

TAUNTON DEANE BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE – 8TH DECEMBER 2004

REPORT OF THE FORWARD PLAN MANAGER AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION MANAGER

TAUNTON URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK AND DESIGN CODE

(This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillors Bishop and Cavill)

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To consider the Taunton Urban Design Framework (UDF) and associated Design Code, following the receipt of the final reports from consultants Terence O'Rourke.
- 1.2 To consider the proposed structure for partnership working in delivering the Taunton Urban Design Framework (Appendix A).
- 1.3 To approve the attached Memorandum of Understanding as a basis for informal partnership working over the next three years in delivering the Vision for Taunton (Appendix B).

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 The objectives of the Vision for Taunton have steered the proposals of the UDF and the Design Code. Together these reports provide a key step in the process of implementing the Vision. Ongoing work has identified the need for a number of further studies, Taunton Town Centre Action Area Plan and the establishment of a Delivery Team to implement the Vision.
- 2.2 It is proposed that a three tier delivery structure be set up for partnership working in delivering The Vision for Taunton, including the appointment of a dedicated Delivery Team (Appendix A). The Executive is also asked to approve a Memorandum of Understanding which sets out the principles of partnership working over a three year period, and to agree to the setting up of a dedicated Steering Group of Borough Council Members and officers to oversee and co-ordinate the implementation of the Vision from the Council's perspective.

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In September 2001 the Regional Planning Guidance for the South West (RPG10) designated Taunton as a Principal Urban Area (PUA), one of eleven in the region. Policy SS14: Taunton states:
Local authorities, developers, infrastructure providers and other agencies should work together to achieve the following for Taunton:

- *An enhanced role as a focal point for increasingly diversified economic activity and as a commercial, cultural and service centre for the central part of the region;*
- *Balanced housing and economic development, facilities and services consistent with the town's enhanced role;*
- *Investment in transport and other infrastructure and facilities to support this strategy, including measures to address capacity problems at M5 junction 25.*

3.2 In response to its PUA status the Vision for Taunton was produced in October 2002 in partnership by TDBC, SCC and the South West of England Regional Development Agency (SWERDA). In March 2003 the partners then commissioned consultants to carry out three studies: an Urban Design Framework (UDF) for the town centre; an Urban Extension Study (UES) for Taunton; and Taunton Transport Strategy Review (TTSR).

3.3 The underlying strategy to the commission is founded on that of the Local Plan and the objectives of the Vision for Taunton. That is to give top priority to the regeneration of previously developed land in the urban area, putting the river at the heart of the town and thereby minimising the need for greenfield development. The studies are informed by an assessment of the economic potential of Taunton, rather than by housing trends. An integrated approach to economic development, land use planning and transport is essential.

3.4 The UDF study area was initially focused on Firepool, the Cricket Club / Coal Orchard and Tangier / Castle Green. In August 2003 the study was widened to include the areas with potential for retail redevelopment either side of High Street.

3.5 In November and December 2003 there was public consultation on the emerging UDF and UES work and in March 2004 there was public consultation on the TTSR. Consultation response showed that public opinion was equally divided between the Inner Relief Road option for Tangier and the Terence O'Rourke proposals. As a result work on a compromise "Third Way" option was commissioned.

3.6 In June 2004 the Somerset Joint Structure Plan Alteration 1996-2016 Deposit Draft included in Policy STR3 Taunton:

The primary aim for new development in Taunton will be to achieve the restructuring and expansion of the town centre through major investment and the redevelopment of several brownfield sites. The Local Planning Authority and other agencies should prepare a strategy for the town centre to enhance its role and deliver the following objectives:

- *As a minimum, approximately 28,000 sqm of new retail floorspace;*
- *Approximately 56,000 sqm of office floorspace;*
- *A major increase in opportunities for town centre living, with approximately 2,000 net additional homes;*

- *New cultural, leisure and sporting facilities to support this enhanced role;*
- *Improved accessibility to and within the town centre making provision for a variety of forms of transport, including walking, cycling and public transport, with increased pedestrian connections to the rail and bus stations and a new public transport interchange;*
- *Improve the quality and permeability of the public realm, creating new public spaces as a focus for public life, with emphasis on the river frontage.*

3.7 The UDF, UES and TTSR will inform important emerging strategies such as the Regional Spatial Strategy, the Taunton Sub Area Study, LTP2 and the Taunton Deane Local Development Framework (LDF). The priority components of the LDF are the Core Strategy and the Taunton Town Centre Area Action Plan that will assist delivery of the Vision for Taunton.

3.8 This report was considered and endorsed by the Council's Strategic Planning, Transportation and Economic Development Review Panel at its Meeting on 23rd November 2004.

4.0 **TAUNTON URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK**

4.1 Members will be sent CDROMs of the UDF and Design Code. These reports take forward the work of the Vision Commission which envisaged "a continually rejuvenating Taunton, acknowledged nationally as a leading exemplar of a 21st century market town". The UDF will inform the planning policies of the Taunton Town Centre Action Area Plan and the Design Code will form the basis of a Supplementary Planning Document to guide development.

4.2 The UDF has identified over 40 ha of under-used land in the town centre, much of it fronting the river Tone. Proposals for the four areas of major change will deliver:

- Approximately 2,200 townhouses and apartments
- 80,000 sqm of employment
- 50,000 sqm of retail and leisure facilities
- 150 bed hotel
- international cricket ground
- new theatre
- new library and cultural centre of excellence
- new bus station
- enhanced rail station and bus interchange
- new healthcare facilities
- 2,200 public parking spaces
- 2 new road links crossing the river
- 4 new pedestrian and cycle bridges
- a network of cycle routes

- over 2 km of enhanced riverfront
- a series of public spaces

In effect the strategy will expand the town centre to put the river at the heart of the town.

- 4.3 The four areas of change which will deliver the key elements of the Vision are:
- Firepool
 - Cricket & Safeway
 - Tangier & Cultural Core
 - High Street

Firepool

- 4.4 Firepool is the largest and most complex area of change and will deliver an employment site of strategic importance for Taunton. It can deliver:

- 45,00 sqm of offices
- light industrial units and live/work units
- 8,000 sqm of retail and leisure
- 6,500 sqm of healthcare facilities
- 9,500 sqm hotel (150 beds)
- 1,000 residential units
- 920 public car parking spaces
- new rail station foyer and bus interchange
- improvements to the public realm and riverfront
- improvements to flood defences, including a new weir and marina
- a Northern Inner Distributor Road (Upper Canal Street) providing strategic vehicular access to Firepool

It will be a vibrant mixed use area and the key factor in changing market perceptions of Taunton as a place to live and work.

Cricket & Safeway

- 4.5 The Coal Orchard and Cricket Club area can deliver:

- International Cricket Ground and stands
- 5,000 sqm of retail and leisure floorspace
- 220 residential units
- 2,000 sqm of offices
- improvements to the public realm
- improved riverside access

The Cricket Club is seen as one of Taunton's key brands and the proposals enable it to redevelop to provide international facilities in heart of the town centre.

- 4.6 The possible longer term redevelopment of the Safeway site provides an opportunity for:
- 3,500 sqm of retail
 - 200 residential units

- 22,500 sqm of offices

Development in this area is not envisaged until after 2016.

Tangier & Cultural Core

- 4.7 The Tangier Area provides a mixed residential, business, cultural and “learning” environment and can deliver:
- 10,500 sqm of office/workshop floorspace
 - 5,500 sqm of retail and leisure floorspace
 - 550 residential units
 - new theatre (550 seat auditorium)
 - cultural centre of excellence
 - new (relocated) library
 - enhanced riverfront
 - enhancements to Castle Green and Goodland Gardens
 - 2 new pedestrian/cycle bridges
 - new vehicular river crossing linking Castle Street to Wood Street
 - 300 public car parking spaces

The retail proposals include the expansion of Debenhams to front the river and Goodland Gardens.

High Street

- 4.8 The opportunity exists east and west of High Street to provide a department store and large new units which will meet the requirements of major national retailers in a “pedestrian friendly” environment. These sites can potentially be delivered independently but must be considered as a single comprehensive scheme which can deliver:
- 30,000 sqm of retail
 - 200 residential units
 - new (relocated) bus station
 - 1,000 public car parking spaces
 - new pedestrian links and squares
- 4.9 The proposals for 24,000 sqm of retail east of High Street would link to the Old Market Centre and provide large new units and a department store close to the core shopping area around the Parade and East Street. Excavation will be necessary to provide a level pedestrian route through the scheme linking to the Old Market Centre and to High Street. Multi-storey car parking and apartments will be provided above the department store.
- 4.10 West of High Street retail provision is concentrated on the northern part of the site, functioning as an extension of a redeveloped Crown Walk. It will create a continuous shopping frontage linking High Street to Bath Place. On the southern part a multi-storey car park will extend under the new bus station serving the shopping area.

- 4.11 The Design Code will guide the nature, scale and form of new development within the areas of change identified by the UDF. The key objective is to retain the fundamental “market town character” of Taunton as the town grows. The Code sets out the urban design principles that should be followed to achieve this.
- 4.12 Important principles include a mix of uses in the town centre to increase the viability of facilities and provide support for small businesses. It creates a greater opportunity for social interaction and developing communities. A range of facilities is important to accommodate the needs of a variety of people from the elderly and disabled to the families and youth. It is also important to encourage a mix of uses that support activity day and night. This helps to create busy places, resulting in more surveillance and increased feeling of safety.
- 4.13 It is important to ensure there are active ground floor uses. For example retail units, cafes, bars and similar activities which will encourage movement through the street and add to the vitality and viability of the area. Innovative approaches may be needed to address blank side and rear elevations of large scale buildings.
- 4.14 The Design Code addresses the need for different types of street in different locations to reflect whether it is a strategic route or a local route. New buildings should provide an appropriate sense of enclosure to streets and spaces. New development should reflect the character of the area and respond to the scale of the streets and spaces being created.
- 4.15 Perimeter blocks should be used wherever possible as they can accommodate the greatest variety of use, will increase connectivity and maximise active frontages, whilst offering flexibility for reuse or redevelopment in the future. The Code addresses a number of other issues including microclimate, building types, boundary treatment, materials, urban grain and building heights.
- 4.16 The Code sets out the key urban design principles for each of the areas of change in turn. It includes a large number of cross sections to accompany the plans. These show how the proposals utilise changes in levels to ensure that active frontages are presented to roads, undercroft parking is provided and what building heights are appropriate.

5.0 **DELIVERY**

Delivery Structure

- 5.1 A three tier delivery structure is proposed incorporating:-

Taunton Advisory Board (TAB)

5.2 This is a non-executive board comprising high level and political representation from the key partners (TDBC, SWERDA, SCC and the Environment Agency), together with other key stakeholders. Its principal role is to:-

- Champion the Vision
- Address strategic issues
- Disseminate information and co-ordinate policy
- Ensure communication between stakeholders

Taunton Vision Executive Group

5.3 This comprises the Chief Executives and Senior Officers of the key partners and its principal role is to:-

- Provide essential liaison between the organisations responsible for delivery of the Vision
- Ensure a coordinated use of resources in order to deliver the Taunton Vision.
- Ensure appropriate staff resources and accommodation are in place for the Delivery Team.
- Raise the profile of the regeneration projects and partnership at Executive level.
- Provide regular progress reports to the TAB.
- Communicate key strategic issues from the TAB to the Delivery Team for action.
- Set priorities for and monitor performance of the Delivery Team.

Taunton Vision Delivery Team

5.4 This is likely to comprise a dedicated team funded primarily by the key partners and comprising four staff in the first instance whose responsibilities would be to:-

- Support the operation of the TAB and Executive Group in all their functions.
- Lead the preparation and updating of the phased Delivery Plan and all associated regeneration programmes.
- Develop a Business Plan for the day to day direction and management of the Delivery Team.
- Develop and maintain a marketing/PR strategy for the Vision.
- Promote the Vision to the local community and other professionals.
- Act as a non-statutory consultee for planning applications concerned with the project area and liaise with all the statutory authorities on pre-application negotiations.

- Prepare and submit planning applications for priority development areas where appropriate.
- Develop and manage associated sub-projects to ensure a holistic approach to the Taunton Vision and embed skills/business development/environmental/social issues into the Delivery Plan.
- Ensure delivery of the Vision reflects best practice in regeneration.
- Act as first point of contact for developers and businesses interested in the regeneration of Taunton.
- Provide advice to partner organisations on appropriate land disposal arrangements.
- Secure appropriate funding resources to enable the Vision.
- Establish key performance indicators and appraise, monitor and review projects and their delivery against the aims of the Vision.

The delivery structure is summarised in Appendix A to this report.

- 5.5 The Taunton Advisory Board was established late last year and currently meets quarterly. The Executive Group has only recently been established and met for the third time on 17th November. The Delivery Team has not yet been formally established although a Core Officer Group comprising key staff from the four main delivery partners has been meeting regularly for the last 12 months in order to progress the Urban Design Framework and all of the various issues associated with planning its delivery.
- 5.6 Progressing the establishment of a dedicated delivery team will become a key issue over the next few months as the Vision process moves progressively from the planning phase towards implementation. The amount of work likely to be involved with delivering the Vision is considerable and a stand-alone and dedicated delivery team is, therefore, felt to be essential. The costs associated with and the funding of that delivery team will need to be the subject of a separate report to the Executive in due course. It is intended that the delivery team should be established by the summer of 2005.
- 5.7 The delivery structure summarised in Appendix A to this report also indicates a number of themed groups feeding into the delivery process. These groups have not yet been established although the Cultural Consortium has been meeting regularly to discuss issues concerning Arts and Culture in Taunton.
- 5.8 Other groups may need to be specifically established for the purpose although more work needs to be done to map those groups already meeting and to determine how they might usefully assist in the delivery process.
- 5.9 Because delivering the Vision comprehensively will involve a very wide range of issues over and above the physical delivery of the key master-planned sites, the input of a wide range of partners in addition to those currently represented on the Advisory Board will be essential at various key stages or in the delivery of various specific projects. It may well be that the Local Strategic Partnership will have an important role to play in this respect.

- 5.10 In addition to the delivery structure referred to above, it is proposed that a dedicated steering group of Borough Council members and officers should be established to oversee and co-ordinate the implementation of the Vision from this Council's perspective and to advise the appropriate Review Panels and the Executive on key issues.
- 5.11 The Core Officer Group has considered a variety of models for delivering the Vision, including more formal arrangements such as Urban Regeneration Companies, etc. The preferred way forward – in the short term at least – is to establish an informal partnership of the key delivery partners with the work of that partnership set out in a so-called Memorandum of Understanding. That Memorandum has been the subject of considerable work to date and will be considered in detail at the next meeting of the TAB.
- 5.12 It is possible that, in due course, the partnership will evolve into a more formal organisation; possibly one with its own separate legal identity. At the present time, however, this is not felt to be the most appropriate way forward and is not a direction in which at least one of the partners (the Environment Agency) would be able to move. A copy of the draft Memorandum of Understanding is attached as Appendix B to this report.

Key Development Sites

Firepool / Cattle Market Relocation

- 5.13 Planning permission has now been granted to Abbey Manor Developments Ltd for the development of their land at East Yard. Their intention is to progress the development of the site at the earliest date possible and there have already been positive discussions about layout, design, infrastructure, timing, etc.
- 5.14 Progress with the relocation of the livestock market from the existing market site has been slower than anticipated primarily as a result of delays with the submission of information in support of the planning application submitted by Taunton Market Auctioneers in respect of the proposed new site at Junction 26. The application is, however, now being progressed.
- 5.15 The RDA have indicated their desire to enter into a joint venture with the Borough Council in respect of the marketing, disposal and development of the existing cattle market site and a preliminary meeting to discuss the potential arrangements was held on 15th September.
- 5.16 Key issues still to be fully resolved in respect of the Firepool site include:-
- The amount of development which can be brought forward accessed solely from Priory Bridge Road, ie is the development

of any part of the site dependent on the NIDR being first constructed?

- The flood alleviation works which may be required – either on site or off site – before the site can be developed.

5.17 Work is currently in hand to provide answers to both of these issues. The latter issue will require the input of some funding from the Borough Council in order to bring forward the necessary flood alleviation studies on an accelerated timescale. The Environment Agency have also asked both the RDA and the County Council for a contribution to the overall cost of about £330,000.

The High Street Shopping Redevelopment

5.18 Terence O'Rourke have now finalised their proposals for the area either side of High Street. Strong interest has already been shown in these proposals by existing owners of adjoining developments.

5.19 One in particular has commissioned agents to provide them with further information on the demand for and viability of the proposals. That work is on-going and there is a regular but informal dialogue with the Borough Council to ensure that both parties are kept fully up-to-date with current issues. The involvement and co-operation of existing landowners will be essential to the comprehensive delivery of the High Street proposals and it may be that some more formal arrangement with the Council would be beneficial at some stage. A dialogue is also being maintained with other key landowners and potential occupiers.

Tangier and The Cultural Quarter

5.20 Second Site continue to pursue their planning application for residential development on land which they own at Tangier. Having awaited the outcome of the Third Way study they now wish to see an early determination of their plans for this area and have recently submitted a second application.

5.21 Discussions are on-going with the owners of the Mecca building about its potential for re-use and the Cultural Consortium continue to develop proposals for the area more generally.

The Cricket Club

5.21 The Cricket Club continue to develop their proposals for the redevelopment of the cricket ground and there have been various discussions about this – principally with the RDA. The Borough Council is currently attempting to arrange a further meeting with the Cricket Club in order to progress discussions about an area of Council-owned land required for the proposals to be implemented.

- 5.22 The proposals do NOT require the demolition/relocation of the Brewhouse Theatre. Although there was initially some confusion about this issue, hopefully all parties are now correctly informed.

Funding Issues, etc

- 5.23 Terence O'Rourke and their advisers have now completed viability appraisals for all of the master-planned areas and these show a significant overall funding shortfall. They have, however, emphasised that they have been conservative in their opinions of value and full in their estimates of cost in order to present what they believe to be a worst-case scenario. A significant proportion of the funding shortfall relates to the proposals for the Cricket Club.
- 5.24 The viability work assumes that the Borough Council receives full open market value for all of its land contained within the various master-planned areas. The Council is the single largest owner of land within the key development sites; largely comprising the Cattle Market and existing surface level car parks.
- 5.25 The Council has already indicated that, in principle, it is prepared to reinvest the proceeds of the sale from its land in order to secure the delivery of the Vision and, moreover, a proportion of this year's Planning Delivery Grant has also been allocated to the delivery of the Vision.
- 5.26 An in-principle indication that additional monies received from the Local Authorities Business Growth Incentive Scheme can be put towards the delivery of the Vision has also been given.
- 5.27 The viability reports forming a confidential technical appendix to the UDF report include indicative land values for each of the master-planned areas. However, these values are not broken down between individual landowners and it is, therefore, very difficult to give an accurate indication at this stage as to the total value of the Borough Council's affected land.
- 5.28 The Council has previously given an indication that it might be prepared to invest some monies in the relocation of the livestock market from the existing town centre site to the proposed site at Junction 26. Any investment would be on the basis that the Council received a fair, open market return for that investment and in proportion to the total cost of the new market. It would also be on the basis that the Council receive a fair share of any future uplift in value of the land or buildings.
- 5.29 The RDA have indicated their interest in entering into a joint venture with the Council in respect of the existing cattle market site and this would be on the basis that they would buy an initial equity share in the site amounting to 50% of an agreed value. No detailed valuation work has yet been carried out which takes into account all of the various costs associated with this site and it is, therefore, premature to speculate as to the financial details of any such joint venture arrangement.

5.30 The RDA have not yet indicated a particular level of financial commitment to the delivery of the Vision and it is unlikely that any such commitment will be finalised until next spring. It is, however, clear that the RDA will expect all of the key delivery partners to demonstrate their financial commitment to the Vision as a pre-requisite of their involvement.

5.31 A significant number of additional studies will be required in order to progress the delivery of the Vision, including:-

- Housing Needs Survey.
- Urban Capacity Study.
- Retail Capacity Study.
- Car Parking Study.
- Flooding Study.
- Highway Capacity Study – Firepool Area.

It is intended that, wherever possible, the studies will be jointly funded by the key partners with the Borough Council's contribution likely to be met primarily from the Planning Delivery Grant.

5.32 The costs associated with the establishment of the delivery team will also be shared between the key partners and these costs will be the subject of a detailed report to the Executive in due course.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

6.1 The objectives of the Vision for Taunton have steered the proposals of the UDF and the Design Code. Together these reports provide a key step in the process of implementing the Vision. Ongoing work has identified the need for a number of further studies, Taunton Town Centre Action Area Plan and the establishment of a Delivery Team to implement the Vision.

7.0 CORPORATE PRIORITIES

7.1 The Taunton UDF and Design Code have been prepared as a result of the PUA role of Taunton and will inform the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy and Taunton Town Centre Action Area Plan. The UDF is a key step towards delivering the Vision for Taunton, the Borough Council's top corporate priority. It guides longer-term economic investment, land use planning and the development of the transport network. It takes account of environmental conservation, contributes towards developing safer and stronger communities, and facilitates the development of healthier lifestyles and therefore contributes towards all the council's priorities.

8.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1 Members are requested to support the content of the Taunton Urban Design Framework and Taunton Design Code.
- 8.2 Members are requested to endorse the Taunton Vision Delivery Structure as set out in this report and agree to the setting up of a Steering Group of Borough Council Members and Officers to oversee and co-ordinate the implementation of the Vision from the Council's perspective.
- 8.3 Members are requested to approve the Memorandum of Understanding as a basis for partnership working over the initial three year period.

Background Papers

The following documents have informed the content of this report:

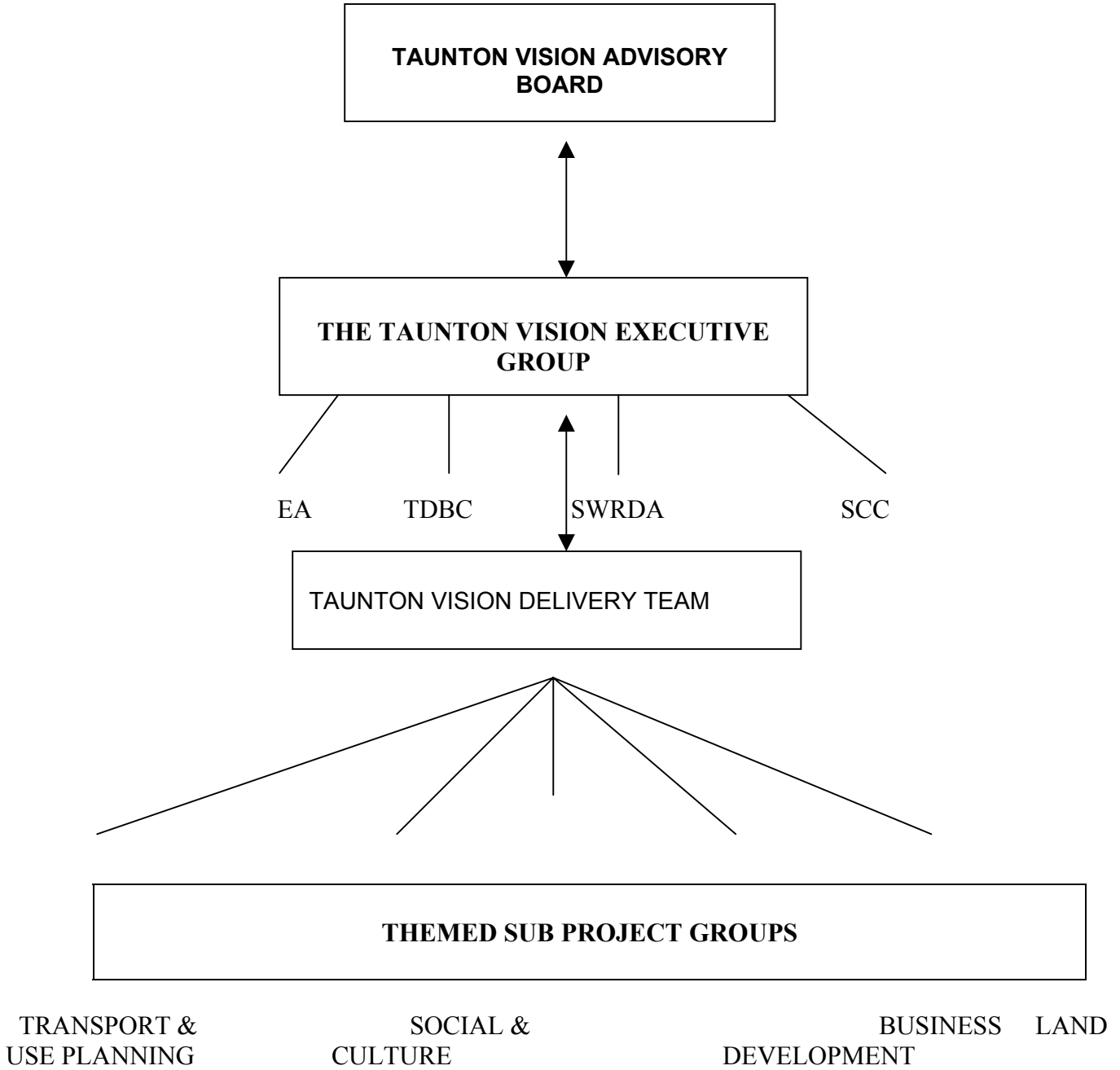
- Taunton Urban Design Framework November 2004
- Taunton Urban Design Code November 2004
- Stakeholder Involvement Report
- Baseline Report
- Delivery Report
- Economic Assessment
- River Corridor Study
- Taunton Deane Local Plan
- Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Alteration 1996-2011 Deposit Draft - June 2004
- Regional Planning Guidance for the South West (RPG10) September 2001

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FLOW CHART OF GROUPS



APPENDIX B

Memorandum of Understanding for Taunton Vision

Relevant Parties:

Somerset County Council

County Hall
Taunton

Taunton Deane Borough Council

Deane House
Taunton

South West of England Regional Development Agency Environment Agency

Sterling House
Dix's Field
Exeter

Rivers House
Bridgwater

Glossary

SWRDA	South West of England Regional Development Agency
SCC	Somerset County Council
TDBC	Taunton Deane Borough Council
EA	Environment Agency
UDF	Urban Design Framework
UES	Urban Extension Study
TTSR	Taunton Transport Strategic Review
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding

1.0 Purpose of Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

1.1 To provide a framework within which SWRDA, TDBC, SCC and EA can work together to progress the Taunton Vision. That Vision being the regeneration and redevelopment of Taunton and any other relevant areas as may be agreed at any time.

1.2 To undertake to develop, support and implement a delivery mechanism to bring forward the masterplans for the town centre.

1.3 To acknowledge and accept the principles of development set out in the Taunton UDF and UES report produced by Terence O'Rourke in 2004 and the TTSR report produced by Halcrows/Atkins in 2004.

1.4 It is not intended that this document shall create contractual relations or commitments between the partners.

2.0 Delivery Mechanism

2.1 The partners, through this MOU accept that the following documents will form the basis upon which further work can be based to develop a detailed delivery strategy for the whole and for individual elements of the vision:

- 1) UDF
- 2) UES
- 3) TTSR
- 4) UDF Design Codes
- 5) UDF Appendices: Retail Capacity Study
Retail Viability Report
UDF Viability Report
UDF Delivery Report
Baseline Report
Stakeholder Involvement Report
River Corridor Survey
- 6) Draft Delivery Plan

2.2 Based upon the contents of the above reports the partners agree to create a “team of professionals” with the requisite skills to be tasked with the delivery of the vision (the Delivery Team).

2.3 The partners agree to establish this Delivery Team for the duration of an agreed term of 3 years in the first instance and that the team will be operational by 1st April 2005.

2.4 Partners will work together to bring forward individual phases of development in accordance with an agreed Delivery Plan..

3.0 Financial Agreements

3.1 The partners agree to work collaboratively to identify and deliver the resources required to deliver the UDF. These resources could come from the organisations budgets, S106 contributions and other third party agency contributions.

3.2 The partners agree to work towards the creation of a comprehensive s106 strategy for the delivery of the vision.

4.0 Land Ownership / Acquisition

4.1 The partners agree to work towards the creation of a comprehensive land assembly strategy for the delivery of the vision.

4.2 The partners agree to work together where necessary to acquire and release land parcels critical to the delivery of the vision, whether by negotiation or by CPO.

5.0 Communications Protocol

5.1 The partners agree to consider and give appropriate weight to the objectives of the vision when making corporate decisions.

5.2 The partners agree to adopt a co-ordinated approach to discussions/involvement with external organisations to elicit their support and further the aims of the vision.

5.3 The partners commit to transparency and to a spirit of open communications in respect of this agreement where that does not breach confidentiality protocols.

5.4 The partners agree to work together in good faith to achieve the delivery of the vision. It is recognised that issues will arise for decisions during the term of this MOU not necessarily provided for by its terms.

5.5 The partners agree where necessary to a coordinated and consistent approach to marketing of the vision, PR and media relations.

6.0 Terms

6.1 No partner shall be liable to pay any contribution or commit any resources without the prior written agreement of the duly authorised representative specifying the extent of such contribution or resources.

6.2 Nothing in this MOU fetters the statutory liabilities, duties, responsibilities or roles of the undersigned parties.

6.3 The MOU will be for a term of three years from date of signing.

Signed by:

Colin Molton
Director of Development
South West Regional Development Agency

Date:

Penny James
Chief Executive
Taunton Deane Borough Council

Date:

Alan Jones
Chief Executive
Somerset County Council

Date:

Tony Owen
Area Manager