

## **The Council's Vision:**

To enable people to live, work and prosper in West Somerset

### **CABINET**

**Meeting to be held on 6 November 2013 at 4.30 pm**

**Council Chamber, Williton**

### **AGENDA**

1. **Apologies for Absence**

2. **Minutes**

Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet held on 2 October 2013 to be approved and signed as a correct record – **SEE ATTACHED.**

3. **Declarations of Interest**

To receive and record declarations of interest in respect of any matters included on the agenda for consideration at this meeting.

4. **Public Participation**

The Leader to advise the Cabinet of any items on which members of the public have requested to speak and advise those members of the public present of the details of the Council's public participation scheme.

For those members of the public wishing to speak at this meeting there are a few points you might like to note.

A three-minute time limit applies to each speaker and you will be asked to speak before Councillors debate the issue. There will be no further opportunity for comment at a later stage. Your comments should be addressed to the Chairman and any ruling made by the Chair is not open to discussion. If a response is needed it will be given either orally at the meeting or a written reply made within five working days of the meeting.

5. **Forward Plan**

To approve the latest Forward Plan published on 25 October 2013 – **SEE ATTACHED.**

6. **Cabinet Action Plan**

To update the Cabinet on the progress of resolutions and recommendations from previous meetings – **SEE ATTACHED.**

7. **Request for Allocation of Section 106 Funding – Fit to Work – Hinkley**

To consider Report No. WSC 142/13, to be presented by Councillor K V Kravis, Lead Member for Resources and Central Support – **SEE ATTACHED.**

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The purpose of the report is to outline proposals by Sedgemoor District Council to use their proportion of the fit to work funding contribution provided as an element of the Skills and Training part of the Hinkley Point C site preparation works section 106 agreement and in line with the requirements of the section 106 agreement to seek the approval of West Somerset Council for this allocation.

### **8. 2014/15 Council Tax Rebate Scheme**

To consider Report No. WSC 133/13, to be presented by Councillor D J Westcott, Lead Member for Community and Customer – **SEE ATTACHED.**

The purpose of the report is to advise Cabinet of the proposed Council Tax Rebate Scheme for West Somerset.

### **9. Joint Scrutiny Review of Flooding**

To consider Report No. WSC 141/13, to be presented by Councillor A H Trollope-Bellew, Lead Member for Environment - General – **SEE ATTACHED.**

The purpose of the report is to present the recommendations of the Joint Scrutiny Review of Flooding.

## **COUNCILLORS ARE REMINDED TO CHECK THEIR POST TRAYS**

### **The Council's Corporate Priorities:**

- Local Democracy:  
Securing local democracy and accountability in West Somerset, based in West Somerset, elected by the people of West Somerset and responsible to the people of West Somerset.
- New Nuclear Development at Hinkley Point  
Maximising opportunities for West Somerset communities and businesses to benefit from the development whilst protecting local communities and the environment.

### **The Council's Core Values:**

- Integrity
- Respect
- Fairness
- Trust

## RISK SCORING MATRIX

Report writers score risks in reports uses the scoring matrix below

**Risk Scoring Matrix**

<b>Likelihood</b>	5	Almost Certain	Low (5)	Medium (10)	High (15)	Very High (20)	Very High (25)
	4	Likely	Low (4)	Medium (8)	Medium (12)	High (16)	Very High (20)
	3	Possible	Low (3)	Low (6)	Medium (9)	Medium (12)	High (15)
	2	Unlikely	Low (2)	Low (4)	Low (6)	Medium (8)	Medium (10)
	1	Rare	Low (1)	Low (2)	Low (3)	Low (4)	Low (5)
			1	2	3	4	5
			Negligible	Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic
<b>Impact</b>							

<b>Likelihood of risk occurring</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Description (chance of occurrence)</b>
1. Very Unlikely	May occur in exceptional circumstances	< 10%
2. Slight	Is unlikely to, but could occur at some time	10 – 25%
3. Feasible	Fairly likely to occur at same time	25 – 50%
4. Likely	Likely to occur within the next 1-2 years, or occurs occasionally	50 – 75%
5. Very Likely	Regular occurrence (daily / weekly / monthly)	> 75%

- Mitigating actions for high ('High' or above) scoring risks are to be reflected in Service Plans, managed by the Group Manager and implemented by Service Lead Officers;
- Lower scoring risks will either be accepted with no mitigating actions or included in work plans with appropriate mitigating actions that are managed by Service Lead Officers.



**CABINET****MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 2 OCTOBER 2013****AT 4.30 PM****IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, WILLITON****Present:**

Councillor T Taylor ..... Leader

Councillor K V Kravis  
Councillor C MorganCouncillor K M Mills  
Councillor S J Pugsley**Members in Attendance:**Councillor M O A Dewdney  
Councillor J Freeman  
Councillor B Heywood  
Councillor E May  
Councillor K J Ross  
Councillor L W SmithCouncillor G S Dowding  
Councillor A P Hadley  
Councillor R P Lillis  
Councillor D D Ross  
Councillor D J Sanders  
Councillor M A Smith**Officers in Attendance:**Chief Executive (A Dyer)  
Corporate Director (B Lang)  
Section 151 Officer (S Campbell)  
Corporate Manager Housing, Welfare and Economy (I Timms)  
Climate Change & Community Liaison Manager (A Lamplough) – Items 7 and 8  
Meeting Administrator (K Kowalewska)**Also in Attendance:**

Nick Millard, Bruton Knowles

**CAB45      Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Trollope-Bellew, K H Turner and D J Westcott.

**CAB46      Minutes of the Meeting held on 4 September 2013**

(Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet held on 4 September 2013 - circulated with the Agenda.)

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet held on 4 September 2013 be confirmed as a correct record.

**CAB47**      **Declarations of Interest**

Members present at the meeting declared the following personal interests in their capacity as a Member of a County, Parish or Town Council:

Name	Minute No.	Member of	Action Taken
Councillor K J Ross	All	Dulverton	Spoke
Councillor L W Smith	All	Minehead	Spoke

In addition, the following interest was declared:

Name	Minute No.	Description of Interest	Personal or Prejudicial	Action Taken
Councillor A P Hadley	CAB59	Shop owner in Minehead	Personal	Spoke

**CAB48**      **Public Participation**

No member of the public had requested to speak.

**CAB49**      **Forward Plan**

(Copy of latest Forward Plan published 24 September 2013 – circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of this item was to approve the latest Forward Plan published 24 September 2013.

**RESOLVED** that the latest Forward Plan published 24 September 2013 be approved.

**CAB50**      **Cabinet Action Plan**

(Copy of the Action Plan – circulated with the Agenda.)

**RESOLVED (1)** that CAB40 – Discretionary Housing Payments Use of Additional Funding be deleted as actioned.

**RESOLVED (2)** that CAB41 – Empty Homes Enforcement Policy be deleted as actioned.

**RESOLVED (3)** that CAB42 – Unlawful Eviction Policy be deleted as actioned.

**CAB51**      **Consideration of nominations received to list Assets of Community Value under the Community Right to Bid Legislation**

(Report No. WSC 122/13, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to review nominations received and the recommendations from CMT under the Localism Act 2011 Part 5 – the Community Right to Bid.

In the absence of the Lead Member for Community and Customer, the Leader presented the report and proposed the recommendation in the report which was seconded by Councillor K M Mills.

In response to a query as to whether access across the Central Car Park to the Porlock Medical Centre would be affected by listing the land as an asset of community value, the Chief Executive advised that in the highly unlikely event the Council did decide to sell the car park arrangements would be made to write the necessary covenants to guarantee right of way.

**RESOLVED** that the nominations [ACV023] for Central Car Park, [ACV024] Central Public Conveniences, [ACV025] Doverhay Car Park and [ACV026] Doverhay Public Conveniences, all located in Porlock, received 9 August 2013, be accepted as Assets of Community Value.

#### **CAB52 Request for Allocation of Planning Obligations Funding**

(Report No. WSC 130/13, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to make a proposal for the allocation of monies secured through planning obligations to individual schemes, and to update Cabinet with regards to the general planning obligations funds held by the Council.

The Lead Member for Resources and Central Support presented this item and advised that the funding for the landscape art project relating to the Coleridge Way had been secured through the Hinkley Point C site preparation works. The Lead Member then went on to propose the recommendation in the report which was duly seconded by Councillor C Morgan.

During the debate the following main points were raised:

- An assurance was provided that although the Minehead Street Light Enhancement project was experiencing a few difficulties with regards to timing it would be completed as quickly as possible.
- The Lead Member for Resources and Central Support and the Climate Change & Community Liaison Manager attended the opening of the Rugby Club, which had benefitted from section 106 monies, and were pleased to report on how good it was to experience how the decisions made at Council had a really good and positive impact on the community.
- In response to an enquiry as to how the £53,000 would be spent on the landscape art project, it was suggested that a copy of the full breakdown of costs could be made available with the report to be presented to the next meeting of full Council.

- The Chief Executive pointed out that all the Hinkley Point related projects would be monitored via the performance management system.

**RESOLVED** that it be recommended to Council to use £53,000 of the Hinkley Point C Site Preparation Works landscape art funding to deliver phase two of the project attached as Appendix B to the report.

**CAB53      Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2014/15 to 2016/17 Update**

(Report No. WSC 128/13, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to provide Members with an update on the Council's financial position over the next three years following the publication of the Consultation on the Settlement.

The Lead Member for Resources and Central Support presented the report and advised that details of the Government's publication of a consultation on the 2014/15 and 2015/16 financial settlement would be incorporated into the MTFP, and she highlighted on how the proposals would affect the budget setting over the next three to four years.

The following main points were reported on:

- Funding from the New Homes Bonus would affect the budget as it was proposed to be top-sliced from 2015/16 to provide funding to the LEPs.
- NNDR retention – because the Council was vulnerable to the repayment of business rates to Hinkley Point power station and the situation was very volatile, funds would be put in a ring fenced reserve for future years to protect it from any risk.
- Details were provided on what the percentage council rise would be in the following years.
- The 'pressures and inflation identified' figure in 2014/15 was heightened by the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) charge as a result of the Council's outstanding debt and it was confirmed that the sale of assets would reduce the amount of MRP.
- A different approach was being taken with regards to savings and potential options totalling £120,089 were being considered - these savings would have very little impact on frontline services.
- Reassurance was also given that savings could be made without any reduction in grants to external bodies.
- The allocation of council tax support grant to parishes needed to be looked at in order to continue to support parish and town councils for as long as possible
- The Council had a much larger reduction to the start-up funding compared to many other authorities.
- The MTFP did not include any benefits of the shared working project with Taunton Deane Borough Council but it did highlight the necessity to move forward to deliver savings.

The Lead Member proposed the recommendations in the report which were seconded by Councillor K M Mills.



Councillor K J Ross, as Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee, thanked Cabinet for the opportunity to look at the allocation of grants to parish and town councils and to consider the savings options which would be debated at the Scrutiny Committee meeting to be held on 24 October 2013.

Members thanked everyone who had been involved to help deliver the MTFP during these difficult times.

**RESOLVED (1)** that the details of the proposed financial settlement for local authorities be noted.

**RESOLVED (2)** that the Scrutiny Committee be asked to consider the amount of parish grant to be allocated to parish and town councils.

**RESOLVED (3)** that the current MTFP, as shown in table 2 of the report, be noted.

**RESOLVED (4)** that the Scrutiny Committee be asked to consider the savings options proposed by Officers.

#### **CAB54      Classification of Earmarked Reserves**

(Report No. WSC 102/13, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to seek approval by Cabinet for the re-classification of certain earmarked reserves.

The report was presented by the Lead Member for Resources and Central Support who reported on each recommendation, advising that it was important to review earmarked reserves on a regular basis. She then went on to propose the recommendations in the report which were duly seconded by Councillor S J Pugsley.

The following points were raised during the discussion of this item:

- It was confirmed that the sum of £52,000 earmarked in recommendation 3.2 included all direct on costs and overheads.
- By reporting on an oversight concerning the Council's payment to the Home Improvement Agency it showed that the Council was an open and honest authority and gave Councillors and local residents great confidence.

**RESOLVED (1)** that the sum of £145,894.07 be transferred to the Sustainability Reserve from the following reserves:

Economic Regeneration	£27,500.00
Working Neighbourhood Fund	£11,747.37
New Homes Bonus	£19,878.14
Lorry Park	£37,665.00
LSP	£ 1,201.13
Hinkley Point DCO	£47,902.43

**RESOLVED (2)** that the sum of £52,000 in the Working Neighbourhood Fund Reserve be earmarked to support the 2014/15 budget to extend the funding of the post of Economic Regeneration Manager for twelve months until 31 March 2015.

**RESOLVED (3)** that it be noted that in accordance with the previously Council approved Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP), the following sums be transferred to the General Fund:

Corporate Improvement	£19,419.46
New Homes Bonus	£60,164.00
Lorry Park	£ 8,335.00
LSP	£ 119.54

**RESOLVED (4)** that a sum of £39,320.00 be earmarked within the New Homes Bonus Reserve for the 2014/15 payment to the Home Improvement Agency.

**RESOLVED (5)** that it be noted that in accordance with the approved MTFP a new reserve of 'New Burdens Funding' has been created which will contain a government grant of £32,680 due to be received in the current year. The purpose of this reserve is to mitigate any negative impact in the Revenues and Benefits services following the implementation of welfare reforms.

**RESOLVED (6)** that it be noted that in accordance with the approved MTFP a new reserve of 'Loss of Business Rate Retention' has been created and the sum of £169,663 transferred into it from the General Fund. The purpose of this reserve is to act as a contingency against a reduction in Business Rate retention.

**RESOLVED (7)** that it be recommended to Council to approve a supplementary estimate of £62,030 in respect of the Council's 2013/14 contractual payment to the Homes Improvement Agency and that this is funded by a transfer from the New Homes Bonus Reserve to the General Fund.

## **CAB55**

### **Somerset Homeless Strategy**

(Report No. WSC 119/13, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to outline the Somerset Homeless Strategy and the associated action plan; and to request that Cabinet recommend adoption of the Strategy to Council.

The Corporate Manager Housing, Welfare and Economy presented the report and advised that the Council was statutorily required to have a Homeless Strategy. He drew Members' attention to the Equalities Impact Assessment which had been comprehensively carried out.

Councillor K V Kravis proposed the recommendation in the report which was seconded by Councillor K M Mills.

In response to an enquiry as to what were the changing themes between the previous homeless strategy and the renewed one, the Corporate Manager Housing, Welfare and Economy advised that the status quo had changed significantly and the revised strategy incorporated changes to the welfare reform, as detailed in Appendix A to the report, public spending cuts, changes to discretionary housing benefit and the move towards universal credit.

**RESOLVED** that it be recommended to Council to adopt the Somerset Homeless Strategy.

**CAB56**      **Homefinder Somerset Common Allocations Policy**

(Report No. WSC 120/13, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to advise Members of the proposed changes to the Allocations Policy resulting from changes in legislation and government policy.

The Corporate Manager Housing, Welfare and Economy reported that the policy required updating due to changes in the benefits system, changes to how armed forces personnel were treated, the provision of the Localism Act and other administrative amendments all of which were detailed in Appendix B to the report. A comprehensive Equalities Impact Assessment had been undertaken as a result of these policy changes.

Councillor K V Kravis proposed the recommendations in the report which were seconded by Councillor C Morgan.

Members expressed concern at the way the system currently worked for residents in the more remote rural parts of the district and requested whether the policy could be tweaked so that it applied more fairly. Members felt people should be encouraged to engage more with the Choice Based Lettings system and how this could be done more effectively needed to be investigated.

**RESOLVED (1)** that the changes to the policy attached as Appendix A to the report be agreed and that it be recommended to Council for adoption.

**RESOLVED (2)** that the findings of the equality impact assessment attached as Appendix C to the report be noted.

**CAB57**      **Somerset Flooding Summit – Draft Final Report**

(Report No. WSC 129/13, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to present the draft final report of the Somerset Flooding Summit to Cabinet.

The Leader advised that the item should be deferred as it was felt that it would not be a productive process for Cabinet to consider the Somerset

Leaders' and Chief Executives' comments on the Joint Scrutiny Review of Flooding at this present time. In consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee it had been agreed that, in order to move forward in a more constructive manner, Members of Cabinet and the Scrutiny Committee would have an informal meeting to debate the comments and a further report would be presented at the next meeting of Cabinet.

The Chief Executive advised that he had been in contact with the Lead Scrutiny Officer from South Somerset District Council who would provide him with information on what other local authorities had decided and the rationale for moving forward to enable Members to have a more informed debate on the issue.

**RESOLVED** that the item be deferred.

**CAB58**      **National Parks Governance Review**

(Report No. WSC 131/13, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to advise Cabinet of the proposals emanating from the Government's National Parks Governance Review to provide an opportunity to respond to part of the current consultation phase.

The report was presented by the Lead Member for Executive Support and Democracy who advised that the Exmoor National Park Authority as part of the review had suggested that there should be a small reduction in the number of Secretary of State appointed members and a small increase in the parish council members.

The Lead Member proposed the recommendation in the report which was seconded by Councillor K V Kravis.

**RESOLVED** that the government's proposals be noted and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) be advised that the Council is in favour of the proposed membership of the Exmoor National Park Authority as set out in the consultation document attached at Appendix A to the report.

**CAB59**      **Disposal of Council Owned Assets – former Aquasplash site and a site (known as leisure land) along Seaward Way, Minehead**

(Report No. WSC 117/13, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to identify and recommend to Council a preferred developer for the sale of two parcels of Council owned land which will enable further autonomous negotiations to continue with a single developer in respect of each site. The future use, including possible disposal, of the Visitor Information Centre (VIC) would be the subject of a separate report.

The Leader welcomed Nick Millard from Bruton Knowles to the meeting.

The Lead Member for Resources and Central Support presented this item. She provided Members with the background information and reported on the timetable of events since Bruton Knowles had been appointed as property consultants. The Lead Member commented on the potential end uses of the sites and felt it was important to note that there was not a great breadth of choice for development. It was noted that the Corporate Policy Advisory Group had recently discussed the matter in great detail. Members were advised of the serious financial implications should a nominal amount for the land be accepted or the decision taken not to sell the land.

The Lead Member also reported on the history relating to the possible provision of a swimming pool and the West Somerset Community College had recently advised the Council that the location of a community swimming pool on the college campus was no longer an option.

The Lead Member then went on to propose the recommendations contained in the report which were duly seconded by Councillor C Morgan.

Councillor K M Mills expressed concern and disappointment for the need to sell council owned land and on the limited amount of end uses for the sites. She was also very much in favour of setting up an online poll as she felt it was very important to receive feedback from local residents on the proposals.

**RESOLVED (1)** that it be recommended to Council to nominate Lidl as the preferred bidder for the sale of the former Aquasplash site.

**RESOLVED (2)** that it be recommended to Council to nominate Hartnell Taylor Cook, acting for Marston's Inns and Taverns, as the preferred bidder for the sale of the land referred to as the Leisure site.

**RESOLVED (3)** that all available draft development details of what is being proposed for each site be posted on the Council's website, from 3 October 2013, inviting comments from members of the public.

**RESOLVED (4)** that a report detailing the negotiated terms and conditions of each disposal be presented to Council as soon as such negotiations are completed.

The meeting closed at 6.42 pm



Weekly version of Forward Plan published on 25 October 2013

Forward Plan Ref / Date proposed decision published in Forward Plan	Date when decision due to be taken and by whom	Details of the proposed decision	Documents and background papers to be available to decision maker	Does the decision contain any exempt information requiring a resolution for it to be considered in private and what are the reasons for this?	Contact Officer for any representations to be made ahead of the proposed decision
FP/13/11/01 13/02/2013	6 November 2013  By Councillor D Westcott – Lead Member for Community and Customer	Title: Consideration of nomination/s received under the Community Right to Bid Legislation  Decision: To approve listing		No exempt / confidential information anticipated	Bruce Lang, Corporate Director 01984 635200
FP/13/11/02 4/07/2013	6 November 2013  By Councillor C Morgan – Lead Member for Environment – Hinkley Point	Title: Hinkley Point  Decision: to consider key issues relating to Hinkley Point		No exempt / confidential information anticipated	Andrew Goodchild, Planning Manager 01984 635245
FP/13/11/03 01/07/13	6 November 2013  By Councillor K Turner – Lead Member for Housing, Health and Wellbeing	Title: Review of Low Cost Home Ownership Scheme  Decision: To consider the review of the Low Cost Home Ownership Scheme		No exempt / confidential information anticipated	Ian Timms, Group Manager Housing, Welfare and Economy 01984 635271
FP/13/11/04 12/09/2013	6 November 2013  By Councillor D Westcott – Lead Member for Community and Customer	Title: Council Tax Rebate Scheme 2014-15  Decision: to recommend Council approve the 2014-15 Council Tax Rebate Scheme		No exempt / confidential information anticipated	Paul Lamb, Principal Benefits and Fraud Officer 01984 635224
FP/13/11/05 02/10/13	6 November 2013  By Councillor A Trollope-Bellew – Lead Member for Environment - General	Title: Somerset Flooding Summit, draft Final Report  Decision: to consider the draft recommendations		No exempt / confidential information anticipated	Bruce Lang, Corporate Director 01984 635200

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FP/13/12/01 23/11/2012	4 December 2013 By Councillor K V Kravis – Lead Member Resources & Central Support	Title: <b>Review of Financial Regulations [FR2]</b>  Decision: to offer comment on the Financial Regulations.		No exempt / confidential information anticipated	Bruce Lang, Corporate Director 01984 635200
FP/13/12/02 23/11/2012	4 December 2013 By Councillor T Taylor – Leader of Council and Councillor K V Kravis – Lead Member Resources & Central Support	Title: <b>Corporate Performance &amp; Budget Monitoring Report 2013-14 – Quarter 2</b>  Decision: to provide Members with an update on progress in delivering corporate priorities, performance of council services including budgetary information and customer satisfaction.		No exempt / confidential information anticipated	Bruce Lang, Corporate Director 01984 635200
FP/13/12/03 13/02/2013	4 December 2013 By Councillor D Westcott – Lead Member for Community and Customer	Title: Consideration of nomination/s received under the Community Right to Bid Legislation  Decision: To approve listing		No exempt / confidential information anticipated	Bruce Lang, Corporate Director 01984 635200
FP/13/12/04 4/07/2013	4 December 2013 By Councillor C Morgan – Lead Member for Environment – Hinkley Point	Title: Hinkley Point  Decision: to consider key issues relating to Hinkley Point		No exempt / confidential information anticipated	Andrew Goodchild, Planning Manager 01984 635245
FP/14/1/01 18/01/2013	8 January 2014 By Councillor K V Kravis – Lead Member Resources & Central Support	Title: <b>Fees and Charges</b>  Decision: to propose levels of fees and charges for the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015 (in some cases fee increases will be implemented earlier, this will be stated in the relevant sections of		No exempt / confidential information anticipated	Section 151 Officer



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		the report).			
FP/14/1/02 18/01/2013	8 January 2014 By Councillor K V Kravis – Lead Member Resources & Central Support	Title: <b>Allocation of Section 106 funds held – Quarter 3</b>  Decision: to make proposals for the allocation of monies secured through planning obligations to individual schemes, and to update members with the current funding position.		No exempt / confidential information anticipated	Ian Timms, Group Manager Housing, Welfare and Economy 01984 635271
FP/14/1/03 18/01/2013	8 January 2014 By Councillor K V Kravis – Lead Member Resources & Central Support	Title: <b>Draft Capital Programme 2013-14 and Capital Strategy</b>  Decision: to present the draft Capital Programme 2013/14 and draft Capital Strategy for recommendation to Council.		No exempt / confidential information anticipated	Section 151 Officer
FP/14/1/04 13/02/2013	8 January 2014 By Councillor D Westcott – Lead Member for Community and Customer	Title: Consideration of nomination/s received under the Community Right to Bid Legislation  Decision: To approve listing		No exempt / confidential information anticipated	Bruce Lang, Corporate Director 01984 635200
FP/14/1/05 4/07/2013	8 January 2014 By Councillor C Morgan – Lead Member for Environment – Hinkley Point	Title: Hinkley Point  Decision: to consider key issues relating to Hinkley Point		No exempt / confidential information anticipated	Andrew Goodchild, Planning Manager 01984 635245
FP/14/2/01 18/01/2013	5 February 2014 By Councillor K V Kravis	Title: <b>Annual Budget &amp; Council Tax Setting 2014-15</b>		No exempt / confidential information anticipated	Section 151 Officer

Forward Plan Ref / Date proposed decision published in Forward Plan	Date when decision due to be taken and by whom	Details of the proposed decision	Documents and background papers to be available to decision maker	Does the decision contain any exempt information requiring a resolution for it to be considered in private and what are the reasons for this?	Contact Officer for any representations to be made ahead of the proposed decision
	– Lead Member Resources & Central Support	Decision: to provide Members with all the information required for Council to approve the revenue budget and capital programme for 2014/15 for recommendation to Council.			
FP/14/2/02 18/01/2013	5 February 2014 By Councillor T Taylor – Leader of Council	Title: <b>Draft Corporate Plan for 2014-15</b>  Decision: to introduce the draft West Somerset Council Corporate Plan 2014/15 for recommendation to Council.		No exempt / confidential information anticipated	Chief Executive 01984 635212
FP/14/2/03 13/02/2013	5 February 2014 By Councillor D Westcott – Lead Member for Community and Customer	Title: Consideration of nomination/s received under the Community Right to Bid Legislation  Decision: To approve listing		No exempt / confidential information anticipated	Bruce Lang, Corporate Director 01984 635200
FP/14/2/04 4/07/2013	5 February 2014 By Councillor C Morgan – Lead Member for Environment – Hinkley Point	Title: Hinkley Point  Decision: to consider key issues relating to Hinkley Point		No exempt / confidential information anticipated	Andrew Goodchild, Planning Manager 01984 635245
FP/14/2/05 23/10/12	5 February 2014 By Councillor A Trollope-Bellew – Lead Member for Environment - General	Title: Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2014-19  Decision: To endorse the Management Plan as a cohesive means to safeguard the unique beauty and distinctive character of the Quantock Hills.		No exempt / confidential information anticipated	Angela Lamplough, Climate Change & Community Liaison Manager 01984 635318

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FP/14/3/01 1/03/2013	5 March 2014 By Councillor T Taylor – Leader of Council and Councillor K V Kravis – Lead Member Resources & Central Support	Title: <b>Corporate Performance &amp; Budget Monitoring Report 2013-14 – Quarter 3</b>  Decision: to provide Members with an update on progress in delivering corporate priorities, performance of council services including budgetary information and customer satisfaction.		No exempt / confidential information anticipated	Bruce Lang, Corporate Director 01984 635200
FP/14/3/02 19/03/2013	5 March 2014 By Councillor D Westcott – Lead Member for Community and Customer	Title: Consideration of nomination/s received under the Community Right to Bid Legislation  Decision: To approve listing		No exempt / confidential information anticipated	Bruce Lang, Corporate Director 01984 635200
FP/13/3/03 4/07/2013	5 March 2014 By Councillor C Morgan – Lead Member for Environment – Hinkley Point	Title: Hinkley Point  Decision: to consider key issues relating to Hinkley Point		No exempt / confidential information anticipated	Andrew Goodchild, Planning Manager 01984 635245
FP/14/4/01 19/03/2013	2 April 2014 By Councillor K V Kravis – Lead Member Resources & Central Support	Title: <b>Allocation of Section 106 funds held – Quarter 4</b>  Decision: to make proposals for the allocation of monies secured through planning obligations to individual schemes, and to update members with the current funding position.		No exempt / confidential information anticipated	Ian Timms, Group Manager Housing, Welfare and Economy 01984 635271
FP/14/4/02	2 April 2014	Title: Consideration of		No exempt / confidential	Bruce Lang, Corporate

Forward Plan Ref / Date proposed decision published in Forward Plan	Date when decision due to be taken and by whom	Details of the proposed decision	Documents and background papers to be available to decision maker	Does the decision contain any exempt information requiring a resolution for it to be considered in private and what are the reasons for this?	Contact Officer for any representations to be made ahead of the proposed decision
19/03/2013	By Councillor D Westcott – Lead Member for Community and Customer	nomination/s received under the Community Right to Bid Legislation  Decision: To approve listing		information anticipated	Director 01984 635200
FP/14/9/03 4/07/2013	2 April 2014 By Councillor C Morgan – Lead Member for Environment – Hinkley Point	Title: Hinkley Point  Decision: to consider key issues relating to Hinkley Point		No exempt / confidential information anticipated	Andrew Goodchild, Planning Manager 01984 635245
FP/14/5/01 23/05/2013	7 May 2014 By Councillor D Westcott – Lead Member for Community and Customer	Title: Consideration of nomination/s received under the Community Right to Bid Legislation  Decision: To approve listing		No exempt / confidential information anticipated	Bruce Lang, Corporate Director 01984 635200
FP/14/5/02 4/07/2013	7 May 2014 By Councillor C Morgan – Lead Member for Environment – Hinkley Point	Title: Hinkley Point  Decision: to consider key issues relating to Hinkley Point		No exempt / confidential information anticipated	Andrew Goodchild, Planning Manager 01984 635245
FP/14/6/01 23/05/2013	June 2014	Title: <b>Cabinet Appointments on Outside Bodies</b>  Decision: to appoint representatives to serve on outside bodies for the period to the Annual Meeting in 2014 (except where specific periods are stated).		No exempt / confidential information anticipated	Bruce Lang, Corporate Director 01984 635200
FP/14/6/02	June 2014	Title: Consideration of		No exempt / confidential	Bruce Lang, Corporate

Forward Plan Ref / Date proposed decision published in Forward Plan	Date when decision due to be taken and by whom	Details of the proposed decision	Documents and background papers to be available to decision maker	Does the decision contain any exempt information requiring a resolution for it to be considered in private and what are the reasons for this?	Contact Officer for any representations to be made ahead of the proposed decision
23/05/2013	By Councillor D Westcott – Lead Member for Community and Customer	nomination/s received under the Community Right to Bid Legislation  Decision: To approve listing		information anticipated	Director 01984 635200
FP/14/6/03  4/07/2013	June 2014  By Councillor C Morgan – Lead Member for Environment – Hinkley Point	Title: Hinkley Point  Decision: to consider key issues relating to Hinkley Point		No exempt / confidential information anticipated	Andrew Goodchild, Planning Manager 01984 635245
FP/14/7/01  23/05/2013	July 2014  By Councillor K V Kravis – Lead Member Resources & Central Support	Title: <b>Allocation of Section 106 funds held – Quarter 1</b>  Decision: to make proposals for the allocation of monies secured through planning obligations to individual schemes, and to update members with the current funding position.		No exempt / confidential information anticipated	Ian Timms, Group Manager Housing, Welfare and Economy 01984 635271
FP/14/7/02  23/05/2013	July 2014  By Councillor T Taylor – Leader of Council and Councillor K V Kravis – Lead Member Resources & Central Support	Title: <b>Corporate Performance &amp; Budget Monitoring Report 2013-14 – Quarter 4</b>  Decision: to provide Members with an update on progress in delivering corporate priorities, performance of council services including budgetary information and customer satisfaction.		No exempt / confidential information anticipated	Bruce Lang, Corporate Director 01984 635200
FP/14/7/03  23/05/2013	July 2014  By Councillor K V Kravis – Lead Member	Title: <b>Review of Financial Regulations [FR2]</b>  Decision: to offer comment on		No exempt / confidential information anticipated	Bruce Lang, Corporate Director 01984 635200

Forward Plan Ref / Date proposed decision published in Forward Plan	Date when decision due to be taken and by whom	Details of the proposed decision	Documents and background papers to be available to decision maker	Does the decision contain any exempt information requiring a resolution for it to be considered in private and what are the reasons for this?	Contact Officer for any representations to be made ahead of the proposed decision
	Resources & Central Support	the Financial Regulations.			
FP/14/7/04 23/05/2013	July 2014 By Councillor K V Kravis – Lead Member Resources & Central Support	Title: <b>Medium Term Financial Plan Update</b>  Decision: to present the updated Medium Term Financial Plan.		No exempt / confidential information anticipated	Section 151 Officer 01984 635253 01823 355482
FP/14/7/05 23/05/2013 Page 18	July 2014 By Councillor D Westcott – Lead Member for Community and Customer	Title: Consideration of nomination/s received under the Community Right to Bid Legislation  Decision: To approve listing		No exempt / confidential information anticipated	Bruce Lang, Corporate Director 01984 635200 Page 18
FP/14/7/06 4/07/2013	July 2014 By Councillor C Morgan – Lead Member for Environment – Hinkley Point	Title: Hinkley Point  Decision: to consider key issues relating to Hinkley Point		No exempt / confidential information anticipated	Andrew Goodchild, Planning Manager 01984 635245
FP/13/8/01 25/07/2013	August 2014 By Councillor T Taylor – Leader of Council and Councillor K V Kravis – Lead Member Resources & Central Support	Title: <b>Corporate Performance &amp; Budget Monitoring Report 2013-14 – Quarter 4</b>  Decision: to provide Members with an update on progress in delivering corporate priorities, performance of council services including budgetary information and customer satisfaction.		No exempt / confidential information anticipated	Bruce Lang, Corporate Director 01984 635200
FP/14/8/02	August 2014	Title: Consideration of		No exempt / confidential	Bruce Lang, Corporate

Forward Plan Ref / Date proposed decision published in Forward Plan	Date when decision due to be taken and by whom	Details of the proposed decision	Documents and background papers to be available to decision maker	Does the decision contain any exempt information requiring a resolution for it to be considered in private and what are the reasons for this?	Contact Officer for any representations to be made ahead of the proposed decision
25/07/2013	By Councillor D Westcott – Lead Member for Community and Customer	nomination/s received under the Community Right to Bid Legislation  Decision: To approve listing		information anticipated	Director 01984 635200
FP/14/9/01 24/09/2013	September 2014  By Councillor T Taylor – Leader of Council and Councillor K V Kravis – Lead Member Resources & Central Support	Title: <b>Corporate Performance &amp; Budget Monitoring Report 2014-15 – Quarter 1</b>  Decision: to provide Members with an update on progress in delivering corporate priorities, performance of council services including budgetary information and customer satisfaction.		No exempt / confidential information anticipated	Bruce Lang, Corporate Director 01984 635200
FP/14/9/02 24/09/2013	September 2014  By Councillor D Westcott – Lead Member for Community and Customer	Title: Consideration of nomination/s received under the Community Right to Bid Legislation  Decision: To approve listing		No exempt / confidential information anticipated	Bruce Lang, Corporate Director 01984 635200
FP/14/10/01 24/09/2013	October 2014  By Councillor K V Kravis – Lead Member Resources & Central Support	Title: <b>Allocation of Section 106 funds held – Quarter 2</b>  Decision: to make proposals for the allocation of monies secured through planning obligations to individual schemes, and to update members with the current funding position.		No exempt / confidential information anticipated	Ian Timms, Group Manager Housing, Welfare and Economy 01984 635271
FP/14/10/02 24/09/2013	October 2014  By Councillor D Westcott – Lead Member for Community and Customer	Title: Consideration of nomination/s received under the Community Right to Bid Legislation  Decision: To approve listing		No exempt / confidential information anticipated	Bruce Lang, Corporate Director 01984 635200

<b>Forward Plan Ref / Date proposed decision published in Forward Plan</b>	<b>Date when decision due to be taken and by whom</b>	<b>Details of the proposed decision</b>	<b>Documents and background papers to be available to decision maker</b>	<b>Does the decision contain any exempt information requiring a resolution for it to be considered in private and what are the reasons for this?</b>	<b>Contact Officer for any representations to be made ahead of the proposed decision</b>

Note (1) – Items in bold type are regular cyclical items.

Note (2) – All Consultation Implications are referred to in individual reports.

The Cabinet comprises the following: Councillors T Taylor, K V Kravis, K M Mills, C Morgan S J Pugsley, A H Trollope-Bellew, K H Turner and D J Westcott.

The Scrutiny Committee comprises: Councillors K J Ross, R Lillis, M J Chilcott, M O A Dewdney, G S Dowding, J Freeman, P N Grierson, B Heywood and P H Murphy.



## AGENDA ITEM 6

## CABINET ACTION PLAN

Date/Minute Number	Action Required	Action Taken
<p><b>2 October 2013</b></p> <p>CAB52 – Request for Allocation of Planning Obligations Funding</p>	<p><b>RESOLVED</b> that it be recommended to Council to use £53,000 of the Hinkley Point C Site Preparation Works landscape art funding to deliver phase two of the project attached as Appendix B to the report.</p>	<p>At the Council meeting on 23 October 2013, it was <b>RESOLVED</b> that the use of £53,000 of the Hinkley Point C Site Preparation Works landscape art funding to deliver phase two of the project attached as Appendix A to the report be agreed.</p>
<p>CAB54 – Classification of Earmarked Reserves</p>	<p><b>RESOLVED (7)</b> that it be recommended to Council to approve a supplementary estimate of £62,030 in respect of the Council's 2013/14 contractual payment to the Homes Improvement Agency and that this is funded by a transfer from the New Homes Bonus Reserve to the General Fund.</p>	<p>At the Council meeting on 23 October 2013, it was <b>RESOLVED</b> that a supplementary estimate of £62,030 in respect of the Council's 2013/14 contractual payment to the Homes Improvement Agency be approved, and that this is funded by a transfer from the New Homes Bonus Reserve to the General Fund.</p>
<p>CAB55 – Somerset Homeless Strategy</p>	<p><b>RESOLVED</b> that it be recommended to Council to adopt the Somerset Homeless Strategy.</p>	<p>At the Council meeting on 23 October 2013, it was <b>RESOLVED</b> that the Somerset Homeless Strategy 2013-2016 be adopted.</p>
<p>CAB56 – Homefinder Somerset Common Allocations Policy</p>	<p><b>RESOLVED (1)</b> that the changes to the policy attached as Appendix A to the report be agreed and that it be recommended to Council for adoption.</p>	<p>At the Council meeting on 23 October 2013, it was <b>RESOLVED (1)</b> that the changes to the Policy,</p>

		<p>attached as Appendix A to the report, be agreed.</p> <p><b><u>RESOLVED (2)</u></b> that the findings of the equality impact assessment, attached as Appendix C to the report, be noted.</p>
<p>CAB59 – Disposal of Council Owned Assets – former Aquasplash site and a site (known as leisure land) along Seaward Way, Minehead</p>	<p><b><u>RESOLVED (1)</u></b> that it be recommended to Council to nominate Lidl as the preferred bidder for the sale of the former Aquasplash site.</p> <p><b><u>RESOLVED (2)</u></b> that it be recommended to Council to nominate Hartnell Taylor Cook, acting for Marston’s Inns and Taverns, as the preferred bidder for the sale of the land referred to as the Leisure site.</p> <p><b><u>RESOLVED (3)</u></b> that all available draft development details of what is being proposed for each site be posted on the Council’s website, from 3 October 2013, inviting comments from members of the public.</p> <p><b><u>RESOLVED (4)</u></b> that a report detailing the negotiated terms and conditions of each disposal be presented to Council as soon as such negotiations are completed.</p>	<p>At the Council meeting on 23 October 2013, it was</p> <p><b><u>RESOLVED (1)</u></b> that the nominated preferred bidder for the sale of the former Aquasplash site is Lidl.</p> <p><b><u>RESOLVED (2)</u></b> that the nominated preferred bidder for the sale of the land referred to as the leisure site is Jones Lang LaSalle, acting for Whitbread.</p> <p><b><u>RESOLVED (3)</u></b> that a report detailing the negotiated terms and conditions of each disposal is presented to Council as soon as such negotiations are completed.</p>

*Report Number:* WSC 142/13

*Presented by:* Cllr Kate Kravis, Lead Member for Resources and Central Support

*Author of the Report:* Ian Timms, Corporate Manager Housing, Welfare and Economy

*Contact Details:*

*Tel. No. Direct Line* 01984 635271

*Email:* itimms@westsomerset.gov.uk

*Report to a Meeting of:* Cabinet

*To be Held on:* 6<sup>th</sup> November 2013

*Date Entered on Executive Forward Plan Or Agreement for Urgency Granted:* Not Applicable

## REQUEST FOR ALLOCATION OF SECTION 106 FUNDING- FIT TO WORK – HINKLEY

### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To outline proposals by Sedgemoor District Council to use their proportion of the fit to work funding contribution provided as an element of the Skills and Training part of the Hinkley Point C site preparation works section 106 agreement.
- 1.2 In line with the requirements of the section 106 agreement to seek the approval of West Somerset Council for this allocation.

### 2. CONTRIBUTION TO CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- 2.1 This proposal comes from Sedgemoor District Council and will be delivered within that District, therefore has no direct relevance to West Somerset Corporate priorities.

### 3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Cabinet recommend that Council agree the proposed use of the £30,000 Fit to Work funding by Sedgemoor District Council as described in appendix A of this report.

### 4. RISK ASSESSMENT (IF APPLICABLE)

#### Risk Matrix

Description	Likelihood	Impact	Overall
Failure to allocate monies correctly in line with legal agreements causing requirements to repay	4	4	16
<i>The Proposals within the report are matched to the legal agreement and monies available for Fit to Work – the financial risk will sit with Sedgemoor District Council and will not impact on the budget of West Somerset Council</i>	2	4	8

The scoring of the risks identified in the above table has been based on the scoring matrix. Each risk has been assessed and scored both before the mitigation measures have been actioned and after they have.

## **5. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 5.1 The authority has established arrangements to allocate monies secured through planning obligations. These match schemes to the authority's priorities. This well established mechanism, the Planning Obligations Group, is also responsible for making recommendations on a number of specified funds within the Hinkley Point C Section 106 agreements.
- 5.2 The Fit to Work funding, which amounts in total to £60,000 is to be spent by West Somerset Council and Sedgemoor District Council. The split of the £60,000 has been subject to extensive negotiation with consideration of a range of factors to ensure that from both Councils perspective the money can have the biggest impact within the effected communities and maximise opportunities for local people. After detailed discussion, where both Councils demonstrated the need to spend the contribution it has been decided to split the contribution 50/50 as, in reality, both Councils have a wide range of laudable measures that they would like to fund.
- 5.3 The proposal was considered by the internal planning obligations group against the planning agreements and appropriate strategies in both councils. As the proposals meet the legal requirements and are above the limit of £25,000 they require approval by both Cabinet and full Council.
- 5.4 The proposal for use of the funds has been derived from positive working between officers at WSC and SDC. When council or cabinet considers such joint proposals the legal agreements make provision for councillors from Sedgemoor District Council to attend and advise on the Sedgemoor specific elements. This enables positive democratic engagement for both sets of members. The West Somerset allocation of £30,000 was agreed by Council on 18<sup>th</sup> September. Whilst, ideally the proposal would have been a joint proposal for the entire £60,000 timescales and opportunities to access match funding have resulted in the Sedgemoor element coming slightly later.
- 5.5 The detailed proposal for Sedgemoor is provided in Appendix A, and focuses on four key themes with 4 project areas. Much of the activity mirrors the programme already established by West Somerset, which demonstrates similar levels of need across the two areas as well as recognising the initial robustness of the pre-employment mapping undertaken by West Somerset Council, which has helped inform the Sedgemoor projects.

## **6. FINANCIAL/RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The funding is provided through the site preparation works Section 106 planning agreements so there are no impacts on West Somerset Council funds.

## **7. SECTION 151 OFFICER COMMENTS**

- 7.1 In line with the section 106 legal agreements this report should be considered by the West Somerset Democratic bodies. This enables a clear process for auditing of all the monies relating to the Hinkley Point C section 106 agreements.

## **8. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

**Members need to demonstrate that they have consciously thought about the three aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty as part of the decision making process.**

The three aims the authority **must** have due regard for:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation

- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it

8.1 There is no detailed analysis attached to this report. However in producing these proposals individuals that are unable to access skills and employment have been taken into account. The proposals aim to address some access issues around specified courses.

## **9. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 The projects provide access to a range of positive activities that will build skills and enable individuals to make more positive contributions to their community.

9.2 It is generally accepted that this kind of activity helps minimise any community safety impacts or potential for them to occur.

## **10. CONSULTATION IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 There has been consultation with partner agencies and between both councils at officer level on how best to use the money.

10.2 The proposals have also been developed in conjunction with EDFE to ensure that wherever possible the projects have clear mitigating effects for the development

## **11. ASSET MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 There are no known implications for council assets.

## **12. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT IMPLICATIONS**

12.1 There are no apparent impacts from this report.

## **13. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

13.1 The proposed allocations are in line with the requirements of the legal agreement.



**Report to the Hinkley Point C – Section 106 Planning Obligations Group**

**November 2013**

**Fit to Work – Budget Proposal**

**1) Summary**

1.1 This paper outlines Sedgemoor District Council's proposed usage of its allocation of the Fit to Work Section 106 Funding, following on from a similar West Somerset paper submitted in September 2013. It outlines a programme of activity to be taken forward into late 2014, as well as relevant opportunities to secure match funding and undertake joint working.

**2) Hinkley Point C ('HPC') S106 – Fit for Work Allocation**

2.1 The Fit to Work programme is a programme of activity identified within the HPC Site Preparation Section 106, and is aligned to the work of the Community Outreach Workers employed by West Somerset Council and Sedgemoor District Council. The S106 provides a sum of £30,000 that has been paid to West Somerset Council on the Implementation of Phase 1, with a further sum of £30,000 being paid to West Somerset Council on the first anniversary of the Implementation of Phase 1 (a breakdown is outlined in the table below).

2.2 Negotiations have taken place at officer level on the allocation of this funding, and it has been agreed in principle that each will receive an equal share of £30,000 per Council. A number of factors have been taken into account when making this decision, including respective levels of deprivation, worklessness figures, existing employment and skills provision, rurality issues and the variations in costs associated with delivering services in each of the areas. It has been recognised that whilst Sedgemoor has greater numbers to cater for, the cost of providing services in a rural area is higher, thus an equal split is considered fair.

<b>HPC S106 Phasing</b>	<b>Total amount (To be split between SDC and WSC)</b>	<b>WSC Allocation</b>	<b>SDC Allocation</b>	<b>Year</b>
Phase One	£30,000	£15,000	£15,000	2012
Anniversary of Phase One	£30,000	£15,000	£15,000	2013
<b>Total</b>	<b>£60,000</b>	<b>£30,000</b>	<b>£30,000</b>	

**2) Outline Proposal**

3.1 Having considered both the content of its Economic Strategy; the broad ambitions set out with respective background papers for the Preliminary works Section 106 Agreement; and the Council's wider priorities on growth and employment as set out within its corporate plan, Sedgemoor District Council intends to take forward a multi-

strand programme of activity utilising the Fit to Work resources available. Echoing the type of approach already being pursued in West Somerset, but seeking to differentiate on the basis of the specific socio-economic challenges present in Sedgemoor, the project will seek to focus resources on skills and training for those furthest from the labour market, as well as reconnecting those outside the labour market for substantive periods of time to work.

3.2 Specifically, it will seek to:

- ***Support entry level training for those currently outside of work, providing funding for Hinkley related access level qualifications, including CSCS, Food Hygiene Certification and other similar 'pathways to work';***
- ***Address specific gaps within local provision on barriers to work, including digital skills, literacy and numeracy and basic employability skills;***
- ***Provide specific resources for those long term, but higher skilled customers of JCP in the Sedgemoor area who wish to now retrain, including part funding for those wishing to take a relevant NVQ level 3 or other vocational qualification;***
- ***Provide support for community provision and infrastructure, allowing training to be undertaken within relevant community and children's centres within the hardest to reach communities.***

3.3 A more detailed outline of each activity to be taken forward can be found in Annex A of this report.

3.4 The programme outlined follows a period of consultation with EDF's Job Brokerage; Job Centre Plus; Homes in Sedgemoor; West Somerset Council, relevant colleges and training providers, and internal teams at SDC leading on community and cohesion issues within the council itself. It also builds on intelligence gathered from employers and potential customers already being engaged through the District's outreach programme and other activity, as well as a pilot skills and training programme undertaken with Bridgwater College during early 2013. Given this, projects identified will seek to build and upon existing engagement, as well as lever further resources and joint working as far as practicable.

3.5 It should be noted that the programme outlined within this paper sits alongside and complements Sedgemoor's existing outreach project, which is made up of 3 core activity strands, aimed at attracting and supporting those currently outside of work back into employment or pathways to work. For reference, the project includes:

- *Employment Events Programme* – A quarterly Jobs Fair and/or Employment Event, providing both a forum for employers to meet with job seekers and wider support services to connect with those outside of traditional referral routes.
- *Intensive Support Workshops* – A regular series of workshops to provide tailored support to a small number of local residents identified as being in need of very basic employment skills.
- *Enabling Activity* – A discretionary programme of support through which our Outreach Officer can support individuals to overcome specific barriers to work, including on issues like childcare costs and transport. The budget also includes



ring-fenced funds to support facilitation of the outreach project, including room hire and catering.

#### **4) Rationale for Activity / Prioritisation**

- 4.1 In common with West Somerset, Sedgemoor faces a range of long standing challenges around employment and worklessness which will need to be addressed if the economic impact of Hinkley Point C is to be best maximised. In many cases, these have direct synergies with those affecting the entire county, with specific concerns over the relatively high proportion of those locally with limited or no qualifications, transport access and rurality, and challenges over the district's demographic structure.
- 4.2 There are however a range of specific issues within the Sedgemoor area (and Bridgwater and Highbridge in particular) which require unique solutions. These include dealing with residual impacts from substantial shifts within the area's economic structure over the past 10 years; long standing issues over urban deprivation within Sedgemoor's core towns; and challenges on aspiration which have led to a concentration of families in some of our urban wards with inter-generational issues on worklessness, health and educational achievement. As such, the district has a specific pool of individuals who are not currently work ready, nor are there easy routes into employment for them through existing training and support offers.
- 4.2 Given this context, and the wider issues and opportunities facing the district, Sedgemoor has therefore prioritised the four areas outlined for the following reasons:

##### ***Support for Entry Level Certification***

- 4.3 Though Sedgemoor benefits from a relatively high level of those economically active overall when compared to the national average (roughly 80% of the working age population in 2013), and relatively high levels of attainment on basic skills as a district overall, it faces very specific challenges within the Bridgwater and Highbridge areas over entry level certification and achievement. In 2011, for example, the census found that roughly 50% of those living in the Hamp area of Bridgwater had no or a very basic level of qualification. Amongst the unemployed, this actually increased to nearer 60% (compared to 35% across the entire district), meaning the majority of those claiming JSA in the area held no substantive certification. Given the entry requirements to the vast majority of Hinkley based occupations, this poses a specific and highly localised challenge for local partners.
- 4.4 In addition, initial work undertaken with both EDF and through the Hinkley planning process suggests that the current skillset of those undertaking entry level qualifications is currently not fit for purpose. Whilst capacity has been increased at the college and amongst wider learning providers to supplement overall educational attainment, the types of course being chosen (or indeed funded by JCP) do not necessarily meet Hinkley's overall demand, with a prevalence of service sectors and lifestyle type occupations. Whilst this is positive with regards facilities management and supply chain activity, further support will be needed to encourage individuals to train in Hinkley relevant areas. Early work also suggests that part of the issue with such qualifications is the upfront cost involved for the individual, in many cases not covered by JCP flexibilities and providing a further disincentive to training in Hinkley related careers.

### ***Basic Skills Provision / Taster Sessions***

- 4.5 As already highlighted, Sedgemoor faces some highly concentrated and acute issues over skills and educational attainment. In particular, within Bridgwater's four most deprived wards, attainments rates are in the bottom 20% nationally, with one ward in the bottom 1%. However, employers and service providers have reported that achievement of formal qualifications is often a lesser issue than wider employability skills amongst those outside work within Bridgwater. Issues regularly highlighted amongst long term claimants include a lack of interview and interpersonal skills, problems with timekeeping, basic literacy and numeracy skills and challenges over aspiration, merging into issues on health and mental health. In these instances, structured pre-employment activity also often proves too demanding for the individuals involved, with outreach officers finding a need for bespoke solutions. Provision for such needs however remains relatively small within the locality.
- 4.6 In the specific case of ICT skills, recent discussions with both Job Centre Plus and local employers suggest that there is a rising and very specific challenge locally with regards work readiness and the ability to use IT. National evidence suggested that 90% of occupations within the UK economy now require a basic level of IT literacy at worst. However, recent experience of large scale employment campaigns within Sedgemoor (notably for Morrisons and Mulberry) suggests that between 10-20% of all candidates coming forward from the area failed to secure interviews due to a basic lack of IT knowledge. Businesses and trainers reported back several instances where candidates were able to undertake manual and even skilled roles, but could not use even basic programmes. Given the centrality of such systems to many of the key roles involved with Hinkley, and a recent drop in existing provision due to national cut backs, Sedgemoor believe this is a key gap within the locality which now requires intervention.

### ***Higher Value Retraining and Skills***

- 4.7 Recent economic progress within Sedgemoor has focused on a rapid shift from traditional manufacturing and a reliance on a number of large employers, towards a more diverse economic base with a mixture of employment areas. Whilst this has helped to reduce the district's exposure to one off economic shocks, it has meant that Bridgwater and Highbridge now have a stock of skilled workers whose industries have lapsed, but who have never retrained or reskilled. As such, there are challenges both with long term unemployment within specific areas of the town and underemployment.
- 4.8 The onset of Hinkley Point offers opportunities to now address some of these economic structural issues, targeting those unemployed or underemployed with a potential translatable skills profile, who may have previously worked in large scale local employers like Innovia or other higher value employers. However, with income levels in Bridgwater amongst the lowest in the county, evidence suggests that requiring payment for such retraining from candidates (even in part) has often proved a key barrier to progress, leading to cycles of unemployment and wider deprivation challenges. Sedgemoor feels that the current funding offers an opportunity to break this cycle, working with Jobcentre Plus and its colleges to identify those candidates who can be moved back into employment, and thereby address long standing challenges within effected wards.

### ***Community Engagement and Capacity Provision***

- 4.9 Initial work within the community outreach project has found that a key barrier amongst the hardest to reach is often their willingness to actually engage with JCP and other formal provision at all. Local challenges on aspiration, educational attainment and intergenerational deprivation, mixed with mixed experiences with formal support provision, often lead to individuals dropping out of the system entirely. Where they are engaged, it often proves difficult to encourage them to travel outside their immediate area in many instances and then sustain attendance and engagement outside of their community support network.
- 4.10 National policy is currently focused on encouraging behaviour change on these issues, but experience in Bridgwater suggests that these are having a limited impact to date, particularly on those outside the main benefits system (which local evidence suggest work in the grey economy). There is a need therefore for alternative solutions, providing training and support in environments which are perceived as neutral and within communities themselves, thus reducing burdens like travel and childcare. Recent experience in areas like Hamp (through projects like the Bridgwater Way) also suggests that relevant individuals are willing to engage with such schemes if they are suitably embedded with the local area and are not overtly linked to other service providers (JCP, local authorities). Sedgemoor therefore intends to provide a measure of local support with these areas, building up relevant capacity and supporting in situ training.

### **5) Next Steps**

- 5.1 Following approval of this paper, Sedgemoor intends to formalise ongoing discussions with partners in November 2013. Its current intention would be to then roll out its programme from January 2014, working through to the start of the 2014/15 academic year.

**Phill Adams**  
**Service Manager, Economic Development and Affordable Housing**  
**Sedgemoor District Council**

**Annex A – Activity Outline**

<b>Sedgemoor Project 1:</b>		<b>Total Cost of Project:</b>
Supported Training Project		£12,000
<b>Project Outline:</b>		
<p>The workstream will support individuals to secure a suitable skill or qualification related to the development at Hinkley Point C, with a focus upon those areas of work which are easiest to enter and providing suitable 'Pathways into Employment' for those currently unemployed or furthest from the labour market.</p> <p>In line with West Somerset, areas of specific interest will likely include Cleaning and Support services, Hospitality and Catering and Landscaping and Construction. Given specialism within Bridgwater College, basic engineering and civil construction skills will also be considered for suitability. Relevant qualifications will therefore include Food Hygiene Certification, CSCS certification, Level 1 and 2 Health and Safety Certification and Level 1 and 2 Construction Skills certification, including plant operation if appropriate.</p> <p>It is anticipated, based on previous experience, that match funding will be secured for half of relevant costs, either in kind or direct funding through partner training providers or other mechanisms. Where possible, synergies with neighbouring authorities and partners will also be sought to reduce costs and increase impact.</p>		
<b>Fit to Work Funding:</b>	<b>Anticipated Outcomes:</b>	<b>Anticipated progression route:</b>
£6,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 60 individuals to have secured an accredited qualification;</li> <li>- 100% of participant supported to access further training/employment related activity</li> <li>-</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Employment / Self Employment</li> <li>- Further Skills and Training</li> <li>- Project 3 - Upskilling/Retraining Project</li> <li>- EDF Job Brokerage / Jobcentre Plus Services.</li> <li>- Voluntary Placement / Traineeship / Apprenticeship</li> </ul>

<b>Sedgemoor Project 2:</b>		<b>Total Cost of Project:</b>
Digital Inclusion / Training Provision		£6,000
<b>Project Outline:</b>		
<p>In conjunction with Homes in Sedgemoor, the Council will secure additional IT training provision to be based within our top four most deprived communities, seeking to reinforce local IT literacy and build up basic skills (specifically around Microsoft's suite of applications). It is envisaged that this project will work in conjunction with project 4 of this paper, with IT infrastructure to be additionally secured for relevant centre.</p> <p>As part of the project, it is envisaged that engagement will be taken forward with Jobcentre Plus to ensure that training provision encourages enhanced usage of the Universal Job Match system and wider online services.</p> <p>Early discussions with partners, including Somerset Skills and Learning, suggest that there is strong potential for additional leverage related to this project, which the project lead will explore through roll out.</p>		
<b>Fit to Work Funding:</b>	<b>Anticipated Outputs:</b>	<b>Anticipated progression route:</b>
£2,000	- 35 individuals trained across 2-3 locations	- Employment / Self Employment
<b>Match Funding:</b>	- 200 hours training time secured for local residents.	- Further Skills and Training
£4,000		- Project 1 - Supported Training programme
		- EDF Job Brokerage / Jobcentre Plus Services

<b>Sedgemoor Project 3:</b>		<b>Total Cost of Project:</b>
Upskilling/Retraining Project		£32,000
<b>Project Outline:</b>		
<p>A flexible pot of resource will be made available, working in conjunction with EDF's Job Brokerage, Bridgwater College and Jobcentre Plus, to allow relevant customers of Jobcentre and other local service providers to retrain and certify in relevant skill areas related to Hinkley. An emphasis will be placed on certifying to level 2 and above as far as practicable, within key areas like construction, engineering and facilities management. Work will also be undertaken with the EDF Brokerage to ensure those undertaking training will be assisted in relevant traineeships or employment at the end of relevant training.</p> <p>As part of the programme (and building on the experience of the initial pilot carried out with Bridgwater College), relevant like for like match will be sought, with the project lead seeking flexibilities in existing provision within other organisations.</p> <p>It is envisaged that this project will complement and build upon project 1 of this paper, providing a progression route from initial certification to job readiness and full employment.</p>		
<b>Fit to Work Funding:</b>	<b>Anticipated Outcomes:</b>	<b>Anticipated progression route:</b>
£16,000	- 50 individuals assisted to achieve accredited level 2/3.	- Employment / Self Employment
<b>Match Funding:</b>		
£16,000	- 100% assisted of participants supported to access further training / employment related activity.	- Further Skills and Training
	- 20% minimum assisted to find employment post certification via Job Brokerage / other approaches.	- EDF Job Brokerage / Jobcentre Plus Services.
		- Voluntary Placement / Traineeship / Apprenticeship

<b>Sedgemoor Project 4:</b>		<b>Total Cost of Project:</b>
Community Learning Provision / Capacity Building		£12,000
<b>Project Outline:</b>		
<p>The workstream will provide a limited support fund for training and learning within communities, seeking to both buy in provision in situ and infrastructure where practicable. Specific training options likely to run through community centres include ICT training, employability skills and CV writing support, literacy and numerous support and interview training.</p> <p>Given the focus upon the community, it is also envisaged that this support programme will seek to engage with those furthest from the market, looking to tailor support for those with the most acute needs and provide referral and other services on to specialist provision.</p> <p>It is envisaged that this project will be run in coordination with project 2 of this paper. Match funding may also be sought from other S106 project areas, as well as providers already working (or seeking to work) within the community.</p>		
<b>Fit to Work Funding:</b>	<b>Anticipated Outcomes:</b>	<b>Anticipated progression route:</b>
£6,000	- 150 individuals engaged with and provided structured support.	- Employment / Self Employment
<b>Match Funding:</b>		
£6,000	- 30 individuals assisted to achieve accredited training outcomes.	- Further Skills and Training
	- 100% of active participants offered access further training and employment related activity.	- Project 1 - Supported Training Programme
		- EDF Job Brokerage / Jobcentre Plus Services





*Report Number:* WSC 133/13

*Presented by:* Dave Westcott Lead Member For Community and Customer

*Author of the Report:* Paul Lamb – Principal Benefits Officer

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*Report to a Meeting of:* Cabinet Committee

*To be Held on:* 6<sup>th</sup> November 2013

*Date Entered on Executive Forward Plan Or Agreement for Urgency Granted:* 12<sup>th</sup> September 2013

## 2014/15 COUNCIL TAX REBATE SCHEME

### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise Cabinet of the proposed 2014/15 Council Tax Rebate Scheme for West Somerset.

### 2. CONTRIBUTION TO CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- 2.1 There are no direct links with regards to this report.

### 3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That Cabinet recommend to Council that the 2013/14 Council Tax Rebate Scheme is adopted for 2014/15.

### 4. RISK ASSESSMENT (IF APPLICABLE)

#### Risk Matrix

Description	Likelihood	Impact	Overall
Failure/difficulties in Council Tax collection from financially disadvantaged if scheme is less generous	4	4	16
<i>Retain 13/14 scheme for 14/15</i>	2	4	8
Caseload increases (e.g. major employer loss) and/or total value of awards exceeds estimates	3	4	12
<i>Monthly review. Details provided to Scrutiny on a monthly basis</i>	2	4	8
Changes to future Government grant	3	3	9
<i>None</i>			
Council fails to agree Scheme by 31 <sup>st</sup> January 2014 which leads to default scheme and adverse effect on MTFP	4	5	20
<i>Ensure Council schedules allow prompt decision making Scheme is adopted to enable MTFP provision to be made</i>	2	4	8

The scoring of the risks identified in the above table has been based on the scoring matrix. Each risk has been assessed and scored both before the mitigation measures have been actioned and after they have.

## **5. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 5.1 The Council Tax Benefit (CTB) scheme was abolished on 31st March 2013 and replaced by the Council Tax Rebate Scheme (CTR). The Government provide all billing authorities (and major precepting authorities) with a grant and expect Councils to design a Council Tax Rebate scheme to help those on low incomes to meet their Council Tax liability. The scheme is referred to in the Local Government Finance Act as the "Council Tax Reduction Scheme", although the Authority branded the scheme as "Council Tax Rebate". It is important to understand the Government grant will not rise each year to match demand and it is not ring-fenced.
- 5.2 Each of the major precepting authorities in Somerset receive a grant based on their current share of Council Tax receipts and therefore the County Council get the biggest share. If more residents than expected claim Council Tax Rebate, the major precepting authorities share the risk based on their share of council tax receipts.
- 5.3 We must agree any local scheme with the major precepting authorities i.e. Somerset County Council, Avon and Somerset Police, and Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority, and adopt it by 31 January 2014. If we cannot agree, the Government will impose a default scheme that will be much more expensive than our localised CTR scheme for 2013/14.
- 5.4 Schemes can be changed and what we have in place for 2014/15 does not have to remain in place for subsequent years, but we cannot change schemes mid-year.
- 5.5 Councils are not allowed complete freedom on the design of their CTR schemes. The Government have stipulated that pensioners should be fully protected under the same criteria that previously applied to Council Tax Benefit. This principle means there is no local discretion in CTR awards for people over pension age, as there are nationally set entitlement rules for this group. Pensioners, make up 56% of our CTR caseload, but account for 62% of spending on CTR. This means any cut in the support paid under CTR is borne by the remaining 44% of working age claimants.
- 5.6 The Government say we must also protect, as far as possible, CTR for vulnerable groups. There is no definition of which groups are counted as "vulnerable" as each authority has to make its own assessment. However, the Government have highlighted Local Authority statutory duties regarding:
- Children and duties under the 2010 Child Poverty Act to reduce and mitigate the effects of child poverty
  - Disabled people and duties under the Equality Act 2010
  - Homelessness Prevention and duties under the 1996 Housing Act to prevent homelessness with special regard to vulnerable groups.
- It is up to Billing Authorities to decide how they apply any such protection. Our scheme considers disabled people's needs and those responsible for children. It fully ignores income from a War Disablement or War Widows Pension. Also following the Government's direction, our CTR scheme strengthens work incentives and encourages people to move off benefits and into work or to stay in work.
- 5.7 3,531 people moved from the Council Tax Benefit scheme to the localised Council Tax Rebate scheme. The average weekly CTR award for a Pension Age claim is £17.40, whilst for people of Working Age, it is £12.06.

Other key facts on CTR caseload, spending and budgets are shown below:

Claimant Type	% of total claims	Caseload as at 31st August	% of total spend	CTR expenditure
Pension age	56.39%	1934	61.99%	£1,753,368.43
Working age employed	11.01%	378	7.93%	£224,378.51
Working Age not employed	32.67%	1122	30.08%	£850,809.47
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>3434</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>£2,828,556.41</b>

The key point from this table is that nearly 62% of Council Tax Rebate expenditure is on the pensioner scheme. The Authority has no control over this scheme, so any potential shortfall will need to be recovered from the remaining 38% expenditure in respect of working age claims.

	Number of claims	Cases with debt	Average Debt	Total Debt
Pension Age	1,934	71	£139.19	£9,882.27
Working Age Employed	378	129	£218.16	£28,142.60
Working Age Other	1,122	451	£164.18	£74,047.18
<b>Total</b>	<b>3434</b>	<b>651</b>	<b>£172.15</b>	<b>£112,072.05</b>

The key point from this table is that claims that are working have significantly higher average debt than the Authority's original concerns of high debt levels for out of work claims.

<b>CTR as at 31st August 2013</b>	
CTR Spend to date	£2,828,556.41
CTR Budget	£2,941,702.00
CTR spend against budget	<b>-£113,145.59</b>
Underspend as a percentage of budget	3.85%

The key point from this table is that the scheme is currently 3.85% under budget.

<b>Budget capacity remaining</b>	
CTR remaining budget	£113,145.59
Average award	£825.13
Claims from overspend	137

The key point from this table is that the 3.85% underspend is the equivalent of 137 claims based on average entitlement.

- 5.8 Members will see from the totals shown in the tables above, we are currently paying out £113,145.59 less in CTR than the budget. This “underspend” equates to 3.85%. While we award most CTR at annual billing, fluctuations in take up and claimant need have an impact on the overall expenditure. To put this into context, if 137 more people claim CTR and receive the scheme average entitlement, then our budget would be overspent.
- 5.9 There have been relatively few complaints about the scheme and most people affected have accepted they need to pay something. Revenues Officers have set up special arrangements to help people struggling to pay. We routinely offered 12 monthly instalment arrangements (usually Council Tax is paid over 10 months) for customers affected by the reduced help through CTR and have been quite successful in agreeing new Direct Debit arrangements. However, it is too early to predict confidently the impact of our localised CTR scheme.
- 5.10 The scheme is currently within budget and operating within the collection parameters used at tax setting. National funding and demand is expected to be similar in 2014/15 as now. Other Somerset billing authorities (Mendip, Sedgemoor and Taunton Deane) have given early indications they will leave their CTR schemes unchanged in 2014/15.
- 5.11 Members should be aware that our scheme automatically increases premia and personal allowances as it links them to the Housing Benefit increases.
- 5.12 In September 2013 the Department for Communities and Local Government announced that it intends to amend the Prescribed Requirements Regulations to up-rate the allowances, premia and non-dependant deductions for pensioners for 2014-15. They will be amended again to up-rate for 2015-16.

The Government intends to up-rate:

- personal allowances in line with Pension Credit rates
- most premia in line with CPI; and
- non-dependant deductions in line with growth in eligible council tax.

2014/15 Pension Credit rates have yet to be published. The current CPI (Consumer Prices Index) rate is 2.7%. It is felt prudent to budget a 1.8% increase in overall CTR expenditure.

This is to allow for 0.9% estimated increase in council tax liability for all cases, and an additional 2.7 % increase in premia (current CPI rate) for all non passported claims. Passported claims will not be affected by the increase in premia as they are already receiving full benefit. The estimated increase in expenditure is broken down as follows:

Claimant Type	% of claims	Caseload as at 31st August 2013	% of total spend	CTR expenditure	% Increase applied	14/15 Estimate
Pension age - Passported	35.7%	1226	42.9%	£1,213,605	0.9%	£1,224,528
Pension age - Non Passported	20.6%	708	19.1%	£539,764	3.6%	£559,195
Working age - Passported	24.1%	827	22.6%	£638,382	0.9%	£644,127
Working Age - Non Passported	19.6%	673	15.4%	£436,806	3.6%	£452,531
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3434</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>£2,828,556</b>	<b>1.8%</b>	<b>£2,880,381</b>

This will allow a spare £61,320 in the scheme, which will allow for an increase of 73 claims if based on the average scheme award. This is calculated as follows:

2014/15 Budget (unchanged from 2013/14)		£2,941,702.00
Estimated 2014/15 expenditure for current claims		£2,880,381.20
CTR budget capacity		-£61,320.80
<b>Estimated underspend as % of budget</b>		<b>2.08%</b>
2014/15 Estimate average award		£839.54
<b>Claims from overspend</b>		<b>73</b>

## 6. FINANCIAL/RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The financing risk of the scheme is shared with other precepting Authorities through the tax base calculation. West Somerset's share of the collection fund is 9 %.
- 6.2 As detailed in 5.10, the Department for Communities and Local Government Local Government Finance Settlement 2014-15 and 2015-16 Technical Consultation (published in July 2013) advised that the Government proposes to keep the total level of the localised Council Tax Rebate (branded by WSC as Council Tax Rebate) funding unchanged in cash terms for 2014/15 and 2015/16.

## 7. SECTION 151 OFFICER COMMENTS

- 7.1 From 2014/15 funding for Council Tax Rebate will be incorporated into the Local Government Finance Settlement and not separately identified.
- 7.2 Even though Government funding for CTR will remain unchanged for 2014/15 and 2015/16, the overall total for the Local Government Finance Settlement is being reduced. It is vital that any financial risk in the 2014/15 Council Tax Rebate scheme is kept to a minimum.
- 7.3 The budget for the proposal allows for the increased premia, and council tax liability. It also allows for a small increase in caseload. Members should be aware that it is impossible to guarantee a cost neutral scheme as a result of factors beyond the Authority's control that increase demand, such as further economic downturn, loss of large local employer etc.
- 7.4 There is no legislative need to consult the preceptors if there is no change, but Somerset County Council have been advised of our proposal.

## 8. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

**Members need to demonstrate that they have consciously thought about the three aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty as part of the decision making process.**

The three aims the authority **must** have due regard for:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it

- 8.1 A thorough consultation was undertaken in August and September 2012. Full details were provided in report WSC 171/12.
- 8.2 Appendix A of this report updates the assessment and provides actual data against the issues originally identified.
- 8.3 Debt levels are broken down by claim profile in Appendix B.

**9. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 Regular liaison between the police and this authority is maintained through our Community Safety Officer. At this time, no attributable impacts upon local rates of crime and disorder have been identified.

**10. CONSULTATION IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 A full consultation was undertaken before the implementation of the 2013/14 scheme.

**11. ASSET MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 This proposal will help keep costs low as there will be no software changes, consultation costs etc.
- 11.2 The cost of scheme financial modelling will be funded from Government grants provided

**12. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT IMPLICATIONS**

- 12.1 None Associated with this report

**13. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 13.1 Council must approve a scheme by 31 January 2014 or it will be forced to adopt the Government's default scheme. The default scheme is essentially old Council Tax Benefit scheme allowing a maximum 100% of liability as oppose to the 85% West Somerset scheme. The clear implication being the creation of a significant additional budget deficit

## West Somerset Council

### Equality Impact Analysis Record Form 2013

### Council Tax Rebate 2013/14 mid year review

When reviewing, planning or providing services West Somerset Council needs to assess the impacts on people.

We must show we have given due regard to the General Equality Duties in relation to our policies, strategies, services and functions as set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010:

The three aims we **must** have due regard for:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it

**This Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) considers the impact of the proposed Council Tax Scheme (CTS) options on the statutory protected characteristics (Age, Disability, Gender, Gender reassignment, Marriage and civil partnership, Pregnancy and maternity, Race, Religion & Belief Sexual orientation) and other groups (Rural Isolation, Carers, Armed Forces) in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). Where any adverse impact is identified, mitigating actions will be considered.**

Service Area: Benefits	
Name of policy/ practice/ service or function	Council Tax Rebate Scheme 14/15 Revised Policy

#### Section 1 Why are you completing the Impact Assessment (please ✓ as appropriate)

Proposed new policy or service	Change to policy or service	Budget/Financial Decision	Mid year review
			✓

#### 1.1. Information about the new policy or change to the policy (explain the proposal and reason for the change)

With effect from 2013/14 district councils have been required to operate a localised Council Tax Support (CTS) scheme to provide assistance to people on low income. CTS replaced the previous Council Tax benefit scheme that was administered by the council on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). Councils are responsible for the design and implementation of these schemes and need to consider whether they are to be revised or replaced on an annual basis. The amount of subsidy reimbursement for CTS has reduced nationally by 10% with councils having the option of funding the shortfall or designing a support scheme that is cost neutral. Any CTS scheme must protect pensioners at the existing level of support and incentivise return to work.

West Somerset Scheme 2013/14

On 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2013 Full Council approved a scheme with the following key principles:

Maximum Liability – Maximum award for working age claimants to be 85% of the council tax liability.

Child Maintenance – Maintenance received for a child or children, paid by a former partner to be treated as income in the means test assessment.

Non dependant reductions – Increased non-dependant reductions

Single Adult Rebate – Abolish single adult rebate for working age claimants.

Increased Earnings Disregard – Part of earned income would not included in the means test to calculate CTR, so incentivising work.

Discretionary Housing Payment – Creation of a discretionary hardship fund, to protect the most vulnerable. Value of the scheme was £22,500.

Sub-Tenant/Boarder Income – Disregards abolished for sub tenant and boarder income.

A public consultation was undertaken during the period 9<sup>th</sup> August 2012 to the 5<sup>th</sup> October 2012. Detailed results of the consultation are available on request.

**The proposal for 2014/15 is to adopt the same scheme with the same principles as detailed above.**



**Section 2: What evidence has been used in the assessment? Attach documents where appropriate**

**Overall Council Tax Rebate Caseload and Debt Profiling (September 2013)**

We have undertaken debt profiling against the Council Tax Rebate customer base and also against those customer groups which are impacted most by the key elements of our localised scheme. As this is 6 months of data it is still too early to make assumptions on the full impacts of the scheme, however, there are some key indicators that are starting to become apparent.

**Table 2.3**

<b>Scheme</b>	Number of claims	Cases with debt	Percentage of cases with debt	Average Debt	Total Debt
Pension Age	1,934	71	3.67%	£139.19	£9,882.27
Working Age Employed	378	127	33.60%	£216.84	£27,538.71
Working Age Other	1,122	453	40.37%	£164.79	£74,651.07
<b>Total</b>	<b>3434</b>	<b>651</b>	<b>18.96%</b>	<b>£172.15</b>	<b>£112,072.05</b>

**Table 2.4**

<b>Scheme Claims</b>	Total claims	Passported	Children	Couple	Single	Lone Parent	Disabled
Pension Age	1,934	1226	25	594	1337	3	0
Working Age Employed	378	5	287	145	67	166	33
Working Age Other	1,122	822	478	336	529	257	398
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,434</b>	<b>2,053</b>	<b>790</b>	<b>1,075</b>	<b>1,933</b>	<b>426</b>	<b>431</b>

**Table 2.5**

<b>Scheme Average Debts</b>	Scheme Average	Passported	Children	Couple	Single	Lone Parent	Disabled
Pension Age	£139.19	£234.58	£153.39	£155.79	£124.77	£0.00	£0.00
Working Age Employed	£216.84	£0.00	£225.64	£247.21	£207.35	£188.73	£142.90
Working Age Other	£164.79	£147.20	£161.77	£219.29	£144.61	£130.08	£115.46

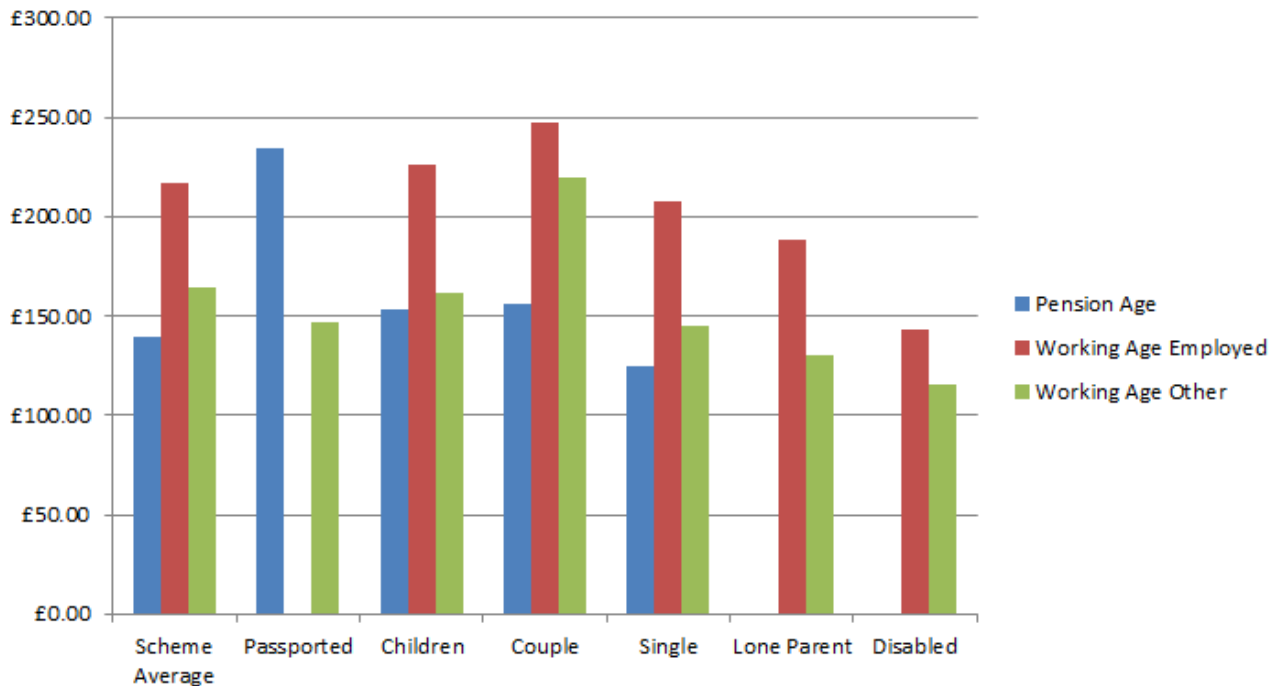
**Table 2.6**

<b>By Council Tax Band Average Debt</b>	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Pension Age	£98.41	£53.93	£138.03	£157.90	£1,431.30	£96.00	£154.94
Working Age Employed	£228.54	£223.70	£205.35	£206.21	£125.64	£0.00	£0.00
Working Age Other	£163.31	£157.69	£151.64	£155.90	£305.53	£1,176.89	£0.00

## Impacts of Scheme Options

## Impacts of Options

Table 3.1 – Average Debt by Profile



**Maximum Benefit reduced to 85%** – This resulted in a substantial increase in council tax liability for working age people who claim Council Tax Rebate. This includes those who previously paid nothing. Some respondents to the consultation said that the increased liabilities would be impossible to pay given their financial circumstances. Together with the other Welfare Reform changes from April 2013 there will be a cumulative affect on low paid and vulnerable households.

Table 2.3 shows that the percentage of claims is not significantly higher for those out of work when compared to those in work. Table 3.1 shows that the average debt is higher for those in work when compared to those not working

Table 3.2 compares passported cases (who historically paid nothing) and non passported cases (that are used to making a contribution)

Table 3.2

Working Age	Number of claims	Cases with debt	Average Debt	Total Debt
Passported	827	338	£165.24	£55,852.53
Non Passported	673	242	£232.31	£56,219.52

The surprising conclusion from this table is that passported cases who have not previously paid anything towards the council tax have an average lower debt than non passported people who are used to making council tax payments

**Taking Child Maintenance into account** – Some respondents to the Council Tax Scheme consultation have said that some absent parents are infrequent and unreliable in paying maintenance for their children. The Child Support Agency (CSA) are not always successful in enforcing non payers. There could be instances where income is being used in the Council Tax Benefit assessment that is not always received. Legal Aid is also no longer available for people to pursue the non-payment of maintenance through the courts.

Debt profile table 3.3 shows that the overall impact of the scheme is only causing a slight increase in average debt for working cases with children. The average debt for those not working is in actual fact slightly lower than the scheme average

**Table 3.3**

Children	Number of claims	Cases with debt	Average Debt	Total Debt
Pension Age	25	4	£153.39	£613.55
Working Age Employed	287	100	£225.64	£22,564.44
Working Age Other	478	224	£161.77	£36,237.50
<b>Total</b>	<b>790</b>	<b>328</b>	<b>£181.14</b>	<b>£59,415.49</b>
<b>Overall Scheme</b>				
Pension Age	1934	71	£139.19	£9,882.27
Working Age Employed	378	127	£216.84	£27,538.71
Working Age Other	1122	453	£164.79	£74,651.07

**Increased Non-Dependant Deduction** – This proposal will increase the levels of non-dependant deductions from the current rates. Out of work non-dependants will be particular affected by this proposal, as there is currently a nil deduction for this group. The proposal will be to increase the deduction for this income group from nil £4.80 per week. Many non-dependants are in fact young adults living with their parents. Current level of Jobseekers Allowance for the under 25's is £56.25.

There could be adverse impact on family relationships, if the claimant is unable to get the required contribution from the non-dependant and subsequently potential for increased pressure on availability of housing if the non-dependant is forced to leave the family home.

**Table 3.4**

Claims with non dependants	Number of claims	Cases with debt	Average Debt	Total Debt
Pension Age	63	8	£116.39	£931.15
Working Age Employed	21	8	£487.38	£3,899.02
Working Age Other	61	27	£476.32	£12,860.55
<b>Total</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>£411.41</b>	<b>£17,690.72</b>

Table 3.4 shows that the number of claims with non dependant deduction that have council tax debt is low. It is a concern though that these few cases do have high levels of debt, considerably above the scheme average.

Further monitoring of these cases will be undertaken over a longer period of time to ensure that non dependant deduction levels are not causing hardship

**Abolish Second Adult Rebate** – There is no evidence that abolishing Second Adult Rebate has caused any issues. The main reason is that this was not part of the main Council Tax Benefit scheme, so recipients would have income levels above Council Tax Benefit entitlement parameters.

**Increase Earnings Disregard** – This was designed to have a positive impact and will help those on low wages. The increased disregards aim to incentivise work and encourage people to remain in employment

**Table 3.5**

Scheme Average Debts	Scheme						
	Average	Passported	Children	Couple	Single	Lone Parent	Disabled
Pension Age	£139.19	£234.58	£153.39	£155.79	£124.77	£0.00	£0.00
Working Age Employed	£218.16	£301.95	£227.14	£249.13	£207.35	£188.73	£142.90
Working Age Other	£164.18	£146.28	£160.51	£218.13	£144.61	£130.08	£115.46

This is a cause for concern as the levels of average debt for employed claim is significantly higher for all profiles than either non-working or pension age cases

**Set up a Discretionary Hardship Fund** – A fund of £22,500 was created to help those most in need and the vulnerable. By the end of August there have been 38 awards totalling just £3,441.25. The average award is £91. This negates concerns that the fund may be exhausted during the year

**Sub Tenant/Boarder Income** – All of the sub tenant and boarder income, which was previously disregarded is now taken into account in the means test. The actual number of claimants affected by this change is very low and no significant impact has been identified.

#### Debt Profiling by Protected Characteristic

<b>Disabled</b>	Number of claims	Cases with debt	Average Debt	Total Debt
Working Age Employed	33	13	£142.90	£1,857.64
Working Age Other	398	134	£115.46	£15,471.14
Total	431	147	£117.88	£17,328.78

The average level of debt for claims receiving the disabled premium is significantly lower than the scheme average of £216.84 for employed claims and £164.79 for claims that are not in employment

These concerns appear unfounded, with average level of debt lower than the scheme average of £216.84 for employed claims and £164.79 for claims that are not in employment

#### **Gender**

<b>Lone Parents</b>	Number of claims	Cases with debt	Average Debt	Total Debt
Working Age Employed	166	53	£188.73	£10,002.74
Working Age Other	257	116	£130.08	£15,089.82
<b>Total</b>	<b>423</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>£148.48</b>	<b>£25,092.56</b>

The average level of debt is lower than the scheme average of £216.84 for employed claims and £164.79 for claims that are not in employment

### 3.1. Equality Impact Assessment ( by protected characteristic)

With reference to the analysis above, for each of the 'protected characteristics' in the table below please record your conclusions with evidence around equality impact in relation to the savings proposal/service change. Record negative and positive impacts.

<b>Protected Group</b>	<b>Findings</b>
Age (includes all age groups)	<p>Older people (those of pension age) are protected from any reductions under the new scheme by the legislation and therefore the reduction in benefit will be borne by those of working age in receipt of Council Tax Benefit.</p> <p>West Somerset has a high pensioner population therefore, there will be a disproportionate affect on working age people with this policy.</p>
Disability (includes mental health)	<p>Disabled people of working age will not be protected and therefore will see increases in the amount of council tax they pay. Disabled people have a limited ability to work and are likely to have higher-level disability related living expenses.</p> <p>This group in particular find it difficult to access and sustain employment and therefore improve on their current financial situation. This group of people is less resilient to the impact of recession and unemployment and are often living in poverty. These further impacts on the individual's mental health.</p>
Gender	<p>Our consultation suggested that lone parents may be disproportionately affected with this policy.</p> <p>This group of people find difficulty in gaining employment because of childcare issues.</p> <p>Lone parents in employment are quite often low earners on part time hours. Many in this group have said they would like to be working more hours but are restricted because of difficulty with childcare.</p> <p>The majority of lone parents in receipt of council tax benefit are female.</p>

Gender reassignment	We have not identified any disproportionate impact with this policy in relation to Gender assignment.
Marriage and civil partnership	We have not identified any disproportionate impact with this policy in relation to Marriage and civil partnership.
Pregnancy and maternity	We have not identified any disproportionate impact with this policy in relation to pregnancy and maternity.
Race (includes Gypsy and Travellers, ethnic origins, colour and nationality)	<p>Ethnicity of the claimant is not taken into consideration as part of the benefit calculation.</p> <p>West Somerset historically has a low BME (Black &amp; Minority Etcnic) population compared to the rest of Somerset.</p> <p>We have not identified any disproportionate impact with this policy in relation to race.</p>
Religion and belief including non-belief	<p>The religion or belief of the claimant is not taken into consideration as part of the benefit calculation.</p> <p>We have not identified any disproportionate impact with this policy in relation to a claimant's religion or belief.</p> <p>Many of the places of worship within West Somerset provide social outreach projects such as the Hope Centre at the Baptist Church, Minehead and the Food Cupboard at St Michael the Archangel, Alcombe. The impact of welfare reforms could see greater reliance on projects such as these, which are run by volunteers.</p>
Sexual orientation (includes heterosexual, gay, bisexual)	<p>Sexual orientation of the claimant is not taken into consideration as part of the benefit calculation.</p> <p>We have not identified any disproportionate impact with this policy in relation to sexual orientation.</p>

### Other Groups (non statutory)

Socio-economic (low income individuals & families)	West Somerset has the second lowest wage levels amongst neighbouring authorities and is significantly below county, regional and national averages. People's incomes in general are declining, yet the cost of living continues to rise. This may be a factor in the high levels of debt for working claims
Rural Isolation (West Somerset is a rural district with poor transport networks which can affect the way we deliver services)	Because of the rural location of West Somerset access to suitable employment, training and public services is an issue for many. The rural nature of West Somerset sees many residents trapped in low paid work with little opportunity to improve on their situation. Increasing transport costs and limited public transport makes it difficult for residents to commute to better paid jobs in other parts of

	<p>the County</p> <p>Many of our residents living in the deeply rural areas, live in poorly insulated properties with limited gas connection. They will have above average exposure to rising fuel costs and will be more likely to be living in fuel poverty.</p>
Carers	Larger families or people with disabilities may be in larger properties to cater for disability needs and so that carers are able to stay overnight.
Armed Forces	<p>Veteran Benefits will continue to be fully disregarded in the means test for Council Tax Benefit.</p> <p>Our scheme does not appear to have a differential impact but we are aware that some ex veterans experience mental health issues and have physical disabilities</p>
Other	<p>Many of our customers have low numeracy and literacy skills and will have been unable to engage with the consultation on this policy. Skills and qualification levels are particularly poor in the district and therefore limit people's opportunities.</p>

### 3.2: What is the cumulative equality impact of your proposal?

**You may have identified an impact on the lives of a group as a result of your individual proposal. However, taken together with other changes the cumulative impact of these decisions may be considerable and the combined impact may not be apparent where decisions are taken in isolation.**

Against a background of economic stagnation, unemployment, the rising cost of living, falling income and public spending cuts the Council faces a serious challenge in designing a fair scheme with minimal impact on our customers.

The scheme encountered the anticipated high levels of enquiry in April, but these dropped significantly after a few weeks

The vast majority of customers accept that they are now required to pay towards their council tax liability, and the scheme appears fair and transparent, with no official complaints being received in this respect.

There is concern about the impact of this scheme in addition to other areas of welfare reform, especially the removal of spare room subsidy.

212 cases have seen their Housing Benefit reduced, 175 by 14% and 37 by 25%. In addition, 2 cases have been subject to the benefit cap.

The Benefits service has worked hard to keep hardship to a minimum through this difficult period for our customers. This has mainly been achieved by prompt assessment of both the Authority's discretionary schemes "Discretionary Housing Payments", and "Additional Council Tax Rebate" payments. Officers automatically check for entitlement against both schemes to ensure maximisation of household income





**Section 4: ACTION PLAN MONITOR**  
**This table below provides an update on the agreed action of the original Council Tax Rebate Equality Impact Assessment**

Identified Issue/Negative Impact	Action needed to mitigate impact	Who is responsible	By When	Expected outcomes from carrying out action	Result
Monitoring impacts	Develop a clear monitoring criteria to identify impacts post April 2013 which includes on-going consultation with advice agencies, voluntary sector groups, Magna West Somerset and internal services who will see the effects of the scheme	P Lamb	April 2013 onwards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Better understanding of actual impacts following introduction of the scheme</li> <li>Better understanding of the changing nature of the caseload</li> <li>Identification of future modification of the scheme</li> </ul>	<p><b>Achieved</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular meetings with Registered Social Landlords (Knightstone, Magna and Falcon) along with West Somerset Advice Bureau</li> <li>Monthly monitoring of CTR and all aspects of welfare reform. This is reported to Scrutiny Committee as part of the quarterly performance report.</li> </ul>
Discretionary Hardship Fund	Design and implement Discretionary Hardship Fund in conjunction with other Somerset authorities	P Lamb	April 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most vulnerable supported</li> <li>In line with the rest of Councils within Somerset</li> </ul>	<p><b>Achieved</b></p> <p>A discretionary fund, named "Additional Council Tax Rebate" was created. The policy for administering this fund was agreed by Full Council in March 2013</p>
Collection Problems	Develop a clear collection policy	S Perkins	April 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most vulnerable supported</li> <li>In line with the rest of Councils within Somerset</li> <li>Understood by local advice agencies</li> </ul>	<p><b>Achieved</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lowering of recovery action threshold has enabled debt issues to be identified and assisted at an earlier stage</li> <li>12 monthly instalment plans introduced to make payment</li> </ul>

<p>Raising awareness of benefit changes and supporting customers through the changes</p>	<p>Recruitment of welfare reform assistant.</p>	<p>P Lamb</p>	<p>December 2012</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Customers supported through the transition to the new scheme</li> </ul>	<p><b>Achieved</b> Welfare reform assistant has been involved with engagement meetings with stakeholders, mail shots to those affected, design of discretionary payment schemes, refresh of web site, landlord liaison, customer enquiries</p>	<p>affordable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussion at regular meetings with stakeholders</li> </ul>
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**Section 5. Monitoring and review/ mainstreaming into service plans**

**Please indicate whether any of your actions have been added to service or work plans and your arrangements for monitoring and reviewing progress/ future impact?**

Actions from the EIA action plan will be included within Team Service Plans and Workplans

**Section 6: Publishing the completed assessment**

**How will the assessment, consultation & outcomes be published and communicated.**

Published as part of report to Cabinet 6<sup>th</sup> November 2013.

**Section 7: Sign Off**

Completed by:	P Lamb
Date:	20 <sup>th</sup> September 2013
Reviewed by:	S Rawle
Date:	29 <sup>th</sup> October 2013

**Decision-making processes**

**Where linked to decision on proposals to change, reduce or withdraw service/ financial decisions/ large-scale staffing restructures**

**Attached to report (title): 2014/15 Council Tax Rebate Scheme**

**Date of report: 6<sup>th</sup> November, 2013**

**Author of report: Ian Timms/ Steve Farmer/ Paul Lamb**

**Audience for report: Cabinet**

**Outcome from report being considered**



## APPENDIX B - CTR CASELOAD AND DEBT INFORMATION

Scheme	Number of claims	Cases with debt	Percentage of cases with debt	Average arrears case	Average arrears across scheme	Total arrears
Pension Age	1,934	71	3.67%	£139.19	£5.11	£9,882.27
Working Age Employed	378	129	34.13%	£218.16	£74.45	£28,142.60
Working Age Other	1,122	451	40.20%	£164.18	£66.00	£74,047.18
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,434</b>	<b>651</b>	<b>18.96%</b>	<b>£172.15</b>	<b>£32.64</b>	<b>£112,072.05</b>

Scheme Claims	Total claims	Passported	Children	Couple	Single	Lone Parent	Disabled
Pension Age	1,934	1,226	25	594	1,337	3	0
Working Age Employed	378	5	287	145	67	166	33
Working Age Other	1,122	822	478	336	529	257	398
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,434</b>	<b>2,053</b>	<b>790</b>	<b>1,075</b>	<b>1,933</b>	<b>426</b>	<b>431</b>

Scheme	Average	Passported	Children	Couple	Single	Lone Parent	Disabled
<b>Scheme Average Debts</b>							
Pension Age	£139.19	£234.58	£153.39	£155.79	£124.77	£0.00	£0.00
Working Age Employed	£218.16	£301.95	£227.14	£249.13	£207.35	£188.73	£142.90
Working Age Other	£164.18	£146.28	£160.51	£218.13	£144.61	£130.08	£115.46

<b>Table 4 - Profile of claims - Arrears across total caseload</b>							
Scheme	Average	Passported	Children	Couple	Single	Lone Parent	Disabled
<b>Scheme Average Debts</b>							
Pension Age	£5.11	£4.97	£24.54	£8.65	£3.55	£0.00	£0.00
Working Age Employed	£74.45	£120.78	£80.73	£97.93	£58.80	£60.26	£56.29
Working Age Other	£66.00	£59.79	£74.55	£92.83	£52.49	£58.72	£38.87

<b>Table 5 - Claims with arrears by council tax band</b>							
Average Debt	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Pension Age	£98.41	£53.93	£138.03	£157.90	£1,431.30	£96.00	£154.94
Working Age Employed	£221.66	£229.50	£205.35	£206.21	£125.64	£0.00	£0.00
Working Age Other	£163.93	£155.42	£151.64	£155.90	£305.53	£1,176.89	£0.00

<b>Table 6 - Arrears across total caseload by council tax band</b>							
Average Debt	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Pension Age	£4.46	£1.74	£3.87	£5.75	£44.04	£5.19	£38.73
Working Age Employed	£84.75	£88.99	£65.63	£62.34	£20.94	£0.00	£0.00
Working Age Other	£71.14	£62.67	£61.00	£33.71	£111.10	£784.59	£0.00

<b>Table 7 - Average non CTR Arrears</b>			
Total Debt	£802,160.84		
Number Debt Cases	1851		
<b>Average Debt</b>	<b>£433.37</b>	<b>% accounts with Debt</b>	<b>10.50%</b>

<b>Table 8 - Claims with Children - arrears Analysis</b>					
	Number of claims	Cases with arrears	Average arrears case	Average arrears across scheme	Total arrears
Pension Age	25	4	£153.39	£24.54	£613.55
Working Age Employed	287	102	£227.14	£80.73	£23,168.33
Working Age Other	478	222	£160.51	£74.55	£35,633.61
<b>Total</b>	<b>790</b>	<b>328</b>	<b>£181.14</b>	<b>£75.21</b>	<b>£59,415.49</b>

<b>Table 9 - Lone Parent Claims - arrears Analysis</b>					
	Number of claims	Cases with arrears	Average arrears case	Average arrears across scheme	Total arrears
Pension Age	3	0	#DIV/0!	£0.00	£0.00
Working Age Employed	166	53	£188.73	£60.26	£10,002.74
Working Age Other	257	116	£130.08	£58.72	£15,089.82
<b>Total</b>	<b>426</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>£148.48</b>	<b>£58.90</b>	<b>£25,092.56</b>

<b>Table 10 - Claims with Disability Premium - arrears Analysis</b>						
	Number of claims	Cases with arrears	Average arrears case	Average arrears across scheme	#DIV/0!	Total arrears
Pension Age	0	0	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!		£0.00
Working Age Employed	33	13	£142.90	£56.29		£1,857.64
Working Age Other	398	134	£115.46	£38.87		£15,471.14
<b>Total</b>	<b>431</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>£117.88</b>	<b>£40.21</b>		<b>£17,328.78</b>

<b>Table 11 - Passported Claims - arrears Analysis</b>						
	Number of claims	Cases with arrears	Average arrears case	Average arrears across scheme	#DIV/0!	Total arrears
Pension Age	1226	26	£234.58	£4.97		£6,099.10
Working Age Employed	5	2	£301.95	£120.78		£603.89
Working Age Other	822	336	£146.28	£59.79		£49,149.54
<b>Total</b>	<b>2053</b>	<b>364</b>	<b>£153.44</b>	<b>£27.21</b>		<b>£55,852.53</b>



**Table 12 - Couples claiming CTR - arrears Analysis**

	Number of claims	Cases with arrears	Average arrears case	Average arrears across scheme	Total arrears
Pension Age	594	33	£155.79	£8.65	£5,141.03
Working Age Employed	145	57	£249.13	£97.93	£14,200.27
Working Age Other	336	143	£218.13	£92.83	£31,192.53
<b>Total</b>	<b>1075</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>£216.88</b>	<b>£47.01</b>	<b>£50,533.83</b>

**Table 13 - Single claims CTR - arrears Analysis**

	Number of claims	Cases with arrears	Average arrears case	Average arrears across scheme	Total arrears
Pension Age	1337	38	£124.77	£3.55	£4,741.24
Working Age Employed	67	19	£207.35	£58.80	£3,939.59
Working Age Other	529	192	£144.61	£52.49	£27,764.83
<b>Total</b>	<b>1933</b>	<b>249</b>	<b>£146.37</b>	<b>£18.85</b>	<b>£36,445.66</b>

<b>Table 14 - Comparison of working age cases</b>					
	Number of claims	Cases with arrears	Average arrears case	Average arrears across scheme	Total arrears
Passported	827	338	£165.24	£67.54	£55,852.53
Non Passported	673	242	£232.31	£83.54	£56,219.52

<b>Table 15 - CTR claims with non dependants</b>					
	Number of claims	Cases with debt	Average arrears case	Average arrears across scheme	Total arrears
Pension Age	63	8	£1116.39	£14.78	£931.15
Working Age Employed	21	8	£487.38	£185.67	£3,899.02
Working Age Other	61	27	£476.32	£210.83	£12,860.55
Total	145	43	£411.41	£122.00	£17,690.72

*Report Number:* WSC 141/13

*Presented by:* Cllr Anthony Trollope-Bellew, Lead Member for Environment – General

*Author of the Report:* Bruce Lang, Corporate Director

*Contact Details:*

*Tel. No. Direct Line* 01984 635200

*Email:* blang@westsomerset.gov.uk

*Report to a Meeting of:* Cabinet

*To be Held on:* Wednesday, 6<sup>th</sup> November 2013

*Date Entered on Executive Forward Plan Or Agreement for Urgency Granted:* 2<sup>nd</sup> October, 2013

## JOINT SCRUTINY REVIEW OF FLOODING

### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to present the recommendations of the Joint Scrutiny Review of Flooding.

### 2. CONTRIBUTION TO CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- 2.1 None in respect of this report.

### 3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That Cabinet consider the recommendations of the Joint Scrutiny Review at Appendix A, as amended to reflect the views of the Somerset Leaders and Chief Executives contained in Appendix B.

### 4. RISK ASSESSMENT (IF APPLICABLE)

#### Risk Matrix

Description	Likelihood	Impact	Overall
Failure to take action in response to the recommendations from the review	4	4	16
Joint Steering Group will remain active to monitor outcome from the recommendations and to ensure that momentum is maintained	2	4	8

## **5. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 5.1 Following the extreme flooding events in 2012 a Joint Steering Group was formed comprising of scrutiny members from the 5 Somerset district councils and Somerset County Council to undertake a Joint Scrutiny Review of Flooding. The review was facilitated and supported by South Somerset District Council's Scrutiny Manager.
- 5.2 By establishing a joint county wide approach to the review represented the best use of limited Scrutiny resources and provided the relevant agencies and the public with a single point of contact. Subsequently, this approach has been recognised by winning the Centre for Public Scrutiny's Annual Award in the Working Together category.
- 5.3 The Steering Group decided that an evidence gathering event would be a good starting point for this project – they therefore planned and organised the Flooding Summit which was held on the 15<sup>th</sup> March 2013 at Somerset County Cricket Ground. The Summit was an opportunity for Somerset residents, local agencies and the business community to come together and share experiences and suggestions for improved water management across the county.
- 5.4 It was very much an evidence gathering exercise and the recommendations contained in the report reflect the information gathered as part of this Scrutiny process. Members of the Joint Steering Group are aware that their report does not address all aspects of flood and water management – it was never intended to. They are however, confident that their recommendations address the points raised through their review and if taken forward, will lead to significant improvements for Somerset residents.
- 5.5 The report attached at Appendix A outlines the process undertaken and subsequent conclusions and recommendations from the Joint Scrutiny Review.
- 5.6 Prior to consideration by the various Scrutiny Committees, the Somerset Leaders and Chief Executives met to consider the report of the Joint Scrutiny Review on Flooding. As a result of their meeting, an 'Executive Response' was prepared which is attached at Appendix B of this report. As you will see, the Leaders and Chief Executives agreed the majority of the recommendations, the only exception being the creation of a single Somerset Flooding website.
- 5.7 When this report has been considered by all six Somerset authorities, the Joint Steering Group will meet again to collate the responses and finalise the action plan and future monitoring arrangements.
- 5.8 Councillors Stuart Dowding and Richard Lillis represented the council on the Joint Steering Group.
- 5.9. The report was considered by the Scrutiny Committee on 19<sup>th</sup> August, 2013 when it was resolved.
- (1) that the Somerset Flooding Summit draft report produced from the Joint Scrutiny Review, at Appendix A to the report, be noted;
- (2) that Somerset Flooding Summit draft report be referred to Cabinet for their consideration.
- 5.10 At the meeting of the Cabinet held on 2<sup>nd</sup> October, 2013, it was agreed to defer the item to enable Members of Cabinet and the West Somerset Council representatives of the Joint Steering Group to have an informal meeting to debate the issues to enable a further report to be presented to the next meeting of the Cabinet.

- 5.11 This meeting was held on the 21<sup>st</sup> October, 2013 when a consensus was reached that Cabinet should recommend to support the recommendations as amended to reflect the views of the Somerset Leaders and Chief Executives.
- 5.12 This was based on the fact that the Leaders and Chief Executives comments further enhanced the original proposals put forward by the Joint Scrutiny Review.
- 5.13 Given that Somerset County Council and the other four district authorities have already agreed to move forward in a similar fashion this would mean a unanimous approach from all the local authorities in Somerset to address this very important issue.
- 5.14 At the informal meeting, the importance of effectively monitoring the implementation of any agreed actions plan was emphasised. This will form part of the role of the Joint Steering Group, who will remain active. The next meeting of the Joint Steering Group will be on the 18<sup>th</sup> November, 2013.

## **6. FINANCIAL/RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 None arising directly from this report.

## **7. SECTION 151 OFFICER COMMENTS**

- 7.1 Although there are no financial implications attached to the recommendations in this report there will nevertheless be significant financial resource requirements to implement the recommendations in the summit report.

## **8. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

**Members need to demonstrate that they have consciously thought about the three aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty as part of the decision making process.**

The three aims the authority **must** have due regard for:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it

- 8.1 None arising directly from this report.

## **9. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 None arising directly from this report.

## **10. CONSULTATION IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 The Joint Steering Group agreed the report and recommendations at its meeting on 24 May, and these were considered by the Somerset Strategic Leaders Group on Tuesday 18 June.

## **11. ASSET MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 None arising directly from this report.

**12. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT IMPLICATIONS**

12.1 Contained in the body of the report.

**13. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

13.1 None arising directly from this report.

DRAFT

# Somerset Flooding Summit

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**A Summary of Findings from the Somerset Flooding Scrutiny Event**

**May 2013**

## Chairman's Introduction

### Introduction

Somerset suffered two particularly bad periods of flooding in April and December 2012. The flooding affected all areas of the County, with the Somerset Levels and Moors perhaps bearing the brunt.

In the weeks immediately following the December floods, it became apparent that various local groups and agencies were keen to hold meetings with key bodies such as the Environment Agency (EA) and the County Council (SCC) to explore the issues around flood prevention, flood management and flood recovery.

It was quickly realised that those key agencies would struggle to attend numerous meetings on the same topic and that such an approach would not represent an effective use of already limited resources. It was therefore agreed to establish a joint countywide Scrutiny approach that would bring as many of the key people together at the same time in the same place.

In this way, Scrutiny played a crucial community leadership role in bringing together a range of agencies and the public in order to deliver real and measurable outcomes that would in time benefit the residents of Somerset.

All the Somerset authorities (both district and County) agreed to this joint approach and established a Joint Steering Group with elected member representation from all 6 authorities. Conducting the review in this manner represented the best use of limited Scrutiny resources and provided the relevant agencies and the public with a single point of contact. By joining together, it was hoped that Somerset would be able to speak cohesively and convincingly at a national level and input more effectively into any subsequent national reviews which may occur in the aftermath of the recent floods.

As a Steering Group we decided that an evidence gathering event would be a good starting point for this project – they therefore planned the Somerset Flooding Summit 2013. The Summit was designed to learn lessons from the recent flooding and identify potential measures to improve things in the future. By its very nature, much flood management work can only be a paper or simulated exercise so when faced with a real time event, it makes sense to review the effectiveness of the relevant policies and practices.

From the outset, we have been very clear on two important points:

Firstly, this exercise was not about apportioning blame to any one agency for their perceived role in the flooding incidents. The process planned to look at success stories as well as areas for future improvement. The Steering Group wished to use the Summit as an opportunity to gather evidence upon which to base further work or recommendations and to build an informed picture as possible of the flooding facts affecting Somerset.

Secondly, the Steering Group had realistic expectations as to what could be achieved by one event on one day – the members were aware that they would not and could not answer



all the points raised, but that the Summit was the start of the process and would provide an evidential framework for further work.

This report sets out areas for further work as well as some specific recommendations for improvements in all aspects of flood management in Somerset.

## **The Somerset Flooding Summit**

The Flooding Summit was intended to be the start of the review process – an evidence gathering opportunity. To this end, from the outset, the Steering Group was keen to ensure that a wide range of delegates were invited to attend, and that the event should not be 'local authority centric'.

There were several key agencies whose attendance was vital to the success of the event:

Environment Agency;

Somerset County Council as Lead Local Flood Authority ( as well as Highways authority and Lead Civil Contingencies authority)

Internal Drainage Board

Wessex Water

Avon and Somerset Police

Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue

County Landowners Association

These agencies were approached first, and the premise of the Summit explained to them – without exception they were all happy to participate, quickly realising the potential of such a jointly organised event to maximise the use of their resources. Once these key agencies had agreed to attend, we were able to look at the wider delegate list and the following confirmed their attendance:

Jeremy Browne MP

Tessa Munt MP

Ian Liddell-Grainger MP

Somerset Chamber of Commerce

Federation of Small Businesses

Insurance Industry

National Farmers Union

In addition to these agencies, we recognised the need to involve members of the community and Parish Councils. However, we also realised the need to keep numbers attending manageable. In terms of public engagement, each local authority issued a press release

outlining the aims and objectives of the review and inviting members of the public to contact us via a dedicated [flooding@southsomerserset.gov.uk](mailto:flooding@southsomerserset.gov.uk) e-mail address. They were asked to detail their personal flooding experiences as well as suggestions for future improvements – we received over 150 responses and undertook to keep all responders informed of progress.

All responses were collated and analysed and the key messages used to inform the Summit Programme.

Somerset as a county has hundreds of Parish Councils, all of whom make a valuable contribution to local democracy and many of whom were affected by the flooding. However, it simply was not logistically practical for each parish to be represented at the Summit, so it was agreed that each district would nominate the five most appropriate parishes from their area to attend – these parishes were identified based on local intelligence.

We were aware that many of these agencies and individuals had significant pressure on their resources and so wanted to make sure that the Summit was the best use of their time. In advance of the Summit, each delegate was asked to identify the top five issues they would wish the Summit to address – their responses were collated and used as basis for the Summit Programme in addition to the public responses identified in the paragraph above.

Overwhelmingly, the majority of delegates identified the need for clarification on the roles and responsibilities of all the agencies involved in Flood Management. The information we gathered indicated that at a time of crisis it was difficult to know who to contact in various situations.

Bearing this in mind, the morning session of the Summit consisted of a number of presentations covering the key Flood Management roles and responsibilities as well as presentation from the Met Office to give some context. Copies of the presentations will be made available in due course.

The presentations were:

Robbie Williams - Environment Agency

Dr Sarah Jackson – Met Office

Paula Hewitt – Somerset County Council

Roger Meecham – South Somerset District Council

Refreshments – served in the main Conference Room

Nick Stevens – Chief Executive, Somerset Internal Drainage Board

Paul Oaten – Head of Sewerage Services – Wessex Water

Graham Clarke – Country Land and Business Association - the Role of Riparian Owners

Prior to the event, we were aware that this was a very emotive subject – understandably so, with many people dramatically affected. However, we wanted to make sure that the Summit was a productive event, looking to learn lessons for the future rather than attribute blame. To help facilitate this, we were very fortunate in securing the services of Lord Cameron of Dillington as an independent Chairman. In addition, we agreed to include a Meeting Etiquette Guide in the Delegate pack (attached at Appendix B to this report) to reinforce the positive intentions of the Somerset Flooding Summit.

The afternoon session of the Summit consisted of four workshops- each one designed to address the issues raised by delegates in advance. Each delegate was assigned to a workshop based on the information they provided beforehand.

In order to try and maintain a focus to the discussions, each workshop was asked to identify at least one local ( Somerset level) action to address the issues raised and one national action that can be taken further following the Summit. The workshops were organised as follows and notes from the workshops can be found at Appendix C to this report.

### Community resilience

Issues for the workshop to consider:

- What could/ should communities be doing to help themselves?
- What support from other agencies do they need and what is available?
- What examples of 'good' community resilience are available and how can these experiences be shared?

Desired outcomes from this Workshop:

- Delegates are more aware of what they can do to support their own communities
- Better understanding of what support is available to them
- Agencies are aware of what support they need to provide and to communicate with such communities
- At least one local action to move things forward
- At least one higher level action to be taken forward.

### Economic Impact

Issues for the workshop to consider:

- What are the issues around the economic impact / business impact / impact on agricultural communities?
- What work is currently going on to investigate the impact of the flooding, including the closure of the A361?
- Are there any suggestions for improvements / actions?

- How can we work with insurers and government to make sure that no premises on the Somerset levels are uninsurable?
- What support is available to support businesses?

Desired outcomes from this workshop:

- What can be done across Somerset to better support businesses in terms of flood recovery?
- What can businesses do for themselves?
- What could be done nationally (i.e. Insurers) to support the economy of Somerset following flooding?
- Consideration of Somerset's vulnerable infrastructure and potential improvements.

### Flood Management / Prevention

Issues for this workshop to consider:

- Extension of discussion on roles and responsibilities
- How can everyone work together to achieve tangible outcomes? NO BLAME
- What are the barriers / issues and how can they be overcome?
- Who and how is it decided when to use the pumping station network that already exists?
- In the modelling of the spatial planning, what consideration is given to the secondary effect of deliberately flooding premises on the Somerset Levels?
- What funding arrangements are in place to support flood management and are there any potential additional funding streams that could be better exploited? Potential use of CIL funding?
- Tidal exclusion barrier on the River Parrett in Bridgwater
- Gully clearing and maintenance.
- What is the way forward in areas where challenges are particularly severe e.g. Somerset Levels?
- How can we make an effective case to MEP/ DEFRA? Central Government for more adequate funding?
- What are the agreed water management priorities particularly for the levels and moors?
- Role of planning authorities and developing on flood plains
- Water storage for future use
- Scope for Internal Drainage Boards to take on responsibility for dredging / channel clearance on main rivers in places where it would improve land drainage but EA are unable to for whatever reason.

Desired outcomes from this workshop:

- Who is responsible for what in terms of Flood Prevention?
- What can be done at Somerset level to improve Flood Prevention?
- What message(s) need to be communicated on a national level re; Flood prevention.

### Interagency Working

Issues for this workshop to consider:

- How can we work better with others in the South West to make important infrastructure more resilient?
- How do we work together to help communities and businesses recover better from flooding?
- How do we make sure that everyone is better informed about their roles and responsibilities – notably Riparian Owners?
- Can we improve how we work together to co-ordinate resources to submit bids for prevention schemes?
- How can we get better at:
  - o Sharing information
  - o Sharing resources
  - o Co-ordinated sandbag response – avoid sandbag postcode lottery
- Simplify flood related communications to the general public
- Greater ability to enable communities and other agencies to close roads to stop vehicles becoming trapped and requiring rescuing / recovery.
- Greater co-ordination of shared information between services prior to events occurring to ensure tactical level receive up to date information during an event.
- Managing public expectations
- Create a shared database of flood defence assets (including maintenance regimes)

Desired outcomes from this workshop:

- 
- What can be done at a Somerset level to improve frontline flood response inter-agency working?
- Potential for a single point of information that everyone feeds into?
- What support is needed nationally to support better inter-agency working?

## Recommendations

In terms of process, the Joint Steering Group is not a formally constituted committee of any of the authorities taking part in this review. Consequently, all recommendations will need endorsing through each authority's own decision making processes. This may appear a rather lengthy and cumbersome process but it is there are no statutory provisions for Joint Scrutiny Committees. That said, many of the recommendations contained in this report suggest further areas of work to ensure that this project is a worthwhile exercise with tangible outcomes. In order to reduce the risk of creating an overly bureaucratic process, we recommend that the Joint Steering Group is retained with its current membership of 2 elected members from each authority. The Steering Group will then agree how best to proceed in terms of monitoring progress against our recommendations and securing the best possible outcomes.

Our recommendations have been formed based on the evidence and information gathered via the Flood Summit. As was intended, the Summit generated a number of areas for further consideration and exploration and consequently a number of these recommendations require further, more detailed work. However, members of the Steering Group are keen to maintain the momentum of this project and are aware that for those affected by flooding issues, a timely response is critical. To this end, the Steering Group have allocated a time frame for each recommendation and the Steering Group will retain an overview of progress against each recommendation.

The outcomes/recommendations fall broadly into two categories; those which can be actioned locally at a Somerset level and those which need to be taken forward at a more national level.

### *Economic Impact and improved infrastructure*

Nationally the emphasis is on the economic case for improved flood management arrangements. Several examples were given at the Flood Summit of the need for improved infrastructure in the County from main roads to main train lines. Delegates at the Summit were informed that SCC are currently preparing a study of the economic impact of the December Flooding – this empirical data will hopefully support the anecdotal evidence given at the Summit of the significant economic impact of the flooding and further support calls for additional flood management funding.

**We recommend that discussions with the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) are initiated to look at the contribution the business community across the region can make to improving the infrastructure - it was not only Somerset that was adversely affected when the mainline train route was compromised by flooding around Curry Moor / Lyng and Burrowbridge and that national bodies such as Network Rail should be actively involved in these solution based discussions.**

**In addition, we recommend that all opportunities to secure Partnership Funding are actively pursued.** In May 2011, DeFRA announced a new approach to funding capital projects that reduce flood risks – Flood and Coastal Erosion Resilience Partnership Funding ( Partnership Funding). This policy allows risk management authorities to apply for grant in

aid and encourages them to secure funding from other sources. The main purpose behind introducing Partnership funding was to:

- Make sure that investment is not constrained by what government alone can afford to do;
- Increase certainty and transparency over the level of DeFRA funding for each project;
- Leverage further investment towards worthwhile projects;
- Allow a greater level of local ownership and choice;
- Encourage more cost-effective solutions; and
- Better target Defra funding towards areas at significant risk.

We feel that any project to protect and improve Somerset's Infrastructure would meet this criteria.

### *Insurance Industry*

Although the Summit was very well attended by a wide range of bodies, representatives from the insurance industry were notable by their absence – despite repeated requests for them to attend. Many of the agricultural, business and community delegates attending the Summit raised a number of questions relating to securing adequate insurance in the future and the role of the insurance industry in flood prevention work. Due to the importance of this issue, **the Steering Group recommend that further work is undertaken to engage with the Insurance industry both at a county level and nationally.** The Steering Group are aware of the ongoing national discussions between the Government and Insurance industry and would urge the Somerset MPs who attended the Summit to represent the interests of Somerset businesses and communities in these on-going discussions. **At a county level, we recommend that the Insurance Industry are asked to participate in the wider economic impact discussions outlined in recommendation ....of this report.**

### *Media Coverage*

Delegates at the Summit stated that the flooding attracted a significant amount of local and national media coverage, and whilst most of the reporting was an accurate reflection of events, there was some sensationalist coverage which some feel has had a negative economic impact (tourists cancelling bookings because they don't think Somerset is 'open for business' etc.). Additionally, other businesses have said that clients have cancelled orders because of mis-reporting (wedding venues etc.).

The information given to the Steering Group seems to indicate that this issue could be somewhat improved if the number of information sources was reduced. This would naturally occur anyway if the co-ordination of information proposed by the single Somerset Flooding Information Point (see recommendation .....) is introduced. **The Steering Group recommend that a press protocol is devised, advising those dealing with media enquiries how to respond effectively.** Such a protocol would direct all enquires to the single information point to ensure consistent information is given – this will of course rely on the full commitment of all the relevant agencies to accurately maintain the single information point. In addition to this, all those in contact with the media will be briefed on the need to reinforce positive messages about those areas which remain accessible and the positive steps being taken to actively manage the flooding situation.

### **Lead Local Flood Authority role and responsibilities.**

The Flooding events of 2012 reminded us that flooding is a serious on-going risk for Somerset Communities. The Flood and Water Management Act 2012 implemented many of the recommendations of the Pitt Review into the 2007 floods. The Act clarified the roles and responsibilities for the management of flooding and introduced some new duties.

The Steering Group recommend that further work is undertaken to fully understand what progress has been made in Somerset towards implementing the full range of duties and responsibilities included in the Act.

One such duty is the preparation of the local flood risk management strategy. Such a strategy should describe the flood risk in an area and set out the actions that will be taken to manage it. Local strategies will help prioritise investment decisions and provide information on how flood risk will be managed. They provide a starting point for Lead Local Flood Authorities to engage with communities. Guidance from Defra and the Local Government Association states that local strategies are expected to take between 12-18 months to complete. According to the most current Environment Agency data, Somerset County Council's strategy preparations are *'in progress'*.

The Flood and Water Management Act was enacted in October 2010. In a recent letter to all Lead Local Flood Authorities, the Minister for Natural Environment – Richard Benyon MP, stated that whilst flooding events of 2012 may have diverted some resources away from policy preparation, he would encourage '...Lead Local Flood Authorities to get your strategies into the public sphere by Autumn 2013 so that communities can see the local arrangements in place for tackling flooding and what they can do to help themselves'.

In terms of funding flood management work -DeFRA figures state that in 2013-14 Somerset as a Lead Local Flood Authority will receive £461,000 – **we recommend that further work is undertaken to look at how this money is committed and what accountability measures are in place? Also, how is this figure calculated and is it adequate based on the risks /actions identified in the Somerset local flood risk management strategy?**

**We recommend that in order to support the Lead Local Flood Authority in preparing the necessary strategy and policy documents, drafts are submitted to the Steering Group for consideration at an appropriate stage. This will ensure effective consultation with the constituent district authorities and that the pertinent issues already identified by this review are reflected in the emerging strategies.**

### *Flood Mapping*

As part of this review of the roles and responsibilities of the Lead Flood authority, **we recommend that the Steering Group considers the information that the Environment Agency and the Lead Local Flood Authority have been doing to generate a new generation of surface water flood maps for England in compliance with the Flood Risk Regulations 2009.** DeFRA are keen that this information is shared with district authorities to ensure all local knowledge is effectively captured and this can be achieved by reporting through this Steering Group.



### *Dredging*

Prior to the Summit, the Steering Group felt that one issue would perhaps dominate – that of dredging the rivers Parrett and Tone, as there had been a significant amount of coverage of this issue in the local and national media. As mentioned in the main body of this report, great care was taken to ensure that this issue did not overshadow any other equally as pertinent issues. However, on the day of the Summit, the Environment Agency opened their presentation by saying that they appreciated the value of dredging ( a change from their previous stance on this issue) and that now efforts needed to be concentrated on sourcing adequate funding.

The Steering Group are of the opinion that there is no value in looking at the historical reason behind dredging, or lack thereof, but that in order to secure the best outcomes for our communities in the future, we should in effect accept that ‘ we are where we are’.

**To this end, the Steering Group recommend that discussions are had as soon as possible to identify practical and innovative sources of funding.** The Wessex Regional Flood and Coastal Committee has recently identified some funding to ‘kick start’ a dredging fund and this now needs to be built upon. We recommend that all potential partnership funding sources are fully explored and progress is regularly reported to the Steering Group.

As part of the continuation of the Joint Steering Group’s work, **we recommend that further work is carried out to ascertain the exact cost of dredging and realistic funding options. Such discussions would move beyond the more familiar territory of who should pay for dredging to who actually can pay. Discussions on this topic should look at contributions from Statutory Flood Management agencies ( EA, IDB’s, Local authorities etc) as well as the business sector and community enterprises.**

### *Disaggregation of Drainage Levy*

District or Unitary Council’s pay a levy to Internal Drainage Boards (IDB’s), funded from Council Tax. The scale of the levy is determined by the IDB and at present and Councils are obliged to pay this levy.

This aggregation creates difficulty for Council’s, as any increase of IDB levy would need to be funded within the limit of increase permitted to Council Tax without referendum (this limit was formerly imposed by way of a ‘cap’). This issue is compounded where a need exists for Council’s to increase Council Tax for their own requirements.

There is potential that Government may introduce a requirement that IDB’s gain the agreement of Council’s on any proposed increase in the drainage levy, but in reality this would not overcome the difficulties described above, as many Council’s would be reluctant to decline requests from IDB’s for an increase.

It would be preferable for the IDB levy to be disaggregated, and for IDB’s to be permitted to precept for the funds they require. This would provide a greater degree of transparency for tax payers and enable Council’s and IDB’s an appropriate degree of financial independence.

### *Somerset recommendations*

More locally, the Steering Group received considerable positive feedback from those attending the event about the presentations given in the morning session of the Summit. As detailed in this report, these presentations outlined the main roles and responsibilities of the key flood management agencies. Feedback from delegates asked if this information could be reproduced in an easy to understand format and made publicly available. In addition, numerous delegates raised concerns that whilst all the information is undoubtedly available, it is hard to know where to find it, especially at a time of crisis.

**We recommend that a single ‘Somerset Flooding Website’ is created, to be hosted by the Lead Local Flood Authority to ensure effective consistent advice and information is given across the County.**

### *Community Resilience*

The Community Resilience Workshop was well attended and very positive – delegates were keen to learn what they could do to help their own communities. The Steering Group feel it is important that this enthusiasm and positivity is maintained and **that a higher profile is given to the recently formed Community Resilience in Somerset Project to ensure that as many communities as possible are supported.** Two parishes have already been included in the programme as a result of the Somerset Flood Summit and this could be expanded.

There were a number of issues raised during this workshop that we would like to see addressed as a matter of some urgency. Once answered, the information could usefully form a self- help guide for communities and **we recommend that a further information event is held for Parish Councils and communities, facilitated by Avon and Somerset Police, Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue and Somerset County Council covering the following points:**

- Public Liability - what can the public be empowered to do in times of flood and how is this achieved ( road closures, flood alleviation etc)
- What resources can be provided to communities – signage etc
- Advice on the use of vehicles in flood water – 4x4 community response vehicles etc
- Definitive information on Road Closures – and what happens if signage is ignored.

Unfortunately, Somerset was not chosen to be part of the DeFRA funded Flood resilience Community Pathfinder Scheme. Participation in this scheme would have addressed many of the issues identified by the Flood Summit. **Every effort must now be made to ensure that the information produced by the thirteen local authorities who were chosen is carefully monitored and appropriately applied to Somerset.**

## Summary of recommendations

The Joint Flooding Steering Group recommends that:

1. That the report on the economic impact of the 2012 flooding events is reported to the Steering Group as soon as is practicable.
2. Discussions with the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) are initiated to look at its contribution to improving the infrastructure - it was not only Somerset that was adversely affected when the mainline train route was compromised by flooding around Curry Moor / Lyng and Burrowbridge and that national bodies such as Network Rail should be actively involved in these solution based discussions.
3. In addition, we recommend that all opportunities to secure Partnership Funding (under the Defra Flood and Coastal Erosion Resilience Partnership Funding initiative) are actively pursued.
4. That Somerset is actively represented by all agencies, including our MPs in government level discussions to ensure that insurance against flooding remains widely available and affordable and the Insurance industry is encouraged to positively engage in flood management discussions to ensure better flood prevention.
5. That a press protocol is devised, advising those dealing with media enquiries how to respond effectively and to promote the 'Somerset is open for business' message at times of flooding.
6. That in order to support the Lead Local Flood Authority in preparing the necessary strategy and policy documents as required by the Flood and Water Management Act, drafts of key documents are submitted to the Steering Group for consideration at an appropriate stage. This will ensure effective consultation with the constituent district authorities and that the pertinent issues already identified by this review are reflected in the emerging strategies.
7. That further work is undertaken to look at how the £ 461,000 allocated by Defra to Somerset County Council as a Lead Local Flood authority money is committed and what accountability measures are in place? Also, how is this figure calculated and is it adequate based on the risks /actions identified in the Somerset local flood risk management strategy?
8. That the Steering Group considers the work that the Environment Agency and the Lead Local Flood Authority(SCC) have been doing to generate a new generation of surface water flood maps for England in compliance with the Flood Risk Regulations 2009.

9. That discussions are had as soon as possible to identify practical and innovative sources of funding for a renewed programme of dredging in Somerset and that further work is carried out to ascertain the exact cost of dredging and realistic funding options. Such discussions would move beyond the more familiar territory of who should pay for dredging to who actually can pay. Discussions on this topic should look at contributions from Statutory Flood Management agencies ( EA, IDB's, Local authorities ) as well as the business sector and community enterprises
10. That a single 'Somerset Flooding Website' is created, to be hosted by the Lead Local Flood Authority to ensure effective consistent advice and information is given across the County.
11. That a higher profile is given to the recently formed Community Resilience in Somerset Project to ensure that it supports as many communities as possible and that the Lead Local Flood Authority can use the project as a basis for implementing a more sustainable model similar to those operated in other areas such as North Somerset.
12. That a further information event is held for Parish Councils and communities, facilitated by Avon and Somerset Police, Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue and Somerset County Council covering the following points:
  - Public Liability - what can the public be empowered to do in times of flood and how is this achieved ( road closures, flood alleviation etc)
  - What resources can be provided to communities – signage etc
  - Advice on the use of vehicles in flood water – 4x4 community response vehicles etc
  - Definitive information on Road Closures – and what happens if signage is ignored.
13. That the Lead Local Flood Authority leads the preparation of a Riparian Owners Information Sheet to be made available to land owners and householders, containing information about Riparian responsibilities and sources of guidance or support.
14. That consideration is given by the Somerset Water Management Partnership (SWMP) to incorporating within its constitution the need for it to take a strategic overview of the issues raised at the Flooding Summit and in this report.
15. In order to provide a greater degree of transparency for tax payers and to enable Council's and Internal Drainage Board's an appropriate degree of financial independence from one another, it is recommended that Council's and MP's promote with Government the disaggregation of the Internal Drainage Board levy from Council tax.

**Appendix B**  
**Leaders' 'Flooding' Recommendations**

	<b>Scrutiny Draft Recommendations</b>	<b>Leader Draft Recommendations</b>
1	That the report on the economic impact of the 2012 flooding events is report to the Steering Group as soon as is practicable.	Agreed
2	That discussions with the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) are initiated to look at the contribution the business community across the region can make to improving the infrastructure it was not only Somerset that was adversely affected when the mainline train route was compromised by flooding around Curry Moor / Lyng and Burrowbridge and that national bodies such as Network Rail should be actively involved in these solution based discussions.	<p>Replace with:</p> <p>That discussions with the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) are initiated to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess the impact of the 2012 flooding on the economic well-being and strategic infrastructure of Somerset and the surrounding areas;</li> <li>• Clarify the contribution that the LEP can make to improving outcomes on these issues.</li> </ul> <p>National bodies such as Network Rail should be actively involved in these solution based discussions given the impact on the mainline train route of flooding on the Levels and Moors.</p>
3	In addition, it is recommended that all opportunities to secure Partnership Funding (under the Defra Flood and Coastal Erosion Resilience Partnership Funding initiative) are actively pursued.	That discussions with all partners should continue as a matter of urgency to agree a vision for flood prevention in Somerset for the future. This should clarify the aims and responsibilities of all of the partners, build a comprehensive understanding of the funding opportunities available and enable the development of appropriate business cases for projects and funding.

	<b>Scrutiny Draft Recommendations</b>	<b>Leader Draft Recommendations</b>
		This work should not stop all opportunities continuing to be pursued to secure Partnership Funding.
4	That Somerset is actively represented by all agencies, including our MPs in government level discussions to ensure that insurance against flooding remains widely available and affordable and the Insurance industry is encouraged to positively engage in flood management discussions to ensure better flood prevention.	Agreed
5	That a press protocol is devised, advising those dealing with media enquiries how to respond effectively and to promote the 'Somerset is open for business' message at times of flooding	Agreed
6	That in order to support the Lead Flood Authority in preparing the necessary strategy and policy documents as required by the Flood and Water Management Act, drafts of key documents are submitted to the Steering Group for consideration at an appropriate stage. This will ensure effective consultation with the constituent district authorities and that the pertinent issues already identified by this review are reflected in the emerging strategies.	Agreed
7	That further work is undertaken to look at how the £ 461,000 allocated by Defra to Somerset County Council as a Lead Flood authority money is committed and what accountability measures are in place? Also, how is this figure calculated and is it adequate based on the risks /actions identified in the Somerset local flood risk management strategy?	Agreed that the totality of current funding for flood related activities needs to be understood and the adequacy of this level of funding considered. In order to build up this picture all councils (including Exmoor National Park) will provide details of spending on flood and water management including external funding and project funding received.

	<b>Scrutiny Draft Recommendations</b>	<b>Leader Draft Recommendations</b>
		<p>However all Government funding streams relating to flood relief and alleviation within Somerset should embrace the twin elements of transparency and accountability with the recipient organisations providing a full audit as to the purpose and details of the implementation of any scheme associated with this funding.</p>
8	<p>That the Steering Group considers the work that the Environment Agency and the Lead Flood Authority(SCC) have been doing to generate a new generation of surface water flood maps for England in compliance with the Flood Risk Regulations 2009.</p>	<p>The Leaders preference is that the Environment Agency should publish their existing surface water flood maps on their website and promote their availability with a view to achieving greater transparency.</p>
9	<p>That discussions are had as soon as possible to identify practical and innovative sources of funding for a renewed programme of dredging in Somerset and that further work is carried out to ascertain the exact cost of dredging and realistic funding options. Such discussions would move beyond the more familiar territory of who should pay for dredging to who actually can pay. Discussions on this topic should look at contributions from Statutory Flood Management agencies ( EA IDB's, Local authorities ) as well as the business sector and community enterprises.</p>	<p>Agreed, however the anticipated impacts of any dredging on retaining structures along the river also need to be understood.</p>
10	<p>That a single 'Somerset Flooding Website' is created, to be hosted by the Lead Flood Authority to ensure effective consistent advice and information is given across the County.</p>	<p>In preference to a new website, the focus will be on improving communications by developing a flooding communications protocol for Somerset to ensure a cohesive approach to the provision of timely and relevant information on existing websites and via other appropriate mechanisms.</p>

	<b>Scrutiny Draft Recommendations</b>	<b>Leader Draft Recommendations</b>
11	<p>That a higher profile is given to the recently formed Community Resilience in Somerset Project to ensure that it supports as many communities as possible and that the Lead Flood Authority can use the project as a basis for implementing a more sustainable model similar to those operated in other areas such as North Somerset.</p>	<p>Agreed</p>
12	<p>That a further information event is held for Parish Councils and communities, facilitated by Avon and Somerset Police, Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue and Somerset County Council covering the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Public Liability - what can the public be empowered to do in times of flood and how is this achieved ( road closures, flood alleviation etc)</li> <li>● What resources can be provided to communities – signage etc</li> <li>● Advice on the use of vehicles in flood water – 4x4 community response vehicles etc</li> <li>● Definitive information on Road Closures – and what happens if signage is ignored.</li> </ul>	<p>Agreed that rather than having a series of separate events, this recommendation will be taken forward by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● adding flooding issues to the agendas for a series of public consultation events being planned by the County Council for the autumn</li> <li>● ensuring that every town and parish council/meeting receives a flooding information pack which will include the points listed in the scrutiny recommendations.</li> </ul>
13	<p>That the Lead Flood Authority leads the preparation of a Riparian Owners Information Sheet to be made available to land owners and householders, containing information about Riparian responsibilities and sources of guidance or support.</p>	<p>Agreed and that this information can be included in the pack referred to above</p>
14	<p>That consideration is given by the Somerset Water Management Partnership (SWMP) to incorporating within its constitution the need for it to take a strategic overview of the issues raised at the Flooding Summit and in this report.</p>	<p>Agreed subject to the inclusion of a review of the groups active within Somerset on water management issues with the aim of simplifying the arrangements and clarifying responsibilities.</p>