wincanton Neighbourhood Plan sets out a vision for the town and the Plan's main objectives; places the Plan in the context of national and local planning policies; and includes a short summary of the town's physical, demographic and historic context. The Plan summarises the consultation process and evidence base informing its preparation; and policies seeking to guide future development in the town relating to what are considered to be the most sustainable locations, securing housing suitable for Wincanton's population, employment, the town centre economy; and the local environment.
- 9 The main objectives within the Neighbourhood Plan are the following:
  - Identifying the most sustainable locations for development
  - Housing suitable for Wincanton's population
  - New employment space near the A303
  - Make the town centre more attractive to users
  - Protect open spaces & improve walking & cycling routes
- 10 Key issues identified during the consultation carried out by the Neighbourhood Planning Group under Regulation 14 were that;
  - businesses need better quality, larger footprint units that they can adapt as the business grows. These need good access to the A303, much better broadband and sufficient parking.
  - the types of houses being built do not suit residents' needs, in particular for the elderly and for young people
  - not enough jobs are being created for the increased population, so that Wincanton's working town character is under threat and services are under pressure
  - the physical environment of the town, especially the main approach into the town from the A303, was of poor quality, with messy industry and old commercial units providing a poor first impression
  - more could be done to support the town centre economy. Edge-of-town supermarkets and internet shopping have had an effect on the vitality of many town centres including Wincanton, but measures such as pedestrian improvements and traffic calming, redeveloping two key Listed buildings and widening the choice of shops were suggested.

- access around the town on foot and by cycle is difficult due to terrain, the one-way system and the historic pattern of development.
- 11 The Plan seeks to protect visually sensitive areas, key buildings and spaces, trees and hedgerows; and river and stream corridors. It states that development on the outskirts of the town should be softened by landscaping and that, where opportunities exist, heritage assets should be sensitively incorporated and a site's role in the history of the town explained.
  - 12 The Plan states that new housing should be predominately of relatively smaller units, include 'Starter Homes' for local people and custom and self-build homes; and that accessible and adaptable homes would be supported.
  - 13 New employment sites outside the town's development area may be supported as long as specified criteria are met; and parking at employment sites should meet adopted parking standards, but solutions that help alleviating existing difficulties regarding poor access and inadequate parking provision will also be encouraged.
  - 14 The Town Council, in collaboration with South Somerset District Council and Somerset County Council as the Highways Authority, will as a priority seek to implement two modest public realm enhancements and an extended 20 mph zone in the town centre area, to improve shopper & visitor experience and the safety of pedestrians.
  - 15 The Plan designates four green spaces as 'Local Green Spaces' for special protection, but also refers to other green spaces which contribute to the character and appearance of the Wincanton Conservation Area; and other green areas and open spaces which are to be retained. The network of existing pedestrian and cycle routes through the town will be protected; and where development allows, opportunities are encouraged to connect to and improve the existing network.
  - 16 Alongside the Neighbourhood Plan itself, the Regulations require that a statement is submitted which states how the Plan meets the specified 'Basic Conditions', a Consultation Statement; and confirmation that the Plan meets the Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations and other European legislation.
  - 17 On receipt of the Submission Documents, the Council carried out the required public consultation for a period of six weeks under Regulation 16; this included a notice in the press and at Wincanton Town Hall and writing to all authorities, utility providers, a wide range of stakeholders and other bodies considered to have an interest in the Plan, including those that the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group had consulted itself. The submission documentation was made available on the Council's website and hard copies were made available at Wincanton Town Hall.
  - 18 A total of seven responses were received and the District Council also presented its own comments; these were all sent to the Examiner.
  - 19 The Examiner's Report concludes that the correct procedure for the preparation and submission of the Wincanton Neighbourhood Plan was followed and that it meets the 'Basic Conditions', subject to several Proposed Modifications being made. The amended document in accordance with these proposed changes is appended to this report, together with the Examiner's Report. The original Submission Plan, supporting documents and representations received are all available on the District Council's website - [South Somerset District Council - Wincanton Neighbourhood Area Designation](#). Wincanton Town Council accepted the Examiner's Proposed Modifications at its meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2017.
  - 20 If the District Council accepts the Examiner's recommendations, the next stage would be to hold a local referendum in Wincanton. The prescribed question that needs to be asked is

“Do you want South Somerset District Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Wincanton to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area”.

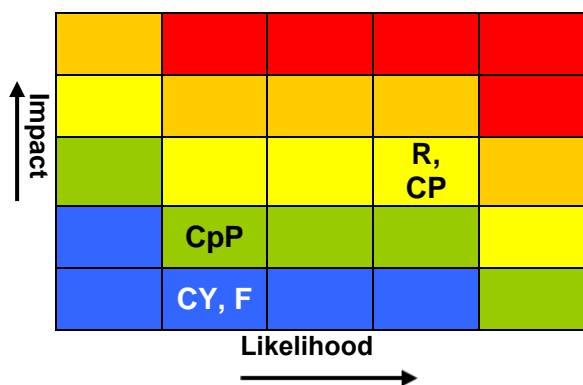
If more than 50% of those who vote say Yes, the Neighbourhood Plan is ‘made’ (or adopted); and it becomes part of the statutory Development Plan for the District Council and needs to be taken account in the determination of planning applications.

### Financial Implications

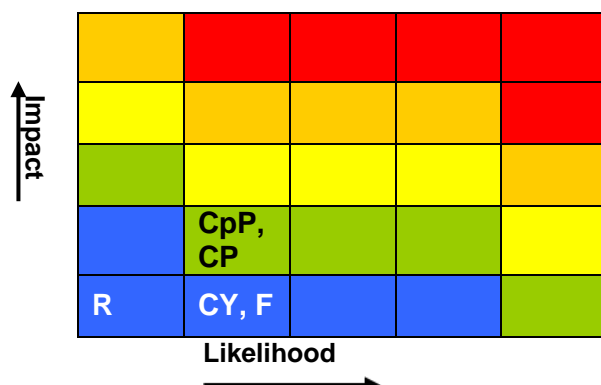
- 21 Under the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations, 15% of Community Infrastructure Levy receipts are generally passed directly to those parish and town councils (in England) where development has taken place. In England, communities that draw up a neighbourhood plan and secure the consent of local people in a referendum, will benefit from 25% of the levy revenues arising from the development that takes place in their area.
- 22 The District Council does not have the option to decline to hold the Referendum as this is required by legislation; and the associated costs will need to be absorbed into existing budgetary arrangements. However, the Council is able to claim a grant of up to £20,000 towards the costs of progressing the Neighbourhood Plan from the Department for Communities and Local Government once the date of the Referendum has been set.

### Risk Matrix

Risk Profile before officer recommendations



Risk Profile after officer recommendations



### Key

Categories	Colours (for further detail please refer to Risk management strategy)
R = Reputation	Red = High impact and high probability
CpP = Corporate Plan Priorities	Orange = Major impact and major probability
CP = Community Priorities	Yellow = Moderate impact and moderate probability
CY = Capacity	Green = Minor impact and minor probability
F = Financial	Blue = Insignificant impact and insignificant probability

### Council Plan Implications

- 23 The Neighbourhood Plan accords with the Council’s aims to increase the focus on jobs and economic development, protect and enhance the quality of our environment; and to enable housing to meet all needs. The District Council’s values include supporting people and communities, enabling them to help themselves; and the Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared by the local community who wish to have an influence on future development in the town. The

Council Plan states that it will focus on supporting communities to develop local, parish and neighbourhood plans.

### **Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications**

24 The Wincanton Neighbourhood Plan does not directly address carbon emissions or climate change and no such issues arise.

### **Equality and Diversity Implications**

25 No significant changes to a Service, Policy or Strategy are proposed directly and it is therefore not necessary that an Equality Assessment is undertaken.

### **Privacy Impact Assessment**

26 No personal data handling is involved.

### **Background Papers**

Appendix A – Examiner’s Report

Appendix B – Wincanton Neighbourhood Plan (with Proposed Modifications)

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**Intelligent Plans**  
and examinations

# **Report on Wincanton Neighbourhood Plan 2017-2028**

**An Examination undertaken for South Somerset District Council with the support of the Wincanton Town Council on the April 2017 submission version of the Plan.**

Independent Examiner: Jill Kingaby BSc(Econ) MSc MRTPI

Date of Report: 3 November 2017

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## **Main Findings** - Executive Summary

From my examination of the Wincanton Neighbourhood Plan (the Plan / the NP) and its supporting documentation including the representations made, I have concluded that subject to the policy modifications set out in this report, the Plan meets the Basic Conditions.

I have also concluded that:

- The Plan has been prepared and submitted for examination by a qualifying body – the Wincanton Town Council;
- The Plan has been prepared for an area properly designated – the Parish of Wincanton shown on the map on Page 6;
- The Plan specifies the period to which it is to take effect – 2017-2028; and
- The policies relate to the development and use of land for a designated neighbourhood area.

I recommend that the Plan, once modified, proceeds to Referendum on the basis that it has met all the relevant legal requirements.

I have considered whether the referendum area should extend beyond the designated area to which the Plan relates and have concluded that it should not.

## **1. Introduction and Background**

### *Wincanton Neighbourhood Plan 2017 - 2028*

- 1.1 Wincanton is located in the south-east of the County of Somerset and South Somerset District, close to the border with Dorset and Wiltshire. The Neighbourhood Plan Area is the Parish of Wincanton which is bisected by the A303 trunk road. Wincanton Town is situated north of this major road linking London to the South West of England, and the southern part of the Parish is rural in character. The Town dates back to Saxon times and its location on the principal medieval coach route from London to Exeter enabled its economic growth, with cloth manufacturing, clock making and the dairy industry from the Middle Ages onwards. An area around the town centre is designated as a Conservation Area to preserve and enhance its historic character.
- 1.2 Wincanton is some 16 miles from Yeovil and is identified as one of four primary market towns in the South Somerset Local Plan, which are placed below Yeovil in the settlement hierarchy<sup>1</sup>. Wincanton serves the needs of the surrounding rural area, having a range of shops, a health centre,

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<sup>1</sup> Policy SS1 of the South Somerset Local Plan 2006-2028, adopted in 2015.

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hospital, leisure centre, primary and secondary schools and other facilities. As Page 1 of the NP states, Wincanton has experienced the construction of some 600 new homes since 2006, and another 270 homes have planning permission. Much of the new development has occurred to the south-west of the Town.

- 1.3 The Town Council decided in May 2013 to produce a Neighbourhood Plan, having produced a Community Plan in 2007 supported by the Market & Coastal Towns initiative, with an updated survey in 2012. After designation of the NP area, a Steering group was formed and work on the Plan began in January 2015. Concern over significant new housebuilding in the Town from 2006 onwards and the impact on local services, the environment and character of the community stimulated an interest in producing a Neighbourhood Plan. Consultation activities including a survey of local businesses began in Spring 2015.

#### *The Independent Examiner*

- 1.4 As the Plan has now reached the examination stage, I have been appointed as the examiner of the Wincanton Neighbourhood Plan by South Somerset District Council (SSDC), with the agreement of the Wincanton Town Council.
- 1.5 I am a chartered town planner and former government Planning Inspector, with previous experience examining Neighbourhood Plans. I am an independent examiner, and do not have an interest in any of the land that may be affected by the draft plan.

#### *The Scope of the Examination*

- 1.6 As the independent examiner I am required to produce this report and recommend either:
- (a) that the NP is submitted to a referendum without changes; or
  - (b) that modifications are made and that the modified NP is submitted to a referendum; or
  - (c) that the NP does not proceed to a referendum on the basis that it does not meet the necessary legal requirements.
- 1.7 The scope of the examination is set out in Paragraph 8(1) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)('the 1990 Act'). The examiner must consider:
- Whether the Plan meets the Basic Conditions;



- Whether the Plan complies with provisions under s.38A and s.38B of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) ('the 2004 Act'). These are:
  - it has been prepared and submitted for examination by a qualifying body, for an area that has been properly designated by the Local Planning Authority;
  - it sets out policies in relation to the development and use of land;
  - it specifies the period during which it has effect;
  - it does not include provisions and policies for 'excluded development';
  - it is the only neighbourhood plan for the area and does not relate to land outside the designated neighbourhood area;
  - whether the referendum boundary should be extended beyond the designated area, should the Plan proceed to referendum; and
- Such matters as prescribed in the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended)('the 2012 Regulations').

1.8 I have considered only matters that fall within Paragraph 8(1) of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Act, with one exception. That is the requirement that the Plan is compatible with the Human Rights Convention.

### *The Basic Conditions*

- 1.9 The 'Basic Conditions' are set out in Paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B to the 1990Act. In order to meet the Basic Conditions, the NP must:
- Have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State;
  - Contribute to the achievement of sustainable development;
  - Be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan for the area;
  - Be compatible with and not breach European Union (EU) obligations; and
  - Meet prescribed conditions and comply with prescribed matters.

- 1.10 Regulation 32 of the 2012 Regulations prescribes a further Basic Condition for a neighbourhood plan. This requires that the neighbourhood plan should not be likely to have a significant effect on a European Site (as defined in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2012) or a European Offshore Marine Site (as defined in the Offshore Marine Conservation (Natural Habitats etc.) Regulations 2007), either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

## **2. Approach to the Examination**

### *Planning Policy Context*

- 2.1 The Development Plan for this part of South Somerset District, not including documents relating to excluded minerals and waste development, is the South Somerset Local Plan 2006-28 adopted in 2015, with 3 saved policies from the South Somerset Local Plan 1991-2011. As the Basic Conditions Report for this NP observes, the saved (old) Local Plan policies are not strategic in nature and are not therefore significant for the examination of this NP. A review of the Local Plan by SSDC is underway but is at an early stage, and a draft Plan has not yet been published. The NP Steering Group has however had regard for some key evidence documents<sup>2</sup>.
- 2.2 The planning policy for England is set out principally in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) offers guidance on how this policy should be implemented. Paragraph 184 of the NPPF confirms that neighbourhood plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan, reflecting these policies and planning positively to support them. Paragraph 185 states that, outside the strategic policies, neighbourhood plans are able to shape and direct sustainable development in their area.

### *Submitted Documents*

- 2.3 I have considered all policy, guidance and other reference documents I consider relevant to the examination, including those submitted which comprise:
- the draft Wincanton Neighbourhood Plan 2017-2028, April 2017;
  - the Map on Page 6 of the Plan which identifies the area to which the proposed NP relates;
  - the Consultation Statement, April 2017;
  - the Basic Conditions Report, April 2017;
  - all the representations that have been made in accordance with the Regulation 16 consultation;

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<sup>2</sup> The Basic Conditions Report refers to the Strategic Housing Market Assessment, Land Availability Assessment and Employment Monitoring Report.

- the Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Screening Report prepared on behalf of Wincanton Town Council, April 2016;
- the Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Screening Report Addendum prepared by SSDC, February 2017; and
- the Town Council's response (15 September 2017) to my questions set out in my letter of 30 August 2017<sup>3</sup>.

#### *Site Visit*

2.4 I made an unaccompanied site visit to the Neighbourhood Plan Area on 12 September 2017 to familiarise myself with Wincanton, and visit relevant sites and areas referenced in the Plan and evidential documents.

#### *Written Representations with or without Public Hearing*

2.5 This examination has been dealt with by written representations. The consultation responses set out a number of objections and reservations which various parties had to the submitted NP. The Town Council, in response to my letter of 30 August 2017, provided additional information on a number of the issues raised by the consultation responses. With this additional evidence, I considered hearing sessions to be unnecessary as the written material gave me a satisfactory understanding of all views regarding the NP.

#### *Modifications*

2.6 Where necessary, I have recommended modifications to the Plan (**PMs**) in this report in order that it meets the Basic Conditions and other legal requirements. For ease of reference, I have listed these modifications separately in the Appendix.

### **3. Procedural Compliance and Human Rights**

#### *Qualifying Body and Neighbourhood Plan Area*

3.1 The Wincanton Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared and submitted for examination by Wincanton Town Council which is a qualifying body for an area that was designated by SSDC on 6 March 2014.

3.2 It is the only NP for the Parish of Wincanton, and does not relate to land outside the designated neighbourhood area. The Neighbourhood Plan Area is illustrated on Page 6 in the map entitled "Fig. 1 Area context". I

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<sup>3</sup> View at: <https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/neighbourhood-plans/neighbourhood-area-designations/wincanton-neighbourhood-area-designation/>

consider that it would be clearer for readers (including decision makers) if a key was added to this map stating that the Parish of Wincanton, delineated by a red boundary, is the NP area<sup>4</sup>. **PM1** should be made to secure this.

### *Plan Period*

- 3.3 The Plan specifies clearly the period to which it is to take effect, which is from 2017 to 2028. This aligns with the end date of the adopted South Somerset Local Plan, which also runs to 2028.

### *Neighbourhood Plan Preparation and Consultation*

- 3.4 Following formation of the Steering Group, work began to prepare the Wincanton NP in January 2015 with the creation of a dedicated website by the Town Council, and a business survey. Some 200 local businesses were contacted, a feedback meeting was held and a press release was made in the Western Gazette in Spring 2015. A community drop-in consultation event, leaflets hand-delivered to all households, further press releases, promotion on the Town Council's website and social media channels, as well as contact with businesses and landowners, were all carried out in June 2015.
- 3.5 The results of early consultation were published in October 2015. Additional work including a request for valued green spaces to be identified, the publication of Plan Objectives, and a Place Check exercise were subsequently undertaken. In July 2016, a draft NP was discussed with SSDC's Spatial Policy Department, prior to public consultation under Regulation 14 of the 2012 Regulations. This consultation exercise used a number of methods to contact local people, businesses, landowners, voluntary groups, neighbouring parish councils and statutory consultees. Consultation took place between 2 November and 21 December 2016. Further details of the consultation process are contained in the Consultation Statement, April 2017, received by SSDC on 15 May 2017.
- 3.6 Twelve responses were received at Regulation 14 stage, and these were used to make amendments to the NP prior to its submission to SSDC in April 2017. Consultation under Regulation 16 was carried out between 15 June and 27 July 2017, which elicited 8 responses. I have had regard for these responses in my examination of the NP. I am satisfied that the consultation process has met the legal requirements and had regard to the advice contained in the PPG concerning the preparation and engagement on a neighbourhood plan.

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<sup>4</sup>The NP should be drafted with sufficient clarity that a decision maker can apply it consistently and with confidence when determining planning applications. See PPG Reference ID: 41-041-20140306.

### *Development and Use of Land*

- 3.7 The Plan sets out policies in relation to the development and use of land in accordance with s.38A of the 2004 Act.

### *Excluded Development*

- 3.8 The Plan does not include provisions and policies for 'excluded development'. In response to a comment made by Somerset County Council, I confirm (see paragraph 4.13 below) that mineral extraction and waste development are not matters for this NP.

### *Human Rights*

- 3.9 SSDC is satisfied that the Plan does not breach Human Rights (within the meaning of the Human Rights Act 1998)<sup>5</sup>, and from my independent assessment I see no reason to disagree.

## **4. Compliance with the Basic Conditions**

### *EU Obligations*

- 4.1 The Wincanton NP was screened for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) in April 2016<sup>6</sup>. This found that there were unlikely to be any significant environmental effects resulting from the NP. An update of the assessments was undertaken by SSDC in early 2017 when the Plan was revised<sup>7</sup>, which confirmed that it was unnecessary to undertake SEA or HRA. I note that Natural England agreed with this position. Having read both documents, and noting that the NP does not include site allocations for development, I support the District Council's conclusion.

### *Main Issues*

- 4.2 Having regard for the Wincanton NP, the consultation responses, written evidence and the site visit, I consider that there are three main issues for this examination. These are whether the Plan meets the Basic Conditions in respect of:

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<sup>5</sup> E-mail of 8 September 2017 from SSDC Spatial Planning in response to Examiner's questions.

<sup>6</sup> Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Report, prepared on behalf of Wincanton Town Council, April 2016 (Post Statutory Consultation).

<sup>7</sup> Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Report Addendum February 2017, South Somerset District Council.

- Housing - Policies 1-6 address the identification of suitable locations for future housing development and Policies 7-10 concern types of housing (Issue 1);
- The Economy - Policies 11-13 relate to sustainable locations for future employment sites and Section 8 addresses enhancement of the town centre economy (Issue 2); and
- The Environment - Policies 1-6 relate to good design in new development which is compatible with the character of the surrounding area, conserving the natural and historic environments; and Section 9 contains Policies 14 and 15 which concern protection of public open space and improvements to walking and cycling routes (Issue 3).

### Overview

- 4.3 The Wincanton NP is a concise document with a logical structure, and it is commendably easy to read. It sets out a clear vision and objectives and, as stated on Page 1, *“takes a realistic and positive approach to where future development should take place”*. Section 2 of the Plan briefly summarises the requirements of national and local planning policies, drawing attention to the South Somerset Local Plan which was adopted in March 2015. SSDC stated that it would be useful to include reference to relevant Local Plan Policies ie. Policies SS1, SS3 and SS5.
- 4.4 The NP should be in general conformity with these key policies, and I shall be assessing this requirement when considering the three main issues. The Town Council stated that it does not wish to refer to the policies specifically because the Local Plan is being reviewed, and this is likely to lead to changes. However, the NP recognises that the current review is unlikely to result in a new adopted Local Plan before 2020, so that Policies SS1, SS3 and SS5 will be strategically important for some time. On balance, I accept that the NP need not make direct reference to these specific policies in Section 2 in order to meet the Basic Conditions.
- 4.5 Section 3 of the NP refers to Wincanton’s geographical position at the south eastern corner of Somerset, and its historical significance on the main Exeter to London medieval coach route. There is a cross-reference to the Local Plan’s brief overview of the town’s history at the top of Page 6 of the NP, and paragraph 7.85 of the Local Plan includes a Spatial Portrait of Wincanton with additional information about Wincanton’s context and character. The NP preparation process is summarised in its section 4, with a reference to the Consultation Statement. Issues for the town and objectives for the NP, for the Town Council in its wider role, and a Vision for Wincanton in 2028, follow in section 5. SSDC queried whether the organisations listed in the table in 5.3 of the NP were in agreement with the Plan’s aims, and whether other bodies should be named. However, the table is headed *“Bodies that could be involved ...”* (my emphasis) and

none of the organisations have objected to being named. I am satisfied that Sections 3-5 provide a helpful starting-point for the following sections which contain related NP policies and proposals.

- 4.6 Section 10 at the end of the NP addresses the topic of monitoring and reviewing the Plan. Challenges for the area and concerns of the local community will change over time, and the Plan should be monitored even though it may not always be possible to predict the long-term direction of change. This last section of the Plan commits to a review of the NP every five years as well as annual monitoring work, with alterations<sup>8</sup> or a new Plan if the current one is shown to be unfit for purpose. This is good planning practice which should contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. I firmly support section 10.

#### Issue 1 – Housing

- 4.7 Page 1 of the NP refers to a recent significant period of housebuilding in Wincanton with 594 new dwellings built since 2006, and an additional 270 dwellings with planning permission. The South Somerset Local Plan's Policy SS1 sets out a settlement hierarchy with Yeovil as the prime focus for development in South Somerset. The Primary Market Towns, including Wincanton, should provide for development, including housing, to increase their self-containment and enhance their roles as service centres. Policy SS5 and Table 2 in the Local Plan show a "housing requirement" for 703 new dwellings in Wincanton over the plan period to 2028, which is lower than the 864 dwellings already completed or with planning permission. Paragraph 7.94 of the Local Plan observes that Wincanton is different from the other Market Towns because of the high level of commitments compared to the overall housing requirement considered appropriate for the settlement. It indicates that the latter years of the Local Plan are expected to experience limited levels of housing provision in Wincanton, which should enable a period of assimilation of the recent/current housing growth.
- 4.8 The Local Plan (paragraph 7.95) envisages that the ongoing monitoring process and an early review of the Local Plan would enable the housing provision of Wincanton to be supplemented, should the local housing market underpinned by employment growth require it. The first paragraph in section 6 of the NP describes how planning applications for housing development in locations like Wincanton may be permitted where a local planning authority is unable to demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply. SSDC referred to the changed position regarding the importance of 5 year land supply following the Ministerial Statement in December

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<sup>8</sup>It is notable in this context that Section 4 of the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017 provides new provisions (once commenced) to make the review of a made neighbourhood plan a much less onerous process.

2016<sup>9</sup>. This would mean that policies for the supply of housing land in a Neighbourhood Plan would not be considered out-of-date if the local planning authority could demonstrate a 3 year supply of deliverable housing sites.

- 4.9 However, national planning policy is currently undergoing a review with the publication of the Housing White Paper on 7 February 2017<sup>10</sup>. Government aims to introduce a new standardised methodology to simplify the process for assessing local housing need and the more recent publication on 14 September 2017 of the consultation document, 'Planning for the right homes in the right places: consultation proposals', contains amongst other things, the new proposed methodology for assessing local housing need<sup>11</sup>. This will be included in a revised NPPF, which it is anticipated will come into force in Spring 2018. In view of the forthcoming changes to housing need assessment in the NPPF, I consider that textual change to the first paragraph in section 6 would assist readers, and ensure that the NP has regard for pending changes to national planning policy, whatever final form they may take. Proposed modification **PM2** would achieve this.
- 4.10 The Wincanton NP does not identify or allocate sites for housing development, but it has been based on an examination of sites which may come forward for consideration in future<sup>12</sup>. Section 6.1 of the NP includes descriptions of the various broad areas in and around the town. Regarding the 'South West of the Town', the Abbey Manor Group Ltd queried the retention of land at Lawrence Hill as informal open space. Although part of the land includes a public footpath, it is in different ownership from the proposed development land to the east, so that its retention as informal open space could not be secured by a development agreement. I consider that the last sentence of the second paragraph should be modified as shown in **PM3** to state that Lawrence Hill should remain undeveloped. It is unnecessary in my view to comment on unspecified, further development of the Town to the south-west at this stage.
- 4.11 The final paragraph concerning the 'South West of the Town' states that a site for a seven class primary school requiring 1.1 hectares of flat land would be needed. Somerset County Council's School Place Planning Infrastructure Growth Plan 2017 suggests that the NP is out-of-date. The s.106 obligation accompanying the planning permission for the New Barns

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<sup>9</sup> View at: <http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Commons/2016-12-12/HCWS346>

<sup>10</sup> View at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/housing-white-paper>

<sup>11</sup> View at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/planning-for-the-right-homes-in-the-right-places-consultation-proposals>

<sup>12</sup> Wincanton PlaceCheck Report, Wincanton Town Council, March 2016.

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Farm (The Chase) included a contribution for a new school. However, negotiations completed in 2016 enabled a swap of the proposed school site for land adjoining Wincanton Primary School. This should enable the existing school to expand, and it is expected to become a 14 class school from November 2017<sup>13</sup>. The text in paragraph 6.1 on Page 12 of the NP should be corrected<sup>14</sup> so that it reflects the most recent position. **PM4** should be made so that the Plan does not hold back sustainable development. I have also considered the suggestion that Page 12 should refer to the possible inclusion of land for parking for the Primary School within any redevelopment scheme of the Tythings site. However, the Town Council advises that it has not been investigated through the NP's preparation, or discussed with the landowner. I accept that any future proposal need not be specifically referenced in the NP.

- 4.12 The Main Findings on Page 14 of the NP conclude that "*there appear to be potential opportunities for further housing development that would be well-related to the town...*". In my opinion, the NP should contribute to sustainable development since it does not take an overly protective approach and allows for the possibility of some new housing. The NP has had proper regard for the NPPF with its presumption in favour of sustainable development and its aim to boost significantly the supply of housing. The overall approach is in general conformity with the strategic policies for housing, notably SS1: Settlement hierarchy and SS5: Delivering new housing growth, in the Local Plan.
- 4.13 Policies 1-6 set out a number of environmental considerations which prospective developers should consider when making development proposals. I discuss the wording of the policies in more detail under Issue 3 below. Reference is made to existing stone buildings at New Barns and the stone wall on the edge of the Tythings in Policy 2 and the preceding text, but it would be inappropriate for the NP to undertake research into the supply of local stone (presumably for new buildings), as suggested by the County Council. Mineral extraction and waste development are defined as excluded development in s.61K of the 1990 Act and should not be addressed in the NP.
- 4.14 It was suggested that Policy 2 should include a reference to viability. The NPPF, paragraph 173, cautions that pursuing development requires careful attention to viability and costs in plan-making and decision-taking. Plans should be deliverable and sites for development should not be subject to such a scale of obligations and policy burdens that their ability to be developed viably is threatened. Policies 1-6 are setting out general

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<sup>13</sup> Somerset County Council: School place planning infrastructure growth plan, 2017, including Wincanton School Organisation Plan Area.

<sup>14</sup> Paragraph 10(3)(e) of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Act provides for the recommending of modifications for the purpose of correcting errors.

principles rather than setting the requirements for specific sites, and Policy 2 is supporting rather than insisting on the re-use of existing buildings at New Barns Farm. In these circumstances, I consider it unnecessary to refer to viability in Policy 2. However, additional text at the top of Page 15 following the 'Main Findings' should be made having regard for the NPPF and the achievement of sustainable development. **PM6** should be made accordingly.

- 4.15 Section 6.2 of the NP concerns 'Housing suitable for Wincanton's population'. I agree with the District Council that a reference to data sources should be added here. A footnote on Page 18 with a link to the background papers, rather than added appendices, would be sufficient. **PM9** should be made to assist readers and help to secure sustainable development.
- 4.16 Policy 7: Housing Types was criticised as being overly restrictive and not providing for 4 bed dwellings. However, as the Town Council pointed out, the policy is addressing open market housing, and I note that the requirement for 1, 2 and 3 bedroom homes is caveated by "*unless there are demonstrable reasons why this is not possible or desirable*". From my site visit, I observed that there are already many substantial dwellings in Wincanton, likely to provide 4 or more bedrooms. In addition, Wincanton is already committed to providing in excess of 700 new dwellings to meet its estimated requirements to 2028. The NP should therefore be entitled to focus new development on the market for smaller dwellings, having regard for the predicted growth in the ageing population. The supporting text on Page 16 acknowledges that studio and 1 bedroom properties have not sold easily in the private market, but indicates that many such homes do not meet the national standards for room sizes. It suggests that innovative solutions are needed to provide suitable, popular configurations for 1 and 2 bedroom homes. I support this approach and consider that Policy 7 is in general conformity with Policy HG5: Achieving a mix of market housing, as well as the achievement of sustainable development. Additional guidance on possible design solutions is not necessary.
- 4.17 Objections to Policy 8: Starter homes for local people in the NP were raised by SSDC. It pointed out that its Strategic Housing Market Assessment October 2016 had raised issues around the affordability of providing 20% of housing as starter homes. Also, the Government's Housing White Paper 2017<sup>15</sup> states in its paragraph 4.16 "*We have listened to concerns that our original plans for a mandatory requirement of 20% starter homes over a certain size will impact on other affordable homes*". It goes on to state that the mandatory requirement is likely to be dropped.

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<sup>15</sup> See footnote 10.

- 4.18 The Local Plan includes Policy HG3 and HG4 on affordable housing and HG5 on achieving a mix of market housing. However, it is quiet on the subject of starter homes. Although the Housing White Paper indicates that the Government will drop the 20% mandatory requirement, it remains committed to support the aspiration of young people to become home owners and supports the provision of discounted starter homes. It states "*We want local authorities to deliver starter homes as part of a mixed package of affordable housing that can respond to local needs and local markets ...*". In light of the current uncertainty in national and local planning policy, I appreciate the difficulty in formulating an effective policy in the NP. Although objectors argued that Policy 8 should be deleted, I consider that it reflects local aspirations and a serious problem, and should be retained.
- 4.19 The Town Council has provided additional information as to what is meant by "households with a local connection", and I consider that the criteria could usefully be added to the Plan. I agree with the Abbey Manor Group Limited that assessments of eligibility for affordable housing and scheme viability would be best made by the District Council. However, if Policy 8 and the supporting text is modified as shown in **PM9**, fair assessments of eligibility and viability should not be compromised. The modified policy and text will have regard for national policy and secure general compliance with the Local Plan.
- 4.20 Policy 9 is supportive of accessible and adaptable homes, and does not specifically require compliance with the Buildings Regulations. I consider that its inclusion in the NP does not breach the Basic Conditions, but accept that adding a reference to feasibility and viability, especially as the terrain of Wincanton is steep in places, would be helpful. **PM10** should be made so that regard is had for paragraph 173 of the NPPF.
- 4.21 There is concern that Policy 10: Custom and Self-Build Homes, could deter developers who are required to provide affordable and general needs market housing, delay delivery because of the marketing period, and affect scheme viability. It might be better, it is suggested, to encourage informal marketing at a pre-application stage and appraise potential self-builders of the costs and other requirements of development. The District Council proposed that early engagement with the local planning authority in relation to registered and funded self-builders might be preferable. I have seen no clear evidence for the threshold of 30 dwellings given in the policy. Whilst the NPPF paragraph 50 supports the principle of providing a mix of housing including for people wishing to build their own homes, I consider that Policy 10 could have a harmful impact on overall housing delivery and be detrimental to the achievement of sustainable development. The second paragraph of the policy should be deleted and

supporting text modified as shown in **PM11**, so that the Basic Conditions are satisfied.

- 4.22 On the first issue, providing all the above modifications are made, I conclude that Policies 1-6, addressing the identification of suitable locations for future housing development, and Policies 7-10 concerning types of housing will be in general conformity with the South Somerset Local Plan, will have regard for national planning policy and will contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

## Issue 2 - The Economy

- 4.23 Section 7 - Employment begins with two objectives and a vision which seek to encourage suitable business development in Wincanton. The Plan goes on to state that the latest employment monitoring report for South Somerset (2016) shows that the development of employment land and floorspace in Wincanton and other towns has been behind the anticipated delivery rate. Policy SS3 of the Local Plan identified an employment land requirement of 7.94 hectares in the period 2006-28 for Wincanton, of which some 3.56 hectares had been provided or was committed. The Local Plan identified a direction of growth to the south-west of the town for additional employment land, but the NP on Page 20 observed that as yet (in 2015) no detailed plans for development there had been made.
- 4.24 The NP describes three main employment sites in the town, all of which are located in the south-west. It is explained that parts of these sites are not particularly well suited to potential businesses, so Policy 11 has been inserted to guide the release of employment land where alternative uses may offer a better long-term solution. Policy 11 is criticised by SSDC because it omits reference to B1 uses (offices), it is unclear to which area the policy applies, and it departs from Policy EP3 – Safeguarding Employment Land - in the Local Plan. I consider that the policy is loosely worded and is different from Policy EP3 of the Local Plan, which seeks to retain locally accessible employment sites and requires marketing for 18 months before employment land can be released. I agree that there is some uncertainty as to where Policy 11 should apply, in the absence of a map or illustration within the NP showing 'the town's development area'.
- 4.25 Paragraph 22 of the NPPF advises that the long term protection of sites allocated for employment use should be avoided where there is no reasonable prospect of them being taken up for that purpose. However, I consider that existing employment land should not be converted to other uses without proper scrutiny of its ability to meet the longer term needs of the local economy, and promote sustainable development. It seems to me that Policy EP3 of the Local Plan should enable potentially redundant sites to be assessed satisfactorily for future employment use.

Regrettably, I conclude that Policy 11 should be deleted from the NP as it is not in general conformity with the Local Plan. In addition, the supporting text on Page 20 should be amended to explain that Policy EP3 will be applied, and to clarify that the direction of growth to the south-west of the Town is included in the Local Plan. SSDC criticised use of the phrase "other uses typically found on large industrial estates", but I consider that the alternative "other economic development uses" is equally broad, and an amendment is therefore unnecessary. However, **PM12** to delete Policy 11 and modify the supporting text should be made to meet the Basic Conditions.

- 4.26 Policy 12 supports new proposals for employment development, and its thrust has regard for section 1 of the NPPF, Building a strong, competitive economy. However, SSDC objected that the policy was not sufficiently precise, and did not take account of evidence from its own Economic Development Monitoring Report (April 2017) and other studies, which demonstrated that business needs could be met without the sole reliance on new land release. These documents demonstrate the difficulty of forecasting economic change accurately, and of predicting the demands of modern businesses for land and workspace, in terms of quantity, quality and location. The Monitoring Report informs readers that 45% of the time period for the Local Plan 2006-28 has now passed, but only 31% of the target for new employment land has been provided. Delivery on the ground is described as "strikingly different" from what was planned in the Long-Term Economic Forecasting report, July 2017. The 'Rest of the District' developed more new sites than the main towns.
- 4.27 I consider that the difficulties of predicting demand for employment land and business premises, however, should not deter the Neighbourhood Planning Team from seeking to ensure that the economy of Wincanton is not held back by the availability of new land and buildings in appropriate locations. The Business Needs Report, March 2017, reports on surveys of local businesses in Wincanton in 2013 and 2015, which provide evidence of future demand for larger and new premises. SSDC's evidence highlights the fact that the A303 upgrade may have an impact on the local economy. If it has a positive effect (paragraph 7.96 of the Local Plan suggests it could improve Wincanton's connectivity 'offer' to potential inward investors), this could stimulate the demand for new employment land.
- 4.28 Policy 12 supports and does not require new development outside the development area. Also, it aims to limit such development to specific instances where existing and serviced sites to meet identified demand are absent. I consider that it is sufficiently clear in the supporting text on Page 20 what is intended by "employment", and the local highway authority would advise whether a specific proposal for development would

give rise to transport movements which would have unacceptable effects. The wording of the policy could be strengthened to ensure that it does not lead to unacceptable consequences for neighbouring residents or the countryside, contrary to national and local planning policies, or the achievement of sustainable development. **PM13** should be made accordingly.

- 4.29 Regarding Policy 13. Design and Layout of Employment Areas, SSDC commented that Policy TA6 of the Local Plan gives parking standards, and new developments can only address parking issues related directly to their own proposals. However, Policy 13 acknowledges the role of 'adopted parking standards' and only encourages (my emphasis) solutions that would help alleviate existing problems with parking and access. It is reasonable to consider opportunities for shared parking and, where practical, include them in development proposals, in my opinion. As the policy is not requiring these measures, I am satisfied that it should not be too onerous for developers nor in conflict with the Local Plan's parking standards. Policy 13 aims to achieve good design and therefore has regard for national policy.
- 4.30 Section 8 of the NP addresses Objective 4, to make the town centre more attractive to users. It is noted that local residents support town centre vitality, but there is no policy to achieve this. The South Somerset Local Plan, 2015, refers to the Retail Study Update, November 2010, which predicted increased retail expenditure and capacity for additional comparison and convenience floorspace in Wincanton by 2028. The Local Plan's Policy EP9 includes a retail hierarchy for the South Somerset District, with Wincanton as a market town where development of main town centre uses should be of a scale commensurate with the settlement's role and function, and not unbalance the overall town centre hierarchy. Policy EP11. The Location of Main Town Centre Uses, promotes the sequential approach for development proposals, consistent with national planning policy. Policy EP12 sets a floorspace threshold for new development in market towns of 750sqm (gross), above which proposals would have to undertake a retail impact assessment. Policy EP13. Protection of Retail Frontages, is also relevant to Wincanton, especially as much of its town centre is designated as a Conservation Area.
- 4.31 In addition, the Local Plan cautions that "*In order to achieve the goal of having a wealth of shops in a bustling High Street it will be important to retain and build upon existing retail provision and ensure that the potential for retail growth which does exist is directed towards the town centre ....*". The NP is silent on the subject of new retail floorspace, and of specific measures to protect its High Street. I see no need for the NP to allocate sites for town centre uses, and paragraph 9.92 of the Local Plan supports this approach. However, it is clear that some out-of-centre

development of supermarkets has taken place in the past, and I consider that the NP should include a stronger statement to limit any such future development which might detract from the town centre's vitality and viability. I appreciate that Neighbourhood Plans should not repeat the policies in Local Plans, but consider that cross-references to relevant policies would in this instance reinforce the NP's Objective 4. **PM14** would achieve this, having regard for section 2 of the NPPF and it would ensure general conformity with the Local Plan.

- 4.32 The Plan describes a Town Centre public realm improvements scheme, which is being developed with SSDC and Somerset Council as the highway authority. This is designed to improve the environment for pedestrians in South Street and High Street, and add an extended 20mph traffic zone in the town centre. I consider that it should help to enhance the vitality of the town centre. As long as the proposed modifications described above are made, I conclude that the NP's Policies 12 and 13, and Section 8 should promote sustainable development of the town's economy and town centre, in general conformity with the Local Plan and having regard for national policy. The Basic Conditions will be met.

### Issue 3 -The Environment

- 4.33 Section 6.1 of the NP describes the character of the landscape and built environment of the Parish, in terms of four sub-areas, and assesses the potential for sustainable development. It is under-pinned by the appraisal in the PlaceCheck Report, March 2016. Pages 12 and 13 of the NP describe the potential for new housing development 'Within the Town'. Reference is made to 'key buildings and green spaces within the town' that are important. This generalised statement should be amended in my view to state that Wincanton includes a substantial Conservation Area with many listed buildings, since these designations offer a high level of protection. I consider that **PM5** is essential, having regard for national planning policy, and to contribute towards sustainable development.
- 4.34 Similarly, Page 14 of the NP should give greater prominence to the fact that Wincanton has a Conservation Area reflecting its special architectural and/or historic interest. **PM5** and **PM7** should be made to modify the text on Page 14 and Policy 2, with the addition of a new map to show the boundary of Wincanton Conservation Area. The Conservation Area Appraisal refers to 91 listed buildings and nearly 40 unlisted buildings/groups of merit, and my site visit confirmed the area's special attractiveness and historical diversity. Page 19 onwards of the Appraisal provides further detail of unlisted buildings of value. The Town Council advised me that the Somerset Historic Environment Record and SSDC's conservation team would be good sources of knowledge for understanding undesignated heritage assets. These should be mentioned in Policy 6 to

provide assurance that objective assessment rather than merely local opinion would be used to determine historical significance. PM7 and **PM8** are needed, having regard for national planning policy for conserving and enhancing the historic environment (section 12 of the NPPF).

- 4.35 In other respects, I am satisfied that the scope and coverage of Policies 1-6 is in general conformity with Strategic Objective 8 and Policies EQ2-EQ6 of the Local Plan. Those, in brief, address protecting and enhancing the natural environment, historic environment and biodiversity; design to achieve high quality and local distinctiveness; and improving green infrastructure and woodlands/forests. Policies 1-6 should be helpful to potential developers and the achievement of sustainable development. It is clear enough from the wording of Policies 3,4 and 5 when landscape management schemes will be needed, in my view.
- 4.36 Section 9 of the NP addresses Objective 5. To protect public open spaces and improve walking and cycling routes. Policy 14 identifies eleven Local Green Spaces, and I have considered whether the policy has full regard for the NPPF, paragraphs 76-78. The NPPF states that Local Green Space (LGS) designations should be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period, and LGS designation will not be appropriate for most green areas or open space. Those considerations have led me to question whether a small town such as Wincanton in a countryside setting merits as many as eleven LGSs. My assessment has been based on my site visit, the background evidence to the NP, the NPPF and the Government's Planning Practice Guidance [ID:37-007-20140306 to 37-022-20140306].
- 4.37 The first proposed LGS is the cemetery immediately west of Cale Park (LGS 1), which is clearly of local significance and provides a tranquil area of open space. The churchyard (LGS 2) is also of historic importance and provides a visually attractive setting to the church. However, it lies within Wincanton Conservation Area, where the PPG states that consideration should be given as to whether any additional local benefit would be gained by designation as LGS. The churchyard provides the setting to the listed parish church of St Peter and St Paul. I consider that the additional benefit of LGS designation would be negligible, and therefore do not endorse LGS 2. Cale Park (LGS 3) including the recreation ground is a distinctive open, green area within easy walking distance of the town centre. The Park is well maintained and well used, and LGS 3 should be designated, as should the cemetery (LGS 1).
- 4.38 The Riverside Walk, Cash's Park and Coneygore & Wrixon's View (proposed LGSs 4, 5 & 6) are described as important spaces in the PlaceCheck Report and Page 4 indicates that they form part of an "important green link" running north of the recreation ground to Shadwell, Cash's Park and north of Carrington Way. The PPG states that there is no



need to designate linear corridors as LGS simply to protect rights of way. In this instance, I understand from the NP that much of the Riverside Walk is in private ownership, but it lies within flood zones 2 and 3 so that the risk of future development would seem to be unlikely<sup>16</sup>. As such, I do not endorse LGS 4. Cash's Park and Coneygore & Wrixon's View lie within the Wincanton Conservation Area and clearly contribute towards its special character and appearance. I see no need for the additional designation to be afforded to LGS 5 and 6.

- 4.39 SSDC stated that the access to Home Drive Playing Field (LGS 7) should be clarified. Although the site is reportedly used by a pre-school and described as having recreational value, from my site visit I was unsure how much it was used by the wider community, and whether it was accessible to them. The PlaceCheck Report describes the Playing Field as having "more local value" than other open spaces such as the cemetery and recreation ground. Since the NPPF states that LGS designation will not be appropriate for most green areas or open space, I consider that Home Drive Playing Field should not be so designated as LGS7. The PlaceCheck Report also identifies land at the corner of Common Road & Deansley Way (LGS 8) as "perhaps of more local value" than other green spaces such as the Recreation Ground and Cemetery. Although this extended area of grass verge has a seat and two or three mature trees, I consider that its value in terms of appearance and usage is not sufficient for its designation as LGS.
- 4.40 As I saw at my site visit, the Charity Field off Bayford Hill (LGS 9) provides an important gap in the built development which enables long-distance views across the countryside to the south. The PlaceCheck Report describes it as open space of "notable local value", and I am satisfied that the designation of LGS 9 is appropriate. The Eastern areas (LGS 10) is described in the NP as a "*well used area (which) allows 'wild play' and is a wildlife habitat*". I accept its importance to this recently developed part of Wincanton and support the LGS 10 designation. LGS 11, New Barns attenuation pond area, is an open area and wildlife habitat close to the River Cale and adjoining the Recreation Ground, LGS3. The Local Plan Inset Map indicates that it could be susceptible to flooding, so is unlikely to be built on. The NPPF advises that LGS designation should not be applied to an extensive tract of land. I consider that the cemetery and recreation ground already occupy a sizeable area, and that adding the New Barns attenuation pond area could make LGS coverage overly extensive. Accordingly, LGS 11 should not be designated.
- 4.41 I therefore conclude that only four of the proposed LGSs, the cemetery (LGS 1), Cale Park (LGS 3), Charity Field off Bayford Hill (LGS 9) and Eastern areas (play area etc) (LGS 10) should be designated as such.

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<sup>16</sup> Inset Map 14, Wincanton, South Somerset Local Plan, 2015, Policies Map.

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This conclusion does not mean that the other proposed sites have no value as local green space, but it has regard for national policy which is clear that the designation should not be used liberally. I consider that the table on Pages 24 & 25 should be modified to state that four green spaces should be designated as LGS, and then list the remaining seven sites, explaining that they are adequately protected by other designations or do not meet the NPPF paragraph 77 criteria to be designated as LGSs. The map on Page 25 should also be modified to reflect these changes. It should continue to show all eleven spaces but should differentiate sites in the Conservation Area and the lower ranked spaces from LGSs. The Proposals Map on Page 28 should be amended so that it differentiates between the LGSs and other green spaces.

- 4.42 The Proposals Map is similar to the map on Page 4 of the PlaceCheck Report. The latter shows another significant green feature, namely the “important green link” up the river valley to Shadwell. As this green corridor will have importance for wildlife as well as for recreation and walking, I consider that it should be shown on the Proposals Map. This would reinforce the message given in Policy 4 of the NP.
- 4.43 The monitoring process for the NP, described in section 10, will enable the Town Council to monitor the significance, quality and usage of all the Town’s green spaces and review its Policy 14 in five years time. **PM15 & PM16** should be made so that the NP has regard for national planning policy and promotes the achievement of sustainable development.
- 4.44 Policy 15. Key Pedestrian and Cycle Routes, should protect and enhance the existing network, and facilitate more sustainable travel across the town in line with paragraph 35 of the NPPF. I support the policy which is also in general conformity with Policy EQ5 of the Local Plan. I conclude that, as long as the above-mentioned modifications are made, the Wincanton NP meets the Basic Conditions thereby ensuring the protection and improvement of the local environment.

## 5. Conclusions

### *Summary*

- 5.1 The Wincanton Neighbourhood Plan has been duly prepared in compliance with the procedural requirements. My examination has investigated whether the Plan meets the Basic Conditions and other legal requirements for neighbourhood plans. I have had regard for all the responses made following consultation on the neighbourhood plan, and the evidence documents submitted with it.

- 5.2 I have made recommendations to modify a number of policies and text to ensure the Plan meets the Basic Conditions and other legal requirements. I recommend that the Plan, once modified, proceeds to referendum.

*The Referendum and its Area*

- 5.3 I have considered whether or not the referendum area should be extended beyond the designated area to which the Plan relates. The Wincanton Neighbourhood Plan as modified has no policy or proposals which I consider significant enough to have an impact beyond the designated neighbourhood plan boundary, requiring the referendum to extend to areas beyond the plan boundary. I recommend that the boundary for the purposes of any future referendum on the plan should be the boundary of the designated neighbourhood plan area.
- 5.4 I appreciate the hard work that has gone into preparing this NP, in gathering relevant evidence and responding to the views of the community's residents and local businesses. The submitted NP demonstrates good local knowledge and understanding of Wincanton's future challenges and potential. I consider that, with the proposed modifications, the Plan should be an effective tool in securing and managing high quality new development. It should help prospective developers to put forward proposals which are appropriate and sensitive to the needs of Wincanton.

*Jill Kingaby*

Examiner

## Appendix: Modifications

Proposed modification number (PM)	Page no./ other reference	Modification
PM1	Page 6	<p>Figure 1. Area context</p> <p>Add a key to this map to clarify that the area shown in red is the Parish of Wincanton which is the area covered by the Neighbourhood Plan.</p>
PM2	Page 11	<p>Section 6. Housing</p> <p>Amend the first paragraph to read:</p> <p>While the town has seen a high level of recent housebuilding, the reality has been that without a District-wide 5 year housing supply, planning applications for further development in and around Wincanton could still <b>have</b> come forward and <del>be</del> <b>have been</b> permitted. This is .....<del>are</del> <b>were</b> considered 'out of date' ... <del>is</del> <b>was</b> significant shortfall. So, when this happened, unless there are <b>were</b> ... <del>are</del> <b>were</b> likely to be considered favourably.</p> <p><b><i>Following the ministerial Paper of 12<sup>th</sup> December 2016, policies for the supply of housing land in Neighbourhood Plans would not be considered out of date, if the local planning authority could demonstrate a three year housing land supply. However, consultation is now taking place, in 2017, on the potential provisions of a revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which is expected to include a standardised methodology for assessing local housing need. Government aims to introduce the revised NPPF by Spring 2018.</i></b></p> <p>However although <del>Even if some</del> <b>Even if some</b> local plan (and even <b>some</b> neighbourhood plan) policies <del>may</del> <b>do</b> become out of date.....</p>

PM3	Page 11	<p>Last sentence at bottom of page:</p> <p>Lawrence Hill is a particularly interesting .....to the town, and should <b>remain undeveloped.</b> <del>be retained as informal open space ....</del></p>
PM4	Page 12	<p>Fourth paragraph beginning "Somerset County Council's Service Manager for Schools Commissioning ... "should be deleted. Replace it with:</p> <p><b><i>If further major housing development is proposed for the town, prospective developers should liaise with Somerset County Council's Service Manager for Schools Commissioning to ensure that appropriate provision for new school places can be secured.</i></b></p>
PM5	<p>Pages 12 to 15</p> <p>Within the Town</p>	<p>First paragraph - ...opportunities on previously developed <b>ed</b> land ... One such example <b>is</b> the Tythings site.</p> <p>Last paragraph on Page 12</p> <p><b><i>Figure xx shows the boundary of Wincanton Conservation Area which encompasses the historic core of the town.</i></b> There are a number of key ..... and countryside beyond. Poorly planned development might <b>cause harm to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area or views in and out of it.</b> <del>Block</del><b>Significant</b> existing views <b>might be blocked,</b> <del>reduce</del>the quality of such <b>green</b> spaces and links <b>reduced,</b> and <del>miss</del>opportunities <b>missed</b> to reinforce ....</p> <p>Page 13</p> <p>Heritage features must be respected .... are two such examples. <b><i>The Somerset Historic Environment Record and South Somerset Conservation Team also have knowledge of local undesignated assets.</i></b> The design and layout.....</p> <p>Page 14 – second paragraph, second bullet point:</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protecting and reinforcing the network of key buildings and spaces around the town. <b>Regard should be had for preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of Wincanton Conservation Area, and conserving its Listed Buildings.</b> By considering <del>h</del> <b>How</b> the design and layout can <del>can</del> <b>might</b> create positive visual and route connections <b>should be considered.</b> These were <del>Key buildings and spaces were</del> identified from .....</li> </ul> <p>- bottom of the page</p> <p>Encouraging opportunities for development to reflect the interesting history ... <b>The Somerset Historic Environment Record backed up by</b> local knowledge can <del>could</del> ....</p>
PM6	Page 15	<p>New text before block of six policies including Policy 2</p> <p><b>The policies take forward Strategic Objective 8 and Policies EQ2 – EQ6 of the South Somerset Local Plan which seek to achieve high quality design and promote the area’s local distinctiveness. Specific development proposals for new housing will also be assessed with careful attention to viability and deliverability, in accordance with national planning policy.</b></p>
PM7	Page 15	<p>Policy 2. Key Buildings and Spaces</p> <p><b>All development proposals should preserve or enhance the character and appearance of Wincanton Conservation Area, shown in Figure xx, and conserve the town’s Listed Buildings.</b> Where development allows ....</p> <p>Add a new Figure (xx) to show Wincanton Conservation Area.</p>
PM8	Page 15	Policy 6. Interpreting the history of a site

		<p>Site features .... <b>The District Council's record of Listed Buildings, its Conservation Team's information on undesignated heritage assets and the Somerset Historic Environment Record should be referenced. In addition,</b></p> <p>cConsultation with the local community ...</p>
PM9	Pages 16, 17&18	<p>Fifth paragraph Page 16</p> <p>The latest evidence ..... potentially affordable housing being prescribed <b>pursued</b> through national guidance ... owner-occupation, and a target ... report's conclusions. <b>The exact proportion of new homes to be Starter Homes will depend on Government policy in the expected revision of the NPPF, and will be a matter for negotiation with developers and South Somerset District Council.</b></p> <p>as a much higher discount than ..... affordable rents. <b>Local connection is defined as currently living or in permanent work in Wincanton Parish, and has been so for 3 of the past 5 years. Other factors which demonstrate a clear link to the local area, including the surrounding parishes, may also be taken into consideration.</b></p> <p>Policy 8. Starter Homes for Local People</p> <p>The provision of starter homes for first time buyers should be <b>will be</b> supported on up to 20% of new homes. <b>where there is a demonstrable need and subject to the viability of the development.</b> Such provision .....</p> <p>Second paragraph, Page 18</p> <p>Similarly, the Government's regulations .... starter homes to be provided in addition.</p> <p>New footnote to Page 18</p> <p>Wincanton Neighbourhood Plan Evidence Base - Housing Review Report, April 2016, SHMA Update March 2017, by Dorset Planning Consultant Ltd informs the</p>

		information included in section 6.2.
PM10	Page 18	Policy 9. Accessible and Adaptable Homes New homes..... within any proposed mix, <b>where feasible and viable.</b>
PM11	Pages 17 & 18	Policy 10. Custom and Self-Build Homes Delete the second paragraph beginning: On larger sites of more than 30 houses..... Modify the final paragraph of text on Page 18 as follows:  Although at the time.....over the plan period. The requirements in Policy 10 will only apply where there is clear evidence of need. <b>Landowners and developers of large sites should acquaint themselves with evidence of likely demand on the District Council's self-build register.</b>
PM12	Pages 20 & 21	Modify the second paragraph on Page 20: Parts of these existing employment sites ..... <del>As such, we have included a policy..... but not as restrictive as</del> Policy EP3 of the Local Plan, which requires at least 18 months marketing of the site <del>and significant environmental improvements</del> <b>and other measures before it can be released from employment use should be applied.</b>  It is important that the overall availability <del>le</del> ....west of Wincanton Business Park) <del>was</del> <b>is</b> included in the Local Plan.....  Delete Policy 11. The Retention of Employment Land (and renumber subsequent policies sequentially).
PM13	Pages 20 & 21	Third paragraph on Page 20: It is important that ..... A303 slip road can be established. <b>The District Council's Economic Development Monitoring Report (April 2017) and related studies of economic forecasting and employment land take-up in South Somerset indicate the difficulties of predicting how much new land will be</b>



		<p><b>required and where it would be best located.</b> By providing the flexibility .....</p> <p>Policy 12. New Employment Areas</p> <p>In the absence of existing and available serviced sites to meet <del>and</del> identified.... for new employment sites outside of the town's .....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the town's .....</li> <li>• .....avoiding routes through residential or other sensitive areas where significant traffic movements would be detrimental to existing nearby uses and their occupants <b>the living conditions of residents</b> or cause harm .....</li> <li>• <del>Avoid giving rise to ... leisure uses</del><b>Not result in noise, pollution or other effects which would cause harm to the living conditions of neighbouring residents,</b> and</li> <li>• Not result in .....</li> </ul> <p>..... for major rebuild.</p>
PM14	Page 22	<p>Objective 4. Make the town centre more attractive to users</p> <p>Residents want .....support town centre vitality. <b>Policy EP9 defines Wincanton as a market town where the development of town centre uses should be of a scale commensurate with the town's position in the retail hierarchy. Policy EP11. The Location of Main Town Centre Uses promotes a town centre first approach to new development in line with national planning policy. Policies EP12 and EP13 concerning floorspace thresholds for new developments and protection of existing retail frontages are also relevant to securing a vital and vibrant town centre for Wincanton.</b> <del>And</del> <b>In addition,</b> the Government has made a number .....</p>
PM15	Pages 24 &	Amend the last sentence of paragraph 2 on

	25	<p>Page 24 to read:</p> <p>The following <b>Four</b> green spaces have therefore been identified <b>as Local Green Spaces for special protection as shown below. These are followed in the second table by a number of green spaces with local importance which are not, however, designated as Local Green Space because (1) they are protected by other designations eg. they are located within the Conservation Area, and/or (2) they do not satisfy in full the criteria in paragraph 77 of the NPPF. All the green spaces have some local importance and should be retained as areas of open space.</b></p> <p>Table on Page 14 should be split into three sections. The top section should list the following as LGSs:</p> <p>Cemetery 1</p> <p>Cale Park (inc. recreation Ground) 3</p> <p>Charity Field off Bayford Hill 9</p> <p>Eastern areas (Play area &amp; field to east of Morpork St &amp; area north of Kinklebury St.) 10</p> <p>The second section should list the following as green spaces which contribute to the character and appearance of the Wincanton Conservation Area:</p> <p>Churchyard 2</p> <p>Cash's Park 5</p> <p>Coneygrove &amp; Wrixon's View 6</p> <p>The third section should list the following as Other Green Areas and Open Space to be retained:</p> <p>Riverside Walk 4</p> <p>Home Drive playing field 7</p>
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		<p>Corner of Common Road &amp; Deansley Way 8</p> <p>New Barns attenuation pond area 11</p> <p>Policy 14. Local Green Space, and other green areas or open space</p> <p>Local Green space designations ..... for designation. <b>Development proposals which retain the other green and open spaces identified in the table above will be supported.</b></p>
PM16	Pages 25 & 28	<p>The maps should be modified so that they distinguish LGSs from important green spaces in Wincanton Conservation Area, and other green and open spaces, in accordance with PM15.</p> <p>The Proposals Map should show the Important Green Link along the river valley as illustrated on Page 4 of the PlaceCheck Report.</p>

# Wincanton Neighbourhood Plan

2018-2028



**Wincanton Town Council**  
**January 2018**

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### Separate Documents

Consultation Statement

Evidence Base

Basic Conditions Statement

## Summary

Wincanton has seen a significant period of housebuilding with 594 new dwellings built in the 10 years from 2006 (the start of the Local Plan). Another 270 dwellings have planning permission. This means that there are more than enough sites with planning consent to meet the Local Plan's target of 703 homes for Wincanton, to be built between 2006 to 2028. In contrast, there is less certainty about the delivery of the employment land.

Residents are very concerned over the impact on local services, the effect on the local environment and on the nature of the community by this level of development. Other key issues identified during our consultation were that the types of houses being built do not suit residents' needs, not enough jobs were being created to balance the increased population (so that Wincanton retains its working town character) and that more could be done to support the town centre economy.

Two Planning Appeal decisions on important sites during the preparation of the Plan served to re-focus the Steering Group's determination to deliver it. At that time, the District Council did not have a five year housing land supply, and therefore despite the local housing target being exceeded, there was (and still remains) a presumption in favour of new housing, regardless of where the existing settlement boundary is drawn, provided there are no significant environmental or other concerns associated with it. With the short-fall in housing numbers across South Somerset, this presumption is likely to continue until a new Local Plan is adopted.

This Plan takes a realistic and positive approach to where future development should take place, by highlighting the type of development the town needs and the special features of the town we want to retain, which can then be considered in where and how new development might come forward. It is not an allocations-based Plan; the Local Plan Early Review will identify the numbers/quantity of homes and amount of employment space required for the town looking beyond 2028.

## The Vision

In 2028 Wincanton will be an even better place to live, work and visit. The town will still have its working character, with employment land and facilities that allow existing businesses to grow and attract in new businesses. It will have a thriving town centre that continues to perform a useful retail, social and community purpose for the town. It will have well-designed homes and developments that suit residents' needs, that are visually unobtrusive and link well to the town centre. The spaces, buildings and other places or features that make Wincanton special, will be protected and respected in new development.

## The Objectives

The objectives of the Plan are;

### **1. Identifying the most sustainable locations for development**

We have considered the possible directions for future growth, issues associated and features that are important, to help identify the best areas for any future development, which would create the least environmental impact and support a thriving, well-connected community.

### **2. Housing suitable for Wincanton's population**

The population of the town needs more smaller homes for older people and starter homes for young families, and developments that prioritise these kinds of homes will be supported.

### **3. New employment space near the A303**

A key objective is to retain existing and facilitate new jobs, to keep Wincanton's working town character. High quality, flexible, larger footprint business units for warehousing, storage and light industrial use, and some offices, will be supported.

### **4. Make the town centre more attractive to users**

Residents want a lively and useful town centre that is a pleasure to shop in. This Plan proposes a modest series of environmental improvements that will make shopping on foot more attractive and safer by slowing traffic and widening some pavements. This will also improve access for mobility scooter users and cyclists.

### **5. Protect open spaces & improve walking & cycling routes**

To make walking a cycling practical for day to day trips, there needs to be suitable, well-signed and attractive off-road links from housing areas to the town centre and other key facilities such as the schools, leisure and health centres. We have identified two routes that will form the basis of this network, and the open spaces that are important to local residents.

The detail of these objectives, and the policies that will deliver them, are outlined in this document, our Neighbourhood Plan.

## 1. Introduction

The Wincanton Neighbourhood Plan aims to shape future development that will enhance the town and help build a balanced community and local economy.

The 2012 Localism Act gives local communities the power to produce their own neighbourhood plans which will influence future development in their local area.

Such plans are focused on shaping the built environment and can:

- Identify a shared vision and common goals for a neighbourhood.
- Define where new homes, shops, offices and other development should be built.
- Identify and protect local green space.
- Influence what new buildings should look like and set design standards.

Consultation has been a key and necessary part of the process in preparing the Plan, which is summarised in section 5 and in detail in the separate Consultation Statement.

Wincanton Town Council is the qualifying body that has led the production of this Plan.



## 2. National & Local Planning Context

Under the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations, the Wincanton Neighbourhood Plan has to comply with the Basic Conditions of the Localism Act 2012, with the National Planning Policy Framework and with the strategic objectives of the adopted South Somerset Local Plan (2006 - 2028).

### 2.1. The Basic Conditions

The right for communities to prepare Neighbourhood Plans was established by the Localism Act in 2011, which was accompanied by the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012. As a result, Neighbourhood Plans are required to meet a number of basic conditions which are detailed within Schedule 4B of the 1990 Act, as inserted by the provisions of Schedule 10 of the Localism Act. The basic conditions are addressed in the Basic Conditions Statement and require that:

- The neighbourhood plan is prepared having regard to national policies and advice issued by the Secretary of State,
- The making of the neighbourhood plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development, and
- The making of the neighbourhood plan is in general conformity with any strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority.

### 2.2. The National Planning Policy Framework

The Government's planning policy for England is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), supplemented by online guidance. The focus of this policy is to achieve the right balance between sustainability and growth to ensure that development is carried out in a way that makes a positive contribution to our lives but also leaves a lasting legacy for our children.

It identifies three distinct planning roles and objectives:

**Economic** - Contributing to building a strong economy: ensuring that sufficient land is available in the right places and at the right time.

**Social** - Providing homes that will meet the needs of future generations and supporting the community's health, social and cultural well-being.

**Environmental** - Protecting our environment: using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution and mitigating climate change.

In guiding neighbourhood plans, the framework makes clear that neighbourhood plans must be in general conformity and not undermine or promote less development than set out in the Local Plan. However they can shape and direct sustainable development in their area, but need to be flexible enough to accommodate needs or changes in economic circumstances they may not have been anticipated.

### 2.3. South Somerset Local Plan 2006-2028

South Somerset District Council is the local planning authority. The South Somerset Local Plan (2006 – 2028) is a collection of policies which set out the long term vision and strategic context for managing and accommodating growth within South Somerset up to 2028.

The District Council adopted the South Somerset Local Plan on the 5th March 2015. The Council has begun an 'Early Review' of the Local Plan, and expects to consult on the Issues and Options in Autumn 2017, publish and consult on the preferred approach in Winter 2018 and consult on the Submission Plan in Summer 2019, with adopted therefore likely in early 2020.

Key elements of the Local Plan that will influence Neighbourhood Plan policy in Wincanton over the Plan period are:-

- The town's status as a Primary Market Town, where provision will be made for housing, employment, shopping and other services that increases its self-containment and enhance its role as a service centre
- The delivery of 703 new homes, of which 594 have been built and a further 270 already have planning consent
- The creation of 599 new jobs, with a preferred 'direction of growth' identified to the south west of the town

The Local Plan's Vision for 2028 relating to Market Towns including Wincanton is;  
"South Somerset's Market Towns and Rural Centres will provide the basis of the thriving regenerated and diversified economy outside Yeovil. These places will have retained their distinctiveness and continue to provide a focus for their surrounding areas. They will have built upon their existing roles and functions and be thriving and vibrant places offering quality housing, job opportunities and a range of services to meet the needs of their communities and visitors and be more self-sufficient and with a better balance of jobs to dwellings."

The growth proposed ... will provide economic regeneration, better housing and, with the maintenance and enhancement of commercial and community services across the district, allowing better access for all. The mix of employment, housing and associated land uses in these places will promote greater settlement self-containment."

### 3. Wincanton in Context

Wincanton is situated at the south eastern corner of Somerset, close to the border with Dorset and Wiltshire, to the north of the Blackmore Vale and overlooking the Cale valley.

The Local Plan provides a brief overview of the history of the town. It describes how the town dates back to Saxon times, where there was a settlement on the east bank of the River Cale in the vicinity of the Church, spreading up the hill to the current High Street where burgage plots were established in the 13th Century. An area around the town centre and extending to the north is designated as a Conservation Area.

The town's location on the main Exeter to London medieval coach route would have encouraged the steady growth from the Middle Ages onwards, and cloth manufacture, clock making and the dairy industry were key strands of the local economy. The A303 trunk road now defines the south edge of the town, providing good road links to London and the south west of England. Within easy reach are the nearby towns of Bruton, Castle Cary, Gillingham and Sherborne, and the major town of Yeovil is about 30 minutes away by car.



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Fig 1. Area context.

Wincanton's population of 5,300 makes it the fourth largest settlement in the district in terms of population. Recent residential growth has taken place at New Barns Farm to the south west, with the main employment areas of the town on the south and south west of the town.

Wincanton is located within a rural setting and is important in serving the needs of residents in the nearby rural areas. In terms of retail, Wincanton has a range of independent stores and a supermarket in the town centre and several supermarkets near the A303. Other key services to be found in the town include a health centre, a hospital, a leisure centre, a library, banks, primary and secondary schools.



The Market Place

Wincanton has historic connections with logistics and distribution and continues to feature elements of the dairy industry and food production. The town enjoys some particular tourism assets with its famous racecourse (just outside the neighbourhood plan area to the north) and literary connections with Terry Pratchett's 'Discworld' series.

Growth in lifestyle business has occurred in the last decade, associated with proximity to the South East and good connectivity. However the town is not overly dependent on any one single employer. Wincanton Racecourse plays a role in the local economy by bringing people to the town.

## 4. How the Neighbourhood Plan was prepared

The Neighbourhood Plan area was designated in March 2014, and a Steering Group of Town and District Councillors, business representatives and community groups (with officer liaison from the District Council) began meeting in January 2015.

The Steering Group undertook a focused consultation process, building on existing evidence.

The initial focus was on business needs, and a survey of local businesses took place in March 2015. This was to update the evidence from a 2011 South Somerset District Council business needs survey. A follow-up meeting gave local businesses the opportunity to respond to the findings and add more detail.



June 2015 Consultation event at the Memorial Hall

Wincanton Town Council had already produced a comprehensive Community Plan in 2007 with an update in 2012, and a Local Transport Plan (2013) and these were reviewed to identify existing issues. These were incorporated into a consultation event in June 2015, where over 150 people gave over 1500 comments across the whole range of issues.

Throughout the production of the Plan, Steering Group members have raised concerns and suggestions from local people and businesses at meetings. The Town Council has maintained a dedicated section of its website to explain progress. Email and social media have also been useful in explaining progress and as a channel for comments.

A Planning Consultant, Jo Witherden (Dorset Planning Consultant) was appointed in November 2015 to help develop a number of policies and the evidence for these.

A group of Town and District Councillors completed a Placecheck, a series of guided visits to areas of the town to assess the constraints and identify opportunities for different kinds of development that the town needs. Specific research was undertaken to establish local housing and employment needs.

The full details of our consultation are shown in the Consultation Statement. The Placecheck report can be viewed in our Evidence Base.

## 5. What the Neighbourhood Plan aims to achieve

### 5.1. Issues for the town

The previous sections set out the context for this Neighbourhood Plan. But what are the issues for local people that the Plan aims to tackle?

Residents are concerned by the level of recent housing development and its impact on local services, effect on the local environment and on the nature of the community. These concerns resulted in a demonstration of around 300 people in December 2014.

Key issues identified during our consultation were that;

- businesses need better quality, larger footprint units that they can adapt as the business grows. These need good access to the A303, much better broadband and sufficient parking.
- the types of houses being built do not suit residents' needs, in particular for the elderly and for young people
- not enough jobs are being created for the increased population, so that Wincanton's working town character is under threat and services are under pressure
- the physical environment of the town, especially the main approach into the town from the A303, was of poor quality, with messy industry and old commercial units providing a poor first impression
- more could be done to support the town centre economy. Edge-of-town supermarkets and internet shopping have had an effect on the vitality of many town centres including Wincanton, but measures such as pedestrian improvements and traffic calming, redeveloping two key Listed buildings and widening the choice of shops were suggested.
- access around the town on foot and by cycle is difficult due to terrain, the one-way system and the historic pattern of development.

Additional concerns raised through contact with Steering Group members and the Neighbourhood Plan Coordinator have included noise from industrial processes affecting householders in the News Barns development (and conversely the impact on local businesses) which can be seen as poor design and planning of new developments, and access concerns for emergency vehicles in New Barns due to on-street parking (again because of poor design).

### 5.2. Objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan

Five objectives formed the basis of the research and focus of our Neighbourhood Plan:

1. Identifying the most sustainable locations for further development
2. Housing suitable for Wincanton's population
3. New employment space near the A303
4. Make the town centre more attractive to users
5. Protect public open spaces & improve walking & cycling routes

Other issues that were raised, shown in the table below, can largely be addressed outside the Neighbourhood Plan. These are either non-planning issues or likely to be supported through existing planning policies.

The vision that encapsulates these objectives, and the policies that will deliver them, are outlined in the following sections.

Recognising the need for flexibility the term ‘should’ has been adopted in a number of the policy statements. This does not imply that the policy is optional, but instead recognises that there may be reasons why the tests set out in the policy may not be practical, and if this is the case the application should contain information explaining the reasons why an exception should be made.

### 5.3. Aims outside of the Neighbourhood Plan

The following table lists additional aims that were identified through the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan, but which fall largely outside of its remit. The Town Council would hope to work together with organisations such as those listed (and others that may wish to be involved) to achieve these aims.

<b>Aims</b>	<b>Bodies that could be involved in delivery</b>
Protecting Wincanton Community Hospital	Wincanton Town Council, Somerset Partnership (NHS), Clinical Commissioning Group
Improving Primary Care	Wincanton Town Council, Clinical Commissioning Group, Patients Participation Group, Wincanton Health Centre
Supporting the expansion of the Primary School	Wincanton Town Council, Local Education Authority
A town centre development to attract an anchor store or service	Wincanton Town Council, Chamber, South Somerset District Council
Unlocking the barriers to viable development of Listed Buildings	Wincanton Town Council, South Somerset District Council

### 5.4. The Vision

In 2028 Wincanton will be an even better place to live, work and visit. The town will still have its working character, with employment land and facilities that allow existing businesses to grow and attract in new businesses. It will have a thriving town centre that continues to perform a useful retail, social and community purpose for the town. It will have well-designed homes and developments that suit residents’ needs, that are visually unobtrusive and link well to the town centre. The spaces, buildings and other places or features that make Wincanton special, will be protected and respected in new development.

## 6. Housing

### **Objective 1. Identifying the most sustainable locations for further development**

### **Objective 2. Housing suitable for Wincanton's population**

While the town has seen a high level of recent housebuilding, the reality is that without a District-wide 5 year housing supply, planning applications for further development outside of the town could still have come forward and have been permitted. This is because development plan policies that restrain housing growth, such as settlement boundaries or local thresholds, were considered 'out of date' where there was a significant shortfall in housing land supply across the wider housing market area. So when this happened, unless there were serious site-specific issues that would make them unsuitable, housing proposals in locations such as Wincanton were likely to be considered favourably.

Following the Ministerial Paper of 12<sup>th</sup> December 2016, policies for the supply of housing land in Neighbourhood Plans would not be considered out of date, if the local planning authority could demonstrate a three year housing land supply. However, consultation is now taking place, in 2017, on the potential provisions of a revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which is expected to include a standardised methodology for assessing local housing need. Government aims to introduce the revised NPPF by Spring 2018.

Even if some local plan (and even some neighbourhood plan) policies do become out of date, they will still carry some weight in the decision making process, particularly if there is a clear underlying purpose.

This Plan looks to provide further guidance on those local issues, such as landscape character, that should be taken into account in directing development to the most appropriate locations for further growth, and the type of housing needed based on an understanding of current demand, likely trends and residents' issues and concerns.

### **6.1. Identifying the most sustainable locations for further development**

The plan does not identify or allocate sites for development. But during its preparation the Steering Group did look at sites which may well come forward for consideration in the future. This was done through a PlaceCheck appraisal, where representatives of the local community thought about what local people would say about those sites and the type of issues that the development of these sites might raise. Although this work was not as detailed as would be required for determining a planning application or site allocation, this has highlighted particular points that should usefully be considered in such planning decisions, so that development better meets the local needs and aspirations of the community whilst not preventing development that is needed. It is hoped that these findings will be used to influence both the Local Plan Review and decisions made on planning applications when the presumption in favour of sustainable development is applied.

#### *South West of the Town*

This area is where the current Local Plan has focused growth. Our investigations showed that it is important that the design, layout and extent of development respects the special landscape towards Hook Valley Farm, and does not become visually obtrusive by building towards the northern elevated field (adjoining West Hill).



There are also some visually sensitive areas where development should be avoided, most notably the higher ground west of New Barns Farm where development would be particularly prominent on the skyline, and Lawrence Hill. The overall form of the town is shaped by its topography, and it is important to keep the higher ground to the west of New Barns Farms free from built development to provide a green backdrop to the town's limits, and allow views across the town. Lawrence Hill is a particularly interesting and enjoyable landscape rising up towards one of the main access roads to the town, and should remain undeveloped.

Within the direction of growth defined in the Local Plan, the stream corridor provides the basis of an important green link, which could provide wildlife, landscape, flood alleviation and recreational benefits. Consideration needs to be given how best to ensure this links through to the remaining green infrastructure network. Similarly the hedgerows and mature trees can be incorporated into the layout of new development to create better places. Opportunities should also be taken where appropriate to soften the existing urban edge to the town.

Given the distance from the town centre, it would be appropriate to plan for a neighbourhood centre within this direction of growth. The existing attractive stone buildings at New Barns could form the basis for such a centre (subject to viability and demand), and their retention would also provide a clear visual link to the history of this area as farmland serving the town's population. Safe and attractive walking and cycling links are important, connecting this new centre, and the surrounding housing to the town centre and other well-used community facilities.

The Local Plan recognises the importance of having good access to the strategic road network for employment development, and the existing roundabout could be adapted to provide a new access from the A371. In the section on employment there are more specific policies aimed at avoiding potential conflict between different uses, and designing the employment areas to be able to adapt to different business requirements.

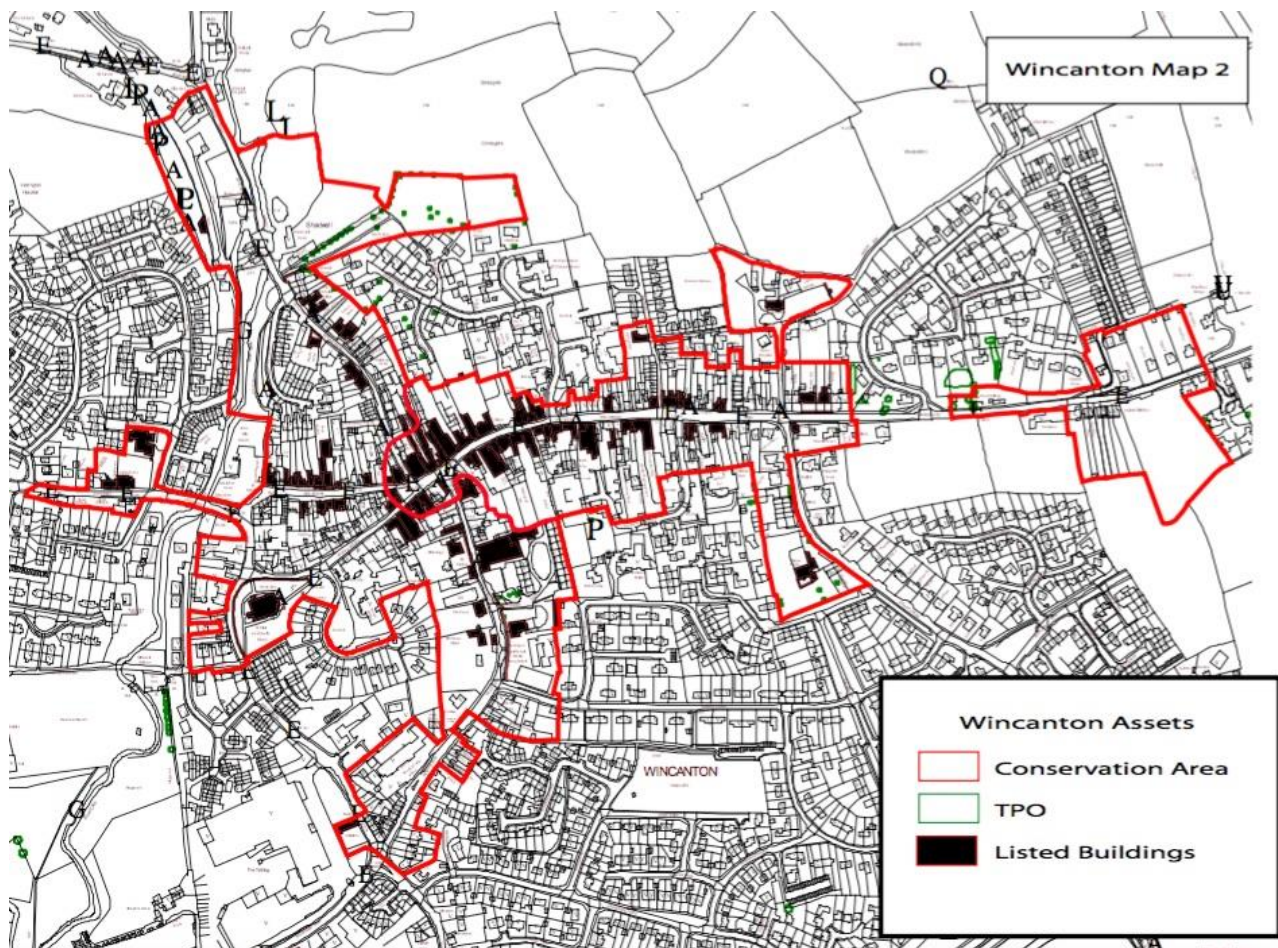
If further major housing development is proposed for the town, prospective developers should liaise with Somerset County Council's Service Manager for Schools Commissioning to ensure that appropriate provision for new school places can be secured.

### *Within the Town*

Looking within the existing built up areas of the town, there may be development opportunities on previously developed land, though any proposals will need to be subject to more detailed investigation. One such example is the Tythings site. The opportunity of redeveloping this site could bring a number of benefits to the town. The messy industrial processes of a concrete works with associated daily HGV movements could be removed from this central site, and the main approach into the town visually improved. The site is within walking distance of the town centre and the health centre. A residential development (focused for older people) or a mixed use development incorporating suitable employment uses ('clean' B uses, such as offices) may be suitable for such a location.

The small Travis Perkins site similarly might present an opportunity for residential development if it became available and subject to avoiding possible harm from flooding (as part of the site is within the flood risk zone).

Figure 2 shows the boundary of Wincanton Conservation Area which encompasses the historic core of the town. There are a number of key buildings and green spaces within the town that are important, not only in defining its distinct character, but also in helping people recognise where they are and providing attractive and more direct routes through to different parts of the town and countryside beyond. Poorly planned development might cause harm to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area or views in and out of it. Significant existing views might be blocked, the quality of green spaces and links reduced, and opportunities missed to reinforce this network of key buildings and spaces. With good design, the scale and layout takes advantage of potential views and the benefits of providing better connections.



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 Fig 2. Wincanton Conservation Area.

Heritage features must be respected in any future development. Not all heritage assets may be obvious – there are local historic features that are not Listed or otherwise highlighted in policy documents. Sometimes the role of a site or building may become apparent by looking at the historic maps and talking to local people who have lived in the area for many years. The former railway line on the eastern edge of the Tythings, marked by a stone wall, and the slaughterhouse on the adjoining land, are two such examples. The Somerset Historic Environment Record and South Somerset Conservation Team also have knowledge of local undesigned assets. The design and layout could creatively incorporate features that help explain the historic evolution of the town, and in particular the role that some of these sites have played.

*Land immediately south of the A303*

Land immediately south of the A303 feels separate from the town because of the severing effect of the trunk road, but could still be a potential option for future growth, particularly if improved links can be provided. Flood risk would be a major issue for some areas, particularly west of the River Cale, and national guidance makes clear that vulnerable development such as housing should not be permitted in flood risk areas if there are reasonably available sites appropriate for the proposed development in areas with a lower probability of flooding. Providing good access, both vehicular access (local and strategic) and pedestrian / cycle links into the town, would also be critical if this area were to be seriously considered for future development. Some of the land falls within the minerals safeguarding zones and as such if development were to be considered, the opportunity for these minerals to be extracted as part of any scheme would be sought by the County Council as the Minerals Planning Authority.

This area's close proximity to the town, yet separation from residential uses suggests that this area may be more appropriate for commercial / industrial uses, particularly as flood risk, possible noise from the A303 and distance from community facilities may make this area unsuited for housing.

### *Elsewhere in the Parish*

Our investigations did not find identify any other sites that appeared to provide opportunities for significant housing development elsewhere in the parish that would be well related to the town.

There may be some scope for housing development east of Penn View but there is little land within the parish boundary, and the larger area falls outside the scope of our Neighbourhood Plan.

The higher ground to the north of the town is very prominent and forms the backdrop in general views across the town. The network of rural lanes and footpaths along this ridge afford key views across the town, as well as access to and sweeping views of the contrasting undeveloped countryside to the north, just a step away from the town centre. For these reasons this higher ground is considered visually sensitive. The existing road network and gradients also make this area particularly difficult to access from a development perspective. For these reasons, development on the high ground to the north of the town, along Windmill Hill, should be avoided.

### *Main findings*

It was clear from our investigations that there appear to be potential opportunities for further housing development that would be well-related to the town, including sites within the town boundary and direction of growth, and possibly other locations as well. Such decisions on the location of new housing will be taken by the Local Planning Authority and detailed through the Local Plan Review, and subject to more detailed investigation than our PlaceCheck could provide. However, our investigations did highlight a number of factors that should form part of these considerations and potentially influence the more detailed design and layout of development. By including these as policy considerations, future development should reflect and reinforce the unique character of the town and help achieve the wider objectives of this plan relating to supporting successful businesses, a strong and vibrant town centre, and a good walking and cycling network potentially as part of a wider green infrastructure strategy.

In terms of supporting local character, key points were:

- > Avoiding the most visually sensitive areas, where development would cause substantial harm to local character and the setting of the town – these were identified from the PlaceCheck and landscape studies as:
  - the higher ground west of New Barns Farm,
  - Lawrence Hill, and
  - the higher ground to the north of the town
- > Protecting and reinforcing the network of key buildings and spaces around the town. Regard should be had for preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of Wincanton Conservation Area, and conserving its Listed Buildings. How the design and layout might create positive visual and route connections should be considered. Key buildings and spaces were identified from the PlaceCheck and Conservation Area Appraisal as:
  - Bayford Hill Villas
  - St Luke and St Theresa
  - St Peter and St Paul
  - Clock Tower
  - West Hill House
  - New Barns
  - Sports Centre
  - Pavilion
  - Way Close
  - Bellfields
  - Windmill Farm
  - Ireson House
  - Alfreds Tower
- > Protecting trees, hedgerows and streams, and incorporating them into the green infrastructure network of any new development. Opportunities for further green corridors and tree planting should also be encouraged where this would strengthen the landscape character and wildlife value of a site, or as mitigation if the retention of the existing features would prevent a better overall design and layout.
- > Encouraging opportunities for development to provide a more attractive edge to the town, through requiring appropriate landscaping that creates a soft transition with the countryside, rather than a hard, urban edge
- > Encouraging opportunities for development to reflect the interesting history of the town, even where the features are not Listed or otherwise designated. Examples identified from the PlaceCheck were the former railway line and the slaughterhouse on the adjoining land. The Somerset Historic Environment Record backed up by local knowledge could play a key role in understanding possible undesignated heritage assets.

These points are reflected in the policies that follow. Other factors relating to employment, walking and cycling are contained in the following chapters.

The policies take forward Strategic Objective 8 and Policies EQ2 – EQ6 of the South Somerset Local Plan which seek to achieve high quality design and promote the area's local distinctiveness. Specific development proposals for new housing will also be assessed with careful attention to viability and deliverability, in accordance with national planning policy.

**Policy 1. Visually sensitive areas**

Visually sensitive areas (identified in the Proposals Map) are locations where new buildings would cause substantial harm to local character and setting of the town. This includes:

- > the higher ground west of New Barns Farm where development would be visually prominent on the skyline,
- > Lawrence Hill
- > the higher ground to the north of the town

Proposals for new buildings within these visually sensitive areas are not supported, unless necessary to support the rural economy.

**Policy 2. Key Buildings and Spaces**

All development proposals should preserve or enhance the character and appearance of Wincanton Conservation Area, shown in Figure 2, and conserve the town's Listed Buildings. Where development allows and is otherwise in accordance with the development plan, opportunities should be taken to reinforce the network of key buildings and spaces (identified in the Proposals Map), by ensuring the scale and layout of new development takes advantage of potential views and opportunities to provide better route connections. The re-use of the existing attractive stone buildings at New Barns as part of a local neighbourhood centre of a scale and type to meet the local needs with local detail / serve the west side of the town should be supported.

**Policy 3. Trees and Hedgerows**

Where a development site includes existing mature trees or hedgerows, these features should be incorporated into the scheme layout to provide wildlife and potential recreational corridors and reinforce local character.

**Policy 4. River & Stream Corridors**

The river and stream corridors (identified in the Proposals Map) provide the basis of important green links, with the potential to provide wildlife, landscape, flood alleviation and recreational benefits and should be safeguarded as part of any development proposals. Where opportunities allow, the benefits of these green links should be enhanced through an appropriate landscape management scheme.

**Policy 5. Development on the outskirts of the town**

Where development is otherwise acceptable on the edge of the built-up area, opportunities should be taken as part of any proposals to include landscape schemes to soften the existing urban edge to the town.

**Policy 6. Interpreting the history of a site**

Site features that may provide a clear link to the town's historic evolution should be assessed as potential heritage assets. The District Council's record of Listed Buildings, its Conservation Team's information on undesignated heritage assets and the Somerset Historic Environment Record should be referenced. In addition, consultation with the local community to gain local knowledge about a site's history is encouraged. If confirmed as historically significant, opportunities should be taken to sensitively incorporate such local heritage assets in the design, to help explain the historic evolution of the town, and the role those sites or features have played.

## 6.2. Housing suitable for Wincanton's population

Our investigations also included a review of Census and other statistics on housing and the local population, interviews with estate agents and healthcare providers, to provide us with an insight on the type of housing needed in the area. A more up-to-date assessment

of the wider housing market area's housing needs has also been published by the District Council (October 2016)<sup>1</sup>. This research has highlighted the following points:

Wincanton's age population profile will have an increasing number of elderly (80 years+) residents by 2030, accounting for about 13% of the predicted population (almost double current levels). About 9% of the population say that their day-to-day activities are "limited a lot", and about 5% say that they are in bad or very bad health. With an aging population, these figures are likely to rise, increasing the need for more suitable accommodation for people who have limited mobility or who may need a greater degree of support, whether from the healthcare sector or the wider community. This suggests that there will be increasing demand for single level accommodation, homes with level and easy access to local facilities, homes that are designed for wheelchair access and homes that have care systems that enable independent living. Lifetime Homes and technical standards for accessible, adaptable dwellings and wheelchair user dwellings (contained in Building Regulations as optional standards), are widely recognised by the industry as providing suitable accommodation to help meet this growing demand.

The vast majority (70%) of households are occupied by one or two people. The amount of one and two person households is projected to grow, whereas the projections indicate that there will be no growth in larger 'family' households. Family homes with small gardens are also difficult to sell. This suggests that there is little locally driven need for larger homes (particularly in the private market sector), as the current stock of larger homes should more than cater for the likely demand. However where family homes are provided, these should have reasonable sized gardens to allow sufficient room for children to play.

Nearly 3 out of 4 houses are "under-occupied" with occupants having one or more bedrooms over and above what they need. This means that houses generally have more bedrooms than they have to be. Although there are obvious benefits from having the space and flexibility that 'spare bedrooms' have, this only applies if you can afford to buy or rent one, and open market housing is largely unaffordable in comparison to average household income levels. Given the increasing number of single and couples living on their own, building more studio and 1 bedroom homes could be the solution. But these smaller types of homes have not generally sold easily on the private market, regardless of the economic cycles, and estate agents have told us that demand continues to be primarily for 2 to 3 bedroom properties. The latest housing needs evidence suggests that many dwellings with only 1 or 2 bedrooms do not meet the national standards for room sizes, which may partly explain why they tend to be avoided. Innovative solutions are needed to provide suitable, popular configuration/s for 1 and 2 bedroom homes that can be built and sold or rented on the open market at lower cost, as part of the overall mix.

On the basis of all this research, an appropriate mix would include a significant proportion of 1 and 2 bedroom homes (in the region of 50 to 55% of dwellings, but mainly weighted towards the affordable home types, and ideally meeting the national space standards for such homes).

The latest evidence has also considered the potential demand for starter homes, which is a new form of potentially affordable housing being pursued through national guidance and legislation, where the sale of such homes is restricted to first time buyers aged 23 - 39, and the price starts at no more than 80% of the open market value. The provision of Starter Homes will enable some local households in the private rented sector to move into owner-occupation. The exact proportion of new homes to be Starter Homes will depend on

Government policy in the expected revision of the NPPF, and will be a matter for negotiation with developers and South Somerset District Council.

Local connection is defined as currently living or in permanent work in Wincanton Parish, and has been so for 3 of the past 5 years. Other factors which demonstrate a clear link to the local area, including the surrounding parishes, may also be taken into consideration.

There is mixed evidence of potential demand for custom and self-build, but this is thought to be higher than local authority registers and estate agents might suggest. In the 9 months between May 2016 and February 2017, the number of people on the South Somerset Register grew from 24 to 41, and with marketing and the prospect of possible sites, this figure could be much higher. Such house building can provide a more affordable and bespoke type of housing, contribute to the distinctiveness of neighbourhoods and is more likely to support the economy through use of local skills and contractors in the build process, but without intervention is unlikely to be provided on large sites which provide the main source of new housing. As such a requirement for serviced plots is considered reasonable on larger sites, provided that this does not unnecessarily delay building out planning consents.

In conclusion, what this research makes clear is that the population of the town needs more smaller (but generously proportioned) homes for older people and affordable homes for young adults, couples and families, including starter homes and self-build options that will help local residents get onto or move up the housing ladder. These key points are encapsulated in the following policies, and are expected to form the basis for deciding the appropriate mix of housing types, although the most appropriate mix for any site will to a degree depend upon a wide range of factors, including site size, viability and local character. For example, the provision of bungalows would not be in character in the historic town centre, but this does not necessarily preclude the potential for other forms of suitable accommodation for the elderly in such locations).

National guidance indicates that any requirements for the higher optional technical standards should be made through the Local Plan where issues such as the impact on viability can be examined in greater detail. As such the policy supporting these higher standards is one of encouragement (and to which weight can be given in assessing the overall planning balance of a proposal) but is not on its own likely to lead to a refusal. The inclusion of a policy requirement for such standards is a matter that should be considered through the Local Plan Review.

#### **Policy 7. Housing Types**

In providing a mix of open market housing types and sizes that contributes to the provision of sustainable and balanced communities, new homes provided as part of a development scheme should fall within one or more of the following categories:

- > 1 and 2 bedroom homes (a significant proportion of which should be designed to cater for an ageing population, including bungalows, and are encouraged to have room sizes that meet the national prescribed standards)
- > 3 bedroom homes (with reasonable sized gardens to allow informal play)

unless there are demonstrable reasons why this is not possible or desirable. On large sites of 10 or more homes, at least 50% of dwellings should be provided as 1 or 2 bedroom homes, where practical providing accommodation suitable for an ageing population (particularly in locations within easy walking distance of local shops and facilities).

#### **Policy 8. Starter Homes for Local People**

The provision of starter homes for first time buyers will be supported where there is a demonstrable need and subject to the viability of the development. Such provision may be counted as contributing towards affordable housing requirements provided restrictions are imposed to ensure (a) the homes are prioritised to households with a local connection who cannot afford to buy suitable housing on the open market, and (b) the re-sale price is retained at an affordable level in relation to local incomes (or the proceeds recycled).

**Policy 9. Accessible and Adaptable Homes**

New homes that meet the Lifetime Homes standards or the optional higher standards as set out in part M4(2) Category 2 or 3 of the Approved Document M Building Regulations should be supported within any proposed mix where feasible and viable.

**Policy 10. Custom and Self-Build Homes**

The provision of custom and self-build homes will be supported on sites suitable for general housing.

Any policy requiring a set proportion of homes to be built at the higher accessibility standards will need to be examined in the context of its impact on economic viability, and as such is a matter for the Local Plan Review. Policy 9 should therefore be read as an interim policy that encourages (but cannot require) such homes, that may be replaced by a requirement if such is included in the next version of the Local Plan.

Similarly the Government’s regulations and requirements for starter homes are not yet finalised, and therefore the starter homes policy (policy 8) is intended to provide flexibility that will allow more locally-focused starter homes to be provided.

Although at the time of writing this plan the evidence for custom and self-build homes was in its infancy, this evidence will grow over the plan period. Landowners and developers of large sites should acquaint themselves with evidence of likely demand on the District Council’s self-build register.

Footnote: Wincanton Neighbourhood Plan Evidence Base - Housing Review Report, April 2016, SHMA Update March 2017, by Dorset Planning Consultant Ltd informs the information included in section 6.2.

## 7. Employment

### **Objective 1. Identifying the most sustainable locations for further development**

### **Objective 3. New employment space near the A303**

The vision for this plan highlights the importance of Wincanton’s working town character. We want to encourage suitable businesses to grow in Wincanton.

Our review of evidence and consultation with local businesses and residents shows that there is likely to be a continuing demand for employment land in the Wincanton area, and a strong desire to retain a good balance of jobs in the town as it grows in size, so that it continues to be relatively self-sufficient.

The latest employment monitoring report for South Somerset (2016) clearly demonstrated that the development of employment land and floorspace in towns such as Wincanton has been well behind the anticipated delivery rate, and concluded that “the strategy of ‘predict and provide’ for new employment land is overly simplistic, and there may be a disconnect between the Council’s approach to allocating land, and what is truly needed by the



business community.” The report also recognised that investment decisions tend to be linked to the strength and hoped future competitiveness of a particular business.

Our research has shown that typical requirements are for premises suitable for warehousing and manufacturing, plus related office space. However it is important to have a range of unit sizes available, from small incubator / start-up units to large units (e.g. 2,000m<sup>2</sup> footprint), and units that can be readily expanded or reconfigured to cater for different occupants and changing business needs can also help keep relocation costs to a minimum. Few businesses stand still as their market, processes and scope change over time and the business builds on its successes. Building flexibility into the design and layout of employment areas is therefore to be encouraged. The shared use of facilities, such as parking and even business support facilities, can all enable the efficient and effective use of land.

The town’s location on the A303, a key part of the strategic road network in the south west, is critical to the success of a number of businesses, and also makes it a good base for distribution companies, which produce or assemble their products on site. This potential is likely to increase if A303 improvements materialise within the plan period, provided sufficient suitable employment land is available. Although the Local Plan cautions against allowing direct access from the strategic road network, Highways England have suggested that although their preference will always be that new development should make use of existing junctions, they would not necessarily object to a new access from the A303 provided there was a strong enough case in support of economic growth and there was not adverse impact on traffic flows and safety. Where a new junction or direct means of access is agreed, the promoter will be expected to secure all necessary consents and to fund all related design and construction works.

The significant volume of delivery vehicle movements generated by businesses also means that good road access to the strategic transport network is a key factor. The traffic levels generated, and some manufacturing processes, can lead to concerns about the potential disturbance and conflict with more residential uses in nearby streets. Having sufficient parking provision is another factor that can make a difference where businesses are reliant on good access and customer’s first impressions.

With markets increasingly relying on the internet for advertising and processing orders, superfast broadband is also essential. As of January 2017, new building and buildings undergoing major renovations will be required to be equipped with high-speed-ready in-building connection points. As such, the provision of broadband access, although critical, does not need to be made a policy requirement in our Neighbourhood Plan.

There are three main employment sites in the town:

- > **Bennetts Field Trading Estate** - a long established employment area with a variety of business types in a range of unit sizes (including small units suitable for start-up businesses)
- > **The Tythings** - a concrete mixing plant, but also home to a number of other businesses in the various units on site.
- > **Wincanton Business Park / Lawrence Hill Business Centre** – the most recent industrial estate (now largely built out)

Parts of these existing employment sites are not particularly well suited to potential businesses due to one or more of the above issues highlighted in the paragraphs above. Policy EP3 of the Local Plan, which requires at least 18 months marketing of the site and other measures before it can be released from employment use should be applied.

It is important that the overall availability of employment land is not diminished. A direction of growth to the south west of the town (north of Lawrence Hill and west of Wincanton Business Park) is included in the Local Plan for further employment land, but as yet no detailed plans have been made. Section 8.1 and the more detailed PlaceCheck appraisal reviewed possible areas in terms of whether they could be suitable for development, and locally identified issues that should be taken into account. Our investigations highlighted that land south of the A303 might warrant further consideration as an alternative or additional site to provide employment land, if a direct access from the A303 slip road can be established. The District Council's Economic Development Monitoring Report (April 2017) and related studies of economic forecasting and employment land take-up in South Somerset indicate the difficulties of predicting how much new land will be required and where it would be best located. By providing the flexibility to allow other locations outside of the strategic direction of growth to be considered, the risk that the town could stagnate due to the lack of available employment land should be avoided. This is a similar approach to that found in national policy for housing, where housing sites may be permitted on unallocated land in the absence of a five year housing land supply.

These points are encapsulated in the following policies. For the purposes of the following policies, "employment" is defined as B1, B2 and B8 uses, and other uses typically found on large industrial estates.

#### **Policy 11. New Employment Areas**

In the absence of existing and available serviced sites to meet identified employment demand, development proposals for new employment sites outside the town's development area (as defined in the Local Plan), may be supported, provided that the development would;

- > Support the town's continued economic growth (at a level appropriate to its size and strategic location on the A303),
- > Have good road access to the strategic transport network, avoiding routes through residential or other sensitive areas where significant traffic movements would be detrimental to the living conditions of residents or cause harm to designated heritage or other environmental assets,
- > Not result in noise, pollution or other effects which would cause harm to the living conditions of neighbouring residents, and
- > Not result in adverse social or environmental impacts that would clearly outweigh the potential economic benefits

On large employment sites, the provision of new units or alterations to existing units should have regard to the desirability of providing a mix of unit sizes ranging from small incubator / start-up units up to large units (e.g. 2,000m<sup>2</sup> footprint).

Where practical new employment premises should be designed to enable the future expansion and reconfiguration of the units, without the need for major rebuild.

#### **Policy 12. Design and Layout of Employment Areas**

The design and layout of new employment areas should ensure sufficient parking provision in line with the adopted parking standards, and solutions that help alleviate existing problems created by poor access and inadequate parking provision will be encouraged.

The layout of employment areas should consider and where practical include opportunities for shared parking areas and pedestrian / cycle access to the town within the design. B2 / B8 and similar uses will not be supported in locations adjoining or in close proximity to residential or other sensitive areas where they are likely to give rise to significant traffic movements or noise and disturbance of a scale that may be detrimental to existing nearby uses and their occupants or cause harm to designated heritage or other environmental assets

## 8. Town Centre Economy

### Objective 4. Make the town centre more attractive to users

Residents want a lively and useful town centre that is a pleasure to shop in. Existing planning policies in the Local Plan support town centre vitality. Policy EP9 defines Wincanton as a market town where the development of town centre uses should be of a scale commensurate with the town's position in the retail hierarchy. Policy EP11 The Location of Main Town Centre Uses promotes a town centre first approach to new development in line with national planning policy. Policies EP12 and EP13 concerning floorspace thresholds for new developments and protection of existing retail frontages are also relevant to securing a vital and vibrant town centre for Wincanton. In addition, the Government has made a number of changes to permitted development rights specifically to provide greater flexibility and less red tape, to encourage and support mixed and vibrant high streets.

The main focus for this Neighbourhood Plan, in relation to the town centre, has been to identify some small-scale environmental improvements that will make shopping on foot more attractive and safer by slowing traffic and widening some pavements. This will also improve access for mobility scooter users and cyclists. The Wincanton Transport Plan (2013) highlighted certain locations as dangerous for pedestrians, and our consultation supported taking action at these points.

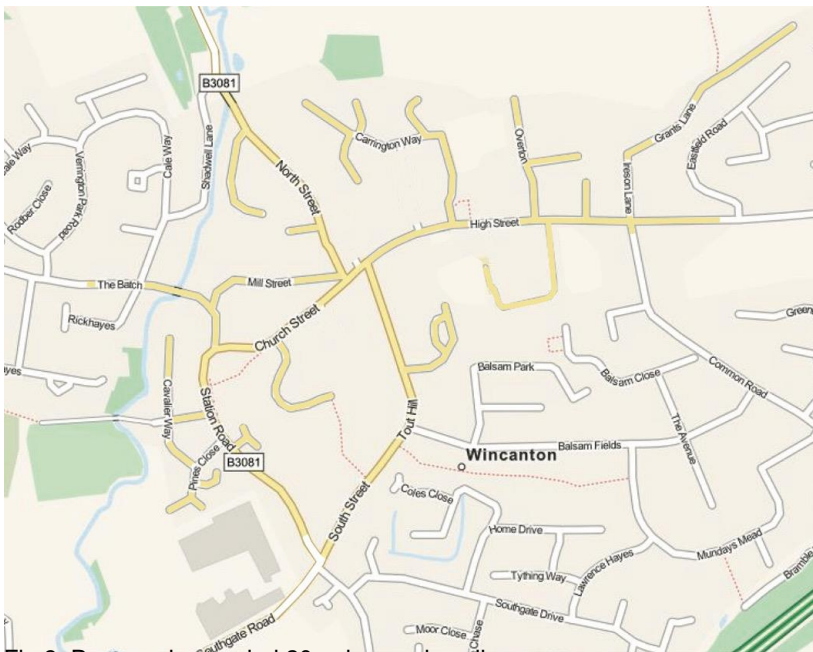


Fig 3. Proposed extended 20mph zone in yellow  
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Discussions with the County Council as the Highways Authority during the production of this Plan have resulted in a planned 20 mph zone that widens the existing zone outside the primary school, to cover the High Street and the existing one-way system. This will improve the general situation for pedestrians, so only the two highest priority problem locations are addressed in this plan.

These are outside NatWest on South Street and the former

HSBC bank on the High Street, where very narrow

pavements and inconsiderate on-pavement parking create dangerous situations for pedestrians, especially those with buggies or using mobility scooters.

#### **PROJECT: Town Centre public realm improvements**

The Town Council, in collaboration with South Somerset District Council and Somerset County Council as the Highways Authority, will as a priority seek to implement two modest public realm enhancements and an extended 20 mph zone in the town centre area, to improve shopper & visitor experience and the safety of pedestrians. The extent of the 20mph zone is shown in Fig 3, and proposed enhancements are shown in Figs 4 and 5. The

enhancements will be subject to detailed design and further consultation.

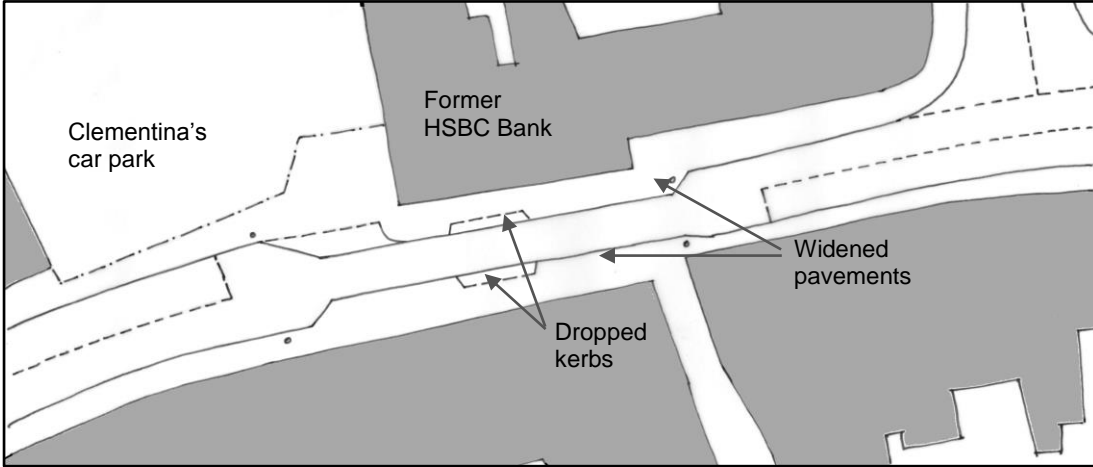


Fig 4. High Street enhancement

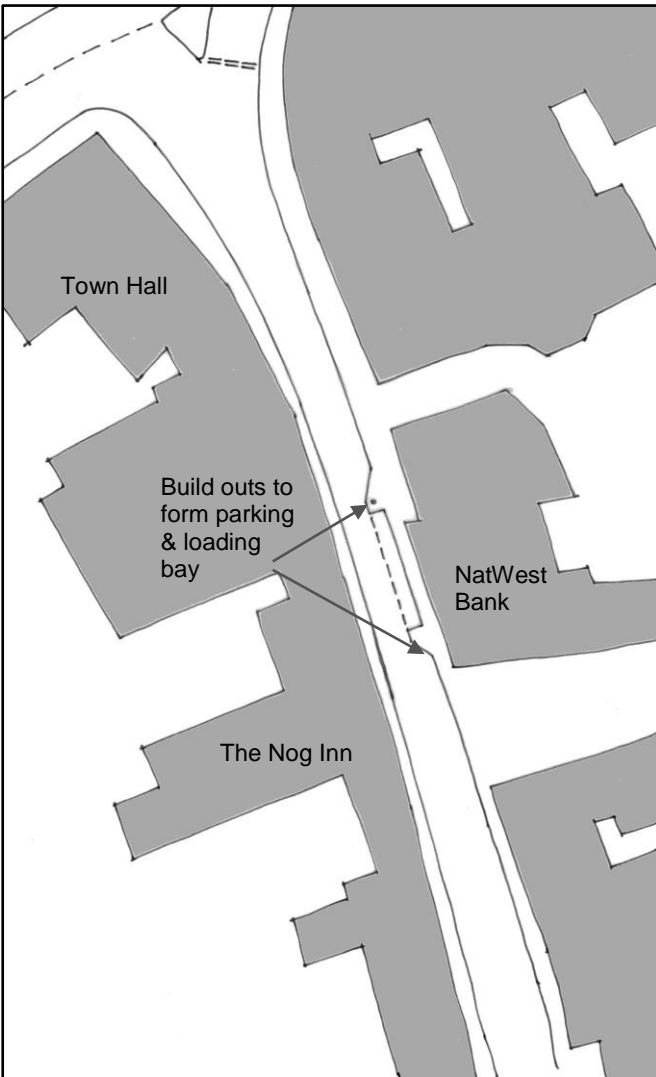


Fig 5. South Street enhancement

## 9. Environment

### Objective 5. Protect public open spaces & improve walking & cycling routes

Residents are rightly proud of the town's public open spaces, which are mostly near the River Cale. This forms a spine of green spaces that is much valued. Most of this land is owned by the Town and District Councils.

National planning guidance makes clear that, through neighbourhood plans, local communities can identify green spaces for special protection (where new development is ruled out other than in very special circumstances) which will endure well beyond the end of the plan period. The designation should only be used where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves, where it is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquility or richness of its wildlife. The designation is also only intended for sites which are local in character, and is not appropriate for extensive tracts of land.

Four green spaces have been identified as Local Green Spaces for special protection as shown below. These are followed in the second table by a number of green spaces with local importance which are not, however, designated as Local Green Space because (1) they are protected by other designations e.g. they are located within the Conservation Area, and/or (2) they do not satisfy in full the criteria in paragraph 77 of the NPPF. All the green spaces have some local importance and should be retained as areas of open space.

<b>Local Green Spaces</b>			
	Ref	Owned by	Reasons for inclusion
<b>Cemetery</b>	1	Wincanton Town Council	Burial ground of cultural and historic importance
<b>Cale Park (inc Recreation Ground)</b>	3	Wincanton Town Council	Valued space for informal recreation & sport
<b>Charity Field off Bayford Hill</b>	9	Wincanton United Charities	Important landscape contribution. Mature trees contribute to townscape.
<b>Eastern areas (Play area &amp; field to east of Morpork St &amp; area north of Kinklebury St.)</b>	10	Currently owned by Taylor Wimpey but due to be transferred to Trinity Estates.	Play area & informal open space, created as part of 08/02183/FUL. Included in the developments Open Space & Landscape Management Plan, this well-used area allows 'wild play' and is a wildlife habitat. It may be under threat from future development.
<b>Green Spaces which contribute to the character and appearance of the Wincanton Conservation Area</b>			
<b>Churchyard</b>	2	PCC/Diocese	Burial ground of cultural and historic importance
<b>Cash's Park</b>	5	Wincanton Town Council	Provides a valuable peaceful walking route with wide views. Used for informal

			recreation.
<b>Coneygore &amp; Wrixon's View</b>	6	Wincanton Town Council	Provides a valuable peaceful walking route with wide views. Used for informal recreation.
<b>Other Green Areas and Open Space to be retained</b>			
<b>Riverside walk</b>	4	Land directly behind Travis Perkins in private ownership. Land at Waterside to be transferred to SSDC.	Valuable link/access, and used by many dog walkers. Cared for by CATCH (river improvement group). Beautiful area.
<b>Home Drive Playing Field</b>	7	SCC	Currently used by pre-school. Recreational value.
<b>Corner of Common Road &amp; Deanesley Way</b>	8	SSDC	Used as an informal play area. Affords good green space and views to east.
<b>New Barns attenuation pond area</b>	11	Abbey Manor Group	Informal open space and wildlife habitat.

The Local Plan expects all new development to be designed to maximise the potential for sustainable transport through securing inclusive, safe and convenient access on foot, cycle, and by public and private transport that addresses the needs of all.

The Wincanton Transport Plan section on Cycling acknowledges the town is difficult for cyclists; "The combination of narrow, busy roads and steep gradients make it difficult to get around the town safely." However with a growing town the opportunity exists to make cycling and walking safer and more convenient. The health benefits of active travel cannot be ignored.

From reviewing the Transport Plan and by walking and cycling potential routes, we have identified two key routes that link to the town centre and/or the health centre, and in line with the Local Plan policy expect that new development will link to these. This will strengthen these convenient walking and cycling links and encourage more active travel.

The northern route (Route A in Fig 7) utilises the existing cycle path from the Recreation Ground to near the Health Centre, and the quiet access road across the Recreation Ground. This could be extended to the west by a cycle lane or dedicated path, linking to any new developments to the south west. It would link to the one way system to the east.

The southern route (Route B) provides a cross-town route that avoids the steep and busy town centre and links to the Health Centre via Cale Park. It utilises relatively quiet residential streets and could be achieved mainly with signage, though some minor junction improvements may be required. It also provides a link to Moor Lane's Sports Ground and any future development south of the A303, and avoids the one-way system.

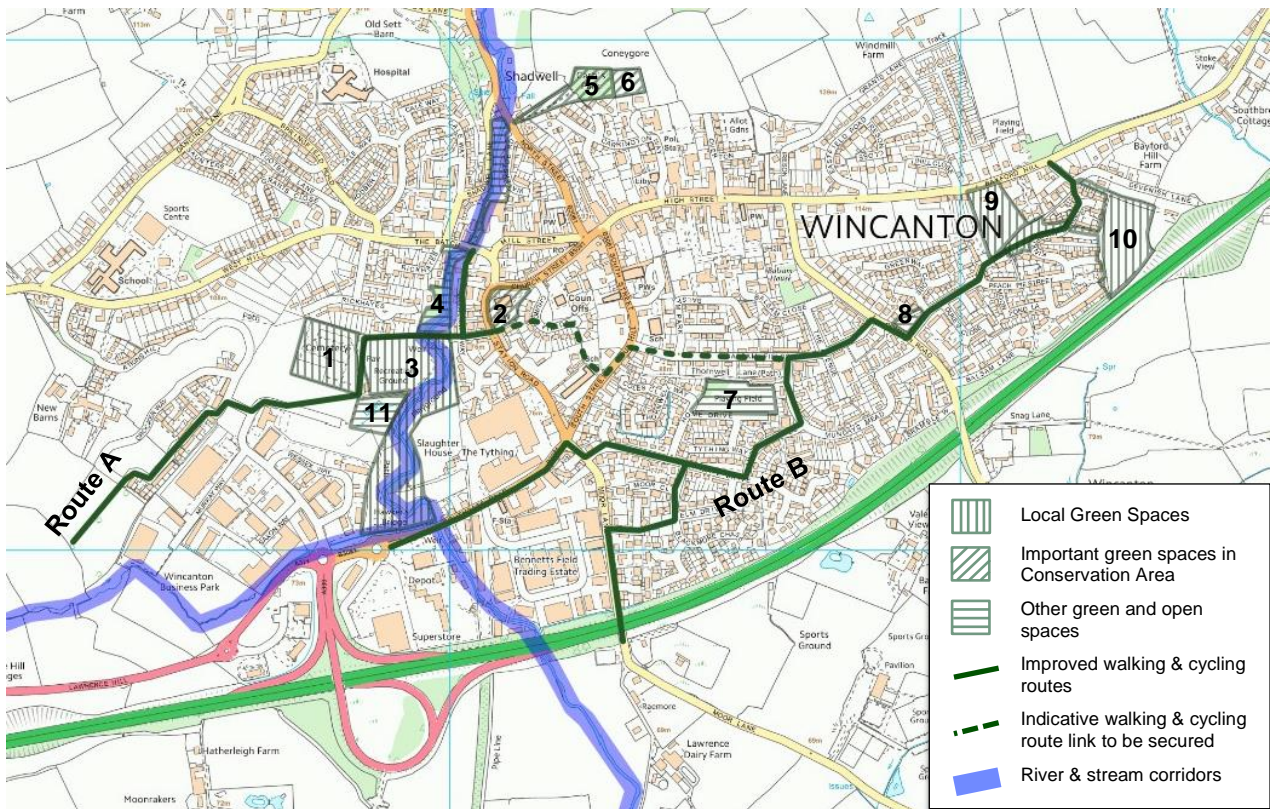


Fig 6. Green space network, river & stream corridors and improved walking & cycling routes  
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Improving these routes will be delivered by a mix of signage, minor junction adjustments where needed to improve safety for cyclists, on-carriageway cycle lane marking, promotion of the new routes and, only where required, constructing new cycle paths. Funding for these elements will come from CIL and s106 agreements. It is expected that any new housing developments will provide suitable on-site paths to link to the nearest of these routes.

**Policy 13. Local Green Spaces**

Local Green Space designations (as shown on the Proposals Map) have been made to protect those spaces that are of particular local importance and used by the community. Development on these sites must not detract from their green or open character or their reason for designation. Development proposals which retain the other green and open spaces identified in the table above will be supported.

**Policy 14. Key Pedestrian and Cycle Routes**

The network of existing pedestrian and cycle routes through the town will be protected, in particular the key off-road walking and cycling routes (as indicated on the Proposals Map). Where development allows, opportunities should be taken to connect to and improve the existing network, to make it safe and attractive to use, and to secure the potential link (as indicated on the Proposals Map)



## 10. Monitoring and Review of the Plan

The Wincanton Neighbourhood Development Plan will run concurrently with the South Somerset Local Plan and apply until the 31st March 2028. It is, however, a response to the needs and aspirations of the local community as understood today and it is recognised that current challenges and concerns are likely to change over the plan period. It is, therefore, essential for the long term success of the Plan that developments in the Plan area are monitored and reviewed against the Plan's Objectives and Policies.

Wincanton Town Council, as the Neighbourhood Plan authority, will be responsible for maintaining and periodically revisiting the Plan to ensure relevance and to monitor delivery.

It is expected that South Somerset District Council will continue to monitor progress relating to the number of dwellings and number of affordable homes delivered during the Plan period, as part of the wider monitoring responsibilities for the District.

An overarching review of the issues and concerns within the community will take place every 5 years. If this and/or the annual monitoring work shows that the Neighbourhood Plan is no longer fit for purpose, then work will start on altering part or producing a new Plan. Otherwise it is envisaged that the Plan will be replaced by a new one in 2028.

# Proposals Map

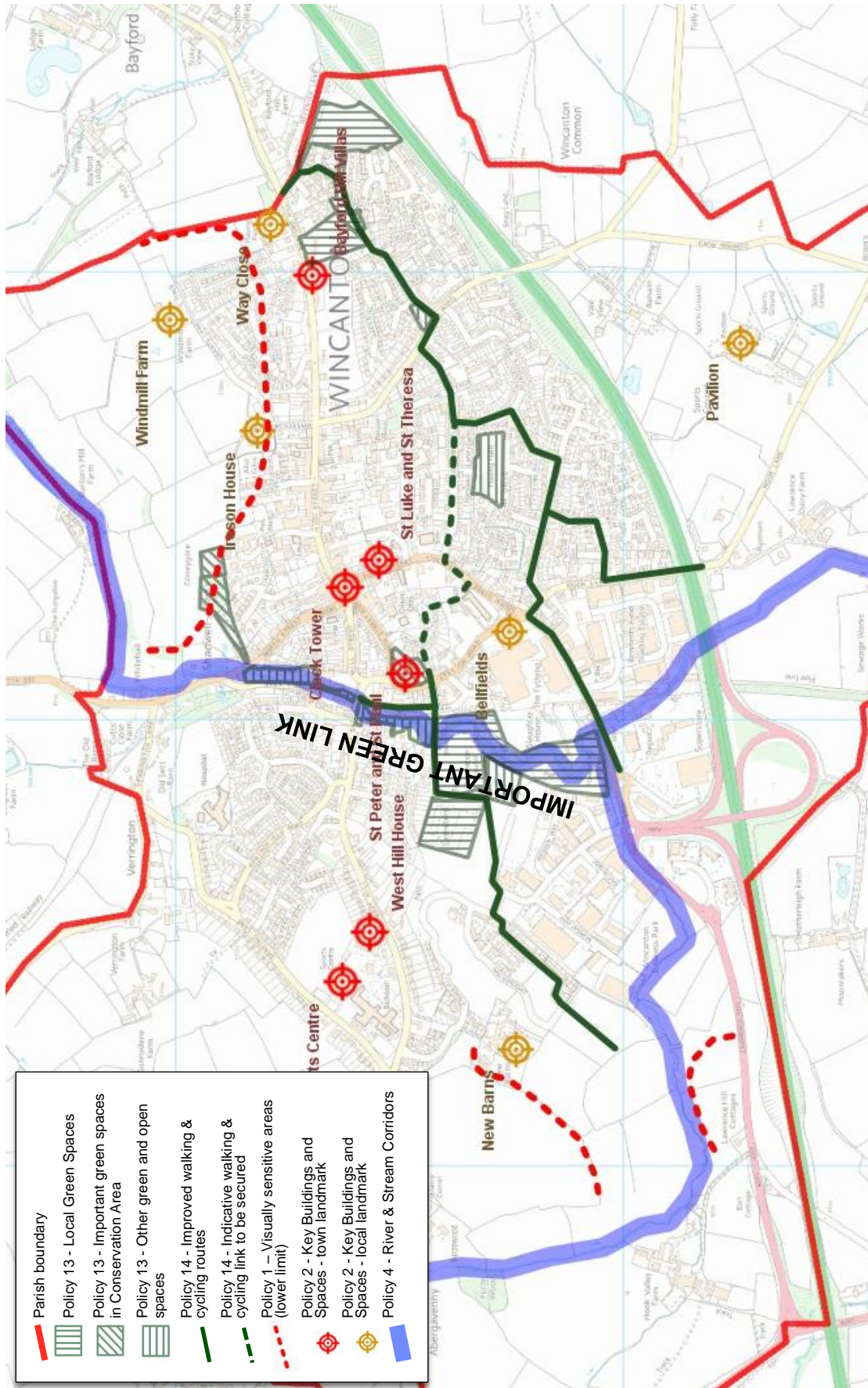


Fig. 7 Proposals Map  
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**Wincanton Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 16 Consultation  
Summary of Comments Received**

No.	Name	Email	Comment
1.	Sport England	Planning.South@sportengland.org	General comments received regarding sporting information for Neighbourhood Plans, which should comply with the NPPF and the Policy statement: 'A Sporting Future for the Playing Fields of England'.
2.	Highways England	Steve.Hellier@highwaysengland.co.uk	<p>The Vision Statement is clear and well structured.</p> <p>In general we support objectives 3 and 4 which can contribute to a reduction in out-commuting and which encourage travel by sustainable modes. We also welcome the plan's policies to seek to improve local employment opportunities that can reduce the need for outward commuting.</p> <p>We support objective 5, (Protect public open spaces &amp; improve walking and cycling routes) as this will contribute to the wider Local Plan policies of walking and cycling links and encourage more active travel which will help in reducing the reliance on the private car.</p> <p>We have no objections to the Plan. We welcome the group's aim of maintaining a sustainable neighbourhood.</p>
3.	Somerset County Council Acoustics Specialist	aashepherd@somerset.gov.uk	<p>The Wincanton Neighbourhood Plan Submission has been considered with respect to the topics of noise and vibration. The County Council Acoustics Specialist notes that Policy 11 is correct to highlight the potential benefits that may arise to existing housing by changes in the use of employment land (possibly to further quieter residential uses).</p> <p>However the County Council Acoustics Specialist states that it may be less clear that alternative uses may have adverse impact on employment land if they introduce noise sensitive development, and the associated expectations for amenity, as this could conflict with or constrain potential commercial development opportunities and uses.</p>

			<p>The County Council Acoustic Specialist recommended that the plan should require the construction of new homes to be appropriate to their environment and the planning uses of adjoining land can, or should have a significant influence on housing design. The inevitable requirement to construct new housing and the increasing desire to utilise brownfield sites can give rise to noise conflict with existing nearby commercial development particularly if a housing developer does not design to effectively mitigate these impacts. The County Council Acoustic Specialist considers that the NPPF advice does not adequately consider this issue that was once addressed by PPG24 (repealed in 2012) and it has been left to local policy to identify the need for new housing to incorporate measures sufficient to mitigate the existing, or potentially likely, noise impacts from surrounding land uses. The Wincanton plan might therefore consider making reference to the new advice contained within ProPG Professional Practice Guidance on Planning &amp; Noise - New Residential Development as a simple way to address these potential noise conflicts.</p>
4.	Somerset County Council - Planning Policy	pvbrowning@somerset.gov.uk	<p>The Plan looks good. It is well-constructed, detailed and clearly reflects a significant amount of time and discussion. It has been well informed by the adopted South Somerset Local Plan 2006-2028 and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).</p> <p>Unfortunately the Neighbourhood Plan does not adequately consider strategic “county” planning policy matters as contained within the Somerset Waste Core Strategy (adopted 2013) and the Somerset Minerals Plan (adopted 2015). Both Plans are NPPF compliant and form part of the Development Plan (see <a href="http://www.somerset.gov.uk/policies-and-plans/policies/minerals-and-waste/">http://www.somerset.gov.uk/policies-and-plans/policies/minerals-and-waste/</a>).</p> <p>This is disappointing given that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>From a minerals perspective there are number of references to the use of stone (such as on pages 12 &amp; 13) as well as within Policy 2. Furthermore, on page 13 there is a reference to some land immediately south of the A303 falling within the minerals safeguarding zone. I recall also that within the conservation area there are a number of significant listed buildings that use or are dressed with local stone (for example, as one proceeds up Church Street) which give the town centre it’s special</li> </ul>

			<p>character.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whilst this does not result in any apparent conflict in land use, the Neighbourhood Plan's support of design and layout that creatively incorporate these features has a corollary – the supply of such stone. And this could be given greater consideration at a local level.</li> <li>• Turning to waste consideration, the Neighbourhood Plan does refer to “minimising waste”. This response highlights opportunities to minimise waste production at the design stage. The bigger the project, the more important it becomes to have a strategic approach to construction, demolition and excavation waste management. Also, for information: the commencement of the review of our adopted waste policies.</li> </ul> <p>Technical officer comments from the Planning Policy Team are appended that expand on these matters.</p>
5.	Natural England	Oliver.Lowe@naturalengland.org.uk	<p>Natural England generally welcomes the Neighbourhood Plan and considers that it provides a valuable framework for the future sustainable development of Wincanton. As advised in previous consultation, we advise that the Neighbourhood Plan will not likely result in significant effects on statutory designated sites. We particularly welcome Policies 3 (Trees and Hedgerows) and 4 (River &amp; Stream Corridors), which will help protect and enhance wildlife corridors and the local landscape.</p> <p>An annex is attached which covers the general issues and opportunities that should be considered when preparing a Neighbourhood Plan.</p>
6.	Abbey Manor Group Ltd	NTimmis@abbeymanor.com	<p>1. Page 11 – last paragraph: This suggests that Lawrence Hill be retained as informal open space. Although part of this land has a public footpath running through it is not in the same ownership as the proposed development land to the east and cannot therefore be secured by means of a development agreement. In this circumstance I would question whether it is appropriate to suggest the retention of this land as “informal open space” which infers more general public access than afforded by a footpath.</p> <p>2. Page 12 Para 4 (South west of Town): - The scale of housing development feasible within the development constraints is unlikely to be sufficient to support</p>

the servicing cost and land loss suggested for a new Primary School, especially as it is likely to have to contribute to the lack of inherent viability of the potential employment land on the flatter land to the south, i.e. that immediately north the roundabout.

3. Page 12 Para 5 (Within the Town): - Further expansion of the primary school on the recently provided site in Station Road (i.e. on the new car park) if a replacement car park were to be provided within the Tythings Site as and when this is redeveloped. Such a proposal would allow further capacity to be provided on the single school site without seriously impacting on the viability of the Tythings.

4. Page 15 – Policy 2: The policy should include a reference to viability, as is included in Para 3, Page 12 supporting text.

5. Page 17 – Policy 7: This policy remains too proscriptive e.g. forbidding 4 bed homes. It is acknowledged in the supporting text (on P17) that this remains somewhat ambiguously “aspirational”, however the policy explicitly prevents 4 bed houses for which there will undoubtedly remain a need and demand.

6. Page 17 – Policy 8: We believe that given the uncertain nature of Government Policy in this area (including definitions) it would be more appropriate for this to be dealt with at the Local Plan level where viability can be more properly assessed.

7. Page 18 – Policy 9: We believe that this policy (which has now been expanded from the Nov 2016 draft) to include wheelchair access should be qualified (in the policy) to reflect feasibility/viability issues. Much of Wincanton’s development land is on steep sites and the cost of compliance, taken together with the other aspirational housing policies, is likely to impact significantly on viability.

8. Page 18 – Policy 10: Whilst we understand and sympathise with the aspirations of potential self-builders, we question whether such a broad based policy is justified or appropriate. The policy if applied as proposed is likely to; i) impact on attraction to developers who are required to provide affordable and

			<p>general needs market housing, ii) delay delivery of housing due to the inferred development embargo during the “marketing” period and iii) likely to impact significantly on overall scheme viability with consequential impact on overall delivery. It might be better to consider the encouragement (outside a formal policy) of informal marketing of individual/groups of plots at a pre-application stage to test the real demand from would-be self-builders who might then be appraised of the likely costs, planning constraints and other restrictions/ contributions that are likely to impact on their plans before risking the potential downside of such a requirement. The final paragraph on Page 18 suggests this approach but is clearly at odds with the Policy 10 as stated.</p> <p>Given the statutory nature of the Neighbourhood Plan I would suggest that Policy 10 is demoted from Policies to the general text of the Section 6.</p> <p>9. Page 18 – Para 2 – This Paragraph concludes with the words “in addition”. It is not clear what this text is intended to infer the required is in addition to. The text of the Policy 8 suggests that the 20% starter homes is to be considered as contributing to Affordable Housing otherwise sought, rather than in addition.</p>
7.	Abbey Manor Group Ltd	NTimmis@abbeymanor.com	<p>1. We wish to support the general content and Policies of the April 2017 draft of the Neighbourhood Plan, and especially their implications for the Local Plan Area of Growth, north of Lawrence Hill and west of the Wincanton Business Park which our company intends to promote for mixed use (Employment and Residential) development, of which approximately 3.0 Ha would be for Employment Uses (as attached key plan).</p> <p>2. This proposal will facilitate a connection to the proposed Route A walking/cycling route of Policy 15.</p>
8.	South Somerset District Council Spatial Policy Team	david.clews@southsomerset.gov.uk	Comments are included on a separate schedule

# General Information about Town and Country Planning, Neighbourhood Planning and the Referendum



## The Planning System

Most new buildings or major changes to existing buildings or to the local environment need consent - known as planning permission. Without a planning system everyone could construct buildings or use land in any way they wanted, no matter what effect this would have on other people who live and work in their area.

South Somerset District Council is responsible for deciding whether a development - anything from an extension on a house to an office block or industrial building - should go ahead in the District.

Planning involves making decisions about the future of our towns, villages and countryside. This is vital to balance our desire to develop the areas where we live and work with ensuring the surrounding environment isn't negatively affected for everyone.

## Local Plans

South Somerset District Council must prepare a local plan which sets planning policies within the local authority area. These are very important when deciding planning applications. The preparation process should have fully involved everyone who has an interest in the document and they should have had the chance to comment.

Local plans must be positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy in accordance with section 20 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) and the National Planning Policy Framework.

The South Somerset District Council Local Plan was adopted in March 2015. The Council is working on preparing a new Local Plan and is carrying out consultation on Issues and Options.

## The National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2012. The framework gives guidance to local councils and neighbourhood plan steering groups in drawing up local plans and neighbourhood plans and on making decisions on planning applications.

## Neighbourhood Plans

Neighbourhood planning was introduced under the Localism Act (2011) in order to give communities a greater say in the planning system in their neighbourhoods. It introduced new rights and powers to allow local communities to shape new development in their local area by coming together to prepare neighbourhood plans. It enables communities to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and deliver the sustainable development they need through planning policies relating to development and the use of land.

## Who can prepare a Neighbourhood Plan?

In South Somerset, the preparation of neighbourhood plans is led by town or parish councils. The plan can show how the community wants land to be used and developed in its area. Neighbourhood plans should not undermine the Local Plan or its strategic policies.

The local community can decide what to include in a neighbourhood plan, but it must meet the following 'Basic Conditions set out in paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. A neighbourhood plan must meet these conditions if it is to



proceed to a referendum and be 'made' (or adopted). The Basic Conditions are that a neighbourhood plan:

1. Has regard to national policy and guidance from Secretary of State;
2. Contributes to sustainable development;
3. Is in general conformity with the strategic policy of the development plan for the area or any part of that area;
4. Does not breach or is otherwise compatible with EU obligations - this includes the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive of 2001/42/EC and compatibility with Convention rights, within the meaning of the Human Rights Act 1998; and
5. The 'making' (or adoption) of the neighbourhood plan is not likely to have a significant effect on a European site (as defined in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010(d) (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects).

Neighbourhood planning is optional and aims to help local communities play a direct role in planning for the areas in which they live and work.

### **How Neighbourhood Plans are prepared?**

There is a statutory process that must be followed in order to make a neighbourhood plan. The neighbourhood area (area to which the plan relates) must be designated by the District Council following an application from the 'qualifying body' (parish/town council). There can only be one neighbourhood plan for each neighbourhood area. The neighbourhood plan must also specify a period for which it is to have effect.

The draft plan must be prepared through a process of consultation with local residents and businesses and the final draft plan must be subject to a set 'publicity period', where there is the opportunity to submit comments.

Once a neighbourhood plan has been prepared, an independent Examiner will check that it meets the basic conditions mentioned above. The Examiner also reviews comments submitted and takes them into consideration. This is to ensure that referendums only take place when proposals are workable and of sufficient quality to meet the 'Basic Conditions'. The Examiner then reports whether any modifications should be made to the plan and whether it should then proceed to a referendum.

The District Council will then decide, in conjunction with the Town or Parish Council and having regard to the statutory criteria, whether to accept the recommendations and proceed through to a referendum to be organised and paid for by the District Council.

People who are registered electors in the neighbourhood area will be entitled to vote in the referendum and will receive a Poll Card. The referendum will be conducted following similar procedures to those used at local government elections. For further information on the conduct of the Referendum, including deadlines for registration, postal and proxy votes can be found in the 'Referendum Information Statement'.

If more than 50% of people voting in the referendum support the plan, the local planning authority must bring it into force. The local planning authority must 'make' the plan as soon as reasonably practicable after the successful outcome of a referendum. Once made, the neighbourhood plan will be part of the statutory development plan and be used in determining planning applications within the neighbourhood area.

# Agenda Item 10

## **Corporate Performance and Complaints Monitoring Report 2017/18: 2nd Quarter**

*Executive Portfolio Holder:* Ric Pallister, Strategy and Policy  
*Director:* Netta Meadows, Director of Strategy and Commissioning  
*Service Manager:* Charlotte Jones, Performance Manager  
*Lead Officer:* Anna-Maria Lenz, Performance Officer  
*Contact Details:* [anna-maria.lenz@southsomerset.gov.uk](mailto:anna-maria.lenz@southsomerset.gov.uk) or (01935) 462216

### **Purpose of the Report**

1. The report covers the period from July to September 2017 (Q2)

### **Forward Plan**

2. This report appeared on the District Executive Forward Plan with an anticipated Committee date of December 2017.

### **Public Interest**

3. The Council is accountable for its performance to the local community and we publish performance monitoring information to demonstrate outcomes and achievements.

### **Recommendations**

4. The District Executive is asked to note and comment on the report.

### **Background**

5. As noted in the Annual Performance Report 2016/17, made to full Council in June 2017, SSDC will be creating a new framework for performance management and therefore our current approach to corporate performance management is in transition.

### **Performance Management**

6. The Council currently has 18 performance indicators that are included in the corporate performance scorecard, 11 of which are measured against annual targets. A summary of performance from July to September 2017 (Q2) is shown below with more details provided in Appendix A:

Where appropriate, this information is colour coded, using red, amber, or green to indicate performance against target

Performance Summary:		Quarterly Breakdown:					
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
		0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
		0	0%	2	20%	0	0%
		11	100%	8	80%	0	0%
		Commentary:					
		11 performance indicators can be compared against target for Q2. There is no data available for PI031 - % of calls to contact centre resolved in contact centre. Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.					
>10% Below Target	0						
Within 10% of Target	2						
On or Above Target	8						

## Council Plan – Annual Action Plan 2017-18

7. The Priority Projects agreed for 2017-18 are:

1. To implement the Transformation Programme including income generation
2. To complete the updating of the plans for regenerating Central Yeovil and Chard and progress implementation
3. To deliver Phase 2 of the Yeovil Innovation Centre
4. To complete the refurbishment and relaunch of the Westlands Complex
5. To facilitate appropriate local development with both council and national funding
6. To support our small and medium sized businesses across the District, including internet access, to meet their needs

8. The following tables show a summary of progress for each priority.

Priority 1: To implement the Transformation programme including income generation	Lead: Alex Parmley
<p>The Transformation Programme is nearing the end of Phase 1, with selection outcomes for support staff teams and management roles announced in October. Phase 1 is on track to deliver the expected benefits in January 2018 as outlined in the Business Case. The detailed design for phases 2 and 3 commenced in October 2017 and will be followed by engagement and consultation in early 2018. A detailed report on Transformation was provided to DX in October 2017, with further reports due in January and April 2018. The Transformation Board meets fortnightly to resolve emerging issues and drive the programme forward.</p> <p>Income generation is underpinned by the Council's Commercial Strategy which was approved in August 2017. This also created the budget for a Commercial Property Land and Development team, with the team manager starting in November. The Council's operational asset review is progressing with a further report due in December. Update reports are made to the Income Generation Board and recent achievements include the purchase of a retail unit in Yeovil town centre, currently occupied by Marks and Spencer PLC.</p>	

<b>Priority 2: To complete the updating of the plans for regenerating central Yeovil and Chard and progress implementation.</b>	<b>Lead: Martin Woods (Yeovil), Alex Parmley (Chard).</b>
<p><b>Yeovil:</b>  We have been working with consultants to design a scheme that will revitalise Yeovil to make the town centre more appealing to those who live, work and visit the area. This includes a 'refresh' of the Urban Development Framework and the creation of a delivery plan that will address accessibility, connectivity, range of uses, public realm, context and design. Expected completion of this plan is by December 2017.  The work includes refreshing plans for the development of key sites including sites which are currently underdeveloped or have the opportunity to be truly transformed and turned into opportunities. These sites include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Cattle Market</li> <li>• The Ski Centre</li> <li>• The Stars Lane Car Park and Box Factory</li> <li>• Petters Way</li> <li>• The 'bottom' end of town which includes Glovers Walk, the pedestrian area of Middle Street, Wyndham Street and the Bus Station</li> <li>• Consideration of other sites of interest including the Quedam extension and Vincent's Yard</li> </ul> <p>A report on delivery and funding will be presented to the District Executive Committee in the near future along with the draft report for consultation</p> <p><b>Chard:</b>  Work to progress the regeneration of Chard is ongoing with a high level assessment of options. Investigation of the feasibility of options that might make up a scheme is being considered with partners.</p> <p>A Project Manager was appointed in May 2017, but unfortunately the post is again vacant and will be reassessed in due course. Project management is currently being undertaken by officers from the Economic Development team who are currently working with potential partners and other stakeholders.</p>	
<b>Priority 3: To deliver Phase 2 of the Yeovil Innovation Centre</b>	<b>Lead: Clare Pestell / David Julian</b>
<p>The funding agreement and contractors agreement for the Yeovil Innovation Centre (YIC) Phase 2 is in place and works are due to commence on site by the end of November. The development of around 9,000 square feet of flexible office accommodation will enable more start up and small businesses in the high-tech and innovation fields to establish, expand and benefit from working with similar businesses. The unconditional offer of funding was approved by the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) in September 2017. The construction stage of the project will begin in November 2017 and is scheduled for completion in August 2018.</p>	
<b>Priority 4: To complete the refurbishment and relaunch of the Westlands Complex</b>	<b>Lead: Clare Pestell / Adam Burgan</b>
<p>A report to DX in September 2017 detailed the activities and work that has taken place in terms of the refurbishment project and set out operational aspects of the venue, along with the future plans for the development of the Westlands service. It marked the completion of the Westlands refurbishment project and therefore closure of the project. Refurbishment</p>	

works has covered four main areas: Sport and Fitness Centre, the Conference and Entertainment Centre, the Pavilion and Car Parking / lighting.

The venue is fully operational and with actual trading figures becoming available the business plan will be reforecast before December 2017. Going forwards Westlands will become another of SSDC's operational businesses and reported in the usual way through budget monitoring from January 2018.

**Priority 5: To facilitate appropriate local development with both council and national funding**

**Lead: Martin Woods / David Julian**

The following projects have been progressed:

Western Corridor Relief Road: - Funding for this project was gained by SCC through the government 'Pinch-point' fund for highways infrastructure schemes following unsuccessful bids to the Regional Growth Fund (rounds 1 and 2). The application was supported by SSDC. Work on the project commenced in 2017 and is likely to be completed in 2018/19

iAero Project: - This project is led by SCC and is supported by SSDC. Funding has been gained through a variety of Government and European Funds including Growth Deal 3 and European Regional Development Funds. The project is scheduled to commence in 2018 with a likely completion date in 2019.

Marginal Viability Funding (HCA): - A bid was made for funding in September for the Brimsmore Site in Yeovil. The bid was made by the developer and supported by SSDC.

Additional Growth Deal 3 funding applications: - Separate funding applications were also made for the following projects; Chard Eastern Development Area (highway infrastructure), CLR Crewkerne (highway Infrastructure), CLR Crewkerne Employment Land, Employment Land for Rural Centres, Castle Cary Employment Land, Ilminster Employment Land, Chard Employment Land, Cycleway and Pedestrian Links (Yeovil). With very limited Government funding available and the process being highly competitive, the applications did not progress beyond the Expression of Interest Stage.

Input to Economic Strategies and Policies: - SSDC have also supported the refresh of the Somerset Growth Plan through representation at Portfolio Holder and Director level at the Somerset Growth Board. Similarly SSDC has supported the preparation of the LEPs new Productivity Plan.

Superfast Broadband Extension Programme: - SSDC has earmarked approx. £640k to support the roll-out of the Government programme to extend/enable the coverage of superfast broadband to approximately 95% of premises in the South Somerset Area.

Apprenticeships:

SSDC has supported the Next Generation Somerset Programme to highlight the opportunities available to both employers and those wishing to embark on apprenticeship schemes.

Efforts to support the economy with investment for affordable housing continue. Pump priming through the council's affordable housing capital programme, engagement with Housing Associations and the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) means we expect schemes completing this financial year to attract a total of £1.8M from the HCA over their lifetime. Over the past three years the total value of affordable housing investment in South Somerset has been £4.6 m.

<b>Priority 6: To support our small and medium sized businesses across the District, including internet access, to meet their needs</b>	<b>Lead: Martin Woods / David Julian</b>
<p>The Economic Development Team provide business support to small and medium sized businesses through a formal programme that includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bespoke business support and advice on a 1:1 basis</li> <li>• Workshops and advisory sessions</li> <li>• Special events such as Food Fairs and Tourism Literature Exchanges</li> <li>• Advice and support on business planning applications</li> <li>• Hot – desk facilities at the Hive in Yeovil Innovation Centre.</li> <li>• Regular newsletters from both the Tourism and ED teams offering latest news, advice and events of interest to the business community.</li> <li>• Internet access. This largely relates to the Connecting Devon and Somerset phase 2 roll-out programme which has yet to be announced by CDS.</li> </ul> <p><b>Notes on Internet access (superfast broadband):</b></p> <p>Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS) is yet to announce detailed coverage information for phase 2 of the roll-out programme. Further information is expected to be announced late in 2017. Gigaclear was awarded the contract for phase 2 and is connecting sixteen Somerset communities in a pilot scheme with work beginning November 2017 and being completed in February 2018. The first Somerset communities to benefit from this latest of phase of CDS are: Rooksbridge, Lympsham, Brean, Weare, Crickham, Ashill, Roundham, Merriott, Over Stratton, Dowlish Ford, Isle Abbots, Corfe, Blagdon Hill, Buckland St Mary, Bradford on Tone, and Wadeford. This includes a total of around 9,000 properties. They have been selected based on their location near to existing connections to main broadband networks. Local information and demonstration events will be held in all of the areas where the roll-out has been announced. Communities not in the initial wave of connection will be kept informed as the programme is updated.</p> <p>SSDC has set aside a sum of £640k to assist with the delivery programme, but until it is known which areas of District will be connected in phase 2 we cannot formulate solutions for those who are outside the phase 2 programme.</p>	

## Complaints

9. During Q2 SSDC recorded 70 complaints. These were all (100%) resolved at stage 1 of the SSDC complaints policy. This remains a small proportion of all customer contacts.

A more detailed analysis of complaints will be included in the Annual Performance Report 2017/18.

## Financial Implications

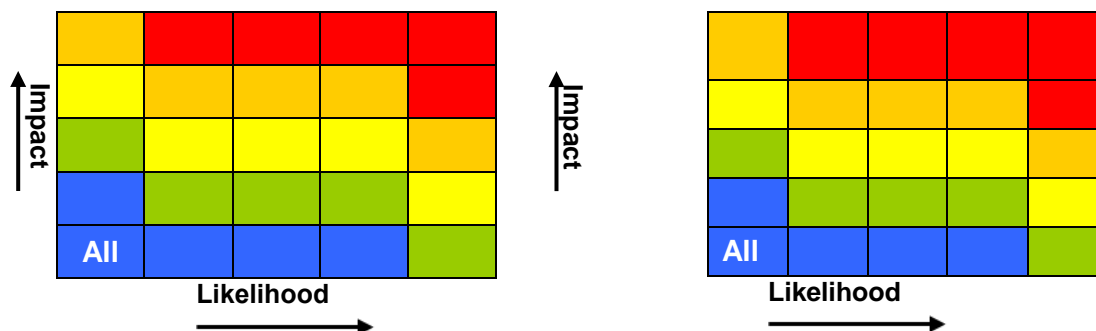
10. There are no direct financial implications related to this report.

## Risk Matrix

11. This report is for information only and so there is no risk profile.

**Risk Profile before officer recommendations**

**Risk Profile after officer recommendations**



**Key**

Categories	Colours (for further detail please refer to Risk management strategy)
R = Reputation	Red = High impact and high probability
CpP = Corporate Plan Priorities	Orange = Major impact and major probability
CP = Community Priorities	Yellow = Moderate impact and moderate probability
CY = Capacity	Green = Minor impact and minor probability
F = Financial	Blue = Insignificant impact and insignificant probability

**Council Plan Implications**

12. This report is consistent with the Council Plan 2016 – 2021

**Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications**

13. There are no direct implications

**Equality and Diversity Implications**

14. There are no direct implications

**Privacy Impact Assessment**

15. There are no direct implications

**Background Papers**

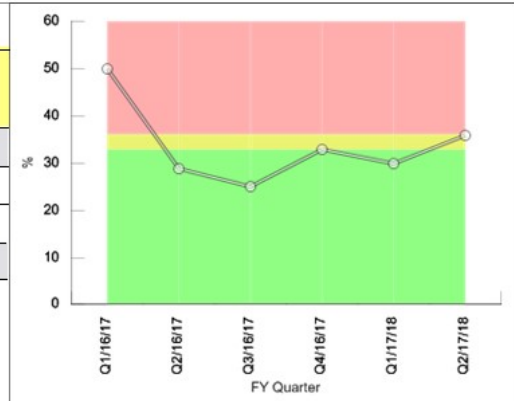
Council Plan 2016-2021 & Annual Action Plan 2017/18

## Appendix A - Quarterly Performance Monitoring Report

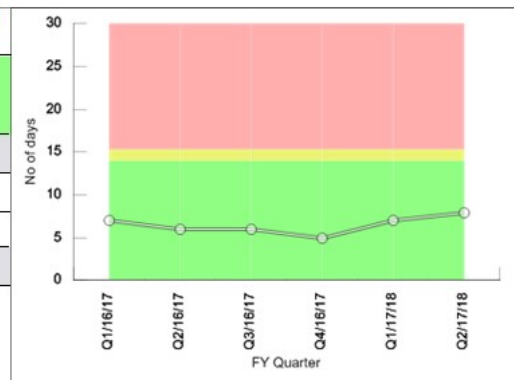
Key:	Red (More than 10% below target)	Amber (Within 10% of target)	Green (On or above target)
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### Performance Measures with Targets:

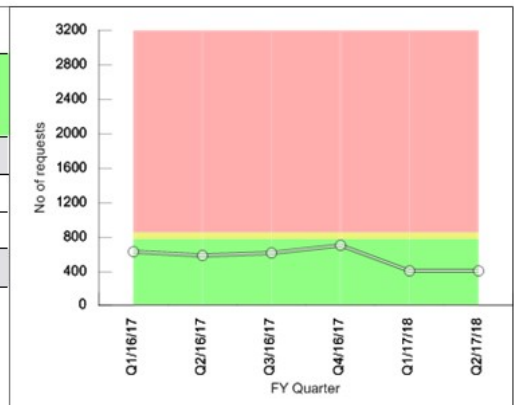
Indicator:	PI 003 - % of planning appeal decisions allowed against the authority's decision to refuse								
Quarter Target:	33.0%				Perf to Date:				
Annual Target:	33.0%								
2016/17:				2017/18:					
Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
50.0%	29.0%	25.0%	33.0%	30.0%	36.0%				
Latest Comments including any necessary action:									



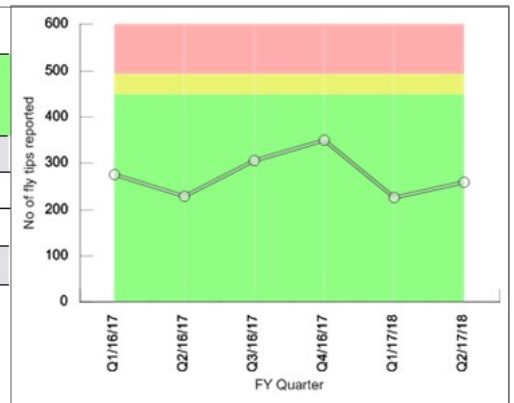
Indicator:	PI 004 - Number of days taken to process Housing Benefit/ Council Tax Benefit new claims and change events								
Quarter Target:	14.00				Perf to Date:				
Annual Target:	14.00								
2016/17:				2017/18:					
Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
7.00	6.00	6.00	5.00	7.00	8.00				
Latest Comments including any necessary action:									



Indicator:	PI 008 - Requests for action from the Streetscene team								
Quarter Target:	775				Perf to Date:				
Annual Target:	3100								
2016/17:				2017/18:					
Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
628	590	618	700	416	408				
Latest Comments including any necessary action:									

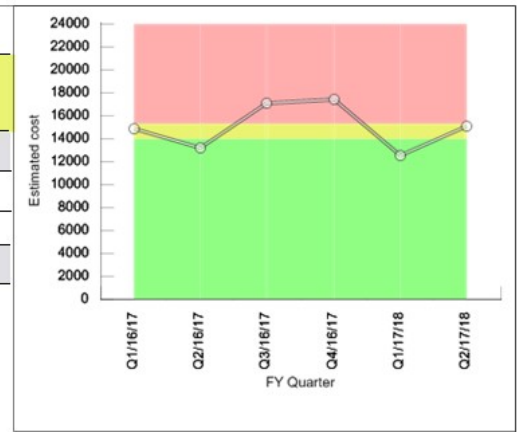


Indicator:	PI 010 - Total number of fly tips reported								
Quarter Target:					Perf to Date:				
Annual Target:	1800								
2016/17:				2017/18:					
Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
277	231	306	351	228	260				
Latest Comments including any necessary action:									

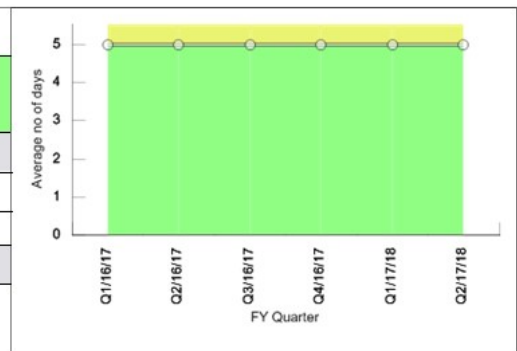




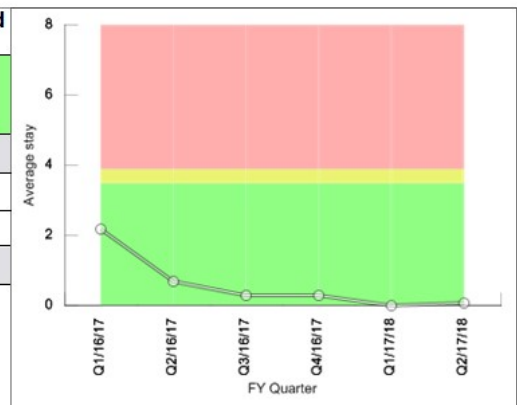
<b>Indicator:</b>	<b>PI 011 - Total estimated cost of clearing reported fly tips</b>							
<b>Quarter Target:</b>	13,965				<b>Perf to Date:</b>			
<b>Annual Target:</b>	55,860							
<b>2016/17:</b>				<b>2017/18:</b>				
<b>Q1</b>	<b>Q2</b>	<b>Q3</b>	<b>Q4</b>	<b>Q1</b>	<b>Q2</b>	<b>Q3</b>	<b>Q4</b>	
14,841 <span style="color: yellow;">A</span>	13,207 <span style="color: green;">G</span>	17,042 <span style="color: red;">R</span>	17,451 <span style="color: red;">R</span>	12,571 <span style="color: green;">G</span>	15,108 <span style="color: yellow;">A</span>			
<b>Latest Comments including any necessary action:</b>								

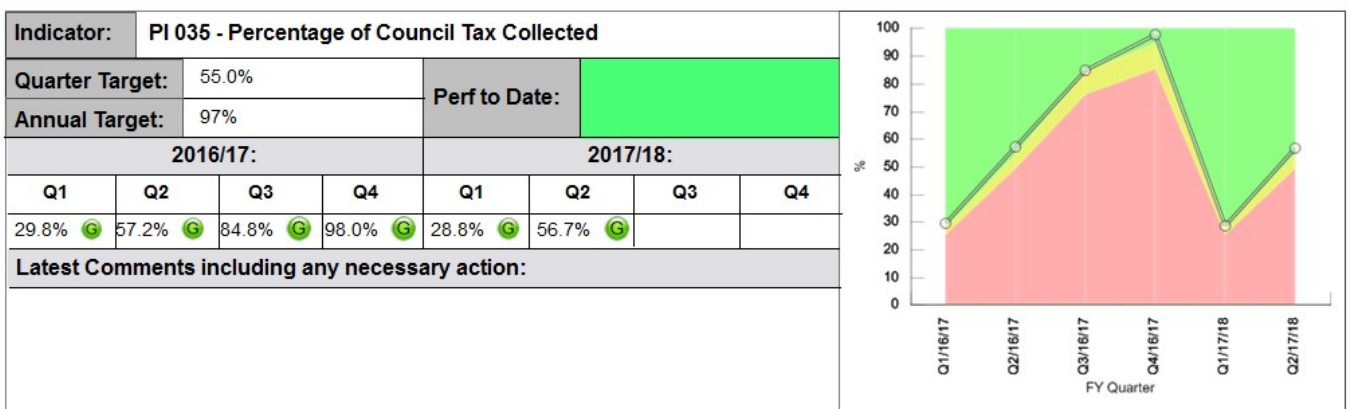
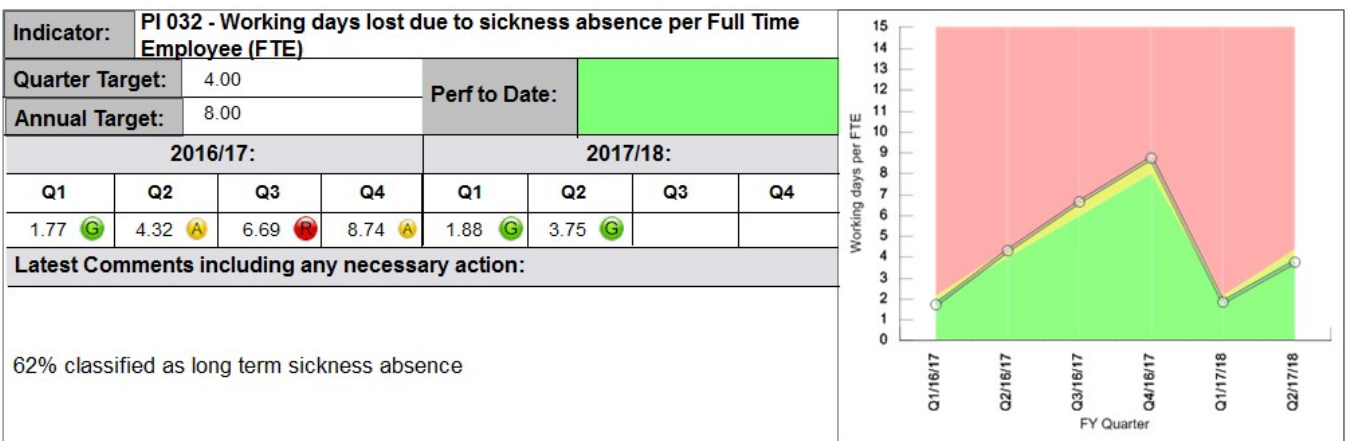
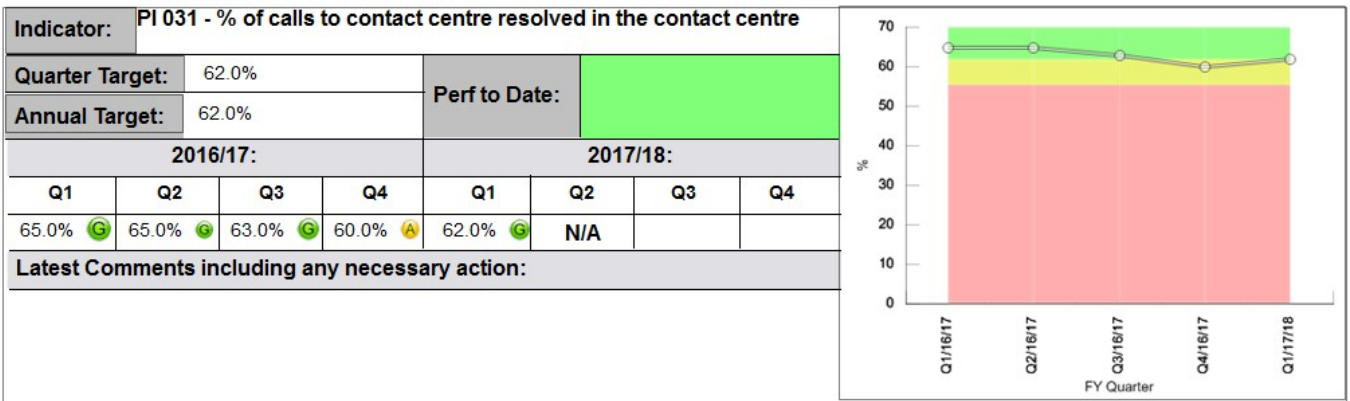
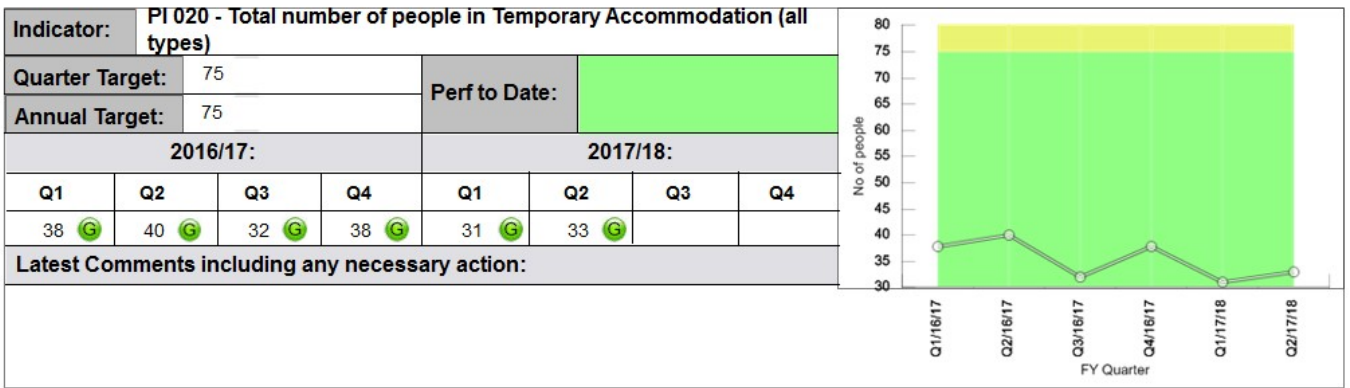


<b>Indicator:</b>	<b>PI 012 - Average number of days to respond to a reported fly tip</b>							
<b>Quarter Target:</b>	5.00				<b>Perf to Date:</b>			
<b>Annual Target:</b>								
<b>2016/17:</b>				<b>2017/18:</b>				
<b>Q1</b>	<b>Q2</b>	<b>Q3</b>	<b>Q4</b>	<b>Q1</b>	<b>Q2</b>	<b>Q3</b>	<b>Q4</b>	
5.0 <span style="color: green;">G</span>	5.0 <span style="color: green;">G</span>	5.0 <span style="color: green;">G</span>	5.0 <span style="color: green;">G</span>	5.0 <span style="color: green;">G</span>	5.0 <span style="color: green;">G</span>			
<b>Latest Comments including any necessary action:</b>								

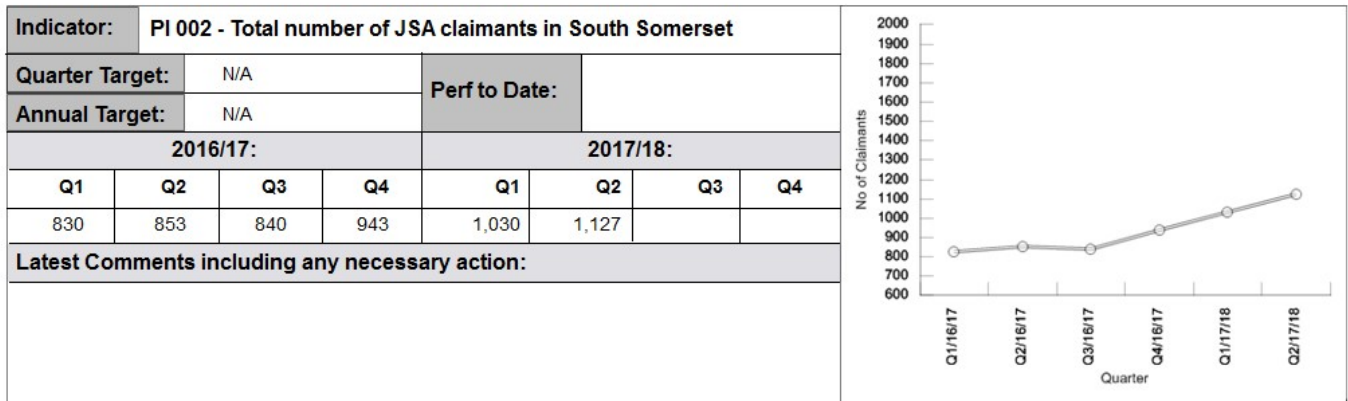
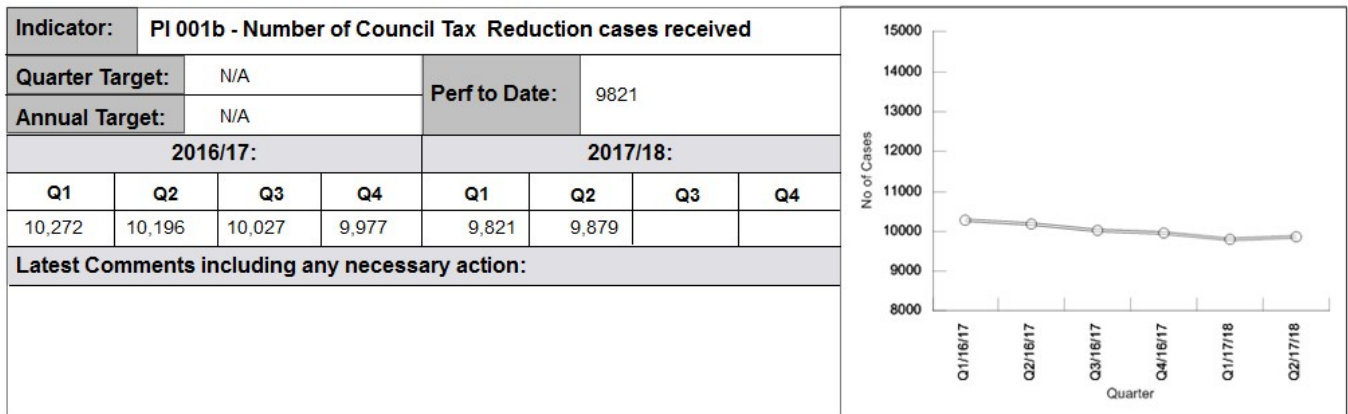
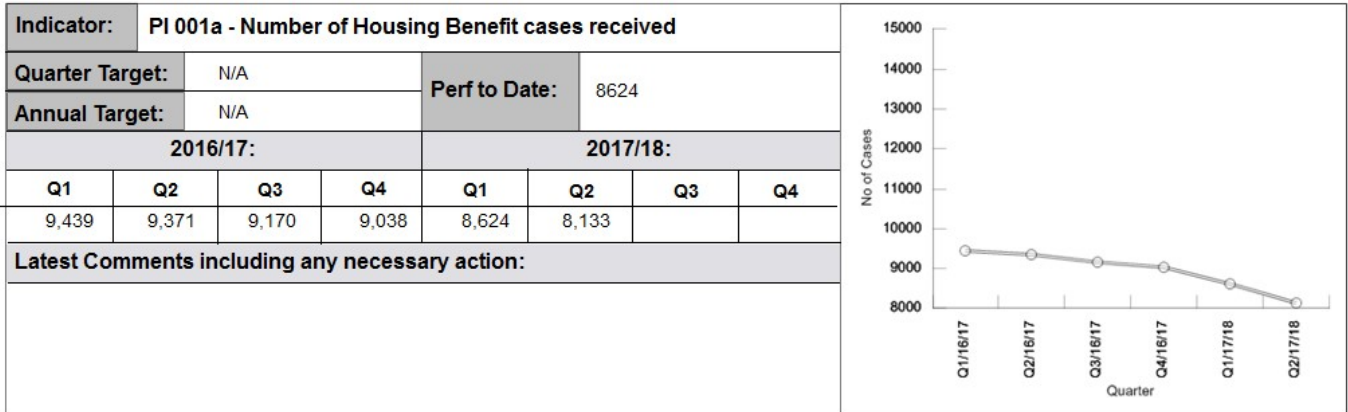


<b>Indicator:</b>	<b>PI 019 - Average number of days in Temporary Accommodation (Bed &amp; Breakfast)</b>							
<b>Quarter Target:</b>	3.5				<b>Perf to Date:</b>			
<b>Annual Target:</b>	3.5							
<b>2016/17:</b>				<b>2017/18:</b>				
<b>Q1</b>	<b>Q2</b>	<b>Q3</b>	<b>Q4</b>	<b>Q1</b>	<b>Q2</b>	<b>Q3</b>	<b>Q4</b>	
2.2 <span style="color: green;">G</span>	0.7 <span style="color: green;">G</span>	0.3 <span style="color: green;">G</span>	0.3 <span style="color: green;">G</span>	0.0 <span style="color: green;">G</span>	0.1 <span style="color: green;">G</span>			
<b>Latest Comments including any necessary action:</b>								
Average for the period was 1 night, ie. approximately 0.1 weeks								

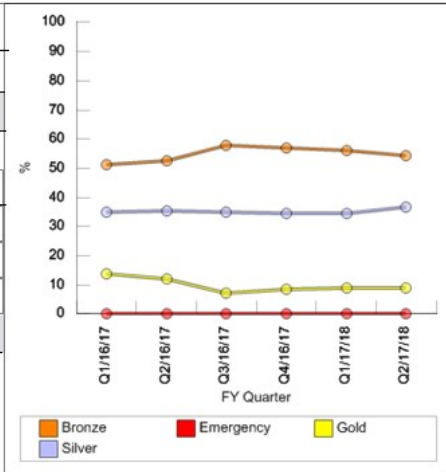




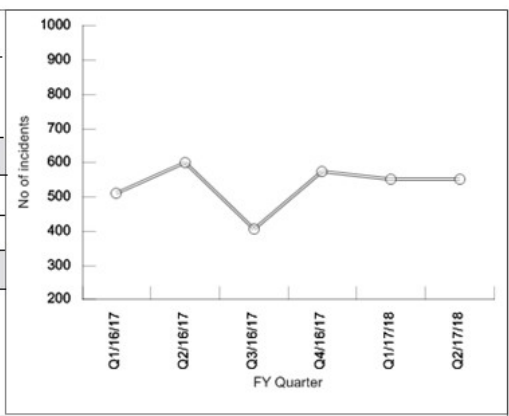
**Performance Measures of Trend (no targets set as SSDC do not directly influence):**



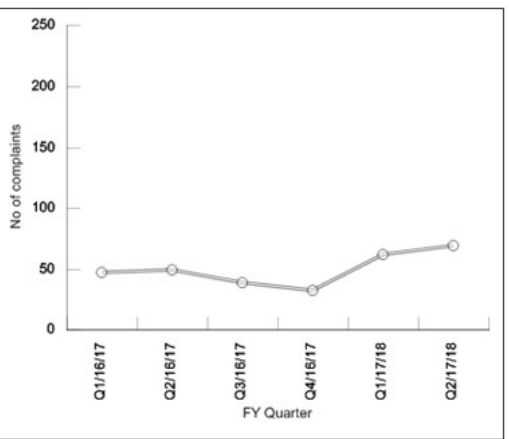
<b>Indicator:</b>	<b>PI 015 - % of households on the Choice Based Letting waiting list (all categories)</b>							
<b>Quarter Target:</b>	N/A				<b>Annual Target:</b>	N/A		
	<b>2016/17:</b>				<b>2017/18:</b>			
	<b>Q1</b>	<b>Q2</b>	<b>Q3</b>	<b>Q4</b>	<b>Q1</b>	<b>Q2</b>	<b>Q3</b>	<b>Q4</b>
Bronze	51.2%	52.6%	58.0%	56.9%	56.1%	54.4%		
Silver	34.9%	35.3%	34.9%	34.5%	34.5%	36.6%		
Gold	13.8%	11.9%	7.1%	8.6%	9.2%	8.9%		
Emergency	0.1%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%		
<b>Latest Comments including any necessary action:</b>								
Q1 2017-18				Q2 2017-18				
Bronze	1,160			Bronze	1,112			
Emergency	4			Emergency	1			
Gold	190			Gold	182			
Silver	714			Silver	748			
Total	2,068			Total	2043			



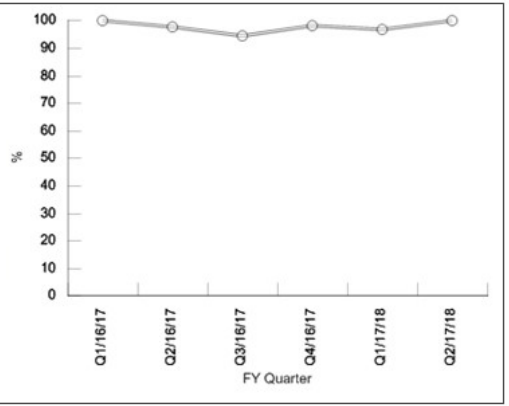
<b>Indicator:</b>	<b>PI029 - Number of incidents of antisocial behaviour reported to SSDC (excluding flytipping and dead animals)</b>							
<b>Quarter Target:</b>	N/A				<b>Perf to Date:</b>			
<b>Annual Target:</b>	N/A							
	<b>2016/17:</b>				<b>2017/18:</b>			
	<b>Q1</b>	<b>Q2</b>	<b>Q3</b>	<b>Q4</b>	<b>Q1</b>	<b>Q2</b>	<b>Q3</b>	<b>Q4</b>
	513	600	409	575	553	552		
<b>Latest Comments including any necessary action:</b>								
Figures remain stable, no significant variations to report. Abandoned vehicle numbers remain high, dog fouling has also increased slightly and a general reduction across the board in all other areas.								



<b>Indicator:</b>	<b>PI 033 - Total number of complaints received</b>							
<b>Quarter Target:</b>	N/A				<b>Perf to Date:</b>			
<b>Annual Target:</b>	N/A							
	<b>2016/17:</b>				<b>2017/18:</b>			
	<b>Q1</b>	<b>Q2</b>	<b>Q3</b>	<b>Q4</b>	<b>Q1</b>	<b>Q2</b>	<b>Q3</b>	<b>Q4</b>
	48	50	39	33	62	70		
<b>Latest Comments including any necessary action:</b>								



<b>Indicator:</b>	<b>PI 034 - % of complaints resolved at stage 1 of complaints procedure</b>							
<b>Quarter Target:</b>	N/A				<b>Perf to Date:</b>			
<b>Annual Target:</b>	N/A							
	<b>2016/17:</b>				<b>2017/18:</b>			
	<b>Q1</b>	<b>Q2</b>	<b>Q3</b>	<b>Q4</b>	<b>Q1</b>	<b>Q2</b>	<b>Q3</b>	<b>Q4</b>
	100.0%	98.0%	94.9%	98.2%	97.0%	100.0%		
<b>Latest Comments including any necessary action:</b>								



# Agenda Item 11

## **Purchase of land adjoining Boden Street Car Park, Chard**

*Executive Portfolio Holder:* Jo Roundell Greene, Environment and Economic Development  
*Ward Member(s)* Dave Bulmer  
*Director:* Clare Pestell, Commercial Services and Income Generation  
*Service Manager:* David Julian, Economic Development Manager  
*Lead Officer:* Clare Pestell, Commercial Services and Income Generation  
*Contact Details:* Clare.pestell@southsomerset.gov.uk or 01935 462

### **Purpose of the Report**

1. To seek authority from the District Executive Committee to purchase an area of land that adjoins the Boden Street Car Park. The plot of land is of strategic value in the regeneration of Chard town centre and the local economy.

### **Forward Plan**

2. This report does not appear on the District Executive Forward Plan. The report is presented at this time as the land is now offered for sale to the District Council.

### **Public Interest**

3. The purchase of this plot of land will extend the amount of land available for the regeneration of the Boden Mill site and the adjoining car parks as part of the Chard Regeneration Scheme. The overall site is a key to the regeneration and revitalisation of Chard Town Centre. The acquisition of the site will increase the amount of land available for redevelopment and will considerably assist with the constrained nature of the site. The redevelopment of this site is a corporate priority for the council.

### **Recommendation**

4. That the District Executive approves the purchase of the plot of land (adjoining Boden Street Car park) at a cost of £51,000 as indicated in this report, to be funded from the useable capital receipts reserve.

### **Background**

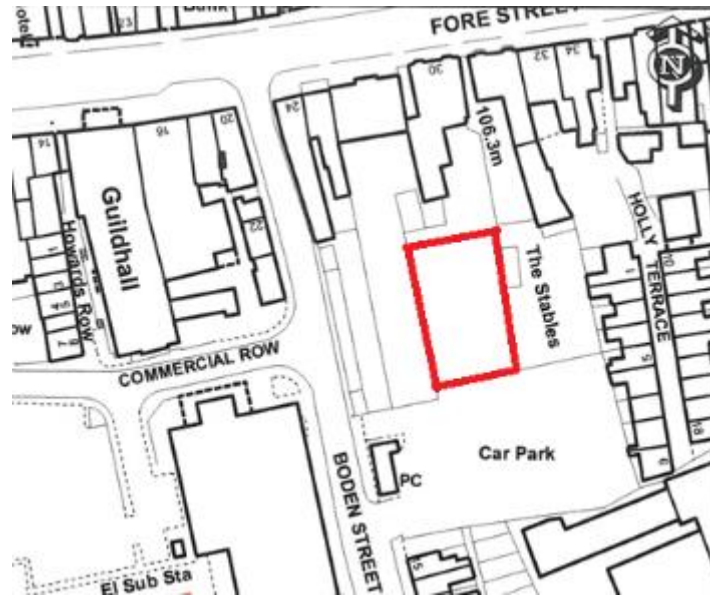
5. SSDC and the Chard Regeneration Board have been working for a number of years to bring forward a comprehensive mixed regeneration development of the Boden Mill/ former ACI site and the adjoining car parks. In December 2016 the District Executive requested that a more community focused development be worked up to business plan stage. This plan will offer a range of facilities that would provide greater community benefit, enhance health and well-being opportunities and create more footfall to the adjacent town centre.
6. Previous plans for the development of the site had identified a shortage of land available for a comprehensive development. The existing site is severely constrained and would benefit considerably from the acquisition of this additional land that adjoins the development site.
7. The land in question is in the ownership of Somerset County Council. It was the garden of their former premises on Fore Street. When the premises were sold a number of years ago the garden was excluded from the sale and retained by the County Council. This land was recognized as being of strategic value to Chard's redevelopment plans. The land was excluded from the original

sale at the request of SSDC and the County Council has now asked SSDC to purchase this land so that it forms part of the overall development site

## Report Detail

### The site.

8. The plan below is for indicative purposes only



### Site Value

9. The District Valuer has taken into account that SSDC is a preferred buyer and that the land would form part of the wider regeneration site. The DV has also accounted for the fact that the site is largely land-locked but has access from the Boden Mill car park which is owned by SSDC.

10. The DV makes the following points in his valuation (5<sup>th</sup> October 2017):

- *Consideration. The consideration for the land that extends to 0.055 ha or thereabouts is agreed, subject to the approval of your Council and subject to contract, in the sum of £50,000 (fifty thousand pounds) for the freehold interest with full vacant possession and free of any third party encumbrances or restrictions.*
- *For the avoidance of doubt the land shall be transferred free of any restrictions on its redevelopment including for example clawback, overage or any covenants that may restrict its use.*
- *The land shall be conveyed with the benefit of any rights that Somerset County Council reserved out of the sale from Fore Street, either pedestrian, vehicular or otherwise.*
- *That South Somerset District Council shall make a contribution of £1000 (one thousand pounds) towards the legal costs of the County Council in relation to the transfer of the land.*

11. It is of particular note that the sale will be free of restrictions and any clawback.

### Potential use of the land

12. The land lends itself to a number of potential uses and benefits to the redevelopment:

- Additional car parking
- Site for utilities e.g. the relocation of the existing power distribution equipment from its current position further within the site
- potential site for additional build

13. Not least the addition of this land would extend the size and value of the overall development site

**Alternative Options**

14. The site being offered for sale immediately adjoins the redevelopment site. It is the only site currently available for sale and is of strategic importance to the Chard Regeneration Scheme. There are no available, suitable alternatives.

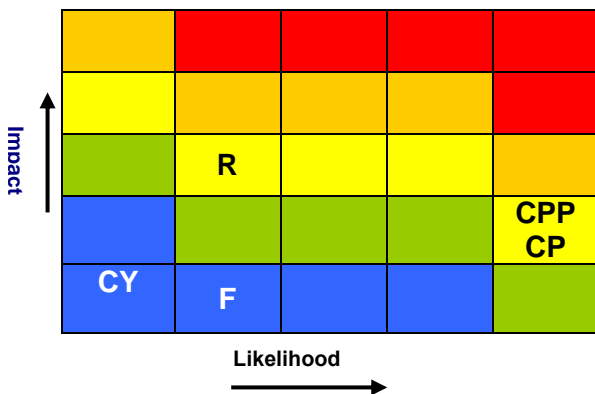
**Financial Implications**

15. The cost of this purchase will be £50,000 for the purchase of the land and a further £1,000 to cover the legal costs of the vendor. This will be funded from the useable capital receipts reserve and is affordable within the current capital programme. The loss of interest of £1,020 will be added to the medium term financial plan for 2018/19.

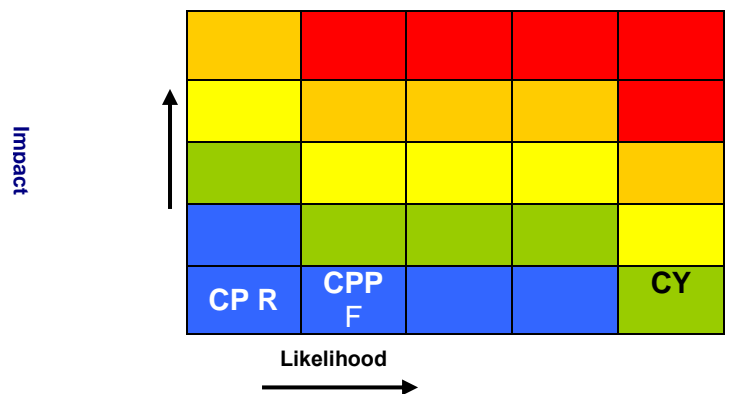
**Risk Matrix**

16. This matrix identifies the risk associated with both taking the decision as set out in the report as the recommendation(s) or not proceeding. Should there be any proposal to amend the recommendation(s) by either members or officers at the meeting then the impact on the matrix and the risks it identifies must be considered prior to the vote on the recommendation(s) taking place.

**Not proceeding with project**



**Proceeding with project**



**Key**

Categories	Colours (for further detail please refer to Risk management strategy)
R = Reputation	Red = High impact and high probability
CpP = Corporate Plan Priorities	Orange = Major impact and major probability
CP = Community Priorities	Yellow = Moderate impact and moderate probability
CY = Capacity	Green = Minor impact and minor probability
F = Financial	Blue = Insignificant impact and insignificant probability

**Council Plan Implications**

17. The regeneration of Chard Town Centre is a corporate priority of the council.
18. Proceeding with the purchase of this land assists in the delivery of 2 of the Councils main corporate priorities:

- To complete the updating of the plans for regenerating Chard and progress implementation
- To support our small and medium sized businesses across the District

### **Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications**

19. None associated with this report

### **Equality and Diversity Implications**

20. None associated with this report although the Chard Regeneration Scheme has itself been subject to equalities impact assessments

### **Privacy Impact Assessment**

21. The transaction of this purchase/ sale of this land between two public bodies is not considered to require a privacy impact assessment.

### **Background Papers**

22. None



# Agenda Item 12

## **Yeovil Refresh - Delivery Arrangements**

*Executive Portfolio Holders:* Peter Gubbins, Area South Committee Chairman  
Jo Roundell Greene, Environment & Economic Development  
*Director:* Martin Woods, Director – Service Delivery  
*Contact Details:* Martin.woods@southsomerset.gov.uk or 01935 462071

### **Purpose of Report**

1. This report updates the District Executive Committee on the progress the Yeovil Refresh project. The report outlines the next steps for the project.

### **Public Interest**

2. The Yeovil Refresh is a strategy for Yeovil town centre that will help provide a framework for investment and planning decisions by the all tiers of local government, as well as provide confidence and encouragement to developers and investors. It is intended that the Yeovil Refresh will, in time, make a significant, positive difference to the economic vitality of the whole of South Somerset. It will be of interest to all who live, work, study, shop, use the services and enjoy the leisure opportunities within the town.

### **Recommendations**

3. The District Executive is recommended to:
  - a) Note the progress so far of the Yeovil Refresh Project.
  - b) Approve the draft Refresh document for consultation in early 2018.
  - c) Agree the allocation of £185,000 from the Infrastructure Reserve to fund the appointment of a Programme Manager to manage the delivery phases of regeneration projects identified. This post would be time-limited and sit outside the Transformation Process.
  - d) Note that Area South Committee will be asked to consider re-allocation of a proportion of the various reserves identified in section 10 to support a programme of activities associated with the Yeovil Refresh
  - e) Note that commercially generated returns derived from capital receipts from development projects in Yeovil will be returned to the council's capital reserve. The reserve can be accessed to support further projects through a business case made to the District Executive Committee.

### **Report**

4. Yeovil is the major town serving South Somerset, and parts of West Dorset. It is the largest residential, service and commercial centre in the district, with a catchment of

280,000 people. It has high employment levels, leading technology and manufacturing businesses as well as an excellent theatre, college and hospital. The town centre has the unique proposition of an award- winning country park adjacent the town centre.

5. Yeovil is experiencing the effects of changes in shopping patterns, and the retail core is increasingly under threat from other centres and out of town developments. Overall, it is not performing as well as it could as a sub-regional centre. There are many land uses and buildings dating from the turn of the century that have ceased their former uses and are seeking new redevelopment.
6. The Council has made the regeneration of the town centre a priority and recognise that the delivery of a new future for the town centre requires a concerted approach from the Council and its partners.
7. Area South Regeneration Board undertook to produce an in-depth review into the Yeovil Town Centre Regeneration Programme and agreed the need to produce an overarching regeneration plan.
8. In September 2016, Jones Lang LaSalle (JLL) was appointed as the lead consultant to develop the plan. JLL, after seeking views from a number of stakeholders, have suggested a framework and range of projects with the aim of revitalising Yeovil town centre.
9. The draft Yeovil Refresh Report for consultation is contained in Appendix A. The Refresh:
  - Provides a direction and strategy towards the regeneration of Yeovil Town Centre
  - Provides a framework for enhancing the public realm and associated public spaces
  - Assists in unlocking and delivering a number of key development sites
  - Recommends focussed highway ideas to improve movement and accessibility
10. The document focuses on a number of key sites:
  - The Cattle Market
  - Bus Station (including Glovers Walk)
  - The Box Factory Car Park
  - Stars Lane Car Park
  - Petters way Car park
  - The former Ski Centre

### **Progress so far**

11. The Yeovil Refresh document produced by JLL comprises an overview of the strengths and weaknesses of Yeovil, as well as a commercial overview of the town. This sets the town within the wider context of changes within town centres nationally and regionally and in particular, the significant changes occurring in the retail sector.

12. As such, it recognises that attracting significantly more retailing to the town in the current market conditions is unlikely and therefore this should not form the centre of the regeneration approach. Instead, attracting more people to live and work in the town centre, supporting the development of the leisure and evening economy, improving the ambiance of the town and strengthening retail in a consolidated core, is the approach that will most likely lead to the successful regeneration.
13. Stakeholders from businesses together with other key partners, such as the Town and County Council have been engaged in helping shape this strategic approach and there is a large degree of consensus around the key issues within the town and the route forward. Much of the analysis from JLL and the feedback from stakeholders is set out in a SWOT analysis produced within the draft report. A high-level action plan identifies a number of priority projects.
14. It is clear that the Council can no longer leave the regeneration of the town to the commercial market and will need to take a more active and direct role, partnering with and supporting the commercial sector where appropriate. Equally, the Council is not in a position to deliver all of the regeneration projects on its own and will need to engage with a range of partners if it is to be successful. Therefore, these projects comprise a programme of work for the Council and its partners.
15. Whilst the highlevel action plan exists, there is much work to be done before delivery on the ground can be started. Such works include more detailed investigation of sites, market testing, design works, as well as development of approaches and strategies in relation to key elements such as parking and the public realm.
16. There will be a further round of consultation. This consultation will enable the document to carry weight as a material consideration in determining planning applications. But before this is complete, it is important to set in place the mechanism for delivery.

### **Delivering the Yeovil Refresh**

17. The draft Refresh document has an action plan which sets priority projects. It is proposed that each project will be allocated its own lead officer, undergo an appraisal, will have a project plan which will include the resource to deliver it.
18. While the focus of the Yeovil Refresh is physical regeneration, to be successful, it must work hand in hand with activities that support the cultural community and business aspects of the town.
19. Thus supporting such investment in projects and activities around greenspaces, the Country Park, Yeovil in Bloom, events such as Super Saturday, place-based marketing and community development is equally important. There may also be a requirement for schemes or projects to encourage the development of businesses within the town centre.

20. Work also will be needed to continue to engage and communicate with stakeholders and land owners to identify potential end users for sites and buildings.
21. There may be a need to consider innovative approaches to assemble and develop sites, such as gaining permission in principle, creating development briefs, using compulsory powers, and crowd-funding.
22. All this will require the council to focus staff from a variety of professions on the delivery of the Refresh, including the new property skills that will be part of the Council's commercial team. These projects will constitute a managed programme of activity that will deliver on the council's Priorities for Homes, Jobs, and Income Generation.

### **Resourcing Regeneration and the Commercial Strategy**

23. Resourcing the Refresh will come from a coordinated approach using a palette of funding opportunities.
  - Direct investment - through SSDC capital programmes and activities that support town centre enhancement for instance the area townscape enhancements work already undertaken ( see table below )
  - Supporting other agency and stakeholder investments - for example the recent investment in the infrastructure of the hospital and college. Special efforts will be made to support and work with SCC in relation to highways.
  - Use of Section 106 and CIL receipts from new development – for instance for a public realm via s106 - £144,000 towards Newton Rd/Sherborne Rd and £4,000 towards a Country Park gateway scheme d but not received, plus a request to Aldi for circa £130,000 for Sherborne Rd/Wyndham Street improvements under their pending scheme. These sums are being requested to pool with the Old Town Station sum for a comprehensive scheme .
  - Direct investment, such as the recent purchase of the freehold of the building occupied by Marks and Spencer's in Middle Street, shows renewed commitment to the town centre. New opportunities will be looked at as they emerge to build new homes, and create further opportunities for investment. The aim is to create viable regeneration schemes that not only pay for themselves but generate a return on the investment over the longer term, and show leadership of and confidence in the town.
24. There are clearly some projects in the Yeovil Refresh that will not generate a return or pay for themselves. Therefore, it is important to maximise the regeneration value and the commercial value from those projects and sites that can produce a return, with a view to investing the returns in the projects that will not generate a direct return. A degree of forward investment will be required by the Council to realise the regeneration and commercial potential of projects, if the regeneration ambitions are to be realised. This will include ensuring the right capacity in terms of time and skills to take forward the programme and the projects within it.
25. Taking more of a commercial approach is important in safeguarding the financial sustainability of the authority. However, regeneration usually takes time until it is income producing and so investments need to be looked at as a long-term, rather than something that will support the Council's revenue budget in the short to medium term. It

often requires more resource, capital or grants funding in the early stages and usually relies on partnership working with third parties. Some aspects of regeneration may never pay for themselves completely, such as improvements to the streetscape, but nevertheless are important elements of the regeneration package. Therefore, in looking at regeneration in a more commercial way it is the total package that needs to be assessed, not just the individual components or projects that make up a programme, to ensure a business-like and a financially sustainable approach that achieves the greatest value for the local community from the public resources committed.

## Delivery

26. It is proposed that there will be a private sector and partner steering group that will contribute to the coordination of investment and other agency activity. This will comprise key stakeholder representatives from the Yeovil Marketing Group and the Yeovil Vision Group and share a common purpose to create a thriving town centre. This is described diagrammatically below.



*Above diagram to be updated*

27. There will be a need to ensure that all the levels of local government - town, district and county are working together through an appropriate officer group and there are appropriate links to the Heart of the South West LEP to secure Yeovil's status as a principal urban area, and growth point.
28. In terms of SSDC's new operating model, delivering the Refresh is a corporate priority deriving from the corporate plan. Key performance measures and milestones will be developed and reported.
29. Working within new Council structure, under the lead of Programme Manager specialists will need to be drawn into lead priority projects. Some examples are described below: -

- Area Team - coordinate local regeneration projects; seek funding opportunities.
- Development Management Planning - take a proactive approach to assisting new development, drawing in new investment wherever possible.
- Conservation Team - design guidance, and enhancement plans
- Area Development Team - project manage public realm enhancements.
- Spatial Policy Team and Local Plan –ensure policies that will support development, and ensure that there is a positive approach to housing, employment, transport planning, walking and cycling within Yeovil.
- Environmental and Direct Services – design and implement bold new landscaping and public realm enhancements
- Economic Development - reviewing wider funding opportunities, support of existing businesses and new business creation.
- The new Commercial Team - work closely with the investment manager to scope commercial opportunities for the council, assess income potential for reinvestment and deliver key projects
- Countryside Tourism and Communications – changing perception and communicating an upbeat message about Yeovil; continuing to build on the success of the country park.
- Licencing - support a safe and diverse night time economy.
- Food Safety support the growth of a diverse restaurant, food and drink sector.
- Arts and Entertainment teams developing public art, events, and using the uniqueness of the new Westland complex, and the Octagon to bring new audiences to Yeovil.
- Finance and legal teams to assess projects and prepare necessary conveyancing documentation and licences.

## **Financial implications**

30. At the heart of the approach as described above is a commercial approach with the council reinvesting the returns from exploiting commercial opportunities back in to the Regeneration programme. The commercial team will look to take the redevelopment of certain sites forward for a profit, or as an investment opportunity which will in part be used to supplement the budget plus take forward other aspects e.g. purchase of a building to create a public square / public art / business support scheme. Section 106 agreements and CIL can also contribute to the highways and public realm works.
31. There is a need for Programme Manager to manage all the projects that will contribute to the delivery of the Refresh. This will be approximately £185k over a three year period, and will be financed from the Infrastructure reserve.
32. The Strategic Regeneration Board has access to a feasibility fund that can be used against any of the project to work up the business case. This currently has £150,000 uncommitted. This can be applied to the Yeovil Refresh to underpin any investment case on a project by project basis if approved by the Strategic Regeneration Board
33. The Council's Commercial Strategy takes an investment based approach to the use of financial resources including assessing the return from the investment in terms of financial return. Sometimes the investment approach will require initial pump-priming.

34. At times bold public investment will be necessary in areas that do not necessarily translate to a positive short term business case, such as a piece of public art or the creation of new focal public space.
35. In the short term, a review of existing funds have been earmarked for investment in Yeovil shows a number of capital reserves that could be applied to the Yeovil Refresh, amounting to c.£600k It is suggested that this could be rolled up into one Yeovil Refresh Delivery Fund.

<b>Foundry House</b> This has been held awaiting a project that fits with the DCLG grant. However, the grant was given years ago so it is unlikely to be scrutinised now.	<b>£4K</b>
<b>Reckleford Gyrotory approximately</b> This remaining £70K is ring- fenced for the gyrotory and the removal of lights.	<b>£70K</b>
<b>Old Town Station:</b> Ring-fenced for improvements at the bottom end of town. Many of the businesses here have been arguing (very vocally) that it needs to be spent there soon.	<b>£321K</b>
<b>Area South Capital:</b> Awaiting allocation Has been built up to be spent on locally important projects which can include the Yeovil Refresh.	<b>£151K</b>
<b>Yeovil Vision Local Delivery Vehicle:</b> Residual funding that requires Yeovil Vision Board approval. £5k has been allocated by the Yeovil Vision Board towards improvements to the signage from National Tyres by County Council to be claimed in 2017/18	<b>£29K</b>
<b>Total SSDC Funding</b>	<b>£575K</b>
<b>SCC Eastern Corridor Underspend</b> Discussions with SCC have enabled this fund to be allocated to a short term Highways project arising from the Yeovil Refresh. <i>This will be spent and delivered by SCC</i>	<b>£500k</b>
<b>Total Potential Funding to Yeovil Refresh</b>	<b>£1.075K</b>

### Match funding

36. There are a number of funds deriving from Government (DCLG and HCA) such as 'One Public Estate', 'Marginal Impact Funding' derelict land remediation funds etc. LEP funding may be available. The Council's Affordable Housing capital pot can be applied to selected schemes in Yeovil in accordance with overall policy criteria.

### Next Stages

37. The next stages of the project will include the following work areas:

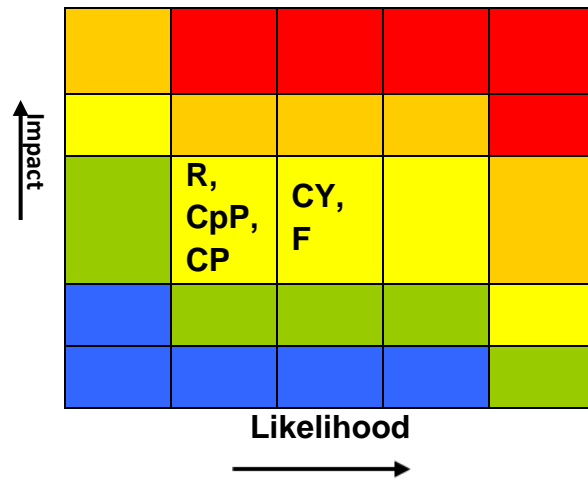
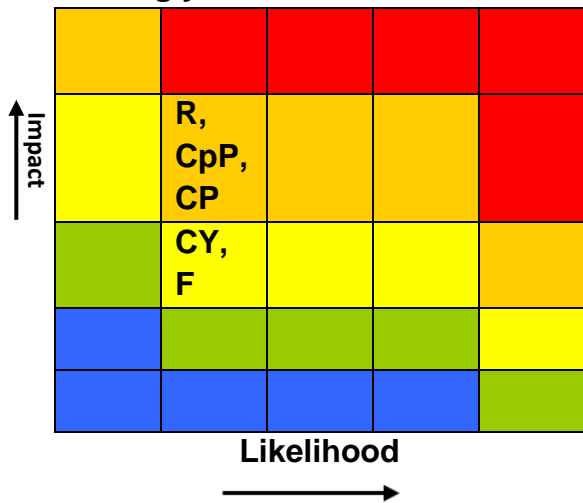
- Appointing a Programme Manager to oversee regeneration projects in Yeovil and South Somerset.
- Individual Project prioritisation inception and planning
- Stakeholder management Partner support

- Seeking Match funding

### Risk Matrix

If District Executive does not approve the recommendations then our long term exposure to financial and reputational risk will increase, whilst our ability to deliver against the corporate plan objectives diminish. The risks generally increase accordingly.

If District Executive approves the recommendations the identified risks will be as follows:



### Key

Categories	Colours (for further detail please refer to Risk management strategy)
R = Reputation	Red = High impact and high probability
CpP = Corporate Plan Priorities	Orange = Major impact and major probability
CP = Community Priorities	Yellow = Moderate impact and moderate probability
CY = Capacity	Green = Minor impact and minor probability
F = Financial	Blue = Insignificant impact and insignificant probability

### Corporate Priority Implications

38. The development of Yeovil town centre assists the council in meeting several of its corporate objectives including:

- Lobbying for and support infra-structure improvements to enable growth.
- Capitalise on our high quality culture, leisure and tourism opportunities to bring people to South Somerset.
- Progress key infrastructure projects that unlock development



- Progress options to improve access/regeneration of Yeovil Town Centre.

### **Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications**

39. There are no current implications associated with this report though the extension programme assists improvements in communication and the reduction of energy use.

### **Equality and Diversity Implications**

40. There are no implications immediately associated with this report

### **Background Papers**

- *Yeovil Town Centre Development Strategy: Stage 1 Baseline*
- *Yeovil Town Centre Development Strategy: ACTION PLAN*

# Agenda Item 13

## **Westlands Revised Business Plan**

*Executive Portfolio Holder:* Cllr Sylvia Seal, Leisure, Culture & Wellbeing  
*Director:* Clare Pestell, Director – Commercial Services and Income Generation  
*Service Manager:* Adam Burgan, Arts & Entertainment Venues Manager  
*Lead Officer:* Adam Burgan, Arts & Entertainment Venues Manager  
*Contact Details:* Adam.burgan@southsomerset.gov.uk or 01935 845911

### **Purpose of the Report**

1. This report has been prepared to update members on the revision of the Business Plan for Westlands Conference, Entertainment and Sports facility.

### **Forward Plan**

2. This report appeared on the District Executive Forward Plan with an anticipated Committee date of 7<sup>th</sup> December 2017.

### **Public Interest**

3. The Complex has been a locally important and long standing venue regularly hosting a vast array of sporting activities and different events ranging from functions, meetings, training events, to weddings, ballroom dances, award ceremonies, festivals and live music events.
4. On the 12th May Augusta Westlands (AW) announced their decision to close the Complex at the end of September 2015. The decision was taken due to increasing costs and the growing subsidy AW has had to make to keep the complex open. Other factors taken into consideration were the impending major investments that would be required to modernise the facilities and declining membership.
5. Recognising the value and importance of the Complex, SSDC and Yeovil Town Council (YTC) met with AW at the beginning of June to discuss its future. At the meeting all parties agreed to carry out a feasibility appraisal to assess the viability of SSDC or another organisation operating the site and continuing to provide a range of sport and leisure facilities for the overall benefit of the community.
6. The District Executive Committee considered the key findings emerging from this and further risk appraisal work at its September and October meetings and in doing so agreed subject to financial approval by Full Council to seek to negotiate and secure satisfactory terms with AW and other funding partners. Full Council subsequently approved a 30 year £1,865,046 internal loan towards the costs of refurbishing the Complex in October 2015.
7. Following a period of refurbishment the venue reopened to in March 2017 with building work completed in June 2017 ahead of the official opening. Now that the venue has been trading for six months we have actual figures to work with and have updated the business plan accordingly.
8. The appendix for this report is confidential as it contains competitive information, and is exempt from disclosure or publication by virtue of the Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A under paragraph 3:

“Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).” It is considered that the public interest in maintaining the exemption from the Access to Information Rules outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

## Recommendation

9. That the District Executive approves the updated Business Plan for Westlands, (confidential – circulated under separate cover) and agrees to include the additional subsidy in years 2 and 3 of the financial forecasts, as summarised in paragraph 40, within the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan, noting that the underlying subsidy is projected to reduce in subsequent years.

## Background

10. On the 12th May Augusta Westlands (AW) announced their decision to close the Complex at the end of September 2015. The decision was taken due to increasing costs and the growing subsidy AW has had to make to keep the complex open.
11. Recognising the value and importance of the Complex, SSDC and Yeovil Town Council (YTC) met with AW at the beginning of June 2015. All parties agreed to assess the viability of SSDC or another organisation operating the site and continuing to provide a range of sport and leisure facilities for the overall benefit of the community.
12. The District Executive Committee considered the key findings emerging from this and further risk appraisal work at its September and October meetings, and in doing so agreed subject to financial approval by Full Council to seek to negotiate and secure satisfactory terms with AW and other funding partners. Full Council subsequently approved a 30 year £1,865,046 internal loan towards the costs of refurbishing the Complex in October 2015.
13. Following a period of refurbishment the venue reopened in March 2017 with building work completed in June 2017 ahead of the official opening.
14. The first six months of operation have been challenging, re-launching a major refurbished venue.
15. The venue began operating in March 2017 with all scheduled events taking place despite areas of the building not completed with contractors remaining on site and completing works up to Friday 16<sup>th</sup> June. Key works outstanding were building of the main entrance, completion of meeting rooms and other ancillary spaces. Ongoing building work incurred additional security and site costs. The venue was unable to operate at normal capacity during this time.
16. Most project matters are now complete there are some 'snagging' and usual building operational matters that are ongoing. At the time of this report the venue is still without phone lines. With staff using work mobiles to take and make calls. We expect to have phone lines in early 2018.
17. Delays to completing the first floor office for occupation by Full On Sport have reduced forecast rental income.
18. Appointments of key members of staff were delayed which has hampered operating and developing venue usage.
19. The Project Manager, Steve Joel, left the authority in May and the work on transformation has impacted on capacity across the organisation with support from services including Property Services, ICT affected.
20. The first two months of operation drew additional costs as staff worked to get the building ready to welcome the public following building work taking place throughout the day. The works hampered efforts to 'advertise' and 'sell' the spaces to potential clients in addition to cutting off income from these spaces as work was completed.

21. With a project of this size inevitably a forecast will not be able to foresee all eventualities such as those listed above. However, staff have worked to resolve operational issues and deliver events successfully. This has impacted on the amount of time available to focus on increasing usage of the venue and generate income to date.

## **Report Detail**

### **Assumptions made in the original forecast**

22. The previous Business Plan was prepared by Steve Joel (the Project Manager) with input from other officers and was based on figures provided by AW when it operated the facility with the forecast based on a 'normal' operating year. Figures are based on a full April-March financial year basis. The new business plan is based on six months of actual trading but taking account of those once off start-up costs incurred.
23. Now the building work is complete there are a number of discrepancies in capacity that have impacted on the venue and the business plan. These include: Figures were based on information taken from previous advertised capacities and information given by contractors during the initial development stages. The seated 'theatre-style' capacity is 870 not 1,000, and the standing capacity is 950 not 1,500 as stated in the original plan.
24. With the delays in building work impacting on the venue availability the number of events for the first year has not met the original forecast with less banquet functions and standing gigs than anticipated. Whilst new strands of programming have been introduced including a programme of film screenings the expected number of tickets sold has been revised to 25,686 (down from a target of 34,996).
25. The ticket yield and average attendance are less than anticipated having been based on the figures achieved at The Octagon that has been operating for 40 consecutive years and is enjoying record attendance. It will take longer to build up the diverse audience for a wider selection of events at Westlands. The actual ticket yield for standing gigs is less than anticipated at £14.24 (actual) rather than £15.07 and average attendance for theatre events at 66% rather than the expected 83%. This was an optimistic forecast and the actual attendance remains higher than the national average of between 50-60%.

### **Early Trading**

26. The first year revenue budget contains £150K worth of equipment and 'start-up' costs including the new website, furniture, catering equipment and costs associated with the Official Opening. The majority of these items are under the £10K purchase cost to be considered capital under SSDC procedures. These are 'exceptional' start-up costs that will not appear again.
27. The closure of the facility led to many of the existing customers finding alternative venues for their events. Whilst some of these users have returned and new customers have started using the venue it is taking longer to build up the number of users than originally forecast. Feedback on events has been positive overall and the number of events and guests hosted is increasing each month.
28. The first six months has seen much positive press about the venue with regional television coverage of the official opening. We are averaging 4.8/5 on Facebook reviews.
29. Over 14,000 tickets were purchased for events at the venue taking place in the first six month and the venue successfully delivered a number of high profile events including The Western Gazette

Business Awards, six large conferences (ranging from 150 – 2,000 delegates per event), an open day and has attracted a growing number of regular meetings and events.

30. We expect it to take longer than originally predicted to build up the number of events and users for the venue to reach 'break-even' point.
31. Based on our experience of operating The Octagon Theatre staff are focussing on delivering events well, maintaining and improving standards and events that will build audiences and generate income. The Octagon has a successful track record of increasing visitor numbers, increasing audience retention and increasing income to reduce subsidy. Over the last seven years the number of ticket sold has increased from 77,316 tickets sold with a Gross value of £1,078,042 in 2009/10 to 132,376 tickets and £2,189,145 in 2016/17.
32. The staff delivering the venue are confident of the revised plan and delivering the growth needed for the venue to break-even.

### **Revised marketing plan and actions**

33. The venue has a wide range of customers from patrons booking performance events, screenings and music gigs, conference and meeting bookers, promoters hiring the venue, to customers buying drinks and refreshments – all with differing needs, requirements and expectations. The variety of events Westlands can present is a strength but also presents a challenge in establishing the venue and delivering a multitude of events well. Marketing to those customers also requires different approaches and styles of marketing.
34. The venue is attracting good press coverage and repeat customers but the venue must maintain a high profile and find new ways to attract first time visitors. The poor reputation of the previous operation has impacted on our ability to attract certain promoters and customers who are not always aware of the extensive refurbishment work that has taken place and the new team in place.
35. Support from the new Marketing and Communications Team will support additional marketing work.

### **Monitoring, Progress and Reporting**

36. Quarterly budget monitoring reporting is in place with comments to members.
37. The Portfolio Holder will be advised of progress at regular meetings.
38. The Arts & Entertainment Manager undertakes monthly budget monitoring and will monitor progress against the revised business plan and report to the Director of Commercial Services and Income Generation and Finance Manager. On an annual basis the Arts & Entertainment Manager will prepare a report on the Arts & Entertainment Service that will include an update on progress against the revised business plan.

### **Financial Implications**

39. Full details of the financial forecast can be seen in the Confidential Appendix 1. A thorough review of the income and expenditure projections has been undertaken, reflecting the configuration of the business operation and facilities as well as building on experience from early trading performance. Whilst these estimates are considered to be robust at this stage, the performance of the business will be closely monitored and the business plan forecasts kept under review as the business matures.

40. The table below summarises the position of the financial forecast for the five following financial years:

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
	£	£	£	£	£
<b>Income</b>	1,163,852	1,440,098	1,730,741	2,108,385	2,180,012
<b>Expenditure</b>	1,361,072	1,581,429	1,798,743	2,093,499	2,158,765
<b>Profit / (Loss)</b>	(197,219)	(141,331)	(68,003)	14,886	125,439
<b>Less subsidy agreed</b>	62,495	62,495	62,495	*	*
<b>Additional subsidy required</b>	(83,891)	(16,820)	56,188		

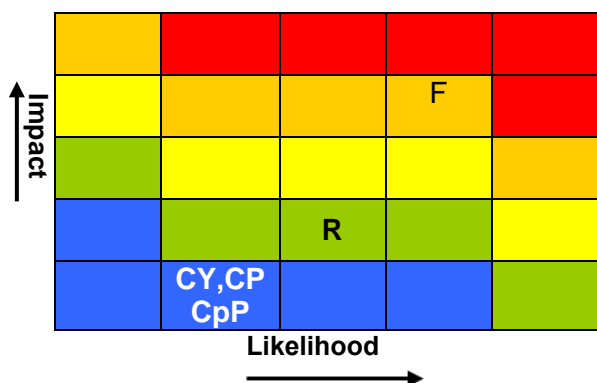
\*The forecast shows no subsidy required in 2021/22 and 2022/23.

41. The additional subsidy required will be covered within the provision for “unavoidable commitments” included within the draft budget estimates for 2018/19 and 2019/20, therefore no additional pressure is placed on the draft Medium Term Financial Plan for next year.

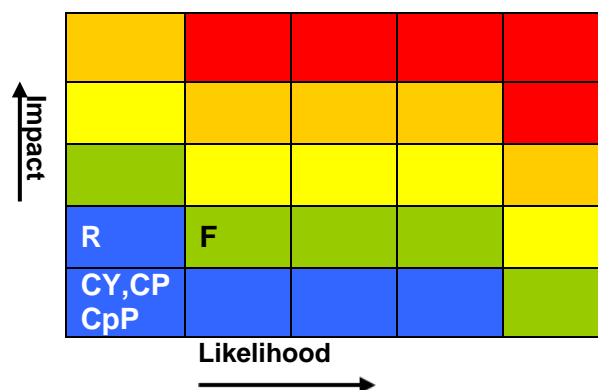
42. It should be noted that the figures above do not include the receipt of the ticket levy nor the repayment of the original loan which is to be repaid from this levy.

## Risk Matrix

Risk Profile before officer recommendations



Risk Profile after officer recommendations



## Key

Categories	Colours (for further detail please refer to Risk management strategy)
R = Reputation	Red = High impact and high probability
CpP = Corporate Plan Priorities	Orange = Major impact and major probability
CP = Community Priorities	Yellow = Moderate impact and moderate probability
CY = Capacity	Green = Minor impact and minor probability
F = Financial	Blue = Insignificant impact and insignificant probability

## Council Plan Implications

1. The Arts & Entertainment Service is primarily linked to THEME 3: IMPROVE THE HOUSING, HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF OUR CITIZENS

2. "We consider that decent, affordable housing is vital to the overall health of our citizens. We want to ensure that all of the community has access to sport, leisure and arts and heritage opportunities"
3. Specific priorities associated to the service are 3.31 Increase engagement in the Arts.

### **Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications**

The Arts & Entertainment Service contributes to SSDC targets of Reducing Carbon Emissions by adopting a culture where this is considered in everyday decision-making. The service has appointed a Carbon Champion who encourages staff to save energy, recycle, and adopt more environmentally friendly ways of delivering our service.

### **Equality and Diversity Implications**

The Arts & Entertainment Service strives to make the service and those offered by its partners accessible to everyone. We ensure that all our partners hold an Equality and Diversity Policy and that equality is one of the core principles of the organisation. Our programme of performances, events and projects aims to offer a diverse range of events which inspire, educate, enlighten and entertain whilst bringing the community together.

### **Privacy Impact Assessment**

Not applicable.

### **Background Papers**

Updated Business Plan (confidential)

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# Agenda Item 14

## **District Executive Forward Plan**

*Executive Portfolio Holder:* Ric Pallister, Leader, Strategy and Policy

*Lead Officer:* Angela Cox, Democratic Services Manager

*Contact Details:* angela.cox@southsomerset.gov.uk or (01935) 462148

### **1. Purpose of the Report**

1.1 This report informs Members of the current Executive Forward Plan, provides information on Portfolio Holder decisions and on consultation documents received by the Council that have been logged on the consultation database.

### **2. Public Interest**

2.1 The District Executive Forward Plan lists the reports due to be discussed and decisions due to be made by the Committee within the next few months. The Consultation Database is a list of topics which the Council's view is currently being consulted upon by various outside organisations.

### **3. Recommendations**

3.1 The District Executive is asked to:-

- I. approve the updated Executive Forward Plan for publication as attached at Appendix A;
- II. note the contents of the Consultation Database as shown at Appendix B.

### **4. Executive Forward Plan**

4.1 The latest Forward Plan is attached at Appendix A. The timings given for reports to come forward are indicative only, and occasionally may be re scheduled and new items added as new circumstances arise.

### **5. Consultation Database**

5.1 The Council has agreed a protocol for processing consultation documents received by the Council. This requires consultation documents received to be logged and the current consultation documents are attached at Appendix B.

### **6. Background Papers**

6.1 None.



**Appendix A - SSDC Executive Forward Plan – December 2017**

<b>Date of Decision</b>	<b>Decision</b>	<b>Portfolio</b>	<b>Service Director</b>	<b>Contact</b>	<b>Committee(s)</b>
January 2018 January 2018	Establishment of the HotSW Joint Committee	Portfolio Holder for Strategy and Policy	Chief Executive	Alex Parmley, Chief Executive	District Executive South Somerset District Council
January 2018	Annual review of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA)	Portfolio Holder for Finance and Legal Services	Director Support Services	Paula Goddard, Senior Legal Executive	District Executive
January 2018	Update on the Medium Term Financial Strategy and Council Plan	Portfolio Holder for Finance and Legal Services	Director Support Services	Paul Fitzgerald, Section 151 Officer	District Executive
January 2018	Council Tax and Housing Benefit fraud report	Portfolio Holder for Finance and Legal Services	Director Support Services	Ian Potter, Revenues and Benefits Manager	District Executive
January 2018 January 2018	Annual Review of the Council Tax Support Scheme 2018/19	Portfolio Holder for Finance and Legal Services	Director Service Delivery	Ian Potter, Revenues and Benefits Manager	District Executive South Somerset District Council
January 2018	Transformation Project Progress Report	Portfolio Holder for Strategy and Policy	Chief Executive	Alex Parmley, Chief Executive	District Executive

<b>Date of Decision</b>	<b>Decision</b>	<b>Portfolio</b>	<b>Service Director</b>	<b>Contact</b>	<b>Committee(s)</b>
January 2018	Yeovil Town Centre Markets	Councillor Peter Gubbins	Assistant Directors (Communities)	Natalie Fortt, Area Development Lead South	District Executive
February 2018 February 2018	2018/19 Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy	Portfolio Holder for Finance and Legal Services	Director Support Services	Paul Fitzgerald, Section 151 Officer	District Executive South Somerset District Council
February 2018	Commercial Strategy & Income Generation Update Report	Portfolio Holder for Property & Climate Change and Income Generation	Director Commercial Services & Income Generation	Clare Pestell, Director (Commercial Services & Income Generation)	District Executive
February 2018	Capital & Revenue Budget monitoring reports for quarter 3	Portfolio Holder for Finance and Legal Services	Director Support Services	Catherine Hood, Finance Manager	District Executive
February 2018	SSDC Operational Office Accommodation Review (Areas and Locality Working)	Portfolio Holder for Property & Climate Change and Income Generation	Director Commercial Services & Income Generation	Clare Pestell, Director (Commercial Services & Income Generation)	District Executive
February 2018	SSDC Operational Office Accommodation Review (Headquarters Feasibility Report)	Portfolio Holder for Property & Climate Change and Income Generation	Director Commercial Services & Income Generation	Clare Pestell, Director (Commercial Services & Income Generation)	District Executive

Date of Decision	Decision	Portfolio	Service Director	Contact	Committee(s)
February 2018	Two year funding agreements (2018/20) for Citizens Advice South Somerset, SPARK and Access for All	Portfolio Holder Leisure & Culture	Assistant Directors (Communities)	David Crisfield, Third Sector and Equalities Co-ordinator	District Executive
February 2018	Proposed introduction of fees for Food Hygiene Rating re-scores	Portfolio Holder for Area West	Director Service Delivery	Nigel O'Grady, Principal Food Safety Officer	District Executive
March 2018	Quarterly Performance and Complaints Monitoring Report	Portfolio Holder for Strategy and Policy	Director Service Delivery	Anna-Maria Lenz, Performance Officer	District Executive
March 2018	District Wide Voluntary Sector Grants	Portfolio Holder Leisure & Culture	Assistant Directors (Communities)	David Crisfield, Third Sector and Equalities Co-ordinator	District Executive
April 2018	Transformation Project Progress Report	Portfolio Holder for Strategy and Policy	Chief Executive	Alex Parmley, Chief Executive	District Executive
July 2018 July 2018	Approval of South Somerset Early Review Local Plan Submission Plan	Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning (Place Making)	Director Service Delivery	Jo Wilkins, Senior Policy Planner	District Executive South Somerset District Council

**APPENDIX B - Current Consultations – December 2017**

Purpose of Document	Portfolio	Director	Response to be agreed by	Contact	Deadline for response
<p><b>Homelessness code of guidance for local authorities</b></p> <p>Consultation on the draft homelessness code of guidance document from government to local authorities.</p> <p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/homelessness-code-of-guidance-for-local-authorities">https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/homelessness-code-of-guidance-for-local-authorities</a></p>	Strategy and Policy / Leisure and Culture	Director (Support Services)	Officers in consultation with Portfolio Holders	Kirsty Larkins	11 <sup>th</sup> December 2017
<p><b>Improving access to social housing for victims of domestic abuse</b></p> <p>A DCLG consultation on new statutory guidance to improve access to social housing for victims of domestic abuse in refuges</p> <p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/improving-access-to-social-housing-for-victims-of-domestic-abuse">https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/improving-access-to-social-housing-for-victims-of-domestic-abuse</a></p>	Strategy and Policy / Leisure and Culture	Director (Support Services)	Officers in consultation with Portfolio Holders	Colin McDonald	5 <sup>th</sup> January 2018
<p><b>Enabling Police and Crime Commissioners to sit and vote on Combined Fire and Rescue Authorities</b></p> <p>We are seeking views on the proposal to vary the combination schemes of Combined Fire and Rescue Authorities to implement the 'representation model' of the Policing and Crime Act 2017.</p> <p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/enabling-police-and-crime-commissioners-to-sit-and-vote-on-combined-fire-and-rescue-authorities">https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/enabling-police-and-crime-commissioners-to-sit-and-vote-on-combined-fire-and-rescue-authorities</a></p>	Area South Chair, Yeovil Town Centre Regeneration, Community Safety, Crematorium	Communities Lead	Officers in consultation with Portfolio Holders and SSDC appointed representative	Helen Rutter	15 <sup>th</sup> January 2018

# Agenda Item 15

## **Date of Next Meeting**

Members are asked to note that the next scheduled meeting of the District Executive will take place on **Thursday, 4<sup>th</sup> January 2018** in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil commencing at 9.30 a.m.