

## Wincanton Town Centre Regeneration – Revisions to Timetable

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Executive Portfolio Holder:	Cllr. Sarah Dyke, Chair of Wincanton Regen Board
Ward Member(s)	Cllr. Nick Colbert, Cllr. Colin Winder
Strategic Director:	Jan Gamon, Place, Recovery and Arts and Entertainment
Lead Officer:	Natalie Fortt, Programme Manager, Place and Recovery
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### Purpose of the Report

1. As we approach the transition from South Somerset District Council to the new Somerset Council, the councillors elected to the new authority have undertaken an extensive review of both the revenue and capital budgets for the financial year 2023/24 and beyond. This has implications for some of the projects currently underway in South Somerset. This report identifies the impact on the Wincanton Town Centre Regeneration.

### Forward Plan

2. This report did not appear on the forward plan, as it could not have been anticipated.

### Public Interest

3. Residents of South Somerset, and those who visit Wincanton for work or leisure, will be interested to understand how our plans for the town are influenced by the decision of the newly elected councillors to the Somerset Council.

### Recommendations

4. That District Executive notes that -
  - a. the total amount of the agreed capital budget for the Wincanton Town Centre Regeneration has been reprofiled so that the spend anticipated to be incurred 2023/24 and in following years has been deferred by a year;
  - b. future spend will be dependent upon an updated business case being submitted to the Somerset Council next year for implementation 2024/25 and beyond;
  - c. the total forecast spend to the end of the current financial year is £601k (of which £318k capital and the remainder revenue costs associated with the project (e.g. events and project management costs). Of the capital expenditure, £197k relates to 2022/23 and £121k to the period 2018/19 to 2021/22.

### Background



## South Somerset District Council

5. The Wincanton Town Centre Strategy was produced in 2019 following public consultation and engagement with key stakeholders. Public feedback informed the 'vision' which is for Wincanton town centre to become a place that:
  - Is well used and a thriving place to live, work and visit.
  - Has an enhanced retail, community and social function that encourages visits during the day and in the evening.
  - Makes more of the centres special cultural and heritage character through improvements to the public realm and buildings to attract investment into the town centre.
  - Has a wider mix of uses, including commercial floor space and quality housing that supports enterprise, creativity and vibrancy.
  - Will create a convenient and attractive destination for both local residents and visitors, using the unique assets of Wincanton town centre and the surrounding area.
6. A diverse range of initiatives were envisaged to help deliver the strategic objectives within three main themes:
  1. Broadening the mix of uses – includes engaging landowners of vacant premises, and under-used sites to promote owner driven re-use of the building or alternative uses appropriate to the town centre.
  2. Enhancing the attractiveness of the town centre - modest interventions such as planting/greening schemes, work to align trading hours, and larger specific projects such as public realm improvements and a property grant programme.
  3. Creating a destination – this includes a variety of projects from one off events, marketing initiatives, partnership with local attractors, signage within and to/from and within the town.

### Scope of Proposed Project

7. In the Summer of 2022 a new chair was appointed to the Wincanton Regeneration Board, and the chair took the opportunity to review, with the board members, the scope of the work. A number of initiatives to support the town and improve historic buildings at risk had been undertaken, but there was a need to re-visit plans for the remaining funds and discuss whether this should focus on public realm works as planned, or to re-focus on bringing key empty premises in the town back into use. Board members agreed that bringing key empty premises back into use should be the primary focus. The planned public realm enhancements would be passed to the new Somerset Council for future delivery as funds allow.
8. Subsequent to this decision, Executive lead members for the new Somerset Council have reviewed the entire capital programme for the new authority in the light of budgetary challenges and the decision was taken to scale back some programmes and defer others. The Wincanton Town Centre Regeneration Programme is one of the projects which will be deferred for a year and will require an updated Business Case.

9. It is proposed that a business case is prepared for consideration by Somerset Council for implementation from 2024/25, which would be followed by the development of proposed plans for the sites in consultation with the public.

## Financial Implications

10. The total approved remaining capital budget for this project remains at £2.099m. The Revised Estimates (Quarter 2 budget monitoring position) approved by Full Council in December 2022 assumed that £0.562m would be spent this year with the balance in 2023/24 (see table one below). The new position which will be included in the Quarter Three capital budget monitoring report is an estimated spend of £0.187m this year with the balance reprofiled into 2024/25 financial year.

Table 1: Wincanton Town Centre Capital Expenditure

	2022/23 Est. Spend (£000s)	2023/24 Est. Spend (£000s)	2024/25 Est. Spend (£000s)	Total
Q2 Budget Monitoring	562	1,537	0	2,099
Q3 Proposed figures	197	0	1,902	2,099

11. Members should note that the S151 Officer will review whether the revenue costs being incurred by this project, and all the Regeneration projects, can be capitalised and funded by borrowing rather than by revenue earmarked reserves as they currently are. This review will be undertaken at the year end with the objective of preserving revenue reserves if possible, for the new Somerset Council.

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

None

## Risk Matrix

None arising from this report

## Council Plan Implications

None arising from this report

## Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications

None arising from this report

<i>An Equality Impact Relevance Check Form has been completed in respect of the Proposal?</i>	Yes / <del>No</del>
<i>The Impact Relevance Check indicated that a full EIA was required?</i>	<del>Yes</del> / No
<i>If an EIA was <b>not</b> required please attach the Impact Relevance Check Form as an Appendix to this report and provide a brief summary of its findings in the comments box below.</i>	
<i>If an EIA <b>was</b> required please attach the completed EIA form as an Appendix to this report and provide a brief summary of the result of your Equality Impact Assessment in the comment box below.</i>	
<b>Additional Comments</b>	

## Privacy Impact Assessment

No personal data will be processed