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## District Executive (Informal)

**Thursday 3rd June 2021**

**9.30 am**

### **Virtual Consultative Meeting using Zoom meeting software**

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The following members are requested to attend the meeting:

Jason Baker  
Mike Best  
John Clark  
Adam Dance  
Sarah Dyke

Peter Gubbins  
Henry Hobhouse  
Val Keitch  
Tony Lock  
Peter Seib

Any members of the public wishing to address the meeting at Public Question Time need to email [democracy@southsomerset.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@southsomerset.gov.uk) by 9.00am on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2021.

The meeting will be viewable online at: <https://youtu.be/hpL7PgGtWF8>

For further information on the items to be discussed, please contact [democracy@southsomerset.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@southsomerset.gov.uk)

This Agenda was issued on Tuesday 25 May 2021 and republished 1<sup>st</sup> June 2021.

*Alex Parmley, Chief Executive Officer*

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

## Information for the Public

In light of the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19), the District Executive Committee will meet virtually via video-conferencing to consider reports. As of 7 May 2021 interim arrangements are in place for committee meetings.

At the meeting of Full Council on 15 April 2021 it was agreed to make the following changes to the Council's Constitution:

- a) To continue to enable members to hold remote, virtual meetings using available technology;
- b) To amend Part 3 (Responsibility for Functions) of the Council's Constitution to allow those remote meetings to function as consultative bodies and delegate decisions, including Executive and Quasi-Judicial decisions, that would have been taken by those meetings if the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 had continued in force to the Chief Executive (or the relevant Director in the Chief Executive's absence) in consultation with those meetings and those members to whom the decision would otherwise have been delegated under Part 3 of the Constitution;
- c) The delegated authority given under (b) will expire on 31 July 2021 unless continued by a future decision of this Council;

For full details and to view the report please see -

[Agenda for South Somerset District Council on Wednesday 5th May 2021, 6.30 pm](#)

### District Executive

Meetings of the District Executive are usually held monthly, at 9.30am, on the first Thursday of the month (unless advised otherwise).

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

Members of the Public are able to:-

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

Agendas and minutes can also be viewed via the Modern.gov app (free) available for iPads and Android devices. Search for 'modern.gov' in the app store for your device, install, and select 'South Somerset' from the list of publishers, then select the committees of interest. A wi-fi signal will be required for a very short time to download an agenda but once downloaded, documents will be viewable offline.

## **Public participation at meetings (held via Zoom)**

### **Public question time**

We recognise that these are challenging times but we still value the public's contribution to our virtual meetings. If you would like to participate and contribute in the meeting, please join on-line through Zoom at: <https://zoom.us/join> You will need an internet connection to do this.

Please email [democracy@southsomerset.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@southsomerset.gov.uk) for the details to join the meeting.

If you would like to view the meeting without participating, please see: <https://youtu.be/hpL7PgGtWF8>

The period allowed for participation in Public Question Time shall not exceed 15 minutes except with the consent of the Chairman and members of the Committee. Each individual speaker shall be restricted to a total of three minutes.

If you would like to address the meeting at Public Question Time, please email [democracy@southsomerset.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@southsomerset.gov.uk) by 9.00am on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2021. When you have registered, the Chairman will invite you to speak at the appropriate time during the virtual meeting.

### **Virtual meeting etiquette:**

- Consider joining the meeting early to ensure your technology is working correctly.
- Please note that we will mute all public attendees to minimise background noise. If you have registered to speak during the virtual meeting, the Chairman will ask you to un-mute your microphone at the appropriate time.
- Each individual speaker shall be restricted to a total of three minutes.
- When speaking, keep your points clear and concise.
- Please speak clearly – the Councillors are interested in your comments.

# District Executive (Informal)

Thursday 3 June 2021

## Agenda

### 1. Apologies for Absence

### 2. Declarations of Interest

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

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

### 3. Public Question Time

### 4. Chairman's Announcements

#### Items for Discussion

### 5. Relocation of Emergency Accommodation (Pages 5 - 11)

### 6. Dealing with Planning Applications: Our Approach to Negotiation (Pages 12 - 18)

### 7. The 'Making' of the Queen Camel Neighbourhood Plan (Pages 19 - 22)

### 8. The 'Making' of the Martock Neighbourhood Plan (Pages 23 - 26)

### 9. Investment Assets Update Report (Pages 27 - 46)

### 10. District Executive Forward Plan (Pages 47 - 51)

### 11. Date of Next Meeting (Page 52)



## Relocation of Emergency Accommodation

Executive Portfolio Holder:	Val Keitch, Strategy and Housing Portfolio Holder
Strategic Director:	Kirsty Larkins, Director Service Delivery
Lead Specialist:	Leigh Rampton, Lead Specialist Communities
Lead Officers:	Alice Knight, Specialist Housing Jo Calvert, Specialist Housing
Contact Details:	alice.knight@southsomerset.gov.uk jo.calvert@southsomerset.gov.uk

## Purpose of the Report

1. This report recommends the use of £390,000 as a grant to Bournemouth Churches Housing Association (BCHA) to contribute towards the purchase and refurbishment of a property, for the Council to use as emergency accommodation for people experiencing homelessness in South Somerset.

## Forward Plan

2. This report did not appear on the District Executive Forward Plan but is required to secure the purchase of new emergency accommodation as an opportunity to secure a site and secure external funding has arisen to replace current provision.

## Public Interest

3. South Somerset District Council has a statutory duty under the Homeless Reduction Act 2017 to provide people with emergency and/or temporary accommodation if they are homeless. We provide a range of accommodation to different customers based on their circumstances and needs.
4. SSDC has a contract with Bournemouth Churches Housing Association (BCHA) to provide emergency accommodation in Yeovil to homeless single people in South Somerset. BCHA also provide support to break the cycles of behaviour, accessing support from specialist agencies and support workers. The existing building is no longer fit for purposes and an opportunity has arisen for BCHA to purchase an alternative property, more suited to the needs of the customers, staff and wider community.

## Recommendations

5. That the District Executive recommend that the Chief Executive approve the use of £390,000 from the Affordable Housing Capital Programme Reserve to award a grant to Bournemouth Churches Housing Association (BCHA) as a contribution towards the costs of the purchase and refurbishment of a property in Yeovil, to



## **South Somerset District Council**

provide emergency accommodation and improved support for people who are homeless, rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping in South Somerset.

### **Background**

6. South Somerset District Council has a statutory duty under the Homeless Reduction Act 2017 to provide people with emergency accommodation if they are homeless.
7. In recent years, the Housing team has met this duty by providing a number of different types of temporary and emergency accommodation for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, and successfully largely avoided placing people in Bed & Breakfast. This includes Council-owned properties as well as a range of other options provided and managed by our partners.
8. SSDC works closely with partners to minimise the numbers of rough sleepers in South Somerset and has managed this successfully through the provision of emergency accommodation and outreach support.
9. SSDC currently has a contract with BCHA to manage a 30-bed hostel at Newton Road, Yeovil, known as Pathways. The building is owned by BCHA.
10. It is widely agreed the current property and location are no longer suitable for emergency accommodation, and BCHA have been looking for alternative premises more suited to customers, support staff, local support agencies and the wider community. The Covid pandemic has accelerated the recognition of the need to identify alternative provision.

### **Homelessness in South Somerset**

11. Following the Homeless Reduction Act 2017, the demand for emergency and temporary accommodation has risen as the Council has new duties to assist more people presenting to us as homeless and assess their wider support needs, including debt, benefits, drug & alcohol issues and family breakdown. The increase is not unique to South Somerset and it has been growing across the country.
12. If an individual or family is homeless, we have a duty to offer and place them in emergency or temporary accommodation for up to 56 days while their circumstances are being assessed and, if appropriate, help them find suitable accommodation.
13. In addition, we have a responsibility to support people who are rough sleeping, at risk of rough sleeping or are not eligible for temporary accommodation under our statutory duties. This group of people have very few options, are often unable to access private or social housing. This leaves them very vulnerable and their only option may be sofa surfing, staying in dangerous or precarious accommodation or sleeping on the streets. This in turn can create additional vulnerabilities, enable exploitation and creates a negative public perception.



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14. In general, we have managed to keep rough sleeping to a minimum in South Somerset through the proactive work of our team and working in partnership with local agencies through outreach, engagement and the provision of our current 30 bed facility at Newton Road.
15. In all circumstances, we work with local partners to deliver support to customers to help them move on from emergency/temporary accommodation and find suitable, more permanent homes and to meet their longer term needs. This 1-1, specialist tailored support is essential to helping people escape from the cycle of homelessness and rough sleeping and address the wider issues that have led them to homelessness and help them rebuild their lives.
16. Our multi-agency approach provides a range of options for people both through accommodation and support. This is acknowledged by MHCLG as successful and our good reputation has stood us in good stead throughout the Covid lockdowns in 2020 when we were able to respond to the Government's 'Everyone In' directive by providing emergency accommodation, in partnership with BCHA and others, with the intensive support attached.
17. The Government published its rough sleeping strategy in 2018 which sets out the government's vision for halving rough sleeping by 2022 and ending it by 2027.

### The Properties

18. BCHA currently own and manage 14-18 Newton Road ('Pathways'), as well as neighbouring number 20 Newton Road as emergency accommodation. A number of issues have led to BCHA and SSDC agreeing to explore an alternative site.
  - Our contract with BCHA was awarded in 2020 on the condition that the poor standard of accommodation was urgently addressed, as the building was seen as being no longer suitable for this service.
  - A redevelopment plan for Newton Road was proposed at a cost of over £5m; Homes England initially indicated support for this early proposal.
  - The Coronavirus pandemic has delayed these plans whilst simultaneously highlighting the structural problems with the building. So for example in line with Government guidelines, we had to remove any shared accommodation reducing capacity of the building from 40 beds to 30. Going forward the guidance is now for self-contained units with bathroom and kitchenettes; there is no scope for achieving this in the current premises.
  - Recently a condition survey was carried out and the building has been declared as "unfit for purpose".
  - The more proactive type of support which we wish to provide for our customers is not possible in the building due to the lack of communal, private or outdoor space and there is little scope for improvement given the inherent restrictions of the site.
  - The current poor state of the building and décor also makes attracting and retaining staff more difficult and limits the ability and willingness of other services to provide on-site which is a much more effective delivery model for many of the customers accessing emergency accommodation.

19. In April 2021 we explored options with BCHA to decant the existing customers and redevelop the building; this would involve finding an interim solution for 30 people for the next 12-18 months. Despite looking at a range of alternatives this has not been possible, so we have focussed on looking for a permanent alternative. An opportunity has now been identified to purchase a site on the edge of Yeovil with a vacant premises and opportunities for further development.
20. The proposed new site offers a wide range of benefits:
  - A large, purpose-built and contemporary care-based facility more suitable for our customers and staff.
  - Enables a rapid achievement of a Covid-safe standard with 39 en-suite rooms and an opportunity to install self-contained kitchenettes.
  - Allows for a more attractive and psychologically informed environment including large, bright and spacious communal rooms for group-work, proactive support, therapeutic rehabilitation work, medical treatment and opportunities for agencies to visit the hostel and provide more on-site support.
  - A better location out of the town centre which will assist in breaking the cycle of exploitation and ASB associated with the current site.
  - Outdoor space with opportunities for working more proactively with customers on health & wellbeing, gardening, exercise etc.
  - Potential for further development on site of additional move-on and supported accommodation units which are not only much-needed in South Somerset but could also potentially provide income from BCHA to further enhance the range of services they can provide for vulnerable people.
  - Opportunity to secure the majority of the capital costs from Homes England at a greatly reduced project cost from the original proposal to redevelop on the current site.
21. Our experience of working with many customers in emergency accommodation shows that the provision of on-site services greatly increases their engagement with the support services they need. Somerset Drug & Alcohol service, Second Step (Mental Health) services, the Police, community nurses/dentists amongst others all say it is very difficult currently to engage with this group at Pathways without adequate or suitable spaces to meet with customers on site.
22. Our experience during the Covid pandemic was, and continues to be, that we can engage much better with customers safely if services are provided on site. One recent example was the caution initially expressed by our customers in receiving the Covid vaccine in a community setting. However, when the local clinical team ran a 1 day vaccination session at Pathways, 27 residents got vaccinated on that day and the rest then followed their lead through attending the local drop-in sessions at the Gateway.
23. Our retained counsellor has also noted a significant increase in engagement if visits can be carried out on-site, and attendance at appointments for the HAP (Home Achievement Programme) and drug/alcohol appointments are much higher





## South Somerset District Council

if customers can attend appointments at Pathways rather than in a community setting.

24. Feedback from the Police about the proposed new site has been very positive. Plans are now being discussed with BCHA and the Police to put in place measures from the outset to establish a more secure environment. There is also a real opportunity to work closely with BCHA as part of the Yeovil Refresh to redevelop Newton Road in a completely different way contributing to the regeneration of a vital area in the town centre.
25. In 2019, SSDC adopted the Somerset Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-2023, which commits us to support clients to access suitable and affordable accommodation where appropriate, and we have agreed a target with MHCLG to reduce rough sleeping to zero by the end of 2021. Investing in and securing this new premises will help us deal with the immediate situation, but will also secure a more positive and effective facility that will contribute to reduced homelessness and rough sleeping in the district, particularly in Yeovil town centre.

### Financial Implications

26. BCHA are currently in negotiations with the current owner over the purchase price. Initial discussions with Homes England are constructive and they will be considering a grant application later in May (the outcome should be known by the June District Executive meeting). A capital contribution from SSDC would significantly improve the chances of the Homes England Grant application being successful.
27. There is currently £1,660,000 available in the Affordable Housing (Unallocated) Capital Programme budget. If Members approve the proposed grant allocation of £390,000 this will leave a balance of £1,270,000.
28. If approved, Homes England and SSDC would place aligned conditions on the grant funding ensuring that if the building were no longer used after a specified time, monies would be returned to the relevant funders. Detailed conditionalities will be negotiated in line with advice of Homes England. In addition to the standard English Homes conditionalities any specific additional requirements from SSDC will be set out in the final grant letter and grant agreement.

### Legal implications (if any) and details of Statutory Powers

29. The work of the Council on homelessness is carried out under the Homelessness Reduction Act (2017).



31. Individuals facing homelessness and rough sleeping can be marginalised and face challenges accessing mainstream services and are more vulnerable to exploitation. By helping people off the streets and supporting people to secure and maintain emergency and temporary accommodation will also address other issues they face we can help make a difference to the lives of individuals and their families and particularly for those who face additional barriers such as poor mental health.
32. People who sleep rough experience some of the most severe health inequalities and report much poorer health than the general population. Many have co-occurring mental ill health and substance misuse needs, physical health needs, and have experienced significant trauma in their lives.
33. People who experience rough sleeping over a long period are, on average, more likely to die young than the general population. They also face a higher likelihood of dying from injury, poisoning and suicide. It has been estimated that around 35% of people who die whilst sleeping rough die due to alcohol or drugs, compared to 2% in the general population.
34. Life expectancy for people who experience rough sleeping in the UK is 44 for men and 42 for women, compared to 76 for men and 81 for women in the general population.
35. As a purpose built facility the new premises will be fully accessible for disabled customers.

## **Privacy Impact Assessment**

Not applicable

## **Background Papers**

- Somerset Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-23
- MHCLG Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018
- Confidential BCHA Proposal to Homes England May 2021

## Dealing with Planning Applications: Our Approach to Negotiation

Executive Portfolio Holder:	Tony Lock, Protecting Core Services
Strategic Director:	Kirsty Larkins, Service Delivery
Service Manager:	Lesley Barakchizadeh, Planning Consultant
Lead Officer:	Barry James, Interim Planning Lead
Contact Details:	Lesley.barakchizadeh@southsomerset.gov.uk

### 1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 As part of the Planning Reimagined series of workshops designed to improve the Council's planning process Members discussed how officers could deal with applications which may require amendments.
- 1.2 The agreed way forward was for officers to produce a document that set out clearly how the pre-application advice phase was the best time to refine a proposal, and that under certain circumstances revisions to live applications may also be acceptable.
- 1.3 The resulting document (Appendix A) is submitted for Members consideration and approval. This will help add clarity to this particular element of the planning process with a view to improving the overall service provided.

### 2.0 Forward Plan

- 2.1 The document was added to the Forward Plan initially for consideration in February but was deferred due to other activities affecting the planning service.

### 3.0 Public Interest

- 3.1 The document provides a framework around which revisions to planning applications can be made. It is in the public interest that the planning service operates as efficiently as possible, and this document will help ensure that happens. The result should be additional clarity, a more efficient system thanks to front-loading discussion within the pre-application phase, and a better planning decision when applications are determined.

### 4.0 Recommendation

- 4.1 That District Executive recommend that the Chief Executive approve the use of "Dealing with Planning Applications - Our Approach to Negotiation" document as guidance for all involved in the planning process.

### 5.0 Background



- 5.1 As part of the Planning Reimagined series of workshops designed to improve the Council's planning process, Members discussed how officers could deal with applications which may require amendments. This discussion considered the importance of working with the Council to refine development proposals at pre-application stage as well as considering the options for revision once an application was formally received.
- 5.2 The benefits of pre-application advice are numerous; spending time and effort on preparing proposal with the benefit of officer advice is more likely to result in a high quality, acceptable development and can mean the Council will process a formal application more quickly. This informal stage allows the principle of a development to be considered and tweaks made to a scheme to refine it so that it can be presented in the most positive manner possible. It can also save a developer time and money with spurious proposals that are unlikely to receive consent.
- 5.3 The informal, pre-application stage provides the best opportunity to revise proposals. Once a formal application is submitted it is at the discretion of the Council whether changes are made whilst they are being processed. The general approach agreed through the Planning Reimagined workshop is that once an application is submitted that has not been through the pre-application advice stage the Council will not normally entertain negotiations. Any such discussions will be at the discretion of the case officer in line with the protocol set out in the document attached to this report.
- 5.4 If pre-application advice was sought and it was advised that the Council would be unlikely to support a particular development, then it will also be standard practice that no negotiation would take place during the formal processing of an application unless circumstances have significantly changed. In this case the application would be determined based on what has been submitted.

## **6.0 Why put this Protocol in place**

- 6.1 This document will give additional clarity to all concerned in the planning process and will set a benchmark to what is expected of participants.
- 6.2 It will advise applicants/potential applicants so they know what to expect and that put simply development proposals need to be refined at the earliest stage rather than when an application is formally running.
- 6.3 When considering alternative approaches, the Council could have left this area unattended which would mean a lack of clarity or structure around this part of the planning process. However, in the interests of transparency, of guiding applicants through the process and assisting all those involved it is considered that this document will be a positive addition to the framework around the operation of the planning service.

## **7.0 Financial implications**



7.1 There are limited financial implications; as the revision of an application is discretionary the Council is not putting itself at risk of challenge.

## 8.0 Legal implications and details of Statutory Powers

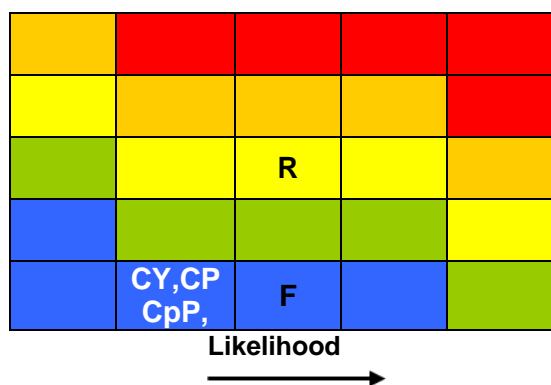
8.1 There is a legislative framework based on the Town and Country Planning Acts and Orders that provides structure to the planning process. This document provides guidance about a discretionary activity and it is considered that the legal implications to the Council are minimal.

8.2 Given the additional clarity this document will provide it is expected that it will be beneficial to the running of the service and will help limit the Council's exposure to complaints and potential legal challenge.

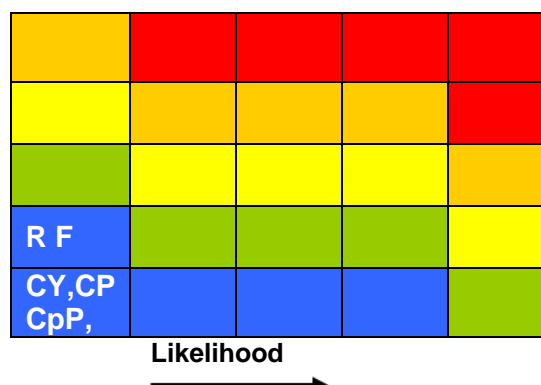
## 9.0 Risk Matrix

The risk matrix shows risk relating to the Council Plan headings.

**Risk Profile before officer recommendations**



**Risk Profile after officer recommendations**



### Key

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

## Council Plan Implications

Adopting this document will help contribute towards a more efficient planning service.

## Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications

There are no carbon emissions or climate change implications of this report.



**South Somerset**  
District Council  
**Equality and Diversity Implications**

There are not considered to be any equality and diversity implications of this report.

### **Privacy Impact Assessment**

Data contained within the planning system will not be altered in anyway by the adoption of this document.

### **Background Papers**

- Dealing with Planning Applications – Our Approach to Negotiation
- Planning Reimagined District Executive.

# **Negotiations and Amendments to a Live Application South Somerset District Council**



## Dealing with Planning Applications – Making Amendments

This document sets out how the Council will deal with potential amendments to live planning applications.

To help give you more clarity about the chances of your proposal getting planning permission, and to take into account informal advice before you submit your application, you are strongly encouraged to use our pre-application service, please see our website:

<https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/services/planning/pre-application-advice/>

Going through the pre-application advice stage will help ensure an application is submitted with all reasonably known issues identified. By having pre-application advice before submitting a planning application, you will likely benefit from a quicker and more successful application process, as there will have been opportunity for issues to have been identified and where possible resolved during the pre-application stage. This could save you time and money during the planning application process.

Spending time and effort on preparing your proposal is more likely to result in a high quality, acceptable development and will help us process your application quickly.

### Dealing with formal planning applications

Our general approach once an application is submitted will be that where pre-application advice has not been sought the LPA will not normally negotiate amendments and any such discussions will be at the discretion of the case officer in line with the protocol below. If the pre-application advised that LPA support would not be forthcoming, then no negotiation around amendments will take place unless circumstances have changed.

It should be stressed that it is at the discretion of the local planning authority whether to accept such changes, to determine if the changes need to be re-consulted upon, or if the proposed changes are so significant as to materially alter the proposal to the point that a new application should be submitted. (see Paragraph: 061 Reference ID: 14-061-20140306 Making an Application - Guidance – [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))

## Amending a Live Application

If you wish to amend your application after submission but before determination you can request to do so through our planning application amendment service.

You may decide to use this service to:

- correct any errors made during submission
- address issues identified whilst determination is pending
- increase the quality of your development
- reduce your risk of refusal
- save time not having to submit an appeal
- change an aspect of the development without the need for a withdrawal/resubmission

Whilst the choice to request an amendment to an application will rest with the applicant/agent, the decision should be based on advice given by the case officer on the merits of doing so. If the case officer's advice is not to the liking of the applicant/agent then they are at liberty to decline to amend the application, in which case the officer will continue to determine the application as it stands.

Where the case officer considers a proposal is unacceptable a decision may be made to refuse an application as it stands. Where an amendment would profoundly change the description, nature or content of the scheme, you may be asked to withdraw the application and make a fresh submission; if this suggestion is declined a decision may be made on the basis of the application as it stands, more than likely a refusal.

If requesting an amendment an applicant/agent should also confirm that they agree to an Extension of Time (EoT) as it is likely additional work will be required to process the application. It should also be noted that an EoT may be required if, as a result of the amendment, the application is referred onto an Area Committee or Regulation Committee.

It is important to note that submitting an amendment is not a guarantee of a successful outcome. Whilst it may improve an application it does not necessarily mean that, when all planning matters and other material considerations are considered by Officers and possibly Members it is approved.

### The Process

- The principle of accepting a revision to a live planning application is raised with and agreed by the case officer.
- In order to ensure clarity please include a detailed breakdown of the amendment(s) sought and the reason(s) for the change(s).
- The agreement to an Extension of Time is provided in writing.
- The Lead Specialist (Planning) retains the discretion to amend or interpret the approach to negotiation on a case-by-case basis.

May 2021



## The 'Making' of the Queen Camel Neighbourhood Plan

Executive Portfolio Holder:	Cllr. Val Keitch, Strategy and Housing
Ward Member(s)	Camelot - Mike Lewis
Director:	Nicola Hix, Director of Support Services and Strategy
Service Manager:	Peter Paddon; Lead Specialist – Strategic Planning
Lead Officer:	Jo Wilkins; Specialist – Strategic Planning
Contact Details:	<a href="mailto:jo.wilkins@SouthSomerset.Gov.Uk">jo.wilkins@SouthSomerset.Gov.Uk</a> or 01935 462588

## Purpose of the Report

1. To note the result of the Referendum in relation to the Queen Camel Neighbourhood Plan and to confirm that the Plan be 'made' (or adopted).

## Forward Plan

2. This report appeared on the District Executive Forward Plan with an anticipated committee date of June 2021.

## Public Interest

3. The Neighbourhood Plan represents the views of Queen Camel Parish Council and other stakeholders on the preferred approach to future development in the parish. This has been the subject of Independent Examination by a qualified person and proceeded to a Referendum by the local electorate, with the result being in favour of the Plan. Once the making of the Plan is confirmed by the District Council, it will become part of the Statutory Development Plan with equal status to the Local Plan and will be used in the determination of planning applications.
4. The Neighbourhood Plan has been the subject of various events and meetings which have been used to engage with interested parties and public consultations. The Parish Council also have a dedicated website for the Neighbourhood Plan: [Neighbourhood Plan – Queen Camel Parish Council](#)

## Recommendations

5. That District Executive recommend that the Chief Executive agrees to the making of the Queen Camel Neighbourhood Plan.

## Background

6. Neighbourhood planning helps local communities play a direct role in planning for the areas in which they live and work. The plan can show how the community wants land in its area to be used and developed. If a plan is 'made' following a



## South Somerset District Council

successful referendum, it becomes part of the development plan for that area. Planning applications are determined by local planning authorities in accordance with the adopted development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

7. The Queen Camel Neighbourhood Area designation was approved by the District Council in March 2013. Since then, the Neighbourhood Plan for the area was prepared and a 'Pre-Submission' Plan was consulted upon by the local Steering Group in May 2019 (Regulation 14). This initial consultation was followed by formal submission of the Plan in January 2020 and the District Council carried out formal consultation in line with procedures set out in the relevant Regulations (Regulation 16), before the restrictions on movement in response to Covid-19 were put in place. The Plan was then subject to an independent examination and the District Council agreed the Examiner's recommendations and the next step of a local referendum on the 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2020.

### The Queen Camel Neighbourhood Plan

8. The Queen Camel Neighbourhood Plan sets out a vision for the Parish and the Stakeholders' main aims. The Plan summarises the consultation process and evidence base which informed its preparation. It also includes policies seeking to guide future development in the Parish relating to Housing, Business and Employment, Community Services and Facilities, Getting About, Environment; and Heritage. A site to the northwest of West Camel Road is allocated for about 30 dwellings; with the land to the north of Roman Way set aside for an extension to the existing recreation ground and/or an archeological interpretation area. The Plan also refers to a number of local projects that will be taken forward by the Parish Council, although these do not form Plan Policies.
9. The Examiner's Report concluded that the correct procedure for the preparation and submission of the Queen Camel Neighbourhood Plan was followed and that it meets the 'Basic Conditions', subject to the proposed modifications being made. The Examiner proposed 19 modifications in all. The original Submission Plan, supporting documents and summary of representations received are all available on the District Council's website <https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/your-council/your-council-plan-and-strategies/planning-policy/neighbourhood-planning/>
10. The District Council held a local Referendum on the 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021. The prescribed question asked was:

*"Do you want South Somerset District Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Queen Camel to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?"*

The Referendum results were as follows: 224 votes were cast; 202 voted in favour (Yes) of the Plan, with 22 voting against (No). As more than 50% of those who voted said 'Yes', the Neighbourhood Plan can now be 'made' (or adopted). A neighbourhood plan attains the same legal status as a local plan (and other documents that form part of the statutory development plan) once it has been



# South Somerset District Council

approved at a referendum. At this point it comes into force as part of the statutory development plan. Applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. A development plan sets out the planning policies for the development and use of land.

## Financial Implications

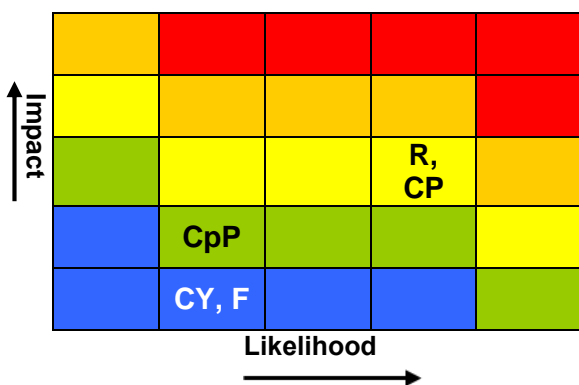
11. Under the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations, 15% of Community Infrastructure Levy receipts are generally passed directly to those parish and town councils (in England) where development has taken place. In England, communities that draw up a Neighbourhood Plan and secure the consent of local people in a Referendum, will benefit from 25% of the levy revenues arising from the development that takes place in their area.
12. The Council is able to claim a grant of up to £20,000 from the Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government towards the costs of progressing the Neighbourhood Plan once the decision to hold a referendum has been made. A claim has already been made in relation to that at Queen Camel and the monies have been received.
13. There is no SSDC funding involved in the recommendation specifically referred to in this report.

## Legal implications and details of Statutory Powers

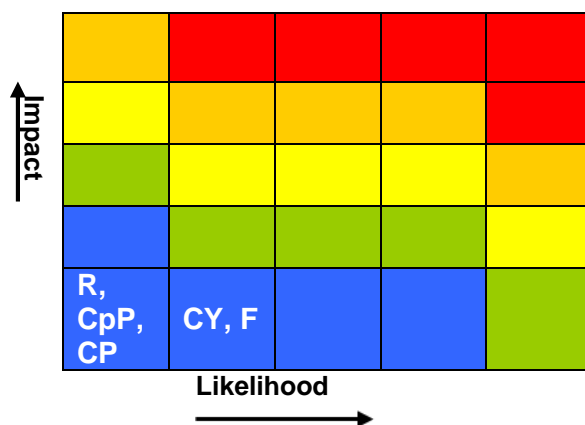
- 14 The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (and subsequent amendments) provide base requirements for the process of the preparation and making of neighbourhood plans; the Localism Act 2011 provides Submission requirements (that is, the 'Basic Conditions'); and the Neighbourhood Planning (Referendums) Regulations 2012 (and subsequent amendments) provide for statutory Neighbourhood Planning Referendum Rules

## Risk Matrix

Risk Profile before officer recommendations



Risk Profile after officer recommendations



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

## Council Plan Implications

- 15 The Queen Camel Neighbourhood Plan accords with the Council's aims to lead the recovery and revitalisation of our economy and communities to be stronger, more resilient and more vibrant than before Covid-19; to enable housing and communities to meet the existing and future needs of residents and employers; to keep South Somerset clean, green and attractive and respond to the climate and ecological emergency; and to enable healthy communities which are cohesive, sustainable and enjoy a high quality of life.

## Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications

- 16 The Queen Camel Neighbourhood Plan does not directly address carbon emissions or climate change and no such issues arise.

## Equality and Diversity Implications

- 17 No significant changes to a service, policy or strategy are proposed, directly and, therefore, it is not necessary to undertake an Equality Impact Assessment.

## Privacy Impact Assessment

- 18 It is not necessary to process personal data so, therefore, a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) is not needed.

## Background Papers

- The Queen Camel Neighbourhood Plan Referendum – Report to District Executive September 2020



## The 'Making' of the Martock Neighbourhood Plan

Executive Portfolio Holder:	Cllr. Val Keitch, Strategy and Housing
Ward Member(s)	Martock – Neil Bloomfield and Louise Clarke
Director:	Nicola Hix, Director of Support Services and Strategy
Service Manager:	Peter Paddon; Lead Specialist – Strategic Planning
Lead Officer:	Jo Wilkins; Specialist – Strategic Planning
Contact Details:	<a href="mailto:jo.wilkins@SouthSomerset.Gov.Uk">jo.wilkins@SouthSomerset.Gov.Uk</a> or 01935 462588

## Purpose of the Report

1. To note the result of the Referendum in relation to the Martock Neighbourhood Plan and to confirm that the Plan be 'made' (or adopted).

## Forward Plan

2. This report appeared on the District Executive Forward Plan with an anticipated committee date of June 2021.

## Public Interest

3. The Neighbourhood Plan represents the views of Martock Parish Council and other stakeholders on the preferred approach to future development in the parish. This has been the subject of Independent Examination by a qualified person and proceeded to a Referendum by the local electorate, with the result being in favour of the Plan. Once the making of the Plan is confirmed by the District Council, it will become part of the Statutory Development Plan with equal status to the Local Plan and will be used in the determination of planning applications.
4. The Neighbourhood Plan has been the subject of various events and meetings which have been used to engage with interested parties and public consultations. The Parish also have a website dedicated to local matters called Martock Online and this includes a section on the Neighbourhood Plan: <https://martockonline.co.uk/>

## Recommendations

5. That District Executive recommends that the Chief Executive agrees to the making of the Martock Neighbourhood Plan.

## Background

6. Neighbourhood planning helps local communities play a direct role in planning for the areas in which they live and work. The plan can show how the community wants land in its area to be used and developed. If a plan is 'made' following a successful referendum, it becomes part of the development plan for that area.



## South Somerset District Council

Planning applications are determined by local planning authorities in accordance with the adopted development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

7. The Martock Neighbourhood Area designation was approved by the District Council in April 2016. Since then, the Neighbourhood Plan for the area was prepared and a 'Pre-Submission' Plan was consulted upon by the local Steering Group in July 2019 (Regulation 14). This initial consultation was followed by formal submission of the Plan in January 2020 and the District Council carried out formal consultation in line with procedures set out in the relevant Regulations (Regulation 16), and in accordance with Covid-19 Regulations. The Plan was then subject to an independent examination and the District Council agreed the Examiner's recommendations and the next step of a local referendum on the 4<sup>th</sup> March 2021.

### The Martock Neighbourhood Plan

- 8 The Martock Neighbourhood Plan sets out an overview of the parish today and the strategic context along with a vision, objectives and main aims for the Parish and stakeholders. The Plan also includes policies seeking to guide future development in the Parish relating to Natural Environment, Built Environment and Heritage, Housing, Local Economy, Transport and Travel and Community Wellbeing.
- 9 No sites are allocated for development in the Plan but the Settlement Area Boundary has been amended from that shown in the adopted Local Plan, March 2015.
- 10 The Examiner's Report concluded that the correct procedure for the preparation and submission of the Martock Parish Neighbourhood Plan was followed and that it meets the 'Basic Conditions', subject to the proposed modifications being made. The Examiner proposed 22 modifications in all. The original Submission Plan, supporting documents and summary of representations received are all available on the District Council's website [here](#)
- 11 The District Council held a local Referendum on the 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021. The prescribed question asked was:

*"Do you want South Somerset District Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Martock to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?"*

The Referendum results were as follows: 997 votes were cast; 870 voted in favour (Yes) of the Plan, with 119 voting against (No). As more than 50% of those who voted said 'Yes', the Neighbourhood Plan can now be 'made' (or adopted). A neighbourhood plan attains the same legal status as a local plan (and other documents that form part of the statutory development plan) once it has been approved at a referendum. At this point it comes into force as part of the statutory development plan. Applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. A development plan sets out the planning policies for the development and use of land.







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CP - Community Priorities  
CY - Capacity  
F - Financial

Moderate impact and moderate probability

Minor impact and minor probability

Insignificant impact and insignificant probability

### Council Plan Implications

16 The Martock Neighbourhood Plan accords with the Council's aims to lead the recovery and revitalisation of our economy and communities to be stronger, more resilient and more vibrant than before Covid-19; to enable housing and communities to meet the existing and future needs of residents and employers; to keep South Somerset clean, green and attractive and respond to the climate and ecological emergency; and to enable healthy communities which are cohesive, sustainable and enjoy a high quality of life.

### Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications

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

### Equality and Diversity Implications

18 No significant changes to a service, policy or strategy are proposed, directly and, therefore, it is not necessary to undertake an Equality Impact Assessment.

### Privacy Impact Assessment

19 It is not necessary to process personal data so, therefore, a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) is not needed.

### Background Papers

- The Martock Parish Neighbourhood Plan Referendum – report to District Executive March 2021



## Investment Asset Update Report

Executive Portfolio Holder: John Clark, Economic Development inc Commercial Strategy  
Strategic Director: Clare Pestell, Commercial Services and Income Generation  
Service Manager: Robert Orrett, Commercial Property, Land & Development Manager  
Contact Details: [Robert.orrett@southsomerset.gov.uk](mailto:Robert.orrett@southsomerset.gov.uk) or 01935 462075

## Purpose of the Report

1. To update members on progress with implementing the Commercial Strategy agreed by Council including the commercial investments and management of the existing asset portfolio since the last half yearly update in December 2020.

## Forward Plan

2. This report appeared on the latest District Executive Forward Plan with an anticipated Committee date of June 2021. This report follows the format of the regular six monthly reports, albeit it follows a quarterly report in March 2021 reflecting the increased frequency of reporting linked to COVID-19 pandemic.

## Public Interest

3. The Council's commercial strategy forms an important part of the Council's Corporate Plan ("Council Plan") and its Financial Strategy. Delivery of the Commercial Strategy enables the council to protect services to residents in the light of reduction in funding and to deliver its ambitions for South Somerset, for example the regeneration of town centres and high streets. This report is to update members on progress made to date on the investment component of the Commercial Strategy. The Council originally agreed to receive update on progress every six months. District Executive decided to receive quarterly summary update reports on Investment Assets until further notice in light of the economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The last report was in March 2021.
4. The report includes updates on the purchase of new commercial property investments, the financial performance of investments and their contribution to delivery of the objectives of SSDC's Financial Strategy originally agreed in September 2017 and the Commercial Strategy agreed in August 2017, and updated with the review by District Executive and Full Council of the Financial Strategy and Commercial Strategy in September 2019.
5. The aim of this report is to give Members and the public an update on the performance and impact of the property investment to date including its contribution to mitigating the impact of reductions in Government funding and protecting services.

6. Due to the sensitive commercial nature of investment acquisitions, and the need to manage risk and protect the value of the Council's investments over the long term, certain detailed information is included in a confidential appendix and not to be disclosed.

## Recommendations

7. That the District Executive:
  - a) Note the resilience of the property investment portfolio throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.
  - b) Note progress made to date in acquiring new commercial property investments and the asset management following acquisition.
  - c) Note the return being achieved across the portfolio which is slightly below the Council's target of 7%.
  - d) Note progress being made in securing income from our existing assets and the contribution to the revenue budget towards the revised £3.35m target.
  - e) Note progress being made in disposals and transfers of existing assets, resulting in a reduction of future liabilities associated with these assets.

## Background

8. Council approved a commercial approach to Land and Property management in August 2017 as part of the Commercial Strategy which was supporting the objective of becoming financially self-sufficient.
9. The commercial approach to Land and Property management is the major financial component of the Commercial Strategy. The objectives are to invest in additional commercial property assets and to manage existing land and property assets more commercially
10. While presenting the "Commercial Services Income Update" report to District Executive in February 2018, members requested regular updates to show progress made in meeting the Commercial Strategy (approved by Council in August 2017). These reports are normally provided at six monthly intervals.
11. This report is a succinct update of high level figures for new investments since February 2021 up to 30 April 2021. It also updates members on work being carried out to increase income from existing assets and reduce liabilities.

## Covid-19

12. The pandemic has impacted on all aspects of society and is affecting economies across the world. The Office for National Statistics reported a contraction in UK GDP by 9.8% in 2020. Although GDP increased by 1.3% in Q4 2020, it is likely



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to have fallen again in Q1 2021 as a result of the latest lockdown. We have noted, as a result of the crisis, a negative impact on the office, and particularly High Street retail property markets.

13. Most commercial property leases provide for rent to be paid quarterly in advance in March, June, September and December. We have therefore had five rent days since the initial outbreak.
14. The March 2020 quarter day (25<sup>th</sup> March) was only two days after the initial lockdown began. A number of retail and leisure based funds and landowners were substantially affected. Our rent collection across the investment property portfolio was broadly unaffected, with collection figures of 98%.
15. Our team has focussed attention on the connection with our tenants. We have sought to show appropriate flexibility as part of a supportive attitude, but also to protect the Council's investments.
16. We had expected the June quarter day to be a substantially harder test, with tenants having had three months of hardship in which to strategise, however we are pleased to report rent collection of 95%. Collection over the past year is well above the industry average, assisted by a diverse portfolio, with a low proportion of High Street retail investments.
17. Our investment acquisition programme paused from March 2020 until February 2021, as we took stock of the market and turbulence caused by Covid-19. Broadly, an increasingly polarised commercial investment market has emerged over the past year, with last-mile logistics units and warehousing in higher occupational demand resulting in harder industrial yields, while retail and, to some extent, offices suffer.
18. This has presented a problem, in that we have not wanted to acquire property in sectors with decreasing demand, but have not considered it appropriate to be paying higher prices for assets in more sought after sectors. Accordingly, our last three acquisitions, a gym, a food production facility and a datacentre, have all been 'alternatives' as opposed to the traditional industrial, retail and office sectors.
19. The market remains suppressed when compared with pre-Covid levels of activity. Owners of office and retail assets that do not need to sell are holding on in the hope that a swift bounce back in the economy will reverse some of the damage caused by the pandemic. Owners are holding industrial assets because of their strong performance and continued rental growth. An increased number of deals are now taking place 'off-market' as vendors attempt to offload assets quietly to free up capital. Industrial and retail warehouse properties that are being widely marketed are achieving figures well in advance of asking price.
20. We have noted polarisation in Market Rents, with decreases in quoting high street retail rents and increasing incentivisation in the office sector, opposite increasing



rents in the industrial sector. This is an important consideration for the revenue returns the investments are providing. The council's position, like other investors, is significantly protected by the fact that most leases contain upwards only rent review provisions. We will look to augment the value of the portfolio by actively managing leases to seek longer terms.

## **Commercial Investments**

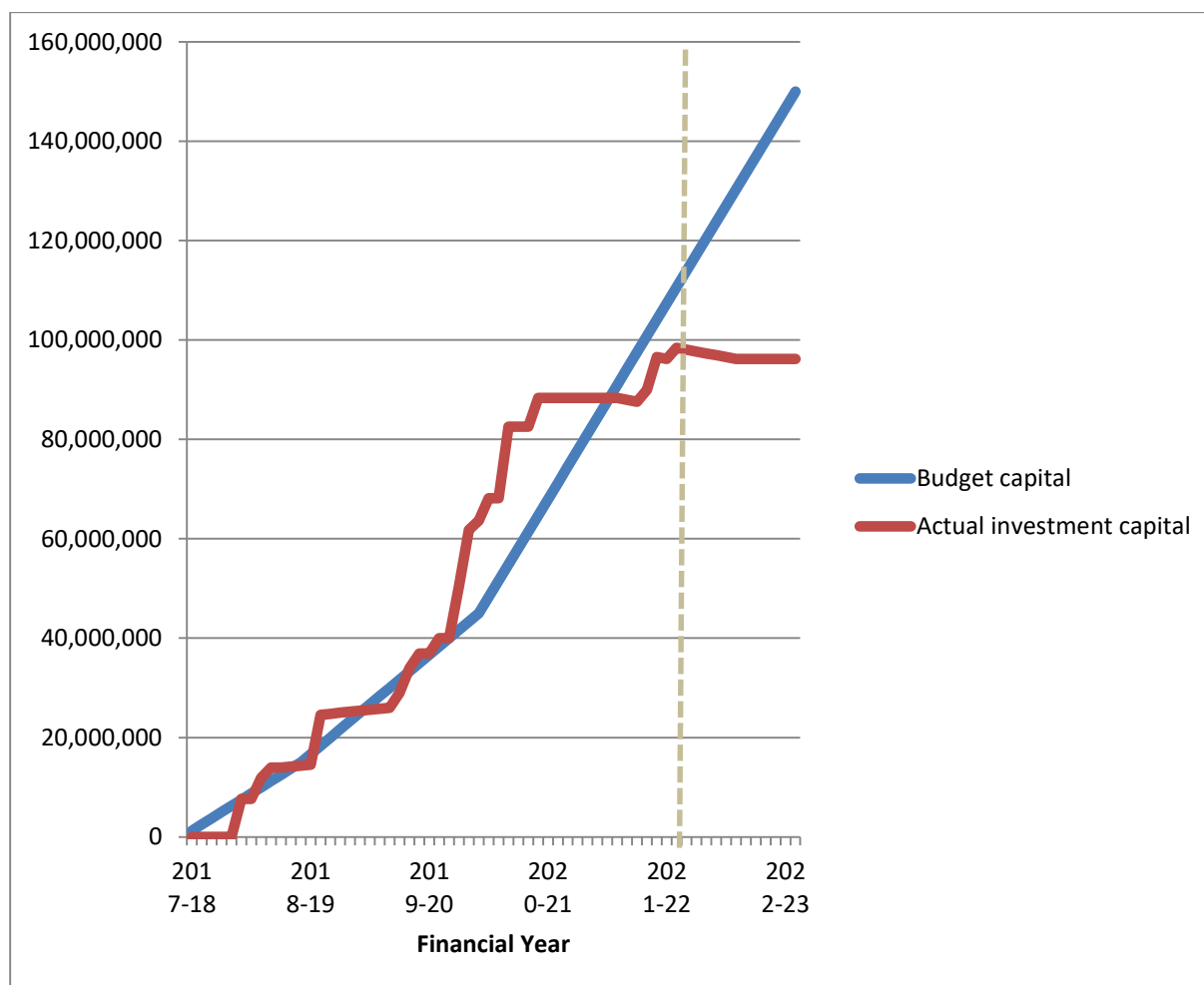
21. In September 2019, the Council approved an increase in the fund from £75m to a new total of £150m to be achieved by March 2022. The revised savings / net income target (after interest, capital repayment and risk reserve) is £3.35m. Saving in this context is delivered by net revenue income.
22. To date, a total of £87.5m has been invested in commercial property, producing a running yield of 7.03% allowing for the rent free incentive on the renewal of the lease with the tenant of our property The Ralph, Marlow (6.77% otherwise). In a reasonable worst case scenario this will decrease to 6.37% in 2022/23. We will however continue to work to renew leases and review rents to achieve improved results. The target running yield is 7%.
23. This is a gross target, which does not take into account costs of borrowing, acquisition, risk reserve and staffing. We will continue to manage the assets to improve this figure.
24. £41m has been invested in BESS - Taunton and FERL 1&2. A further £5m in the Marlborough residential development. We have excluded these investments as their returns operate on a different basis – namely interest on loans and profit on capital.
25. Our total investment is therefore £133.5m, providing for a future investment budget of £16.5m to maximise the remit.
26. In assembling this investment portfolio, the Council is not applying all of the revenue generated to support the Council's revenue budget. The Council is fully meeting the requirement to set aside money annually to repay the principal. This is distinct from the approach taken by many commercial property companies and Local Authorities, who tend only to pay the interest. However, for the Council this means a decreasing level of debt and an increasing net value of the Asset Portfolio as the debt to value ratio reduces in the Council's favour.
27. In addition, the Council has recognised the risks attached to holding a property investment portfolio and using income for this to support the revenue budget and provision of services. Therefore, the Council is also utilising a proportion of the commercial income to develop a Commercial Asset Risk reserve to protect the Council and the revenue budget from any potential future volatility, income voids or repair costs.



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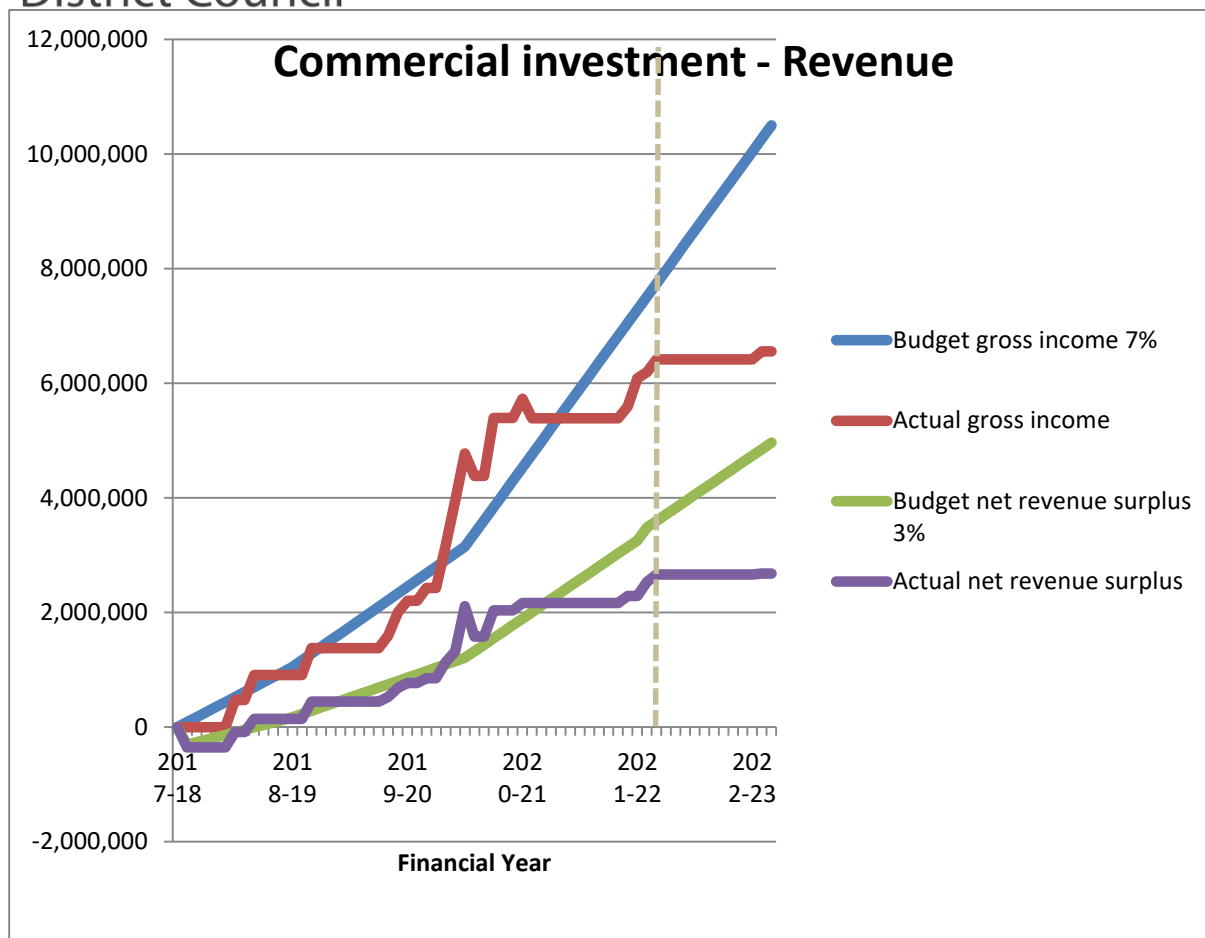
28. This reserve currently stands at in excess of £6.5m as previously reported to District Executive. As a result of the Council's prudent approach, whilst the portfolio is generating a return of circa 7%, the Council is able to utilise the true net return to support the revenue budget.
29. Progress is shown on the graph below for the actual capital invested to date in new commercial assets. This is compared with the initial budget objective to invest £150m by March 2022. The fund was allocated across four financial years and to assist review is shown as a straight line budget progression enabling progress over the time period to be seen as either below or ahead of the objective.

**Figure 1 shows commercial investment capital – Budget v Actual**



Note: Figure excludes investment in FERL 1 & 2

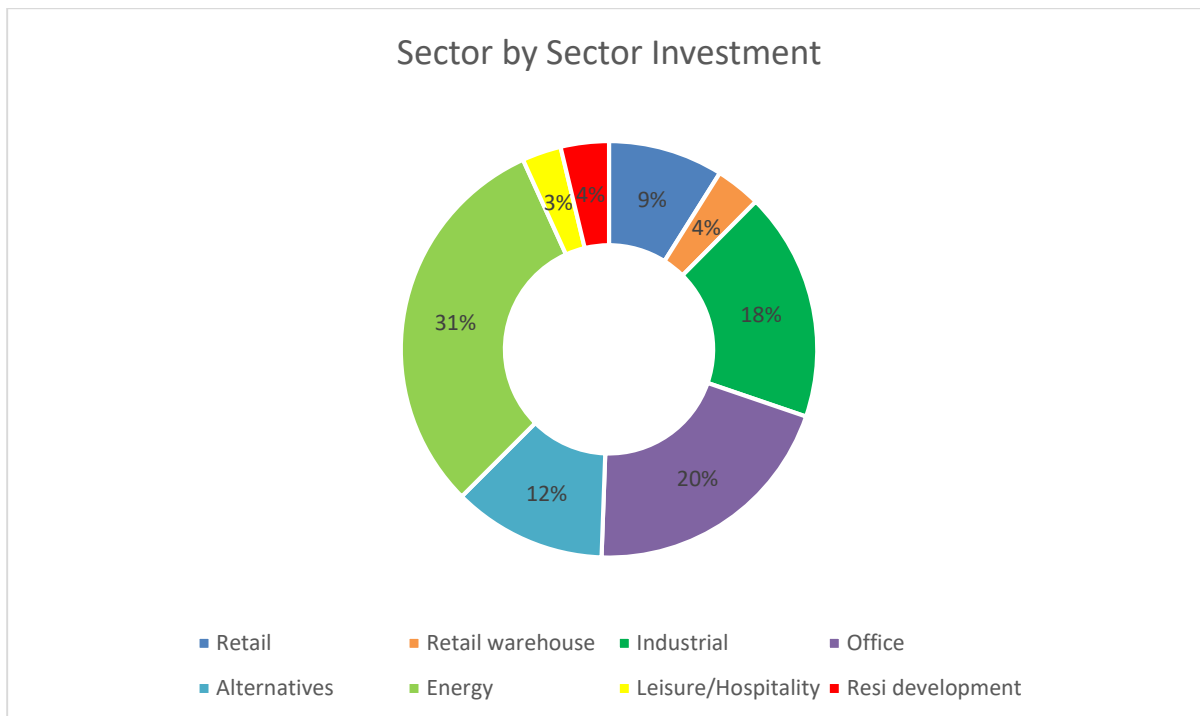
30. Progress in terms of generating additional gross revenue as a return from the capital invested shown in Figure 2 overleaf.



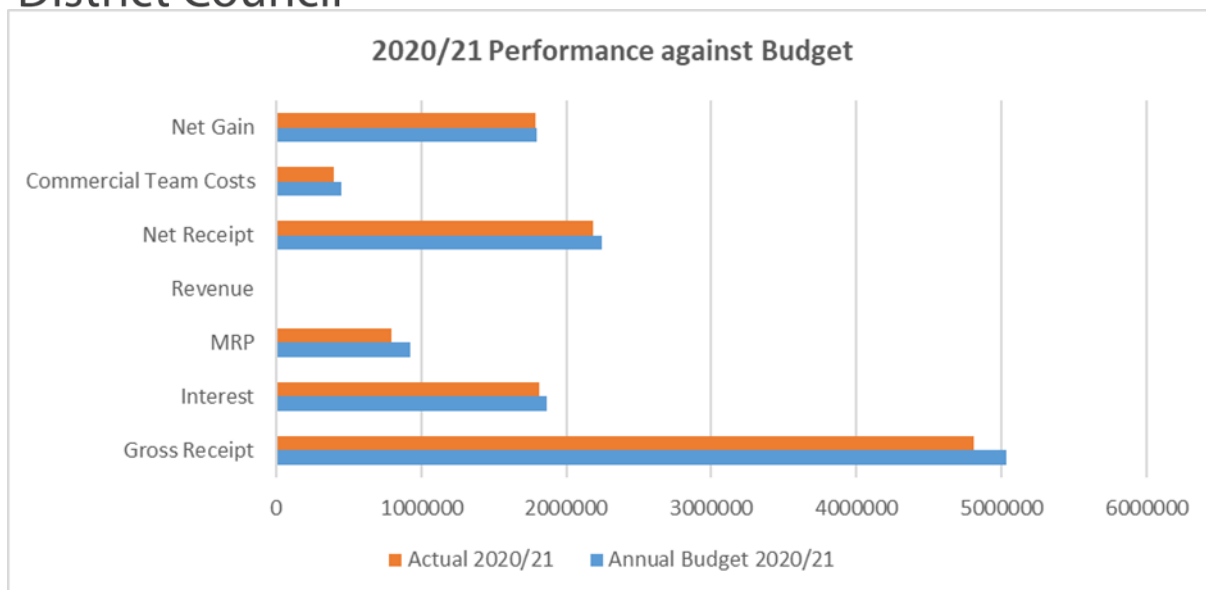
Note: excludes any income from FERL 1&2.

31. The income used in the graph above uses the contracted income (rent) from commercial property investments where the purchase has been completed.
32. Since the introduction of the Commercial Strategy, SSDC has purchased a number of investment properties. This report summarises the high level figures to demonstrate the annual income achieved via rent or sales. The investments made to date are aiding progress towards this target with commercial income in the Council's revenue budget to protect and support services to the community.
33. The Council currently has twenty-three assets in its 'new' portfolio, providing a gross income (before cost of borrowing) of £5.93m per annum using the whole year income for 2021/22 from assets in SSDC ownership as at 17<sup>th</sup> May 2021. This excludes the expected returns from BESS Taunton, FERL 1&2 and the Marlborough development project, which are not in the form of annually recurring income.
34. The battery storage facility in Taunton is now fully energised and income producing. This income is paid in arrears by National Grid.
35. The current sector split of capital invested in all of these assets, including Marlborough, BESS Taunton and FERL 1&2 is as follows:





36. Since our last report in December 2020, the Council has acquired three commercial properties for a total of £11.725m. These add £919,187 to the gross annual income and £494,675 to the net annual income.
37. Acquisitions have been funded through a combination of capital receipts, cash resources and borrowing to date. In line with the Council’s treasury management strategy we continue to utilise ‘internal borrowing’ to meet some of the financing requirement for the investments purchased. This approach reduces treasury risk. All borrowing will be asset backed (i.e. if the Council wished to pay off the borrowing it will have an asset to sell to achieve this). The investment is required to produce a rate of return for the Council which meets the Commercial Strategy targets and therefore, covers interest, capital debt repayment and produces additional income to fund the delivery of services.
38. In making investments the Council seeks to meet its corporate ambitions as set out in the Council Plan to maximise the benefits to the communities of South Somerset. The costs and funding of the investment portfolio is set out in Confidential Appendix, table 1.
39. The bar chart below shows the income and costs to 31st March 2021 for 2020/21 against the budget that was included in the Budget Setting 2020/21 report agreed by Full Council in February 2020. It shows that despite Covid-19 the budgets set in February 2020 were accurate predictions.



## Portfolio Commentary

40. The world is very infrequently dominated by one issue in the same way that COVID-19 has influenced global consciousness and the world economy. Earlier in this report we reported the impact that Covid-19 has had on GDP and rent collection.
41. Since January we have obtained planning permission for the development of a “drive-thru” coffee unit at B&Q, Glastonbury. We have agreed terms with a national covenant for occupation on a fifteen year term. Upon completion, this will add circa £1.1m to the value of the asset.
42. The lease renewal of The Ralph, on which we reported previously, is assessed to have added £1.2m to the value of the asset.
43. We have previously commented upon media coverage of Local Authority property investment. We reiterate that this matter should remain foremost in Members’ minds. Press commentary has portrayed risk as if it is a black and white matter where there could be activity areas which do not have risk. This is a serious distortion of the actuality. The Commercial Strategy acknowledged from the outset that there are risks involved in commercial activity. In the property investment area, we have adopted implementation, acquisition and management strategies that assess and mitigate risks. This has to be adapted for the situation we now face, but our analysis does enable us to identify levels of price adjustment needed to reflect the potential impacts from economic slowdown and its effect on businesses and property markets.
44. Property investors are protected during lease terms from falls in market rental values as most commercial leases provide for upwards only rent revisions.



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Analysis from past serious recessions shows how funds can perform effectively with purchasing during economic downturn.

### New Assets

45. There have been two investment purchases in the period from February 2021 to April 2021.
46. 54 Willis Way, Poole was acquired in February 2021 for £2.55m reflecting a net initial yield of 7.47%. The property comprises an 18,174 square foot high quality gym occupied by Fitness First for an eighteen year unexpired term, with a break in eight years. Whilst the leisure sector has been hit by Covid-19 the highly accessible nature and large parking area mean that the value is underpinned by trade counter and retail warehouse uses.
47. The Cornwall Food Production Unit, Redruth was acquired in April 2021 for £6.7m reflecting a net initial yield of 6.71%, increasing annually by any uplift in the retail price index. The property comprises a 24,144 square foot, high specification food production facility which produces the food for Cornwall's acute hospitals. There is a further 12.3 year unexpired term to the highly secure Government backed covenant of the NHS.
48. Just beyond the cut-off, Lyndon Place, Birmingham was acquired in May 2021 for £2.475m reflecting a net initial yield of 8.96%. The property comprises a mixed use freehold property, with 90% of the income secured against global IT services provider SCC, who operate the ground floor as a data-centre. The upper floors are arranged as residential flats from which the Council derives a ground rent, and two roof mounted telephone masts. There is an average weighted unexpired lease term of 5.75 years to break.
49. In the calendar year 2019, SSDC acquired 12 properties totalling £56.3m. Subject to market conditions, this provides an indication of the ability to deliver the remainder of the acquisition programme required to meet the overall investment objective within the period stated in the Financial Strategy. Covid-19 paused our acquisition programme and we acquired just £5.4m property in the 2020 calendar year. We remain confident in completing our acquisition programme by the end of the 2021 calendar year.

### Residential Development, Marlborough

50. The Marlborough residential development has been considerably delayed against original programme as reported previously, COVID-19 disrupting both completion of outstanding work and marketing activity. We have appointed new



selling agents. One house sale completed during the period being reported and we are expecting a second completion. We are hopeful that the end of lockdown will see the market pick up, and Marlborough as a location is expected to perform well.

## **BESS Fideoak and Fareham**

51. The Fideoak BESS (battery energy storage scheme) continues to be fully operational and revenue producing. In March the system operated by SSDCOPL was put in the Dynamic Low High (DLH) market so we could qualify to Dynamic Containment (DC) market. In April, the first part of the month was in DLH and then trading went into DC. In addition, the figures below include a projection for April's income.

52. For May, this is a projected figure for 22MW of energy trading. The remainder of the 30 MW is still unqualified in DC, but it is the intention to get this qualified into DC before the end on April, once BYD, the battery suppliers, have finished software upgrades; so this figure should increase.

March Actual = £134,229.6

April Figure DLH = £67,067.62 & DC = £163,608      Total = £230,675.62

May Projection = £287,256.00

53. As a reminder to members, we do not receive revenue for March until the end of May, April until the end of June and May until the end of July. So from a cashflow perspective we are always at least two months behind the actual generation. All figures exclude VAT.

54. On the Fareham BESS phase 1, all is on track and in budget to date with the only extras coming in relating to a hard dig for the service cable from a more cost effective soft dig. This was due to utilities being incorrectly mapped by their owners and the soft dig route not being available as it has already been used for utilities. These additional costs are being paid from within the contingency fund, contractors are confident some of this can be clawed back elsewhere before the end of development.

55. The only other update since our last report was linked to the Suez Canal blockage issue, with battery containers being on shipping delayed by the blockage. That has been resolved as a risk now, with no further adverse impact on the development programme.

## **Commercial Investment Acquisitions**

56. Consideration of appropriate acquisitions has been sustained to continue progress towards meeting the Council's objectives for commercial investment. Before the pandemic, we typically considered some forty investment opportunities each month and have a regularly updated set of criteria for agents identifying target yield, lot size, sector, unexpired term, location and tenant. The property investment market sharply reduced activity once the lockdown was announced although transactions have continued to complete.
57. The RICS announced a period of material valuation uncertainty, which although rescinded across all sectors by mid-September 2020, has restricted investment. We are currently considering circa twenty opportunities a month.
58. The Commercial Property Team has developed a reputation in the property investment market for acting quickly and professionally. This ensures that SSDC is offered the most attractive opportunities and does not overpay for property.
59. SSDC's Commercial strategy also aims to create a risk-mitigated and balanced portfolio and therefore we will continue to be highly selective, in order to meet our strategic objectives.

## **Financial Implications**

60. The financial implications for the progress with commercial investments and of asset management activity are set out within the report and in further detail in the Confidential Appendix.
61. SSDC have approved a large sum for commercial investment. The commercial strategy has been operating for 45 months, and excellent progress has been made, ahead of target timeframes. Nevertheless the economic effect of Covid-19 have slowed progress as the market has struggled and less opportunities are available.
62. Detailed and robust due diligence has been completed with extensive involvement of SSDC's finance and legal specialists together with external advisors (e.g. valuers, tax specialists, legal advisers, sector specialists) to support the property team in completing robust business cases that underpin recommendations and investment decisions. The decisions made have been through the agreed governance arrangements as approved by SSDC with the Investment Assessment Group providing deferrals, refusals and unanimous recommendations to the Council Leader and Chief Executive for final decisions. Arrangements have been reviewed by Internal Audit and the minor improvements recommended have been implemented.



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63. The financial implications of completed acquisitions including costs, income and funding arrangements will continue to be incorporated in budget setting and monitoring processes, in line with SSDC's financial procedures framework.

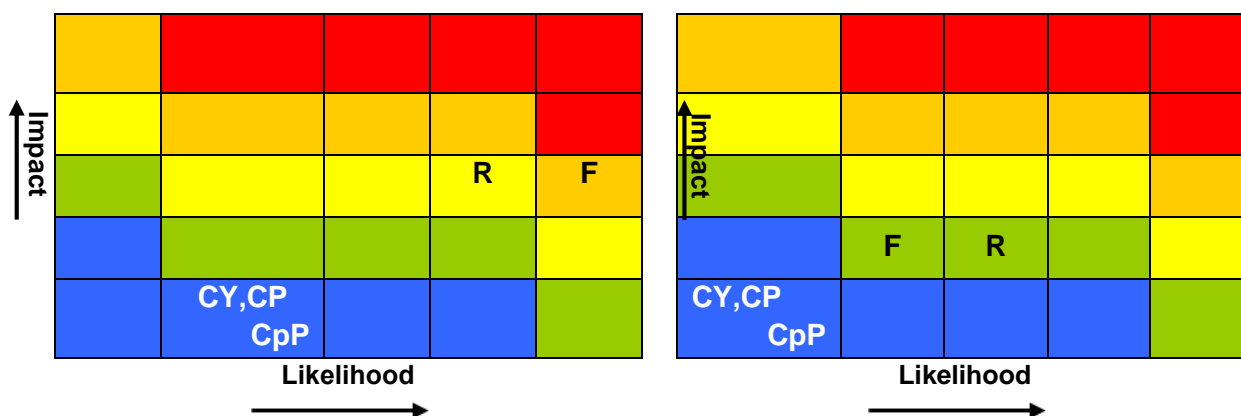
## Legal implications (if any) and details of Statutory Powers

64. None.

## Risk Matrix

Risk Profile before officer recommendations

Risk Profile after officer recommendations



### Key

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

## Council Plan Implications

65. This report links to the following Council Plan objectives:

- Protecting Core Services
- Take a more commercial approach to become self-sufficient financially
- Supporting the Regeneration of Chard, Yeovil and Wincanton
- Supporting local businesses

## Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications

66. None.

## Equality and Diversity Implications

67. None.



## **Privacy Impact Assessment**

68. There is no personal information included in this report

## **Background Papers**

69. SSSDC Commercial Strategy 2017 and 2019

## **Completions relating to SSDC Assets**

- Service easement with Conrad Energy for a gas pipe under SSDC land in Yeovil for the sum of £2,000
- Disposal of 17 Woodland Grove, Yeovil for £140,500 to an individual who will continue to use the property as a HMO
- Lease of office space at Boden Centre, Chard to Ross Fanyaki (osteopath) for £3,000 per annum. The tenant will relocate to the regeneration site when new units are available
- Formalised an agreement between SSDC and Yeovil Crime Reduction Unit for office space at Petters House
- Letting of 1A Trafalgar House, Taunton to Soul Gourmet Limited for a ten year term at a rent of £18,000, increasing to £22,000 over the first three years of the term.

## **Asset Management Update**

70. Since the last District Executive update in December 2020 the asset team have continued reviewing the portfolio and identifying opportunities to explore. The emergence of the phosphate issue in August 2020 has caused significant issues with obtaining residential planning consents. This has also led to certain disposals with outline planning consent being paused whilst a mitigation strategy is developed. As the mitigation may take the form of a financial contribution, secured through a s106 agreement or unilateral undertaking, this is causing some uncertainty to our buyers, as the scale of this contribution is not yet known.
71. Two significant disposals that were expected to have completed have been affected (2x homes at Eastfield, Martock and 2x homes at Piece Road, Milborne Port). These sites remain in the disposal pipeline and are expected to transact in the next 12 months, subject to the phosphate issue being resolved.
72. The team have concluded land sales to the value of £140,500, with additional small land parcels unaffected by phosphates due to compete later this year.
73. The post COVID-19 local market is proving to be relatively strong, however the ongoing phosphate issue is restricting the supply of residential sites to the market.





## South Somerset District Council

We anticipate strong demand for the future pipeline sites once they are in receipt of a planning consent.

74. We have also agreed leases and wayleaves totalling £42,260, of which £5,000 has already been received.
  75. The work to develop a pipeline of small sites for disposal has continued, albeit at a slower pace due to Covid and the phosphate issue. The team have worked hard during lockdown to let any vacant small commercial units, and the portfolio currently has very few voids. We are in regular contact with the tenants at the Small Business Centre and have provided support and advice to help sustain their tenancies.
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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted



## District Executive Forward Plan

Executive Portfolio Holder: Val Keitch, Leader, Strategy and Housing  
Strategic Director: Nicola Hix, Strategy and Support Services  
Lead Officer: Angela Cox, Democratic Services Specialist  
Contact Details: angela.cox@southsomerset.gov.uk or (01935) 462148

## Purpose of the Report

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

## Public Interest

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

## Recommendations

3. That District Executive is asked to:
  - a) approve the updated Executive Forward Plan for publication as attached at Appendix A
  - b) note the contents of the Consultation Database as shown at Appendix B.

## Executive Forward Plan

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

## Consultation Database

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

## Background Papers

6. None.

## APPENDIX A - SSDC Executive Forward Plan

Date of Decision	Decision	Portfolio	Service Director	Contact	Committee(s)
June 2021	Investment Assets update report	Portfolio Holder - Economic Development including Commercial Strategy	Director Commercial Services & Income Generation	Robert Orrett, Commercial Property, Land & Development Manager	District Executive
June 2021	Negotiation Strategy for Planning	Portfolio Holder - Protecting Core Services	Director Service Delivery	Kirsty Larkins, Director (Service Delivery)	District Executive
June 2021	Result of Neighbourhood Plan Referendum for Martock	Portfolio Holder - Strategy & Housing	Director Service Delivery	Jo Wilkins, Specialist (Strategic Planning)	District Executive
June 2021	Result of Neighbourhood Plan Referendum for Queen Camel	Portfolio Holder - Strategy & Housing	Director Service Delivery	Jo Wilkins, Specialist (Strategic Planning)	District Executive
June 2021	Relocation of Emergency Accommodation	Portfolio Holder - Strategy & Housing	Director Service Delivery	Leigh Rampton, Lead Specialist (Communities)	District Executive
July 2021	Update on Proposals from the Planning Re-imagined Workshops	Portfolio Holder - Protecting Core Services	Director Service Delivery	Kirsty Larkins, Director (Service Delivery)	District Executive

Date of Decision	Decision	Portfolio	Service Director	Contact	Committee(s)
July 2021	Review and amendment of Priority Project 1 of the Council Plan: Lead the recovery and revitalisation of our economy and communities to be stronger, more resilient and more vibrant than before Covid-19	Portfolio Holder - Economic Development including Commercial Strategy	Director Place and Recovery	Joe Walsh, Specialist (Economic Development)	District Executive
July 2021	Capital & Revenue Budget Outturn reports for Quarter 4	Portfolio Holder - Finance, Legal & Democratic Services	Director Strategy and Support Services	Paul Matravers, Lead Specialist (Finance)	District Executive
August 2021	SSDC Financial Strategy	Portfolio Holder - Finance, Legal & Democratic Services	Director Strategy and Support Services	Karen Watling, Interim Section 151 Officer	District Executive
August 2021	Review of SSDC Commercial Strategy	Portfolio Holder - Economic Development including Commercial Strategy	Director Commercial Services & Income Generation	Clare Pestell, Director (Commercial Services & Income Generation)	District Executive
August 2021	Briefing on the outcome of the future of Local Government in Somerset	Portfolio Holder - Strategy & Housing	Director Place and Recovery	Jan Gamon, Director (Place and Recovery)	District Executive
August 2021	Capital & Revenue Budget monitoring reports for Quarter 1	Portfolio Holder - Finance, Legal & Democratic Services	Director Strategy and Support Services	Karen Watling, Interim Section 151 Officer	District Executive

<b>Date of Decision</b>	<b>Decision</b>	<b>Portfolio</b>	<b>Service Director</b>	<b>Contact</b>	<b>Committee(s)</b>
August 2021	Quarterly Corporate Performance Report	Portfolio Holder - Strategy & Housing	Director Strategy and Support Services	Cath Temple, Specialist (Performance)	District Executive
September 2021	Creating a future strategy for Chard - progress report	Portfolio Holder - Area West	Director Place and Recovery	Jan Gamon, Director (Place and Recovery)	District Executive
September 2021	Freedom Leisure update	Portfolio Holder - Health & Well-Being	Director Strategy and Support Services	Lynda Pincombe, Specialist - Strategic Planning	District Executive
November 2021	Capital & Revenue Budget monitoring reports for Quarter 2	Portfolio Holder - Finance, Legal & Democratic Services	Director Strategy and Support Services	Karen Watling, Interim Section 151 Officer	District Executive
November 2021	Quarterly Corporate Performance Report	Portfolio Holder - Strategy & Housing	Director Strategy and Support Services	Cath Temple, Specialist (Performance)	District Executive

**APPENDIX B - Current Consultations – June 2021**

Purpose of Document	Portfolio	Director	Response to be agreed by	Contact	Deadline for response
<p><b>Local authority remote meetings: call for evidence</b></p> <p>We are seeking views on the use of the current arrangements which have allowed local authorities to hold meetings remotely or in a hybrid format during the coronavirus pandemic.</p> <p>This call for evidence seeks to understand the experience of local authorities in the whole of the UK regarding remote meetings. This includes authorities in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland.</p> <p>Scottish authorities were able to meet remotely prior to the pandemic, and this call for evidence seeks to understand their experience of remote meetings since these arrangements came into force.</p> <p><a href="http://www.gov.uk">Local authority remote meetings: call for evidence - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</a></p>	<p>Finance and Legal Services</p>	<p>Nicola Hix, Strategy and Support Services</p>	<p>Officers in consultation with Portfolio Holder (survey of members and Parish Councils undertaken)</p>	<p>Jill Byron, Monitoring Officer</p>	<p>17 June 2021</p>



## **Date of Next Meeting**

Members are asked to note that the next meeting of the District Executive will take place on **Thursday, 1<sup>st</sup> July 2021** as a virtual consultation meeting via Zoom meeting software commencing at 9.30 a.m.

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