



# Somerset Recovery and Growth Plan

## Summary of Areas of Activity

Prepared by Somerset's Local Authorities

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# 1 Introduction

- 1.0.1 This document sets out a short summary of each of the areas of activity proposed in the Somerset Recovery & Growth Plan. For many of these more detail is provided in a full project template which is available as a separate document.

## 2 Employment, Skills and Economic Inclusion

2.0.1 The activities included in this theme are divided into three areas: employment; education and skills; and economic inclusion. These are summarised in the figure below.

**Figure 2.1: Activities to Support Employment, Skills and Economic Inclusion**

<b>Employment</b>
Redundancy support
Employment support
Improve local employment opportunities
<b>Education and skills</b>
Enhanced careers, education, information advice and guidance (CEIAG)
Enhanced post 16 education
Training provider sustainability and growth
<b>Economic inclusion</b>
Address unemployment, under-employment and in-work poverty
Digital skills and access
Young people support

### 2.1 Redundancy Support

#### Overview

2.1.1 We are working with partners to provide immediate support for those who are at risk of redundancy or who have lost their job as a result of Coronavirus. We will implement local Response to Redundancy Taskforces, following our Response to Redundancy Framework. We will put in place a comprehensive package of support to individuals which will be available as an online resource and supplemented with direct support where needed. This support will be aligned with that on offer from key partners such as Job Centre Plus, National Careers Service, SERCO and others. Businesses will also be supported through the redundancy process and support will be available for their ongoing resilience and growth.

2.1.2 Key objectives of this programme are to ensure:

- A coordinated response to redundancies across partners following the Response to Redundancy Framework
- That all appropriate information and support is easily accessible by individuals and business

#### Offer

2.1.3 Using BRRP funding, short-term capacity has been secured for the following activity.

2.1.4 We will develop, roll out and maintain a Response to Redundancy (R2R) Framework which sets out how partners should work together to provide a coordinated response to support businesses (including survival, their ongoing sustainability and longer-term growth) and the individuals impacted.

2.1.5 We will bring together all advice and guidance available from partners in respect of redundancy support and publish it in a single, accessible, place on the Step Up Somerset website. This will act as a one-stop-shop for all relevant information. We will identify any gaps in provision and will work with partners to develop additional support where needed.

- 2.1.6 We will coordinate a multi-partner group (the Unemployment Support Group) to oversee redundancy announcements and the implementation of the R2R Framework. We will continue to pull together the services available across key partners.

#### **Ask**

- 2.1.7 That DWP/JCP are able to proactively share intelligence on redundancy announcements and HR1 details with the USG and/or key partners in a timely manner and that the Taskforce is fully engaged in early discussions with the business. This is key where the business may need business support alongside the support on offer to individuals.
- 2.1.8 To ensure that national programmes of activity are fully engaged with local partners, and work in parallel, under the R2R Framework so we are able to provide a coordinated response and support package to business. There is a significant risk of business receiving fragmented support if this is not achieved.
- 2.1.9 Additional funding, to continue this activity post September 2021, is required as set out below.

#### **Readiness and Deliverability**

- 2.1.10 The R2R Framework, Step Up Somerset and USG are all in progress.

#### **Next Steps**

- 2.1.11 To review and refine the R2R Framework based on learning from early implementation.
- 2.1.12 To continue to pull together support offers from across partners and include on the Step Up Somerset website.
- 2.1.13 Identify any gaps in provision or capacity issues across partners as numbers of redundancy increase. Ensure we have the right provision available and seek investment where appropriate.
- 2.1.14 Promote the support available directly to individuals, particularly where the business has closed without engaging through the R2R Framework, using social media and other channels.

#### **Timing**

- 2.1.15 Ongoing.

#### **Funds**

- 2.1.16 This activity has been delivered within the strategic capacity provided under the BRRP funding (1 FTE coordinator and 1 FTE project/comms officer). This capacity is currently funded until September 2021. Ongoing support will be required post September 2021 at an approximate annual cost of £80,000.
- 2.1.17 Step Up Somerset has been developed and funded through the BRRP and costs covered until September 2022. Ongoing development of the portal will be provided within the strategic capacity, but hosting costs and additional functionality of the website will cost between £500-£1,000 per annum depending on the requirements.

## **2.2 Employment Support**

#### **Overview**

- 2.2.1 We are working with partners to create a package of support to those seeking work, considering self-employment or who are seeking an alternative career route. We will ensure that they have

suitable employability and personal skills. We will ensure that individuals are aware of the roles and opportunities available to them, match them to these opportunities and help them to apply for these jobs. This support will closely align with the Redundancy Support and the Skills Support programmes.

#### **Offer**

- 2.2.2 Using BRRP funding short-term capacity has been secured for the following activity.
- 2.2.3 We will develop and maintain the Step Up Somerset website which brings together a range of employment support into a single point of access. This is an online resource that will be supplemented by other delivery mechanisms.
- 2.2.4 We will create a network of employment and skills hubs across Somerset. Building on services already available across our partners and developing new provision where appropriate. The hubs will bring together partners who are already working with individuals to provide advice/guidance on all aspects of employment, applying for jobs, upskilling and self-employment such as Job Centre Plus, National Careers Service, SERCO and others. Advisors will be available to provide 1-2-1 support, matching individuals to job opportunities, and helping them through the application process. The hubs are intended to provide a physical access point for services hosted on the Step Up Somerset website.
- 2.2.5 Through Skill Up, we are providing guidance and support to apprentices who have been directly impacted by Coronavirus. Working with training providers and employers, advice will be provided to ensure the individual can continue on their apprenticeship journey, where possible, or is supported into another employment/training opportunity.
- 2.2.6 We will work with partners to develop a joined-up approach to redeployment into sectors where employment opportunities exist, such as the care sector and through major projects such as HPC, creating a workforce pipeline for the future and also supporting individuals to retrain for relevant roles. Under the Enhanced CEIAG Programme, we will develop a suite of route maps, and escalators of progression, into and through our core sectors.

#### **Ask**

- 2.2.7 Additional funding, to continue this activity post September 2021, is required as set out below.

#### **Readiness and Deliverability**

- 2.2.8 This is work in progress.

#### **Next Steps**

- 2.2.9 To review and refine the Step Up Somerset website, continue to develop content as appropriate and continue to raise awareness of the site and the services available through it.
- 2.2.10 Continue to roll out the physical employment and skills hubs across Somerset so they are operational before the end of the employment support schemes.
- 2.2.11 Identify any gaps in employment support and consider, with partners, how these can be filled.
- 2.2.12 Deliver three virtual jobs/apprenticeship fairs early in 2021 aligned with the Enhanced CEIAG Programme.

#### **Timing**

- 2.2.13 Ongoing.

## **Funds**

- 2.2.14 This activity has been delivered within the strategic capacity provided under the BRRP funding (one FTE coordinator and one FTE project/comms officer). This capacity is currently funded until September 2021. Ongoing support will be required post September at an approximate annual cost of £80,000.
- 2.2.15 To continue the delivery of the employment and skills hubs we would require £400,000 of annual revenue funding.
- 2.2.16 Step Up Somerset has been developed and funded through the BRRP and costs covered until September 2022. Ongoing development of the portal will be provided within the strategic capacity, but hosting costs and additional functionality of the website will cost between £500-£1,000 per annum depending on the requirements.

## **2.3 Improve Local Employment Opportunities**

### **Overview**

- 2.3.1 We will work with employers to maximise opportunities for local employment within our growth and across our bedrock sectors, specifically encouraging clean growth, and support individuals to access these opportunities ensuring they have the appropriate skills to do so. For major projects within Somerset we will use planning and procurement processes to secure employment of local workers and for investment in their ongoing skills development e.g. using and extending local labour agreements. We will need enhanced capacity to enforce this through planning and effective contract management of procurement. This will support revitalisation and growth in Somerset.
- 2.3.2 Skill Up Somerset is currently funded through the BRRP and through our ESF funded, Skills for the Workforce Programme, we will continue and extend the Somerset Skill Up Service, delivered by DSTPN, until 2023. Skill Up works with business to encourage them to create apprenticeship and traineeship opportunities, supporting the government's Opportunity Guarantee for Young People, but also ensuring people of all ages have access to apprenticeships and training. Skill Up will work with business to support recruitment into apprenticeships and traineeships. We will work with the DSTPN to ensure appropriate provision is available and seek resources to improve the sustainability of these programmes. Our training providers will support the delivery of all employment related skills-based training programmes including traineeships and apprenticeships, underpinned by incentives to employers.

### **Offer**

- 2.3.3 We will work with employers to create employment opportunities within our bedrock and growth sectors, specifically encouraging clean growth, and support individuals to access these opportunities ensuring they have the appropriate skills to do so.
- 2.3.4 We will embed local labour agreements across all planning and procurement processes and encourage our supply chain to invest in their workforce.
- 2.3.5 We have created the Skill Up Somerset service, through DSTPN, using BRRP funding and will continue the service, post March 2021, under our ESF Funded Skills for the Workforce Programme. Skill Up will continue to encourage creation of apprenticeship and traineeship opportunities and will work with business to support recruitment into these opportunities.

- 2.3.6 We will host information on the Step Up Somerset website. This will act as a one-stop-shop for all relevant information and will sign post out to partners where appropriate.

#### **Ask**

- 2.3.7 Implementation of a range of funding and rule changes to 16-24 traineeship, apprenticeship and adult offer to facilitate training opportunities for all.
- 2.3.8 Employer incentives of up to £3,000 per apprentice, with an increase on non-levy funding allocations to match.
- 2.3.9 Additional funding, to continue this activity post September 2021, is required as set out below.

#### **Readiness and Deliverability**

- 2.3.10 The activity is not yet fully scoped, although work under the Skill Up service is in progress.

#### **Next Steps**

- 2.3.11 The full scope of activity needs to be developed and an approach agreed.

#### **Timing**

- 2.3.12 This work will commence in early 2021.

#### **Funds**

- 2.3.13 This activity will be delivered by the strategic capacity provided under the BRRP funding (1 FTE coordinator and 1 FTE project/comms officer). This capacity is currently funded until September 2021. Ongoing support will be required post September at an approximate annual cost of £80k.
- 2.3.14 The Skill Up Service is funded via the BRRP until March 2021 and will be funded via the ESF Funding from April 2021 until July 2023.
- 2.3.15 Step Up Somerset has been developed and funded through the BRRP and costs covered until September 2022. Ongoing development of the portal will be provided within the strategic capacity, but hosting costs and additional functionality of the website will cost between £500-£1,000 per annum depending on the requirements.

## **2.4 Logistics Training Academy**

#### **Overview**

- 2.4.1 As part of the sustained expansion of a key local logistics company based between Frome and Shepton Mallet, and the enhancement of their FLT Fleet to electric, an opportunity has arisen to create a purpose built Logistics Training Academy to serve the wider local area. The scheme proposal would include local training provider/s, local businesses accessing opportunities to upskill their staff alongside a programme for individuals accessing the industry through the DWP and through recruitment agencies to be included in the scheme to help to offset anticipated losses in many other sectors due to the impact of Covid-19. Additional skills in the sector are also expected with uncertainties around the impact of Brexit on international logistics companies.

## 2.5 Enhanced Careers, Education, Information, Advice and Guidance

### Overview

2.5.1 We are working with partners to provide enhanced careers, education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) to all Somerset residents, particularly our young people, including raising awareness of apprenticeships, traineeships and T Levels as a viable post-16 option. During school closures the Somerset Education Business Partnership (EBP) moved all resources online and rolled out a programme of virtual work experience and careers events accessible to all young people across Somerset. We will seek funding to continue the services of the EBP which is essential to sustain and develop careers advice and engagement between employers, schools, young people and their parents/guardians. The EBP will continue to work in very close partnership with the Heart of the South West Careers Hub. To enable continuation of both of these activities locally we will need additional revenue funding. Ongoing activity will need to be aligned with local labour market intelligence as the post-Coronavirus landscape continues to change and develop. In the short-term we will utilise the BRRP funding to cover a proportion of these costs.

2.5.2 The objectives of this activity are to:

- Raise awareness across our young people of post 16 opportunities in education, training or employment
- Raise awareness across the wider adult population of opportunities in education, training or employment

### Offer

2.5.3 We will create clear route maps, and escalators of progression, into and through our core sectors. These pathways will align with our employment support programmes and, working with training providers, we will ensure individuals can access the right training meeting the needs of employers.

2.5.4 We will continue to deliver the Somerset Education Business Partnership and, working with partners, we will develop a sustainable model for ongoing delivery beyond 2021.

2.5.5 We will provide an interim contribution from the BRRP funding to cover the shortfall in costs in 2020/21 for the HotSW Careers Hub.

2.5.6 We have developed the Step Up Somerset website bringing together all CEIAG support available across Somerset. We will use Step Up to hold, and promote, CEIAG to the wider population on opportunities in education, training and employment. We will signpost to other provision where appropriate (including EBP for pre-16) and link to our Employment Support programme. We will continue to develop it into the medium/long term identifying any gaps in provision and seeking to fill these.

### Ask

2.5.7 For Government (DfE) to fully meet the cost of the Careers Hub from 2021/22 to sustain this provision.

2.5.8 Additional funding, to continue this activity post September 2021, is required as set out below.

### Readiness and Deliverability

2.5.9 EBP and Careers Hub is in delivery. Other activity has begun and will develop over time.

### **Next Steps**

- 2.5.10 To define the model for ongoing EBP sustainability.
- 2.5.11 To develop the full CEIAG offer and promote.

### **Timing**

- 2.5.12 Work has begun and will be ongoing.

### **Funds**

- 2.5.13 The operational cost of the EBP is around £110,000 per annum. Ongoing funding is needed to continue the service post 2021.
- 2.5.14 The contribution to the HotSW Career Hub in 2020/21 for Somerset was £25,000. Costs for 2021/22 are not yet known and will be needed.
- 2.5.15 The wider activity has been delivered within the strategic capacity provided under the BRRP funding (one FTE coordinator and one FTE project/comms officer). This capacity is currently funded until September 2021. Ongoing support will be required post September at an approximate annual cost of £80,000.
- 2.5.16 Step Up Somerset has been developed and funded through the BRRP and costs covered for 2 years. Ongoing development of the portal will be provided within the strategic capacity, but hosting costs and additional functionality of the website will cost approximately £500 per annum.

## **2.6 Enhance Post 16 Education**

### **Overview**

- 2.6.1 Working with our training providers, we will ensure that everyone has access to the right education and training which aligns to the current and future needs of business.

### **Offer**

- 2.6.2 We will work with our training providers and the DSTPN, to enhance post-16 education, including re-training for the unemployed and greater flexibility in course offer and start dates. This will help to ensure that residents have the skills needed to contribute to revitalisation and growth in the economy. We need greater flexibility in the use of the Adult Education Budget. We seek support, including through flexibilities, to allow easy access to training for adults who have been made redundant. This skills provision will range from short courses to higher level qualifications, including additional support for digital literacy, outreach and workforce mobilisation across distressed sectors.
- 2.6.3 We will seek to extend skills provision for adults alongside our European Social Fund Skills Support for the Workforce, which will provide training support to those in, or close to, employment.
- 2.6.4 We will work with our training providers to ensure every young person has access to high-quality education or training, funded to meet their needs. Funding needs to be flexible to allow students to start throughout the year.
- 2.6.5 We will deliver higher skills for the Growth Sectors, aligned to the HotSW Local Industrial Strategy. We ask for greater flexibility in the use of funding to allow re-training and up-skilling in Growth Sector areas. This will include digital skills across all sectors. We will seek investment towards the

development of innovation and skills opportunities with a focus on high growth and clean growth innovation and high value employment.

2.6.6 Independent Training Providers (ITP's) via the DSTPN will deliver different specialisms across the post 16 education training offer including re-training for the unemployed, Traineeships, Apprenticeships and provision for 16-19, 19-23 and 23 + year olds. Greater emphasis will be given to activity which encourages and increases work experience and gives greater flexibility on course offer and start dates.

2.6.7 We will deliver training to enhance and accelerate economic strategies.

#### **Ask**

2.6.8 Ensure guarantees for Adult Education Budget are in place for 2020/21. We ask that flexibilities are considered so that 19+ learners are given further support to incentivise participation in training development

2.6.9 Funding to expand the education for 16-19 year olds to successfully deliver against our offer

2.6.10 Support for 16-18 year olds to access education through the provision of free transport, in line with other parts of the Country such as London and Manchester

2.6.11 Repurpose balances of ESF to provide responsive and tailored programmes for adults within the community to re-train and re-skill

2.6.12 Investment to develop programmes such as sector-based work academies and the delivery of these programmes.

2.6.13 Ensuring that training providers are embedded into JCP/DWP delivery

2.6.14 Enhance the Adult Education Budget together in one budget line with the National Retraining Scheme, the National Skills Fund and the Shared Prosperity Fund ensuring balances are sufficient to meet increased demand to counter the impact of reduced income if full-funding flexibilities are implemented

2.6.15 Early release of a proportion of the National Skills Fund to support flexible learning.

2.6.16 Fully fund 24+ adults to undertake subsequent L3 programmes or units in priority sectors

2.6.17 Simplification of the funding rates and rules training providers work to in order to have flexibility to meet demand

2.6.18 Where needed, a front-loaded payment profile for training providers to allow for intensive upfront delivery

2.6.19 Adequate funding with flexibility in the funding rules

#### **Readiness and Deliverability**

2.6.20 Training providers continue to deliver their services

#### **Next Steps**

2.6.21 Independent Training Providers are developing their strategy and approach to respond to Government's future post 16 education and skills strategy and the evolution of the economy and skills needs.

### **Timing**

2.6.22 Ongoing

### **Funds**

2.6.23 The funding requirements are set out within the Asks section above.

2.6.24 This activity has been delivered within the strategic capacity provided under the BRRP funding (one FTE coordinator and one FTE project/comms officer). This capacity is currently funded until September 2021. Ongoing support will be required post September at an approximate annual cost of £80,000.

## **2.7 Training Provider Sustainability and Growth**

### **Overview**

2.7.1 We will work with our training providers to ensure they are able to provide the right training to individuals that meets the needs of business now and in the future.

2.7.2 We will seek funding to support capital improvements within our training provider network including resources to enhance digital connectivity across the network to provide virtual learning and modernise assets. We seek investment for maintenance of training provider facilities. With greater flexibility and funding, we will be able to further develop delivery of blended learning opportunities (immersive online and face-to-face) and local delivery of post-16 education in less accessible places such as West Somerset.

### **Offer**

2.7.3 Delivery of modification and IT set-up to deliver blended learning

### **Ask**

2.7.4 Support for training providers with development funds to assist the development of individual provider's strategy to adapt and become the provider of the future

2.7.5 Funding to replace category C&D accommodation within our colleges

2.7.6 Release 20% of the £1.5bn capital fund for IT equipment, software and building modification for all training providers

### **Readiness and Deliverability**

2.7.7 Work in progress.

### **Next Steps**

2.7.8 We will continue to work with our training providers to understand need and use this to inform strategic investment planning locally and with the HotSW LEP.

### **Timing**

2.7.9 Ongoing

### **Funds**

2.7.10 Funding requirements are set out within the Ask section above.

2.7.11 This activity has been delivered within the strategic capacity provided under the BRRP funding (one FTE coordinator and one FTE project/comms officer). This capacity is currently funded until

September 2021. Ongoing support will be required post September at an approximate annual cost of £80,000.

## 2.8 Address Unemployment, Under-Employment and In-Work Poverty

### Overview

- 2.8.1 Promoting economic inclusion is an important outcome of restarting, revitalising and growing the Somerset economy. We will seek to support individuals who need additional support to access employment and learning.
- 2.8.2 We will work with training providers to ensure that the whole population has access to learning through localised provision particularly in our rural and deprived areas where transport and connectivity issues are a concern. This will include a blended and distance learning approach accessible via local learning hubs.
- 2.8.3 We will provide targeted support for in-work poverty to ensure that people already in work are able to access training for upskilling, enabling them to move into better paid jobs. We will ensure that other responses highlighted in the plan help to achieve this. We will also provide support to businesses to train and upskill their staff through our Skill Up service, enabling individuals to move into better paid roles.
- 2.8.4 Building on the pilot in South Somerset, we will develop a Somerset-wide coaching and support programme to help families to help themselves and support children from deprived backgrounds in improving their educational attainment and accessing employment.

### Offer

- 2.8.5 We are applying for funding to extend the Access to Learning and Employment Grant that we have delivered in the West Somerset Opportunity Area. This is a flexible grant to individuals to help overcome any barriers to learning or work e.g. childcare, training, transport or suitable workwear/clothes. existing Access to Learning and Employment Grant. If successful this will be extended across Somerset.
- 2.8.6 We will encourage local delivery of training by extending the Skill Up Here model, piloted in West Somerset. We will work with training providers to understand need, identify barriers and seek to overcome these to enable delivery.
- 2.8.7 We will continue to support, and encourage, a blended learning approach/distance learning particularly in rural areas.
- 2.8.8 We will provide employment support through our employment programmes and will provide enhanced coaching and support for deprived families.
- 2.8.9 Building on the pilot in South Somerset, we will develop a Somerset-wide coaching and support programme to help families to help themselves and support children from deprived backgrounds in improving their educational attainment and accessing employment and aiming to reduce social isolation, building resilience and securing employment/better outcomes.

### Ask

- 2.8.10 £400,000 per annum for the extension to Access to Learning Grant. We are applying to DWP for this.

- 2.8.11 £1 million capital investment in local/remote facilities to roll out learning hubs.
- 2.8.12 Investment in training provider facilities to enable enhanced blended/distance learning.
- 2.8.13 £1 million per year for a three year county-wide coaching/support programme for deprived families based on the South Somerset model.
- 2.8.14 Additional funding, to continue this activity post September 2021, is required as set out below.

#### **Readiness and Deliverability**

- 2.8.15 Some activity is in progress and being delivered as part of wider programmes,

#### **Next Steps**

- 2.8.16 Continue with the application for funding for the Access to Learning and Employment Grant.
- 2.8.17 Develop a detailed plan of investment needed for delivery of a network of learning hubs.
- 2.8.18 Develop a detailed plan of investment needed in training provider facilities to enable blended/distance learning.
- 2.8.19 Develop a detailed plan, based on the South Somerset model, for a programme of coaching and support for deprived families.

#### **Timing**

- 2.8.20 Some activity has begun but the development of plans will begin early in 2021.

#### **Funds**

- 2.8.21 Funding requirements are set out in the Ask section above.
- 2.8.22 This activity will be delivered within the strategic capacity provided under the BRRP funding (one FTE coordinator and one FTE project/comms officer). This capacity is currently funded until September 2021. Ongoing support will be required post September at an approximate annual cost of £80,000.

## **2.9 Digital Skills and Access**

#### **Overview**

- 2.9.1 Digital skills and access is a cross cutting theme that is considered across all of our programmes to support individuals into employment and through skills and training. However, there are a number of discrete projects that we consider to be essential enablers for the wider programmes such as:

- Access to devices and internet for individuals seeking work
- Access to devices and internet for our learners

#### **Offer**

- 2.9.2 Through our Skills and Employment Support Programmes we will continue to improve digital skills throughout the population to enable people to access digital services, support and apply for jobs.
- 2.9.3 Using BRRP funding we are rolling out a pilot programme to loan devices, with broadband access, to residents who are seeking employment. If demand is proven, we would require funding to extend and widen this service.

2.9.4 We will work with our training providers to ensure learners have appropriate devices and broadband access for learning.

#### **Ask**

2.9.5 Capital funding to extend access to devices at a cost of £9,000 per ten devices. This scheme can be scaled to fully meet demand if funding is available.

2.9.6 £800,000 to provide all learners with access to a personal device and connectivity to access online learning.

#### **Readiness and Deliverability**

2.9.7 The pilot is in delivery, other work is ongoing.

#### **Next Steps**

2.9.8 Review effectiveness of pilot and consider ongoing need/demand.

2.9.9 Work with training providers to understand needs and gaps in access to devices across the student population.

#### **Timing**

2.9.10 Ongoing into 2021.

#### **Funds**

2.9.11 The funding requirements are set out in the Ask section above.

2.9.12 The device loans scheme pilot has been funded through £10k of BRRP funding. Private sector sponsorship for an additional 10 devices is under discussion. Funding is required to further extend the scheme to fully meet demand.

2.9.13 This activity has been delivered within the strategic capacity provided under the BRRP funding (one FTE coordinator and one FTE project/comms officer). This capacity is currently funded until September 2021. Ongoing support will be required post September at an approximate annual cost of £80,000.

## **2.10 Young People Support**

#### **Overview**

2.10.1 Our young people are, and will continue to be, adversely impacted by the effects of Coronavirus. All of our interventions across Employment, Skills and Inclusion will be accessible to young people, where appropriate. However, we will also develop a targeted strategy to support Young People to ensure they can access the right training and skills development for future job opportunities.

#### **Offer**

2.10.2 We will ensure that all of our services, both in delivery and being planned, consider specific support for Young People.

2.10.3 We will develop a strategy that considers the challenges faced by young people in the current climate. We will develop a programme of interventions, aligned where appropriate to wider interventions, to ensure that young people have access to employment and training opportunities. We will coordinate, and act as a gateway, the DWP Kickstart Scheme within Somerset. We will

encourage and support employers to offer placements and ensure every young person engaged has access to appropriate wrap-around support.

- 2.10.4 We will support national interventions ensuring local take up. Specifically, we will coordinate the DWP Kickstart Scheme locally and apply to become a gateway for public sector businesses and their supply chains. We will work with other gateway organisations operating in Somerset to support the effective implementation of the scheme for our Young People. We will offer the support of the Somerset Skill Up service to broker any additional wrap around support the young people need.
- 2.10.5 We will commission Youth Employment UK to develop an online hub for Somerset. We will coordinate across partners and our own services to ensure Young People can access services and support from this hub.
- 2.10.6 We will deliver our £1.3 million ESF NEETs programme to ensure that young people at risk of, or who are, NEETs re-engage in education or can access employment opportunities. We will seek additional funding to ensure that ALL young people can access support they need to continue to engage.

#### **Ask**

- 2.10.7 That all national schemes planned and rolled out are coordinated with local provision to avoid confusion and duplication and ensure alignment.
- 2.10.8 Investment to deliver the interventions identified within the emerging Young People Strategy.
- 2.10.9 £190,000 of urgent pastoral and academic activity to support 16 year olds back into study to enhance the ESF programme
- 2.10.10 Establish a pool of funding to support the students at risk of becoming NEET to include one-to-one tutorial support/mentoring and the establishment of bursaries to remove barriers to education.

#### **Readiness and Deliverability**

- 2.10.11 Some activity is integrated into other provision and in delivery (such as CEaIG and employment support), the ESF NEETs programme is in delivery and other activity is yet to be defined.

#### **Next Steps**

- 2.10.12 Develop the Youth hub online content.
- 2.10.13 Finalise the Young People strategy and define our interventions.

#### **Timing**

- 2.10.14 Strategy to be finalised in December 2020 and implementation ongoing thereafter.

#### **Funds**

- 2.10.15 £6,000 has been committed from the West Somerset Opportunity Area to commission the Youth Employment Hub.
- 2.10.16 Using BRRP funding we have commissioned capacity to develop the initial Young People strategy. Additional funding will be required to implement the recommendations and activity identified within the strategy.
- 2.10.17 This activity has been delivered within the strategic capacity provided under the BRRP funding (one FTE coordinator and one FTE project/comms officer). This capacity is currently funded until

September 2021. Ongoing support will be required post September at an approximate annual cost of £80,000.

2.10.18 Step Up Somerset has been developed and funded through the BRRP and costs covered for 2 years. Ongoing development of the portal will be provided within the strategic capacity, but hosting costs and additional functionality of the website will cost approximately £500 per annum.

2.10.19 Other funding requirements are set out in the ask section above.

### 3 Helping Businesses and Sectors to Grow

3.0.1 The activities included in this theme are divided into two areas: safeguarding and creating jobs in the bedrock sectors; and supporting growth and productivity in the growth sectors. These are summarised in the figure below.

**Figure 3.1: Activities to Help Businesses and Sectors to Grow**

<b>Safeguarding and creating jobs in the bedrock sectors</b>
Visitor Economy Support Programme
Enhance and expand Growth Hub support
Promote social value, procurement and social enterprise
New enterprise centres and work hub space
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chard</li> <li>• Bruton</li> <li>• Wellington</li> <li>• Burnham/Highbridge</li> <li>• Glastonbury (as part of the Glastonbury Town Deal bid)</li> <li>• Co-Working Space (Yeovil &amp; Chard)</li> </ul>
<b>Supporting growth and productivity in the growth sectors</b>
Delivery of innovation infrastructure projects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• iAero</li> <li>• Taunton Digital Innovation Centre</li> </ul>
Deliver new innovation zones
Additional inward investment promotion and support
Somerset Catalyst

#### 3.1 Bedrock: Visitor Economy Support Programme

##### Overview

3.1.1 The Somerset Visitor Economy Support Programme will provide a discrete set of interventions to support the visitor economy to resume trading as COVID-19 restrictions are eased/lifted and to start to move towards recovery. This approach recognises the value and importance of Somerset’s visitor economy, the particular impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the sector and the need for targeted and tailored support.

3.1.2 Activities will include: beneficiary recruitment, signposting, business support and digital skills training, visitor sentiment and needs research

##### Offer

3.1.3 We have committed £250,000 of funds to deliver this activity.

##### Ask

3.1.4 The proposed activities will cost £500,000, so a further £250,000 is needed for these.

##### Readiness and Deliverability

3.1.5 There is a business plan in place. The Visitor Economy Support Programme phase 1 was approved by SGMG in June 2020. Phase 2 of the programme is currently in development with marketing, destination packaging and disruption strategies to connect businesses more closely with the visitor all being worked up.

### **Next Steps**

3.1.6 Phase 1 will be delivered; and Phase 2 will be developed further.

### **Timing**

3.1.7 Immediate delivery, lasting for 12 months.

### **Funds**

3.1.8 £250,000 has been committed from the Business Rate Retention Pilot. A further £250,000 is needed for Phase 2.

## **3.2 Bedrock: Enhance and Expand Growth Hub support**

### **Overview**

3.2.1 The Heart of the South West LEP Growth Hub provides independent diagnosis and referrals to existing business support services in the HotSW area which includes Somerset.

3.2.2 This year the Growth Hub has engaged with a larger number of SMEs due to the Covid pandemic than in normal circumstances. The Growth Hub has worked closely and in partnership with businesses, business support providers, regulators and local authorities to provide and signpost to business support services in the region. Working with partnerships such as Better Business for All, HotSW LEP as well as partners and suppliers, the Growth hub has provided key information to businesses during the past year.

3.2.3 We will enhance and expand the Growth Hub support to businesses, to enable the service to support more businesses throughout Somerset. This will help businesses to survive and grow, safeguarding and creating jobs, and help new-start businesses that are established.

### **Offer**

3.2.4 Somerset local authorities will promote Growth Hub through all available channels and provide local service delivery points. Growth Hub will provide ongoing business support and signposting for businesses in the region including in the Somerset area.

### **Ask**

3.2.5 With the ERDF part-funded Start Up and Grow programme having ended in March, there would seem to be a clear gap for intensive programmes of support for start-ups. The Growth Hub, has noted increased start-up related enquiries as many people have re-evaluated their plans through necessity or choice as we move through the impacts of Covid-19

3.2.6 The following areas have been identified as areas of need where there are gaps in provision over the coming months and beyond

- Access to finance: this is the key gap that the LEP is currently looking at along with the British Business Bank.
- BAME support
- EU Exit Business Support
- Incremental Innovation / Adoption of new technology
- Social enterprise support
- Start-up

### 3.3 Bedrock: Promote Social Value, Procurement and the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector

#### Overview

3.3.1 This whole strand of activity represents a programme level approach which is a **combination of existing projects and projects and an aspiration for the future** and greater levels of transformation in how collectively we deliver against social value objectives in our planning and procurement processes and how we support the re-stabilisation of the Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise sector (VCSE) for them to become self-sustaining where possible.

**Figure 3.2: The role of VCSE in Economic Recovery & Growth – cross cutting themes**

Direct	Indirect
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment</li> <li>• Spend local -&gt; support the high streets</li> <li>• Mental health/well-being support</li> <li>• Pathways to employment</li> <li>• Transport</li> <li>• Skills</li> <li>• Health</li> <li>• Community owned assets – pubs, shops etc</li> <li>• Diversity &amp; inclusion</li> <li>• Inward investment</li> <li>• Tourism/arts/culture</li> <li>• Financial/debt services – CABs, Credit Unions etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enabling services e.g. childcare, young people support, older people services...</li> <li>• Catalysts, alternative models</li> <li>• Contributing to overall quality of life</li> <li>• Community owned assets – community buildings to host activities</li> </ul>

3.3.2 The tables above demonstrates cross-cutting themes that describe how the VCSE sector contributes directly and indirectly to inclusive economic growth and community wealth, which goes beyond simply what the VCSE sector needs to what the sector has to offer

3.3.3 The main themes under this activity are:

- The policies that the Councils are collectively developing in adopting the principle of the Social Value Act 2012, to ensure that as much Local Authority spend through its regeneration and procurement activities benefit local businesses, supply chains and skilling of the local residents, to ensure that monies are spent and distributed in the local area for the benefit of the local economy
- Supporting those organisations that provide support for the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise businesses

3.3.4 This whole strand of activity represents a programme level approach which is a combination of existing projects and projects and an aspiration for the future and greater levels of transformation in how collectively we deliver against social value objectives in our planning and procurement processes and how we support the re-stabilisation of social enterprises for them to become self-sustaining where possible.

3.3.5 The focus should be on:

- Adopting a commissioning approach to the design of services delivered to the public ensuring those involved in procuring services within the Councils understand our Social Value objectives, and the value of VCSE sector in delivering services to the public
- Consider splitting contracts into smaller lots where this is likely to attract bids from micro, small and medium sized enterprises, community groups, voluntary organisations and social enterprises, with longer lead-in times and longer contract lengths
- Refresh Social Value policies and embedding them in Councils
- Adopt a Community Wealth generation approach
- Securing funding for those VCSEs that have been set back due to either lockdowns or the social distancing measures – shift to investing in a vibrant future for the sector
- Building and investing in partnership approach, support innovation, co-production, working together e.g. workforce development, asset transfers etc.
- Critical success factor – cultural change to see VCSE as mission-critical partner
- Need ‘risk capital’ and ‘org development’

#### **Offer**

3.3.6 Somerset’s local authorities will redesign the commissioning of services and use our procurement and planning systems to promote social value. Through this work we will:

- Create new local jobs
- Re-start local businesses, and support the growth of responsible businesses
- Develop local supply chains
- Provide skills, training and apprenticeship opportunities for local residents
- Build community resilience
- Recruit and train community volunteers
- Protect the environment

3.3.7 Activities could include:

- A VCSE Transformation Fund – consisting of grants, loans and patient capital. This would help support adaptation, managed change and innovation.
- Business development:
  - a) training and investment in core skills – leadership, management, HR, finance
  - b) ‘Enhance VCSE’ business planning and transformation service – for experienced business development professionals
- Investment in networks and peer learning including development of collaborative work, including bringing in ideas and influences from outside Somerset
- Community investment – anchor organisations and grassroots “people-led” initiatives
- Unlock potential within Somerset – CSR, volunteering, skill sharing
- Cross sector working practices to co-produce etc
- Investment in infrastructure
- To support existing social enterprises, CiCs and other VCSE organisations with trading or paid for service delivery functions, as well as supporting pre starts and the social entrepreneurship

3.3.8 We will build on existing Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) innovation projects in Frome, Glastonbury and Watchet.

### 3.4 Bedrock: New Enterprise Centres and Work Hub Space

3.4.1 See sections below on enterprise centres for:

- Bruton
- Chard
- Glastonbury
- Wellington

3.4.2 There are also sections on co-working spaces at Chard and Yeovil.

### 3.5 Bedrock: Bruton Enterprise Centre

#### Overview

3.5.1 The Bruton Enterprise Centre (BEC) project will deliver enterprise centre space including office and light industrial accommodation for SMEs. At present, ERDF and Somerset County Council funding has been secured for the office component. An application to the HotSW LEP's Getting Building Fund has been submitted to support the delivery of seven light industrial units.

3.5.2 The aim of the BEC project is to deliver modern, high quality managed office and light industrial space for SMEs in the Bruton area who are looking for grow-on space and to encourage these SMEs to access business support and to collaborate through the Somerset Enterprise Centre Network (SECN).

3.5.3 The BEC will be a new build addition to the SECN, comprising:

3.5.4 Phase One (328 sqm)

- Office space – 10 two-person office units, complete with 2 meeting rooms (which can be used by external businesses) and facilities
- Studio space – flexible workspace, with the potential to be transformed into office space later.

3.5.5 Phase Two (355 sqm)

- Industrial building – seven light industrial units, complete with facilities

3.5.6 The BEC will provide SME tenancies on flexible easy-in easy-out terms, which are particularly advantageous to those looking to move from home-working space to professional facilities to support business growth.

#### Readiness and Deliverability

3.5.7 The Business Case and Funding Applications have been submitted and approved. Planning permission has been achieved for both phases. Willmott Dixon has been appointed to design and build, and the final contract sum agreed along with a complete programme of works. The build is due to start onsite in late November.

Milestone	Start date	Completion date	Complete?
<b>Key Management and Administration Milestones</b>			

Somerset County Council entering into an ERDF Funding agreement with MHCLG		04/11/2019	Yes
<b>Design and Build of Bruton Enterprise Centre</b>			
Full planning permission secured	Application submitted September 2018	May 2020	Yes
Appointment of Design (Stage 4 onwards) and Build contractor using Scape Minor Works Framework (including associated Somerset County Council internal governance procedures)	July 2019	September 2019	Yes
RIBA Stage 4 - Technical design and Market Testing	October 2019	September 2020	Yes
Signing of the main build contract to allow for start onsite	October 2020	October 2020	No
RIBA Stage 5 - Construction, completion and handover	November 2020	June 2021	No
Fit out of Bruton Enterprise Centre	July 2021	End of October 2021	No
Bruton Enterprise Centre opens to tenants	November 2021	-	No

### Funds

- 3.5.8 The cost of delivering Phase 1 and 2 simultaneously is £2,710,723. The project has already secured c.£615,000 of ERDF Capital funding towards the costs of Phase 1. £816,000 of Getting Building Funding has also been secured to support the delivery of Phase 2. SCC has made a further £1,279,732 available to deliver both phases simultaneously.

	Total	Secured?
Somerset County Council	£1,273,000	Yes
European Regional Development Fund	£712,000	Yes
<i>Capital</i>	<i>£615,000</i>	
<i>Revenue</i>	<i>£97,000</i>	
Getting Building Fund	£816,000	Yes

- 3.5.9 Although the original intention was to deliver the two phases separately, it has now been confirmed that they need to be delivered together. Phase 2 could not be delivered once phase 1 is occupied due to the limited size and the gradient of the site, and health and safety legislation.
- 3.5.10 The BEC is asking for a further £30,000 to enable the installation of a remote access IT system that would allow for remote control of the centre's doors from the operator's hub in Highbridge (Torbay Development Agency). The inclusion of this system would reduce the need for staff from TDA to travel and access the site for short periods of time to let people who aren't tenants into the centre. This would have direct reductions on CO2 created through travel to the centre from Highbridge (approx. 30 miles).

- 3.5.11 This would also provide greater flexibility to the centre for external businesses to book and access the meeting rooms, encouraging greater involvement from the local business community.

## **3.6 Bedrock: Burnham & Highbridge Enterprise Centre**

### **Overview**

- 3.6.1 SCC is proposing the development of council owned property into an enterprise hub in the Highbridge and Burnham-on-Sea area. The project will deliver enterprise space including office, practical space and storage for micro businesses and early stage trades. The space will be designed to create an environment in which early stage trades can grow and establish themselves. The facility will form part of the Somerset Enterprise Centre Network, which offers business space across Somerset along with a business support package.

### **Offer**

- 3.6.2 The proposal is to utilise SCC owned property to develop an enterprise hub in the Highbridge and Burnham-on-Sea area. The centre will include office/practical space, grow on space and storage for early trades and micro businesses. It will be accompanied by a business support offer to help business establish themselves and provide routes into self-employment.
- 3.6.3 An intervention in the area is necessary. Burnham-on-Sea is identified as Somerset County's most deprived neighbourhood. A local hub will allow local business retention, create local employment and reduce outside leakages.
- 3.6.4 At this stage SCC estimates that there are costs of circa £280,000 to refurbish the building and a further estimated £50,000 to repurpose the site into a suitable enterprise hub. Estimates are based on similar developments by SCC in which costings have been prepared by SCC Property Services.

### **Ask**

- 3.6.5 Based on the above estimation, SCC are requesting contributions towards the total cost of refurbishment and repurposing of the building.

### **Next Steps, Readiness and Deliverability**

- 3.6.6 It is necessary to secure additional funding before project can proceed. Without additional funding this is not possible.
- 3.6.7 Once funding is secured/in development, SCC can begin to investigate the site fully beyond estimations. This includes a project cost feasibility and demand evidence.

### **Timing**

- 3.6.8 Once funding is secure is will be possible to proceed with project.
- 3.6.9 Estimated start date: Q3 2021
- 3.6.10 Estimated completion date: Q4 2022

### **Funds**

- 3.6.11 Estimated total cost £330,000 to refurbish and repurpose the site into an enterprise hub. SCC requests contribution towards the total project sum.
- 3.6.12 SCC will commit an asset to towards the scheme and contribute towards funding needed.

## 3.7 Bedrock: Chard Enterprise Park

### Overview

- 3.7.1 The Chard Enterprise Park (CEP) project will deliver enterprise space including office, grow on space and light industrial accommodation for SMEs which will be delivered over three phases. Designed to create an environment in which new start businesses and established SMEs can grow, the new build facility will form part of the established Somerset Enterprise Centre Network (SECN).
- 3.7.2 At present, Somerset County Council is engaged in an ERDF funding process for phase 1, of which a decision is expected by the end of 2020. The project is supported by Chard Town Council and South Somerset District Council has been consulted and is supportive of the need for additional business space in the area.

### Offer

- 3.7.3 The SCC owned land at Beeching Close, Chard, has been identified for development into the Chard Enterprise Park and will deliver supported business space including office, grow on space and light industrial units over three phases. The park will provide a business support offer available to tenants and external businesses. The park will create a local work hub in an identified area of deprivation. This will allow businesses to remain in locally and reduce outside commuting or business/employment leakages. The project will be delivered in three phases:
- Phase 1: Office space (this is the phase to be partially funded by the current ERDF funding application). The work required to develop the site for this phase also unlocks phase 2
  - Phase 2: Grow on space
  - Phase 3: Further employment space. The need for space for businesses has been identified and there is enough space to allow for further development as funding becomes available

### Ask

- 3.7.4 Further funding for delivery of all phases, without extra funding these phases will not be deliverable.
- 3.7.5 Confirmation of grant funding for phase 1.

### Readiness and Deliverability

- 3.7.6 Works are underway for the delivery of phase 1, including whole site planning applications, site investigations and ground works. Delivery of other phases is dependent on further funding.

### Next Steps

- 3.7.7 Next steps in development or delivery of the activity:
- Phase 1 ERDF funding secured
  - Planning permission secured for whole site
  - Phase 2 & 3 funding source secured for further delivery
  - Appointment of contractor for design and build of Phase 1

### Timing

- 3.7.8 Phase 1 open by December 2022. Depending on available funding, other phases could meet this timescale.

### Funds

- 3.7.9 Total cost

Phase 1	SCC	ERDF	Total Project Costs
Capital	£1,576,900 (secured)	£1,575,687 (awaiting approval)	£3,152,587
Revenue	£12,500 (Secured)	£13,714 (awaiting approval)	£26,214

	Estimated Total Cost	Funding
Phase 2	£2.4 million	Unsecured
Phase 3	TBC	Unsecured

### 3.8 Bedrock: Glastonbury Enterprise Centre

3.8.1 This enterprise centre is part of the Glastonbury Town Deal proposal, discussed in detail in section 5.3.

#### Overview

3.8.2 SCC has submitted an Expression of Interest to Mendip District Council under the Government's Town Deal for Glastonbury. If successful, SCC will look to submit a full funding bid for the project. This will provide funding for SCC to repurpose its property asset Beckery House Resource centre into an enterprise and skills facility with an identified emphasis on local specialisation of food production.

3.8.3 The project would address the enterprise skills infrastructure, digital connectivity and space regeneration outcomes of The Town Fund and support the SCC economic recovery and growth plan

3.8.4 SCC have looked to work with partners to maximise the impact of the project and reduce any possibility of duplication including libraries services to address digital skills and local college for food manufacturing.

#### Offer

3.8.5 The Glastonbury Enterprise Centre would provide office space, specialist food development facilities and dedicated training space which will include digital skills development. These spaces will be provided to tenants on flexible, easy-in easy-out terms as flexible accommodation has proven popular elsewhere as it allows start-ups to take the next step in their development. Tenants will be given an initial business support assessment before joining the centre and further access to business support services will be available through their tenancy.

#### Readiness and Deliverability

3.8.6 The project is still in its very early days and has not yet secured funding. There are ongoing discussions with Mendip District Council regarding the viability of the bid in relation to other proposed projects under the Town Deal for Glastonbury

#### Next Steps

3.8.7 Further development of the Expression of Interest into a full funding bid is ongoing to meet the deadlines outlined below.

#### Timing

3.8.8 Initial bid to be submitted December 2020. Approval for bids will be January 2021 which will then lead to full and final bids around March 2021.

## **Funds**

- 3.8.9 Estimated cost of project is currently around £1.25 million not including land value.

## **3.9 Bedrock: Wellington Enterprise Centre**

### **Overview**

- 3.9.1 The Wellington Enterprise Centre will be another addition to the Somerset Enterprise Centre Network. Located on Coram's Lane, Wellington, the existing SCC Estate that previously belonged to Somerset Skills and Learning will be refreshed to provide modern workspace for the local economy.
- 3.9.2 Wellington is considered to be an economically deprived area, with the area of 'Wellington North' in the top 20 most deprived areas in England. Therefore, this project would address Enterprise Skills Infrastructure and digital connectivity outcomes to support the SCC economic recovery and growth plan.

### **Offer**

- 3.9.3 While this project is still in early stages of development, preliminary floor plans of the centre are proposing 11 small offices, a reception area, kitchen and other utility rooms. The centre will also include car parking for office tenants.
- 3.9.4 The centre is being approached with two stages in mind; refurbish and repurpose. The building requires initial work to refurbish existing damage, wear and tear that the building has experienced through a lack of use and upkeep.
- 3.9.5 The second stage will be to ensure that the building is fit for purpose and desirable to local business looking to invest in office space. Work will be completed to ensure that the centre has modern upgrades including superfast broadband connection, car parking, efficient heating and insulation and tenant amenities.
- 3.9.6 These offices will be provided to tenants on flexible, easy-in easy-out terms as flexible accommodation has proven popular elsewhere as it allows start-ups to take the next step in their development. Tenants will be given an initial business support assessment before joining the centre and further access to business support services will be available through their tenancy.

### **Ask**

- 3.9.7 From evidence of demand from similar areas in Somerset, as well as consulting with Somerset West and Taunton District Council, we know that there is demand for training and skills space. Therefore, we intend that the Wellington Enterprise Centre will have focus on advanced technologies.
- 3.9.8 If further funding for the Wellington Enterprise Centre can be secured, the centre will be able to invest in advanced technologies for the tenants, as well as the skills training for these SME tenants to be able to adopt technologies into their business as usual. These technologies will complement those found in the Glass Box in Taunton and allow SME tenants to access specialised equipment that will allow them to further product development, productivity and ultimately, growth. This equipment will vary and reflect demand stimulated by the local area, but could include:
- 3D printers for product prototypes

- Virtual reality (VR) equipment
- A range of specialist software licenses

3.9.9 The Wellington Enterprise Centre will also be able to invest in advanced technology training. This will link with the business support offer already provided through the network (and Growth Hub) and help tenants of the centre to upskill/reskill in digital, a major sector in the post Coronavirus world.

3.9.10 A contribution from the government of £80,000 would allow the centre to invest in digital technologies and provide the wrap around training to ensure the facilities were fully adopted by tenants.

#### **Readiness and Deliverability**

3.9.11 Somerset County Council is already starting to undertake initial feasibility work to understand how the Wellington Enterprise Centre can be developed. Following this feasibility work, a formal decision will be taken on whether to proceed with the development of the centre. The hope is that SCC will be able to invest in this centre to benefit the local community of Wellington.

3.9.12 However, a decision for SCC to invest is strengthened if funding from other sources can be secured.

#### **Next Steps**

3.9.13 A project mandate is currently being drafted to instruct SCC Property Services to begin procuring feasibility work for the Wellington Enterprise Centre.

3.9.14 This feasibility work will create lead to a final proposed design. A formal decision will then be taken on whether to progress the Wellington Enterprise Centre.

#### **Timing**

3.9.15 Project Mandate Submitted – Dec 2020

3.9.16 Feasibility study and plans complete – Apr 2021

3.9.17 Decision to invest in centre – May 2021

3.9.18 Contracting, Procurement and Build – June 2021 onwards

#### **Funds**

3.9.19 While exact costs for the project and a feasibility work is yet to be completed, initial investigations into the site have provided the following costs. These costs have been put together by the SCC Estates team following an on-site assessment of the condition of the building.

3.9.20 £286,500 is the total investment needed to fully refurbish the building into a useable state. These costings have been put together by SCC Property Service from a conditions survey undertaken in January 2020.

3.9.21 Further works of £50,500 are also needed to repurpose the centre structurally into an ‘Enterprise Centre,’ changing the internal wall structure to create office rooms for use by SME’s.

3.9.22 Further funding on top of that will be used to upgrade the building, including investment in skills facilities and advanced technologies for tenant use.

### 3.10 Bedrock: Chard Co-Working Space

#### Overview

- 3.10.1 The Chard co-working space will provide an innovative environment in the form of shared workspace in Chard town centre. The hub will deliver space for professional industry start-ups, home-professionals in professional industries, and out-commuters in the professional industries to co-locate. We envisage that users will work across all sectors, however, our primary focus will be for 'professionals' and those working in the creative sectors. The space will result in increased productivity, motivation, teamwork, creativity, and potential business opportunities for everyone from freelancers to small businesses and large corporations.
- 3.10.2 Co-working is short for collaborative working. It is an emerging style of working in an innovative environment, usually a shared workspace, that is more flexible in its approach than traditional office environments. Co-working offers sharing of equipment, resources, ideas, and/or experiences among remote professionals. The co-working model is unique in that workers can choose to remain independent and self-directed, but can often find more opportunities for networking and socialising among like-minded individuals. This typically results in increased productivity, motivation, teamwork, creativity, and potential business opportunities for everyone from freelancers to small businesses and large corporations.' (Coworker.com, 2019)
- 3.10.3 South Somerset District Council owns a historic building within Chard Town Centre which we are seeking to transform into a co-working hub. The hub will provide employment space for those within Chard and the surrounding area. We anticipate that the space will act as a catalyst for entrepreneurship and innovation. During the Coronavirus pandemic we have seen a shift from people wanting larger scale office space to working from home. We believe that the outcome will be the requirement for a space that can be used on flexible terms. Co-working will provide this necessity for the South Somerset ecosystem.

#### Readiness and Deliverability

- 3.10.4 This forms part of the wider regeneration plans for Chard Town Centre.
- 3.10.5 Planning permission for change of use is required.

#### Timing

- 3.10.6 This could be delivered by 2022, depending on funding.

#### Funds

- 3.10.7 Total cost is £1.3 million.

### 3.11 Bedrock: Yeovil Co-Working Space

#### Overview

- 3.11.1 This project involves the purchase of a prominent derelict building that dominates the Bandstand area of the town. Radical intervention is needed to replace poor-quality unwanted retail space with high-quality, sought-after co-working space. Evidence from Smart Growth Analytics suggests that there is a significant demand for co-working and alternative workspace. However, the private sector alone cannot deliver this in Yeovil due to low commercial land values and significant redevelopment costs. The new shared workspace will help Yeovil adapt to changing technology,

creating a foundation for business start-ups and innovators to collaborate in the heart of the town centre whilst driving footfall.

#### **Readiness and Deliverability**

3.11.2 This forms part of the wider regeneration plans for Yeovil Town Centre.

#### **Next Steps**

3.11.3 Planning permission for change of use is required, but this is minor as the premise is currently mixed-use with retail lead.

#### **Timing**

3.11.4 This could be delivered in 2022 depending on the availability of funding.

#### **Funds**

3.11.5 Total cost is £4.8 million. £1.2 million of this is being sought from the Future High Streets Fund, so a further £3.6 million is needed to deliver this.

### **3.12 Growth: Innovation Infrastructure - iAero**

#### **Overview**

3.12.1 The iAero Centre will provide high-quality space, equipment and support to foster innovation, collaboration and growth in the aerospace sector and supply chain. Construction is nearing completion and remaining project activity will focus on Centre fit-out and mobilisation to facilitate its opening and operation.

3.12.2 Beyond the existing project, there is longer-term potential to explore grow-on space as a second-phase development of the iAero Centre. There is also a strong link between the emerging iAero Centre and the 'innovation zones' activity identified in the Somerset Recovery and Growth Plan, including any eventual Freeport proposition for the Heart of the South West LEP area.

3.12.3 The project aims to deliver the fit out and mobilisation activity required to enable the opening and operation of a fit for purpose iAero Centre. Through the above:

- To respond to the innovation and collaboration workspace, equipment and support service needs of the local aerospace sector and supply chain
- To provide a Somerset focal point in the wider aerospace South West cluster and innovation ecosystem, forging and exploiting strategic linkages with other relevant organisations and initiatives to maximise added value and impact
- To facilitate and foster increased innovation and collaboration in the local aerospace sector and supply chain, driving its competitiveness and growth

3.12.4 The activities that comprise this project are:

- Fit out of the iAero Centre
- Commissioning of innovation support services
- Wider iAero Centre mobilisation, such as marketing, Centre staff recruitment and lease/licence arrangements

### Offer

3.12.5 Complete the delivery of the iAero Innovation Centre and Phase 3 of the Somerset Energy Innovation Centre

### Ask

3.12.6 £0.5 million for iAero as part of Local Infrastructure Stimulus Fund/MHCLG call for LEPs.

### Readiness and Deliverability

3.12.7 There is a business plan in place for the delivery of the activity.

### Next Steps

3.12.8 Next steps are summarised in the figure below.

Key Project Milestones	Delivery Date
Completion of iAero Centre construction	December 2020
Signed Getting Building Funding Agreement in place to support Centre fit out	December 2020
Procurement exercises for fit out commence	By / in January 2021
Procurement of ERDF-funded innovation support services	January to April 2021
iAero fit out begins	By February 2021
Mobilisation of ERDF-funded innovation support services	April to June 2021
iAero fit out complete	June 2021
iAero Centre opens	July 2021
ERDF-funded innovation support services commence	July 2021
ERDF-funded Innovation Support Ends	June 2023

### Timing

3.12.9 The activity will be delivered between November 2020 and the end of June 2023.

### Funds

3.12.10 The total iAero fit out and mobilisation project activity cost is £607,723. This comprises:

- Capital costs of £127,548
- Revenue costs of £245,000

3.12.11 Funds have been committed by the Getting Building Fund, SCC revenue funds, and ERDF revenue funds. No further funding is needed.

3.12.12 Somerset County Council entering into a formal funding agreement with the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership for Getting Building Funding for fit out of the iAero Centre.

## 3.13 Growth: Innovation Infrastructure - Taunton Digital Innovation Centre

### Overview

3.13.1 The aim of the Digital Innovation Centre project is to deliver flexible, high-quality innovation and collaboration space and support services targeted at new-start and existing businesses in, or moving into, the digital economy, including, but not limited to, marine geospatial, health technology and risk analysis businesses. It will therefore:

- Capitalise on the recognised ‘digital’ competitive advantage of the local economy, including the UK Hydrographic Office’s presence in Taunton
- Respond to evidenced market failures and unmet target business needs
- Support productivity-led growth and higher-value job creation in and around Taunton
- Act as a Somerset focal point in the wider Heart of the South West innovation ecosystem, forging and exploiting strategic linkages with other relevant organisations and initiatives to maximise added-value and impact.

3.13.2 Key project activities are:

- Design and construction of a 3,000 sqm digital innovation centre on the Firepool site in Taunton
- Commissioning of innovation support services
- Fit out, mobilisation and opening of the Digital Innovation Centre

3.13.3 The project approach allows for potential second-phase development of a further 2,000 sqm building on the DIC site. There are also strong linkages between the DIC Project and the ‘innovation zones’ activity identified in the Somerset Recovery and Growth Plan.

**Offer**

3.13.4 Complete the delivery of the iAero Innovation Centre and Phase 3 of the Somerset Energy Innovation Centre

**Readiness and Deliverability**

3.13.5 A business plan has been completed for this activity.

**Next Steps**

3.13.6 A planning application has been submitted, with a target decision date of late December 2020.

3.13.7 Next steps include:

- Discharging of pre-funding agreement conditions of funding and SCC entering into a Getting Building Funding Agreement with the LEP
- Securing ERDF monies for the Digital Innovation Centre scheme
- Planning approval
- SCC agreeing Heads of Terms and entering into a lease with Somerset West and Taunton Council for the Digital Innovation Centre plot on the Firepool site
- SCC awarding a construction contract (including early enabling works) to Willmott Dixon under the Scape Major Work Framework.

3.13.8 Key project milestones are set out in the figure below.

<b>Key Project Milestones</b>	<b>Delivery Date</b>
Planning approval	By 24/12/2020
Funding agreement in place with HotSW LEP	By 31/12/2020
Enabling works commence	By 04/01/2021
Enabling works completed	By 09/04/2021
Main construction works start onsite	By 12/04/2021
Commencements of innovation support services procurement preparation and process	By 01/05/2021

Marketing and tenant pipeline development commences	By 01/05/2021
Innovation support services provider contracted, and mobilisation commences	By 01/11/2021
Construction completed	By 24/12/2021
Fit-out of DIC completed	By 24/02/2022
DIC open to tenants and commencement of innovation support services	By 01/04/2022

### Funds

- 3.13.9 The total project costs (including the LEP's Getting Building Fund management fee) is £9,630,000
- 3.13.10 Cash funding has been formally secured from Somerset County Council, Somerset West and Taunton Council and the Somerset Business Rates Retention pilot. An in-kind land contribution has also been secured from Somerset West and Taunton Council.
- 3.13.11 Funding from the Getting Building Fund has been conditionally approved and a full ERDF application has been submitted.

## 3.14 Growth: New Innovation Zones

- 3.14.1 The development of innovation zones is a strategic ambition for Somerset.

### Overview

- 3.14.2 We will deliver new innovation zones in Somerset, containing innovation centres along with specialist business support to enable innovation and R&D. The Clean Growth innovation zone around Bridgwater, Hinkley Point C and the Gravity enterprise zone is already established, and there are further opportunities to capture local growth. An Aerospace innovation zone around Yeovil is our next priority. The Firepool Digital innovation zone will include the Taunton Digital Innovation Centre. An Agri-Tech innovation zone is also being developed, and we are working with the HotSW LEP on early ideas for a coastal innovation zone. We will prepare Local Development Orders for these zones to simplify the planning process and speed-up their delivery. These zones will help to support new businesses, employment and higher productivity.
- 3.14.3 Somerset is committed to longer term ambitions focused on making the most of existing sector specialisms through the development of four strategically important innovation zones:
- Aerospace Innovation Zone – centred around Yeovil
  - Agri-tech Innovation Zone – further development of the virtual cluster in the Mendip area
  - Clean Energy Innovation Zone – centred around Bridgwater and the Gravity Enterprise Zone
  - Digital Innovation Zone – linked to the Firepool development and Taunton Digital Innovation Centre
- 3.14.4 Work is required to develop these ambitions more fully, but the aim is to develop innovation zones centred around these specialisms. Work will concentrate on provision of the right conditions and levels of support to enable innovation, research and development through to market ready products.
- 3.14.5 The intention is to develop full business cases for each of the innovation zones. Working groups have been convened for each of the potential zones and will focus on developing propositions for each of the potential innovation zones. Assessment will be undertaken of existing strengths and opportunities including existing assets and infrastructure as well as identification of any gaps or

barriers to development. Local Development Orders and additional funding for business support activity will be required to deliver this commitment and will form an essential part of the process.

### **3.15 Growth: Nuclear Fusion STEP Project**

#### **Overview**

- 3.15.1 The United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority (UKAEA) is pursuing an ambitious goal of being the first in the world to develop and deploy a Fusion power station – through its Spherical Tokamak for Energy Production (STEP) project.
- 3.15.2 The UKAEA is currently searching for a location to build STEP, and provide a fusion energy ecosystem, which will include a Research Centre, Test Reactor (about the size of a Small Modular Reactor), Technology Park and associated training and skills centres.
- 3.15.3 This is an opportunity to grow and anchor the capability to deliver one of the most important and complex engineering challenges in the world. It is also an opportunity for Somerset to contribute its existing strengths to maximise the success of the project.
- 3.15.4 The South West has the highest number of nuclear licensed sites in the UK, with Hinkley Point, home to reactors A, B and C (under construction) being one of the most attractive in terms of potentially locating the STEP programme. The site has good accessibility, water cooling, grid connections, and due to its poor socio economic and social mobility indicators would score highly within the Government's levelling up agenda. It also has a significant eco-system of nuclear assets and infrastructure that could in part be re-purposed or utilised for aspects of STEP. Including the Gravity EZ, National College for Nuclear, purpose-built training facilities on various Bridgwater & Taunton College campuses, a nuclear competent supply chain, established site services contractors and a variety of associated developments including freight management, logistics, and campus accommodation. As importantly, it has a community that is broadly accepting of nuclear activity, though it has to be noted that fusion technology is very different from fission, and will not be subject to the significantly high levels of regulation that fission reactors are.

#### **Offer**

- 3.15.5 Somerset is offering a coordinated approach to championing this project in recognition that landing the STEP project which will provide a sustainable legacy to the HPC new nuclear build. Leading to increased productivity, highly skilled occupations, a fusion technology cluster of businesses, and world class research and development.

#### **Ask**

- 3.15.6 Government to recognise the economic transformational potential of this project to the UK levelling up agenda, by supporting Somerset as the location for STEP, while also potentially reducing the costs of siting and developing the STEP project (less demand on the taxpayer) due to the re-use of assets, and infrastructure put in place for the construction of HPC.

#### **Readiness and Deliverability**

- 3.15.7 There is a SW STEP Team in place supported by Nuclear South West, comprising of technical experts and others. There is a Somerset STEP Team in place comprising of the three local authorities (SDC, SWT, SCC) supported by the LEP. Key Members of the local authorities have been briefed and are positive. Collaborative work is underway to meet the March 2021 deadline for submission of the EOI to UKAEA.

### **Next Steps**

- 3.15.8 Various stakeholders have to be on-board (EDF Energy, NDA, Landowners etc.). Work in establishing this is underway. The EOI has to be completed by 31 March 2021, with 100 hectares of land across the three stations and in other geographically close areas identified (e.g. Gravity, Skills & Training facilities etc.).

### **Timing**

- 3.15.9 The UKAEA have stated that the siting process will take up to 18 months, where proposals will be assessed, down selected and eventually recommendations made to Government (BEIS), where the Minister will make the final decision. Once a site is selected than the project will embark on the normal trajectory that any other Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project would.

## **3.16 Growth: Inward Investment Promotion and Support**

### **Overview**

- 3.16.1 We will continue to develop Somerset's innovation ecosystem through the delivery of the Somerset Catalyst Programme and the Regional Entrepreneurship Acceleration Programme in partnership with MIT and BEIS. Both programmes seek to accelerate the delivery of entrepreneurship and encourage the use of technology to increase productivity. Direct outcomes include new business start-ups who have the expertise and knowledge to grow their business in the local area and contribute positively to the Somerset Economy.

### **Offer**

- 3.16.2 Inward investment activity funded under the BRR pilot will be deployed to develop Somerset's key investment propositions linked to Clean Growth; Aero; Digital; and Agri-Tech.

### **Ask**

- 3.16.3 Build better working relationship with DIT.

## **3.17 Growth: Somerset Catalyst Programme**

### **Overview**

- 3.17.1 The Somerset Catalyst Programme is creating an entrepreneurial ecosystem across Somerset which supports the growth of entrepreneurs, SME's and innovation in Somerset. The extension of this programme is critical to maintain momentum in entrepreneurial activity.
- 3.17.2 The aims and objectives of the Somerset Catalyst Programme are to create a system of support for innovation which supports the establishment, growth and development of high quality businesses with significant growth potential by providing them with access to support, capabilities, networks and resources required. The programme aims to establish a regional focus for technology businesses and high-quality growth businesses within advanced manufacturing and engineering including energy, aerospace and agritech that are significantly contributing to the growth of the economy e.g. in terms of GVA. It seeks to accelerate and support the development of high growth potential innovative micro, small and medium enterprises. It will support the growth and innovation within advanced manufacturing and engineering including energy, aerospace and agritech by supporting clustering effects and fostering open innovation between SME's industry primes and other keys businesses.

3.17.3 The programme will comprise of a business incubator, entrepreneurial bootcamps, Peer Group Club, incubator alumni group and networking events.

**Offer**

3.17.4 Support for high growth businesses is already being delivered.

**Ask**

3.17.5 Additional funding will allow for the extension of the activity beyond March 2021.

**Readiness and Deliverability**

3.17.6 Activity is already being delivered.

**Funds**

3.17.7 Project cost is £200,000 from April 2020 to March 2021.

3.17.8 Additional funding will allow for the extension of the activity.

## 4 Providing the Infrastructure to Enable Growth

4.0.1 The activities included in this theme are divided into four areas: reducing carbon emissions; improving digital and physical connectivity; reducing flood risk; and delivering strategic employment sites. These are summarised in the figure below.

**Figure 4.1: Activities to Provide Infrastructure to Enable Growth**

<b>Reducing carbon emissions through travel and energy efficiency</b>
Deliver cycling and walking infrastructure
Retrofit energy efficiency technologies
Digital demand rural transport and electric car and bus infrastructure
Decarbonisation of the travel network and fleet
<b>Improving digital and physical connectivity</b>
Deliver broadband and mobile connectivity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5G research</li> <li>• Community challenge programme</li> <li>• CDS Phase 2</li> <li>• CDS Phase 2 Lot 4</li> <li>• Rural Gigabit Connectivity Voucher Scheme</li> <li>• Mobile booster project</li> </ul>
Deliver strategic and important local road projects
Improving rail connectivity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wellington</li> <li>• Gravity</li> <li>• Bridgwater</li> <li>• Shepton Mallet</li> </ul>
<b>Reducing flood risk to enable growth</b>
Delivery of Bridgwater Barrier
Taunton Flood Attenuation
Blue Anchor Scheme
<b>Delivering strategic employment sites</b>
Gravity Enterprise Zone
Bunford Innovation Park

### 4.1 Carbon Emissions: Cycling and Walking Infrastructure

#### Overview

4.1.1 We will establish a transformational programme to deliver improved cycling and walking infrastructure across the area that supports a range of environmental, health, social and safety benefits.

4.1.2 We will deliver cycling and walking infrastructure within and between towns including Bridgwater, Radstock-Frome, Taunton, Walton-Street-Glastonbury, and Yeovil; and the Eastover pedestrian prioritisation scheme in Bridgwater. This needs to be undertaken soon to build on lower carbon mobility trends that have emerged during lockdown, as well as to improve connectivity, enable non-motorised travel and so reduce carbon emissions.

#### Offer

4.1.3 Plans in place for delivery of new infrastructure. A coherent strategy is being developed.

### **Ask**

4.1.4 Financial support from Government, but no figure is yet available.

### **Readiness and Deliverability**

4.1.5 The County Council and four District Councils will work together on delivering this, along with other stakeholders. An Active Travel Group has recently been established to deliver the Emergency Active Travel Fund.

4.1.6 The activity is still being developed, with a business plan being developed.

### **Next Steps**

4.1.7 Development of an overall strategy and business plan.

4.1.8 Planning permission will be required for project delivery.

### **Timing**

4.1.9 To be developed.

### **Funds**

4.1.10 Total cost has not yet been calculated. Match funds have not yet been secured.

4.1.11 A scheme to link two park and ride facilities to Taunton town centre will cost £12.5 million. Other schemes may well be cheaper.

## **4.2 Carbon Emissions: Retrofit Energy Efficiency Technologies**

### **Overview**

4.2.1 We will retrofit energy efficiency technologies to buildings to reduce running costs and carbon emissions, with a particular focus on social housing – but the lessons learned will benefit private landlords and owner/occupiers also. The focus of an initial pilot project will be on Somerset West & Taunton (SWT) Council-owned social housing, and the Retrofit Programme will focus on void (empty home) properties over a 12 month period (from funding approval). This will make a step change in the low carbon qualities of SWTs existing homes.

4.2.2 This project will be a pilot to test different levels of investment to achieve the low carbon outcomes we desire, and to find the best one for Somerset. The programme will also identify the optimum cost to achieve the low carbon benefits. The programme has the aim of:

- Reducing carbon emissions from the building stock
- Reducing the cost per unit of retrofit, through the application of new approaches and technologies, before rolling this out more broadly
- Creating new businesses and jobs
- Reducing fuel poverty
- Improving health outcomes for tenants

4.2.3 The pilot project seeks to deliver over 350 carbon saving measures to over 65 homes, and complement the measures with a tenancy advisory service to help tenants make the most of their low carbon home. The programme will also link to current SWT investments in low carbon and use of innovation opportunities provided through the local supply chain

#### **Offer**

4.2.4 Utilisation of the social housing stock to pilot and find the best approach

#### **Ask**

4.2.5 The ask is for £1 million to undertake a competition to find the best approach, with the aim of then rolling out the solution across Somerset and the Heart of the South West.

#### **Readiness and Deliverability**

4.2.6 This is an ambition, and the activity is not yet ready to deliver.

#### **Next Steps**

4.2.7 Actions required to progress the delivery of the activity are:

- Stakeholder engagement activity, and establishment of ownership of the project by the Tenants Strategic Group and Executive Portfolio Holder for Housing
- Research new energy-saving technology (e.g. Biohm insulation)
- Test products and materials and supply availability (existing materials)
- Produce the low-carbon lettable standard checklists
- Train raise awareness of the project with staff, and train void maintenance operatives, lettings officers and Housing managers to ensure low-carbon measures can be identified and delivered, and tenants supported to use their home effectively
- Work with consultants to establish data monitoring process to understand cost savings to customers
- Project commencement (upon funding approval)

#### **Timing**

4.2.8 Delivery will take place over 12 months. If the pilot project can start in March 2021 then it will be completed by April 2022.

#### **Funds**

4.2.9 The total cost of the pilot project is £1 million.

### **4.3 Carbon Emissions: Digital Demand Rural Transport**

#### **Overview**

4.3.1 We will deliver a digital Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) solution for the residents of Somerset. This is part of a wider project to trial innovative enhancements within the DRT provision. A bid for funding has been submitted to the Department for Transport (DfT) to trial innovative solutions within DRT. The bid proposes to trial a number of initiatives including evening/Saturday services, feeder services and employment services, as well as piloting a digital solution for DRT.

4.3.2 The broader project in which digital DRT has a part, aims to tackle issues associated with:

- Social Mobility
- Employment Access
- Social Isolation
- Healthcare Access
- The Climate Emergency Agenda

4.3.3 The project will be led by Somerset County Council, working with the District Councils, Community Transport Groups, HotSW LEP, local bus operators, academic partners and technology suppliers.

#### **Offer**

4.3.4 We have developed a proposal for a DDRT trail across Somerset. This builds on 15 years of experience of delivering demand responsive transport. Daytime DRT coverage is already funded by the local authority.

#### **Ask**

4.3.5 £1.5 million of funds from DfT. Revenue from running the service will help to fund it.

#### **Readiness and Deliverability**

4.3.6 An expression of interest has been submitted to DfT. If successful, this will progress to a full business case.

#### **Next Steps**

4.3.7 If the EoI is successful, we will prepare a full business case, which is likely to take up to six months.

#### **Timing**

4.3.8 The overall timescale for the assessment of EoIs has slipped during 2020. We are hoping to hear about the success of the EoI in November 2020. Delivery will start around 12 months after the award of funding.

#### **Funds**

4.3.9 We have submitted an Expression of Interest to the DfT's Rural Mobility Fund for a Digital Demand Responsive Transport (DRRT) trail, and the award of £1.5 million will help to progress this.

## **4.4 Carbon Emissions: Decarbonisation of the Travel Network and Fleet**

### **Overview**

4.4.1 The activity includes setting out an overarching strategy for decarbonisation of the transport network and fleet.

4.4.2 The activity is now set out in some detail within the transport theme of the Somerset Climate Emergency Strategy which can be accessed from <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/climate-emergency/somersets-climate-emergency-strategy-documents/>.

4.4.3 The transport sector summary can be found from page \*\* of the climate emergency strategy, covering the activity required to promote use of alternative fuels and electrification, reduction in need for and demand for travel, increasing shared transport and public transport usage, increasing use of active travel modes and adapting transport networks to improve resilience to climate change.

4.4.4 A detailed Electric Vehicle (EV) strategy has also been prepared.

4.4.5 High-level actions are:

- Carbon emissions generated on Somerset's road are reduced by 2030 through the use of electric cars, ultra-low emissions commercial vehicles and a reduction in road use
- Carbon emissions are reduced by encouraging behaviour change: reducing the number of single occupancy vehicle journeys undertaken by the promotion of car sharing, public transport

use, combining trips and replacing vehicular journeys with active travel modes (walking or cycling)

- Climate change adaptation plans have been developed and implemented to build and maintain the resilience of Somerset's transport infrastructure

#### **Readiness and Deliverability**

- 4.4.6 There is no single overarching business plan in place for the delivery of the full range of activity for transport decarbonisation. A high-level action plan is being developed, but it encompasses an enormous range of activity and individual business plans will need to be developed for specific initiatives over time.
- 4.4.7 Some of the activities set out in the transport sector strategy for decarbonisation may require planning permission where they involve infrastructure that is not within highway boundaries (i.e. new cycle routes away from the existing highway, and installation of EV infrastructure may require permission in certain circumstances).
- 4.4.8 The planning process itself is key to achieving decarbonisation so planning consents for new development will need to actively consider this issue.

#### **Next Steps**

- 4.4.9 A high-level action plan is being developed which will consider delivery dates for key initiatives, but as most of the initiatives are currently unfunded the delivery dates will be hard to predict. The climate emergency strategy sets out a goal to work towards making Somerset carbon neutral by 2030 so the highest priority initiatives to achieve this goal will need to be implemented at the earliest opportunity prior to 2030.

#### **Funds**

- 4.4.10 Total cost is not yet defined.

## **4.5 Connectivity: Broadband and Mobile**

- 4.5.1 We will deliver broadband and mobile connectivity across the whole county. We will build on work already undertaken to roll-out of broadband across the county through *Connecting Devon & Somerset* (CDS), and complete Somerset-wide coverage. This will enable people to engage in online activity, learn and work from home, which is likely to become more prevalent after the Coronavirus crisis. It will also support the setting up of new businesses and growth of existing businesses that draw on Somerset's strengths and key sectors. We are proposing to deliver training and skills to ensure that people make the best use of this digital infrastructure.
- 4.5.2 Key activities set out below are:
- 5G research
  - Community challenge programme
  - CDS Phase 2
  - CDS Phase 2 Lot 4
  - Rural Gigabit Connectivity Voucher Scheme
  - Mobile booster project

## 4.6 Connectivity: Broadband and Mobile - 5G research

### Overview

- 4.6.1 CDS has commissioned some independent research into the economic impacts of 5G specific to our region. It is proposed that this research, along with other resources, will be used to help DCC and SCC formulate their future 5G strategy and help them agree an approach

### Readiness and Deliverability

- 4.6.2 This activity is not at a delivery stage. The first draft of the research report is due in November 2020.

### Next Steps

- 4.6.3 Following input into the first draft report in November, a final report is expected in December. This will then be provided to the CDS board before then deciding next steps.

### Timing

- 4.6.4 SCC will need to decide an approach to 5G over the course of 2021.

### Funds

- 4.6.5 Future costs are unknown at this stage. Costs to-date for the research and report are circa £16,000.
- 4.6.6 Government is looking to Local Authorities to promote the take up of 5G and to encourage 5G infrastructure. Additional support may be required to handle public concerns about 5G.

## 4.7 Connectivity: Broadband and Mobile - Community Challenge Programme

### Overview

- 4.7.1 CDS has piloted a Community Challenge Programme in a number of communities across the area. The Community Challenge Programme enables local communities to select an approved private sector partner and co-produce a broadband solution that works best for them with some financial support and advice from CDS.
- 4.7.2 Pilots were initially successfully trialled in Harford and Lower Combe in Devon with Openreach and Airband, as well as in Yatton in North Somerset with Openreach. Further schemes are currently underway across the region, including Churndon in North Devon, Northleigh in East Devon, Skillgate in Somerset West & Taunton and Charlton Musgrove in South Somerset, partnering with BDUK's Rural Gigabit Voucher Scheme to gap-fund schemes. In total 458 homes and businesses will have access to full fibre to the premise broadband with the capability to deliver speeds up to 1 Gbps. The pilots have been supported by £146,700 capital funding from CDS. The pilots have proved effective at enabling local people in communities with different needs to co-produce a broadband solution that works best for them, with CDS support. Each community has had different characteristics and challenges, ranging from deeply rural areas and protected landscapes to urban fringes. CDS is continuing to apply this good practice learned from these pilots to help other communities to develop their own solutions. This is under development and adds a new dimension to complement the CDS broader programme. It also supports the UK Government's Gigabit capable/full fibre policy.

#### **Offer**

- 4.7.3 This scheme offers communities a solution by combining a number of funding sources along with contributions from the community as well.
- 4.7.4 CDS continue to work to identify communities who could benefit from the scheme.

#### **Readiness and Deliverability**

- 4.7.5 This is an activity that is already in progress.

#### **Next Steps**

- 4.7.6 CDS to continue to work to identify communities who could benefit from the scheme.

#### **Timing**

- 4.7.7 Ongoing

#### **Funds**

- 4.7.8 This project utilises a mixture of Government Rural Gigabit Connectivity vouchers, community contributions and top up funding from CDS' challenge fund.

### **4.8 Connectivity: Broadband and Mobile - CDS Phase 2**

- 4.8.1 Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS) is a local government-led partnership which is working to extend superfast broadband infrastructure in areas where commercial providers do not plan to deliver a Next Generation Access (NGA) broadband service. NGA broadband is a service capable of delivering download speeds of at least 30Mbps
- 4.8.2 The CDS board approved the procurement strategy and Building Digital UK (BDUK), the national competency centre for broadband, formally assured and approved the procurement documentation to extend NGA to secure broadband infrastructure providers on a gap funded model.

#### **Offer**

- 4.8.3 CDS is now part way through the Extending Next Generation Access (NGA) Broadband & Gigabit Access OJEU procurement, seeking to award contracts to six Lot areas across our region.

#### **Ask**

- 4.8.4 For bidders to model as many of the 97,000 NGA white premises as possible with the subsidy available. Certain rural and business premises outputs are required in order for us to meet funding requirements specifically with the LEP, ERDF and DEFRA.

#### **Readiness and Deliverability**

- 4.8.5 The procurement is part way through and contract award for all Lots is required by the end of December 2020.

#### **Next Steps**

- 4.8.6 CDS have presented their reports to Board and seek Cabinet approval to move to preferred supplier stage.

#### **Timing**

- 4.8.7 Procurement needs to complete by 31 December 2020. Build is then expected to commence early in 2021 with completion approximately three years later.

## Funds

4.8.8 This project utilises a mixture of funding streams

Grant funding source	Amount	Status	Requirements
BDUK	£18,785,125	Confirmed	Spend by Dec 2024
Heart of the South West LEP	£7,010,520	Confirmed	Spend by Dec 2021
ERDF	£2,981,680	Confirmed	Spend by June 2023
RDPE	£3,165,000	Confirmed	Spend by June 2022
Local authorities	£5,601,475	Confirmed	Spend by Dec 2024
Total	£37,543,800		

4.8.9 Ask of Government: Fibre for all & Gigabit capable

## 4.9 Connectivity: Broadband and Mobile - CDS Phase 2 Lot 4

### Overview

4.9.1 The Lot 4 contract was awarded to Airband in 2016 and is currently in build. Airband recently submitted a change request to move over to a full fibre solution, a step change from the Fixed Wireless solution to that point. The change request was approved by BDUK and CDS in May this year.

### Offer

4.9.2 This contract is providing improved broadband solutions for circa 18,000 premises in some of the most rural parts of Devon and Somerset. Completion is expected towards the end of 2021.

### Ask

4.9.3 Broadband infrastructure in Lot 4 area.

### Readiness and Deliverability

4.9.4 The contract is in delivery with completion expected later in 2021.

### Next Steps

4.9.5 CDS continue to monitor build progress.

### Timing

4.9.6 Completion due towards the end of 2021.

### Funds

4.9.7 This project utilises a mixture of funding streams

Grant funding source	Amount
BDUK	£5,254,876
Heart of the South West LEP	£2,168,600
ERDF	£1,321,000
RDPE	£1,835,000
Local authorities	£338,525
Total	£10,918,001

4.9.8 Ask of Government: Fibre for all & Gigabit capable

## 4.10 Connectivity: Broadband and Mobile - Rural Gigabit Connectivity

### Overview

- 4.10.1 The Rural Gigabit Connectivity (RGC) programme commenced in May 2019 and will run until the end of March 2021 with an initial £200 million fund. The FTIR identified that approximately 10% of UK premises, largely in rural and remote locations, would be unlikely to receive full fibre connections by 2033.
- 4.10.2 The RGC programme seeks to ensure that the final 10% of premises are addressed at the same pace as the rest of the UK. The programme is testing a hub model, with the hub being a public sector building upgraded with gigabit capable connectivity. Delivering this connectivity may result in the surrounding area becoming increasingly viable for commercial intervention, stimulating the market to build more networks in these areas. A £3 million pilot of this approach was first unveiled in February 2019 via the LFFN budget which is now expected to connect 119 schools. Schools in the CDS region were connected as part of this pilot.
- 4.10.3 The RGC Programme will be delivered using a phased approach. The Programme is initially working with Department for Education and the Department of Health and Social Care as two major public sector estates in rural areas. Progress of the initial phases, which has identified potential hub sites in priority areas, will be monitored and, utilising lessons learnt, may extend opportunities to more areas in the future.

### Offer

- 4.10.4 As part of the UK Government's Rural Gigabit Connectivity programme, business and residents in some of the hardest-to-reach places in the UK are eligible for additional funding towards the cost of installing gigabit-capable broadband to their premises when part of a group project. Group projects are when two or more residents and/or SMEs get together to combine their vouchers towards the shared cost of installation. Single connections are not eligible for additional funding. Group projects in rural areas (broadly defined for England & Wales as DEFRA D, E and F) with broadband speeds of less than 30Mbps can use Rural Gigabit Vouchers worth up to £3,500 for each small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs), and up to £1,500 per residential premise to support the cost of installing new gigabit-capable connections.

### Ask

- 4.10.5 CDS seeks to promote the take up of these vouchers. It is also possible for stakeholders to help identify communities/premises they believe may be eligible.

### Readiness and Deliverability

- 4.10.6 This is an activity already in progress. Suppliers in our area are actively building based on a demand led model funded in part by these vouchers.

### Next Steps

- 4.10.7 CDS to continue to help promote the Government scheme and work with the districts to help them identify opportunities.

### Timing

- 4.10.8 Currently the voucher scheme is due to expire in March 2021 but it is possible than an extension to the scheme will be announced.

## Funds

4.10.9 Currently all funds for this scheme come via DCMS.

4.10.10 Ask of Government: Fibre for all

## 4.11 Connectivity: Broadband and Mobile - Mobile Booster Project

### Overview

4.11.1 The project aims to address small businesses and some residential premises in partial or total indoor mobile “not spots” and improve their indoor 4G coverage by acquiring and installing a signal booster through a universal voucher scheme across the Heart of the South West.

### Offer

4.11.2 The project will allow potential beneficiaries to apply for a voucher via an online portal and self-certificate eligibility. Once a voucher is awarded, the beneficiary will contact their preferred supplier from an authorise list who will use the voucher to install an indoor 4G booster.

4.11.3 The project will look to target 1,250 beneficiaries over the lifetime of the project, which will complete in March 2022. The project will focus on small businesses with the estimation that 65% of take up will be from SME's with the remaining 35% of vouchers will be taken up but residential and home workers.

4.11.4 The value of each voucher will be £800. This will cover the cost of the signal booster and installation and, along with match funding, would incentivise the supplier. The match funding from small businesses and residents benefiting from the voucher scheme will be an average of £200.

### Ask

4.11.5 The project is funded by the Heart of the SW LEP Growth Deal Digital Extension grant funding. If the project looks to exceed its outputs, addition funding would be sought.

### Readiness and Deliverability

4.11.6 Grant funding agreement has been signed between SCC as CDS accountable body and LEP. Full project launch will happen in October 2020.

### Next Steps

4.11.7 Internal systems are in place to operate the scheme including on-line voucher application and supplier database. Once formal launch as occurred, continued publicity to push the scheme will continue with the support of district Economic development teams, Federation of Small Business and other local business partners

### Timing

4.11.8 The project will run from October 2020 and cease delivery end of December 2021. Full project closure will occur end March 2022

### Funds

4.11.9 Total cost of project is:

	Growth Deal	Public Match	Private Match	Total
Capital	£1 million		£250,000	£1.25 million
Revenue		£96,000		£96,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£1 million</b>	<b>£96,000</b>	<b>£250,000</b>	<b>£1.346 million</b>

4.11.10 Match funding is £346,000 which is 20% of total project cost

## 4.12 Strategic and Locally Significant Road Infrastructure

### Overview

- 4.12.1 The activity includes seeking further investment in key strategic roads to improve economic connectivity between Somerset and the rest of the UK; and improve selected local road connections necessary to unlock the growth and development of our main settlements.
- 4.12.2 We will work with Highways England and the local highways authority to deliver strategic road infrastructure improvements, including upgrades to the A303, A358, A38, A39, M5 junctions 22 and 23, and the associated Edithmead and Dunball junctions. This will improve accessibility within Somerset and to strategic economic locations outside the county, including airports and the major cities of Bristol and Exeter, thus making Somerset a more attractive place for investment and in which to do business. We have already developed schemes, but need at least £1 million to complete this, and funding of more than £100 million will be needed for the works.
- 4.12.3 We also need support to deliver important local road projects including the Cannons/Cross Rifles junction in Bridgwater and Toneway in Taunton. Funding has been allocated for several schemes, but greater flexibility over the timing of delivery is needed, whilst we need additional funding to deliver others.

### Offer

- 4.12.4 We have plans in place for major road improvements. There are several separate planning processes underway to secure funds for various projects.

### Ask

- 4.12.5 £1 million to complete technical work, and £100 million to deliver these schemes

### Readiness and Deliverability

- 4.12.6 Somerset County Council is the highways authority, and will work closely with Highways England. Other stakeholders include the Department for Transport, Peninsula Transport, the sub-national transport body, the HotSW LEP and its Local Transport Board.
- 4.12.7 A business case has been or is being prepared for each project.

### Next Steps

- 4.12.8 Development consent is being sought for the A303 and A358 projects. Planning consent will be needed for the A39 improvements. Planning consent may be needed for improvements to the A38 corridor to Bristol Airport.
- 4.12.9 Business cases are being prepared. HM Treasury Green Book business cases have been completed for many of the schemes.
- 4.12.10 Funding is being sought for each of the schemes.

### Timing

- 4.12.11 Delivery dates are not yet fixed. However:

- A303 proposed start date is 2021
- A358 proposed start date is 2023 or 2024
- A39 proposed start date is 2023
- A38 corridor proposed start date is 2022

### **Funds**

4.12.12 Capital cost estimates include:

- A303 Sparkford to Ilchester – up to £250 million
- A358 Southfields to M5 – up to £500 million
- A39 Walton-Ashcott bypass - £90 million
- A38 corridor - £6 million
- M5 J23 - £6 million
- Dunball junction - £5 million
- Canon Cross Rifles junction - £7 million
- Toneway corridor phase 2 - £11 million

4.12.13 Revenue funding is needed for scheme development. Around £1 million is needed for the non-Highways England schemes.

4.12.14 Most schemes do not have match funding in place, but some Section 106 funds and other developer contributions have been secured for the Dunball junction and Canon Cross Rifles junction.

## **4.13 Rail Connectivity**

### **Overview**

4.13.1 We are working towards improving rail connectivity in parts of Somerset to increase connectivity and inclusion, and reduce road traffic, congestion and carbon emissions. We are working closely with different partners across the rail industry with the aim to facilitate improved connectivity:

- Within Somerset and between those communities with an existing station or with aspirations to develop a new one
- With key regional centres, e.g. Exeter, Bristol, Bath
- To connect with nationally important stations and interchanges, e.g. London, West Midlands (with potential future link to HS2) and South Wales

4.13.2 The nature of rail investment (scale and timing) means that we are less likely to be directly involved in delivering rail schemes but rather working with the rail industry, key partners and other stakeholders to identify needs, help provide the evidence base and work with local communities to ensure that improvements are delivered effectively.

### **Offer**

4.13.3 We will work with arrange of stakeholders to develop and deliver our proposals. These include:

- The Department for Transport
- Office of Road and Rail
- Train operators – both passenger and freight
- Peninsula Transport, a subnational transport body

- Community rail partnerships
- Rail interest and campaign groups
- Heritage rail groups

#### **Ask**

4.13.4 Funding for new stations and existing station improvements.

#### **Readiness and Deliverability**

4.13.5 Text

#### **Next Steps**

4.13.6 Maintain and, if possible, extend strategic engagement with all stakeholders. Continue to actively support and promote funding opportunities and engage and encourage active lobbying of key government bodies.

4.13.7 Individual rail delivery projects will require planning permission, and these will be developed at the appropriate time.

#### **Timing**

4.13.8 Not yet known.

#### **Funds**

4.13.9 Revenue funds will be needed to develop project business cases.

4.13.10 Capital costs are not determined at this stage but are likely to be significant.

## **4.14 Rail Connectivity: Wellington Station**

#### **Overview**

4.14.1 The project to re-open Wellington Station is part of a wider project to create a Devon and Somerset Metro network. This includes restoring rail access to Cullompton station too. Somerset West and Taunton Council is working in partnership with Mid Devon District Council to develop the business case for re-opening both stations. Other key partners in the Devon and Somerset Metro Group include: Somerset County Council; Devon County Council; Network Rail; Great Western Railway; the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership; Wellington Town Council; and Cullompton Town Council. The project is also supported by Rebecca Pow (MP for Taunton Deane) and Neil Parish (MP for Tiverton and Honiton).

#### **Readiness and Deliverability**

4.14.2 This project is building on existing activity. The partnership conducted a number of studies to assess the scope for re-opening stations at Wellington and Cullompton. These studies considered the likely patronage from the stations, the options for providing train services to them, and the technical feasibility of providing stations for the two towns. This has informed a successful Restoring Your Railway bid submission, and the subsequent development of the SOBC and further GRIP 3 work.

#### **Next Steps**

4.14.3 The Strategic Outline Business Case is due to be complete in December 2020. The final products will include: an Options Assessment Report; an Appraisal Specification Report; Environmental

Appraisal; Risk Statement; and SOBC (Strategic, Economic, Commercial, Financial and Management Cases).

4.14.4 Planning permission will be required once the final preferred options are determined for the site locations, access and associated works.

#### **Timing**

4.14.5 Delivery is estimated to be in 2025.

### **4.15 Rail Connectivity: Gravity and Bridgwater Connectivity**

#### **Overview**

4.15.1 The Gravity site is a nationally significant destination for inward investment and will deliver over 4,000 jobs, bolstering GDP by more than £1 billion. It has a key part of play in delivering the Government's Industrial Strategy, acting as key location for clean growth and advanced manufacturing. A key aspect of this is ensuring that that site can offer a multi-modal transport solution for servicing the economy, including strategic connectivity in relation to rail.

4.15.2 The provision of a passenger and rail freight service will serve as a key attractor to expedite and secure investment. The aim is therefore to reopen the branch rail line into the site, just off and connected to the mainline between Bristol and Exeter. The reopened connection would deliver substantial added potential for the site to accelerate sustainable growth in a manner consistent with the Government's Clean Growth and Industrial Strategies. In general terms the new railway to the gravity site is intended to comprise of.

- A new turnout and spur line of 300 metres from the main line
- A new crossover on the main line just north of the new turnout
- A new single track to the development site
- A new freight siding with a loop
- A new freight siding
- A new passenger line and new single faced platform
- Associated signalling, telecoms, power and civils work

#### **Offer**

4.15.3 Feasibility work has been undertaken. This scheme will enhance a site with the potential to deliver up to 100,000 sq m of commercial floorspace and 4,000 new jobs.

#### **Ask**

4.15.4 Government investment would help to deliver the scheme.

#### **Readiness and Deliverability**

4.15.5 The Local Plan identifies support for reinstatement of the rail head to support the Enterprise Zone (Policy B16).

4.15.6 Preliminary engineering studies carried out between 2007 and 2010 indicate that whilst much of the original sidings and track have been removed, the track bed remains in place and the embankment was considered to be in a serviceable condition. It concluded that subject to detailed feasibility and viability studies, rail contract and statutory processes, it would be feasible to reconnect the site to the main line. More recently, Pre-GRIP (Governance for Railway Investment Projects) work has been undertaken by This is Gravity Limited in collaboration with Network Rail.

This indicates the deliverability of a scheme for both passenger and freight with no negative impacts upon existing rail services.

#### **Next Steps**

- 4.15.7 A detailed business plan needs to be developed. A preferred option has been identified.
- 4.15.8 Planning permission will be needed for this proposal. The land is safeguarded for rail use.

#### **Timing**

- 4.15.9 Delivery by the end of 2024 is achievable.

#### **Funds**

- 4.15.10 The total cost is thought to be between £45 million and £55 million, including contingency. Funds could be sought from Government or privately. Business Rate retention from the Enterprise Zone could possibly be used for this scheme. However, the scheme would need to be forward-funded and the funding repaid with Business Rate receipts.

## **4.16 Rail Connectivity: Shepton Mallet**

#### **Overview**

- 4.16.1 The proposal is to create a modern commercial passenger service to Shepton Mallet in Somerset, by using the East Somerset branch line, from Witham Friary near Frome, which is currently partially in use as commercial freight route for Mendip Rail Ltd. This is a consortium of the aggregate 'super-quarries' between Shepton Mallet and Frome, with a terminus at Merehead Sidings/Torr Quarry, near the village of Cranmore.
- 4.16.2 The proposal is to utilise and upgrade the existing track bed to Mendip Vale Halt for passenger services between Shepton Mallet in the west, via the existing Mendip rail station of Frome, through to Westbury in Wiltshire, with the latter acting as an interchange for routes to London, Swindon, Bath and Bristol, and the wider South East and West Midlands.
- 4.16.3 A preliminary feasibility study by Atkins Rail was commissioned by Mendip District Council and the East Somerset Railway in 2007 to originally explore the idea of extending the line to Shepton Mallet for the heritage service. The conclusion of the study indicates feasibility and an indicative nature of the works required. Further work is now needed to update and refine the original cost estimates for groundworks, and to re-evaluate the proposal for a commercial passenger line, with integrated parking/bus service provision.

#### **Readiness and Deliverability**

- 4.16.4 An unsuccessful application was submitted to the Restoring your Railway DfT Ideas Fund. It is proposed that commissioning further feasibility work now occurs in 2021 when a clearer picture of the medium- and longer-term impacts of Covid-19 on railway funding and operations emerges.

#### **Next Steps**

- 4.16.5 Further consultation and evidence scoping will continue to take place in 2020-21. We would now expect to commission feasibility work in 2021, depending on the continuing impact of Coronavirus on railway operations. This is to enable proper engagement with Network Rail and TOCs through the process. Delivery of preliminary feasibility work for a passenger line would be expected to take four to six months.

## **Funds**

- 4.16.6 Preliminary feasibility work is thought to be in the region of £30,000 to 50,000. The longer-term cost is estimated to be in excess of £10 million.

## **4.17 Flood Risk: Bridgwater Barrier**

### **Overview**

- 4.17.1 This project, led by the Environment Agency and supported by Sedgemoor District Council, will deliver the Bridgwater tidal barrier and associated improvements to downstream flood protection banks in order to reduce the risk of flooding from the tidal river Parrett. This features in the Somerset Levels & Moors Flood Action Plan (2014) which was developed by a range of organisations, including Somerset County Council and the Environment Agency. The barrier will result in 12,800 existing homes, businesses and infrastructure within Bridgwater and surrounding areas benefiting from a reduced risk of tidal flooding. The works will enable significant new housing and employment growth to come forward on sites already allocated for development in the adopted local plan.

### **Offer**

- 4.17.2 The total scheme cost is £99 million. £79 million has been secured from Flood Defence Grant in Aid (FDGiA), and £4 million from the local levy. Further partnership funding will be secured from developer contributions through planning agreements.

### **Ask**

- 4.17.3 £10 million is needed towards the partnership funding contribution.

### **Readiness and Deliverability**

- 4.17.4 Development of the scheme is underway. Next steps are set out below.

### **Next Steps**

- 4.17.5 The scheme is currently progressing through a Transport Works Act Order (including planning permission), with anticipated completion in early 2021. An outline business case has been prepared, and the full business case for FDGiA is being prepared. Contractor procurement is expected in 2021, with construction to start in 2022 and complete in 2024. Commissioning is expected in 2025.

### **Timing**

- 4.17.6 Commissioning is expected in 2025.

### **Funds**

- 4.17.7 £10 million is sought towards a total cost of £99 million.

## **4.18 Flood Risk: Taunton Flood Attenuation**

### **Overview**

- 4.18.1 The Taunton Strategic Flood Alleviation Improvements Scheme (TSFAI) adopted by the Council earlier in 2020 identifies a suite of flood alleviation projects and measures phased over 30 years, to make them easier to deliver and fund, and which will all need to be delivered to ensure that flood risk to the Town of Taunton is minimised. This long-term strategic solution to reducing flood risk to Taunton and, where possible, to the wider catchment was the culmination of six years

partnership working by Somerset West and Taunton Council (SWT) and the Environment Agency (EA), with additional funding/grant support from the Heart of the South West LEP and Somerset Rivers Authority.

- 4.18.2 The TSFAIS Programme will provide protection to thousands of properties, key infrastructure (such as the BT Exchange, Police Station, Royal Mail Sorting Office, Medical Centres, Primary Schools), resilient network routes (A3027, A3087, A3038, routes into the Town Centre and to Taunton Train Station) and maintain economic activity through access to businesses and services. It is estimated that a single major flood in Taunton would cost the local economy approximately £50 million. It will enable the large regenerations sites in Taunton Town Centre including Firepool and Tangier to come forward.
- 4.18.3 Going forward, in Year One, the Council will focus on working closely with partners including the Environment Agency to get the priority funded projects moving. It will also start to lay the foundations for exploring how and when some of the later projects might come forward.
- 4.18.4 There is no single option that completely removes or reduces flooding in isolation. Instead, a combination of around a dozen interventions is required. This combination of works is referred to as the “preferred approach”. This ‘Preferred Approach/Framework’ can reduce flood risk in Taunton today and in the future, when taking account of climate change, to protect existing property in Taunton and to allow the town to develop safely and holistically.
- 4.18.5 There are three ‘short-term’ projects the council is focusing on in the next few years:
- **River Tone Left Bank Flood Defences** – a combination of repair, replacement or new flood defences between Frieze Hill and Town Bridge to provide reduced flood risk to key transport routes including the A3027 Bridge Street, A3027 Staplegrove Road and the A3087 Station Road, and the North Town and Firepool areas of Taunton, including SWT’s multi-million pound regeneration site
  - **Firepool Lock gate** and associated bund between the River Tone and Bridgwater to Taunton Canal – raising levels of the lock gates and area around them in conjunction with creating an earthen bund defence between the canal and the river from Firepool to Obridge which will prevent flows entering the canal. This provides reduced flood risk for Priorswood and Crown Industrial Estates and Bathpool
  - **Longrun Meadow** flood attenuation improvements - optimisation of the existing flood storage area at Longrun Meadow through new embankments, inlet and outlet to remove excess water from the river and control when the water is put back into the River. This reduces flood risk in Taunton Town Centre and further downstream including areas of North Town, Firepool, Priorswood and Crown Industrial Estates, Bathpool and benefiting tributary flows reducing flood risk in Tangier area, which is also a key Town Centre regeneration site.
- 4.18.6 Other short - medium-term (10-15 years) projects in the TSFAI programme are:
- Raised or New Defences on the Tangier Tributaries (short term 0-10y)
  - Raised or new defences on the River Tone and its Tributaries (short/medium term)
  - Pumping station at Bathpool (short term 10-15y)
  - Preventing backflow from railway culverts (short term 10-15y)
  - River Restoration and flood storage at Vivary Park (short term 10-15y)
  - Raising Castle Street Bridge & Bus Station footbridge (as opportunity arises);

- Mill Stream flow diversion (as opportunity arises)

4.18.7 The long-term approach:

- Upstream storage at Bradford on Tone (30yr)

#### **Offer**

4.18.8 SWT is the lead partner on the short-term programme of projects, and is looking to deliver key elements of the design and construction of the first two of these projects (Firepool lock gates and River Tone left bank defences) with £6 million of Council funds.

#### **Ask**

4.18.9 £2.6 million is needed to close the funding gap for the total £8.6 million investment required for the three short term measures listed.

4.18.10 The Council has approved £6 million funding from New Homes Bonus (NHB) and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). Environment Agency FDGiA will be applied for. However, this relates to infrastructure only and due to how it is calculated it is anticipated it may only deliver a very small contribution. Wessex Local Levy and SRA grant will also be applied for. The Council is looking for other funding streams to support this important work on flood defence that will support the economy and growth of Taunton.

4.18.11 The entire TSFAIS programme totals c. £190 million of investment over 30 years. The Council will clearly not be able to progress the programme without significant funding support.

#### **Readiness and Deliverability**

4.18.12 For all the projects, detailed design is required and scheduling of works to manage potential detriment to other areas.

#### **Next Steps**

4.18.13 Next steps are:

- **Firepool** – currently in late design stage, with delivery anticipated late 2021
- **River Tone left bank** – design stage during 2021/22, with delivery anticipated in 2022/23. A Collaborative Agreement between SWT and the EA for the River Tone Left Bank Flood Defences will be signed early 2021. A Project Brief and Programme is being jointly progressed with a view to letting a contract via the Environment Agency's supplier framework by February 2021 for the detailed design, consents and permissions. Landowner liaison is taking place to identify any potential issues and protocols for access to land and notification of works/investigations and establish conflicts or opportunities for working. An Engagement and Consultation Plan will be prepared.
- **Longrun Meadow** – design and delivery during 2022-2024

#### **Funds**

4.18.14 SWT has approved an allocation of £6,000,000 of capital funding from already earmarked Community Infrastructure Levy, New Homes Bonus and s106 contributions, to progress the identified short term priorities of Firepool lock gates, improvements to the left bank of the River Tone (Frieze Hill to Town Bridge), and Longrun Meadow.

4.18.15 The entire Preferred Approach is phased to make it more affordable, as it is unlikely to attract full or majority funding from central government Flood Defence Grant in Aid (FDGIA). Funding sources

that have been identified by the SWT and EA Project Team include: Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF), New Homes Bonus and the Wessex Flood Defence Committee. However additional sources continue to be sought.

## 4.19 Flood Risk: Blue Anchor

### Overview

- 4.19.1 This activity comprises significant coastal defence works to protect the sea cliffs, the B3191 Blue Anchor to Watchet road, the services therein and the adjacent properties. The aim is to protect property, infrastructure and land. The scheme is the lowest cost option of those considered, the option most likely to be able to be delivered in a timely manner and the most deliverable of the options given the clarity regarding land ownership.

### Offer

- 4.19.2 Somerset West and Taunton Council agree in principle to accept responsibility and ownership for the coastal protection structure together with a commuted sum to cover estimated maintenance over the estimated lifecycle of the asset, provided that the new infrastructure is funded entirely by the Highways Authority, Environment Agency and or other external contributors.
- 4.19.3 A Supplementary Capital Budget of £3,550,000 has been approved for the delivery of the long-term coast protection capital works, funded entirely by expected contributions from Somerset County Council and the Environment Agency.

### Ask

- 4.19.4 Requests are being submitted to the Environment Agency for grant in aid and also for local levy funding

### Readiness and Deliverability

- 4.19.5 The project builds on activity that has already taken place.
- 4.19.6 Significant option appraisal work has taken place and a preferred option has been identified. As this is primarily a project to protect a highway the vast majority of funding is being provided by Somerset County Council with the project being managed and delivered by Somerset West and Taunton Council. Additional funding has been sought from the Environment Agency and we are awaiting the outcome of these applications. The project requires approval before detailed designs are started.
- 4.19.7 Agreement regarding future ownership and the funding of and responsibility for the ongoing maintenance and any repairs remains outstanding but is currently proceeding through the Somerset West and Taunton Council committee cycle (Full Council 1 December 2020).
- 4.19.8 The activity requires planning permission. It is not yet in place as there are no final designs yet in place for the scheme.

### Next Steps

- 4.19.9 Detailed design work needs to be completed, and then planning permission secured.
- 4.19.10 Somerset West and Taunton Council will complete the emergency works to the existing sea defence wall and import approximately 1,800 tonnes of rock armour to buy time for the design and

implementation of the main scheme. This work has been awarded funding from the Environment Agency and there are no costs to Somerset West and Taunton Council.

- 4.19.11 Somerset West and Taunton Council officers will engage with local landowners to secure the use of the private land necessary for access, storage, and construction of the scheme. The Council will establish a contract with designers to take forward the scheme, and start engagement with the contractors. The Council will establish a multi-agency project board and timeline of activity.

#### **Timing**

- 4.19.12 The project can be delivered in 2021 or 2022 depending on the length of time for designs and permissions, and the availability of appropriate delivery vessels and rock armour.

#### **Funds**

- 4.19.13 It is estimated that the total capital cost of delivering the scheme will be £4 million. The vast majority of funding will come from SCC as the Highways Authority. Land required is expected to be free of charge. Further funding has been sought from the Environment Agency through both Grant in Aid and Local Levy routes.

## **4.20 Strategic Sites: Gravity Enterprise Zone**

### **Overview**

- 4.20.1 We have been progressing the delivery of the Gravity Enterprise Zone for several years, to support delivery of a smart campus focusing on Clean Growth principles with the stated ambition being to create a multifunctional campus with digital connectivity, smart mobility, including rail restoration. The EZ also has the potential to support the Freeport proposal at Bristol with opportunities to support advanced manufacturing facilities as part of a wider Freeport Zone for the South West. Forward funding for infrastructure, including the reinstatement of a rail link into the site, will help to stimulate the development of high technology and energy-related businesses on the site, creating thousands of high-quality jobs and improved productivity.
- 4.20.2 The proposed activities will include a delivery of a demonstrator and incubation space to attract start-ups and growing companies and to showcase the clean growth principle and smart campus concept alongside the preparation of the local development order. Additionally, the project seeks to deliver a smart mobility centre to provide transport innovation solutions on and off site.
- 4.20.3 The UK's ambition to build its own Gigafactories is recognised and Gravity could support the UK's government in fulfilling that ambition by hosting the first Gigafactory in the country. Additionally, the site is ideally located to support the latest government's initiative – freeports. Gravity and Sedgemoor District Council work closely with WECA and Bristol Port on designing a proposal that would create a multi-site freeport delivering jobs and wider social benefits in the area. Gravity, as a quite contained site, could be an ideal testbed for 5G and other technologies (e.g. autonomous vehicles, smart mobility, etc.).
- 4.20.4 The site requires a direct connection to WPD network – this project seeks Government's support in grid reinforcement between Bridgwater and the site to enable high-wattage power connection to enable the development.

### **Offer**

- 4.20.5 The project will be delivered by This Is Gravity Limited together with Sedgemoor District Council, Somerset County Council, the HotSW LEP, the Department for International Trade, the Department of Transport, local HE and FE partners and Highways England.
- 4.20.6 Use of retained business rates to forward-fund site infrastructure
- 4.20.7 Delivery of a Local Development Order to accelerate delivery of the site and provide fast track and agile planning processes aligned to investor timescales and occupier needs
- 4.20.8 Create innovation space and test bed on Gravity

### **Ask**

- 4.20.9 Inclusion of Gravity in the Freeport Zone for the South West.
- 4.20.10 £10m for acceleration of WPD grid reinforcement from Bridgwater to site.
- 4.20.11 £2 million demonstrator and incubator space to attract first occupiers to site and to demonstrate smart campus concept.
- 4.20.12 DfT investment into rail restoration project to enable rail connection to the site (£50 million).
- 4.20.13 Government support to promote the site as a location for a Gigafactory.
- 4.20.14 £5m for smart mobility centre to provide transport innovation and mobility solutions on and off site

### **Readiness and Deliverability**

- 4.20.15 The project is being developed. High level plans are in place for the demonstrator space and the mobility centre. Proposals have been drafted for 5G bid and freeport consultation. SDC is participating in the delivery of the LDO to increase marketability of the site and promote development. Discussions are ongoing with Western Power Distribution and Hinkley Point C regarding power connection. The freeports consultation has ended but no date has been given for when the bidding process might start.
- 4.20.16 A business plan has been developed for a mobility centre.
- 4.20.17 A grid reinforcement project is being led by This is Gravity Limited.

### **Next Steps**

- 4.20.18 Sedgemoor District Council is progressing work on a local development order which will align planning and vision for the site and will send a clear message to potential investors that the site is ready for development.
- 4.20.19 High level plans and costings have been developed for the demonstrator space and smart mobility centre, and these need to be developed further.
- 4.20.20 An energy strategy for the site needs to be prepared.
- 4.20.21 Freeport and 5G bids need to be pursued.

### **Timing**

- 4.20.22 The demonstrator space and mobility centre could be operational by 2022.

## **Funds**

4.20.23 A total of £17 million if funds are sought to deliver the activity set out above. Sedgemoor District Council could potentially borrow up to £4.5 million against retained business rates. Some funds are sought from ERDF.

4.20.24 A further £12.5 million is sought from Government to deliver this activity.

## **4.21 Other Strategic Employment Sites**

4.21.1 There are a number of other significant employment sites that we are working on with development partners, including Nexus 25 at Taunton and the Bunford Innovation Park at Yeovil. Funds for these sites will stimulate private sector investment in delivering premises for new high value businesses, creating hundreds of new jobs and productivity in high technology sectors. These will be supported through the Revolving Infrastructure Fund discussed below.

## **4.22 Strategic Sites: Bunford Innovation Park**

### **Overview**

4.22.1 The BIP will provide innovation and enterprise grow on space for businesses operating within the Aerospace and AEM sectors with a specific emphasis on those working within the clean growth sphere. It will add to the developing ecosystem by aligning itself with existing developments such as Yeovil Innovation Centre and iAero.

4.22.2 BIP is a 59 acre site located adjacent to the A3088 National Freight Route in Yeovil, has the benefit of an existing Local Plan allocation for employment uses, an extant outline consent and recent section 73 consent to allow phased delivery. The site has a capacity for approximately 500,000 sq ft of commercial accommodation. The proposed redevelopment of the site would provide a varied provision of Grow On Space to complement existing innovation accommodation in Yeovil

### **Readiness and Deliverability**

4.22.3 A business plan has been completed for this work.

### **Next Steps**

4.22.4 Outline planning permission was granted in March 2011. Further permissions will be required.

### **Timing**

4.22.5 Phase 1 – Access and Infrastructure Works – 2021/22

4.22.6 Phase 2 – EV charging and Grow-On Space – 2022/23

4.22.7 Phase 3 – Future BIP Delivery – ongoing dependent on market demand

### **Funds**

4.22.8 An application has been submitted for Getting Building Funding. How much? Successful?

4.22.9 The total project cost is over £93 million, comprising:

- £4.6 million for Phase 1 access and infrastructure works
- £20.7 million for Phase 2 EV charging and grow-on space
- £68 million for Phase 3 full delivery of the BIP

## 5 Creating Attractive Places and Homes

5.0.1 The activities included in this theme are divided into three areas: improving the environment in Somerset’s towns; enabling the private sector to deliver development; and direct delivery of housing. These are summarised in the figure below.

**Figure 5.1: Activities to Provide Infrastructure to Enable Growth**

<b>Improving the environment in Somerset’s towns</b>
Major town centre regeneration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bridgwater Town Deal</li> <li>• Glastonbury Town Deal</li> <li>• Taunton FHSF</li> <li>• Yeovil FHSF</li> </ul>
<b>Enabling the private sector to deliver development</b>
Revolving Infrastructure Fund
Direct investment in new infrastructure e.g. schools
<b>Direct delivery of housing</b>
Loan fund to deliver new affordable housing

### 5.1 Major Town Centre Regeneration

#### Overview

5.1.1 We are developing integrated programmes of activity for major town centre redevelopment in Bridgwater, Glastonbury, Taunton and Yeovil. Securing £38 million of Future High Street Funds for Taunton and Yeovil, and up to £50 million of Towns Deal funds for Bridgwater and Glastonbury will draw in match funding and investment from other partners. These programmes will deliver thousands of new jobs and homes in these town centres, turning them into vibrant and sustainable places which provide opportunities for many of our excluded residents.

### 5.2 Major Town Centre Regeneration: Bridgwater Town Deal

#### Overview

5.2.1 Bridgwater Town Deal is a programme of capital projects that will be funded by Central Government. *Our Vision for Bridgwater is a Town Re-energised* – ensuring the town is better positioned to benefit from existing and future investment in clean energy and clean sustainable growth. A town recognised as a place of education, enterprise and innovation. A town that is socially conscious, culturally rich and colourful with a strong sense of civic pride and community.

5.2.2 The Strategic Aims of the Town Deal are:

- Maximise Our Community Potential – providing skills and support to residents to access employment and start businesses
- Re-energise our Town Centre - stimulating greater diversity of activity and connection, as a place for enterprise and production, alongside the traditional town centre functions of retail, culture and leisure
- Accessibility & Movement – ensuring that Bridgwater is able to function effectively and is well connected both within the locality and across the wider area.

### **Offer**

- 5.2.3 The Town Board is preparing a Town Investment Plan to re-energise Bridgwater and attract investment in clean energy and sustainable growth.

### **Ask**

- 5.2.4 Approval of the Town Investment Plan, and subsequent award of funds.

### **Readiness and Deliverability**

- 5.2.5 A Town Board has been convened, comprising a range of stakeholders. A Town Investment Plan is being prepared, for submission in January 2021. The list of projects that comprise the Town Investment Plan has not yet been agreed.

### **Next Steps**

- 5.2.6 A survey to engage residents and businesses is underway during October 2020.
- 5.2.7 Projects are being developed and a shortlist of projects will be compiled.
- 5.2.8 A bid will be submitted in January 2021.
- 5.2.9 If the Town Investment Plan is successful, then full business cases will be prepared for the projects. Some projects may need planning permission.

### **Timing**

- 5.2.10 The Town Investment Plan will be submitted in January 2021. If this is approved, then full business cases need to be prepared within 12 months, and project must be delivered within six years.

### **Funds**

- 5.2.11 A bid is likely to be for up to £25 million, although an exceptional bid could seek £50 million. Match funds have not yet been secured.

## **5.3 Major Town Centre Regeneration: Glastonbury Town Deal**

### **Overview**

- 5.3.1 Accelerator funding of £500,000 has been secured for:
- Renovation of Building C of the Red Brick Building, for business development, youth and community events
  - High Street enhancements, including cycle racks, trees, hanging baskets, signage and toilet blocks
  - Refurbishment of St Edmunds Hall
  - Community parking facilities at Herbies Field
  - A circular seven-mile footpath
- 5.3.2 A Town Investment Plan is being prepared for a bid of up to £24.5 million, for submission in January 2021. The focus is on:
- Regeneration projects around the Beckery in Glastonbury to create jobs and economic growth
  - A town centre hub for business and skills in the community. A proposal for an Enterprise Centre is part of this proposition and is discussed in detail at section 3.8.
  - Heritage projects

- Sports projects
- Affordable housing
- Transport
- Renewables

#### **Offer**

5.3.3 Accelerator projects have already been identified. A Town Investment Plan to promote economic growth, employment and change in Glastonbury is being prepared.

#### **Ask**

5.3.4 Up to £25 million of funds from the Town Deal.

#### **Readiness and Deliverability**

5.3.5 A Town Board has been convened, representing all sections of the local community, HotSW LEP, Somerset County Council and the local MP. Community and business consultation is underway.

5.3.6 The accelerator projects are ready to deliver. The Town Investment Plan is being developed.

#### **Next Steps**

5.3.7 Submission of the Town Investment Plan in January 2021.

5.3.8 Planning permission will be needed for some projects.

#### **Timing**

5.3.9 Submission of the Town Investment Plan in January 2021. Accelerator projects will be delivered by March 2021. Delivery of the main TIP projects will commence in 2022.

#### **Funds**

5.3.10 Up to £25 million in total is sought for the Glastonbury Town Deal.

## **5.4 Major Town Centre Regeneration: Taunton FHSF**

#### **Overview**

5.4.1 The Taunton Future High Street Fund bid was submitted to MHCLG in May 2020 with a total ask of £20.2m. The proposed intervention will enable the Council to deliver long established plans for the regeneration of Taunton town centre. The FHSF bid included the following projects:

- A new, transformational, mixed use development at Firepool in the heart of the town: bringing forward a large stalled site that has laid vacant since 2008. Supporting the development of new housing, hospitality and leisure space, business and innovation space
- A new nationally significant cultural venue and multi events space at Firepool
- Creation of a new pedestrian and cycle route linking the station to the town centre and the River Tone.
- Converting one of the town's most strategically significant riverside locations, Coal Orchard, from a car park to a high-quality mixed-use development, including apartments, retail, workspace, restaurants and riverfront plaza. This will attract new footfall to the High Street and form a key connection between Taunton Station, the Firepool development and the town centre. The project is under construction and scheduled for completion in May 2021.

### **Offer**

5.4.2 Projects costing £85 million will be delivered. The majority of the co-funding will be provided by Somerset West & Taunton Council. Some co-funding has been secured from Homes England.

### **Ask**

5.4.3 £20 million of Future High Street Funding is sought.

### **Readiness and Deliverability**

5.4.4 Stakeholders include Somerset West & Taunton Council, Somerset County Council, the Environment Agency, Homes England, and the HotSW LEP.

5.4.5 At Firepool, initial enabling works, site clearance and land assembly have been completed.

5.4.6 The Coal Orchard development is already under construction.

### **Next Steps**

5.4.7 Initial infrastructure works are scheduled to take place in late 2020.

### **Timing**

5.4.8 A full business case has been submitted to Government.

### **Funds**

5.4.9 £20 million of Future High Streets Funding is sought, towards a total project cost of £85 million.

## **5.5 Major Town Centre Regeneration: Yeovil FHSF**

### **Overview**

5.5.1 *Yeovil Refresh* is an holistic regeneration of Yeovil town centre. This is supported by a strategic vision which will be delivered by a programme of interlinking projects.

5.5.2 This creates a regeneration programme based on three main themes:

- **Strategic Development** – Focused on Cattle Market and Vincents Yard, Glovers Walk and 72-74 Middle Street. These sites individually and in combination present an opportunity to create fundamental change in Yeovil. They will enable the reduction of retail floorspaces, densification of housing, introduction of new commercial and leisure spaces combined with creation of co-collaboration workspace.
- **Improving the Network** – Re-orientation of the transport networks to create an inter connected transport network across all modes of transport. Active travel approaches and creation of shared space focused on pedestrians in the core town centre streets. Tackle air quality and modes of transport.
- **Creating Spaces and Linking Places** - A broad range of public realm interventions were considered that respond directly to the market failure identified in the Strategic Case. The priority for Yeovil is to enhance the core of the town centre with a highly legible series of linked public spaces that create an investment friendly environment, making the town centre a more attractive space to spend time throughout the entire length of the day. A safe, attractive and high-quality public realm will support the wider objectives of the town in providing the connecting network between existing assets and destinations and importantly between the town and the newly developed sites within and around the town centre.

- Complementary Approaches – This theme underpins the three core themes with a planned programme of animation and activity which will use and support the town centre environment.

### **Readiness and Deliverability**

5.5.3 An over-arching plan is being prepared. A bid has been submitted for Future High Streets Funding.

### **Timing**

5.5.4 Delivery will take place between 2021 and 2025.

### **Funds**

5.5.5 The estimated total cost of delivering the activity is £29 million, comprising £27.7 million of capital costs and £1.3 million of revenue costs.

## **5.6 Major Town Centre Regeneration Multi-Centre Town Deal**

5.6.1 This activity is one of Somerset’s strategic ambitions, which is being developed.

### **Overview**

5.6.2 We have set out proposals for investment in Somerset’s four largest towns in other projects. This project will help to deliver development and regeneration in the some of our second-tier towns. We are preparing a proposition for the integrated regeneration of towns including Chard, Shepton Mallet, Watchet and Wincanton, which can potentially be developed into a single Town Deal or four separate Town deals (or possibly applications to the newly announced Levelling Up Fund). Our plans will need at least £25 million of funds to unlock private investment and match funding from other partners. Delivering regeneration in our second-tier towns is a strategic ambition for Somerset, and we have established a group of stakeholders to develop plans for this activity. We will provide more detail in the Spring of 2021.

5.6.3 Our plan is to deliver a range of projects that help meet the aims of the Towns Fund i.e.

- Delivering urban regeneration to make these towns thriving places for people to live and work. This could include projects to increase density in the town centres; improve local assets, including cultural assets; acquire, remediate and regenerate sites; and use planning to bring strategic change and direction
- Delivering skills and enterprise infrastructure, to ensure that towns have the space to support skills delivery and small business development
- Improving connectivity by delivering local transport schemes to complement regional and national networks, and improving digital connectivity

5.6.4 We note that place-based regeneration, skills and enterprise infrastructure, and the delivery of physical and digital connectivity are addressed by other strategic actions in the Somerset Recovery and Growth Plan, This multi-centre town deal helps to deliver activity specifically in some of our second-tier towns to complement and help them to benefit from the major strategic investments.

### **Offer**

5.6.5 The regeneration of these towns will help to create jobs, opportunities and greater inclusion in these communities. Starting the process of regeneration will increase confidence, stimulating further investment and development.

5.6.6 We will assemble a package of private investment and match funding to complement any investment by Government in this activity.

5.6.7 We will build on activity which is already underway, including a recently commissioned masterplan for Shepton Mallet.

#### **Ask**

5.6.8 We request £25 million of Town Deal or Levelling Up funds from Government to start the process of regeneration in our towns.

#### **Readiness and Deliverability**

5.6.9 We are working on the development of plans for these towns. We are identifying, testing and working up opportunities that help to meet the aims and objectives of the Towns Fund and Levelling Up Fund.

#### **Next Steps**

5.6.10 We will convene a Town Board to lead this project.

5.6.11 We will prepare a Towns Investment Plan to demonstrate how we will deliver regeneration across the four towns, to complement the strategic development that is taking place across Somerset.

5.6.12 Our Towns Investment Plan will set out:

- The contextual analysis for each of the towns, including the challenges it faces, needs, assets, strengths and opportunities. We will identify common needs and opportunities across the towns
- A strategy for the development of each town, setting out a vision, projects that will help to meet this, targets, priorities, and a spatial strategy. We will identify common strategic themes across the four towns, and develop complementary solutions across the four towns
- We will set out the theory of change, to show how investment in each town will lead to sustainable regeneration and growth
- Evidence of the engagement that we have undertaken with local businesses and communities in each of the towns. We will identify how the public and private sectors will work together to deliver regeneration in each of the towns
- Initial proposals for delivery including accountable bodies, high-level business cases, and high-level delivery plans

5.6.13 We will develop initial proposals for each project within the Town Investment Plan

5.6.14 Once we have agreed a Town Investment Plan with Government we will prepare full Business Cases for investment in each of the towns.

#### **Timing**

5.6.15 We will develop full plans for the integrated regeneration of Chard, Shepton Mallet, Watchet and Wincanton in 2021.

#### **Funds**

5.6.16 In the first phase of work we will identify projects costing a total of £25 million. As part of the process of developing the plans for the towns, we will identify sources of match funding which will help to increase the scope of work that we can undertake.

5.6.17 We will develop a Town Investment Plan and seek £25 million from Government for the implementation of the first phase of this.

## 5.7 Revolving Infrastructure Fund

### Overview

- 5.7.1 We have a number of major residential and commercial development opportunities in Somerset which need enabling infrastructure to get started. We want £150 million grant-in-aid (repayable to Government upon cessation) to create a Revolving infrastructure Fund to invest in enabling infrastructure to kick-start new developments. As development is delivered, we will invest in further enabling infrastructure. Along with parallel investment in training and skills, these projects will create employment for local people in construction, helping to increase inclusive growth.

### Offer

- 5.7.2 Accelerated delivery of new homes and new jobs

### Ask

- 5.7.3 £150 million grant-in-aid repayable borrowing to create the RIF

### Next Steps

- 5.7.4 In the first Quarter of 2021 we will establish a county-wide steering group involving the four District Council, and overseen by the Somerset Growth Management Group (SGMG).
- 5.7.5 The steering group will review and refresh the list of key development sites in Somerset, identifying:
- Location and ownership
  - Type/mix of potential development
  - Anticipated/planned quantum of housing, employment, and other development
  - Potential for the repayment of an investment from the RIF
  - Delivery/planning status and timescales
  - Key barriers to the delivery of enabling infrastructure and site development (actual/known, or possible risks)
  - Stakeholder identification and analysis work (and development of a stakeholder engagement plan – including how this work aligns with the LEP’s infrastructure investment strategy)
  - Identify existing and new funding opportunities (e.g. Levelling Up Fund), and assess how these might be suitable for specific schemes

## 5.8 Direct Investment in New Infrastructure

- 5.8.1 This project may be merged with the Revolving Infrastructure Fund, above.

### Overview

- 5.8.2 In some places in Somerset we need to invest in new infrastructure and public realm developments on a non-repayable basis in order to enable new development by the private sector. These will stimulate the delivery of new homes, new employment opportunities, employment opportunities in construction, and greater inclusion. Many new residential developments result in the need to deliver new schools, additional classrooms and educational infrastructure for the new population. We know from experience that the level of CIL/S106 funding that we can achieve in Somerset from new housing developments is insufficient to fund educational infrastructure as well as other essential infrastructure. Therefore, we are requesting funding to allow us to build school places, so they are ready for new housing. CIL collected from these housing developments will then

be used to help fund future schools, moving us from always experiencing a funding gap to proactively providing school places.

#### **Offer**

- 5.8.3 Accelerated delivery of new homes and new jobs

#### **Ask**

- 5.8.4 £57 million of new funding for schools in Somerset to be built and ready for the academic year starting Sept 2024 at the latest

## **5.9 Loan Fund to Deliver New Affordable Housing**

### **Overview**

- 5.9.1 Delivery of housing for the residents of Somerset is one of our highest priorities. As local authorities we have delivered significant numbers of new homes and can deliver many thousands more homes in our urban centres, towns and rural areas. To maintain momentum in the delivery of new homes as well as bringing forward additional sites that have been stalled (e.g. harder to deliver brownfield sites), the councils need access to low cost secure lending. Our proposal is that Government creates a facility within the PWLB, at a preferential rate, that allows significant borrowing specifically to deliver new homes.
- 5.9.2 This proposal advocates direct intervention on the part of the Somerset Councils to establish a shared Housing Development Company, supported with a locally controlled and funded Housing Investment Loan Fund, designed to provide funding support to appropriate mechanisms that can unlock new housing, where delivery is stalled on sites on account of financial constraints.
- 5.9.3 The outturn will be increased numbers of directly delivered council homes which are well designed, energy efficient, sustainable and homes to rent and buy on both an affordable and commercial basis.

### **Offer**

- 5.9.4 This project will bring together the separate work possibly already taking place at the individual local authority level, bringing a consistent and coordinated county wide approach. The creation of a new development loan facility will be a shared initiative design to support housing development and generate revolving recyclable funds for reinvestment into future housing delivery.
- 5.9.5 This proposal has a simple aim to encourage, accelerate and unlock housing delivery of new homes through direct delivery, generating income to expand further going forward in a sustainable way.

### **Ask**

- 5.9.6 A borrowing facility with a PWLB rate close to the Bank of England base rate

### **Readiness and Deliverability**

- 5.9.7 This project is a county-wide ambition and is being developed further by a group of stakeholders including all of Somerset's local authorities.
- 5.9.8 This proposal is building on existing activity, which will require the bringing together of current activity and agreeing a coordinated way forward.

5.9.9 Whilst individual councils are already able to provide commercial loans, this tends to be on an ad-hoc basis. The creation of new shared loan facility will require the creation of something new in terms of financial and legal arrangements.

**Next Steps**

5.9.10 To be confirmed.

**Timing**

5.9.11 Not yet assessed.

**Funds**

5.9.12 Total cost is not known at this stage.