

## SWT Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday, 5th February, 2020,  
6.15 pm

**Somerset West  
and Taunton**

**The John Meikle Room - The Deane  
House**

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**Members:** Gwil Wren (Chair), Libby Lisgo (Vice-Chair), Ian Aldridge, Sue Buller, Norman Cavill, Dixie Darch, Ed Firmin, John Hunt, Sue Lees, Dave Mansell, Hazel Prior-Sankey, Phil Stone, Nick Thwaites, Danny Wedderkopp and Keith Wheatley

### **Agenda**

**1. Apologies**

To receive any apologies for absence.

**2. Minutes of the previous meeting of the Scrutiny Committees held on 8 January and 20 January (attached)**

To approve the minutes of the previous meetings of the Committee held on 8 and 20 January.

**3. Declarations of Interest**

To receive and note any declarations of disclosable pecuniary or prejudicial or personal interests in respect of any matters included on the agenda for consideration at this meeting.

(The personal interests of Councillors and Clerks of Somerset County Council, Town or Parish Councils and other Local Authorities will automatically be recorded in the minutes.)

**4. Public Participation**

The Chair to advise the Committee 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 who have submitted any questions or statements, please note, a three minute time limit applies to each speaker and you will be asked to speak

(Pages 5 - 22)

before Councillors debate the issue.

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|---|-------------------|
| <b>5. Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group Fit For My Future Presentation.</b>   | (Pages 23 - 30)   |
| <b>6. Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget Estimates 2020/21. (Including Rent Setting and Fees and Charges). Report of the Finance Specialist</b> | (Pages 31 - 64)   |
| <b>7. Somerset Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019 - 2023. Report of the Strategy Specialist</b>   | (Pages 65 - 156)  |
| <b>8. General Fund Revenue Budget and Capital Estimates 2020/21. Report of the Finance Business Partner and Deputy S151 Officer</b>               | (Pages 157 - 190) |
| <b>9. Off Street Car Parking Charges Report. Report of the Specialists Manager</b>  | (Pages 191 - 200) |
| <b>10. Executive and Council Forward Plans</b>  | (Pages 201 - 204) |
| <b>11. Scrutiny Committee Forward Plan</b><br>To receive items and review the Forward Plan.   | (Pages 205 - 206) |



**JAMES HASSETT**  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

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If an item on the agenda is contentious, with a large number of people attending the meeting, a representative should be nominated to present the views of a group. These arrangements do not apply to exempt (confidential) items on the agenda where any members of the press or public present will be asked to leave the Committee Room. Full Council, Executive, and Committee agendas, reports and minutes are available on our website: [www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk](http://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk)

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## SWT Scrutiny Committee - 8 January 2020

Present: Councillor Gwil Wren (Chair)

Councillors Libby Lisgo, Ian Aldridge, Sue Buller, John Hassall, John Hunt, Sue Lees, Dave Mansell, Phil Stone, Nick Thwaites, Simon Coles, Mark Lithgow and Alan Wedderkopp

Officers:

Also Present: Councillors Chris Booth, Dave Durdan, Marcus Kravis, Richard Lees, Janet Lloyd, Peter Pilkington, Federica Smith-Roberts, Ray Tully and Loretta Whetlor

(The meeting commenced at Time Not Specified)

### 45. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Cavill, Darch, Milne, Prior-Sankey, D Wedderkopp and Wheatley.

Councillor Coles substituted for Prior-Sankey  
Councillor Lithgow substituted for Councillor Darch  
Councillor A Wedderkopp substituted for Councillor Wheatley.

### 46. Minutes of the previous meeting of the Scrutiny Committee

(Minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held on 6 November 2019 circulated with the agenda)

**Resolved** that the minutes of the Scrutiny Committee held on 6 November 2019 be confirmed as a correct record.

### 47. Declarations of Interest

Members present at the meeting declared the following personal interests in their capacity as a Councillor or Clerk of a County, Town or Parish Council or any other Local Authority:-

Name	Minute No.	Description of Interest	Reason	Action Taken
Cllr S Coles	All Items	SCC & Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr J Hunt	All Items	SCC	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr S Lees	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr L Lisgo	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr M Lithgow	All Items	Wellington	Personal	Spoke and Voted

Cllr D Mansell	All Items	Wiveliscombe	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr A Wedderkopp	All Items	SCC & Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr G Wren	All Items	Clerk to Milverton PC	Personal	Spoke and Voted

48. **Public Participation**

No members of the public had requested to speak on any item on the agenda.

49. **Scrutiny Committee Action Plan**

(There were no outstanding Scrutiny Committee Actions from previous meetings).

**Resolved** that the Scrutiny Committee Action Plan be noted.

50. **Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy. Report of the Strategy Specialist and Customer Specialist – Housing Options (Item deferred to February)**

The item of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy had been deferred until the meeting scheduled on 5 February 2020.

51. **Voluntary and Community Sector Grants Annual Review 2019/20. Report of the Localities Manager (attached)**

Somerset West and Taunton Council (SWT) provides financial support to a wide range of Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations that help deliver corporate priorities consistent to community needs. VCS grants were awarded by the Council via the Economic Development Function, Housing Function, Tenants Forum, Localities Function, Charter Trustees (Unparished Area) and through Section 106 planning gain.

All grantees entered into a funding agreement with the Council and grants were monitored to ensure that conditions were adhered to and that the grant funding maximised to benefit communities across the district.

Historically the Council carried out an annual review of the grants provided through the Somerset West and Taunton (SWT) Small Grants Fund, SWT Partnership Fund and presents the findings to Members. This year the review had been extended to grants provided by the Housing Function and services commissioned to the Voluntary and Community Sector.

The following Grant Funds were included in this review:

- SWT VCS Partnership Fund
- SWT Small grants
- SWT administration fees
- Somerset West Lottery Community Fund
- Housing Grants awarded from the Housing Revenue

The following grant funds were not in the scope of the review:

- Tenants Forum
- Housing/Homeless reduction grants
- Charter Trustees Unparished Fund
- Planning Obligations (Section 106) funds
- Economic Development and Arts Grants
- Other services commissioned to the Voluntary Sector.

The review took into account the amount of funding provided, the service/s provided, performance against the grant proposal and recommendations made by Somerset Community Foundation.

The review looked forward to 2020/21 and considered applications for funding and the allocation of available budgets.

The review took a close look at Citizen Advice Taunton and West Somerset Advice. Last year Somerset County Council made a decision to cut a significant element of core grant funding to all CA services across the county. CA services provided councils with valuable assistance in relation to providing customers with housing, debt and benefits advice. SWT provided a 'one –off' additional payment of £45k to help stabilise CA services. The review took a close look at how this money was invested, and considered the need for additional support.

In July 2016 TDBC and SWT entered into an agreement with Somerset Community Foundation (SCF) to provide a professional grant management service enabling the VCS Small Grants Fund. The agreement included the administration of the fund, due diligence checks, making recommendations for grant awards to the Council and monitoring of grants.

As of April 2017 SCF received £20,000 per year for the VCS Small Grants Fund. The agreement stated that SCF may use no more than 10% of the Small Grants Fund for the purpose of managing the fund. In 2017 a decision was made to utilise underspent funds to increase the award to £22,000 allowing SCF to take up to 10% administration fee and award £20,000

In December 2018 the Council varied the agreement with Somerset Community Foundation, to include in addition to the Small Grants Fund the administration of the Somerset West Lottery Local Community Fund and VCS Partnership Fund.

SCF pledged to provide a minimum of 10% match funding. In some individual grants the match fund contribution exceeded the SWTC grant. The match fund total administration costs to the Council 2019/20 was set out in Appendix A:

CAs across the county were operating in a very challenging environment, both financially and with regard to systems that were placing ever-increasing demands on its services.

CAs (CAT, WSA and others across the county) had made good progress with pursuing a number of initiatives that would lead to integrated working and efficiencies. It was acknowledged that this was difficult given that CAs continued to operate on very tight logistical and financial margins

District councils understood the importance of CA services – CAs supported customers with advice relating to housing, benefits, debt, employment and other matters. However, it was also acknowledged that district councils, including SWT, were operating themselves within an extremely challenging financial environment.

Strategically, as part of considering a way forward, it was acknowledged that whilst the District Councils had already stepped in with additional one-off funding, it could not be expected that they would continue to pick up the costs / impacts of the SCC cut (which across the county, amounted to £419,286 including LAS)

Options that could be considered, whether individually or in combination, but which were not an exhaustive list, included:-

- a) That the District Councils consider, on an individual basis, increased core funding arrangements with their respective CA, commencing 2020/21, and that this is considered within individual MTFPs
- b) That the council's jointly consider commissioning a single CA service
- c) That SWT considers commissioning a single CA service for the SWT area
- d) That the District Councils match the County's management contribution for the LAS element - £6,480 per CA - for 2020/21 (subject to a satisfactory number of LAS grants having come into the Districts)
- e) That the councils jointly commission some support for the CAs to explore different ways of delivering the service outcomes, including looking at transformation, technology and interventions to reduce demand/deal earlier with some of the issues that are creating demand.

Of the options given above, the preference was for option e), this was a consistent view across Somerset – i.e. all districts and also involving the County Council). Option e) would bring in independent expertise to work with all CAs (and funding partners) with a view to informing a way forward. This included debate and consideration of options a) to d). It was anticipated that each partner would need to contribute between £5k and £8k to commission a consultant. This work would commence in early 2020 and completed by July 2020, to inform the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and a review of core grant funding for CA services. The brief for this work would be developed in Jan 2020, to be co-designed with CA services

However, in order to support this, the following would be required:

- Option d) i.e. continued match funding (with SCC) of the administrative support to the LAS. The cost of this is £6.5k (approx.) x 2 i.e. £13k
- A sum of money to provide capacity for CA managers to engage with the work of the consultant (option e). It is recommended that a sum of £6k x 2 (£12k) be released to facilitate this additional capacity.

In summary and in total, it was proposed that an additional £33k be provided to support CAT and WSA during 2020/21. This money would be released within a Letter of Agreement between SWT and CAT/WSA.

In addition, SWT could add value by assisting both CAT and WSA with conversations relating to their accommodation requirements. It had been mentioned that WSA were looking to move to Alcombe (Minehead), subject to resolving issues around fire risk and remedial works to the building. Alcombe is within SWT ownership. CAT were currently based at offices on Hammet Street.



The possibility of the public sector assisting CAT with accommodation options was being considered should they wish to move in the future.

### Debate

- There was no prospect of Somerset County Council coming back with additional funding.
- All councils were considering supporting the consultant in this work.
- Concerns were expressed over the consultancy costs that each council would be contributing to.
- Members were reassured that this was no more than £5,000 contribution per council and would bring in expertise and new ideas in exploring savings and efficiencies. Exploring additional funding that was not out of the core grant was an important part of this.
- Officers were asked to consider any free support and commercial expertise to help the voluntary sector.
- There would be a full review of voluntary grants next June/July with tough questions needing to be addressed over the next few months.
- Due to the amount of funding it was considered important to recruit the right consultant with the relevant experience.
- Underfunding of the CAB was considered a long term issue which needed to be resolved. Members of the committee wished for Somerset County Council funding with CAB be reconsidered now a balanced budget had been achieved.
- Further concerns were expressed over the underfunding of the CAB and the perception of changes imposed to an independent body following the work proposed by the consultant.
- Clarification was requested over which voluntary sector organisations received match funding.

### The Scrutiny Committee Recommended:-

- 1) To continue funding at current levels for 2020/21 while the key points raised during the review detailed in this paper are addressed.
- 2) During 20/21 carry out a review of current areas of funding and set new funding objectives in line with the Councils corporate objectives and current needs within the community.
- 3) During 20/21 officers should work closely with all grant recipients to ensure targets are met and grants are offering value for money.
- 4) The Scrutiny Committee are supportive of the approach proposed by Districts and County Council's with the Citizen's Advice Bureau engaging a consultant with emphasis that the brief given to the consultant would align with the outcomes requested, in collaboration with CAB officers.
- 5) The word "minimum" to be removed from recommendation B in Appendix B.

## 52. **Financial Monitoring - 2019/20 as at 30 November 2019. Report of the Finance Business Partner and Deputy S151 Officer (attached).**

The report provided an update on the projected outturn financial position of the

Council for the financial year 2019/20 (as at 30 November 2019).

The current revenue forecast outturn for the financial year 2019/20 was set out. These were the best estimates at month 8 of the financial year based on information currently available:

- a) General Fund (GF) Revenue Budget reported a forecast net overspend of £36k.
- b) Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Revenue Budget forecasted a net underspend of £378k.

The current Capital Programme forecast position for 2019/20 was as followed:

- (a) The General Fund Capital Programme budget was £56.734m. No significant variations to budget were currently reported.
- (b) The HRA Capital Programme budget for 2019/20 was £23.093m. As previously reported, it was expected costs would be phased over more than one year so a proportion of the budget would be carried forward at the end of the financial year.

The HRA Capital Programme was provided in detail in Appendix A and The General Fund Capital Programme detailed in Appendix B.

The General Fund general reserves balance as at 31 March 2020 was projected to be £2.756m (subject to risks identified). The opening balance had been adjusted due to an accounting error correction in last year's accounts, The balance was below the operational target of £3m, but above the financial resilience target of £2.4m as approved in the Council's Financial Strategy in September 2019.

The General Fund earmarked reserves balance at the beginning of the year was £18.242m. The net movement in year was reported at an increase of £3,954m, mainly contributions to the New Homes Bonus (less the agreed contribution of £747k to fund staff costs) and Business Rates Smoothing earmarked reserves. A number of allocations from reserves were applied at the end of the financial year and would be included in the Outturn report at that stage.

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) general reserve balance as at 31 March 2020 was projected to be £3.07m (subject to risks identified). This was above both the current recommended operational target level (£2.4m) and financial resilience target level (£1.8m) set within the Council's Finance Strategy and HRA Business Plan.

The HRA earmarked reserves balance at the beginning of the year was £2.719m, with £1.369m committed to be spent within the next three years and the remaining £1.340m for the Social Housing Development Fund to be used as required to fund social housing development.

### Debate

- Additional and temporary staffing costs were considered. There had been constant variance to this budget throughout the year.
- Final costs would be provided for the repair of the Watchet Harbour Wall.
- Further details were requested for the variances detailed in the financial monitoring report. Amongst these were parking income projections and increased costs of the service, and the Housing Partnership overspend.

- Greater clarification was requested on the £20k GDPR spend.
- Further details were requested on the processes of welfare funerals and costs of provision.

The Scrutiny Committee Recommended that:-

The Committee support the report subject to the receipt of responses circulated to all Councillors before the Executive committee on 28<sup>th</sup> January.

53. **Draft 2020/21 Budget Progress and Initial Budget Options. Report of the Finance Business Partner and Deputy S151 Officer (attached).**

The purpose of the report was to provide Members with an update on progress with regard to Budget Setting for 2020/21, the latest Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) forecasts and the areas to be finalised.

The Council's current MTFP projects a budget gap for 2020/21 of £686k. Following the proposed MTFP bids and savings identified the Budget Gap is a surplus of £39k for 2020/21, but rises to £1.514m by 2024/25.

There remain a number of areas where budget forecasts are to be finalised therefore there is potential for the estimated Gap to change, and this will be reported to Members as the budget process progresses. The Executive is due to recommend its final budget proposals to Full Council in February 2020.

The Financial Strategy for Somerset West and Taunton Council (SWT) was approved by the Executive on 18 September 2019. This report also provided Members with an update on the Medium Term Financial Position (MTFP).

A further update on any significant changes to the MTFP was provided to the Scrutiny Committee on 6 November 2019. This was showing a budget gap in 2020/21 of £358k rising to £2.699m by 2024/25.

There are still some items which are unknown at this stage of the budget process. These are covered in section 10.

There have been some changes to the budget gap to incorporate known unavoidable pressures and some savings identified. The table set out:-

	£k	£k
<b>2020/21 Budget Gap as reported to Scrutiny 6 November 2019</b>		<b>358</b>
<b>Service Cost Pressures:</b>		
Additional B&B Homelessness Costs	82	
Additional Telephony Operating Costs	108	
Review of Base Budgets	280	
<b>Subtotal – Service Cost Pressures</b>		<b>470</b>
<b>Service Cost Savings:</b>		
Reduction in Revenue contribution to Capital	-96	
IEG4 Revs and Bens Licence no longer required	-34	
Increase in Treasury Investment Income	-200	
Review of Fees and Charges	??	
<b>Subtotal – Service Cost Savings</b>		<b>-330</b>

	£k	£k
<b>Collection Fund deficit revised estimate</b>		<b>14</b>
<b>Lower Council Tax Base (estimate of Band D Equivalents)</b>		<b>174</b>
<b>2020/21 Latest Budget Gap Estimate December 2019</b>		<b>686</b>

The table set out a summary of the Medium Term Financial Plan for Somerset West and Taunton. This is based on the current estimate of costs and predicted funding before MTFP bids and savings proposals below

	2019/20 £	2020/21 £	2021/22 £	2022/23 £	2023/24 £	2024/25 £
Services Costs	14,752,279	14,752,279	16,130,146	16,910,436	17,500,866	18,192,659
Net Financing Costs	356,540	389,900	464,260	627,370	410,480	403,590
SRA Contribution	99,090	98,693	100,272	101,876	103,506	105,162
Special Expenses	46,399	0	0	0	0	0
Earmarked Reserves- Growth	3,089,150	2,814,760	-200,000	0	0	0
Earmarked Reserves- Other	2,834,631	-17,806	0	0	0	0
Economic Growth and Prosperity Fund	1,200,000	0	0	0	0	0
General Reserves	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Net Expenditure</b>	<b>22,378,089</b>	<b>18,178,375</b>	<b>16,494,678</b>	<b>17,639,682</b>	<b>18,014,852</b>	<b>18,701,411</b>
Retained Business Rates	-7,787,783	-4,910,158	-3,989,206	-4,067,579	-4,145,952	-4,224,325
Business Rates prior year deficit	-1,331,905	0	0	0	0	0
Revenue Support Grant	-6,340	0	0	0	0	0
Rural Services Delivery Grant	-241,506	-241,506	-241,506	-241,506	-241,506	-241,506
New Homes Bonus	-3,809,150	-3,214,760	0	0	0	0
Council Tax	-8,939,605	-9,091,252	-9,366,321	-9,650,005	9,941,917	10,242,820
Council Tax–SRA	-99,090	-98,693	-100,272	-101,876	-103,506	-105,162
Council Tax–Special Expenses	-46,399	0	0	0	0	0
Council Tax prior year surplus	-116,311	63,877	0	0	0	0
<b>Net Funding</b>	<b>22,378,089</b>	<b>17,492,586</b>	<b>13,696,808</b>	<b>14,059,863</b>	<b>14,431,155</b>	<b>14,811,449</b>
<b>Budget Gap</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>685,883</b>	<b>2,797,373</b>	<b>3,578,716</b>	<b>3,581,971</b>	<b>3,887,598</b>
Gap – Change on Previous Year	0	685,883	2,111,490	781,343	3,255	305,627

General Reserves were currently estimated to be at £2.756m at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020, which was below the minimum operational target set out within the financial strategy of £3m.

It was recommended that £300k is transferred from the NHB reserves to General reserves to bring these back up above the minimum level. The s151 Officer would review the minimum reserve requirement in February 2020 as part of the final budget recommendations.

If all of bids and savings proposed were agreed the Draft Budget Gap has an estimated surplus of £39k for 2020/21, but rises to £1.514m by 2024/25.

The assumptions used in the previous report have not changed for Council Tax Charge increases. For financial planning purposes it was assumed Council Tax Charges will increase by 1.99% each year from 2020/21. This is subject to consideration by the Executive through the budget process, which will formally recommend its Council Tax proposals to Council each February as part of the Budget report. It is not known at this stage whether the Secretary of State will continue the option for the 'threshold for excessive council tax increases' for shire districts to increase tax by up to £5 (on a Band D charge). This is subject to confirmation annually through the Finance Settlement.

The Council Tax Base has been approved by the s151 officer on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2019, which has resulted in reduction in the assumptions included in the last update to Scrutiny on 6<sup>th</sup> November. Therefore this reduction has increased the Budget Gap for 2020/21 by £174k (shown in Table 2 above). The reduction in the base is mainly due to slower housing growth and increased Council Tax Support Scheme costs.

The 75% business rates pooling pilot scheme was for one year only in 2019/20. The Somerset Business Rates Pool continues under the 50% retention scheme in 2020/21. Indicative estimates at this stage show a potential gain of between £1m and £1.4m. The budget proposal above prudently includes £1m towards funding services in 2020/21. There is an element of risk as the actual income will not be confirmed until the end of 2020/21. This will be monitored through the budget monitoring process and if the £1m is exceeded options for allocating additional funds can be considered at that time.

New Homes Bonus was a non-ring-fenced grant designed to incentivise housing growth. A contribution of £2.75m from NHB across 2020/21 and 2021/22 is recommended towards balancing the budget in order for the proposed spending plans to be affordable. Officers are currently reviewing commitments against the capital programme for which NHB funding was previously assumed. Therefore if these costs are still to be incurred the Council might need to borrow, which will have an impact on future revenue costs.

### Debate

- Further details were requested in relation to DLO vehicles and the potential for these to be electric vehicles.
- Members requested that the climate change budget be explored at the Climate Change working Group with consideration for it to increase from

£75k to £150k if the need for this could be evidenced through Climate Change Projects.

- Ongoing IT project costs would be provided to members when available later this week.
- The funding earmarked for the East Quay wall was welcomed.
- Members were reminded that budget options aligned the funding available to the priorities of the Council.
- Costs of the final fix to the East Quay Wall be reported to members.

The Scrutiny Committee recommended:-

- 1) To note the latest Medium Term Financial Plan forecasts and the areas to be finalised.
- 2) Requested The Executive consider increasing the climate change budget from £75,000 to £150,000 and consult with the Climate Change working Group on what projects could be explored.

#### 54. **Scrutiny Committee Forward Plan**

(Copy of the Scrutiny Committee Forward Plan, circulated with the agenda).

Councillors were reminded that if they had an item they wanted to add to the agenda, that they should send their requests to the Governance Team.

**Resolved** that the Scrutiny Committee Forward Plan be noted.

(The Meeting ended at Time Not Specified)

## SWT Scrutiny Committee - 20 January 2020

Present: Councillor Gwil Wren (Chair)

Councillors Libby Lisgo, Ian Aldridge, Sue Buller, Dixie Darch, John Hassall, John Hunt, Dave Mansell, Hazel Prior-Sankey, Phil Stone, Keith Wheatley, Caroline Ellis and Simon Coles

Officers:

Also Present: Councillors Chris Booth, Ross Henley, Marcus Kravis, Janet Lloyd, Peter Pilkington, Francesca Smith, Federica Smith-Roberts, Brenda Weston, Loretta Whetlor and Alan Wedderkopp

(The meeting commenced at 6.15 pm)

### 55. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Cavil, S Lees, Thwaites and D Wedderkopp.

Councillor Ellis substituted for Councillor S Lees.

Councillor Coles substituted for Councillor D Wedderkopp.

### 56. Minutes of the previous meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held on 8 January (attached)

(Minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held on 8 January circulated with the agenda)

**Resolved** that the approval of the minutes of the Scrutiny Committee held on 8 January be deferred until the meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> February.

### 57. Declarations of Interest

Members present at the meeting declared the following personal interests in their capacity as a Councillor or Clerk of a County, Town or Parish Council or any other Local Authority:-

Name	Minute No.	Description of Interest	Reason	Action Taken
Cllr S Coles	All Items	SCC & Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr C Ellis	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr J Hunt	All Items	SCC	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr L Lisgo	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr D Mansell	All Items	Wiveliscombe	Personal	Spoke and Voted

Cllr H Prior-Sankey	All Items	SCC & Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr G Wren	All Items	Clerk to Milverton PC	Personal	Spoke and Voted

58. **Public Participation**

No members of the public had requested to speak on any item on the agenda.

59. **East Quay Wall, Watchet - Maintenance Report. Report of The Localities Manager (attached).**

The report set out the situation with the East Quay wall, Watchet and the options that the Council had to maintain this asset into the future. It did not seek approval of a permanent solution for the repair at Splash Point, this would be dealt with separately once possible design options were established, but did request financial approval of the design work for this permanent repair.

For the East Quay wall survey works identified that the wall was not at imminent risk of failure but would benefit from maintenance with some reinforcing in the central and northern sections to ensure that operations could continue into the future, and that a programme of monitoring be put in place for the entire length of the wall. The report challenged the economic advantage of undertaking the reinforcing work to the northern section and proposed alternative options.

The East Quay wall served as part of the structure to create the marina, protects Watchet as a sea defence, and stabilised the East Quay itself. This area was used for boat storage, as a lifting facility for the marina, and a tourism offering.

The timing of the report was unrelated to the granting of the lease to the Onion Collective as the report identified that this development had a negligible impact on the wall structure and no works to the wall were required to enable the development.

The report identified a budget need for design work and a maintenance solution, therefore a budget request was made for £740k to design a permanent solution to the Splash Point failure and reinforce the central section of the East Quay wall with the associated professional costs.

From the survey information provided, the southern section required no substantial maintenance works, however a plan for monitoring was required.

It was recommended that the central section would be reinforced to allow for vehicle movements into the boat storage area and crane operations which were a condition of the lease to the marina operator. These could continue at high tide but advice would be provided to the marina operator and Onion Collective concerning low tide. Undertaking this work would also provide for longer term stability for the operation of the marina.

It is recommended that the northern section is excluded from the reinforcing programme and officers are instructed to work with the marina operator to limit the impact of this decision.



The Authority will undertake a robust procurement activity to ensure that the best options and value are established. We recommend to Members that we further instruct specialists to create the necessary engineering designs for both Splash Point and the central section of East Quay.

We then recommend that the design is put to market with a minimum lifespan requirement. With this quality aspect already set we can then run a procurement activity weighted in favour of price.

Upon approval of the recommendations the design and procurement will begin, with works being undertaken on site in 2020 / 21, and completed to a timeline that avoids further disruption on site following the conclusion of the OC development.

### Debate

- The temporary rock solution to the East Quay, there was likely unseen levels of damage due to the area where the collapse in the wall had occurred. Engineers were closely monitoring the wall and its risk of collapse.
- Testing of the wall and the temporary measures to fill the breach had ensured the temporary stability of the wall. The costs for a permanent fix to the wall was estimated at £500k which included professional fees and expertise. Clarification was provided that this was an asset the Council owned and not an Environment Agency owned asset.
- Emphasis was given on a permanent solution being required to repair the wall to full strength. There would be a procurement tendering process for the design and delivery of the works. The works being tendered for were to reinstate the existing size of walls and would not take into account a higher level of wall. Doing so would disperse higher waves elsewhere.
- Due to the rising sea levels consideration was requested to reflect repairs which took this into account. The Marina operator was responsible for the maintenance of the harbour. The Council were still in contact with the operator to discuss the range of solutions to dredge the harbour, water injection dredging seen on the Somerset Levels would not be effective on compacted mud experienced in the Harbour.
- The committee welcomed the update being considered at Executive and Full Council and commended the work undertaken by officers and the positive image of the administration which had enhanced its reputation.

**Resolved:-** The Scrutiny Committee endorse the recommendations that the Executive Full Council approve the following additions to the Capital Programme, which would be funded through borrowing:

- i) Add the following to the Capital Programme for 2019/20
  - a. The sum of £100k be allocated to the wall design works at Splash Point and
  - b. The sum of £100k be allocated to the wall design works at East Quay
- ii) Add the following to the Capital Programme for 2020/21

- a. The sum of £500k be allocated to reinforce the East Quay wall in the central section and
- b. The sum of £40k for project management resource to deliver this project to its conclusion.

60. **Housing Revenue Account (HRA) - Business Plan Review. Report of The Director of Housing (attached).**

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan contained the financial model of the service for the next 30 years. A number of largely external changes meant that a full refresh of the Business Plan was necessary. This report identified the changes and the impact of these. The report also set out a new vision for the Housing Service and plans for growth in the number of new homes we plan to build. The report also proposed a new rent policy following the end of a period of four years of imposed rent reduction, this would provide a refreshed income position on which to build future plans set out in this report.

Officers worked with external housing and business planning advisers Savills to create a new structure and approach to modelling future financial planning. The proposed Business Plan represented the current established position, it incorporated assumptions concerning future projected substantial growth and gearing primarily to invest in new homes, that have been accommodated within the plan. This substantially increased level of investment was possible due to the imposed debt cap on the business having been removed, and represented higher levels of investment and borrowing than the service had previously undertaken. This created substantial opportunity to do more, but also would increase risk, factors which would need to be balanced carefully by the Council in the coming years.

The assumptions made within the business plan were prudent without being excessively restrictive; they provided for inflation on income and costs at prevailing rates which were aligned, allowed a considerable investment in existing stock, a substantial investment in new homes leading to a net increase in properties, whilst debt forecast at elevated levels to today at the end of 30 years. The peak debt of the plan was £164.4 million in year 11, which would not have been possible under the previous HRA regime with a debt cap of £115.8million.

Somerset West and Taunton Council owns and manages affordable housing of over 5700 homes mostly at social rent levels. This “business” within the Council had a turnover of £26M. Income was derived mostly from rents from tenants but also from service charges and other fees. Expenditure was made up of Council staff delivering services to tenants along with repairs and maintenance and other improvements to existing homes and investment in new much needed homes, and the repayment of borrowing.

The finances of the Housing Service was held within a ring-fenced account called the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) which was separate from all other Council finances in that the money was only to be used for providing services to tenants.

In 2012 the Council moved away from a national subsidy system, which meant an annual payment from the HRA to central government, to be ‘self-financing’. As part of the self-financing agreement, a mandatory one-off payment of £85.12m

was made to government, in return for being able to retain all income locally to manage and maintain the housing stock. The total debt in the HRA at the start of self-financing was £99.7m. Financially this was a positive step for the Council and it released more resources to be invested locally on additional services and new homes.

In order to manage the freedoms gained by the HRA through self-financing, a new 30 year Business Plan (2012-2042) was introduced. This set out the Council's overall aims and objectives for Housing Services, as well as laying out plans to manage the increased risks and opportunities. The HRA Business Plan had been reviewed and updated regularly since 2012, but recently there had been many changes in national policies and local aspiration that meant a full update of the Business Plan was once again required.

Since 2012 the HRA had been subject to an imposed notional debt cap, essentially setting a limit on the borrowing the service could undertake which provided a constraint on growth of the service in terms of investment in new homes. The HRA debt cap was £116M. Following many years of lobbying by the sector, the debt cap was removed, which heralded a new era of growth opportunity, as the business could afford to prudently borrow significantly more to allow more investment in existing and new homes.

The Council along with all Registered Providers (RPs) of social housing was subject to a four year period of enforced rent reduction. This step imposed in 2016 essentially removed £185M from the 30 year business plan at this time. Measures were taken at this stage to reduce costs and manage this reduction in revenue whilst continuing to invest in properties and in services for tenants. The period of rent reduction was now at an end and provided the opportunity to once again apply appropriate and modest rent increases to ensure the business kept track of increases in its operating costs.

The Council had declared a climate emergency, many tenants struggled to be able to afford to heat their homes, particularly as many homes were hard to heat due to poor thermal performance. The ability of the HRA to invest in communities especially with regard to the built infrastructure created an opportunity for funding to be targeted at these issues.

Appendix 2 set out the Housing Revenue Account Rent Setting Policy from April 2020

### Debate

- The impact of the 1% reduction was considered. The reduction had caused a £600k deficit from year 1 and a total of £185 million across the 30 year business plan.
- The consequences of a disparity of rent for the houses of the same banding was discussed. Clarification was provided that the rent increase of CPI plus 1% would be applied across all tenancies.
- Rents were formatted on a calculation which formulated the average wage and bedrooms. Tenants in sheltered accommodation in receipt of housing benefits would receive an increase in benefits alongside any increase in rents.
- Emphasis over new homes carbon incentives was encouraged to embrace initiatives working with other districts and housing associations.

- Following questioning members were reassured that there was confidence in the estimated costs of retrofitting stood at £28k per house.
- Support for vulnerable tenants was provided to enable them to retain independence for as long as possible. The Deane Helpline costs were subsidised for those on housing benefit; supported housing accommodation was exempt from right to buy.
- Central Government determined how much was kept from right to buy receipts, the council retained 30% of receipts.
- Right to Buy sales had impacted on the numbers of social housing owned by the council, this decline was a national issue. This was a business risk and created uncertainty, tenants had the right to buy houses once they are 15 years old.
- HRA debt stood at £103 million, the previous debt cap removed stood at £116 million.
- The delivery plan would require a more detailed approach and would be incorporated. Purchase of development land was being investigated to achieve ambitions along with balancing this with the regeneration of existing estates and repurchasing of housing where there was a business case.
- Concerns were expressed over lack of carbon reduction ambitions in the HRA business plan along with the additional numbers of housing figures over 30 years not being ambitious enough.

**Resolved:** that The Scrutiny Committee:-

1. Approved the revised 30 year Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan as set out in this report, noting the target for carbon neutrality by 2030 and examining Energiesprong retrofitting proposals along with other alternatives and building techniques. The committee further requested further work relating to the Equality Impact Assessment.
2. Approved the proposed vision for the Housing service along with three new service Objectives.
3. Approves the proposed Housing Revenue Account Rent Setting policy 2020 with feedback from tenant boards to be incorporated.

61. **Corporate Performance Report. Report of the Business Intelligence and Performance Manager (For Information) (attached).**

The report was submitted for information and provided a brief summary of current performance on a selection of key indicators.

As part of the Councils commitment to transparency and accountability the report provided an update on a range of performance indicators. The format of the report would be developed further from the start of the 2020/21 financial year in order to monitor progress of the Councils Corporate Strategy and to reflect the new Directorates.

The table set out in Appendix 1 included a number of the councils Key Performance Indicators and shows how the council had performed for the first 8 months of 2019/20. Some of the targets were still being finalised to take account of performance across the

new council.

Two performance indicators that were reported as red were:-

- Percentage of complaints responded to in 20 days
- Percentage of Freedom of Information Requests responded to in 20 days

#### Debate

- The figures around Planning appeals were questioned. Clarification of the number of successful appeals would be provided.
- Issues around delays with fly tipping complaints were being resolved. Clarification was requested around turnaround target for complaints with the website stating a five day resolution. Councillors would be provided with an update on the target in due course

**Resolved** that:- The Scrutiny Committee noted the report.

#### 62. **Scrutiny Committee Forward Plan**

(Copy of the Scrutiny Committee Forward Plan, circulated with the agenda).

Councillors were reminded that if they had an item they wanted to add to the agenda, that they should send their requests to the Governance Team.

**Resolved** that the Scrutiny Committee Forward Plan be noted.

(The Meeting ended at Time Not Specified)



## Update on the Fit for my Future: Consultation on acute mental health inpatient beds for adults of working age and Engagement on our vision for neighbourhoods and community settings of care

Lead Officers: Maria Heard, Fit for my Future Programme Director  
Dr Alex Murray, Clinical Lead, Fit for my Future

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Cabinet Member:

Division and Local Member:

### 1. Summary

- 1.1 Fit for my Future is a strategy for how we will support the health and wellbeing of the people of Somerset by changing the way we commission and deliver health and care services. It is jointly led by Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group and Somerset County Council, and includes the main NHS provider organisations in the county.
- 1.2 This report presents our engagement and consultation strategy which was approved by our Governing Body on 16 January 2020 and sets out the progress we have made since our last report to the Somerset County Council Adult Health and Overview Scrutiny Committee on two of our work programmes:
  - mental health
  - neighbourhood and community settings of care
- 1.3 In the update on mental health it sets out how we are undertaking public consultation on the future locations of inpatient mental health beds for people of working age and how the new model of care is developing. It updates the members of the committee on:
  - what has happened since the last update
  - the consultation on the future location of inpatient mental health beds for people of working age
  - next steps.
- 1.4 In the update on neighbourhood and community settings of care, it sets out how we are undertaking engagement to obtain feedback on our vision and early thinking on improvements to these services. It updates the members of the committee on:
  - what has happened since the last update
  - the engagement programme and stakeholder mapping
  - next steps.

### 2. Issues for consideration / Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to consider and comment on the report and support next steps. Somerset County Council Scrutiny for Policies, Adults and Health Committee and individual members are invited to formally respond to our consultation and engagement activities.

### 3. CCG consultation strategy

- 3.1 The strategy outlines how we will make sure that any proposed service change is well planned and managed which will lead to better decision making and effective implementation.
- 3.2 Our consultation strategy aims to show how we will carry out formal public consultation to make sure everyone who lives and works in Somerset has the opportunity to have a say in the future of local health services.
- 3.3 The duty to involve the public under section 242 of the NHS Act 2006 raised the bar for the way NHS organisations are expected to consult and engage with people and respond to the feedback received. The Health and Social Care Act 2012 strengthens this expectation.
- 3.4 For each formal public consultation we deliver, we will co-design a specific consultation strategy with an identified stakeholder reference group which is tailored to the particular issues subject to consultation.
- 3.5 The Consultation Strategy was approved by the Governing Body on 16 January 2020 who agreed that it should be considered by the Somerset County Council Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Comments on the Consultation Strategy are welcomed from members and will be carefully considered.
- 4. Consultation on the future of acute mental health inpatient beds for adults of working age**
- 4.1 There has been a history of under-investment in Somerset's mental health services and we are determined to redress the balance and place equal value on the importance of physical and mental health services. That's why we're increasing our investment in mental health, so we can develop a more complete service with a stronger focus on prevention and early help to keep people well wherever possible, and to provide the best care in the right settings for those who become unwell.
- 4.2 People who have used mental health services in the past or are using them now have helped us shape our new model of care; they have told us that we need to make it easier for them to access our service, and to reach a whole system of support through just one referral.
- 4.3 Our overall vision for mental health, and the new mental health model, is innovative. We are enhancing, and investing in, services that are already there, introducing new ones closer to where people live, and making them wholly accessible at every step of the way.
- 4.4 Acute mental health inpatient services for adults of working age are just one part of this whole system of care, a very important component for the relatively small number of people facing the most acute mental health issues. We need to ensure that we provide this care in the safest possible way. This isn't about money or a reduction in service; in fact we'll be investing more to improve the acute mental health inpatient service. We're very proud of the dedication and quality of the staff providing these services, but we recognise that it is simply not possible to provide the safest possible care if we continue to operate from three different locations, two of which have stand-alone wards with limited support available, and one of which is a long way away from an emergency department.
- 4.5 We believe there is a better solution. This would involve providing our acute inpatient services from two sites and not three.
- 4.6 Reasons for changing our current configuration of services**  
The central issue under deliberation has been how to provide the optimal inpatient



care for those who require treatment for an acute psychiatric episode. We currently have four wards providing acute inpatient mental health care for adults of working age; Rydon 1 and 2 in Taunton (adjacent to other mental health wards), Rowan ward in Yeovil and St Andrews ward in Wells. Two of our four wards for adults of working age in Somerset are 'standalone' wards, meaning that there is not an adjacent mental health ward where support can be drawn upon at times of need. These wards are St Andrews in Wells and Rowan in Yeovil. In addition, St Andrews ward in Wells is a long way from the nearest emergency department – 45 minutes from St Andrews ward to Royal United Hospital in Bath, compared with several minutes journey time from services located in Yeovil and Taunton, and has limited out of hours support.

- 4.7 The key concerns we have are summarised as follows:

**Lack of local support**

Having single wards can cause problems with safe staffing and management of patient risk. When two wards are close to each other, staff from one ward can provide support to the other whenever there is a problem. When there is only one ward, staff have no immediate back-up and have to resort to calling the police or an ambulance. This is the case in St Andrews ward in Wells and Rowan ward in Yeovil.

**Distance from an emergency department**

Inpatients in an acute mental health ward will at times require acute medical support following harm to themselves or others in addition to routine medical care, therefore distance from an Emergency Department is important and can impact on the outcome of treatment due to the time taken to reach the appropriate service. Wells is 22 miles away from the nearest District General Hospital and it can take 45 minutes to reach hospital by ambulance. In comparison, Yeovil and Taunton are several minutes away from the nearest Emergency Department.

**Out of hours medical cover**

Specialist mental health and medical cover is inconsistent across our three sites. On Rowan ward, Yeovil and Rydon wards 1 and 2, Taunton, onsite cover is provided round the clock by junior doctors and consultants. On St Andrews ward, Wells, mental health specialist cover is available Monday to Friday from 9am – 5pm; out of hours cover is provided by a GP and out of hours mental health support is available from the on-call psychiatrist by phone.

- 4.8 In summer 2019 we held a one day workshop with a group of staff, service users, carers, voluntary sector organisations and other stakeholders to work through and appraise three options on the future location of inpatient mental health beds. This workshop was independently facilitated by Participate. These were:

**Option 1 – Stay the same**

- Retain wards where they are with the same functions, bed numbers and invest in the buildings where needed to bring them up to modern expectations of inpatient services

**Option 2 – Relocate Wells service to Yeovil**

- Move St Andrews ward, Wells and create two wards using existing ward space at Rowan/Holly Court. This would require some refurbishment to enable the change

**Option 3 – Relocate Yeovil service to Wells**

- Move Rowan ward, Yeovil and create two wards, refurbishing or rebuilding the existing Phoenix ward

- 4.9 In Autumn 2019 a clinical review of our proposal was undertaken by the South West Clinical Senate. The Senate panel of clinicians is drawn together from across the south west to give a detailed clinical view of the strength of the case for change, the

options for consideration and the evidence to support them. The Clinical Senate supported our case for change and proposals.

- 4.10 On 21 October 2020, the final stage of the NHS service reconfiguration assurance process, NHS England and Improvement considered whether the case for change and proposals demonstrate evidence to meet five core tests including strong public and patient engagement, consistency with current and prospective need for patient choice, and support for the proposals from clinical commissioners. This was approved.
- 4.11 After considering all the evidence, our preferred option is to move the beds from St Andrews Ward in Wells to Yeovil, alongside the existing Rowan Ward. Stakeholders who attended the one day stakeholder workshop arrived at the same view.
- 4.12 The reason why moving the beds from St Andrews Ward in Wells to Yeovil is our preferred option is because:

**Quality of care – outcomes and safety**

- It's close to the Emergency Department at Yeovil District Hospital, compared to St Andrews Ward in Wells which is 22 miles or 45 minutes away from the nearest Emergency Department at Bath Royal United Hospital
- A risk management protocol is required for Wells which results in around 40 patients a year having to be admitted first to Taunton and then to Wells. Some of the highest risk patients remain at Taunton due to its proximity to an Emergency Department. Even if two wards were to be located at Wells instead of Yeovil, a small number of patients with high risk of self-harm would still need to be retained at Taunton due to Wells' distance from an Emergency Department

**Travel time for patients, their carers and visitors**

**Moving beds from Wells to Yeovil:** On average, a person previously admitted to Wells would face a longer journey of an extra 6 minutes if they had to go to Yeovil instead; 77 patients in all would have a longer journey time, 28 of them with an increase of more than 20 minutes.

**Moving beds from Yeovil to Wells:** On average, a person previously admitted to Yeovil would face a longer journey of an extra 7 minutes if they had to go to Wells. 145 of them in all would be affected, 111 of them with a journey increase of more than 20 minutes.

**Workforce sustainability**

Lack of medical training accreditation at St Andrews ward in Wells creates challenges for recruitment and retention of medical staff, including both the inability to employ junior doctors and retain consultant staff. This means it has not been possible to provide out of hours medical cover, and patients cannot be admitted to Wells after 3pm Monday to Friday. Yeovil already has training accreditation and junior doctors are on site to support admissions and assessments 24hours a day.

**Impact on equalities**

Patient engagement and operational staff from Somerset Partnership looked at the potential impact of the options on equalities but did not find any factors which appeared to differentiate between the move of beds to Yeovil or to Wells.

**Deliverability**

The work required to create two wards at Yeovil would take eighteen months to

deliver compared to two years for the work to be completed on the Wells site.

#### **Affordability and value for money**

The capital investment cost (bricks and mortar) of moving beds to Yeovil would be significantly less at £5,030,000 than moving beds to Wells, where the capital cost would be £7,166,000. The day to day running costs – the revenue budget requirement – is around £250,000 less for Yeovil than for Wells.

- 4.13 We understand the proposed move of St Andrews Ward from Wells to Yeovil will be a concern for people in the north of the county, and especially in the Mendip area. However safety is paramount, and clinicians are unanimous in their view that the colocation of the St Andrews and Rowan Wards in Yeovil is in their opinion the safest option.

- 4.14 In the consultation document we have set out the evidence we have gathered for all three options, with the help of Somerset Partnership, the service provider, that has helped us to come to a view.

As part of our wider mental health service improvement, supported by the recent award of Trailblazer status to Somerset and including an additional £13million funding over the next 3 years, we are currently launching additional community mental health services, including a crisis café in Mendip (and one in Bridgwater), extended Home Treatment and Community Mental Health Teams, and greater support for people with mental health concerns from prevention through to those with severe mental illness.

4.15 **Public consultation**

On 16 January 2020 the Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group Governing Body approved a decision to go to public consultation on the proposed changes to the location of inpatient mental health beds for people of working age in Somerset. The period of consultation runs from 17 January to 12 April 2020.

- 4.16 Through the consultation we aim to reach not just the general population but all of those with an interest in mental health service for adults of working age to hear their views about the proposals, including service users, carers and their families. A detailed stakeholder mapping exercise has been undertaken to support this.

- 4.17 Emails have been sent to community and voluntary sector groups across the county to seek their views. We are attending Talking Cafes and holding a series of drop-in sessions at the locations of the inpatient mental health wards in Yeovil, Wells and Taunton.

- 4.18 We are also working with key stakeholders to facilitate feedback and contributions from people with learning disabilities, serious mental illness and other groups who may struggle to have their voice heard.

- 4.19 We are inviting people in the Mendip area to attend a public meeting in Wells on 06 February 2020 to listen to any concerns they may have.

- 4.20 We are attending libraries across the county during the day, evenings and on Saturdays to raise awareness, gather feedback and answer questions.

- 4.21 We are holding a series of pop-up sessions at health and care sites across the county including community hospitals, GP surgeries (particularly those in more rural areas) etc. We are also holding pop-up sessions at local colleges to reach our younger populations.

- 4.22 Information on the consultation and details of how people can get involved has been

sent to all Parish Clerks for cascading through parish newsletters and websites.

4.23 A media briefing has been held with local and regional journalists and a series of interviews have been facilitated.

4.24 We are delivering our detailed plan for promoting the consultation on social media. This includes:

- Boosted posts on Instagram and Facebook targeting key demographics
- Seeking the support of local influencers to raise awareness of the consultation
- Posting in local Facebook groups and community pages to raise awareness of the consultation.

4.25 **Next steps**

The public consultation on mental health will run until 12 April 2020. Weekly reviews of reach and outcomes will take place and the consultation plan will be flexed as necessary to extend reach and support involvement.

4.26 The feedback from the public consultation will be independently analysed by Participate, an organisation with expertise in consultation and engagement, and a full report of the consultation and analysis will be published later this year. This will directly inform the decision making business case which is scheduled to be presented for approval in Autumn 2020.

4.27 Further updates will be presented to the Somerset County Council Adult and Health and Overview Scrutiny Committee following the conclusion of the consultation period.

**5. Engagement on our vision for neighbourhoods and community settings of care**

5.1 We have been working with our partners and providers including doctors, nurses, allied health professionals (therapists) and other people working within public health, adult and children's services - and the organisations they work for, Somerset County Council, Somerset Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, Yeovil District Hospital, Musgrove Park Hospital, and the GP practices that make up Somerset's health and care system.

5.2 Together, we have been sharing our expertise, experience and understanding to think about how community-based health and care services in Somerset can work better together.

5.3 We believe that the people of Somerset should have access to a wide range of health and social care services which are designed to meet their needs and that are delivered as close to home as possible. We believe that these services should be delivered through a network of community hospitals, care homes, community hubs and local integrated health, social care and community/voluntary sector teams. We also believe that people should be supported to be able to take a more proactive role in managing and maintaining good health and reduce their reliance on reactive health and care services.

5.4 To achieve this ambition we need to change the way the services are delivered in the community. We need to support them to meet the needs of local people and be fit for the challenges we face in delivering modern healthcare now and in the future. As part of this we must recognise the challenges of providing high quality, affordable healthcare across a rural county, and acknowledge that there will be difficult decisions to make regarding this in the future.

5.5 **Public engagement**

On 30 January 2020 the Governing Body of Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group will be asked to approve the launch of public engagement on the early thinking

around improvements to community health and care services including same day urgent care.

- 5.6 The engagement programme will run to 12 April 2020.
- 5.7 Through the engagement we will aim to reach our general population, including all of those with an interest in the community based health and care services to hear their views about our early thinking, including service users, carers and their families. We are undertaking a detailed stakeholder mapping exercise to maximise our reach and make sure people have the opportunity to give their feedback.
- 5.8 We will be sharing the reasons why our current services need to change and the challenges that we face in continuing to run them.
- 5.9 We will be holding a series of drop-in events at all community hospital and minor injury unit sites as well as dedicated meetings for the community hospital league of friends.
- 5.10 As with the mental health public consultation we will be holding a number of pop-up sessions at health and care sites, libraries and voluntary sector organisations, and using social media and the media to reach as many people as possible.
- 5.11 **Next steps**  
The feedback from the engagement programme will be independently analysed by Participate, an organisation with expertise in consultation and engagement, and a full report of the engagement and analysis will be published later this year.
- 5.12 Further updates will be presented to the Somerset County Council Adult Health and Overview Scrutiny Committee as this work progresses.

## **6. Implications**

### **6.1 Consultation on acute mental health inpatient beds for adults of working age**

The preferred option for mental health inpatient beds will not involve a reduction of acute mental health inpatient beds but rather a change in the location of the beds.

- This option will create two wards of 16 beds, including two extra care areas that can be used to support particular additional requirements at times of greatest need.
- The wards will be equal in size, have round the clock medical cover and be affordable from within existing resources.
- The existing s136 place of safety provision will continue unaffected by these changes.

Additional services and support will be made available for people in the north of Somerset which will include:

- **Increase the skill mix and capacity of community based mental health teams and home treatment teams** – more psychiatrists, psychologists, and community psychiatric nurses, enabling safe and effective care for more people at home
- **Appoint 'Recovery Partners'** – people with lived experience to work alongside Community Mental Health Teams and Home Treatment Teams
- **Improve partnerships and joint-working with voluntary and social enterprise organisations** - such as Heads Up in Mendip area, Village Agents, MIND and others
- **Develop 2 Crisis Cafes, one in the Wells/Mendip area (the other in Bridgwater)** - to provide safe space for people experiencing mental health distress, and support for people at or before they reach crisis point; they'll be open at times of peak need.

No final decision will be made until after all the feedback has been received and reviewed.

**7. Background papers**

- 7.1 The consultation documents for the mental health public consultation are published on the Fit for My Future website [www.fitformyfuture.org.uk](http://www.fitformyfuture.org.uk)
- 7.2 The engagement documents for community based health and care services engagement are also on the Fit for My Future website.

**Note:** For sight of individual background papers please contact the report author

# Somerset West and Taunton

## Scrutiny Committee – 5 February 2020

### Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget Estimates 2020/21 (Including Rent Setting and Fees and Charges)

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Francesca Smith

Report Author: Kerry Prisco, Finance Specialist

#### 1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report updates Members on the proposed HRA Annual Revenue Budget and Capital Programme for 2020/21, the proposed Rent Setting for the average weekly rent for 2020/21 and the proposed Fees and Charges for 2020/21.
- 1.2 The proposals included in this report would enable the Council to set a balanced budget for the HRA for 2020/21.

#### 2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are invited to consider and support the following proposed recommendations to the Executive and Full Council:
- 2.2 In accordance with the Regulator of Social Housing's new Rent Standard from April 2020, the Dwelling Rent for 2020/21 for existing tenants will be an increase of CPI+1% to the average weekly rent, from £80.87 per week to £83.05 per week.
- 2.3 In accordance with the Regulator of Social Housing's new Rent Standard from April 2020, the Dwelling Rent for 2020/21 for new tenants only will be an increase of CPI+1% plus an additional 5% for general needs to the average weekly rent, from £80.87 per week to £87.21 per week.
- 2.4 In accordance with the Regulator of Social Housing's new Rent Standard from April 2020, the Dwelling Rent for 2020/21 for new tenants only will be an increase of CPI+1% plus an additional 10% for sheltered/supported and extra care dwelling rents to the average weekly rent, from £80.87 per week to £91.36 per week.
- 2.5 To increase non-dwelling rent and service charges in line with national policy by CPI+1% for 2020/21, with the exception of garages for private and shared ownerships tenants which would increase from £10.32 (including VAT) to £12.00 (including VAT).
- 2.6 To approve the HRA Annual Revenue Budget for 2020/21.

- 2.7 To approve the HRA Capital Programme for 2020/21.

### **3 Risk Assessment**

- 3.1 The purpose of this section is to highlight the key external risks that may pose a threat to the successful delivery of the HRA 2020 Business Plan. The Council will need to be alert to the following issues:
- 3.2 Welfare Reform: The HRA has already taken steps to try and prevent loss of income where possible. The potential impact of existing and further welfare reform measures will need careful management in order to protect our rental income. Universal Credit remains the greatest potential risk to our income for us and most other providers.
- 3.3 Exiting the EU: The process of exiting the European Union remains in a state of uncertainty about what is exactly going to happen. This could affect the cost of goods/materials, services, development and funding.
- 3.4 Housing Policy: On the 14 August 2018 the government published its Social Housing Green Paper in response to the tragedy at Grenfell Tower. Whilst the initial consultation has now closed, we are still awaiting the outcome of this consultation and any regulatory changes that this may bring.
- 3.5 Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety: The final report sets out over 50 recommendations for government as to how to deliver a more robust regulatory system to ensure that the buildings residents live in are safe and remain so. We are awaiting the final regulatory changes, but know that the Council will need to respond to the evolving requirements following the tragedy at Grenfell Tower and incorporate any financial impacts into the Business Plan once known.
- 3.6 The Regulator of Social Housing has published (October 2019) their Sector Risk Profile<sup>1</sup> highlighting the common strategic and operational risks that pose a threat to housing providers.

### **4 Background**

- 4.1 The purpose of this report is to present the proposed Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Annual Budget and Capital Programme for 2020/21, as well as the Rent Setting and the Fees and Charges proposals for 2020/21.
- 4.2 The HRA is a ring fenced account used to manage the Council's housing stock of some 5,700 properties, with the Council acting as the Landlord.
- 4.3 In April 2012, under the Localism Act 2011, the HRA (under the administration of Taunton Deane Borough Council (TDBC)) moved away from a national subsidy system (which required an annual payment from the HRA to Central Government) to become 'self-financing'. This enabled the Council to retain all rental income to meet the costs of managing and maintaining the housing stock, as well as meeting the interest payments and repayment of debt. As part of the self-financing agreement, a one-off payment of

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1

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/848158/Sector\\_Risk\\_Profile\\_2019.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/848158/Sector_Risk_Profile_2019.pdf)



£85.198m was made to Government.

- 4.4 In order to manage the freedoms gained by the HRA through self-financing, a new 30-Year Business Plan (2012-2042) was introduced. This set out the Council's overall aims and objectives for Housing Services, as well as laying out plans to manage the increased risks and opportunities.
- 4.5 The HRA Business Plan has been reviewed and updated annually since 2012, with a full review undertaken in 2016. In response to recent changes in national policies and local aspiration, another full and comprehensive 30-year Business Plan from 2020/21 onwards has recently been undertaken, with the support of consultants Savills, and can be found as a separate report called "HRA Business Plan Review". The key changes in revenue budget from 2019/20 to 2020/21 are summarised from paragraph 5.6 below.
- 4.6 The HRA continues to face a number of risks and uncertainties, many of which could be significant but the actual financial impact is not yet known. These are discussed in section 3 above.
- 4.7 As part of the self-financing agreement, an individual housing revenue borrowing cap of £116m was implemented for TDBC. This meant that the HRA was unable to exceed a capital borrowing requirement of £116m within the HRA Business Plan. In October 2018 this borrowing cap was officially removed.

## **5 The HRA 2020 Business Plan and Annual Revenue Budget for 2020/21**

- 5.1 The 2020 Business Plan review was undertaken as a direct result of a number changes in both national policies and local aspiration; we have seen the debt cap removal in October 2018, the introduction of the Regulator of Social Housing's new Rent Standard from April 2020 and a new Somerset Housing Strategy published in March 2019. The Grenfell tragedy has prioritised landlord compliance such as fire and safety, the declaration of a climate emergency and a new leadership aspiration to build 1000 new homes in 30 years.
- 5.2 The HRA 2020 Business Plan review was undertaken to assess the affordability and viability of these aspirational schemes and the financial impact of regulatory changes, to determine what schemes could actually be delivered and when.
- 5.3 The current assumptions within the Business Plan indicate that the new build aspirations are affordable and viable but require the maximisation of future rental income through the application of options available within the boundaries of national policy, as this will require significant capital investment and borrowing over the next 10 years.
- 5.4 The HRA 2020 Business Plan aims to deliver 1,000 new homes over the next 30 years with a net gain of 400 homes as a result of tenants purchasing their homes through estimated RTB sales.
- 5.5 In response to the HRA 2020 Business Plan, table 1 below provides a summary of the main proposed changes to the annual revenue budget estimates from 2019/20 to 2020/21.

- 5.6 A summary of the overall HRA Revenue Budget for 2020/21 and 5-year Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP), as a result of planned changes within the HRA 2020 Business Plan and other changes, is included in Appendix A.

Table 1: HRA Budget Setting 2019/20 to 2020/21 Changes

	Reference Paragraph	£'000
<b>Original Budget 2019/20 – balanced budget</b>		
<u>Income</u>	5.8	(555)
<u>Service Expenditure</u>		
Repairs & Maintenance	5.11	(10)
Grounds Maintenance	5.12	78
Insurance	5.13	(145)
Management Costs – salaries	5.14	1,533
Management Costs – other	5.18	(97)
Efficiency Savings	5.19	(100)
<u>Central Costs / Movement in Reserves</u>		
Provision for Bad Debt	5.20	120
Interest Payable	5.22	126
Interest Receivable	5.24	70
Provision for Depreciation	5.25	229
Provision for Repayment of Borrowing	5.27	0
Revenue Contribution to Capital (SHDF)	5.28	(1,170)
Movement in Reserves	5.29	(79)
<b>Proposed Original Budget for 2020/21 i.e. net transfer to reserves</b>		<b>0</b>

- 5.7 The main changes include:
- 5.8 **Rental Income:** between April 2016 and March 2020 all social housing landlords were required to reduce the rent payable by tenants by 1% each year in accordance with the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016 Social Rent Reduction. The introduction of the Regulator of Social Housing's new Rent Standard from April 2020 states that social housing landlords can now increase the rent payable by tenants by CPI+1% annually for a period of five years. This rate also applies to service charges. More information can be found in section 6 below.
- 5.9 It is also being proposed to apply "rent flexibility" from April 2020 which could generate approximately £100k in the first year. However the financial impact is not being budgeted for until 2021/22 due to the application of this rent flexibility to new tenants only.

- 5.10 This also includes a realignment of the RTB Admin Grant and GF Contribution under 'income' instead of 'expenditure'.
- 5.11 **Repairs & Maintenance:** an additional £50k has been included for Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) energy performance certificates and stock validation as well as £42k to service 600 air source heat pumps. The repairs and maintenance service is also hoping to achieve a reduction in cost of £50k from contract savings and another £52k cost saving through the capitalisation of scaffolding costs.
- 5.12 **Grounds Maintenance Service Charges:** Tenants pay a weekly service charge towards the costs of maintaining the grounds around the area within which they live, for example grass cutting, shrub pruning, weeding, etc. The Service Level Agreement (SLA) for 2020/21 has been increased to £778k in line with the increase in the proposed Grounds Maintenance Service Charge from £1.90 to £1.95 per week.
- 5.13 **Insurance:** following an authority wide re-tender exercise for insurance premiums the new authority has been successful at significantly reducing their annual premiums. It is estimated that a saving against budget of £145k will be seen across the HRA including leaseholders, shops and meeting halls.
- 5.14 **Management Costs – salaries:** Following the Council decision to establish a structure of four Directorates, a new Housing staff structure will be implemented. Whilst most roles will "lift and shift" from the current structure some vacancies will arise where we require a new focus to meet the housing business objectives. The new structure contains growth and new emphasis in relation to development and regeneration to meet our current and future aspirations, along with landlord safety and compliance, tenant engagement and customer experience, performance and finance.
- 5.15 The Housing Directorate staff structure will incorporate direct staff costs relating to both the HRA and the general fund (GF) homeless function. The HRA will also receive the benefit of central support services delivered by staff in the GF, such as procurement, accounts payable, facilities management, HR/Payroll and finance, etc. The HRA will fund a proportion of these costs for the central support services received.
- 5.16 As reported to Full Council on the 3rd December 2019, the Council's leadership team identified ongoing financial pressures in order to protect service standards and maintain capacity whilst completing the safe delivery of expected service process efficiencies and greater customer access to self-service. The HRA will need to take on a share of these transition and service resilience cost pressures in year 1, but will see a cost reduction going forwards as the Council works to deliver the service process efficiencies. The HRA will also need to fund a share of the temporary staff delivering the corporate change programme.
- 5.17 In table 1 above you can see an increase in budget of £1.533m relating to staffing costs for 2020/21 with table 2 below providing a breakdown of this cost and high level projections for future years.

Table 2: HRA Staffing Costs for 2020/21 and Future Year Projections

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Housing Directorate - HRA Direct Staff Costs		6,323	6,481	6,643	6,809	6,979
Housing Directorate - GF Direct Staff Costs		960	984	1,009	1,034	1,060
Central Support Service Costs		845	866	888	910	933
Central Support Service Costs - One Off		315	-	-	-	-
Central Support Service Costs - Change Programme		140	72	-	-	-
	<b>7,050</b>	<b>8,583</b>	<b>8,403</b>	<b>8,539</b>	<b>8,753</b>	<b>8,972</b>
Inflation @ 2.5%			205	208	213	219

- 5.18 **Management Costs – other:** there has been some reduction in budget requirements through the reassessment of budget needs across tenancy and management delivering savings of £97k.
- 5.19 **Efficiency Savings:** an efficiency target of £100k in 2020/21 rising to £150k per year from 2021/22 has been included within the Business Plan, as we aspire to drive forward improvements in service delivery to realise cash benefits. We have “lean” reviews underway in the “big three” processes of income management, voids and response repairs. With more reviews planned.
- 5.20 **Change in Provision for Bad Debt:** the previous two iterations of the Business Plan, in 2012 and 2016, made a provision at 2% for the expectation that the changes in Welfare Reform would result in increased levels of non-payment of rent and service charges. Whilst new claimant’s moved to the new Universal Credits scheme from 2016, the migration of existing claimants has experienced continued delays. It is also worth noting that the Universal Credit scheme pays claimants in arrears and not in advance, as we currently expect our rental payments to be made.
- 5.21 The 2020 Business Plan includes a new two year provision at 0.75% (£180k in 2020/21) of dwelling rental income, dropping to 0.5% thereafter, to mitigate the financial risk associated with a possible increase in unrecoverable rental income due to the forthcoming “managed migration” to the Universal Credits scheme that is indicated to be completed by March 2023. Provision for bad debt is a year-end accounting adjustment that cannot be forecast with certainty prior to closing the final accounts. Any un-used provision for bad debt will be transferred into an earmarked reserve at the end of the year to manage any further timing differences in the implementation of the Universal Credits scheme.

- 5.22 **Interest Payable:** The majority of existing external borrowing is based on fixed interest rates for the term of the loan, with only two loans based on variable rates of interest. Therefore we are able to predict the interest payment for these elements with a high degree of certainty. The HRA has also increased internal borrowing from the General Fund which is charged at the average borrowing rate across the authority. The estimated budget for 2020/21 is £2,744,700 which is an increase of £125,900.
- 5.23 The HRA is investigating taking on additional external borrowing to fund the North Taunton regeneration scheme to reduce internal borrowing. The Section 151 Officer is seeking advice from Arlingclose, the Council's Treasury advisors, to identify the optimum route that minimises debt costs and risk to finance these loans. Consequently budgets will be revised during the year to accommodate this cost with funding available, for example from repayment of borrowing.
- 5.24 **Interest Receivable:** with internal borrowing exceeding investments there is no expectation to obtain any interest receivable payments.
- 5.25 **Provision for Depreciation:** Depreciation is transferred to the Major Repairs Reserve (MRR) and is used to fund the capital programme and/or repay debt. From 2017/18 depreciation has been required to be included within the HRA accounts on a component accounting basis. This means depreciation will need to be calculated on each of the major components of each house e.g. kitchen, bathroom, rather than being based on the Major Repairs Allowance (MRA), an estimation of the works needed to maintain the stock in good condition.
- 5.26 Depreciation is a year-end accounting adjustment that cannot be forecast with certainty prior to closing the final accounts. The estimated depreciation for 2020/21 is based on those calculations made for 2018/19 plus an allowance for sales and purchases during the year. This is an increase of £227,580.
- 5.27 **Provision for Repayment of Borrowing:** The current voluntary revenue provision (VRP) to repay debt is £1.821m. The Business Plan proposes to continue to use this amount to reduce future capital financing requirements for the next 10 years. Thereafter all surplus funds will be prioritised to repay debt at the earliest opportunity.
- 5.28 **Revenue Contribution to Capital:** a revenue budget of £1.17m has previously been used to help fund the Social Housing Development Capital Schemes. It is proposed to remove a budgeted revenue allocation entirely as a source of funding for capital schemes in order to provide more revenue resources for direct service delivery capacity.
- 5.29 **Movement in Reserves:** the social housing development fund earmarked reserve will be used to fund the development team ahead of becoming part of the base budget.
- 5.30 Other changes not directly influenced by the Business Plan include:
- 5.31 **Minimum general reserve balance:** under the Council's wider Financial Strategy the Executive has agreed a new minimum Operational Target of £2.4m and a new minimum Financial Resilience Target of £1.8m, for the HRA general reserve balance. Remaining

at or above these targets provides added financial resilience to risks such as bad debt, if needed.

- 5.32 **Inflation:** Staffing costs have been inflated by 2.5% (0.5% for increments and 2% for pay inflation). Income has been inflated at Consumer Price Index (CPI) plus 1% where CPI is 1.7% at September 2019.

## **6 Income**

### **6.1 Dwelling Rental Income (including Shared Ownership)**

- 6.1.1 The Government introduced the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016 Social Rent Reduction, which required all social housing landlords to reduce the rent payable by tenants by 1% each year for 4 years between April 2016 and April 2019 (excluding shared ownership homes and temporary accommodation). This superseded the Government's previous 10 year rent increase policy implemented in April 2015.
- 6.1.2 On 26 February 2019 the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government confirmed that increases to social housing rents will be limited to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) plus 1% for 5 years from 2020. The September 2019 CPI figure is 1.7% as published by the Office for National Statistics on the 16 October 2019.
- 6.1.3 The Regulator of Social Housing has now issued a new Rent Standard for 2020 under the direction of the Government. This new Rent Standard will now apply to all housing associations, whereas previously Local Authorities were excluded from such standards.
- 6.1.4 A separate Rent Setting Policy, covering the content and those elements proposed to be adopted by the Council contained within the Regulator of Social Housing's Rent Standard 2020, is also being presented to the Strategic Tenants Board and the Council to recommend the Dwelling Rental Income and Shared Ownership Rent for 2020/21, as part of the HRA 2020 Business Plan report.
- 6.1.5 The Rent Setting Policy recommends that social rents for existing tenancies will be reviewed annually and any increases will not exceed the limit of Consumer Price Index (CPI) plus 1% for 5 years from April 2020.
- 6.1.6 *Therefore in accordance with the Regulator of Social Housing's new Rent Standard from April 2020, the recommended Dwelling Rent for 2020/21 for existing tenants will be an increase of CPI+1% to the average weekly rent, from £80.87 per week to £83.05 per week.*
- 6.1.7 The new Rent Standard also provides the option to apply a one-off rent flexibility allowance to increase rents further. Therefore, in addition to applying CPI+1%, the Council's new Rent Setting Policy provides an additional option to apply this one-off increase of 5% on general need and 10% on sheltered/supported housing. This would be applied to rents for new tenants only. This would provide an estimated additional income of £100k per year, which we would budget to see the benefit of this from 2021/22 onwards.

- 6.2 *Therefore in accordance with the Regulator of Social Housing's new Rent Standard from April 2020, the recommended Dwelling Rent for 2020/21 for new tenants only will be an increase of CPI+1% plus an additional 5% for general needs to the average weekly rent, from £80.87 per week to £87.21 per week.*
- 6.3 *Therefore in accordance with the Regulator of Social Housing's new Rent Standard from April 2020, the recommended Dwelling Rent for 2020/21 for new tenants only will be an increase of CPI+1% plus an additional 10% for sheltered/supported and extra care dwelling rents to the average weekly rent, from £80.87 per week to £91.36 per week.*
- 6.3.1 Whilst in the past the Council did not apply such tolerances, the Council now has an increasingly important role to play in providing great homes for local communities. This will require having the necessary rental income with which to fund the maintenance and management of existing homes, whilst also supporting the delivery of new homes and to supporting tenants within their communities. This is emphasised and explained further within the Business Plan and Rent Policy.
- 6.3.2 This ability to increase rents also enables the Council to play catch-up following the last 4 years imposed 1% reduction in rents. Table 3 below shows what the average weekly rent would have been if rents had been increased by 1% or 2% each year from a base line of 2015/16 (e.g. before the 4 year 1% rent reduction was imposed).

Table 3 – Average Weekly Rents Comparison

	Baseline	1% reduction each year for 4 years				CPI+1% for 5 years				
	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2020/22	2020/23	2020/24	2020/25
Actual / Proposed	84.15	83.32	82.50	81.68	80.87	83.05	85.30	87.60	89.96	92.39
If increased by 1%	84.15	85.00	85.85	86.70	87.57	88.45	89.33	90.22	91.13	92.04
If increased by CPI at 2%	84.15	85.84	87.55	89.30	91.09	92.91	94.77	96.67	98.60	100.57

- 6.3.3 Therefore where options are presented to increase rents within the boundaries of national policies these should be considered carefully. These decisions will have a long term impact on the 30-year Business Plan, with regards to the affordability of operating the service, planned capital investment, and meeting debt repayment obligations.
- 6.3.4 **Void Loss:** Rent lost through void periods continue to be lower than the 2% allowed in the original Business Plan. Therefore it has been deemed appropriate to reduce the expected void rate to 1.25% for a five year period, reducing to 1% thereafter, and to also consider voids as a result of regeneration needs.
- 6.4 **Non-Dwelling Rental Income and Service Charges Income**
- 6.4.1 This incorporates income from non-dwelling rents (mainly garages but also shops, land access and meeting halls), charges for services and facilities, and contributions to HRA costs from leaseholders and council tenants. This accounts for approximately 8% (c£2m) of total HRA income.

- 6.4.2 **Service Charges:** Housing Service Charges are made to housing tenants for the services that they use. Service Charges are set locally each year and are in addition to the Rent Charges.
- 6.4.3 Charges to leaseholders will continue to be based on actual costs incurred.
- 6.4.4 The Government issued a direction to the Regulator of Social Housing to set a new Rent Standard to be effective from April 2020. The proposed Policy Statement recommends registered providers should endeavour to keep increases for service charges within the limit on rent changes, of CPI+1%, to help keep charges affordable. The September 2019 CPI figure is 1.7% as published by the Office for National Statistics on the 16 October 2019.
- 6.4.5 The Council is proposing to increase service charges by CPI+1% for 2020/21, as shown in Appendix B - Table 1 and 2, to ensure they remain affordable for the tenants.
- 6.4.6 **Garage Rents:** The proposal is to increase garage rents for private tenants and owner occupier so that they are in line with the open market value rental rate at £12 (including VAT) per week for 2020/21. Thereafter, these will be increased on an annual basis using CPI+1%. The increase for garage rents for council tenants will be CPI+1%. Please see Appendix B - Table 3.
- 6.4.7 This means for council tenants the weekly rent will increase from £6.37 per week to £6.54 per week – an increase of £0.17 per week or 2.7% (last year 3.3%). For private tenants and owner occupiers the weekly rent will increase from £10.32 (including VAT) per week to £12 per week (including VAT) – an increase of £1.68 per week or 16.3% (last year 3.3%). This equates to additional income of approximately £54k.
- 6.4.8 **Meeting Halls:** The fees levied for 2020/21 for meeting room hire will be increased by CPI+1% and then rounded to the nearest 10p as requested by tenants during feedback provided in 2017/18. Please see Appendix B - Table 4.
- 6.4.9 **Guest Rooms:** The fees levied for 2020/21 for meeting room hire will be increased by CPI+1% and then rounded to the nearest 50p as requested by tenants during feedback provided in 2017/18. Please see Appendix B - Table 5.
- 6.4.10 **Temporary Accommodation:** The fee for temporary accommodation is broken down into two elements: the licence fee and the service charge. The proposed licence fee and service charge for 2020/21 are summarised in Appendix B – Table 6.
- 6.4.11 **Licence Fee:** Whilst the Housing Benefit (HB) subsidy is regulated, the amount social landlords can charge for temporary accommodation is not. Temporary accommodation is also exempt from the new Rent Standard. The proposal for 2020/21 is to continue setting the temporary accommodation licence fee at 100% of the permitted Local Housing Allowance (LHA) ordinary rate as of April 2020.



6.4.12 The LHA for 2020/21 will not be published until approximately January 2020, so therefore the rates shown in table 6 state the current 2019/20 LHA rates and these will change in accordance with the rates officially published by the LHA.

6.4.13 This will result in an increase of £1.56 per week on a 3 bedroom, a £0.98 per week on a 2 bedroom and a £0.12 per week increase on either a 1 bedroom or studio.

6.4.14 **Service Charge:** The proposal for 2020/21 is to increase service charges by CPI+1%.

6.4.15 **Exceptions:** Charges for properties not on mains sewerage. These properties charges for sewerage will be increased in line with the Wessex Water increases for 2020/21 once known. Wessex Water rates for sewerage standing charge per annum and poundage charges are used in the system calculation. For 2019/20 these are £7.00 per annum for unmetered sewerage standing charge and £1.6379 for the poundage charge payable per £ of rateable value of the property. Wessex Water will publish their new charges in February 2020 (available from their website) for 2020/21.

## **7 Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme for 2020/21**

7.1 The HRA 2020 Business Plan proposes significant levels of capital investment to deliver the aspiration of 1000 new homes within the next 30 years whilst maintaining a decent homes standard.

7.2 The HRA Capital Programme for 2020/21, that will deliver the capital investment proposed within the Business Plan, is shown in table 4 below.

7.3 The 5-Year HRA Capital Programme from 2020/21 to 2024/25, that will deliver the capital investment proposed within the Business Plan, is shown in Appendix C.

7.4 This report does not include social housing development schemes that have been previously approved where the spending is planned to be incurred in 2020/21 onwards, for example North Taunton Regeneration.

Table 4: HRA Capital Programme for 2020/21

<b>Capital Investment</b>	<b>Total Cost £000</b>
Major Works	5,379
Improvements	2,150
Related Assets	100
Exceptional Extensive	350
Disabled Adaptations	300
Vehicles	121
ICT	546
Social Housing	6,898
<b>Total Proposed HRA Capital Programme 2020/21</b>	<b>15,844</b>

7.5 The estimated capital investment per scheme and the scheme itself is explained in more detail below. Whilst Officers have estimated the planned spend based on information

currently available to them, these estimates are subject to change depending on contract negotiations, contractor availability, demand on the business, the condition of voids returned to the council and changing business priorities. Therefore any changes to the profile of spend between schemes will be subject to approval by the Housing Director and the Housing Portfolio Holder, and reported as part of the 4-monthly budget monitoring reports.

- 7.6 It is proposed that the HRA Capital Programme for 2020/21 shown above in table 4 will be funded from an appropriate combination of Major Repairs Reserves (from depreciation), revenue contributions (RCCO), capital receipts (Right to Buy), capital grants and borrowing.
- 7.7 A summary of the estimated funding profile for the 2020/21 capital programme is shown in the table 5 below. The final funding profile will be agreed by the Section 151 Officer as per the financial procedure rules.

Table 5: Capital Investment Funding Estimates

<b>Capital Investment</b>	<b>Total Funding £000</b>
Major Repairs Reserve	6,759
Revenue (RCCO)	0
Capital (RTB) Receipts	2,069
Capital Grant Receipts	187
Borrowing	6,829
<b>TOTAL Funding</b>	<b>15,844</b>

- 7.8 **Major Works**
- 7.8.1 These schemes will be focusing on ensuring that a decent homes standard is maintained and that the housing stock major components are replaced periodically as per our capital works programme for 2020/21. This will also include unplanned major works on voids where the property is returned in a poor condition and requires a full re-work ahead of the capital works programme.
- 7.8.2 The Major Works capital programme will be broken down into component schemes, with table 6 below showing the estimated amount to be spent on each scheme.

Table 6: Major Works

<b>Capital Scheme</b>	<b>Total Cost £000</b>
Kitchens	100
Bathrooms	100
Roofing	50
Windows	1,000
Heating (Open Vented)	1,050
Doors	100
Fasciae and Soffits	750
Door Entry Systems	400
Voids Kitchens and Bathrooms	150
Drainage	50
Scaffolding	979
Heating for Warmer Homes	262
Insulation	388
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,379</b>

## 7.9 Improvements

7.10 The Improvements capital programme will be focusing on ongoing fire safety works and ensuring all housing stock continues to adhere to the fire safety regulations. The one-off fire safety works will focus on the replacement of key components.

7.10.1 The Improvements capital programme will be broken down into component schemes, with table 7 below showing the estimate amount to be spent on each scheme.

Table 7: Improvements

<b>Capital Scheme</b>	<b>Total Cost £000</b>
Fire Safety (ongoing)	150
Fire Safety (one off)	2,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,150</b>

## 7.11 Related Assets

7.11.1 The Council also owns a number of related assets in addition to the housing stock. These include garages, meeting / community halls and shops. The proposed capital investment of £100k will ensure that these assets are maintained as required.

## 7.12 Exceptional Extensive Works

7.12.1 This capital investment of £350k will be used primarily for asbestos removal and works to the Council's non-traditional properties.

## 7.13 Disabled Facilities and Aids and Adaptations

7.13.1 This is an annual recurring budget for small and large scale home aids and adaptations in tenants' homes where there are mobility issues. This budget is demand led by requests from tenants or through recommendations by occupational therapists or other healthcare professionals. Applications are made through the Somerset West Private Sector Housing Partnership.

7.13.2 The demand for adaptations has been historically lower than budget and provision has been made in the 2020 Business Plan to reduce this to £300k per annum. This will be achieved with a number of steps being taken, such as moving towards more cost effective installations of wet floor shower rooms through a new fixed price contract; switching from concrete ramps to better value metal modular ramps; and a move toward stairlift loans and recycling, rather than purchases. These measures will ensure that the service stays within reduced budgets without impacting tenants.

#### **7.14 Vehicles**

7.14.1 The service uses a combination of both owned and leased vehicles depending on the complex nature of the vehicle requirements, to deliver services to our tenants. This capital investment of £121k per year is to cover the replacement cost of owned vehicles on a cyclical basis.

#### **7.15 IT Systems and Software Improvements**

7.15.1 There are a number of business critical IT systems and software applications used to run the HRA. These include Academy, Open Contractor, Codeman, Abritas and e5. This capital investment of £546k is to support the Housing Technology Programme which is planning to deliver the replacement of Academy into the Open Housing as well as the implementation of Open Assets.

7.15.2 The HRA will also need to fund a share of the future corporate technology change programme which includes renewing contracts / licence agreements and upgrading to Microsoft 365, as well as e5 contractual upgrades and the implementation of new accounts payable invoicing software.

7.15.3 All of the above will also require IT infrastructure upgrades to add additional server capacity into the data centre to allow us to create the new services that these projects required.

#### **7.16 Social Housing Development**

7.16.1 A budget of £6.898m has been included within the capital programme as a back stop to ensure that we are able to meet our total spend requirements for 2020/21 under the RTB "1-4-1 Agreement" (explained in section 9 below). This would be funded 30% from retained RTB capital receipts.

7.16.2 This equates to approximately 42 new social housing units and directly delivers on the aspiration for an additional 500 homes in the next 10 years

7.16.3 There are a number of individual social housing schemes that are currently being developed. As individual schemes are presented to Full Council for approval, the need

for the notional amount of £6.898m would reduce as RTB spend is met through specific schemes.

## **8 HRA Borrowing**

- 8.1 In 2012 the Council took out additional external borrowing of £85.198m as part of the self-financing settlement with the Government. This meant that the total debt owed by the HRA at the start of self-financing was £99.649m (which included £9m of pre self-financing loans and £5.451m of internal borrowing).
- 8.2 As part of the self-financing agreement, an individual housing revenue borrowing cap of £116m was implemented for TDBC. This meant that the HRA was unable to exceed capital borrowing of £116m within the HRA Business Plan. Although the Government abolished the HRA Debt Cap in October 2018, it is proposed to set a prudent debt cap for the HRA.
- 8.3 The total capital borrowing requirement (debt balance) owed by the HRA at the start of 2019/20 was £103m.
- 8.4 The HRA 2020 Business Plan assumes that there will be a significant increase in new borrowing over the next 10 years to meet the increased ambitions for capital investment. This will result in additional cost pressures to cover the financing of this new investment and refinancing of existing loans.
- 8.5 The budgeted annual provision of £1.821m for the repayment of debt will be used to repay existing debt, finance any new external borrowings as required or to reduce the year-on-year capital financing requirement. Any surplus funds from the revenue account will be used to protect reserves in the first instance but will then be used to reduce future capital financing requirements.
- 8.6 Whilst this report is focusing on the budget for year 1 of the HRA 2020 30-Year Business Plan, it is important to consider the impact that decisions taken now have on the entirety of the plan, for example the cumulative impact of future rental income and the future financing requirements of borrowings.
- 8.7 The one-off application of the rent flexibility allowance for new tenants only, if approved, will provide more headroom against our internal debt cap which means that there is less risk and more interest cover available, and enables the Business Plan to deliver the new build aspirations and reduce debt back down to approximately £129m over the 30 years.
- 8.8 The S151 Officer is working with Arlingclose, the Council's Treasury advisors, on how best to refinance the existing loans as they fall due over the next 10 years and how to take out new external borrowing to fund approved schemes such as the North Taunton Regeneration scheme, in a way that minimises debt costs and risk.
- 8.9 The funding and cash flow implications of the HRA 2020 Business Plan will be managed in line with the Council's Capital, Investment and Treasury Strategies which is approved alongside the annual budget each year.

## **9 Right to Buy (RTB) Receipts**

- 9.1 The RTB scheme is a government scheme that enables tenants to purchase their homes at a discount, subject to meeting qualifying criteria. The scheme saw the maximum discount increase significantly in 2012 to up to £75,000 followed by a steady increase year on year to up to £82,800 in April 2019.
- 9.2 Taunton Deane Borough Council signed up to a “1-4-1 Agreement” with the Treasury/MHCLG to retain a higher proportion of RTB the additional receipts on the proviso, and agreed that these receipts would be used to fund new social housing. This agreement continues now under SWT until such time as the Council decides to opt out. Only a small percentage of receipts from RTB sales are retained by the Council. These additional RTB receipts can only account for 30% of spend on new social housing costs, with the remaining 70% coming from other funds such as revenue funding or borrowing.
- 9.3 The RTB receipts cannot be used in the same scheme as other Government funding such as grants from Homes England. They must also be spent within three years of the capital receipt, or must be returned to Government with interest at 4% over base rate from the date of the original receipt. Receipts can be returned to Government in the quarter in which they are received with no interest payable.
- 9.4 Alternatively, the 30% RTB funding could be granted to and used by Housing Associations in the area, providing they meet the same match funding requirements. The new housing doesn’t need to be provided by the Council.
- 9.5 To date, the Council has successfully spent all of their retained 1-4-1 receipts resulting in no returns being made to the Treasury/MHCLG.
- 9.6 **RTB Receipts Year to Date:** Table 8 below shows the number of RTB sales, the total (capital) receipts received under the new RTB discount scheme, the Council retained 1-4-1 receipts to be used for new social housing, and the total amount that would need to be spent by the Council in order to fully retain them.

Table 8: Right to Buy Receipts

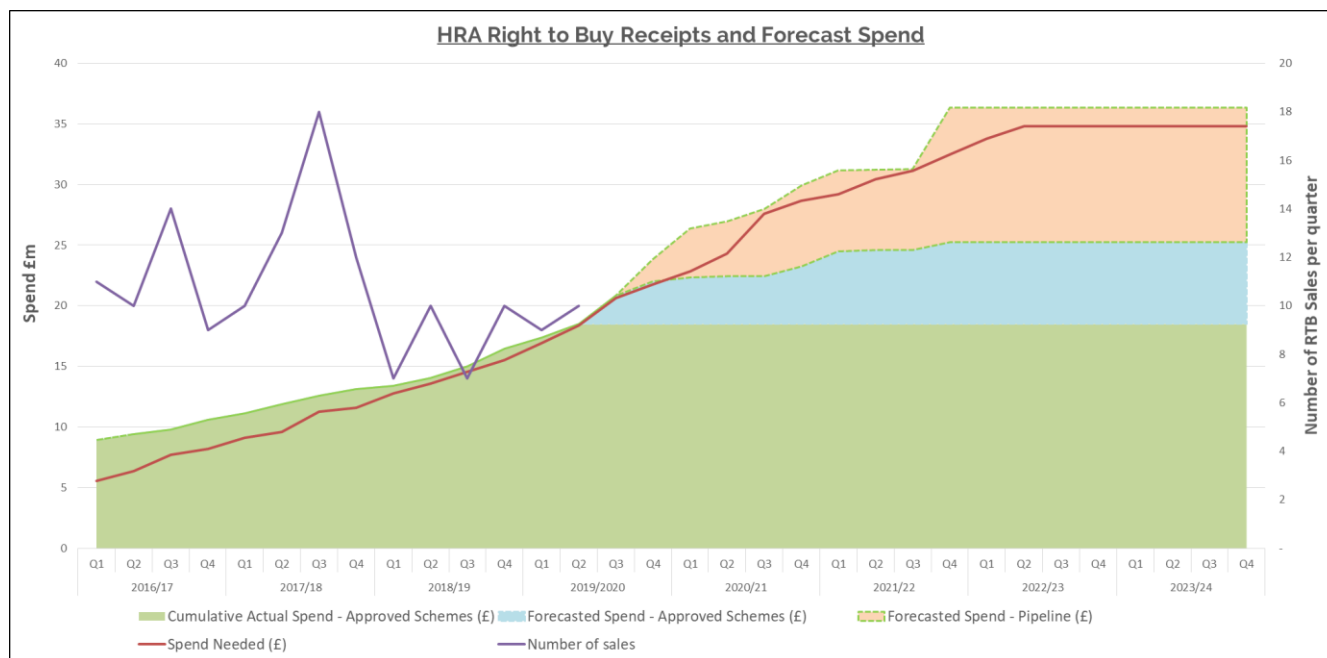
	Total 2012/13	Total 2013/14	Total 2014/15	Total 2015/16	Total 2016/17	Total 2017/18	Total 2018/19
Sales	37	47	35	38	44	53	34
Total Receipts (£k)	2,330	2,705	2,317	2,666	3,568	3,971	2,576
1-4-1 Receipts (£k)	1,234	1,230	1,005	1,193	1,864	2,069	1,149
1-4-1 Receipts Spend - Per Year (£k)				1,234	1,230	1,005	1,193
Match Funding Spend - Per Year (£k)				2,879	2,871	2,345	2,783
<b>Total Spend Required - Per Year (£k)</b>	-	-	-	<b>4,112</b>	<b>4,102</b>	<b>3,350</b>	<b>3,976</b>
Total Spend Required - Cumulative (£k)	-	-	-	4,112	8,214	11,563	15,539
Average number of units per year				25	25	20	24

	Total 2019/20	Total 2020/21	Total 2021/22	Total 2022/23
Sales	35	32	32	32
Total Receipts (£k)	2,317	2,576	2,576	2,576
1-4-1 Receipts (£k)	1,005	1,149	1,149	1,149
1-4-1 Receipts Spend - Per Year (£k)	1,864	2,069	1,149	1,005
Match Funding Spend - Per Year (£k)	4,349	4,829	2,681	2,345
<b>Total Spend Required - Per Year (£k)</b>	<b>6,213</b>	<b>6,898</b>	<b>3,830</b>	<b>3,350</b>
Total Spend Required - Cumulative (£k)	21,752	28,650	32,480	35,829
Average number of units per year	38	42	23	20

[Note that the grey data is estimated.]

- 9.7 **Forecast Spend of RTB Receipts:** The spend year to date and the current forecast spend can be shown in graph 1 below. The estimated spend on approved schemes, such as Outer Circle and Laxton Road, together with additional open market buybacks, will be sufficient to meet the RTB match funding requirements to quarter 4 of 2019/20.
- 9.8 Looking forwards over the next three years, there are a number of new build and off-the-shelf buybacks being investigated that, if approved by Full Council, together with a minimal amount of open market buybacks, will see our RTB match funding requirements achieved for the next three years.
- 9.9 This will support the aspiration for an additional 1000 homes in the next 30 years, being able to achieve this with 30% match funding from RTB Receipts, whilst ensuring we do not have to return our RTB receipts (plus interest) back to the Government.
- 9.10 However this will require significant borrowing, which is now possible since the removal of the debt cap, and will have to be managed carefully within the overall 2020 Business Plan to ensure that the revenue account can fund the interest payments and principal loan repayment.

Graph 1: Right to Buy Receipts and Forecast Spend



## 10 Links to Corporate Strategy

10.1 The budget proposals for 2020/21 have been prepared in line with the HRA 2020 Business Plan and newly adopted Corporate Strategy<sup>2</sup>.

## 11 Finance / Resource Implications

11.1 This is a finance report and therefore no further finance comments are required.

## 12 Legal Implications

12.1 The HRA is governed by the following legislations:

- Housing Act 1985 (Part II)
- Housing Act 1988
- Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (section 74)
- Local Government Act 2003
- Localism Act 2011

12.2 The introduction of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 meant that the HRA was now required to become a 'ring-fenced' account, completely separated from the GF. As a consequence local authorities can only include items in the HRA for which there is statutory provision, and transfers of income and expenditure between the HRA and the General Fund are only allowed in very specific circumstances. In essence, rents cannot be subsidised by transfers from the General Fund, and Council Tax cannot be subsidised by transfers from the HRA.

12.3 The introduction of the Localism Act 2011 reformed local authority housing financing with the abolition of the national subsidy system and a move to 'self-financing' from April 2012. This meant that local authority housing revenue accounts are able to retain all

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/your-council/corporate-strategy/>



rental income to meet the costs of managing and maintaining their housing stock.

### **13 Climate and Sustainability Implications**

- 13.1 As part of the HRA 2020 Business Plan review a “Strategic Asset Investment Proposal For Housing In Relation to Achieving Affordable Warmth & Carbon Neutrality (Retrofit Strategy)” report was commissioned. This report was produced to inform the Council on how they could achieve carbon neutrality within the housing stock by 2050 as recommended within the “SWT Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience Plan”.
- 13.2 As part of the Major Works capital programme, the HRA will be looking to replace components in a thermally efficient way where possible, for example installing air source heat pumps, external wall insulation and thermally efficient windows.

### **14 Safeguarding and/or Community Safety Implications**

- 14.1 The HRA has an ongoing responsibility for the safeguarding of vulnerable people within its communities. There are no changes proposed within this report.

### **15 Equality and Diversity Implications**

- 15.1 The Housing Specialist has assessed the proposals presented within this report as driven by the HRA 2020 Business Plan and Rent Policy. An equality impact assessment form can be found in Appendix D.

### **16 Social Value Implications**

- 16.1 Our approach to social value will encompass the full procurement and commissioning cycles, service planning and review, decision making and policy development as described in the Council’s Social Value Statement (Social Value within Procurement - June 2018).

### **17 Partnership Implications**

- 17.1 The HRA budget includes significant expenditure on services provided by MIND, citizen’s advice, Inspire to Achieve, Taunton East Development Trust, North Taunton and Wiveliscombe Area partnership.

### **18 Health and Wellbeing Implications**

- 18.1 None for the purposes of this report. Any relevant information and decisions with regard to health and wellbeing will be reported as these emerge through the financial planning process.

### **19 Asset Management Implications**

- 19.1 This report includes a section relating to the capital programme for 2020/21 and therefore no further comments are required.

### **20 Data Protection Implications**

- 20.1 None for the purposes of this report.

## 21 Consultation Implications

21.1 Consultation will be undertaken with tenants through the Strategic Tenants Board.

## 22 Scrutiny Comments / Recommendation(s)

22.1 Due to the timing of publishing the report for the Executive Committee meeting on 22 January, a verbal update will be provided on any comments and/or recommendations arising from the Strategic Tenants Board and Scrutiny Committee.

### Democratic Path:

Committee / Board	Yes / No	Date
Informal Executive	Yes	6 Jan 2020
Strategic Tenants Board	Yes	15 Jan 2020
All Members Briefing	Yes	16 Jan 2020
Scrutiny	Yes	20 Jan 2020
Executive	Yes	22 Jan 2020
Full Council	Yes	19 Feb 2020

**Reporting Frequency: Annually**

### List of Appendices (delete if not applicable)

Appendix A	HRA Revenue Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan
Appendix B	Proposed Fees and Charges 2020/21
Appendix C	Five Year Capital Programme
Appendix D	Equality Impact Assessment Form

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## APPENDIX A

### HRA Revenue Budget for 2020/21 and Medium Term Financial Plan

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Income</b>						
Dwelling Rents	(24,013)	(24,225)	(24,979)	(25,779)	(26,558)	(27,442)
Non Dwelling Rents	(649)	(719)	(734)	(750)	(765)	(781)
Service Charges	(1,424)	(1,457)	(1,495)	(1,534)	(1,574)	(1,615)
Other Income	(132)	(371)	(366)	(361)	(355)	(354)
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>(26,217)</b>	<b>(26,773)</b>	<b>(27,575)</b>	<b>(28,423)</b>	<b>(29,252)</b>	<b>(30,192)</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>						
Repairs and Maintenance	3,549	3,617	3,722	3,796	3,872	3,950
Management	8,492	7,649	7,834	8,023	8,216	8,415
Rents and Rates	484	320	328	336	345	354
Special Management	1,187	3,394	3,079	3,076	3,147	3,220
Bad Debt Provision	60	180	186	128	131	135
Debt Management Expenses	9	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>13,780</b>	<b>15,160</b>	<b>15,148</b>	<b>15,359</b>	<b>15,712</b>	<b>16,074</b>
<b>Other Expenditure</b>						
Depreciation - dwellings	6,346	6,790	6,920	7,053	7,189	7,327
Depreciation - non dwellings	176	210	214	217	220	223
RCCO	250	-	-	-	-	-
Contribution to CDC	229	229	229	229	229	229
Interest Payable	2,619	2,745	3,877	4,124	4,353	4,503
Investment Income	(70)	-	-	-	-	-
Social Housing Development Fund	1,170	-	-	-	-	-
Provision for repayment of debt	1,821	1,821	1,187	1,441	1,550	1,836
Movement in Reserves	(104)	(183)	-	-	-	-
<b>Total Other</b>	<b>12,437</b>	<b>11,613</b>	<b>12,427</b>	<b>13,065</b>	<b>13,540</b>	<b>14,119</b>
<b>Total - (surplus) / deficit</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

## APPENDIX B

### Proposed Fees and Charges 2020/21

Displayed below is the table of fees and charges, comparing 2019/20 to 2020/21 indicative prices (CPI of 1.7% + 1% has been applied).

Housing Service Charges		Actual 2019/20	% increase	Actual 2020/21
<b>Table 1: Service Charges (VAT not applicable) – Per Week</b>				
Communal areas		£0.65	CPI+1%	£0.67
Grounds maintenance		£1.90	CPI+1%	£1.95
Heating charge (Broomfield House only)		£5.23	CPI+1%	£5.37
Laundry charge (Broomfield House only)		£1.59	CPI+1%	£1.63
<b>Table 2: Combined Service Charges (VAT not applicable) – Per Week</b>				
Sheltered Housing Service Charge		£11.96	CPI+1%	£12.28
Sheltered Piper Charge		£5.05	CPI+1%	£5.19
Extra Care Housing Service Charge		£22.44	CPI+1%	£23.05
Extra Care Piper Charge		£5.84	CPI+1%	£6.00
<b>Table 3: Garage Rents - Per Week</b>				
Council Tenants (VAT not applicable)		£6.37	CPI+1%	£6.54
Private Tenants and Owner Occupiers (exc. VAT)		£8.60	16.3%	£10.00
Private Tenants and Owner Occupiers (inc. VAT)		£10.32	16.3%	£12.00
<b>Table 4: Hire Charges for Sheltered Scheme Meeting Halls (ex VAT)</b>				
First hour		£10.80	CPI+1%	£11.10
Each half hour thereafter		£5.40	CPI+1%	£5.60
6 hours plus		£64.40	CPI+1%	£66.20
Total charge for residents in a scheme and community organisations		£14.80	CPI+1%	£15.20
<b>Table 5: Hire Charges for Sheltered Scheme Guest Rooms (ex VAT) Tauntonfield, Middleway, Hope Corner Lane, Kilkenny and Lodge</b>				
No. of nights per person -1 <sup>st</sup> night per person per night		£22.00	CPI+1%	£23.00
No. of nights per person -2		£32.00	CPI+1%	£33.00
No. of nights per person -3		£43.00	CPI+1%	£44.50
No. of nights per person -4		£54.00	CPI+1%	£55.50
No. of nights per person -5		£64.00	CPI+1%	£66.00
No. of nights per person -6		£75.50	CPI+1%	£78.00
No. of nights per person -7		£86.00	CPI+1%	£88.50

## APPENDIX B (CONT.)

<b>Table 6: Temporary Accommodation (rent per day, VAT not applicable)</b>	<b>Daily Service Charge 2019/20</b>	<b>Gross Daily Licence Fee &amp; Service Charge 2019/20</b>	<b>Daily Service Charge 2020/21</b>	<b>Gross Daily Licence Fee &amp; Service Charge 2020/21</b>
9b School Road (2 bedroom)	£1.00	£17.31	£1.03	£18.29
57 Priory (3 bedroom)	£1.26	£20.54	£1.29	£22.10
40 Humphreys Road (2 bedroom)	£1.00	£17.31	£1.03	£18.29
1 Gay Street (2 bedroom)	£1.00	£17.31	£1.03	£18.29
10 Duke Street (3 bedroom)	£1.26	£20.54	£1.29	£22.10
12 Moorland Close annex (1 bedroom)	n/a	n/a	£0.77	£13.92
<b>Outer Circle</b>				
96 Outer Circle (2 bedroom)	£1.00	£17.31	£1.03	£18.29
113 (studio)	£0.75	£13.80	£0.77	£13.92
113a (studio)	£0.75	£13.80	£0.77	£13.92
115 (3 bedroom)	£1.26	£20.54	£1.29	£22.10
115a (3 bedroom)	£1.26	£20.54	£1.29	£22.10
119 (studio)	£0.75	£13.80	£0.77	£13.92
119a (studio)	£0.75	£13.80	£0.77	£13.92
<b>Snedden Grove</b>				
Unit 1 (2 bedroom)	£1.00	£17.31	£1.03	£18.29
Unit 2 (2 bedroom)	£1.00	£17.31	£1.03	£18.29
Unit 3 (2 bedroom)	£1.00	£17.31	£1.03	£18.29
Unit 4 (3 bedroom)	£1.26	£20.54	£1.29	£22.10
Unit 5 (3 bedroom)	£1.26	£20.54	£1.29	£22.10
Unit 6 (2 bedroom)	£1.00	£17.31	£1.03	£18.29
Unit 7 (3 bedroom)	£1.26	£20.54	£1.29	£22.10
Unit 8 (2 bedroom)	£1.00	£17.31	£1.03	£18.29
<b>Wheatley Crescent</b>				
5a (2 bedroom)	£1.00	£17.31	£1.03	£18.29
30 (1 bedroom)	£0.75	£13.80	£0.77	£13.92
32 (1 bedroom)	£0.75	£13.80	£0.77	£13.92
34 (1 bedroom)	£0.75	£13.80	£0.77	£13.92
36 (1 bedroom)	£0.75	£13.80	£0.77	£13.92
<b>Howard Road (Magna)</b>				
43a (1 bedroom)	n/a	£13.05	n/a	£13.15
43b (1 bedroom)	n/a	£13.05	n/a	£13.15
43c (1 bedroom)	n/a	£13.05	n/a	£13.15
43d (1 bedroom)	n/a	£13.05	n/a	£13.15

### Discounts

Discounts do not apply to service charges.

## APPENDIX C

### HRA Five Year Capital Programme from 2020/21

<b><u>HRA Capital Programme</u></b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
Major Works	5,379	5,379	5,379	5,379	5,379
Improvements / Fire Safety	2,150	150	150	150	150
Related Assets	100	100	100	100	100
Exceptional Extensive	350	350	350	350	350
Disabled Adaptations	300	300	300	300	300
Vehicles	121	121	121	121	121
ICT	546	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,946</b>	<b>6,400</b>	<b>6,400</b>	<b>6,400</b>	<b>6,400</b>

## APPENDIX D

### Equality Impact Assessment Form



Clinical Commissioning Group



Musgrove Park Hospital



Somerset Partnership



## Somerset Equality Impact Assessment

**Organisation prepared for**

Somerset West and Taunton Council

**Version**

1

**Date Completed**

January 2020

**Description of what is being impact assessed**

Somerset West and Taunton Council (SWT) Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan 2020 – 2050

The strategic objectives of the business plan are to: Deliver more new homes; Provide great customer service; and Improve existing homes and neighbourhood.

HRA budget setting 2020/21

The HRA budget setting report enables the council to set a balanced budget for 2020/21 that reflects SWT's HRA business plan and takes into account councillor's priorities. The report provides an overview of the finances for the HRA. It covers both HRA revenue and housing capital spending, highlighting the inter-relationships between the two.

Council housing rent setting policy from April 2020 for a period of up to 5 years

To ensure continued investment in the management, maintenance and development of council housing stock to ensure the needs of existing and potential tenants are met, and to provide enhanced support for families and communities experiencing hardship.

### HRA fees and charges for 2020/2021

To increase the fees and charges from April 2020 for the HRA to ensure sufficient financial resources are in place to deliver the services.

### **Evidence**

**What data/information have you used to assess how this policy/service might impact on protected groups?** Sources such as the [Office of National Statistics](#), [Somerset Intelligence Partnership](#), [Somerset's Joint Strategic Needs Analysis \(JSNA\)](#), Staff and/ or [area profiles](#), should be detailed here

#### Data:

Major changes in national housing finance and housing policy – 2019/20

Somerset West and Taunton's Corporate Strategy 2020 – 2024

The most current available data on our tenants and our housing stock.

(Note: Further work will continue in this area as tenant engagement resources are increased)

**Who have you consulted with to assess possible impact on protected groups?** If you have not consulted other people, please explain why?

#### Engagement:

Consultation and regular meetings with the SWT Tenants Strategic Board during 2019/20

Wider engagement with councillors in the development of the HRA Business Plan 2020–2050 throughout 2019/20



## Analysis of impact on protected groups

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires us to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations with protected groups. Consider how this policy/service will achieve these aims. In the table below, using the evidence outlined above and your own understanding, detail what considerations and potential impacts against each of the three aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty. Based on this information, make an assessment of the likely outcome, before you have implemented any mitigation.

Protected group	Summary of impact	Negative outcome	Neutral outcome	Positive outcome
Age	<p>People will benefit from the overall investment in council housing.</p> <p>The increased choice of affordable housing type, size and tenure provides housing options for all age groups.</p> <p>Improvements in energy efficiency will help to protect tenants, whatever their age or the hardships they experience, from fuel poverty.</p> <p>The rent setting policy and the increase to fees and charges will be applied across our housing stock. This increase in the gross rental charge for existing tenants and new tenants moving into our housing will have a neutral effect on protected groups. The cost rise to tenants is a relatively modest one and follows four years of rent reductions for tenants. The rise will enable the council to continue to provide an excellent range of services.</p> <p>Note: A total of 3,265 (58%) of our existing tenants are in receipt of help with housing costs i.e. Housing Benefit or Universal Credit.</p> <p>The impact of both investment prioritisation and improvements to service delivery need to be assessed in more detail as part of an annual planning process in order to identify more precisely the potential for both negative and positive of the business plan on this specific group.</p>	□	⊗	⊗

	Communications on any complex changes may disproportionately worry tenants in sheltered/supported housing.			
<b>Disability</b>	<p>People will benefit from the overall investment in council housing.</p> <p>Specific provision for a range of new adapted properties will be made to provide a housing choice for those with a disability.</p> <p>Eligible tenants will particularly benefit from the provision of disabled adaptations (major and minor) to existing council housing.</p>			
<b>Gender reassignment</b>	<p>People will benefit from the overall investment in council housing.</p> <p>There is not expected to be any particular negative impact on this specific group.</p>			
<b>Marriage and civil partnership</b>	<p>People will benefit from the overall investment in council housing.</p> <p>There is not expected to be any particular negative impact on this specific group.</p>			
<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b>	<p>People will benefit from the overall investment in council housing.</p> <p>Within the business plan there is potential for investment in better quality and additional family housing.</p> <p>There is not expected to be any particular negative impact on this specific group.</p>			

<b>Race and ethnicity</b>	<p>People will benefit from the overall investment in council housing.</p> <p>Wider tenant participation and engagement will increase the proportion of tenants providing feedback to inform service improvements.</p> <p>Any proposed re-development of the housing stock could potentially have a negative impact on a specific group of tenants, depending upon the location.</p> <p>Communication about the business plan may not fully reach those for whom English is not their first language.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Religion or belief</b>	<p>People will benefit from the overall investment in council housing.</p> <p>Developing and supporting staff to provide great customer service will ensure appropriate and sensitive services are delivered to the religious or belief requirements of tenants.</p> <p>There is not expected to be any particular negative impact on this specific group.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Sex</b>	<p>People will benefit from the overall investment in council housing.</p> <p>There is not expected to be any particular negative impact on this specific group.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Sexual orientation</b>	<p>People will benefit from the overall investment in council housing.</p> <p>Investment in our communities will ensure information about our services is accessible so that people can benefit from all our activities. People experiencing alarm, distress and harassment will benefit from investment being made into providing great customer services which will be community inclusive.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

	There is not expected to be any particular negative impact on this specific group.			
<b>Other, e.g. carers, veterans, homeless, low income, rurality/isolation, etc.</b>	<p>Property lettings will be allocated via the choice based lettings system - Homefinder Somerset, which has equality and diversity policies in place to ensure protected groups are not disadvantaged.</p> <p>The rent setting policy and the increase to fees and charges will be applied across our housing stock. This increase in the gross rental charge for existing tenants and new tenants moving into our housing will have a neutral effect on protected groups. The cost rise to tenants is a relatively modest one and follows four years of rent reductions for tenants. The rise will enable the council to continue to provide an excellent range of services.</p> <p>The application of rent tolerances for certain individual properties will take account of local factors and concerns, in consultation with tenants.</p> <p>To help support tenants on low incomes the housing service will continue to provide a number of initiatives to enable them to manage their finances and maximise their income:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publish clear information on rent which helps tenants to manage their own finances;</li> <li>• Signpost tenants to a relevant benefit agency to help ensure they are maximising their income to meet their living costs;</li> <li>• Take action to raise the awareness of accessing a range of welfare benefits; and</li> <li>• Provide the opportunity to access direct support in checking they are in receipt of the welfare benefits they are entitled to claim.</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

	The impact of both investment prioritisation and improvements to service delivery need to be assessed in more detail as part of an annual planning process in order to identify more precisely the potential for both negative and positive of the business plan on this specific group.			
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### Negative outcomes action plan

Where you have ascertained that there will potentially be negative outcomes, you are required to mitigate the impact of these. Please detail below the actions that you intend to take.

Action taken/to be taken	Date	Person responsible	How will it be monitored?	Action complete
Communications on any complex changes may disproportionately worry tenants in sheltered/supported housing. We will communicate with all tenants to explain any significant changes affecting them and what we are investing in.	2020 - ongoing	Case Management Leads	Regular meetings and wider engagement with stakeholders.	<input type="checkbox"/>
There is potential to alienate specific ethnic groups when housing is identified for regeneration/redevelopment. We will consider re-supply of appropriate housing to meet the needs of ethnic groups as part of any future regeneration/redevelopment.	2020 - ongoing	Development and Regeneration Lead	Regular meetings and wider engagement with stakeholders.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Those for whom English is not their first language are not made fully aware of changes. We will offer translation of communication into alternative languages. We will engage with minority groups using existing tenant involvement channels.	2020 - ongoing	Case Management Leads	Regular meetings and wider engagement with stakeholders.	<input type="checkbox"/>
There is potential to alienate religious or belief groups when housing is identified for regeneration/redevelopment. We	2020 - ongoing	Development and	Regular meetings and	<input type="checkbox"/>

will consider re-supply of appropriate housing to meet the needs of any religious or belief groups as part of any future regeneration/redevelopment scheme.		Regeneration Lead	wider engagement with stakeholders.	
<p>The rent setting policy and the increase to fees and charges will be applied across our housing stock. This increase in the gross rental charge for existing tenants and new tenants moving into in our housing will have a neutral effect on protected groups. The cost rise to tenants is a relatively modest one and follows four years of rent reductions for tenants. The rise will enable the council to continue to provide an excellent range of services.</p> <p>To help support tenants on low incomes the housing service will continue to provide a number of initiatives to enable them to manage their finances and maximise their income:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publish clear information on rent which helps tenants to manage their own finances;</li> <li>• Signpost tenants to a relevant benefit agency to help ensure they are maximising their income to meet their living costs;</li> <li>• Take action to raise the awareness of accessing a range of welfare benefits; and</li> <li>• Provide the opportunity to access direct support in checking they are in receipt of the welfare benefits they are entitled to claim.</li> </ul>	2020 – ongoing	Case Management Leads	Regular meetings and wider engagement with stakeholders.	<input type="checkbox"/>
As the report states, it is acknowledged that there may be an increase in the level of rent arrears. The proposed budgets for rental income in 2020/21 make a provision for an increase in arrears/bad debt.	2020/21	Case Management Lead – Finance	Regular meetings. Annual review of the HRA financial model.	

The impact of both investment prioritisation and improvements to service delivery will be assessed in more detail as part of an annual planning process in order to identify more precisely the potential for both negative and positive of the business plan.		2021 – ongoing	Director of Housing	Annual review of the HRA business plan.	
<b>If negative impacts remain, please provide an explanation below.</b>					
<b>Completed by:</b>		Stephen Boland			
<b>Date</b>		7 <sup>th</sup> January 2020			
<b>Signed off by:</b>					
<b>Date</b>		January 2020			
<b>Equality Lead/Manager sign off date:</b>					
<b>To be reviewed by: (officer name)</b>		Stephen Boland			
<b>Review date:</b>		31 <sup>st</sup> March 2021			





# Somerset West and Taunton

## Scrutiny Committee – 5<sup>th</sup> February 2020

### Somerset Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019 - 2023

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Member Fran Smith

#### Report Authors:

**Mark Leeman (Strategy Specialist) & Hannah Cook (Customer Specialist – Housing Options)**

#### 1 Executive Summary / Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 District Councils have a statutory duty to adopt a Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy. This strategy sets out the strategic goals for the four Somerset Housing Authorities including a detailed action plan to show how the strategy will be delivered. Our existing Somerset Homeless Strategy was adopted in May 2018; this was an interim strategy which only ran until December 2019 so we now need to update the strategy taking into consideration the priorities identified in the Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Needs Assessment 2019, together with the new requirements of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2019.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to enable Scrutiny Committee to scrutinise the content of the proposed Somerset Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy (and Action Plan) 2019-2023 (SH&RSS)

#### 2 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Scrutiny Committee scrutinises the proposed Somerset Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy and Action Plan (2019-2023), and provides:
  - in principle support for the adoption of the SH&RSS, subject to
  - any comments for consideration by the Executive (10<sup>th</sup> February 2020) who will be asked to formally recommend the adoption of the Strategy to Full Council

#### 3 Risk Assessment

- 3.1 The development of the draft SH&RSS has highlighted a number of key risks, as described below:

Description	Likelihood	Impact	Overall
Impact of HRA on staffing levels and associated risks to service delivery – Additional pressures on staff in	4	4	16

appointments to deal with homelessness applications which make it difficult to keep up with casework, and associated impact on quality of advice. Housing options staff are much sought after – risk of losing staff to other authorities			
Mitigation: Ensure processes are regularly reviewed to ensure work load is managed and staff are supported to deliver a good quality service. Provide staff training where needed to help staff be successful in their role	2	3	6
<b>Action Plan is too aspirational</b> – there is a lack of resources to accomplish all that is needed to support vulnerable individuals and families	4	4	16
Mitigation: Resources across the housing, health and care systems are stretched. The Action Plan will require on going partner engagement to define priorities and to coordinate resources (this to include external resources e.g. grant applications). The action plan will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis	2	2	4
<b>Escalating B&amp;B provision / costs</b> – attributable to an increase in the number of homeless applicants that are assisted under the HRA, and stretched capacity within Temporary Accommodation	4	4	16
Mitigation: Continue to use and develop homelessness prevention measures to avoid the need for B&B. Seek to expand capacity within TA	3	3	9
<b>Increase of ASB and crime on the streets</b> - due to the inability to reduce / prevent homelessness and rough sleeping	3	4	12
Mitigation: We have achieved success in this area recently, with the funding secured to develop the Rough Sleeper Initiative (Taunton). The adoption of this strategy will help support future funding bids to maintain such essential support networks	2	3	6
<b>Government funding:</b> Loss of Govt funding if we fail to meet targets	3	3	9
Mitigation: Ensure the correct processes are in place (including the management and monitoring of both Homefinder and the action plan attached to this strategy) to ensure we can evidence the requirements needed to access funding	1	2	3

<b>Reputation</b> – failure to have a strategy and clear processes on how we deal with homelessness and rough sleeping. Homeless decisions on applications would be invalid	4	5	20
<b>Mitigation:</b> Adopt the homelessness strategy and supporting action plan, and review in four years	2	2	4

## 4 Background and Full details of the Report

4.1 The 2002 Homelessness Act places a duty on Local Authorities to develop a homelessness and rough sleeper strategy and an obligation to renew it every five years. The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, introduced new measures for dealing with homelessness including:

- Increasing the length of time a housing authority should treat someone as threatened with Homelessness from 28 to 56 days
- The introduction of Personalised Housing Plans for clients to outline the circumstances of homelessness, the housing needs of the client, any support required to secure and sustain accommodation, steps that the client is required to take along with the steps the Local Authority is required to take to assist the client
- a new duty to prevent homelessness for all eligible households threatened with homelessness
- a new duty to relieve homelessness for all eligible homeless applicants
- a new duty on public services to notify a local authority if they come into contact with someone they think may be homeless or at risk of becoming homeless

4.2 The current interim strategy was developed by the four District Councils in Somerset and was adopted in 2018. Since the adoption of the Interim Strategy we have collectively conducted a Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Needs Assessment which has been used as the evidence base for the 'Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019 – 2023' as well as considering the new requirements of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

4.3 A Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Needs Assessment 2019 (Appendix 1) was carried out to assess the need within the county. This has been used to inform the new Somerset Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019-23 (Appendix 2). The strategy includes 6 priorities for 2019-23:

- Provision of adequate, affordable accommodation
- The provision and effective use of temporary accommodation
- Support the Government's commitment to combat rough sleeping
- Support prevention and early intervention

- Enable specific client groups to access suitable accommodation
  - Maintain strong working relationships across partnerships
- 4.4 The SH&RSS will be implemented by each district through the Homelessness Managers Group (HMG) who will be responsible for the day to day delivery of this strategy and actions contained within the action plan; including monitoring progress against actions and targets at the monthly HMG meetings. There will also be a link with the Somerset Strategic Housing officers Group (SSHG) who are responsible for the delivery plan for the Somerset Housing Strategy 2019-2023, so close links will be maintained between both groups to ensure we keep track of progress on actions overall.

## 5 Links to Corporate Strategy

- 5.1 These proposals relate directly to the Housing and Communities priority, and will help enable the delivery of a number of the supporting objectives:

3.0 Homes and Communities	
A district which offers a choice of good quality homes for our residents, whatever their age and income, in communities where support is available for those who need it	
3.1	Increase the number of affordable and social homes in our urban towns, rural and coastal communities; including those built by the Council.
3.3	Reduce anti-social behaviour through working with residents and our partners as well as tackle economic, social and health inequalities within the groups and communities that need extra support.
3.4	Work to end homelessness and rough sleeping in the District.
3.5	Engage with the voluntary sector in their mission to help support our communities

## 6 Finance / Resource Implications

- 6.1 There are no specific resources requested as part of agreeing the Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019-23, however there may be financial implications linked to the achievement of the action plan which will either be covered within existing budgets or come forward for funding as appropriate.
- 6.2 Risk: Housing Options (the delivery end of the homelessness and rough sleeper service) operate within a complex environment that is reliant on support services, private sector landlords, the voluntary and community sector etc. The action plan that supports the SH&RSS is critical in this context. Failure to support clients in their existing accommodation or to access suitable and affordable accommodation causes B&B costs to escalate.
- 6.3 Risk: There could also be the potential costs of legal challenges should internal protocols fail due to the set of review rights imposed by the Homelessness Reduction Act. There are financial implications if the Council is legally challenged due to its

decisions and there could be costs associated with any ombudsman enquiries as a result of procedural failures within the department.

## **7 Legal Implications**

- 7.1 It is a legal requirement in accordance to the Homelessness Act 2002 that Housing Authorities have in place a Homelessness Strategy based on a Homelessness Review (e.g. Appendix 1) within their district. This exercise should be carried out and the strategic documents reviewed at least every five years.
- 7.2 The current strategy has an end-date of December 2019. So we are currently working from an out of date strategy. Homelessness decisions can be challenged on the basis of an out of date strategy. However, this is rare. Also, the four districts have made good progress towards the adoption of the revised strategy, which will be material evidence in any challenge.
- 7.3 As per 6.3, there could also be the potential costs of legal challenges should internal protocols fail.

## **8 Climate and Sustainability Implications**

- 8.1 This strategy has no direct impact (positive or negative) on climate change / carbon emissions. Indirectly, there are implications for other service areas e.g. housing enabling and the provision of new build accommodation. There is a separate workstream looking at sustainable construction/energy efficiency of new build dwellings.
- 8.2 Adverse weather conditions (excessive heat or cold or precipitation) can have a significant and traumatic effect on vulnerable groups such as rough sleepers, enhancing vulnerability (and indeed a threat to life) and placing extra stress on services
- 8.3 The most extreme example of this was the flooding of the Somerset Levels in December 2013. Somerset, along with other areas in the country, experienced unusually heavy rainfall resulting in extensive flooding. Around 165 properties on the Somerset levels and moors were flooded to an average depth of 0.7m. Evacuation of homes began in early January 2014 and a major emergency was declared, with significant and extensive impact on council resources, including housing options who were on the front line of the response.

## **9 Safeguarding and/or Community Safety Implications**

- 9.1 The proposals will have a positive impact on safeguarding and community safety
- The strategy proposes enhanced / coordinated partnership activity around vulnerable people, along with more training for staff
  - The strategy supports enhanced / coordinated partnership activity in relation to rough sleepers. The Taunton Rough Sleeper Initiative has had a significant impact in both supporting this vulnerable group of people, as well as improving community safety within the town centre. The strategy and action plan supports the continuation of this work and will form the basis of further resourcing bids to Government and other fund holders.

## **10 Equality and Diversity Implications**

- 10.1 A comprehensive EIA is attached at Appendix 3. The EIA has directly influenced the development of priorities and activities within the SH&RSS.

## **11 Social Value Implications (if any)**

- 11.1 There are no direct Social Value implications. However, indirectly, we (districts and other partners such as the County Council) do commission services to support homeless and rough sleeping e.g. Pathways to Independence, Step Together etc.
- 11.2 Social Value considerations are built in to such strategic procurement activity
- 11.3 Locally, SWT is to reconsider its Social Value policy and objectives. A report will be presented to Members during Spring 2020. This, alongside a strategic review of our support to the voluntary sector, will naturally inform future commissioning intentions with the objective of delivering enhanced levels of Social Value.

## **12 Partnership Implications**

- 12.1 The response to homelessness and rough sleeping is embedded in strategic and local partnership activity, as noted throughout the strategy and supporting action plan

## **13 Health and Wellbeing Implications**

- 13.1 Vulnerable individuals and families can often present with a range of physical and/or mental health problems. Vulnerable people are more likely to be at risk of homelessness. Rough Sleepers often have significant physical and mental health problems, often compounded by addictive behaviours. The life expectancy of rough sleepers is mid-40s. Female rough sleepers are some of the most vulnerable people within our society.
- 13.2 The Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy embraces and promotes a partnership response that includes key agencies such as Public Health, the Clinical Commissioning Group, Somerset Hospitals and social care (children and adults). Health and care partners are the commissioners for many of the homelessness support services such as P2I, Positive Lives and Step Together.

## **14 Asset Management Implications**

- 14.1 None

## **15 Data Protection Implications**

- 15.1 No direct implications.

## **16 Consultation Implications**

- 16.1 Consultation and engagement has informed the development of the strategy and action plan. Please refer to section 4 of the Needs Assessment (Appendix 1). Consultation and engagement with partners will continue to inform the development of the action plan. This will be reviewed and monitored on a regular basis by the Homelessness Managers Group (HMG).

- **Scrutiny / Corporate Governance or Audit Committees – Yes**
- **Cabinet/Executive – Yes**
- **Full Council – Yes**

**Reporting Frequency:**    ☐ **Once only**                      ☐ **Ad-hoc**    ☐ **Quarterly**  
    ☐ **Twice-yearly**                      ☐ **Annually**

**List of Appendices (delete if not applicable)**

Appendix 1	Somerset Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Needs Assessment 2019
Appendix 2	Somerset Homelessness & Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019-2023
Appendix 3	Equalities Impact Assessment

**Contact Officers**

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# **Somerset Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019 to 2023 Draft December 2019**

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## Introduction

The 2002 Homelessness Act places a duty on Local Authorities to develop a homelessness and rough sleeper strategy and an obligation to renew it every five years. The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 brought significant changes, transforming service delivery to prevention focused services. New measures for dealing with homelessness were introduced including:

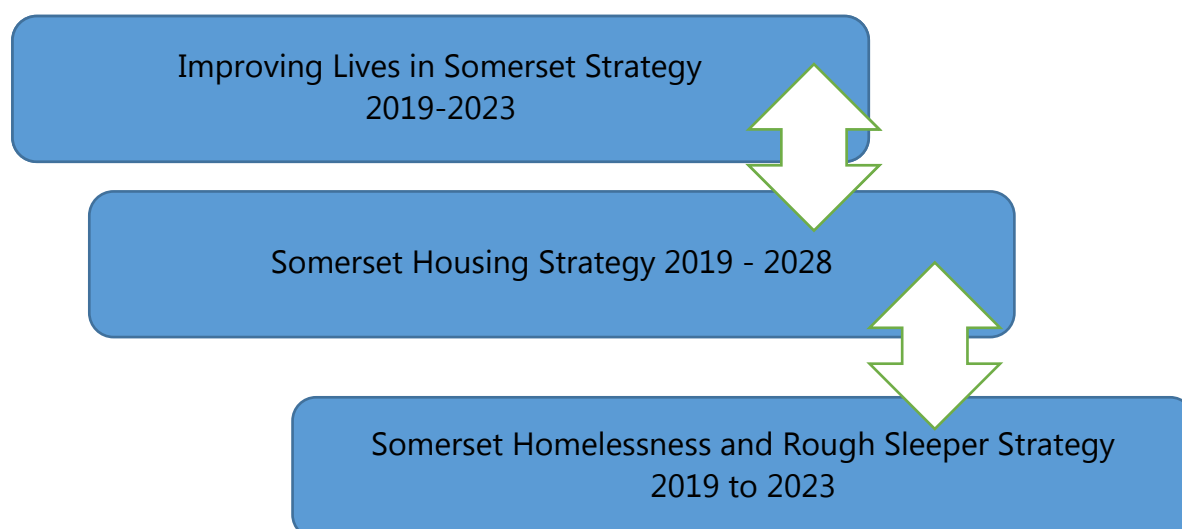
- Increasing the length of time a housing authority should treat someone as threatened with Homelessness from 28 to 56 days;
- The introduction of Personalised Housing Plans for clients to outline the circumstances of homelessness, the housing needs of the client, any support required to secure and sustain accommodation, steps that the client is required to take along with the steps the local authority is required to take to assist the client;
- A new duty to prevent homelessness for all eligible households threatened with homelessness;
- A new duty to relieve homelessness for all eligible homeless applicants;
- A new duty on public services to notify a local authority if they come into contact with someone they think may be homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

In 2018 the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) published its "Rough Sleeping Strategy" which set out the government's vision "to support every person who sleeps rough off the streets and into a home"; to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and ending it by 2027. It focuses on three key themes: Prevention; Intervention; and Recovery, aspirations which we also share.

The current interim strategy was developed by the four District Councils in Somerset and was adopted in 2018. Since the adoption of the Interim Strategy we have conducted a Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Needs Assessment which has been used as the evidence base for the "Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019 – 2023" We have also considered the impact of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and the need for continued service development to address emerging new priorities.

The delivery of this Strategy will be monitored by the Homeless Managers Group (HMG). A full review will be conducted in 2023 when a new needs assessment will be carried out to guide development of a refreshed strategy.

## How the strategy links with other strategies



In Somerset we have an overarching strategy, developed by the Somerset Health and Wellbeing Board “Improving Lives in Somerset Strategy 2019 - 2028”, which details the county vision which includes the following:

- A thriving and productive Somerset that is ambitious, confident and focused on improving people’s lives
- A county of resilient, well-connected and safe and strong communities working to reduce inequalities
- A county infrastructure that supports affordable housing, economic prosperity and sustainable public services
- A county and environment where all partners, private and voluntary sector, focus on improving the health and wellbeing of all our communities

The “Somerset Housing Strategy 2019 – 2023” was launched in March 2019, covers the whole county and sits beneath the “Improving lives Strategy in Somerset Strategy 2019 - 2028”. The Strategy sets out the following vision for the county:

- **Strong and effective strategic Leadership:**  
To deliver leadership across an integrated system that embraces communities, housing, health & wellbeing, social care and town & country planning
- **A local Economy that provides opportunity for all:**  
To increase housing supply across all tenures and maximise the proportion of affordable homes including within rural communities, to be constructed by a skilled local labour force

- **Homes in Somerset are good for your Health:**  
A healthy living environment with secure and decent homes that fosters independent living within strong communities
- **A Society that supports the vulnerable:**  
Coordinated support to individuals and communities to reduce the impact of Welfare Reform, to prevent homelessness, and to facilitate a balanced housing stock that meets the needs of all local people

The "Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019 – 2023" sits beneath the "Somerset Housing Strategy" and works to support the vision and priorities detailed in it. The "Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019 – 2023" details what we know, what we are doing and what we will do to continue to improve the service we provide.

### **Overview of Homelessness and Rough Sleeping in Mendip, Sedgemoor, South Somerset and Somerset West and Taunton**

A main homeless duty is owed where the authority is satisfied that an applicant is eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless and falls within a specified priority need group. Statutorily homeless households are referred to as 'acceptances'.

There were 478 application decisions taken in Somerset during 2018/19. Out of these 218 were owed a homelessness duty. The most common reason for initial contact throughout the county was the loss of an assured shorthold tenancy. The main reason for priority need was having dependent children, with the remaining factors covering the main criteria for a vulnerable individual.

Of the applicants owed a main duty, 58% were aged 25-44 years of age, followed by the 16-24 years of age group, who made up 25% of the applicants. The younger bias of those in need of support is very clear.

A total 1495 prevention and relief cases presented during 2018/19. Of this, 133 were assisted to remain in their accommodation and 516 were assisted into alternative accommodation under the prevention duty (there were also another 251 that were assisted under the prevention duty but we were unable to break this down further), whilst 589 were assisted to relieve their homelessness under the relief duty.

The use of temporary accommodation has been consistently low in Somerset over the last few years; we have accommodated 120 people, in such accommodation, as of quarter 4 (January to March 2019).

As a result of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (HRA) we are expecting demand for temporary accommodation to increase. This expectation stems from the fact that under this statutory provision we are obliged to help prevent an applicant becoming homeless, or relieve them of homelessness regardless of whether they are intentionally homeless. This requirement can mean that an applicant who is intentionally homeless will still need to be placed into temporary accommodation, if needed, whilst we try to relieve their homelessness during the 56 days 'relief duty'.

We are also seeing an increase in the volume of approaches and the length of time staff are working on an individual case. This increase in volumes can mean that often cases where an applicant is likely to be intentionally homeless now remain with the officer concerned, as part of their casework, until a final decision is made.

We currently have approximately 568 armed forces veterans in the county who neither own nor rent a property and who could potentially become homeless. Homeless veterans have been found on average to be older and more likely to have alcohol-related problems. In considering the needs of homeless veterans, directing them to specialist advice can be as important as meeting their accommodation needs.

Pathways to Independence (P2i) is the commissioned service that deals with youth housing in Somerset. The highest proportion of youths needing help during 2018/19 were aged between 18-21 years, with the main reason for presenting being the threat of homelessness.

Citizens Advice services remain key to supporting many of our clients – a significant proportion of whom have debt / budgeting support needs and require specialists who are trained to give advice to these individuals and in turn will support them in being financially stable moving forwards. The Local Authorities all support Citizens Advice services financially in our local areas to help prevent and relieve homelessness.

Positive Lives, which support adults with complex needs, supported 850 people during 2018. They provided other support too, such as helping 380 people to engage with education and training, 226 people to move into independent living and 47 people to gain employment.

We also saw the launch, in April 2019, of the 'Second Step' service funded by Somerset County Council which helps clients with complex needs to live fulfilling lives in their communities, thus retaining their tenancy and reducing repeated homelessness.

Gypsy and Travellers definition:

Excerpt definition of Gypsy and Travellers under the Housing Act 2004:

- *"Persons with a cultural tradition or nomadism or of living in a caravan and all other persons of a nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin"*

Excerpt definition of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation assessment (GTAA) 2007 was withdrawn in Dec 2016 and has not yet been replaced, however, the updated definition in the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites 2015 excerpt:

- *"persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin"*
- However, it no longer includes those who have *"ceased travelling permanently for any reason including old age or disability"* which is a departure from the previous definition which did include those who had ceased travelling either temporarily or permanently on the grounds of old age, ill health or educational needs.

Gypsies and Travellers require a different type of housing in that they require a pitch. A pitch should allow for a static van, a touring van and have a day room. There are a number of different Gypsy and Traveller groups in our county including English / Romany Gypsies, Irish Travellers, Showmen and Others. Gypsies and Travellers do travel by the nature of their culture, however they can become homeless or be at risk of homelessness where they are either asked to leave the pitch they are on or living on land that does not have permission for a Gypsy pitch or other situations such as domestic violence. Gypsy and Travellers are not homeless simply because they live in accommodation that is moveable or impermanent nor because they travel; however, like any household who needs advice and assistance they will be supported by the homeless service in line with the Homelessness Reduction Act.

Somerset does have a number of issues regarding Gypsy and Traveller sites, with work progressing to establish transit provision and temporary stopping places. Currently the Somerset planning policy officers are seeking an update of the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment which is due in the summer 2020. That will give both Housing officers and planning officers a better understanding of need for pitches in Somerset.

Rough sleeping within the county is currently a challenge in the Taunton area of Somerset West and Taunton Council, Sedgemoor and for Mendip District Council, but is at lower levels the South Somerset area. Living on the street is detrimental to mental and physical health and wellbeing. People sleeping rough develop chronic health problems and die younger and are more at risk from violence. Rough sleeping also has an impact on local residents and visitors. Any rough sleeping is a concern and we aim to find ways to alleviate, reduce and ultimately end all rough sleeping across the county. Mendip and Somerset West and Taunton District Councils have a comprehensive range of intensive interventions in place to tackle rough sleeping funded through the government Rough Sleeper Initiative funding.

In addition, there are a number of effective services already in place through existing district funding. All districts have a Severe Weather Protocol (SWEP) in place and across the County we provide a range of outreach, advice, support services and accommodation for single homeless/rough sleepers:

- Direct access beds
- Outreach
- Access to sheltered and single homeless supported accommodation
- Drop in support, advice centres and sessions in targeted locations
- Schools outreach programme to raise awareness about the risks and realities of homelessness and rough sleeping

### **Challenges and Gaps**

The Somerset Homeless Needs Assessment identified a number of areas of concern including:

- Population projections show that the population is due to grow faster than anticipated, especially in the former Taunton Deane area and in Sedgemoor. The challenge to deliver sufficient affordable homes and to support the tenure needs of our residents will become more pressing, not less
- The gap between the local housing allowance and market rent for private lets is a significant barrier in allowing applicants to secure a private rented property because they cannot secure financial support to make the home affordable. This can force people to make a difficult choice and move away from support, e.g. to move away from their family.
- Bringing empty properties back into use is always a challenge. There is value in exploring and sharing best practice to increase the numbers brought back into use
- When assessing what housing is needed in the county we need to ensure that adequate housing is provided which is suitable and available to help prevent youth homelessness.
- In particular we need to work with enablers to encourage increased numbers of single social rented accommodation units being brought forward on developments to meet the needs of the majority of people who are seeking single unit accommodation via Homefinder
- There is a need to recognise the need for smaller units rather than larger multi-occupancy dwellings, to allow single and couples and non-priority households the ability to access housing. Working with planners to reflect housing needs in what is built could support this need.



- Educating young people whilst they are at school about homelessness, to educate them with the aim of helping alleviate future youth homelessness, although funding will need to be considered to support this
- Whilst we have been successful with cases in preventing and relieving their homelessness, we continue to seek new ways to reduce the number of people approaching us needing temporary accommodation in crisis
- The Homeless Reduction Act 2017, brought in the need to produce a Personal Housing Plan (PHP) for clients. The consultation information identifies that further work is needed to in respect of PHP and the processes and systems needed to empower and enable customers to find solutions
- Work with veterans and their families to put in place any additional protocols that could be needed to signpost to support with other factors, such as PTSD, alcohol or mental health problems which can exacerbate the situation
- We have an ageing population in Somerset, especially 85 years and older group. The future needs of older people need to rise up the agenda and more energy given to understanding their requirements and future housing options.
- Rough sleeping is a concern for all and a challenge in much of the county, in particular, due to higher numbers and complexity of need. It will continue to demand sustained focus and resource with additional interventions, strategies and coordinated partnership working. It's likely that there rough sleeping which is 'unseen', which would include sleeping in vehicles and tents hidden in rural areas. It is important that we also ensure we address reconnections robustly and swiftly.
- Feedback from the consultation events about key issues expressed the need for more suitable, affordable sustainable accommodation. To achieve this there needs to be:
  - A continued need for increased collaborative working with partnership agencies where homelessness is an issue or risk, especially to support the vulnerable and those with complex needs. Resources are limited and in many cases, different agencies hold a different part of the jigsaw
  - Continued intervention where possible to help clients to remain in their existing homes to aid the prevention of homelessness. It is well recognised that homelessness costs individuals in terms of their mental and physical health as well as the cost to their finances and local service resources
  - A review of relevant county-wide and local strategies, policies and practices to ensure they support homelessness prevention and fair access to social and affordable housing and do not discriminate against those most in need

- Consultation also highlighted concerns about vulnerable individuals with complex needs who find it hard to engage, access, navigate services and sustain accommodation without specialist support. Those with complex needs can be a concern for those with lower needs, when placed together. This necessitates a review of gaps in service provision and the identification of alternative accommodation options (e.g. housing first initiatives) alongside necessary resourcing

### Priorities

It is clear from above that there are a lot of challenges to be tackled either through this strategy and actions or through the role of influencer with the wider Somerset Strategic Housing Group (SSHG). A good example of this is affordable housing. It is clear from the needs assessment that demand is greater than supply, particularly for social housing. Whilst the Homeless Managers Group can acknowledge this as a fundamental issue, their role is to influence SSHG to support the continued supply of affordable housing across the County.

No single organisation has the resources, skills or solutions needed to tackle all aspects of homelessness effectively on their own. We recognise that partnerships are integral to successful prevention and relief of homelessness and reduction in rough sleeping. Therefore, partnership working will play a large part in delivery of all priorities.

Since the adoption of the Interim Homelessness Strategy we have seen the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) in April 2018. A priority for the new strategy will be to track and respond to the impacts of the Act over the term of the new strategy.

The priorities are

1. Provision of adequate affordable accommodation
2. The provision and effective use of temporary accommodation
3. Support the Government's commitment to combat rough sleeping
4. Support prevention and early intervention
5. Enable specific client groups to access suitable accommodation
6. Maintain strong working relationships across the partnerships

In the table below we have identified, using the needs assessment, some of the reasoning behind the identification of the priorities.

Priority	Why it is a priority
Provision of adequate, affordable housing stock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is a widening affordability gap</li> <li>- Population projections to 2041 show an average of 11% increase in population across the county with Taunton Deane area and Sedgemoor seeing the highest increases</li> <li>- There are over 2000 empty properties in the county and there is therefore an opportunity to bring properties back into use</li> <li>- Housing needs to be adequate and meet the needs of those needing help, for example, single units for single people and couples</li> </ul>
The provision and effective use of temporary accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The relief duty requires housing authorities to help those that are homeless to secure accommodation</li> <li>- The duty lasts 56 days, during which time reasonable steps must be taken by the housing authority and the applicant to secure accommodation</li> <li>- We recognise that temporary accommodation is not ideal and does not fit with individual/family's housing and wider social and economic needs in relation to work, school, and support networks. It is not a long term solution and it is essential that clients are enabled to find more suitable settled accommodation as early as possible.</li> <li>- The steps that need to be taken are set out in Personal Housing Plans (PHP) are critical to minimising reliance on and time spent in temporary accommodation. We need to recognise that further work is needed with PHP to ensure that we empower and enable people to take responsibility for their own housing needs as much as we need to support them</li> <li>- There is a need to find new ways to reduce the number of people approaching needing temporary accommodation</li> <li>- We need to recognise the need for temporary accommodation to meet the needs of our clients, for example disabled clients needing accessible accommodation</li> </ul>

Priority	Why it is a priority
Support the Government's commitment to combat rough sleeping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All districts are committed to support the MHCLG commitment to combat rough sleeping</li> <li>- Mendip and Taunton Deane are leading the way in the work that can be done to combat rough sleeping, with a range of approaches being used</li> <li>- Recognition that some rough sleepers could well be former members of the Armed Forces and that their needs could be more complex and therefore there is a need to work to develop any additional protocols to signpost to the support available to the forces community such as Veterans Gateway</li> <li>- We need to have robust and timely reconnection policies and practices</li> <li>- Work to ensure there is effective and adequate emergency accommodation for rough sleepers especially during severe weather</li> <li>- Enhance our cold weather provision to engage rough sleepers who are otherwise hard to reach</li> <li>- Try to gain an understanding of the root causes of homelessness and non-engagement</li> <li>- Developing policies to support prevention, intervention and recovery for rough sleepers</li> </ul>
Support prevention and early intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is a need through policy and legislative agendas to prevent homelessness, looking to improve the range of options, support and tools that can assist an individual to remain in their accommodation</li> <li>- There has been an increase of incidences of clients being given notice to quit – there is a need to understand why this is happening</li> <li>- The Homeless Reduction Act 2017 details the 'prevention duty' which places a duty the councils to make available for all who are at risk of becoming homeless, not just those that are in a 'priority need' The duty last 56 days</li> </ul>

Priority	Why it is a priority
Enable specific client groups to access suitable accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- It is not always possible for a client to remain in their current accommodation so where a move cannot be avoided, there is a need to support and empower them to access suitable accommodation that is affordable</li> <li>- There is a need to influence housing providers to deliver suitable accommodation that is affordable and meets local needs</li> <li>- We have an ageing population, especially 85 years and over – the future needs of older people need to rise up the agenda and time taken to understand their requirements and future housing options</li> <li>- There is a need to recognise the differing needs of a wider range of clients requiring support including young people, Gypsy and Travellers</li> </ul>
Maintain strong working relationships across the partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The strategy cannot be delivered in isolation</li> <li>- There is a need to recognise effective partnership working and the benefits that can bring including sharing best practice, effective use of resources and delivery of cost savings</li> <li>- There is a need to ensure that there are effective accessible pathways to empower vulnerable individuals and those with complex needs such as P2i, Positive Lives and Step Together</li> </ul>

### How will we be measured?

The Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019 to 2023 will be implemented by each district through the Homeless Managers Group (HMG) who will be responsible for the day to day delivery of this strategy and actions contained within the action plan. HMG will monitor progress against the actions and targets at the monthly HMG meetings.

HMG will maintain close links with the Somerset Strategic Housing Officers Group who are responsible for the delivery of the Somerset Housing Strategy 2019 to 2023, in order that progress on all actions be tracked.

Each district will also have their own additional measures in place to monitor the progress of the actions relating to their district as well as performance monitoring which covers areas such as

1. Number of households helped
2. Number of households in temporary accommodation
3. Average number of nights in bed and breakfast

These measures are normally reported on a quarterly basis so, can be evaluated at each quarter to assess if there is anything that needs to be looked at in more detail or actioned in addition to the action plan itself.

## Action Plan

The following actions have been developed in response to the priorities identified, with each priority having a series of actions that have been identified. They are county-wide as a whole, although where an action is connected to a specific organisation this will be detailed.

The actions are categorised into the following Roles:

1. **Enable** – these 7 actions which HMG will enable
2. **Support** – these 5 actions where the role of the council is to support
3. **Deliver** – these 17 can be delivered directly by HMG

Each action is linked to the 6 priorities – (some actions meet multiple priorities), as a reminder the priorities are as follows:

PRIORITY 1 – Provision of adequate, affordable housing stock

PRIORITY 2 – The provision and effective use of temporary accommodation

PRIORITY 3 - Support the Government's commitment to combat Rough Sleeping

PRIORITY 4 - Support prevention and early intervention

PRIORITY 5 – Enable specific client groups to access suitable accommodation

PRIORITY 6 - Maintain strong working relationships across the partnerships

<b>Role: Enable</b>						
<b>Action ref no.</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Review date</b>	<b>Links to Priority</b>
1.1	Strengthen our relationships with registered providers and developers to increase the amount of new affordable rented and social housing provided within the county whilst maximising in particular the provision of 1 bed affordable social rented housing accommodation. (Links to action 1.6)	Ongoing	Enabling Teams & SSHG	Evidence that we have tried to influence development programmes to include increased volume of affordable and social housing  Development programmes take into account identified local needs  Innovative solutions are given consideration	Dec 2020 and annually	Priority 1 & 6
1.2	Share best practice to bring more private sector properties back into use to increase our success rate	October 2020	Empty homes officers/ private sector / housing standards team	Positive local case studies and best practice shared between LA teams	March 2021 & annually	Priority 1 & 4
1.3	Review the effectiveness of bond schemes to ensure they support access to the private rented sector	February 2021	HMG	Aim to increase the take up of bond schemes in private sector lettings  Annual statistical report on take up of bond schemes in PRS access for homelessness applicants to monitor effectiveness of private rental access.	March 2021	Priority 1, 4, 5 & 6



<b>Role:</b> Enable						
<b>Action ref no.</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Review date</b>	<b>Links to Priority</b>
1.4	Empower clients through proactive case work and the effective use of the PHPs to manage expectations about the reality of available housing and find early solutions to their housing need and minimise time in temporary accommodation (links to actions 1.7 and 3.10)	Ongoing  March 2021	Districts to commission independent review	<p>Clients are increasingly proactive in taking steps to gain access to suitable accommodation and officers are proactively chasing and reviewing client actions.</p> <p>A focus on income maximisation to manage arrears and debts and encourage clients to start saving</p> <p>Officers are proactive in encouraging clients to take the steps in PHP and where clients do not are officers following legislation to end duties (e.g. non co-operation)</p> <p>Proactive timely actions by clients will result in reduced length of time in TA analysed by household type, need and age</p>	April 2022	Priority 2, 4, 5

<b>Role: Enable</b>						
<b>Action ref no.</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Review date</b>	<b>Links to Priority</b>
1.5	Work with partner organisations to ensure there are viable accommodation options and effective housing pathways to help new and longer term rough sleepers	Ongoing	HMG	Reviews with partners aimed at improving access to suitable accommodation  More rough sleepers accessing and sustaining accommodation	October 2022	Priority 3, 5 & 6
1.6	It is essential that local strategies, policies and practices support homeless prevention and relief and are inclusive of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged clients. It is critical that they also support rapid throughput and early exit from temporary accommodation  Review the Common Lettings Policy and its implementation by Registered providers, referring any issues back to Homefinder Monitoring Board for action.	September 2020 and annually	Homefinder Somerset Co-ordinator & Homefinder Monitoring Board	Relevant policies reviewed and updated to meet this objective including the "4 week" rule element of the policy.  Allocations do not exclude or discriminate against any groups in relation to vulnerability and protected characteristics  Undertake a review of skipping reasons initially with homeless prevention / relief clients to assess any areas for improvement / training  Findings reported to the monitoring board.	December 2022	Priority 1, 2, 4, 5 & 6

<b>Role: Enable</b>						
<b>Action ref no.</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Review date</b>	<b>Links to Priority</b>
- 1.6	Contribute to county-wide discussion of need to review the Somerset Tenancy Strategy and any subsequent in house or commissioning of independent review of the Tenancy strategy (links to actions 1.1 & 2.1)	September 2022	SSHG / Enabling teams (Homefinder Somerset Co-ordinator/ HMG/)	HMG participation in relevant activities to Tenancy Strategy Review such as discussions, scoping, commissioning of review, involvement or input into project	December 2022	(As above)
1.7	Review Housing Options Teams' practice and processes to ensure efficient, effective and high quality including: -Quality/ timeliness of advice -PHPs tailored to clients' needs -Proactive and timely casework triage process to ensure clients presenting to other agencies can easily be referred to avoid duplication -Explore systems in place with partners to improve the client journey & reduce the number of duplicated contacts/ assessments (links to 1.4 & 3.10)	March 2021	Districts to commission independent review	Independent Review commissioned.  Process improvements identified and in place  Best practice in PHPs and general identified and shared across HMG  Learning put into practice and shared through HMG  Improved effectiveness of information sharing and protocols  Discussions with partners to explore streamlining duplicate processes	May 2022	Priority 4 & 6

Role: Support						
Action ref no.	Action	Timescale	Responsibility	Measure	Review date	Links to Priority
2.1	<p>Work with P2i to look at the types of accommodation that are needed for dealing with youth homelessness and where these dwellings would be best located.</p> <p>Link to review of Homefinder Common lettings policy to ensure it supports timely move on (links to action 1.6 and also 1.1 in. terms of influencing enablers and developers to deliver shared and 1 bed accommodation and consider innovative accommodation)</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>September 2020 &amp; annually</p>	<p>HMG / P2i board</p> <p>Homefinder Somerset Co-ordinator &amp; Homefinder Monitoring Board</p>	<p>Continually monitor the effectiveness of P2i for homeless clients in conjunction with the Homefinder policy including:</p> <p>Analysis of feedback from clients</p> <p>Numbers of successful move-on from P2i accommodation within 9 months of P2i tenancy start date.</p> <p>Monitor success of move on from P2i accommodation, accommodation type and length of time to move on from "ready to move on date"</p>	<p>September 2021</p> <p>December 2022</p>	<p>Priority 1, 4, 5 &amp; 6</p>

<b>Role:</b> Support						
<b>Action ref no.</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Review date</b>	<b>Links to Priority</b>
2.2	Monitor the impact of Hinkley Point C (HPC) development on the private rented sector and housing markets, making links to any changes to homelessness being reported, especially as peak construction is approaching	Ongoing	SDC/ SWT/ HMG	<p>SDC and SWT to monitor rental and house price data and availability and, as far as we able, displacement of the local population.</p> <p>Evidence of mitigating actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Deliver small family and single persons accommodation through empty homes activity, lodgings and enabling schemes</li> <li>-Target schemes for move-on from Temporary Accommodation</li> <li>-Support local landlords through the use of bonds, rent-in-advance, landlord and tenant accreditation schemes, to prevent displacement</li> <li>-Safeguard tenancies through work with HMRC and DWP around inflated rents for Hinkley workers and non-declared tax</li> </ul>	September 2020 and annually until 2022	Priority 1 & 6

Role: Support						
Action ref no.	Action	Timescale	Responsibility	Measure	Review date	Links to Priority
2.3	<p>Identify support schemes across the county and work in partnership with providers and other key support agencies to ensure the most vulnerable and complex needs clients can</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-access suitable accommodation effectively</li> <li>- sustain accommodation</li> <li>- respond quickly to escalation of support needs and risks which in turn could lead to tenancy failure</li> </ul>	July 2020	HMG	<p>Improved timescales and customer journey to access suitable accommodation</p> <p>Support schemes are utilised appropriately to enable access</p> <p>Statutory agencies and provider organisations have clear effective information sharing and joint working protocols to enable individuals with complex needs to access, settle into <u>and</u> sustain accommodation, with fast track support escalation processes in place to prevent failure once support has reduced/ended</p>	July 2021	Priority 3, 4, 5 & 6
2.4	Explore funding opportunities where they don't exist to enable young people to be educated in school regarding homelessness to try and help alleviate youth homelessness	July 2021	HMG	Districts to consider funding opportunities where "schools" work is currently not funded.	July 2021	Priority 3, 4, 5 & 6

<b>Role: Support</b>						
<b>Action ref no.</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Review date</b>	<b>Links to Priority</b>
2.5	Work with DWP to increase advice and opportunities to our customers to maximise income and skills	September 2020	HMG	Explore opportunities to build links with DWP to train and support our staff on options available to customers to maximise their income / skills	September 2021	Priority 4, 5 & 6

<b>Role: Deliver</b>						
<b>Action Ref no.</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Review date</b>	<b>Links to Priority</b>
3.1	Look at the vacancies that have arisen on Homefinder for social housing supported accommodation for older people which have been difficult to let to try and establish the reasons why and look at what is needed to ensure that this accommodation is desirable to older persons	June 2021	Homefinder co-ordinator	Statistical Homefinder Somerset report reviewed by HMG  Evidence of work with landlords to establish reasons for hard to let sheltered properties and potential solutions	December 2021 and 2022	Priority 1, 5 & 6

<b>Role:</b> Deliver						
<b>Action Ref no.</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Review date</b>	<b>Links to Priority</b>
3.2	Regularly review local provision of temporary accommodation to ensure it has capacity to meet demand and needs in terms of size and accessibility	December 2020 and annually	Districts	Statistical review of demand compared to provision including household needs and size/flexibility of provision  Where relevant, plans in place with accommodation providers to address gaps	March 2022	Priority 2 & 6
3.3	Continue to monitor the extent of rough sleeping at a frequency appropriate to local need, daily if required, so that swift action can be taken when new rough sleepers are identified	Ongoing	HMG/ Districts	Systems in place to monitor numbers and respond to new rough sleepers at a frequency relevant to each district's needs  HMG to review statistics quarterly	December 2020 and annually	Priority 3
3.4	Where appropriate review and share reconnection success & best practice in order to strengthen reconnection policy and practice	September 2020	Districts/HMG	Local practices reviewed and improved in light of identified successful reconnections across districts	December 2020	Priority 3



<b>Role:</b> Deliver						
<b>Action Ref no.</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Review date</b>	<b>Links to Priority</b>
3.6	Identify organisations and groups inadvertently sustaining rough sleeping and begging. Help them to understand the issues and work together to create a consistent approach	October 2020	Districts	<p>Range of communications with organisations which helps their understanding of the issues and the approach of services tackling rough sleeping.</p> <p>Where possible and relevant, seek opportunities for working together with key services identified and consider countywide diverted giving scheme.</p>	March 2021	Priority 3 & 6
3.7	Review opportunities presented through severe weather provision to engage rough sleepers who are reluctant to accept services	Ongoing and seasonal	Districts	<p>Agreed partnership approach in advance of cold weather to engage and support all individuals</p> <p>Increased engagement of rough sleepers as a result of SWEP contact</p>	April 2021	Priority 3 & 6

<b>Role:</b> Deliver						
<b>Action Ref no.</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Review date</b>	<b>Links to Priority</b>
3.8	Continuously monitor, review and develop our existing rough sleeper interventions to optimise their effectiveness	Ongoing	Districts	Evidence of regular review of what works to develop our local approaches  Statistics and feedback demonstrate positive impact of interventions	April 2022	Priority 3 & 6
3.9	Ensure practice focuses on prevention, early intervention/reconnection and recovery for rough sleepers	December 2020 and annually	Districts	Local practices reviewed in light of national and local rough sleeper strategy priorities	April 2022	Priority 3 & 6
3.10	Making use of intelligence from HCLIC data, identify what works well and the extent to which teams prioritise early intervention homelessness prevention to get the best outcomes (links to actions 1.7 & 1.4)	Ongoing  March 2021	Districts to commission independent review	Quarterly casework and statistical reviews  Independent review of services is commissioned in each district  Quality of casework & outcomes achieved.	May 2022	Priority 4

<b>Role:</b> Deliver						
<b>Action Ref no.</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Review date</b>	<b>Links to Priority</b>
3.11	Review collection and analysis of information from applicants and landlords on reasons for the issue of notice to quits, to inform how we can help the landlords to prevent evictions and to keep the properties in the private rented market in the future	December 2020	Districts & Private sector housing teams	Consider engagement with landlords via district private sector housing forums to encourage early notification at prevention stage to help reduce notices and evictions from private sector housing tenancies  Monitor proportional reduction in number of evictions from PR Sector.	Review findings and undertake actions identified 2021/22	Priority 4 & 6
3.12	Monitor effectiveness of all homeless prevention initiatives and schemes and ensure we deliver 'value for money'.	March annually	Districts and HMG	Conduct annual review of funded service delivery partnerships and schemes, ensuring schemes offer VFM and are effectively preventing and relieving homelessness.  Continually share best practice between LAs.	March 2022	Priority 4 & 6

<b>Role: Deliver</b>						
<b>Action Ref no.</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Review date</b>	<b>Links to Priority</b>
3.13	Consider joint training opportunities for staff to upskill to continuously improve our service delivery including high quality Personal Housing Plans (PHP) and trauma informed practice at triage stage	September 2021	HMG	Range of joint training opportunities e.g. shadowing (across districts), good practice sharing workshop, tailored locally delivered training.	December 2021	Priority 3, 4, 6
3.14	Monitor the incidence of clients with mental health needs without dual diagnosis unable to access services due to their high needs. If there is evidence of unmet need in this respect, ask Somerset County Council commissioners to review provision to ensure they can meet identified local needs	End June 2020	HMG	Review of referrals made and outcomes feeding back to SCC commissioners via HMG.	October 2020	Priority 5 & 6
3.15	Review the demands & needs of armed forces veterans to enable us to consider how we continue to work with veterans and where they can be directed for additional support	December 2021	HMG	Review undertaken by HMG	April 2022	Priority 5

<b>Role:</b> Deliver						
<b>Action Ref no.</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Review date</b>	<b>Links to Priority</b>
3.16	Review the outcomes of the use of the hospital discharge worker in South Somerset and explore opportunities to roll out any best practice from this pilot	June 2021	HMG	Service outcomes and best practice reviewed	September 2022	Priority 4, 5 & 6
3.17	Review the outcomes of the use of a drug and alcohol worker in South Somerset and explore opportunities to roll out any best practice from this pilot	July 2021	HMG	Service outcomes and best practice reviewed	March 2022	Priority 4 & 5



# **Somerset Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Needs Assessment 2019**

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## Introduction

This document outlines the extent of homelessness and rough sleeping across Somerset at the level of a district authority. It takes into account the characteristics of those who find themselves homeless and the reasons for their homelessness. This assessment of need can be evaluated against existing provision and can assist in identifying gaps. Throughout this document, we will clarify the differences that arise within the county and understand these differences to assist in the development and delivery of plans that meet local need.

This information will inform the development of a new Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy for Somerset, accompanied by an action to overcome the issues and gaps identified in the needs assessment.

## The Somerset Districts

There are currently 4 districts in Somerset. In April 2019, Taunton Deane Borough Council and West Somerset Council, combined to form Somerset West and Taunton Council.

NB: For the purposes of this document some information from these councils will be considered separately if this is how the evidence is presented, based on the date the data/information is available at.

The districts and their boundaries are as follows:



## Population

The ONS release mid-year population data for the prior year in September/October every year. The population for each districts in 2018 is as follows:

**Table One: District size and population**

District	Population
Mendip	114,900
Sedgemoor	122,800
South Somerset	167,900
Taunton Deane	119,000
West Somerset	34,900
Total	559,500

*Source: ONS Mid-year population estimates 2018*

Geographically South Somerset is the largest of the districts as well as the highest population. West Somerset is the most rural district as it encompasses parts of Exmoor and the Quantocks, both of which have low population density.

Population projections give a good overview of expectations over future population size. The ONS released new population estimates projected to the year 2041 in May 2018. The projections are based in the 2016 mid-year estimates.

**Table Two: Population projections by district, 2016 to 2041**

	2016	2021	2026	2031	2036	2041	% change 16-41
Mendip	113,100	116,600	120,300	123,300	126,000	128,200	+12%
Sedgemoor	121,300	127,000	132,200	136,600	140,400	143,700	+16%
South Somerset	166,500	170,300	174,000	176,900	179,300	181,500	+8%
Taunton Deane	116,000	120,800	125,300	129,100	132,300	135,200	+14%
West Somerset	34,500	34,600	34,900	35,400	35,800	36,200	+5%

*Source: ONS population projections*

Between 2016 and 2041, Sedgemoor and Taunton Deane are projected to experience the highest growths in percentage terms, 16% and 14% respectively.

The population projections will impact in the need for additional affordable housing.

### Age range of the population in Somerset

The table below shows the number of people in each age bracket for the 4 district councils

**Table 3 – Population by age**

Age range	Mendip	Sedgemoor	South Somerset	Somerset West and Taunton	Total
Under 15	19,300	20,500	28,000	24,700	92,500
15 to 24	11,900	12,400	16,300	14,700	55,300
25 to 44	24,000	26,000	35,500	32,300	117,800
45 to 59	26,200	26,700	35,000	32,400	120,300
60 to 64	7,500	7,900	10,700	10,300	36,400
65 to 74	14,600	15,900	23,000	20,800	74,300
75+	11,600	13,300	19,100	18,700	62,700

*Source: ONS Mid-Year population estimates 2018*

Data relating to age can be helpful in explaining the differences that are seen in requests for specific types of accommodation, for example bungalows or assisted living accommodation. Across the County the 2 biggest age ranges are 25 to 44 and 45 to 59. Both South Somerset and Somerset West and Taunton show high numbers of people in the 75+ age group.

### Employment in Somerset

Overall about 82.3% of Somerset's residents aged 16-64 are economically active, compared to 78.9% in Great Britain.

**Table 4: Labour Market profile**

	Economically active – in employment Jul 18 to June 19	Economically inactive Jul 18 to June 19	Out of work benefits claimant count - October 2019
Mendip	59,500	9,800	1605
Sedgemoor	63,300	13,000	1970
South Somerset	81,700	16,400	1870
Somerset West and Taunton	73,800	17,000	1900

*Source: NOMIS Labour market profile July 2018 to June 2019*

Table 5 - Annual Gross Pay – median 2018/2019

District	Median 2018	Monthly average	Media 2019 (provisional)	Monthly average (provisional)
Mendip	£30,517	£2543.08	£29,201	£2433.41
Sedgemoor	£26,981	£2248.42	£27,468	£2289
South Somerset	£27,406	£2283.83	£29,213	£2434.42
Somerset West and Taunton	£25,832	£2152.67	£29,648	£2470.67

Source: ONS – people in work dataset – table 8

### Universal Credit

Universal Credit is the new single benefit payment that was introduced in 2013. It replaced income-based Job Seekers Allowance, income-related Employment and Support Allowance, Income Support, Child Tax Credits, Working Tax Credits and Housing Benefit. Whilst the introduction of a single benefit was significant, the other change was the introduction of claiming Universal Credit online and maintaining that claim online.

The initial phases of introduction saw new claims for benefit being made as Universal Credit in specific areas. This has since been rolled out across the country, with Somerset going to full service in 2017/2018. The transfer of current benefit claimants on the legacy benefits to Universal Credit has started and will continue over the next few years.

There has no doubt been teething troubles which such a large change and whilst there were concerns about rent arrears, debt and people managing their finances, reports from the Registered Providers within the area in 2019, have shown that a lot of these initial problems have been ironed out, and arrears remain at a level prior to the introduction.

Universal Credit statistics are based on statistics issued by local Job centres. Within Somerset there 6 job centres. However, Wells and Frome will probably cover areas outside of Somerset, the statistics below give a good understanding of the number of households claiming Universal Credit.

Table 6: Number of UC claims by job centre

Job Centre	Numbers claiming UC as at October 2019
Taunton	7396
Minehead	1498
Bridgwater	6538
Wells	3331
Yeovil	6625
Frome	2210

Source: UC Statistics October 2019

### Housing Market, demand and supply

The Somerset Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2016 (SHMA) , states ' A household is considered to be able to afford to buy a home if it costs less than four times the gross household income. It is assumed that a household would have a 10% deposit'.

Table 7 below, shows the ratio of lower quartile house prices to lower quartile gross annual (where available) residence-based earnings (residence-based earnings refer to the median or lower quartile earnings based on the area in which an individual lives, whereas workplace-based earnings refer to earnings based on the area in which the individual works) by local authority district since 2013.

The lower quartile is the value determined by putting all the house prices or earnings for a given area and year, in order of value, and then selecting the value of the house prices or earnings that fall three-quarters of the way down the list, such that 75% lie above and 25% lie below that value. These ratios are particularly useful for assessing housing affordability to indicate the entry level for first time buyers. Affordability ratios are calculated by dividing house prices by gross annual residence-based earnings (Source ONS)

Table 7 – House price to residence-based earnings ratio

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
<b>Mendip</b>	8.37	8.73	8.77	8.75	10.23
<b>Sedgemoor</b>	6.87	6.98	7.64	7.74	8.04
<b>South Somerset</b>	7.16	7.33	8.19	7.89	7.61
<b>Taunton Deane</b>	7.83	7.94	8.06	8.04	7.97
<b>West Somerset</b>	9.17	10.09	9.02	10.09	10.25
<b>South West</b>	7.78	8.03	8.27	8.50	8.75
<b>England</b>	6.57	6.91	7.11	7.16	7.26

The data in table 7 highlights that households would require more than 7.6 times their earnings to afford a home in Somerset, although there is a wide disparity in affordability across the Somerset districts. The highest ratio is in Mendip and West Somerset where in 2017 a household would have required more than 10 times their earnings to afford a home. Sedgemoor has also seen a sharp ratio increase.

This affordability is hindered further by the national employment shift to zero hour contracts rather than traditional employment contracts. This change can prove a barrier to accessing rented accommodation and in meeting any affordability tests of income and expenditure, thus obstructing the ability to become an owner-occupier. Mortgage lenders can be reluctant to lend against uncertain income stream. ONS figures show that in 2017, 16% of the UK workforce, aged 16 and over, were a zero hour's contract and in 2018, this rose to 16.4%.

The graph below shows how the lower quartile income in the area compared to the lower quartile house price over time since 2013. Taunton Deane is the only district to have maintained its ratio; in all other districts, the situation has been worsening, with house prices in the lower quartile typically being at best close to eight times earnings in the lowest quartile. This starkly illustrates the difficulty of housing affordability across Somerset when considered against the accepted standard for affordability (four times earnings)

Chart One: House prices to earnings

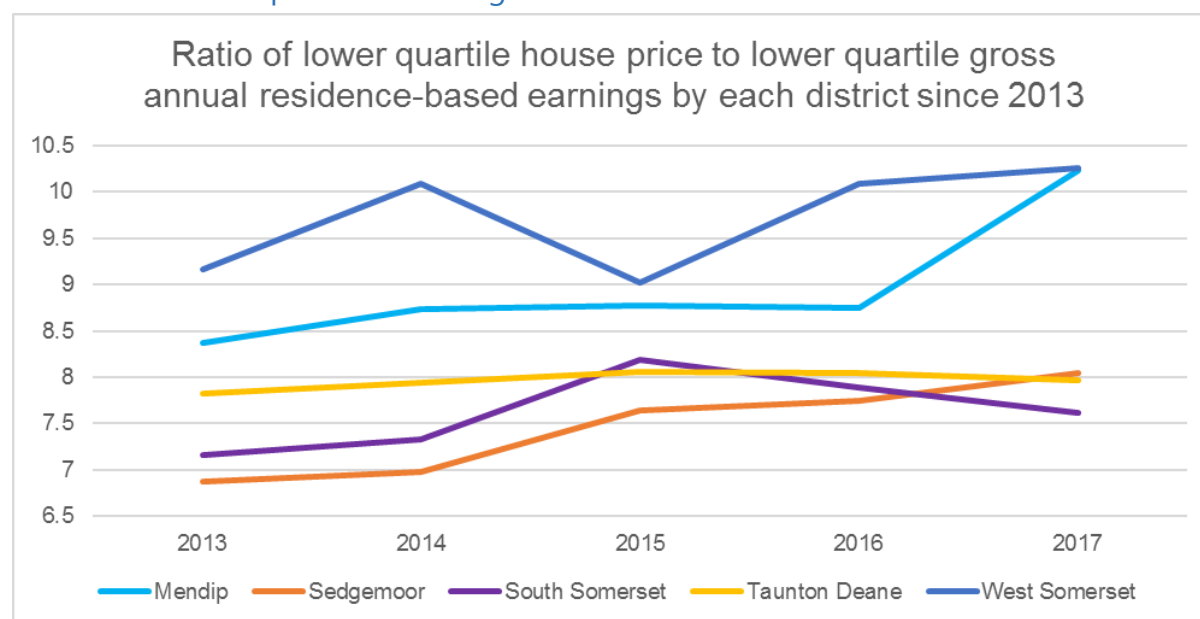


Table 8: Depicts the mean price paid for homes by local authority area

District	House Type	March 2015	March 2016	March 2017	March 2018	% difference in last 12 months
<b>Mendip</b>	Detached	370,165	359,622	419,599	419,056	-0.13%
	Semi Detached	211,331	221,067	244,488	260,846	6.69%
	Terraced	200,878	204,863	229,472	236,333	2.99%
	Flats/ Maisonettes	132,419	129,404	142,117	141,464	-0.46%
<b>Sedgemoor</b>	Detached	290,487	295,959	321,511	342,483	6.52%
	Semi Detached	177,000	194,351	204,238	215,171	5.35%
	Terraced	148,281	151,945	166,763	169,213	1.47%
	Flats/ Maisonettes	101,548	107,430	119,328	125,382	5.07%
<b>South Somerset</b>	Detached	310,574	324,102	345,141	367,622	6.51%
	Semi Detached	199,106	198,188	210,990	215,951	2.35%
	Terraced	165,312	171,053	183,227	186,697	1.89%
	Flats/ Maisonettes	108,275	109,226	110,009	118,113	7.37%
<b>Taunton Deane</b>	Detached	312,756	322,739	348,318	355,424	2.04%
	Semi Detached	200,648	209,542	213,849	232,881	8.90%
	Terraced	171,784	175,888	184,398	190,153	3.12%

District	House Type	March 2015	March 2016	March 2017	March 2018	% difference in last 12 months
	Flats/ Maisonettes	159,275	139,241	143,009	143,912	0.63%
<b>West Somerset</b>	Detached	318,137	315,281	336,123	361,327	7.50%
	Semi Detached	209,765	218,966	222,072	236,534	6.51%
	Terraced	172,906	182,168	177,088	195,998	10.68%
	Flats/ Maisonettes	159,970	128,097	133,442	130,037	-2.55%

Source: ONS

The evidence shown in the table demonstrates how the mean house price has changed over the last 4 years, moving house purchase further beyond the reach of many residents.

Table 9 – Private rental market statistics - 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019 for the districts in the South West

	Mendip £	Sedgemoor £	South Somerset £	Taunton Deane £	West Somerset £	South West £	England £
Room	357	412	368	433	-	413	411
Studio	400	400	375	375	410	500	668
One bed	495	460	450	485	495	584	731
Two bed	635	600	625	625	600	726	800
Three bed	800	750	750	768	700	883	916
Four or more beds	1200	995	1100	1100	965	1509	1611

Source: VOA Admin dataset as at 31/3/2019

In the majority of cases the district rent levels are below both the South West average and the England average.

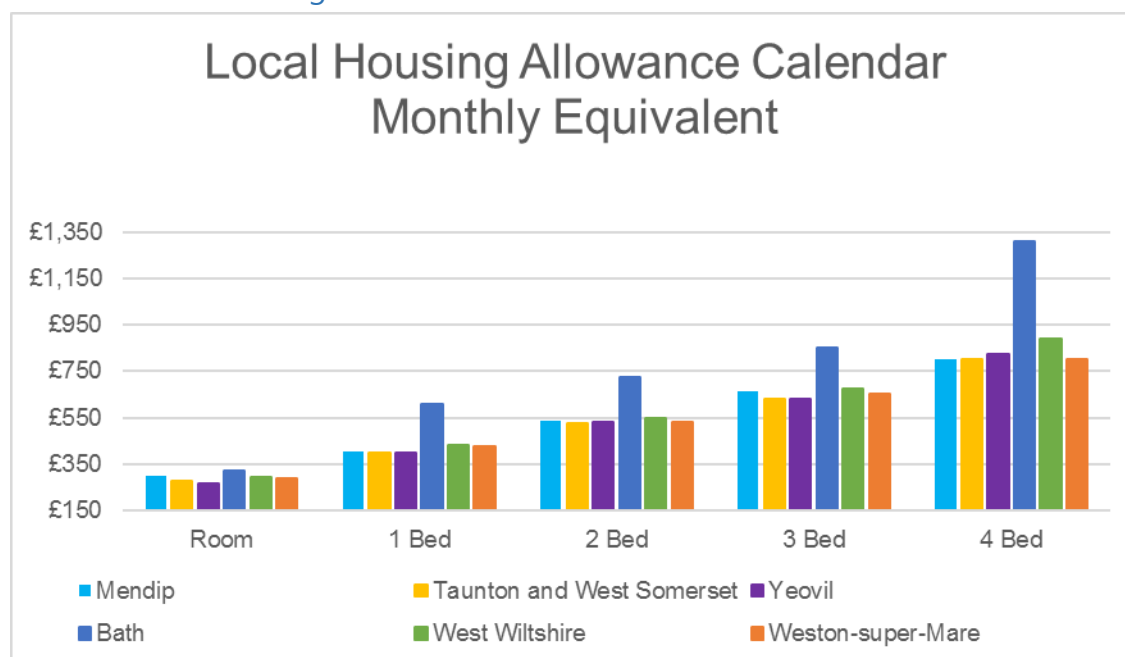
The figures in Table 7 and Table 8 indicate a widening gap in affordability to rent. A family renting a 3 bedroom house in the South Somerset area, would pay approximately 30% of their income would be taken up paying rent.



## Local Housing Allowance

The Local Housing Allowance (LHA) are the rates used to calculate housing benefit and the Housing Element of Universal Credit for tenants renting from private landlords. The LHA rates relate to the area in which you make your claim. These areas are called Broad Rental Market Areas (BRMA). A BRMA is where a person could reasonably be expected to live taking into account access to facilities and services.

Chart 2: Local Housing Allowance



The LHA boundaries do not mirror the district boundaries. Of the six BRMAs, Bath receives the highest LHA across all housing types. When comparing Yeovil, Mendip and Taunton Deane, it can be seen that Mendip has the highest LHA for all property sizes except 4-bed accommodation, where this is higher for Yeovil. Taunton Deane and Yeovil have very similar LHAs across all property types; however, Taunton Deane has a higher rate for rooms.

## Affordable Housing

The evidence suggests that there is a considerable gap in the affordability of homes either to purchase or to rent privately in Somerset (tables in this report demonstrate). This is due to low earnings relative to house prices and rental values. The need for affordable housing is evident.

Table 10: Estimated Annual Affordable Housing Need

	<b>Current need* (annualised)</b>	<b>Newly forming households</b>	<b>Existing households falling into need</b>	<b>Total need</b>	<b>Re-let supply</b>	<b>Net need</b>	<b>Net need % of Total need</b>
<b>Mendip</b>	17	351	191	559	319	240	43%
<b>Sedgemoor</b>	15	408	232	655	354	301	46%
<b>South Somerset</b>	20	466	379	865	659	206	24%
<b>Taunton Deane</b>	17	363	393	774	613	161	21%
<b>Somerset</b>	74	1665	1274	3013	2058	955	

Source: SHMA 2016

Table 10 above also included within the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2016, demonstrates the estimated annual need for affordable housing by location. There was no data available for West Somerset as they were not part of the SHMA. However, the need for West Somerset is shown as information has been taken from Homefinder Somerset.

Current need reflects the annual number of households already expressing a need for affordable housing and includes households without housing, concealed households. Concealed households are family units or single adults living within 'host' households.

Table 10a below details the gross need for intermediate and affordable/social rented housing taken from the SHMA 2016. The SHMA also mentions other factors that should be considered when looking at the table below such as the savings an applicant may have, access to a deposit and the supply of intermediate housing.

Table 10a: Gross need for Intermediate and affordable/social rented housing

<b>Component of need (all per annum)</b>	<b>Intermediate Housing</b>	<b>Affordable rented</b>	<b>Social rented</b>	<b>Total</b>
Current need	3	5	66	74
Newly forming households	234	244	1187	1665
Existing households falling into need	105	115	1054	1274
Total	342	364	2307	3013
Percentage of Total	11%	12%	77%	100%
Mendip	12%	14%	75%	100%
Sedgemoor	12%	13%	75%	100%
South Somerset	11%	10%	79%	100%
Taunton Deane	11%	13%	76%	100%

Source: SHMA 2016

The figures above show the suggested percentages of need for the different tenures provided as affordable housing. It is clear in all districts that the highest need is for social rented dwellings which account 70-80% of the need overall whilst intermediate housing and affordable rented housing account for 10-15% each.

### Homefinder Somerset

Homefinder Somerset is the countywide housing register for people needing social housing. Registered households are placed in four bands – Gold, Silver and Bronze plus a separate Emergency banding. The banding determines the urgency of their affordable Housing need.

Table 11: Households with active applications as at 6<sup>th</sup> December 2019

	No. of bedrooms needed						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
<b>Mendip</b>	<b>791</b>	<b>511</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,577</b>
Emergency	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
Gold	44	34	11	13	2	0	104
Silver	347	231	149	28	2	0	757
Bronze	398	246	60	10	0	0	714
<b>Sedgemoor</b>	<b>1,138</b>	<b>794</b>	<b>343</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2,376</b>
Emergency	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
Gold	77	42	24	12	7	2	164
Silver	313	319	178	59	0	0	869
Bronze	747	432	141	21	0	0	1,341
<b>Somerset West &amp; Taunton</b>	<b>2,148</b>	<b>1,215</b>	<b>528</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4,065</b>
Emergency	6	4	1	0	0	0	11
Gold	203	75	32	23	14	1	348
Silver	575	453	307	103	7	0	1,445
Bronze	1,364	683	188	25	1	0	2,261
<b>South Somerset</b>	<b>978</b>	<b>632</b>	<b>319</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2,025</b>
Emergency	1	1	1	0	0	0	3
Gold	97	49	27	13	6	2	194
Silver	258	207	170	64	3	0	702
Bronze	622	375	121	7	1	0	1,126
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,055</b>	<b>3,152</b>	<b>1,410</b>	<b>378</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>10,043</b>

Source: Homefinder Somerset




NB: The figures for Somerset West and Taunton Council (SWT) reflect that there is work to do to cleanse the information held on Homefinder, something they will do when the resources are in place to allow this to happen. Therefore the current figures suggest that SWT have a higher housing need than the other councils in Somerset.

The table above sets out the number of application on Homefinder Somerset as at December 2019. From this there are just over 10,000 householders registered in Homefinder. The majority are in the bronze category although there are 18 applications in the emergency banding. The figure for December and from the past suggests that there has been and remains strong demand, and that demand which outweighs supply.

Registered households are placed into four bands – Gold, Silver and Bronze plus a separate Emergency banding – to determine the urgency of their affordable housing need. Somerset West and Taunton has the highest level of households in gold band. There are currently (December 2019) 18 in emergency banding.

The banding criteria for each band are shown at Table 12. The Emergency Band is for those applicants that require an 'urgent' move to ensure their safety and welfare.

**Table 12: Banding criteria for Homefinder Somerset**

Gold Band – High need 	Silver Band – Medium Need 	Bronze Band – Low Need 
Homeless households who are owed a main homeless duty by a Homefinder Somerset partner authority.	Where the applicant lacks 1 bedroom in their current home.	Where an applicant is adequately housed.
Applicants who lack 2 or more bedrooms or have been confirmed as overcrowded by a Local Authority officer.	Applicants who can demonstrate a need to move for employment reasons or to give or receive support where significant harm would result if this was not provided.	Where applicants own their own property but whose home is not suitable for their needs but they have sufficient equity to address their housing needs.
Current supported housing residents or care leaving applicants who are assessed as ready to move on to independent living.	Where there is a medium medical need. Medium welfare need	Applicants with a low medical need. Applicants with a low welfare need.
High disrepair for people living in the private sector.	Medium disrepair for people living in the private sector.	Applicants living in short term supported housing, or are care leavers prior to being ready to move at which stage they will move up to the gold band.
High medical need High welfare need	Applicants with dependent children and are lodging with friends or family or in accommodation with shared living facilities.	Applicants with no dependent children and are lodging with friends or family or in accommodation with shared living facilities.
Applicants awarded a 'medium' medical priority, combined with 'medium' disrepair award from the silver band.	Other homeless (where Homefinder Somerset partners do not owe an applicant a full homeless duty).	Applicants are assessed as having adequate financial resources to address their housing needs.
Victim of harassment or violence at their current property within the Homefinder Somerset area.	Applicants of split families who not by choice are living separately.	Applicant has no housing need.
Applicant awarded 4 or more silver band housing needs with the exception of applicants found to be intentionally homeless.		Applicant has deliberately worsened their circumstances or made use of the under occupation band before, or has accepted an offer that doesn't meet their needs previously.
Social housing tenants whose homes are subject to major works for rebuilding/renovation or re-designation.		Applicants with low disrepair needs living in private sector rented property.
Where the Local Authority receives written support from a Homefinder Somerset landlord that an applicant has no legal right to succession and the landlord will pursue possession.		Applicants that have no local connection applying for extra care or sheltered properties.

## Affordable Housing

Affordable housing is best described as housing provided at prices below the prevailing market value for people who are unable to find a suitable home on the open market (primarily due to its price). Affordable housing can be provided on a rental or home ownership basis.

The SHMA 2016 set out the estimated size of dwellings needed for affordable housing 2014 to 2039 by Local Authority area

**Table 13: Estimated size of affordable dwellings needed 2014 to 2039**

	<b>One bedroom</b>	<b>Two bedrooms</b>	<b>Three + bedrooms</b>
<b>Mendip</b>	48.2%	31.5%	20.2%
<b>Sedgemoor</b>	43.3%	28.4%	28.3%
<b>South Somerset</b>	44.6%	37.3%	18.2%
<b>Taunton Deane</b>	47.5%	32.3%	20.2%

*Source: SHMA 2016*

Affordable housing is provided in a number of different ways as follows:

Affordable rented housing	Affordable rented homes are provided by the both the Council (where they still have their own housing stock) and Registered Providers (Housing Associations). For the rent to be classified as affordable, it must be no more than 80% of the market rent (including service charge)
Social rented housing	Social rented homes are provided the Council (where they still have their own housing stock) and Registered Providers (Housing Associations)
Shared ownership	Shared ownership properties can be both new and re-sale properties and are provided by Registered Providers (Housing Associations). With shared ownership you buy a proportion of the property and rent the other proportion. Over time you can increase the proportion that you own by buying additional percentages. Re-sales – these are properties that have already been bought through shared ownership in and the owners are now looking to sell their % share.

Table 14: Number of affordable homes delivered

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19*	Estimated Annual Affordable Housing Need
<b>Mendip</b>	120	38	189	100	240
<b>Sedgemoor</b>	98	147	65	130	301
<b>South Somerset</b>	128	48	86	122	206
<b>Taunton Deane</b>	222	284	92	218	161
<b>West Somerset</b>	21	40	21	3	47
<b>Total</b>	589	557	453	573	955

Source: Local Authority information

Although the number of affordable homes delivered has increased, the area is still around 40% short of what is needed, annually, in order to meet need.

### Empty Homes

Long term vacant dwellings mean 'dwellings which have been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for over 6 months'. In October 2018 there were just over 2000 long term vacant dwellings within the County, the highest proportion being within South Somerset.

Table 15: Number of long term vacant dwellings

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018*
<b>Mendip</b>	470	439	404	460	479	332
<b>Sedgemoor</b>	390	277	269	335	325	376
<b>South Somerset</b>	470	636	739	595	643	657
<b>Taunton Deane</b>	428	473	464	456	388	453
<b>West Somerset</b>	211	224	202	224	241	223
<b>Total</b>	1969	2049	2078	2070	2076	2041

Source: Local Authority data

All districts work within their Authority area to identify empty dwellings. They proactively work with the owners to understand the reasons the dwelling is empty to enable collaborative working with partners to help the owners access low cost loans and advice and guidance on repairs and leasing.

Sedgemoor has secured funding to develop empty properties through the Hinkley Point C development agreement. The project to bring empty homes back into use, works with Somerset Care and repair who lease the property from the owner, bring the property back in use and subsequently manage the property. The project has been phased as money has been released. To date phase one to three of the project has delivered 121 bed spaces against a target of 115 bed spaces.

Due to recent changes in legislation under the Local Government Finance Act 1992, local authorities now have the discretion to increase the council tax charges in empty dwellings. This is in addition to the existing 150% council tax on all dwellings that are empty for 2 years or more.

All districts either have already introduced increases in council tax charges for empty properties or are looking to do so in line with the new legislation. The charges range from a total of charge of 200% to 300% for dwellings vacant dwellings for longer periods. This will help the districts in their commitment to encouraging empty properties back into use.

In certain circumstances if a dwelling remains empty the relevant district can take enforcement action. This can be in the form of enforced sale, compulsory purchase order (CPO) or an empty dwelling management order (EDMO).

It is imperative that all districts monitor the benefit realisation of each targeted action to help inform future strategies.

## Homelessness in Mendip, Sedgemoor, South Somerset and Somerset West and Taunton

A **main homelessness duty** is owed where the authority is satisfied that an applicant is eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless and falls within a specified priority need group. Such statutory homeless households are referred to as 'acceptances'.

The MHCLG's Homelessness code of guidance for local authorities identifies the following categories of applicant as having a priority need for accommodation:

1. A pregnant woman or person with whom she resides or might reasonably be expected to reside
2. A person with whom dependent children reside or might reasonably be expected to reside
3. A person who is vulnerable as a result of old age, mental illness, learning disability or physical disability or other special reason, or with whom such a person resides or might reasonably be expected to reside
4. A person aged 16 or 17 who is not a 'relevant child' or a child in need to whom a local authority owes a duty under section 20 of the Children Act 1989
5. A person under 21 who was (but is no longer) looked after, accommodated or fostered between the ages of 16 and 18 (except a person who is a relevant student)
6. A person aged 21 or more who is vulnerable as a result of having been looked after, accommodated or fostered (except a person who is a 'relevant student')
7. A person who is vulnerable as a result of having been a member of Her Majesty's regular naval, military or air forces
8. A person who is vulnerable as a result of
  - a. Having served a custodial sentence
  - b. Having been committed for contempt of court, or any other kindred offence; or
  - c. Having been remanded in custody
9. A person who is vulnerable as a result of ceasing to occupy accommodation because of violence from another person or threats of violence from another person which are likely to be carried out
10. A person who is homeless, or threatened with homelessness, as a result of an emergency such as flood, fire or other disaster

Table below shows the outcome of homelessness applications by district for the year 2018/19



Table 16: Homelessness application decisions

	<b>Mendip</b>	<b>Sedgemoor</b>	<b>South Somerset</b>	<b>Somerset West and Taunton</b>
<b>Eligible, unintentionally homeless &amp; in priority need</b>	10	84	83	62
<b>Eligible, homeless, in priority need but intentionally Homeless</b>	4	7	9	0
<b>Eligible, homeless but not in priority need</b>	18	38	25	7
<b>Eligible but not homeless</b>	2	14	2	2
<b>Lost contact prior to assessment</b>	2	3	0	0
<b>Withdrew prior to assessment</b>	1	0	1	89
<b>Not Eligible for assistance</b>	0	1	4	10
<b>Total</b>	37	147	124	170

*Source: Local Authority data*

NB: When the Homeless Reduction Act was introduced in 2018 any approach, regarding homelessness, including those who approached via email and telephone, were recorded onto the system and taken through an initial triage. Out of the 1170 approaches, 89 either failed to continue to engage to enable an assessment to be carried out or did not meet the criteria to continue with an assessment (i.e. they were not homeless/threatened with homelessness or ineligible for assistance)

The top 5 reasons why an individual contacts the local authority with a threat of homelessness are set out in the table below.

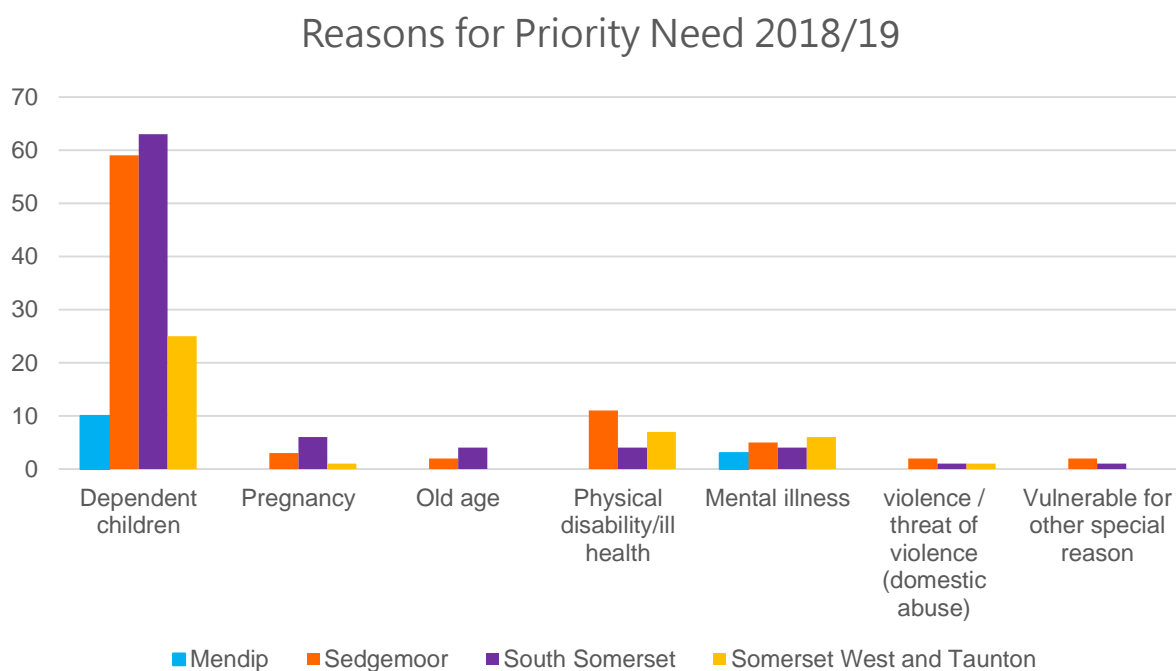
Table 17: Top 5 reasons for initial contact

Mendip	Sedgemoor	South Somerset	Somerset West and Taunton
<b>Loss of Assured Shorthold Tenancy</b>	Loss of Assured Shorthold Tenancy	Loss of Assured Shorthold Tenancy	Loss of Assured Shorthold Tenancy
<b>Family no longer able/ willing to accommodate</b>	Family no longer able/ willing to accommodate	Non- Violent breakdown of relationship	Family no longer able/willing to accommodate
<b>Non- Violent breakdown of relationship</b>	Non- Violent breakdown of relationship	Family no longer able/ willing to accommodate	Non- Violent breakdown of relationship
<b>Domestic abuse</b>	Domestic abuse	Domestic abuse	Rough Sleeping
<b>End of Social Rented Tenancy</b>	End of Social Rented Tenancy	End of Social Rented Tenancy	Domestic Abuse

Note: End of social rented tenancy would normally be because the tenant has failed to adhere to their tenancy agreement such as anti-social behaviour, failing to adequately maintain the dwelling or garden, or rent arrears.

The chart below shows the 'Applicant households found to be eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless and in priority need during the financial year 2018/19, by priority need category'

Chart 3: Reasons for priority need



As can be seen above having dependent children, is the main reason priority determined. The other reasons cover the main criteria for a 'vulnerable' individual.

58% of the applicants to whom we owe a main housing duty are aged 25-44, this compares with 20% incidence in the general population. 16-24 year olds follow, who make up 25% of the applicants, but only around 10% of the general population. This figure supports the work the councils in Somerset do through P2i which is a service designed to prevent youth homelessness.

Table 18 below shows the breakdown of homelessness duty by age, the information has been provided direct by each of the local authorities.

Table 18: Households accepted by LA as owed a main homelessness duty by age of applicant

<b>2018/19</b>	<b>16-24</b>	<b>25-44</b>	<b>45-59</b>	<b>60-64</b>	<b>65-74</b>	<b>75 &amp; above</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Mendip</b>	3	2	5	0	0	0	10
<b>Sedgemoor</b>	13	53	11	1	6	0	84
<b>South Somerset</b>	23	48	6	0	3	3	83
<b>Somerset West and Taunton</b>	7	27	6	0	0	1	41
<b>Total</b>	46	130	28	1	9	4	218

*Source: Local Authority data*

## Temporary accommodation

Temporary accommodation is offered if a person or family is already homeless and the council is considering a homeless application.

The table below shows the number of households accommodated in temporary accommodation within each District since 2014 as a snapshot in time on the last day of the end of quarter 4 (January to March) each year.

Table 19: Number of applicant households accommodated in temporary accommodation since 2014 as at 31<sup>st</sup> March each year (as a snapshot in time)

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
<b>Mendip</b>	19	5	7	6	3	8
<b>Sedgemoor</b>	9	17	23	23	32	37
<b>South Somerset</b>	34	36	31	37	39	35
<b>Taunton Deane</b>	34	31	34	18	23	37
<b>West Somerset</b>	6	6	2	3	9	3

### The Hinkley Point C Impact

The Hinkley Point C project, will see the construction of the new nuclear reactors on the West Somerset coast, next door to the current Hinkley Point B station currently in operation.

During the planning stages, the impact on housing was investigated and it was clear that there would be an impact, and therefore through the S106 agreement monies were allocated to increase bedspaces within the areas that were identified as being most affected by the build and the increase in workers.

Inevitably the housing picture has changed particular in Bridgwater and the villages closest to site. Changes include:

1. Increase in caravan sites where workers have been living in rented vans or where they bring their own
2. Increase in people buying to let and in some cases turning these properties into houses of multi occupation
3. Increases in rent, in some cases impacted in existing tenants
4. People renting out spare rooms to one or two workers

These changes have been offset by the S106 monies and the initiatives that have been put into place. As at November 2019, about 1400 extra bedspaces have been created within Bridgwater and the surrounding area to overcome the impact of the changes in the housing market.

## Homelessness Prevention & Relief

### Assessments and Personalised Housing Plans (PHPs)

Housing Authorities have a duty to carry out assessments (section 189A of the Housing Act 1996) in all cases where an eligible applicant is homeless or threatened with homelessness. This will identify what has caused the homelessness or threat of homelessness, the housing needs of the applicant and any support they need in order to be able to secure and retain accommodation. Following this assessment the housing authority must work with the person to develop a written *“personalised housing plan (PHP) which will include actions (or “reasonable steps”) to be taken by the authority and the applicant to try to prevent or relieve homelessness”*. The introduction of PHPs was as a result of the Homeless Reduction Act (HRA) 2017 which came into force from April 2018. This has increased the volume of work for Local Authority housing teams given that everyone applying for assistance from a housing authority stating they are homeless or threatened with homelessness will require an initial assessment where they are eligible and homeless / threatened with homelessness and provide written personalised housing plans for all.

Homelessness prevention means that we work with people to assist them to remain in their present home either permanently or temporarily whilst they secure alternative housing which in turn avoids homelessness. This could involve services such as debt advice, undertaking Tenancy Accreditation Scheme, rapid response service, Intensive tenancy support, rapid support carried out jointly by Citizens' Advice (CAB) and the Local Authority, mediation, floating support, deposit schemes, rough sleeper outreach for example.

Homelessness relief is where an authority has been unable to prevent homelessness, Section 189B of the Housing Act 1996 requires housing authorities *“to help people who are homeless to secure accommodation”* and applies when the housing authority is satisfied *“the applicant is both homeless and eligible for assistance”*. Where the LA has *“reason to believe the applicant may be eligible, homeless and in priority need they must also provide interim accommodation”* (temporary accommodation) whilst fulfilling the relief duty.

Ending the relief and prevention duty – the Local Authority can only bring to an end the prevention or relief duty in several specified ways (for more details please refer to the MHCLG Code of Guidance). In addition, the prevention duty will end where the applicant has become homeless and the relief duty will end when 56 days has passed and the housing authority is satisfied that the applicant has a priority need and is homeless unintentionally or on refusal of a final accommodation offer or Part 6 offer.

If prevention or relief were unsuccessful the applicant will be owed the Main Housing Duty to applicants who are eligible, have a priority need for accommodation and are homeless unintentionally. This is explained earlier at page 17.

Table 20: Successful homeless prevention and relief cases

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	% Change since 2012/13
<b>Mendip</b>	222	295	192	263	313	324	377	69.81%
<b>Sedgemoor</b>	483	797	1089	747	498	526	272	-43.6%
<b>South Somerset</b>	260	219	172	190	201	201	206	-20.76%
<b>Taunton Deane</b>	204	306	187	248	289	156	640	171.18%
<b>West Somerset</b>	32	97	46	85	94	68		

Source: Local Authority data

The number of homeless prevention and relief cases can be further broken down to allow analysis of how many households were assisted to remain in their accommodation, how many households were assisted to move to alternative accommodation and how many homeless cases were effectively relieved. The breakdown of these figures for 2018/19 is shown in Table 23 by district.

Table 21: Breakdown of homeless prevention and relief cases 2018/19

	<b>Prevention</b>		<b>Successful homelessness relief</b>	<b>Total</b>
	Assisted to remain in accommodation	Assisted into alternative accommodation		
<b>Mendip</b>	77	251	49	377
<b>Sedgemoor</b>	32	161	73	266
<b>South Somerset</b>	24	104	78	206
<b>Somerset West and Taunton</b>	251*		389	640

Source: Local Authority data

\*Breakdown unavailable

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 came into force on the 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2018. It was a big change for local authorities and since its introduction, the impacts have been:

1. There has been increased pressure from a range of sources, including
  - a. Increased pressure on resources, some council have taken on additional staff to deal with the additional workloads, this put pressure on them to find additional funds
  - b. Length of time a member of staff is working on a case as the applicant remains with the case officer longer due to the 56 days we must now keep them 'under relief' until the final decision is made or duties are discharged
  - c. Lack of accommodation and affordability
  - d. Landlords being more risk adverse
  - e. Increased number of applicants with complex needs making it challenging to rehouse
  - f. Burden to accommodate for longer in temporary accommodation during relief stage, e.g. intentionally homeless, now accommodate for 56 days before can make an intentionally homeless decision
2. Personal Housing plan production and monitoring, requiring additional staff time and resource
3. H-CLIC administration and process requirements have increased administration for officers (H-CLIC is the government statutory returns)
4. Incredibly challenging to recruit experienced, professional housing options officer staff – a challenge for all local authorities in the South West England (and further afield) meaning often Las are operating with vacancies or with inexperienced staff or have resorted to taking in costly temporary agency staff

### **Armed Forces Veterans and homelessness**

The Armed Forces Covenant is a pledge to ensure that we will do all we can to ensure that veterans are treated fairly and not disadvantaged in their day to day life. Somerset collectively signed the pledge in 2012 and has since that have formed the Somerset Armed Forces Covenant Partnership to ensure that the pledge is honoured and delivered upon.

In October 2017, the MOD produced figures based in data from the Office for National Statistics Annual Population Survey 2016. The study estimated that 75.64% of the veteran population in Great Britain own a house outright, or with a mortgage and 23.19% rent or part rent their property. This would therefore imply that 1.17% of veterans are potentially homeless.

MOD provides the numbers of current armed forces pension and compensation recipients at different geographic levels. It does not show those entitled to deferred pension payments (minimum eligibility criteria is 2 years of service). Data is separated into three main datasets:

- Armed Forces Pension Scheme (AFPS).
- War Pensions Scheme (WPS)
- Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS)

Table 23: Location of Armed Forces pension, war pension and compensation recipients 31/3/2019

	Veterans	AFPS	WPS	AFCS
Mendip	980	881	236	31
Sedgemoor	986	868	258	52
South Somerset	3334	3025	686	292
Taunton Deane	1270	1044	352	235
West Somerset	333	289	92	18
Total	6903	6107	1629	628

The vulnerabilities and support needs of homeless ex-Service personnel are, overall, very similar in nature to those of other non-statutory homeless people, but a greater proportion of ex-Service personnel have alcohol, physical and/or mental health problems.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) has been found among a small number of homeless veterans although other non-military related mental health problems were more common.

A 2013 study conducted by York University (commissioned by the Centre for Housing Policy) identified several key reasons why veterans experience housing difficulties. These include:

- A shortage of affordable accommodation
- Problems sustaining a tenancy
- Relationship breakdown
- Inadequate transition planning from the Armed Forces

Other factors that may contribute to homelessness amongst single veterans include their experience of service, e.g. unfamiliarity with civilian life (e.g. housing market, the welfare system and budgeting) making it difficult for them to secure housing and to manage tenancies.



Homeless veterans have also been found on average to be older, have slept rough for longer, be less likely to use drugs and more likely to have alcohol-related problems.

In considering the needs of homeless veterans, addressing the wider and contributory factors through informed advice and referral to specialist military support services can be, therefore, as important as the meeting the accommodation needs.

The Royal British Legion is currently supporting a campaign 'No Homeless Veteran' to raise the profile of veterans who are currently homeless.

### **Youth Housing in Somerset**

Pathways to Independence (P2i) is a commissioned service, by the county council, supported by district councils, that deals with youth housing in Somerset.

Somerset County Council and the four districts across Somerset commissioned the setting up of the Pathways to Independence (P2i), during 2012/13 as a response to the escalating issues around youth housing in Somerset. P2i was launched in May 2013 and is the multi-agency homelessness prevention service for young people aged 16 to 25 who reside in, or have a local connection to the Somerset area.

Primarily, the service was designed to prevent homelessness by providing targeted prevention measures. If prevention was not possible the service allows young people with housing related support needs to progress along a pathway of outcome focused needs led provision, until they are able to sustain independent living without the need for support.

Whilst P2i has achieved its objectives and has provided a good service over the past three years there are some key areas of service delivery that were not considered as part of the original specification and as a result have arisen in gaps in provision for some of the most vulnerable young people. To understand these identified gaps, a comprehensive needs analysis was undertaken and informed the new specification which was launched on the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2017. For example there is a need for smaller properties rather than larger multi occupancy dwellings such as a Foyer provision. The current contract is due to end in September 2021 and aims to create an outcomes focussed service.

Table 24 shows the age demographic of P2i for all districts, it shows that the largest proportion of individuals are aged 18-21.

Table 24: P2i age demographics as of 28<sup>th</sup> March 2019

	16/17	18/21	22 and over
<b>Mendip</b>	4	30	5
<b>Sedgemoor</b>	10	19	9
<b>South Somerset</b>	5	17	9
<b>West Somerset and Taunton</b>	2	22	12
<b>Total</b>	21	88	35

Chart 4 shows the number of contacts that staff have had with individuals when an assessment of need has been completed. Please note that one person could have had contact on more than one occasion. The reason for contact is largely being threatened with homelessness.

#### P2i County - Rolling 12 Months

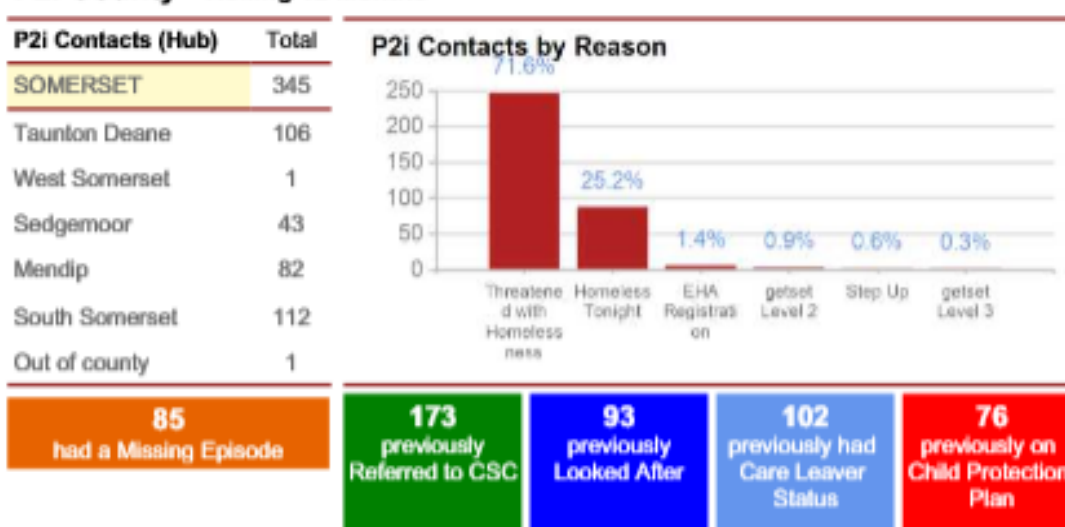
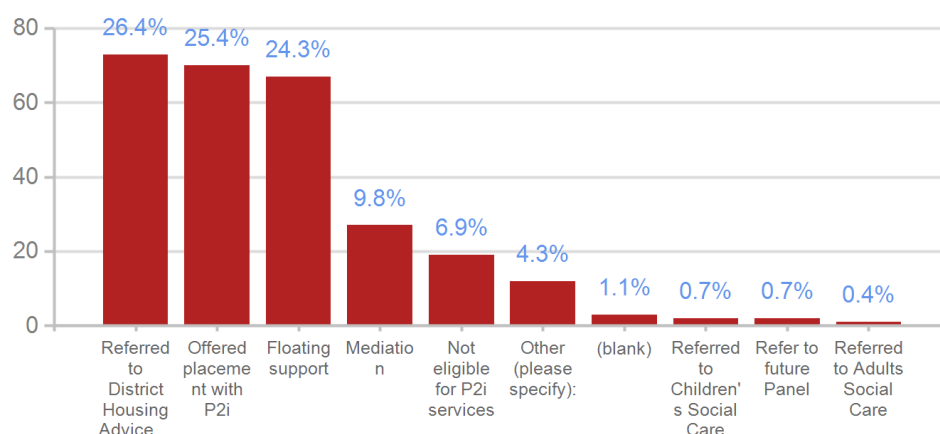


Chart 5, below, shows that just over a quarter of all cases are referred to the local authority for housing advice with another 25% being offered a placement, there is also just under 25% that need floating support. This highlights the need for adequate housing to be provided which is suitable and available to prevent youth homelessness.

### Panel Outcomes Decisions



### Housing and support for vulnerable adults and people with complex needs

In May 2015, following budget cuts for adults with complex needs, it was agreed that a countywide approach was needed and a multi-agency, cross sector alliance was formed. It championed a new approach that innovated and delivered creative solutions for the most entrenched adults with complex needs. It offered greater flexibility and commitment around multi-agency working as well as a strategy to deliver effective ongoing support.

Positive Lives was initiated through the Local Government Association (LGA) sponsored Design in Public Services programme undertaken in 2015. It has since then developed into a broad multi-agency, cross sector coalition of partners.

Positive lives has focused on the following objectives:

- To strengthen positive family and supports objectives
- To promote physical and emotional health as part of a positive life
- To reduce or avoid unnecessary admissions to hospital/care/prison
- To help maintain stability of tenure
- To provide the right support at the right time – least intervention first
- To reduce unnecessary financial burdens on agencies

Over the last year Positive Lives have

- Supported 850 people
- Supported 400 people at any one time
- 380 people engaged with education or training
- 226 people moved into independent living
- 47 people obtaining employment
- 38 very vulnerable/high risk people moved into independent living
- 20 people engaged in formal volunteering as a preparation for work

- 262 people from local communities have provided voluntary support

Step Together is a new support service commissioned by Somerset County Council for adults in Somerset who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, and also have a mix of mental health needs, drug and alcohol problems, behavioural issues, debt or have been involved in the criminal justice system.

The service is provided by 'Second Step' whose clients have complex needs and often find it extremely hard to sustain positive change in their lives. Their service is primarily about helping people to live fulfilling lives in their own communities, retain their tenancy and reduce repeated homelessness.

The contract will be closely monitored to ensure that positive outcomes are delivered for this client group.

### **Income Maximisation, Debt and Money Management**

Citizens Advice are funded by all districts to provide budgeting, money and debt advice to individuals and warrant schemes across the county linked to local needs. These services are integral to helping many households keep their homes or access a new home if they cannot stay, and importantly help to prevent future homelessness through tenancy sustainment.

### **Gypsy and Travellers**

For the purposes of planning policy for Traveller Sites, travellers means gypsies and travellers and travelling show people.

Gypsies and Travellers means 'persons of a nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family's or dependants' educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling show people or circus people travelling together as such'.

Travelling show people means 'members of a group organised for the purposes of holding fairs, circuses or shows'.

When considering the needs of Gypsy and Travellers who travel through and temporarily settle in the county, it is very unusual for members of the community to come into the housing office and present as homeless. Instead, their needs are normally assessed when we visit any unauthorised encampment and appropriate advice is given at the time.

The Somerset Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) was originally produced in 2010 and updated in 2013. It currently runs to 2032 and sets the number of pitches required in each district, together with transit requirements and showman yard requirements. The GTAA is being reviewed in 2020.

Gypsy and Travellers are not homeless simply because they live in accommodation that is moveable or impermanent nor because they travel; however, like any household they may become at risk of being homeless and in need of advice and assistance. Under the Housing Act 1996, section 175 (2) (b) 'A person is also homeless if he has accommodation but – (b) it consists of a moveable structure, vehicle or vessel designed or adapted for human habitation and there is no place where he is entitled or permitted both to place it and to reside in it'.

Somerset, Mendip in particular, has seen a large increase in a caravan dwellers, where caravans pitch at the side of road, or on local authority or Somerset County Council land and live there.

### **Rough Sleeping in Somerset**

Rough sleeping is defined as 'People sleeping, about to bed down (sitting on/in or standing next to their bedding) or actually bedded down in the open air (such as on the streets, in tents, doorways, parks, bus shelters or encampments). People in buildings or other places not designed for habitation (such as stairwells, barns, sheds, car parks, cars, derelict boats, stations or 'bashes' which are makeshift shelters, often comprised of cardboard boxes). The definition does not include people in hostels or shelters, people in campsites or other sites used for recreational purposes or organised protest squatters or travellers (this includes new age/van dwellers).

Rough sleeping within the county is currently challenging. Living on the street is detrimental to mental and physical health and wellbeing. People sleeping rough develop chronic health problems and die younger, and are more at risk from violence. Rough sleeping also has an impact on local residents and visitors. Any rough sleeping is a concern and we aim to find ways to alleviate, reduce and ultimately end all rough sleeping across the county.

Reconnections is making sure that homeless people are reconnected back to home area where they have a connection. This is an area that will continue to need to be reviewed to ensure we have effective mechanisms to address robustly and swiftly.

Mendip and Taunton Deane councils were identified by the Government as having high numbers of rough sleepers and through the Governments Rough Sleeper Initiative, funding was given to create a coordinated strategic approach along with joined up front line services to tackle the issues head on.

It has become evident recently that a significant number of Rough Sleepers from the Sedgemoor area were historically utilising Rough Sleeper Services within the Taunton area which effectively masked the Rough Sleeper issue in the Bridgwater and surrounding area. This shift explains the sharp rise in Rough Sleeper numbers in Sedgemoor from 2019 onwards (as seen in Table 25 below).

As a result, Somerset West and Taunton Rough Sleeper services have commenced positive partner relationships with Sedgemoor focussing on effective reconnection of Rough Sleepers back to Sedgemoor in a timely manner. It will be important moving forwards that all districts continue to liaise and monitor rough sleeper trends and encourage effective partnership working to support people within their home area avoiding drift into other Local Authority areas which puts pressure on services in those areas and masks issues at source.

The following services and features are helping to reduce the numbers of rough sleepers in these districts and enable individuals to engage in alternative safer and healthier options than rough sleeping, with a view to tackling the root of the problem and longer term recovery:

- Increased focus with a multi-agency partnership approach with monthly strategic pathways meetings of key professionals and weekly task and targeting meetings between staff on the ground
- Rough sleeper co-ordinator
- Housing coaches x 2 (Mendip)
- Assertive coaching
- Streetwise Officer (Taunton)
- Personal budgets to make a difference in engagement, preventing further nights outs
- Shared house for those who are new to the street (SWT)
- Housing First pilot schemes  
(Housing First model is designed to help individuals who have complex needs who have been unable to access and sustain housing with an opportunity to move forward and recover by providing non-conditional independent accommodation with quality, intensive, open-ended wrap-around support services)
- Funding for reconnections
- Psychologically Informed Environment approach with clinical psychology input for hard to engage rough sleepers with complex needs (Mendip)
- Landlord Liaison Officer for Keyring Lettings (Mendip)
- Additional drug and alcohol workers dual diagnosis workers (SSDC)
- Reconnection Officer (SWT)
- No Second Night Out Officer (SWT)

All districts commission direct access accommodation, drop-in and outreach, access to sheltered and single homeless supported accommodation and additional shelter in cold weather through Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP).

The Severe Weather Protocol sets out the type of arrangements that local authorities have in place to ensure people are not at risk of dying on the streets during cold weather. SWEP arrangements are triggered when the night time temperature is predicted to be zero degrees or below for three consecutive nights. Authorities make arrangements with local providers to open up more temporary shelter in these circumstances which are usually communal areas and halls. It is designed to protect rough sleepers from risks to health and life from the cold.

Table 25 below shows the extent of rough sleeping by District since 2012. This information is based on a single snapshot carried out on one night in the autumn every year using street counts and intelligence driven estimates.

Table 25: Extent of rough sleeping on one night in Autumn since 2012

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
<b>Mendip</b>	19	16	20	20	16	19	14	13
<b>Sedgemoor</b>	5	2	4	6	2	7	3	25
<b>South Somerset</b>	1	1	2	5	8	4	3	8
<b>Taunton Deane</b>	15	7	18	21	20	23	14	25
<b>West Somerset</b>	0	2	6	4	2	4	2	

Using the quarter January to March 2019, further analysis of rough sleepers by characteristics

Table 26: Rough Sleeping by age, nationality and gender – January to March 2019

	Total	UK	EU	Non EU	Not known	Under 18	18-25	26 and over	Not known	Male	Female
SDC	3	1	1	0	1			3		3	
MDC	14	11	2	1	0			13	1	9	5
SSDC	3	3						3		3	
Taunton	14	13	1				1	12	1	14	
West Somerset	2	2						2		2	

## Voluntary and Faith Groups

There are a number of voluntary and faith groups that provide valuable support to those in need within the county, for example, drop in sessions for social support, Health and Wellbeing related activities, volunteers, and opportunities for getting out of the cold in severe weather. There are also potential opportunities for the Local Authorities to work more closely with these groups so that they can help support the multi-agency approach to tackling rough sleeping by encouraging individuals to engage with services which will help them reconnect to their own area, engage with relevant support services and work towards accessing suitable accommodation and avoid unintentionally sustaining rough sleeping.

## Consultation

A homelessness Survey was available throughout November and December 2018. The survey was sent to a sample of homeless applicants and all stakeholders. The number of responses received for each district is shown below. There were also consultation events across the County in December 2018

	<b>Applicants</b>	<b>Stakeholders</b>
<b>Mendip</b>	7	32
<b>Sedgemoor</b>	12	22
<b>South Somerset</b>	11	12
<b>Taunton Deane</b>	11	4
<b>West Somerset</b>	2	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>73</b>

Amongst applicants, there was only 19 of the total who found the Personalised Housing Plan (PHP) and referred to it again. Some of the comments attached to this referred to the fact that it did not feel personalised to them/their family. Perhaps more should be done to work with applicants to determine how to improve the PHP.

Those who had been offered temporary accommodation commented on the accommodation that they had been offered and, whilst some accepted this accommodation, several clients felt the accommodation was not suitable. Sometimes it felt unsafe because of the other tenants, or was unsuitable because of the applicant's specific needs around disability or because they were asked to share with a teenage child of the opposite sex. There were also comments more generally, that clients offered private rented accommodation felt they could not afford the accommodation proposed.

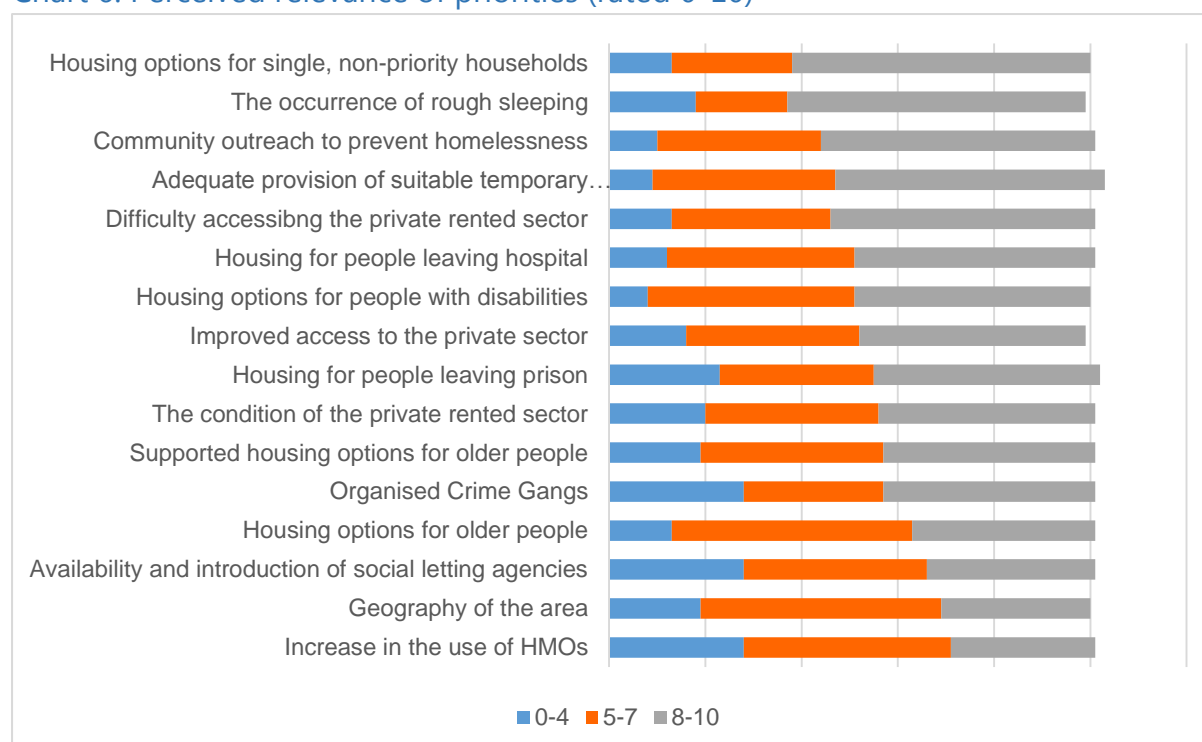


Stakeholders were asked how relevant a number of issues were to them in their roles. Shown in chart 6 are the priorities that were assigned the highest relevance. Those above the horizontal line are those that generate the highest scores for relevance; housing options for single, non-priority households and rough sleeping are deemed to be the most relevant priorities.

Participants at events highlighted that individuals with complex needs find it hard to engage with services; some are unable to cope with application and support process and some choose alternative lifestyle due to their detrimental life experiences. As well as difficulties in accessing accommodation there is often not enough specialist support available to enable those with complex needs to sustain accommodation. Those with complex needs can be a concern for those with lower needs, when placed together. This necessitates a review of gaps in service provision and the identification of alternative accommodation options (e.g. housing first initiatives) alongside necessary resourcing. However there are other pressing needs, as shown.

Improved access to the private rented sector and better quality of provision here, is a relatively high priority. It is also clear that there are groups with particular needs who remain a key priority; those with disabilities, older people or those leaving hospital or prison. There is also a clear need for accessible suitable temporary accommodation for those with complex needs and / or disabilities.

Chart 6: Perceived relevance of priorities (rated 0-10)



The responses to the survey shown above are supported by verbatim comments made as part of the consultation:

*'Challenge to prevent homelessness and work together creatively in this respect. There is a huge gap in accessible temporary or longer term temporary accommodation to help move ons from hospital, repossessions etc. for people with complex medical needs for whom B&B simply is not an option'*

*'Suitable and adequate housing choices. Affordable rents. Encouraging new and good quality landlords in the private sector to work with us. Prevention/Intervention Support after accommodation is found'*

*'There is a huge gap for those who have a dual diagnosed with mental health and drugs misuse. The homeless rate for individuals within this category is on the increase. Accommodation officers are housing individuals who fall out of their sector because they have no option. It is a huge concern for many agencies at this present time, especially with the weather turning'*

## Conclusions

The assessment has identified the following areas of concern that need to be considered further in the new Somerset homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019-2023.

Areas that need to be considered further

1. Population projections show that the population is due to grow faster than anticipated, especially in the former Taunton Deane area and in Sedgemoor. The challenge to deliver sufficient affordable homes and to support the tenure needs of our residents will become more pressing, not less
2. The gap between the local housing allowance and market rent for private lets is a significant barrier in allowing applicants to secure a private rented property because they cannot secure financial support to make the home affordable. This can force people to make a difficult choice and move away from support, e.g. to move away from their family.
3. Bringing empty properties back into use is always a challenge. There is value in exploring and sharing best practice to increase the numbers brought back into use

4. When assessing what housing is needed in the county we need to ensure that adequate housing is provided which is suitable and available to help prevent youth homelessness.
5. In particular we need to work with enablers to encourage increased numbers of single social rented accommodation units being bought forward on developments to meet the needs of the majority of people who are seeking single unit accommodation via Homefinder.
6. There is a need to recognise the need for smaller units rather than larger multi-occupancy dwellings, to allow single and couples and non-priority households the ability to access housing. Working with planners to reflect housing needs in what is built could support this need.
7. Educating young people whilst they are at school about homelessness, to educate them with the aim of helping alleviate future youth homelessness, although funding will need to be considered to support this
8. Whilst we have been successful with cases in preventing and relieving their homelessness, we continue to seek new ways to reduce the number of people approaching us needing temporary accommodation in crisis
9. The Homeless Reduction Act 2017, brought in the need to produce a Personal Housing Plan (PHP) for clients. The consultation information identifies that further work is needed to in respect of PHP and the processes and systems needed to empower and enable customers to find solutions
10. Work with veterans and their families to put in place any additional protocols that could be needed to signpost to support with other factors, such as PTSD, alcohol or mental health problems which can exacerbate the situation
11. We have an ageing population in Somerset, especially 85 years and older group. The future needs of older people need to rise up the agenda and more energy given to understanding their requirements and future housing options.
12. Rough sleeping is a concern for all and a challenge in much of the county, in particular, due to higher numbers and complexity of need. It will continue to demand sustained focus and resource with additional interventions, strategies and coordinated partnership working. It's likely that there is rough sleeping which is 'unseen', which would include sleeping in vehicles and tents hidden in rural areas. It is key that we also ensure we address reconnections robustly and swiftly.

13. Feedback from the consultation events about key issues expressed the need for more suitable, affordable sustainable accommodation. To achieve this there needs to be:
- A continued need for increased collaborative working with partnership agencies where homelessness is an issue or risk, especially to support the vulnerable and those with complex needs. Resources are limited and in many cases, different agencies hold a different part of the jigsaw
  - Continued intervention where possible to help clients to remain in their existing homes to aid the prevention of homelessness. It is well recognised that homelessness costs individuals in terms of their mental and physical health as well as the cost to their finances and local service resources.
  - A review of relevant county-wide and local strategies, policies and practices support homelessness prevention and fair access to social and affordable housing and do not discriminate against those most in need
14. Consultation also highlighted concerns about vulnerable individuals with complex needs who find it hard to engage, access, navigate services and sustain accommodation without specialist support. Those with complex needs can be a concern for those with lower needs, when placed together. This necessitates a review of gaps in service provision and the identification of alternative accommodation options (e.g. housing first initiatives) alongside necessary resourcing

## Somerset Equality Impact Assessment

Before completing this EIA please ensure you have read the EIA guidance notes – available from your Equality Officer

<b>Organisation prepared for</b>	<b>4 Councils in Somerset including Mendip DC, Sedgemoor DC, South Somerset DC and Somerset West and Taunton Council</b>
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<b>Version</b>	<b>V1</b>	<b>Date Completed</b>	<b>November 2019</b>
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**Description of what is being impact assessed**

**Somerset Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019 to 2023**

**Evidence**

**What data/information have you used to assess how this policy/service might impact on protected groups?** Sources such as the [Office of National Statistics](#), [Somerset Intelligence Partnership](#), [Somerset's Joint Strategic Needs Analysis \(JSNA\)](#), Staff and/ or [area profiles](#), should be detailed here

Somerset Homelessness and Rough Sleeper needs assessment 2019

The assessment outlines the extent of homelessness and rough sleeping across Somerset at district authority level, evaluating existing provision and identifying gaps in provision

Main points:

- South Somerset is the largest district geographically
- Sedgemoor is expected to experience the largest population change
- As at date of needs assessment (June 2019) there were 8795 people currently expressing a need for affordable housing, with one bedroom accommodation the most in demand, especially in Taunton Deane
- The highest age prevalence is in the age range 25-59, except West Somerset, where the highest age group is 45-59 and 65-74.
- In Taunton there is a slightly higher proportion of 25-44 year olds

- In West Somerset 42% are 60 year or over, compared to 33% for Somerset as a whole
- To afford to buy a home in Somerset would require 7.6 time their earnings, although there is wide disparity in affordability across the Somerset districts. The highest ratio is in Mendip and West Somerset where in 2017 a household would have required more than 10 times their earnings to afford a home. Sedgemoor has also seen a sharp ratio increase
- There is a widening gap in affordability to rent, with median monthly rent accounting for an average of 36% of gross monthly pay, an increase since 2015
- In all districts the highest need is for social rented dwellings which account for 70-80% of overall need
- Taunton Deane has the highest combined number of 'Gold' and emergency need households, followed by South Somerset
- There are 2041 (October 2018) long term vacant dwellings in Somerset
- In 2018/19 indicative figures indicate that the districts delivered the following number of affordable homes
  1. Mendip – 100
  2. Sedgemoor – 130
  3. South Somerset – 122
  4. Taunton Deane – 218
  5. West Somerset – 3
- The outcome of homeless applications can be seen as follows

	Mendip	Sedgemoor	South Somerset	Somerset West and Taunton
Eligible, unintentionally homeless and is priority need	10	84	83	62
Eligible, homeless, in priority need but intentionally homeless	4	7	9	0
Eligible, homeless but not in priority need	18	38	25	7
Eligible but not homeless	2	14	2	2
Lost contact prior to assessment	2	3	0	0
Withdrew prior to assessment	1	0	1	89
Not eligible for assistance	0	1	4	10

Total	37	147	124	170
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- There are a number of reasons why an individual contacts the local authority with a threat of Homelessness, including
  1. Loss of Assured Shorthold Tenancy
  2. Family no longer able/willing to accommodate
  3. Non-violent breakdown in relationship
  4. Domestic abuse
- In 2018/19 the following number of applicants were accepted by the Somerset local authorities as homeless and in priority need:
  1. Mendip - 10
  2. Sedgemoor – 84
  3. South Somerset – 80
  4. Taunton Deane and West Somerset – 41
- Priority need groups include:
  1. Households with dependent children
  2. Pregnant women
  3. People who are 'vulnerable' in some way, e.g. because of mental illness and physical disability
  4. Aged 16-17
  5. Aged 18 to 20 who were previously in care
  6. Vulnerable as a result of time spent in care, in custody, or in HM Forces
  7. Vulnerable as a result of having to flee their home because of violence or the threat of violence
- The main reason for priority need is having dependent children
- 55% of applicants who are owed a main housing duty are aged 25-44
- 16-24 year old, who disproportionately make up 25% of the applicants
- Using MOD data from 2017, they estimated that 49,000 veterans live in Somerset of which 75.64% own a house, 23.19% rent a property. The balance, 1.17% (568) would imply are potentially homeless
- P2i is a multi-agency homelessness prevention service for young people aged 16-25 who reside in or have a local connection to the Somerset area. The age demographic for P2i as at 28/3/19 is as follows:

	<b>16/17</b>	<b>18/21</b>	<b>22 and over</b>
Mendip	4	30	5
Sedgemoor	10	19	9
South Somerset	5	17	9
West Somerset and Taunton	2	22	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>35</b>

- There 2 predominant reasons why the P2i service is contacted and they are threatened with homelessness (71.6%) and Homeless tonight (25.2%).
- Positive lives is a multi-agency, cross sector alliance, which delivers creative solutions for entrenched adults with complex needs. Over the past year Positive Lives have
  - Supported 850 people
  - Supported 400 people at any one time
  - 380 people engaged in education and training
  - 266 people moved into independent living
  - 47 people obtained employment
  - 38 very vulnerable/high risk people moved into independent living
  - 20 people engaged in formal volunteering as a preparation for work
  - 262 people from local communities have provided voluntary support
- Step together commissioned by SCC for adults in Somerset who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and also have a mix of mental health needs, drug and alcohol problems, behavioural issues, debt or have been involved in the criminal justice system
- Rough sleeping – based a single snapshot in autumn every year using street counts and intelligence drive estimates, in 2018 the following numbers were the extent of rough sleeping:

**Mendip      14      Sedgemoor   3      South Somerset   3      Taunton Deane   14      West Somerset**



**Initial assessment of statutory homelessness duties owed – ethnicity- January to March 2019**

	Total owed a duty	White British	White Irish	White Gypsy and Traveller	White Other	Black, African Caribbean	Asian	Mixed	Other	Unknown
SDC	155	134	3	2	9	1	2			4
SSDC	127	115			8		3		1	
MDC	236	199	3	2	10	1		3	2	16
Taunton	149	128		1	7	3	7	1	1	1
West Somerset	35	33				2				

**Priority need category of households owed a main duty by LA – January to March 2019**

	Total	HH with dependent children	HH with pregnant women	Total Vulnerable household	Old Age	Physical, ill health	Mental Health	Young	Other
SDC	26	19	0	7	0	3	2	0	0
MDC	2								
Taunton	7	4	0	3	0	1	1	0	1
West Somerset	2								
SSDC	19	12	3	4	0	1	1	0	1

### Rough Sleeping by age, nationality and gender – January to March 2019

	Total	UK	EU	Non EU	Not known	Under 18	18-25	26 and over	Not known	Male	Female
SDC	3	1	1	0	1			3		3	
MDC	14	11	2	1	0			13	1	9	5
SSDC	3	3						3		3	
Taunton	14	13	1				1	12	1	14	
West Somerset	2	2						2		2	

### Somerset Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019 to 2023

#### Priorities

Priority One – Provision of adequate, affordable housing stock

Priority Two – Support clients to remain in their existing accommodation where appropriate

Priority Three – Support specific client groups to access suitable accommodation through effective support

Priority Four – Support the government's commitment to combat rough sleeping

Priority Five – Maintain strong working relationships across the partnership

Priority Six – Track and respond to the impacts of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

**Who have you consulted with to assess possible impact on protected groups?** If you have not consulted other people, please explain why?

1. A homelessness survey was available throughout November and December 2018. The survey was sent to a sample of homeless applicants and all stakeholders.

2. Responses received by districts is as follows:

<b>District</b>	<b>Applicants</b>	<b>Stakeholders</b>
Mendip	7	32
Sedgemoor	12	22
South Somerset	11	12
Taunton Deane	11	4
West Somerset	2	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>73</b>

3. Feedback

- More work is needed with applicants on how to improve Personalised Housing Plans (PHP), as only 10 found them useful and referred to them again
- Temporary accommodation not always suitable for client's needs, including disability
- Stakeholders were asked how relevant a number of issues were to them in their role. The top 2 were housing options for single, non-priority households and the occurrence of rough sleeping. Other issues include:
  - Community outreach to prevent homelessness
  - Adequate suitable temporary accommodation
  - Difficulty assessing the private rented sector
  - Housing options for people with disabilities

### Analysis of impact on protected groups

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires us to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations with protected groups. Consider how this policy/service will achieve these aims. In the table below, using the evidence outlined above and your own understanding, detail what considerations and potential impacts against each of the three aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty. Based on this information, make an assessment of the likely outcome, before you have implemented any mitigation.

Protected group	Summary of impact	Negative outcome	Neutral outcome	Positive outcome
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Age is captured on all homeless and housing need customers</li> <li>There no evidence that those in any age group are disadvantaged in their access to the service or housing assistance</li> <li>The needs assessment (June 2019) 58% of applicants owed a main duty were aged 25-44</li> <li>25% of the applicants were 16-24 years old</li> <li>The highest proportion of youths needing help in 2018/19 were aged 18 to 21 years old with the main reason for presenting being the threat of homelessness</li> <li>P2i works to prevent youth homelessness for the age 16 to 25. In 2018 21 16/17 year olds, 88 18/21 year olds and 35 22 and over used the service</li> <li>West Somerset in particular has a significant over 60 year old population with 42% over 60 in comparison to 33% for Somerset as a whole</li> <li>In 2018/19 there were 14 households accepted as owed a main homelessness duty who were over 60</li> </ul>	□	□	☒

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For the period January to March 2019, of the 36 identified as rough sleeping, the majority were over 26, with only 1 between 18 and 25</li> </ul>			
<b>Disability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Positive lives is a multi-agency, cross sector alliance, championing a new approach for the most entrenched adults with complex needs. The project has supported 850 people during 2018</li> <li>Step Together is a new support service (2019) for adults who are homeless or are at risk of homelessness and have a mixture of mental health needs, drug and alcohol problems, behavioural issues.</li> <li>Finding suitable temporary accommodation for people with disabilities is an issue</li> <li>For the period January to March 2019 who are in priority need owed a main duty by the LA, of the 56, 5 had physical disabilities and 4 had Mental Health issues. It is unclear whether any of these had both a physical and a mental health issue.</li> <li>The term mental health covers a wider spectrum of conditions and it is unclear when the term is used what sort of mental illness the client is suffering from</li> </ul>	<div>□</div>	<div>⊗</div>	<div>□</div>
<b>Gender reassignment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We have no evidence to suggest that applicants from this group are disadvantaged in any way by the strategy</li> <li>They may be at risk of homelessness arising from transphobic reactions, Hate Crime and harassment by family, neighbours or members of local communities</li> </ul>	<div>□</div>	<div>□</div>	<div>□</div>

<b>Marriage and civil partnership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Applicants are not disadvantaged by either being married or on a civil partnership or not when accessing affordable housing on terms of the housing register or homelessness/homeless prevention services</li> <li>Registered civil partners have the same rights as married heterosexual spouses in relation to proper</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Since the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2004, it has been unlawful for local authorities to house families with children and pregnant women in bed and breakfast accommodation for more 6 weeks, which has out increased pressure on the housing system</li> <li>Of the 56 in priority need where owed a main duty by local authority, for the period January to March 2019, 3 were pregnant</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Race and ethnicity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gypsy and Traveller communities; Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers a recognised ethnic categories within the Equality Act 2010</li> <li>The GTAA in 2013 identified pitch, transit and showpeople yards. At the present time, there is no transit facility in Somerset although there is work being undertaken to see if at least one site can be got off the ground in 2020. Unauthorised encampments of Gypsy and Travellers has increased over the past 18 months with particular areas vulnerable to returning encampments including Sedgemoor and Taunton Deane</li> <li>Currently due to the above there is no potential provision for Gypsy's and Travellers should they become homeless in the majority of Somerset</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Using ONS Local Area Migration Indicators for 2018, Somerset population totals 546,000, with Non UK born population approximately 7.9% (about 43,000)</li> <li>Based on the H-CLIC data for January to March 2019, of the 702 for that period where an initial assessment of statutory duty owed, 10.3% were from nationalities other White British.</li> <li>Of the 702, 0.7% with from Gypsy and Traveller origins and determining housing requirements for them will be needed as they have their own culture.</li> <li>In respect of rough sleeping for the period January to March 2019, of the 36 rough sleepers in the County, approximately 14% were from either the EU or non EU country</li> <li>Language barriers and lack of understanding of the housing system are potential challenges in accessing support</li> </ul>			
<b>Religion or belief</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is no evidence to suggest that applicants from this group are disadvantaged in anyway by the strategy</li> <li>Assessment of need and Personal Housing Plans should take account of specific beliefs and religion</li> <li>Setting the Local Housing Allowance at 30% of the rate of private rents in the area, and not having an LHA for more than 4 bedrooms, could therefore disproportionately affect some religious groups who may multi-generational/larger families living in one property</li> </ul>	□	⊗	□
<b>Sex (gender)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Providing comprehensive advice services across all tenures will benefit women, especially those at risk of domestic abuse and who could be at risk through the impact of welfare reform</li> <li>Since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2004, it has been unlawful for local authorities to house families with children and pregnant women in bed and</li> </ul>	□	□	⊗

	<p>breakfast accommodation for more than six weeks, which has put increased pressure on the housing system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For the period January to March 2019, of the 36 rough sleepers in Somerset, approximately 85% are male and 15% female, with Mendip and Taunton Deane having the highest percentage of rough sleepers</li> <li>Programmes are in place to support vulnerable adults including Positive Lives and the new service from April 2019, Step Together.</li> </ul>			
<b>Sexual orientation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessments of need and Personal Housing Plans may be a suitable way to determine what types of dwellings are required which could include location and neighbourhood to avoid harassment or discrimination</li> <li>In a survey with LGBT young people in Somerset, 85% of the respondents indicated that they had either been bullied, witness bullying or both with 86% had experienced verbal abuse</li> </ul>	☐	☒	☐
<b>Armed Forces Veterans</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>568 Armed Forces Veterans who neither own or rent a property and who could potentially become homeless.</li> <li>Homeless veterans tend to be older and more likely to have alcohol-related problems</li> <li>Other factors that could contribute to homelessness amongst single veterans include their experience of service, including unfamiliarity with civilian life, making it difficult to secure housing and to manage tenancies</li> </ul>	☒	☐	☐



<b>Rurality</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Somerset is a rural county with South Somerset the largest geographically</li> <li>• Rough sleepers may well go unseen due to the rural nature of the county</li> <li>• Transport is a significant issue for Somerset and can lead to isolation in some of the more rural areas of the county</li> <li>• In census 2011 around 10% of White British households in Somerset do not access to a car, compared to 15-16% of all other ethnic groups</li> <li>• Internet connectivity is an issue in a number of rural communities which can impact on people being to access services as they go increasingly online</li> </ul>		x	
<b>Negative outcomes action plan</b> +Where you have ascertained that there will potentially be negative outcomes, you are required to mitigate the impact of these. Plea  se detail below the actions that you intend to take.				
Action taken/to be taken	Date	Person responsible	How will it be monitored?	Action complete
Make sure that the housing system can record information about race	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
Provide yearly District specific reports on race from the housing system to establish if there are any trends or issues	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
Work with Planning Policy Group to make sure there is appropriate resource available for the Gypsy Traveller community that may become homeless	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>

Work with planning teams, housing enabling teams and Developers to deliver smaller and more financially accessible accommodation to meet the needs of young people.	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
Work with Housing Associations to make sure processes are in places to quickly and efficiently provide accessible accommodation when required for when disabled people become homeless.	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
Complete research into the needs of physical and learning disabilities to understand the potential impact of becoming homeless on this group.	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
When reviewing the Commons Letting Policy confirm how victims of hate crime in Social Housing will be supported to retain accommodation	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>If negative impacts remain, please provide an explanation below.</b>				
<b>Completed by:</b>	<b>SEOG members AF/TR</b>			
<b>Date</b>	<b>16/12/19</b>			
<b>Signed off by:</b>				
<b>Date</b>				

<b>Equality Lead/Manager sign off date:</b>	
<b>To be reviewed by:</b> (officer name)	
<b>Review date:</b>	



# **Somerset West and Taunton**

## **Scrutiny Committee – 5<sup>th</sup> February 2020**

### **Draft General Fund Revenue Budget and Capital Estimates 2020/21**

**This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Henley, Corporate Resources**

**Report Author: Emily Collacott, Finance Business Partner and Deputy S151 Officer**

#### **1 Executive Summary/Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 The report presents Scrutiny Committee with the draft budget estimates for 2020/21, Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) forecasts, and 2020/21 Capital Programme and the proposed sources of funding.
- 1.2 The Provisional Finance Settlement was issued by Government on 20 December, and included details regarding general revenue grant funding, New Homes Bonus, and business rates retention baseline and tariff. The information arising is broadly in line with our previous expectations. The final Finance Settlement is expected to be published before Full Council meets on 19 February.
- 1.3 Executive is minded to implement a council tax increase of 3.17% (£5 on a Band D) in 2020/21, making the annual Band D charge £164.63. The increase in the tax rate provides an additional £282,249 income, however a reduction in the tax base equating to £27,299, results in a net additional council tax income of £254,950 compared to 2019/20.
- 1.4 Executive is also minded to precept £29,240 in special expenses for the Unparished Area of Taunton. This results in an annual council tax rate at £1.91 for a Band D for the Unparished Area of Taunton.
- 1.5 The 2020/21 draft budget also includes a prior year net Collection Fund surplus of £250,191 (£63,877 council tax deficit and £314,068 business rates surplus).
- 1.6 On the advice of the S151 Officer, the Executive is minded to reallocate £3.5m from the Business Rates Retention Smoothing Reserve to a new Investment Risk Reserve to reflect a change in risk profiles across the two different funding streams.

#### **2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 Scrutiny reviews and comments on the draft revenue and capital budget estimates and proposals and refers any comments to Executive.
- 2.2 Scrutiny supports a recommendation to the Executive and Full Council to approve the Draft Revenue Budget expenditure, savings and income targets, subject to any final adjustments as may be required for new information prior to Full Council (such as the NNDR1 final estimates and the Final Finance Settlement).
- 2.3 Scrutiny supports a recommendation to the Executive and Full Council to approve the new capital schemes of the General Fund Capital Programme Budget of £12.015m for 2020/21, as set out in Appendix A and Table 10.
- 2.4 Scrutiny supports a recommendation to the Executive to approve a virement from the Capital Project for Transformation and Office 365 to the project for the Change Programme in the 2019/20 budget of £774k.
- 2.5 Scrutiny is recommended to support the reallocation of £3.5m from the BRR Smoothing Reserve to the Investment Risk Reserve.

### 3 Risk Assessment

#### Risk Matrix

Description	Likelihood	Impact	Overall
Risk: The Council is unable to set a balanced budget	Slight (2)	Major (4)	Medium (8)
<i>Mitigation: Members approve options to balance the budget</i>	<i>Very Unlikely (1)</i>	<i>Major (4)</i>	<i>Low (4)</i>

#### Risk Scoring Matrix

Likelihood	5	Very Likely	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	Feasible	Low (3)	Low (6)	Medium (9)	Medium (12)	High (15)
	2	Slight	Low (2)	Low (4)	Low (6)	Medium (8)	Medium (10)
	1	Very Unlikely	Low (1)	Low (2)	Low (3)	Low (4)	Low (5)
			1	2	3	4	5
			Negligible	Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic

Likelihood of risk occurring	Impact	
	Indicator	Chance of occurrence
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%

## 4 Background Information

- 4.1 The General Fund Revenue Account is the Council's main fund and shows the income and expenditure relating to the provision of services which residents, visitors and businesses all have access to including planning, environmental services, car parks, certain housing functions, community services and corporate services.
- 4.2 The Council directly charges individual consumers for some of its services through fees and charges. The expenditure that remains is mainly funded through a combination of local taxation (including council tax and a proportion of business rates) and through grant funding from Central Government (including Revenue Support Grant, New Homes Bonus and other non-ring-fenced and specific grants/subsidy).
- 4.3 Each year the Council has to set an annual budget which details the resources needed to meet operational requirements. The annual budget should be prepared within the context of priorities and objectives identified by Members which are embedded in the Council's current Corporate Plan.
- 4.4 The Draft Budget included in this report sets out a proposed balanced budget position for 2020/21. This includes additional expenditure to meet identified cost pressures and bids to support new spending, as well significant savings plans and short term support to the budget using New Homes Bonus reserves. Funding through business rates and New Homes Bonus is expected to reduce significantly over the next two years. The agreed Financial Strategy, and the draft budget and MTFP in this report set out plans to meet this challenge.
- 4.5 Members have previously considered a range of important reports that provide background on the Council's financial position and the financial strategy for 2020/21.

## 5 Provisional Finance Settlement 2020/21

- 5.1 The **Provisional Settlement**, which provides the level of funding set by Government through business rates retention and general grants, was announced

on 20 December 2019. The information arising is broadly in line with our previous expectations, with the main headlines being:

- (a) **Council Tax** – Government has confirmed district councils may increase council tax by up to the greater of £5 or 1.99% a year.
- (b) **Revenue Support Grant** – Confirmed as £6,444, slightly higher than our previous estimate of £6,340 due to an inflation factor being applied. Government has again mitigated the potential “negative RSG” which would have reduced our funding by £128,000.
- (c) **Rural Services Delivery Grant** – Confirmed as £241,506, no change to our previous estimates.
- (d) **New Homes Bonus** – provisional grant for 2020/21 confirmed as £3,253,289, which is £38,529 higher than previous estimates. Information included with the Settlement confirms the 2020/21 ‘increment’ within the NHB calculation will be for one year only – not four years as per previous years. It also indicates (but subject to future Finance Settlements) that the legacy payment from the 2018/19 and 2019/20 allocations will apply for four years, therefore the S151 Officer is minded to add the projected income back into the MTFP forecasts for 2021/22 and 2022/23, totalling £2.5m over the two years.
- (e) **Business Rates Retention** – Baseline and Tariff allocations in line with our previous estimates. Local estimates for total business rates income are due to be completed by the end of January 2020 which will determine the net income retained by SWT including growth above the baseline and potential Pooling gains.

5.2 These changes have been reflected in the MTFP and explanations are provided in the body of this report. Though at the time of writing the report we are waiting for the NNDR1 to be completed for the final business rates retention figures to be completed, these will be included in the final budget reports.

5.3 The date of the Final Settlement has not been confirmed but is expected to be before the Council is due to approve the final budget on 19 February.

## 6 General Grant Funding

6.1 The grant funding from Government is roughly in line with previous MTFP projections. The Revenue Support Grant (RSG) in 2020/21 is £6,444 and there is no change to the previous estimates for the Rural Services Delivery Grant which remains at the 2019/20 settlement level. Government has confirmed that ‘Negative’ Revenue Support Grant will be offset in 2020/21. Overall there is a less than 0.1% increase in general revenue grant funding from 2019/20:

Table 1 – General Government Grant

	2019/20 £	2020/21 £	Change £	
Revenue Support Grant	6,340	6,444	104	1.6%
Rural Services Delivery Grant	241,506	241,506	-	-



<b>Total General Revenue Grant</b>	<b>247,846</b>	<b>247,950</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>0.05%</b>
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- 6.2 The following table summarises how overall settlement funding has changed since 2015/16 (for comparison purposes the years 2015/16 to 2018/19 incorporate the combined funding assessments for Taunton Deane and West Somerset Councils). During this period the Settlement reduces by 34% in cash terms.

Table 2 – Settlement Funding (General Grants and Business Rates)

	15/16 £k	16/17 £k	17/18 £k	18/19 £k	19/20 £k	20/21 £k
RSG	2,751	1,785	962	450	6	6
RSDG	46	240	194	242	242	242
Transition Grant	0	17	17	0	0	0
BR Baseline	3,550	3,579	3,652	3,762	4,096	3,911
<b>Government Settlement</b>	<b>6,347</b>	<b>5,621</b>	<b>4,825</b>	<b>4,454</b>	<b>4,344</b>	<b>4,159</b>

## 7 Business Rates Retention

- 7.1 Local authorities receive a significant proportion of their funding through the Business Rates Retention (BRR) system. SWT operates within the Somerset Business Rates Pool. In 2019/20 the Pool applied successfully to be a Pilot area for 75% BRR (one of 16 pilots nationally in 2019/20) which is for one year only and therefore reverts to a 50% BRR Pool in 2020/21.
- 7.2 The Provisional Finance Settlement in December 2019 confirmed that Baseline and Tariff allocations are in line with our previous estimates. Local estimates for total business rates income are not yet completed at the time of writing the report and are due to be completed by the end of January 2020. These will determine the net income retained by SWT including growth above the baseline and potential pooling gains.
- 7.3 A summary of the 2020/21 Retained Funding estimate is shown in the table below. This will be updated following completion of the NNDR1.

Table 3 – Business Rates Retention Estimates

<b>Business Rates Retention Provisional Funding Estimates</b>	<b>2020/21 Provisional Estimates £</b>
Share of Business Rates Yield	23,187,720
Rates yield from renewable energy	208,265
Tariff to Government	-18,394,766
Levy Payment	-1,191,061
S31 Grant funding for Reliefs	2,100,000

	<b>2020/21 Provisional Estimates £</b>
<b>Business Rates Retention Provisional Funding Estimates</b>	
<b>Net Retained Business Rates Funding</b>	<b>5,910,158</b>
Net Retained Rates Funding as % of yield	10.2%

- 7.4 Subject to completion of the NNDR1, provisional indications are that the Council could gain approximately an additional £1m through the Business Rates Pool next year. Final estimates will be reflected in the final budget report to Council in February.

## **8 New Homes Bonus**

- 8.1 The New Homes Bonus (NHB) Grant system has been in place since 2011/12. It is funding allocated by Government, separate to Revenue Support Grant and Business Rates, which incentivises and rewards housing growth. The NHB grant is non-ring-fenced which means that the Council is free to decide how to use it. The Council only intends to use part of its NHB allocation each year towards the revenue budget for services. The remaining grant will be allocated to the Growth Earmarked Reserve to fund project resources and schemes within the Capital Programme.
- 8.2 The confirmed NHB Grant for 2020/21 is £3,253,289 which is £555,861 or 15% less than comparable amount for 2019/20. Whilst this is a reduction, it is slightly above our initial budget estimates included in previous reports.

Table 4 – New Homes Bonus 2020/21

	2019/20 £	2020/21 £
<b>New Homes Bonus Grant</b>	<b>3,809,150</b>	<b>3,253,289</b>
Amount for core revenue budget	720,000	400,000
Transfer to growth reserve	3,089,150	2,853,289
Planned transfers in 2020/21 from the Reserve:		
Project resources	513,000	513,000
Contribution to operational staff costs		1,450,000
Contribution from NHB reserve to General Reserves	0	300,000

- 8.3 The growth baseline remains at 0.4%, which sees a “top-slice” for growth which does not attract any NHB grant. Each year’s growth used to attract grant for 4 years but this is not expected to continue. The annual growth ‘increment’ in 2020/21 is for one year only. Table 5 below shows the current forecast within the current MTFP. We have assumed that the legacy payments will continue for the financial years 2021/22 and 2022/23 though it should be noted that these payment are not guaranteed and could be removed in future funding settlements.

Table 5 – New Homes Bonus Grant Forecast

	2019/20 £k	2020/21 £k	2021/22 £k	2022/23 £k	2023/24 £k	2024/25 £k
2016/17	841					
2017/18	1,258	1,258				
2018/19	858	858	858			
2019/20	851	851	851	851		
2020/21		286	0	0	0	
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,808</b>	<b>3,253</b>	<b>1,709</b>	<b>851</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

## 9 Council Tax

- 9.1 The Provisional Finance Settlement has confirmed that Shire Districts are able to increase council tax by the greater of 1.99% or £5 (on a Band D) in 2020/21 without the need for a referendum.
- 9.2 Executive are minded to recommend the option to increase Band D Council Tax to £162.88 which equates to the £5 annual increase on the current SWT rate of £157.88, and this is reflected in the proposed budget for 2020/21. The Band D tax rate including £1.75 for Somerset Rivers Authority will be £164.63 per year or £3.16 per week.
- 9.3 The approved Tax Base for 2020/21 is 56,449.87 Band D Equivalents, a decrease of 172.9 (0.31%) compared to the 2019/20 tax base. The main reasons the tax base has reduced is that housing growth in the previous year was over-estimated and eligible claims for Council Tax Support discounts has increased. The budget estimates for Council Tax income for SWT is therefore  $56,449.87 \times £162.88 = £9,194,555$ . This represents a total increase of £254,950 compared to the previous year. The budget estimates are calculated as follows.

	£
Council Tax Income Budget 2019/20	8,939,605
Decrease due to change in Tax Base (Band D equivalents)	-27,299
Increase due to proposed increase in Tax Rate	282,249
Council Tax Income Estimate 2020/21	9,194,555
Amount raised for Somerset Rivers Authority (see below)	98,787
Overall Total SWTC Council Tax Precept	9,293,342

## 10 Somerset Rivers Authority

- 10.1 The Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA) remains unable to raise their own precept and it is therefore proposed to follow the same arrangements as previous years. For 2020/21 it is proposed that the Band D amount will remain at £1.75 and this will raise £98,787 in funding for the SRA from the Council in 2020/21.

## **11 Special Expenses/Unparished Area Budget**

- 11.1 From 2020/21 the Charter Trustees are required to precept directly for mayoralty and related civic costs plus their own governance/admin costs. The Executive also wishes to maintain an element of special expenses for the unparished area related to local service costs that a town/parish might provide if in existence but is beyond the scope of the Charter Trustees.
- 11.2 The Council's tax rate baseline has to be adjusted for mayoralty costs that were funded through the special expenses raised by SWT in 2019/20. The adjustment amount is a decision made by the Secretary of State through the Finance Settlement, and the S151 Officer has provided information to MHCLG to facilitate this. A formal decision is expected to be announced in February 2020.
- 11.3 The adjustment impacts on the calculation of tax increases and any potential referendum if the overall tax rate for SWT increases by more than £5. It is therefore proposed to set the Band D special expenses rate at the adjusted value. There is no such restriction on any increase or decrease in the tax rate set by the Charter Trustees, but they may only precept for costs specific to the Mayoralty, related civic functions and their own governance and administration.
- 11.4 If the current precept for special expenses is adjusted for the transfer of costs related to the mayoralty and directly related costs to Chartered Trustees, this leaves £29,319 as funded by special expenses this year which works out as £1.91 per unparished area band D equivalent. (Note: For referendum purposes we have to measure this as though it is a charge for the whole area, which equates to £0.52 for Band D.)
- 11.5 For 2020/21, the Tax Base is as follows:
- Unparished Area Tax Base in 2020/21 = 15,308.18 Band D equivalents  
Whole Area Tax Base in 2020/21 = 56,449.87 Band D equivalents
- 11.6 The Chartered Trustees set their budget for 2020/21 on 23rd January 2020. For information, their proposed budget is £51,140 which works out as a precept of £3.34 per band D equivalent in the unparished area.
- 11.7 The total Special Expenses proposed to be raised by SWT for the unparished area, but not related to the Charter Trustees, is £29,240. This results in a Band D rate of £1.91 i.e. no increase on the adjusted rate following the transfer of mayoralty costs.
- 11.8 The total proposed charges per Band D equivalent to unparished households, for special expenses raised by the Council and the separate Charter Trustees precept, is therefore £5.25:

SWT Special expenses	£1.91
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Chartered Trustees Precept	<u>£3.34</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>£5.25</u></b>

11.9 This is an increase of £2.23 (74%) compared to the 2019/20 SWT special expenses charge of £3.02 per band D equivalent.

## 12 2020/21 Draft Budget Summary

12.1 The following tables provides a summary of the Budget position for 2020/21.

Table 6 – General Fund Draft Budget Summary

	<b>2019/20 £</b>	<b>2020/21 £</b>
Total Spending on Services	14,752,279	17,229,828
Somerset Rivers Authority Contribution	99,090	98,787
Revenue Contribution to Capital	375,000	15,000
Capital Debt Repayment Provision (MRP)	455,010	505,010
Interest Costs	168,530	214,640
Interest Income	-642,000	-875,750
Parish Precepts	2,072,282	2,072,282
Special Expenses	46,399	29,240
Transfers to Earmarked Reserves	5,923,781	1,467,415
Transfer to Economic Growth and Prosperity Fund	1,200,000	0
Transfer to General Reserves	0	300,000
<b>AUTHORITY EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>24,450,371</b>	<b>21,056,452</b>
Retained Business Rates (including pool and pilot 2019/20)	-6,528,746	-5,910,158
Somerset BRR Pilot	-1,200,000	0
Share of Levy Surplus	-59,037	0
Revenue Support Grant	-6,340	-6,444
Rural Services Delivery Grant	-241,506	-241,506
New Homes Bonus	-3,809,150	-3,253,289
Surplus(-)/Deficit on Collection Fund – Council Tax	-116,311	63,877
Surplus(-)/Deficit on Collection Fund – Business Rates	-1,331,905	-314,068
Demand on Collection Fund – Parishes and SER	-2,118,681	-2,101,522
Total Council Tax Raised by Council	<b>9,038,695</b>	<b>9,293,342</b>
Divided by Council Tax Base	56,622.8	56,449.87
<b>Council Tax Band D – SWT Services</b>	<b>157.88</b>	<b>162.88</b>
<b>Council Tax Band D – Somerset Rivers Authority</b>	<b>1.75</b>	<b>1.75</b>
<b>Council Tax Band D – SWT including SRA</b>	<b>159.63</b>	<b>164.63</b>
<b>Cost per week per Band D equivalent</b>	<b>3.05</b>	<b>3.16</b>

12.2 The table below shows the movement in spending and funding between 2019/20 and 2020/21:-

Table 7 – Summary of Budget Changes in 2020/21

	£k	£k
<b>Net Expenditure Base Budget 2019/20</b>		<b>24,450</b>
Inflation costs	614	
Pension contributions increase	45	
Remove one-off items from 2019/20 Budget	-884	
Leisure Contract savings	-302	
Other Service Changes	691	
Homelessness	155	
Staffing Costs	2,450	
Asset Management	200	
Park and Ride	230	
Environment Strategy Development	75	
Local Plan	82	
Additional one-off Contribution to Citizens Advice	33	
Harbour Dredging	43	
Clean Sweep	40	
Increased IT Costs	148	
Change Programme	408	
Contingency	50	
Commercial Investment Income	-840	
Fees and Charges – Car Parks	-500	
Commercialism and Services Income	-60	
Procurement Savings	-200	
Reduction in Revenue Contribution to Capital	-360	
Financing Costs (net income and repayment of debt)	-138	
Reduction in Unparished Area Precept	-17	
<b>Subtotal costs</b>		<b>1,963</b>
Remove One-off Contribution to Economic Growth and Prosperity Fund (75% Pilot gain)	-1,200	
Transfer to Business Rates Smoothing Reserve	-33	
Reduction in NHB contribution to reserves	-1,986	
Remove previous year transfers to reserves	-2,834	
Contribution to Investment Risk Reserve	400	
Contribution to General Reserves	300	
Other Reserve Adjustments	-3	
<b>Subtotal Reserve movement</b>		<b>-5,356</b>
<b>Net Expenditure Base Budget 2019/20</b>		<b>21,057</b>

	£'000	£'000
<b>Total Funding 2019/20</b>		<b>-24,450</b>
Increase in RSG	0	
Decreased Retained Business Rates	618	
Reduction in Somerset Rates Pooling Gain	1,200	
Reduction in Levy Surplus	59	
Reduction in NHB	556	

Increased funding from Council Tax	-255	
Reduction in Unparished Area Precept	17	
Collection Fund	1,198	
<b>Subtotal - change in funding</b>		<b>3,393</b>
<b>Total Funding 2020/21</b>		<b>-21,057</b>

12.3 Below is a short description for each bid:

- a) **Inflation Costs:** This includes inflation for staffing costs, major contract and utilities.
- b) **Pension Contributions:** The last tri-annual review of the pension fund includes an increase to the contribution towards the pension deficit. This will be reviewed when the results of the current review are published – expected imminently.
- c) **Remove one-off items from 2019/20 Budget:** The 2019/20 included one-off items which need to be removed for 2020/21.
- d) **Leisure Contract:** Saving from the new leisure services contract which commenced during 2019/20.
- e) **Other Services Changes:** Various changes to service budget following a review of 2019/20 budgets versus spend.
- f) **Homelessness:** The cost of Bed and Breakfast expenditure is forecast to exceed the budget in 2019/20. Currently this is expected to continue and therefore the increase needs to be built into future budgets. Officers are investigating options to mitigate the increase in the budget and a more detailed explanation is included within the Financial Monitoring report presented to Executive on 22 January 2020.
- g) **Staffing Budget:** As reported to Full Council on the 3 December 2019, the Council's leadership team identified ongoing financial pressures in order to protect service standards and maintain capacity whilst completing the safe delivery of expected service process efficiencies and greater customer access to self-service. The Council is requested to support a continuation of additional staff capacity for a longer period (12-18 months) to ensure services continue and standards are maintained during a longer transition period. A cost reduction is required in future years as the Change Programme drives forward to deliver the service process efficiencies and demand management benefits anticipated.
- h) **Asset Management:** Following a review of assets additional funding is required, for reactive work needed, to maintain the Council's assets.

- i) **Park and Ride:** Proposed funding to maintain the Park and Ride (a separate report was considered by the Executive on 18 December 2019). The MTFP includes a forecast for this cost continuing on an ongoing basis for financial planning purposes, however formal approval is sought at this stage for 2020/21 budget only.
- j) **Environment Strategy Development:** To enable the Council to progress its climate and environmental commitments whilst the strategy is being progressed, this budget allocation provides additional capacity to deliver early progress on strategy development and development of plans and business cases for further consideration. This stand-alone allocation does not represent the entirety of the Council's investment in services and projects that seek to further the Council's environmental objectives.
- k) **Local Plan:** To enable the Local Plan work to be undertaken (a separate report was considered by the Executive on 20 November 2019).
- l) **Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) - further contribution:** A one-off additional contribution for 2020/21 only (a separate report with more detail was presented to the Executive on 28 January 2020).
- m) **Dredging – outer harbour at Watchet:** The current budget is £7k per annum based on the legacy budget position for West Somerset Council. The increase to £50k would allow for two dredges next year and then one dredge per annum thereafter, when the base budget is proposed to reduce to £25k. In future the ambition is to increase the ongoing budget to £50k if affordable.
- n) **Clean Sweep:** To enable a regular “spring clean” of the larger towns within the district.
- o) **Increased IT Costs:** This includes increased costs for telephony and essential network support required.
- p) **Change Programme:** £85k relates to the ongoing support and maintenance for Microsoft 365 licences and £323k one-off costs for the projects to upgrade and improvement of the finance system and to implement Microsoft 365.
- q) **Contingency:** A small contingency of £50k is included, pending finalisation of the budget plan for 2020/21 and for in-year unforeseen costs.
- r) **Commercial Investment Income:** The Council approved a new commercial investment strategy after considering the **confidential** report to the Full Council meeting on 17 December 2019.
- s) **Fees and Charges – Car Parking:** A separate report detailing the changes is being considered on this agenda.



- t) **Commercialism and Services Income:** A target set for increase income from other fees and charges and/or other service income.
- u) **Procurement Savings:** The agreed financial strategy set a target for procurement savings and within 2020/21 the majority of this will be met from the recent procurement of a new Insurance contract for the Council.
- v) **Reduction in Revenue Contribution to Capital:** The revenue budget includes a contribution to the Capital Programme for recurring capital spend. This has been reduced for 2020/21 and 2021/22 and other sources of financing (capital receipts and borrowing) sought for the relevant capital spend.
- w) **Financing Costs (net income and repayment of debt):** This is the net change in treasury investment income the cost of repayment of debt.
- x) **Reduction in Unparished Area Precept:** See section 11 of this report.
- y) **Reserve Movements:** These include contributions to and from both earmarked and general reserves.

### 13 Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) Summary

13.1 The current MTFP forecast is summarised below, reflecting the proposed budget for 2020/21 and the updates described in this report.

Table 8 - Draft MTFP Summary 2019/20 to 2024/25

	2019/20 £	2020/21 £	2021/22 £	2022/23 £	2023/24 £	2024/25 £
Services Costs	14,752,279	17,229,828	15,416,966	14,951,256	15,521,686	16,218,479
Net Financing Costs	356,540	-141,100	11,260	508,370	291,480	284,590
SRA Contribution	99,090	98,787	99,775	100,773	101,780	102,798
Special Expenses	46,399	29,240	0	0	0	0
Earmarked Reserves-Growth	3,089,150	2,853,289	1,509,342	851,411	0	0
Earmarked Reserves-Other	2,834,631	-1,385,874	-1,000,000	0	0	0
Economic Growth and Prosperity	1,200,000	0	0	0	0	0
General Reserves	0	300,000	0	0	0	0
<b>Net Expenditure</b>	<b>22,378,089</b>	<b>18,984,170</b>	<b>16,037,343</b>	<b>16,411,810</b>	<b>15,914,946</b>	<b>16,605,867</b>
Retained Business Rates	-6,528,746	-5,910,158	-3,989,206	-4,067,579	-4,145,952	-4,224,325
Business Rates prior year surplus/deficit	-1,331,905	-314,068	0	0	0	0
Somerset BRR Pilot	-1,200,000	0	0	0	0	0
BRR Levy Account Surplus	-59,037	0	0	0	0	0

	2019/20 £	2020/21 £	2021/22 £	2022/23 £	2023/24 £	2024/25 £
Revenue Support Grant	-6,340	-6,444	0	0	0	0
Rural Services Delivery Grant	-241,506	-241,506	-241,506	-241,506	-241,506	-241,506
New Homes Bonus	-3,809,150	-3,253,289	-1,709,342	-851,411	0	0
Council Tax	-8,939,605	-9,194,555	-9,472,938	-9,759,992	-10,055,329	-10,359,716
Council Tax–SRA	-99,090	-98,787	-99,775	-100,773	-101,780	-102,798
Council Tax–Special Expenses	-46,399	-29,240	0	0	0	0
Council Tax prior year surplus/deficit	-116,311	63,877	0	0	0	0
<b>Net Funding</b>	<b>-22,378,089</b>	<b>-18,984,170</b>	<b>-15,512,767</b>	<b>-15,021,261</b>	<b>-14,544,567</b>	<b>-14,928,345</b>
<b>Budget Gap</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>524,576</b>	<b>1,390,549</b>	<b>1,370,379</b>	<b>1,677,522</b>
Gap – Change on Previous Year	0	0	524,576	865,973	-20,170	307,143

Note: The 2019/20 figures in this table relate to the Original Budget approved in February 2019 and do not reflect in-year approved budget changes.

## 14 Fees and Charges

- 14.1 The Council's Constitution delegates the approval of Fees and Charges (with the exception of Car Parks) to the S151 Officer. Therefore the increase in all other fees and charges will be approved by the S151 Officer prior to the Executive meeting on 10th February 2020, in consultation with the Corporate Resources Portfolio Holder. Fees and charges are set on the principles of full cost recovery where appropriate or an inflationary increase in line with the financial strategy approved by the Executive.
- 14.2 A separate report on the proposed changes to Car Parking Fees is on the agenda and the proposals include an increase in income of £500k.

## 15 General Reserves

- 15.1 The current reserves position is shown below. Recent forecast outturn projections for the 2019/20 budget predict an overspend of £39,000. In addition it has been approved that £65,000 of General Reserves is used to fund climate change (£15k) and Economic Development (£50k) in 2019/20. The table below therefore gives a provisional forecast of the reserves position at the start of the next financial year at £2.756m.
- 15.2 The level of reserves are projected to be below the recommended Operational minimum level. Given the future funding risks it is strongly advised to maintain reserves above the minimum and therefore it is recommended to transfer £300k from the NHB reserve into General Reserves during 2020/21.

Table 9 – General Reserves Balance

	£k
Balance Brought Forward 1 April 2019	2,857
2019/20 Projected Outturn Overspend	-36
2019/20 Approved transfer to date	-65
<b>Projected Balance 31 March 2019</b>	<b>2,756</b>
Budgeted transfer in 2020/21	300
<b>Project Balance after transfer in 2020/21</b>	<b>3,056</b>
Recommended Operational Minimum Balance	3,000
Projected Balance after transfer above recommended minimum	56
Recommended Financial Resilience Minimum Balance	2,400
Projected Balance above recommended minimum	656

## 16 Investment Risk Reserve

16.1 It is proposed to realign some earmarked reserve balances to reflect up to date financial risks.

16.2 Commercial Investment – The Council approved a new commercial investment strategy after considering the **confidential** report to the Full Council meeting on 17 December 2019. This will result in an increasing reliance on investment income to fund services in future. As with any investment this strategy is not risk-free, for example rental income may be susceptible to voids. It is proposed to build up financial resilience to mitigate this risk through a new Investment Risk Reserve, through a combination of reallocating existing reserves and setting aside a proportion of future investment income. The S151 Officer considers the risk in respect of business rates funding volatility is reducing (see below), which provides an opportunity to reallocate £3.5m from the BRR Smoothing Reserve to the Investment Risk Reserve in 2019/20. The MTFP includes plans to then allocate an amount each year to this reserve, with the aim of accumulating a balance of £6m-£7m in the medium term.

Table 10 – Investment Risk Reserve

	Allocations to Reserve £k	Forecast Balance £k
2019/20 – Transfer from BRR Reserve	3,500	3,500
2020/21 – Budgeted set aside from investment income	400	3,900
2021/22 – Budgeted set aside from investment income	520	4,420
2022/23 – Budgeted set aside from investment income	420	4,840
2023/24 – Budgeted set aside from investment income	420	5,260
2024/25 – Budgeted set aside from investment income	420	5,680

16.3 Business Rates Smoothing Reserve – This Reserve currently holds a balance of £6.4m (April 2019), and is expected to remain at or above this level next year. The reserve provides funding to mitigate risk of fluctuations in funding levels and offset accounting timing differences. With the Business Rates Retention budget estimates reducing to the Baseline in 2021/22 within the MTFP the assessment of

the S151 Officer is that the impact of potential volatility on the budget is reduced. The risk is also considered to have reduced following the Court judgement finding against NHS Foundation Trusts claim for mandatory 80% charitable relief on their business rates (although the claimant may still appeal). On this basis it is considered prudent to reallocate £3.5m from this reserve to the Investment Risk Reserve, whilst leaving a prudent balance to be reviewed once the future business rates retention funding arrangements have been clarified for 2021/22 onwards.

## 17 2020/21 General Fund Capital Programme

- 17.1 The current General Fund Capital Programme in 2019/20 includes approved projects totalling £56.7m and is shown in Appendix A.
- 17.2 Within the 2019/20 capital programme it is recommended that the £100k for M365 and £674k for Transformation already within the Capital Programme are Vired to fund the capital costs relating to the current change programme of £774k. At the time of writing a supplementary approval of £200k will be requested at Full Council on 27th January 2020 for the East Quay Wall.
- 17.3 The recommended General Fund Capital Programme for 2020/21 totals £12.02m. Table 11 summarises the General Fund bids that have been presented by services for consideration.

Table 11 – 2020/21 Capital Bids

Scheme	2019/20 Cost £k	2020/21 Cost £k	Proposed Funding				
			RCCO £k	Grants/ CIL/S106 £k	Growth Reserve £k	Capital Receipts £k	Borrow ing £k
Leisure Grants to Clubs and Parishes		15	15				
Vehicle Replacement		152				152	
Plant and Equipment		23				23	
New/Replacement Waste Containers		100				100	
Lifeline Equipment		25					25
Refresh of End User Devices		30					30
Members IT Equipment Replacement		4					4
Replacement Play Equipment		64					64
Wellington Sports Centre Air handling Units		253					253
East Quay Wall*	200	540					740
Change Programme: Microsoft 365 Migration/Finance Upgrade	774	0				327	447
Resources for Change Programme		360				360	
Disabled Facilities Grants(DFGs)		1,274		1,274			
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>974</b>	<b>2,840</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>1,274</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>962</b>	<b>1,563</b>
Major Transport Schemes		875			875		
Employment Site Enabling & Growth		300			300		
Taunton Flood Alleviation		2,500			2,500		
<b>Growth Sub-Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3,675</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3,675</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Cycle and Pedestrian Improvements		500		500			
Education Provision		3,500		3,500			

Scheme	2019/20 Cost £k	2020/21 Cost £k	Proposed Funding				
			RCCO £k	Grants/ CIL/S106 £k	Growth Reserve £k	Capital Receipts £k	Borrow ing £k
Public Transport Improvements		1,000		1,000			
Taunton Town Centre Regeneration		500		500			
<b>CIL Sub-Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5,500</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5,500</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>974</b>	<b>12,015</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>6,774</b>	<b>3,675</b>	<b>962</b>	<b>1,563</b>

\*Approval for this scheme sought Executive 22 January 2020 and Full Council 27 January 2020

17.4 Below is a short description for each scheme:

- a) **Leisure Grants to Clubs and Parishes:** These grant schemes allow us to award funds towards projects they are facilitating within their local communities. Voluntary Village Halls and Community Centre and Sports Clubs are awarded up to 33% of the project costs and Parish Councils are awarded up to 50% of the project costs.
- b) **Vehicle Replacement:** The cost of a rolling programme to replace vehicles used by the locality champions.
- c) **Plant and Equipment:** To replace plant and equipment items of small capital value used by the locality champions.
- d) **New/Replacement Waste Containers:** To purchase new and replacement waste and recycling containers (bins and boxes) as part of the ongoing costs of the Somerset Waste Partnership.
- e) **Lifeline Equipment:** Lifeline units have a useful life of approximately 7 years, this is the cost to replacement the equipment on a rolling basis with approximately 1/7th of stock replaced per annum.
- f) **Refresh of End User Devices:** Annual refresh budget which plans for laptops and tablets to be replaced on a rolling five year basis and smart devices every three years.
- g) **Members IT Equipment Replacement:** An annual budget for replacement of IT equipment for members.
- h) **Replacement Play Equipment:** To maintain the Council owned playgrounds within the Somerset West and Taunton Council area.
- i) **Wellington Sports Centre Air Handling Units:** Responsibility of plant remains with SWT. The current plant is more than 40 years old and as part of the recent procurement for a new leisure operator SWT committed to replacing the equipment following a condition survey recommendation.
- j) **East Quay Wall:** Overall cost estimates are £740k, and approval is sought to

allocate £200k in the 2019/20 budget as work is planned to commence before April 2020. A detailed report was presented to the Executive on 22 January 2020.

- k) **Change Programme Microsoft 365 Migration / Finance Upgrade:** Capital costs for the projects to upgrade and improve the finance system and to implement Microsoft 365.
- l) **Resources for Change Programme:** It is recommended to fund the project resources required for the Change Programme from flexible capital receipts.
- m) **Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs):** Enabling people to remain in their own homes by having access to facilities in and around the home. The Council has a statutory duty to deliver the grants under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996. The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) Order 2002, and the Housing Act 2004. Funding is passed through to SWTC by SCC from the Better Care Funding provided by Government.
- n) **Growth Funded Projects:** See section 19 below
- o) **CIL Funded Projects:** See section 20 below.

## **18 Funding the General Fund Capital Programme**

- 18.1 Funding of capital investment by the Council can come from a variety of sources:
  - Capital Receipts
  - Grant Funding
  - Capital Contributions (e.g. from another Local Authority / s.106 Funding, CIL)
  - Revenue budgets/reserves (often referred as RCCO – Revenue Contributions to Capital Outlay)
  - Borrowing
- 18.2 Table 11 above summarises the proposed funding of the Capital Programme for 2020/21.

### **Funding Sources Explained**

- 18.3 Capital Receipts General: These come from the sale of the Council's assets. The Council also receives regular receipts from the sale of Council Houses (Right to Buys), and a proportion is retained by the General Fund.
- 18.4 Capital Receipts Housing (non-HRA): These are capital receipts received which are ring-fenced to be spent on affordable housing initiatives. The principle has been supported by Full Council that any future external funding received for affordable housing should be allocated to affordable housing projects and automatically added to the Capital Programme.

- 18.5 Grant Funding: The Council receives capital grant for Disabled Facilities Grant. This funding is now rolled into the Better Care Fund (BCF) and it is the responsibility of the commissioners of the fund – the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and Somerset County Council – to decide how the money is allocated. The Council has representation on various groups to try and ensure our interests are protected.
- 18.6 Capital Contributions: This could take the form of capital contributions from other authorities or developers in the form of s.106 funding or Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).
- 18.7 Revenue Funding (RCCO): The Council's draft budget includes an annual sum of to fund capital expenditure from General Fund revenue budgets which for 2020/21 this is £15k, if supported through the approval of the 2020/21 Capital Programme, would be affordable.
- 18.8 Borrowing: This would be in the form of taking out a loan either from the markets or through the PWLB which would incur interest costs chargeable to the revenue budget. The revenue implications of the proposed borrowing of £1.563m included in Table 11 above is included with the current MTFP estimates. There is also "internal borrowing" which is treated the same as external borrowing for funding purposes, but uses cash balances rather than taking out a physical loan.
- 18.9 Capital Reserve: The Council has an earmarked Capital Reserve holding revenue resources previously set aside to fund capital spending. We currently hold no unallocated capital reserves.

## **19 Capital Programme for Growth and Regeneration 2020/21**

- 19.1 SWTC (and formerly TDBC) has previously approved the allocation of £16.6m of New Homes Bonus (NHB) funding over the five year period 2016/17 to 2020/21, to support its priorities relating to growth and regeneration. A number of spend categories were approved, as follows:
- Taunton Strategic Flood Alleviation
  - Major Transport Schemes
  - Town Centre Regeneration
  - Employment site enabling and promoting enterprise and innovation
  - Marketing, promotion and inward investment
  - Supporting urban extension delivery
  - Preparation of Local Development Orders
- 19.2 Given the uncertainty of future New Homes Bonus receipts the spend allocated to NHB has been reviewed and remains within the principles of spending in the report to the Executive dated 3 December 2015. This highlighted the fact that the profile of spending over the five year period was indicative and would be refreshed

annually, to ensure that spending plans remained aligned with an evolving picture of external funding secured, opportunities for new funding and new growth priorities.

- 19.3 The period of the report has been extended to 2021/22 to show indicative spend and NHB grant receipts in that financial year.

Table 12 - Indicative Growth and Regeneration Spend Profile – Per NHB Forecast as at January 2020

	2016/17 Actual £k	2017/18 Actual £k	2018/19 Actual £k	2019/20 Forecast £k	2020/21 Indicative £k	2021/22 Indicative £k	Totals £k
Major transport schemes	0	0	857	0	2,375	925	<b>4,157</b>
Taunton Town Centre regeneration	14	161	1,888	2,487	288	0	<b>4,838</b>
Employment site enabling and innovation to promote Growth	0	16	48	625	100	0	<b>789</b>
Taunton Strategic Flood Alleviation	0	152	93	77	2,500	500	<b>3,322</b>
New Garden Communities	0	0	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
Marketing Promotion and Inward Investment	102	110	-14	0	0	0	<b>198</b>
Preparation of LDO's	59	0	0	0	0	0	<b>59</b>
<b>Total expected investment</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>439</b>	<b>2,872</b>	<b>3,189</b>	<b>5,263</b>	<b>1,425</b>	<b>13,363</b>

- 19.4 Within the revised £13.4m allocation, members will note that changes to the prior year profile are now proposed in some categories, namely:

- **Major Transport Schemes** – remains £4.1m due to the planned £1.5m contribution to the J25 improvement scheme in 2020/21 in line with the anticipated delivery of this project, Toneway Corridor Phase 1 (£1m), Rapid Bus Link (£500k) and indicative provision of £300k for other potential schemes).
- **Taunton Town Centre Regeneration** - overall allocation increased due to Firepool Infrastructure and Master planning costs (£1.1m)
- **Employment sites, enterprise and innovation** – Significant reduction (£3m) due to Nexus 25 Site enabling being removed from the spend profile. Retains £300k for Innovation Centres.
- **Taunton Strategic Flood Alleviation** - The allocation towards the Flood Alleviation project has been reduced by reallocation of £2m for this scheme to be funded by CIL.

- 19.5 The affordability of the above capital investment relies on future NHB receipts as forecast in this report (section 8.3, Table 5 above). Further funding pressure will be placed on this programme if NHB is not forthcoming in 2021/22 and 2022/23, resulting in the need to reduce commitments or fund through other capital resources.

## 20 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)



- 20.1 The former TDBC introduced a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) on 1 April 2014. CIL is a tariff charged on residential development (excluding Taunton town centre and Wellington) and retail development outside Taunton and Wellington town centres. The principle behind CIL is that most development has some impact on infrastructure and the developer should contribute to the cost of providing or improving it. CIL applies to new floor space and charges are based on the size, type and location of the new development.
- 20.2 SWTC Shadow Council approved future CIL allocations for 2019/20 to 2022/23 on 21 February 2019. The report detailed proposed CIL allocations of £15.5m for the period 2019/20-2022/23 for member approval. The CIL allocations are to support current funding bids (HIF and High Street Fund) to deliver key infrastructure projects for the Taunton Garden Town and are in addition to the £16.6m (£13.4m indicative based on available resources to 2021/22) New Homes Bonus already planned towards delivering the Council's growth agenda. The CIL allocations have been rolled forward from 2019/20 to ensure these remain available to support current funding bids and the overall total forecast CIL allocations remain as £15.5m.
- 20.3 As at 22nd January 2020 the CIL strategic pot holds approximately £4.84m in CIL receipts. The proposed CIL allocations for the period 2020/21 to 2024/25 are set out in the table below, including amounts to be rolled forward from the 2019/20 approval.

Table 13: CIL allocations for the period 2020/21-2024/25

Taunton Garden Town CIL projects	2020/21 £k	2021/22 £k	2022/23 £k	2023/24 £k	2024/25 £k	Proposed Total CIL allocations for 2020-2025 £k
Cycle and pedestrian improvements	500	0	0	1,000	0	1,500
Education provision	3,500	1,000	2,500	0	0	7,000
Public transport improvements	0	1,000	1,000	0	0	2,000
Taunton Town Centre Regeneration	0	1,000	500	0	0	1,500
Surface Water and Flood Risk Mitigation	0	2,000	0	1,000	0	3,000
Community Development	0	0	0	500	0	500
<b>Total allocations</b>	<b>4,000</b>	<b>5,000</b>	<b>4,000</b>	<b>2,500</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>15,500</b>

## 21 Robustness of Budget Estimates and Adequacy of Reserves

- 21.1 Under Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 the S151 officer is required to report to Council on the robustness of the estimates made for the purpose of calculations of the budget and the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves.
- 21.2 The Draft Budget for 2020/21 has been prepared on the basis of continuing the

current year budget levels where appropriate, and has allowed for best estimates of expenditure and income including assumptions for increases and decreases due to trends and future influences such as inflation. It reflects commitments necessary to maintain service levels, and with demand-led budgets this inevitably entails a degree of judgement.

- 21.3 There has been a significant degree of scrutiny of the proposed budgets and savings by:
- The finance team – with several staff holding professional accountancy qualifications
  - Senior Leadership Team and Leadership group
  - Portfolio Holders
  - Scrutiny Committee
- 21.4 These examinations of the budgets have led to refinements and provide considerable assurance about the robustness of the estimates.
- 21.5 It is recognised that the formation of the single new council from April 2019, the “knitting together” of service budgets from the two predecessor councils, and changes to the organisation and staffing during the last 12-18 months, has meant frequent and dynamic changes to the Council’s financial information and cost estimates. The changes has led to new budget holders and finance officers learning and building knowledge across new / different areas of the Council’s business. Responsibilities for budgets has changed more frequently than would be seen in a mature and stable business and workforce, which brings a degree of additional financial risk.
- 21.6 During 2019/20 a lot of focus has been on delivering stability and improvement following a significant period of disruption, and rebuilding knowledge of managers’ understanding of their costs and income. It has been evident during this phase that some budgets and costs need to be more closely aligned in some areas. In addition, with the formation of the Council’s new leadership team, finance officers are in the process of reorganising budgets into the new directorates. This is an important step, with resources focussed on implementing these changes ready for the start of the new financial year to enable strong and efficient financial control to operate from the outset.
- 21.7 The budget estimates and Medium Term Financial Plan include significant pressures and requests to increase spending in some areas. The proposed budget includes the continuation of transitional staffing costs for the next 12-15 months as process efficiencies, increased customer self-service, channel shift and reduced failure demand are fully delivered. It also reflects the direction of the financial strategy which, as well as reducing costs through operational efficiencies, seeks to grow the Council’s income through commercial investment, treasury investment, and increased commercialisation of services. This is necessary to replace the major reduction in grant funding from central Government and avoid the need for

major cuts to local services. Placing increasing reliance on income through investment and directly paid-for services results in a shift in the financial risks of the Council.

- 21.8 From my perspective as your S151 Officer, the budget proposal shared by Executive is based on the most accurate information available and therefore presents an accurate reflection of the Council's financial position. I am also reassured by the relatively healthy reserves position of the Council, which provides a good level financial resilience in the medium term. Given the financial risks and uncertainties faced it is very important that contingencies and reserve levels are maintained.
- 21.9 It is vitally important that the Council's leadership ensures cost efficiencies and income strategies are prioritised and delivered to ensure the Council remains financially resilient and service objectives remain affordable. A further priority for the S151 Officer and the finance function during 2020/21 will be improving financial control, monitoring and reporting arrangements at both a strategic and operational level. The remodelling of the budgets to the new directorate structure will see greater granularity being introduced to our financial information, which will enable more targeted financial information, and better understanding and control of costs and income.

### **Risk and Uncertainty**

- 21.10 There are key areas of uncertainty beyond 2020/21, and other potential risks in the shorter term that I have considered in commenting on the proposed budget. These are explained in further detail below and include:
- The budget and MTFP assumes relative stability in business rates funding, which is known to be volatile – a large cost of appeals or other reductions could conceivably reduce funding to the Baseline or Safety Net. This applies at the county-wide Business Rates Pool level such that volatility in either district could impact on funding available.
  - The budget relies on significant cost reductions being fully achieved within the next 12-18 months, and investment income growth to be delivered at pace whilst managing risk through the quality of investment undertaken.
  - There is significant future uncertainty in terms of Government funding beyond 2020/21 with the unknown impacts of the 2020 Spending Review, the Fair Funding Review, business rates baseline and tariff resets, redesign of the business rates retention system and roll out of 75% Retention, and the review of New Homes Bonus.
- 21.11 Other key risks to be aware of are:

- **Business Rates:** The Council is exposed to financial risk in its business rates funding estimates. Business Rates Retention (BRR) funding is based on the estimates completed in January each year. Estimates reflect anticipated growth, mandatory and discretionary discounts/reliefs and collection rates. Financial provisions are made for potential losses for appeals and other reductions, however experience shows that business rates funding can be volatile despite prudent estimates. There are also timing differences between financial years inherent in the required accounting arrangements. The Council seeks to mitigate the budget risk of reductions in funding by holding funds in a Business Rates Smoothing Reserve.
- **Business Rates Pooling and 75% BRR Pilot:** The County and four Districts in Somerset form the Somerset Business Rates Pool, which is a pilot area for 75% Retention in 2019/20 for one year only. The Pool will return to operating under the 50% Retention system in 2020/21. Pooling seeks to reduce the levy paid to Government on growth in business rates income above the funding baseline, and will distribute gains from levy savings in the form of a 'dividend' at the end of each financial year. Being in a pool increases risk with a lower safety net, although the safety is more beneficial under the 75% scheme (95% of baseline as opposed to 92.5%). In mitigation the Pool plans to cover individual authority safety net costs from pooling gains before any dividend is issued however there is no guarantee the gains will be sufficient to cover large scale losses. The risk is considered to be low in this respect, but will be carefully monitored. The proposed budget for 2020/21 includes a reasonable estimate of the pooling gain, which is proposed to initially be set aside in the Smoothing Reserve but may be available to support future financial sustainability measures.
- **Reserves:** The assessment of minimum level of reserves was updated when the current financial strategy was approved in September 2019. The Council now measures reserves against two benchmarks: a financial resilience minimum balance of £2.4m and an operating minimum balance of £3m. General Reserves are forecast to be £2.7m by the end of 2019/20, and provision is included in the 2020/21 budget to increase this by £300k with a view to starting next financial year in line with the operating target.
- **Economy and Brexit:** A downturn in the economy for example through Brexit would impact on our key income streams including business rates. A 5% reduction in development control, car parking, and building control alone would result in a loss in excess of £300k per annum.
- **Council Tax Reduction Scheme:** Members have approved the scheme for 2020/21 with no changes. There has been a significant increase in caseload and awarded eligible discounts during 2019/20, which is reflected in the 2020/21 council tax base. We will continue to monitor the financial impact on

the Council. The key risk on this item is further growth impacting on total council tax income available to fund other services.

- **Housing Benefits / Subsidy:** Subsidy budgets are very difficult to estimate due to the fluctuating volume of claims received and the different levels of subsidy payable. Adjustments reducing the grant subsidy can also be made for local authority error. The total benefit subsidy budget is approximately £40m – and relatively small percentage fluctuations in this budget can have a big impact on the budget of the Council. Systems are in place to ensure this is monitored on a monthly basis. In addition, assumptions on the level of subsidy payable on local authority overpayments are at a prudent level.
- **New Homes Bonus (NHB):** The slowdown in housing growth in the year to October 2019 has led to a reduction in total NHB grant awarded in 2020/21. The Government has confirmed the 2020/21 grant awarded includes a continuation of legacy payments from the previous 3 years. Ministers have confirmed their intention to review the NHB scheme during 2020, and it is prudent to plan for this grant disappearing and funds being redistributed in future. Within the grant calculation, the increment for 2020/21 will be for one year only and the forecast legacy payments in 2021/22 and 2022/23 are subject to confirmation in future Finance Settlements.

### **Government Funding**

- 21.12 The grant funding from Government in 2020/21 is effectively a one year roll-forward of the 2019/20 position, with RSG maintained at £6k and RSDG maintained at £241k (subject to confirmation in the final Finance Settlement).
- 21.13 The Government continue to develop their policy on local government finance. 2020 should be a pivotal year in providing some clarity on the medium term funding position for local government and district councils' share of available core funding. The implementation of 75% Business Rates Retention has been deferred to 2021/22, and it is currently assumed the impact will be neutral at the point of implementation. The timing of any future move to 100% retention of business rates is unknown. As stated above the distribution of funding from 2021/22 onwards will be determined by a number of factors: the 2020 Spending Review, Fair Funding Review and Business Rates Retention reform, and review of New Homes Bonus.

### **Council Tax**

- 21.14 On council tax, the Government have once again set the upper limit at a £5 annual increase for district councils on a Band D property, and have not imposed an upper limit on town/parish council precept increases. The S151 officer's assumption is that 2020/21 will be final year that the flexibility of applying a £5 increase, with new principles likely to establish following the reset of 'core spending power' following the changes to government funding identified in 21.13 above. Council tax is a

relatively stable and predictable funding source, and provides over 50% of the Councils core funding towards general services.

### **Capital Programme Funding**

- 21.15 The Executive's draft budget proposals for the General Fund capital programme are included in this report. Capital expenditure estimates on council housing provision is included separately within the Housing Revenue Account budget report. To support the spending plans, councils are required to publish and monitor a set of Prudential Indicators. These are listed in full in the Capital, Investment and Treasury Strategies report which is also shared separately for approval.
- 21.16 The Executive's draft capital programmes for the General Fund and HRA follow the principles of the Prudential Code, and I am satisfied that the treasury implications are clear and within affordable limits.
- 21.17 The Capital Strategy and programmes demonstrate an increase in capital spending in the short to medium term in the General Fund to meet both service priorities and increased investment in assets for income generation purposes; and long term in the HRA to meet in particular the social housing regeneration and delivery objectives in the updated HRA 30-Year Business Plan. The programmes will rely on long term investment supported by borrowing, and an important feature of financial planning is that the costs of servicing this debt remain affordable. The increase in general fund borrowing is largely related to regeneration and investment schemes that will more than cover the costs of borrowing through income generated, and HRA investment remains affordable based on forecast housing rent income.

### **Inflation and Other Key Budget Assumptions**

- 21.18 I have reviewed the budget proposals and assumptions and comment as follows:

**Inflation:** inflation assumptions appear reasonable with general inflation projected at 2% in line with longer term government targets. An appropriate level of inflation allowance has also been reflected in the budget estimates for pay, pensions and core service contracts. Services will be required to absorb variations in costs compared to budget, with any emerging significant issues to be highlighted through budget monitoring reports.

**Service Income:** income projections are based on realistic assumptions on usage, and the most recent Government guidance on fee levels when appropriate. They also take into account historic trends and current year projections.

**Growth in service requirements:** the MTFP identifies service growth areas such as waste collection and recycling. Detailed estimates are firmed up by discussions with managers during the budget process.

Revenue Implications of Capital: the MTFP identifies and incorporates changes to the base budget as a result of the capital programme.

Economic assumptions: investment interest assumptions are based on independent economic forecasts and include the impact of treasury management decisions made in earlier years, as well as projected benefits from recent changes in the range of investments used for cash balances.

Council Tax: growth assumptions in the council tax base have been forecast at 1% in 2020/21 and for each year thereafter on a prudent estimate of the net effect of local growth, council tax support and other discounts. Council tax collection rates remain strong, providing confidence the income will be received as planned.

Sustainability: the proposed budget takes into account the future financial uncertainty faced by the Council. The Council can set a balanced budget for 2020/21 and has healthy reserves. Not all costs are fixed, providing management with some flexibility to control spending in year if needed.

### **Delivery of Savings**

- 21.19 The MTFP has built in significant savings targets which carries some risk, in particular on timing of sustainable efficiency savings and achieving growth in commercial investment income at pace. I am comfortable that appropriate mitigations are in place through reserves and flexibility in financing arrangements / costs.
- 21.20 Delivery of savings will be closely monitored by the S151 Officer and Directors, and reported regularly to the Senior Management Team. Any significant variations will be reported to Members with mitigating actions / options.

## **22 Adequacy of Reserves**

- 22.1 With the existing statutory and regulatory framework, it is my responsibility as S151 Officer to advise the Council about the adequacy of the Council's reserves position.
- 22.2 All reserves are reviewed at least annually and my formal opinion updated during the budget setting process each year. For the General Fund, the minimum level of reserves for prudent resilience to financial risks has been set at £2.4m, with an operating target for reserves set at £3m to provide some operating flexibility if needed. For the HRA these are set at £1.8m and £2.4m respectively.
- 22.3 A detailed review of earmarked reserves will be undertaken with Directors as part of the financial year end process. I am currently satisfied that reserves are appropriate however some balances are now long-standing and will be reviewed to ensure they are still required for their original purpose.

- 22.4 My opinion is given in the knowledge that known risks (strategic, operational and financial) are managed and mitigated appropriately in line with the Council's policies and strategies.

### **General Fund Reserve**

- 22.5 The forecast General Reserves balance at the end of 2019/20 is £2.7m, and therefore remains above the acceptable level and is therefore adequate. Whilst this is above the minimum balance required, the Executive's draft budget for 2020/21 includes a contribution to General Reserves of £0.3m, with the aim of returning the balance at least to the operating target level. This is prudent in view of financial risks in the next 1-2 years.
- 22.6 There are no further planned allocations to or from general reserves within the MTFP, in line with the principle that the Council plans to balance the budget each year from annual income. This will be reviewed annually as part of the budget planning process.

### **Housing Revenue Account Reserve**

- 22.7 The HRA working balance reserve is forecast to be £3.1m at the beginning of 2020/21. The HRA MTFP and Business Plan are built on the principle that reserves will remain and the operating minimum each year, with opportunity to apply in year surpluses to reducing capital borrowing costs. The balance is forecast to remain in line with these financial strategy and business plan expectations.

### **Earmarked Reserves**

- 22.8 The current (at December 2019) balance of General Fund earmarked reserves is £23m, and for the HRA the balance is £2.5m. These balances provide a healthy financial resilience, and contain funds to meet future planned expenditure and contingencies for some specific financial risks.
- 22.9 With reduced reliance on business rates growth in the MTFP and the prudent assumption that retained business rates funding will fall to the Baseline following the Reset in 2021/22, there is an opportunity to reduce the balance held in the BRR Smoothing Reserve. Alongside this, the planned increase in investment for income generation purposes brings increasing reliance on this potentially volatile source of funding. The planned reallocation of £3.5m to a new Investment Risk Reserve provides immediate resilience to income volatility and/or delay in achieving the income targets.
- 22.10 The proposed budget over the next two years relies on an allocation of £2.75m from the New Homes Bonus reserve. This is a temporary injection of funding aligned to temporary costs, and is therefore a sustainable strategy. However, this does result in less cash funding for the Council's capital programme, which means capital costs will need to either be reduced or be funded from other sources such as future capital receipts or borrowing.



## **23 Conclusions – Statement of the S151 Officer**

- 23.1 Based on the evidence I have reviewed I am able to confirm that I believe the Council's draft budget proposals for 2020/21 to be sufficiently robust, and the Council's reserves to be adequate.
- 23.2 Whilst the forecast funding position beyond 2020/21 is uncertain, estimates are considered to be prudent based on current information. Key influences will be the Government's Spending Review in 2020 and future funding settlements, the Fair Funding Review, the reset of the business rates baseline and tariff, the redesign of the business rates retention system and the future of New Homes Bonus. The financial strategy and MTFP will need to be reviewed and updated as new information emerges over the next 12 months.
- 23.3 The budget for 2020/21 is balanced without the need to draw on general reserves, and with earmarked reserves used to fund temporary costs. Looking ahead, the MTFP relies on the full delivery of savings and income targets to close the funding gap, but still projects a funding shortfall / budget gap of £0.5m in 2021/22 rising to £1.7m by 2024/25. The Executive and Leadership team will need to drive forward the planned changes necessary to meet current financial plans, and also maintain a longer-term focus to ensure future objectives are affordable and the Council remains financially resilient.
- 23.4 Finally of course, Brexit also brings significant uncertainty at the time of writing this report. We will need to carefully monitor the impact of the exit from the EU on the national and local economy, and respond to any unplanned impact on local services and council finances.

## **24 Links to Corporate Aims / Priorities**

- 24.1 It is important that Councillors recognise the financial position, challenges and risks faced by the Council and fully engage in the corporate and financial planning processes in order to determine an affordable and sustainable set of corporate aims and priorities. This should lead to the Council approving a sustainable final budget and MTFP in February 2020.

## **25 Legal Implications**

- 25.1 The Council is required by law to set a balanced budget and failure to do so would result in serious financial and service implications and lead to Government intervention.

## **26 Environmental Impact Implications**

- 26.1 None directly for the purposes of this report. The delivery of the Council's environmental objectives is embedded in many of the Council's revenue and capital budget proposals for both General Fund and Housing Revenue Account services. The General Fund budget included a proposed allocation of £75k which

will provide some enabling funding to progress the Environment Strategy and potentially initiate some projects under the strategy.

**27 Safeguarding and/or Community Safety Implications (if any)**

27.1 None for the purposes of this report.

**28 Equality and Diversity Implications (if any)**

28.1 None for the purposes of this report.

**29 Social Value Implications (if any)**

29.1 None for the purposes of this report.

**30 Partnership Implications (if any)**

30.1 None for the purposes of this report. The Council budget incorporates costs and income related to the various partnership arrangements, and any changes in relevant forecasts and proposals will be reported for consideration as these emerge.

**31 Health and Wellbeing Implications**

31.1 None for the purposes of this report. Any relevant information and decisions with regard to health and wellbeing will be reported as these emerge through the financial planning process.

**32 Asset Management Implications**

32.1 The proposed budget includes an increase in the general assets maintenance budget to provide for planned and reactive maintenance across the asset base. Priorities will be determined in line with the Asset Management Plans in place.

**33 Data Protection Implications**

33.1 None for the purposes of this report.

**34 Consultation Implications**

34.1 None for the purposes of this report.

**35 Scrutiny Comments / Recommendation(s)**

35.1 Comments are invited at this meeting, for consideration by the Executive and in forming recommendations to Members to approve the 2020/21 Budget and address the ongoing financial sustainability of the Council.

**Democratic Path:**  
**Scrutiny – 5 February 2020**  
**Executive – 10 February 2020**  
**Council – 19 February 2020**

**Reporting Frequency: Annually**

**List of Appendices**

Appendix A	General Fund Capital Programme
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SOMERSET WEST & TAUNTON COUNCIL - GENERAL FUND - CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2019/20 - FUNDING

										Funding (£)										
	Project	Revised Approved Budget for 2019/20 £	2019/20 Supplementary Estimates £	2019/20 Budget Returns £	2019/20 Budget Virements £	2019/20 Current Budget £	2019/20 Proposed Changes £	Proposed 2020/21 Budget £	Overall Capital Budget £	Capital Grants	Section 106 Agreements	Capital Receipts	General Fund RCCO	New Homes Bonus	Capital Financing Reserve	Other Earmarked Reserves	Unallocated Capital resources	Borrowing	TOTAL	
Growth Programme																				
	GF C Town Centre Improvements	170,360				170,360			170,360					170,360						170,360
	GF C Firepool Land Assembly	2,535	35,622			38,157			38,157					38,157						38,157
	GF C Major Transport Schemes	1,693,910		(193,910)	(1,500,000)			875,000	875,000					875,000						875,000
	GF C Flooding Alleviation	982,846		(981,500)		1,346		2,500,000	2,501,346					2,501,346						2,501,346
	GF C Town Centre Regeneration	1,021,000		(1,004,016)		16,984			16,984					16,984						16,984
	GF C Emp Site Enabling Innovation	1,891,000		(1,855,750)	(35,250)			300,000	300,000					300,000						300,000
	TD C Broadband SEP	380,000				380,000			380,000					380,000						380,000
	TD C Parking, Access & Signage	9,577				9,577			9,577					9,577						9,577
	Firepool Development	55,543	825,000			880,543			880,543					880,543						880,543
	Lisieux Way Site Masterplaning	9,750			35,250	45,000			45,000					45,000						45,000
	Firepool Master Planning		275,000			275,000			275,000					275,000						275,000
	Total Growth Programme	6,216,521	1,135,622	(4,035,176)	(1,500,000)	1,816,967		3,675,000	5,491,967					5,491,967						5,491,967
IT Projects																				
	GF C Members IT Equipment	7,205				7,205		4,000	11,205				4,000		3,205				4,000	11,205
	GF C PC Refresh Project	50,000				50,000			50,000				50,000							50,000
	GF C Cemetery IT System	24,950				24,950			24,950						24,950					24,950
	GF C Transformation	753,738		(79,738)		674,000	(674,000)													0
	GF C IT Offsite Backup Facilities	11,861				11,861			11,861				11,861						30,000	11,861
	GF C IT Annual Hardware Replacement	8,857				8,857		30,000	38,857			2,857	6,000							38,857
	GF C IT Server Refresh	20,000				20,000			20,000				20,000					75,000		20,000
	GF C Committee Rooms AV Kit	75,000				75,000			75,000											75,000
	Microsoft Migration	100,000				100,000	(100,000)													0
	Change Programme: Microsoft 365 Migration/Finance Upgrade						774,000		774,000			327,000						447,000		774,000
	Total IT Projects	1,051,611		(79,738)		971,873		34,000	1,005,873			329,857	91,861		28,155		75,000	481,000		1,005,873
Major Projects																				
	GF C PT Coal Orchard	10,727,650	3,683,000		(1,407,013)	13,003,637			13,003,637									13,003,637		13,003,637
	GF C Lisieux way	957,212				957,212			957,212									957,212		957,212
	GF C Blackbrook Swimming Pool	62,869				62,869			62,869						62,869					62,869
	GF C SCC Waste Vehicle Loan	7,000,000		(75,000)		7,000,000			7,000,000									7,000,000		7,000,000
	GF C Paul Street Car Park Major Works	421,779				346,779			346,779						232,873		113,906			346,779
	GF C Creech Castle Improvement (Toneway Corridor Phase 1)	375,000				375,000			375,000					375,000						375,000
	GF C Firepool Hotel	15,712,627		(15,705,526)		7,101			7,101											7,101
	GF C Waiting Room	205,616				205,616			205,616											205,616
	GF C Seaward Way	2,862,074				2,862,074			2,862,074											2,862,074
	Coal Orchard Development Costs				1,407,013	1,407,013			1,407,013					1,407,013						0
	Watchet - East Quay Development	1,500,000				1,500,000			1,500,000									1,500,000		1,500,000
	Great Western Railway	5,000,000				5,000,000			5,000,000									5,000,000		5,000,000
	Leisure	1,000,000				1,000,000			1,000,000									1,000,000		1,000,000
	Gaumont Palace Theatre (Mecca Bingo)		2,277,000			2,277,000			2,277,000											2,277,000
	J25 Improvement Scheme Contribution				1,500,000	1,500,000			1,500,000					1,500,000						1,500,000
	East Quay Wall						200,000	540,000	740,000									740,000		740,000
	Total Major Projects	45,824,827	5,960,000	(15,780,526)	1,500,000	37,504,301	200,000	540,000	38,244,301					3,282,013	295,742		113,906	34,552,640		38,244,301
Housing																				
	GF C Grants to RSLs	2,317,988				2,317,988			2,317,988											2,317,988
	GF C DFGs Private Sector	2,646,861				2,646,861		1,274,000	3,920,861	3,824,210	1,137,000	416,906			96,651	19,897	744,185			3,920,861
	GF C Decent Homes																			
	Total Housing Projects	4,964,849				4,964,849		1,274,000	6,238,849	3,824,210	1,137,000	416,906			96,651	19,897	744,185			6,238,849
Other Projects																				
	GF C Special Expenses Grants	11,000				11,000			11,000						11,000					11,000
	GF C Youth Project Cap Grants	20,030				20,030			20,030			20,030								20,030
	GF C Gypsy Site	108,502				108,502			108,502						108,502					108,502
	GF C PT Longrun Meadow Bridge	4,200		(4,200)																0
	GF C DLO Vehicles Acquisition	290,143				290,143		152,000	442,143			152,000	152,000			138,143				442,143
	GF C Waste Containers	108,590				108,590		100,000	208,590			100,000	100,000		8,590					208,590
	GF C Grants to Halls & Sports Clubs	30,367				30,367			30,367						30,367					30,367
	GF C Grants to Parishes	42,830				42,830		15,000	57,830				30,000		27,830					57,830
	GF C Replacement Play Equipment	84,048				84,048		64,000	148,048			76,740			7,308			64,000		148,048
	GF C GF Community Alarms	48,982				48,982		25,000	73,982				31,000		17,982			25,000		73,982
	GF C DLO Plant	23,000				23,000		23,000	46,000			23,000								46,000
	GF C Brewhouse	37,328				37,328			37,328											37,328
	GF C Crematorium Project	6,991				6,991			6,991											6,991
	GF C Norton Fitzwarren Hillfort	17,472		(13,368)		4,104			4,104						4,104					4,104
	GF C West Monkton Country Park	50,726				50,726			50,726											50,726
	GF C East Wharf	66,611				66,611			66,611											66,611
	GF C Superfast Broadband	170,000				170,000			170,000											170,000
	GF C 7 The Esplanade	15,000				15,000			15,000											15,000
	GF C Steam Coast Trail	114,604				114,604			114,604	114,604										114,604
	GF C Stair Lift Recycling																			0
	GF C Cuckoo Meadow Play Area	1,103				1,103			1,103											1,103
	GF C CASA	78,165		(78,165)								0								0
	GF C Minehead Esplanade	17,563				17,563			17,563											17,563
	Wellington Sports Centre Air Handling Units							253,000	253,000									253,000		253,000
	Resources for Change Programme							360,000	360,000			360,000								360,000
	Total Other Projects	1,347,255		(95,733)		1,251,522		9												

										Funding (£)									
	Project	Revised Approved Budget for 2019/20 £	2019/20 Supplementary Estimates £	2019/20 Budget Returns £	2019/20 Budget Virements £	2019/20 Current Budget £	2019/20 Proposed Changes £	Proposed 2020/21 Budget £	Overall Capital Budget £	Capital Grants	Section 106 Agreements	Capital Receipts	General Fund RCCO	New Homes Bonus	Capital Financing Reserve	Other Earmarked Reserves	Unallocated Capital resources	Borrowing	TOTAL
	HK C Westfield Street Café	3,000				3,000			3,000		3,000								3,000
	HK C South B/W & North Petherton	250,500		(102,074)		148,426			148,426		148,426								148,426
	HK C Bridgwater Town Centre	54,278				54,278			54,278		54,278								54,278
	HK C Holford & District Village Hall	76,092				76,092			76,092		76,092								76,092
	HK C Minehead TC - New Changing Facilities	382,047				382,047			382,047		382,047								382,047
	Watchet Bowling Club	150,000				150,000			150,000		150,000								150,000
	Williton Shooting Club	23,000				23,000			23,000		23,000								23,000
	Cheddar Parish Council	320,000				320,000			320,000		320,000								320,000
	Bos & HB Council	350,000				350,000			350,000		350,000								350,000
	Victoria Ward Green	51,428				51,428			51,428		51,428								51,428
	North Petherton RFC Gym	300,000				300,000			300,000		300,000								300,000
	Empty Homes & LOTS	90,000				90,000			90,000		90,000								90,000
	Stogursey Leisure	1,301,125				1,301,125			1,301,125		1,301,125								1,301,125
	Enterprising Minehead	187,672	30,000			217,672			217,672		217,672								217,672
	Cannington Traffic																		
	Total S106 Funded - Hinkley Schemes	3,539,142	30,000	(102,074)		3,467,068			3,467,068		3,467,068								3,467,068
	Externally Funded Projects																		
	GF C CIL Grant																		
	CIL - Cycle & Pedestrian Improvements	1,000,000				1,000,000		500,000	1,500,000	1,500,000									1,500,000
	CIL - Education Provision	4,000,000						3,500,000	7,500,000	7,500,000									7,500,000
	CIL - Public Transport Improvements	1,000,000				1,000,000		1,000,000	2,000,000	2,000,000									2,000,000
	CIL - Taunton Town Centre Regeneration							500,000	500,000	500,000									500,000
	Total Externally Funded Projects	6,000,000				6,000,000		5,500,000	11,500,000	11,500,000									11,500,000
	General Fund Total	69,215,341	7,457,060	(20,093,247)		56,579,154	200,000	12,015,000	68,794,154	15,457,480	5,206,642	1,730,144	427,861	8,862,034	636,231	165,031	933,091	35,375,640	68,794,154

# Somerset West and Taunton Council

## Scrutiny Committee – 5<sup>th</sup> February 2020

### Off Street Car Parking Charges

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Ross Henley

Report Author: Scott Weetch – Specialists Manager

#### 1 Executive Summary / Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To advise on proposals to change car parking fees across Somerset West and Taunton Council area.

#### 2 Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended to raise car parking charges by 10% across the Somerset West and Taunton Council area.

#### 3 Risk Assessment

##### Risk Matrix

Description	Likelihood	Impact	Overall
Risk: The Council fails to recover sufficient income to cover the cost of running the Parking service	1	3	3
Mitigation: Any shortfall should be met through the General Fund.			

##### Risk Scoring Matrix

Likelihood	5	Very Likely	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	Feasible	Low (3)	Low (6)	Medium (9)	Medium (12)	High (15)
	2	Slight	Low (2)	Low (4)	Low (6)	Medium (8)	Medium (10)
	1	Very Unlikely	Low (1)	Low (2)	Low (3)	Low (4)	Low (5)
			1	2	3	4	5
			Negligible	Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic

Likelihood of risk occurring	Impact	
	Indicator	Chance of occurrence
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%

#### 4 Background and Full details of the Report

- 4.1 The Council desires to change driver behaviour as part of its Corporate aim for a low-carbon, clean, green and prosperous district that attracts high quality employment opportunities and encourages healthy lifestyle.

<https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/your-council/corporate-strategy/>

- 4.2 Further, the Council wishes to promote and enhance the use of Taunton Park and Ride facilities provided by Somerset County Council to support its own aims in reducing town centre congestion for Taunton and pollution and supporting overall Air Quality Management across the Council area as set out in the Air Quality Action Plan. The latest Air Quality Action Reports (2018) are available on the SWTC web site at:

<https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/environmental-health/environmental-protection/air-quality/>

- 4.3 Charges were last increased across the former Taunton Deane Borough Council area in 2016. Notwithstanding that there was a realignment of fees in Taunton to move to a more readily understood Short and Long Stay parking as part of the Pay on Foot parking project. However, these changes were cost neutral, as outlined and approved by Taunton Deane Full Council in February 2018.
- 4.4 Charges were last increased in the former West Somerset Council area in 2017.
- 4.5 The report outlines the intention to raise car parking fees by 10% in all areas, the legal basis for doing so and the intentions of monies raised through this.
- 4.6 The powers for local authorities to provide and charge for car parking are set out in the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (RTRA). Different provisions are set out in relation to on-street and off-street parking. This report relates to off street parking arrangements.
- 4.7 Section 32 RTRA <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1984/27/section/32> provides the authority for councils to provide off-street parking:



"32. Power of local authorities to provide parking places. (1) Where for the purpose of relieving or preventing congestion of traffic it appears to a local authority to be necessary to provide within their area suitable parking places for vehicles, the local authority, .... (a) may provide off-street parking places ...."

- 4.8 Section 35 provides the authority for councils to charge for use of off-street car parking: "35 Provisions as to use of parking places provided under s 32 or 33. (1) As respects any parking place— (a) provided by a local authority under section 32 of this Act, or (b) provided under any letting or arrangements made by a local authority under section 33(4) of this Act, the local authority, subject to Parts I to III of Schedule 9 to this Act, may by order make provision as to— i) the use of the parking place, and in particular the vehicles or class of vehicles which may be entitled to use it, ii) the conditions on which it may be used, iii) the charges to be paid in connection with its use (where it is an off-street one)..."
- 4.9 Section 41 outlines that a local authority may contribute towards the expenses incurred by any other authority in the exercise of their powers including the provision of off street parking places.
- 4.10 Section 122 places a duty on every local authority to secure the expeditious, convenient and safe movement of vehicular and other traffic (including pedestrians) and the provision of suitable and adequate parking facilities on and off the highway. In particular that means securing and maintaining reasonable access to premises; the effect on the amenities of any locality affected and (without prejudice to the generality of this paragraph) the importance of regulating and restricting the use of roads by heavy commercial vehicles, so as to preserve or improve the amenities of the areas through which the roads run; the strategy prepared under section 80 of the Environment Act 1995 (national air quality strategy); the importance of facilitating the passage of public service vehicles and of securing the safety and convenience of persons using or desiring to use such vehicles; and any other matters appearing to the local authority to be relevant.
- 4.11 Decisions on setting fees must be reasonable and proportionate and have a view to the reasons for the parking powers in the first place (i.e. the minimising of congestion in town centres). The Council is awarded powers to create off-street parking places – and then to charge for them – where it appears necessary to them for the purposes of relieving or preventing traffic congestion.
- 4.12 A schedule of proposed fees is included at Appendix A.

## **5 Links to Corporate Strategy**

- 5.1 This links to the priority theme of environment and economy. Specifically, it links to the desire for a low-carbon, clean, green and prosperous district that attracts high quality employment opportunities and encourages healthy lifestyle.

## **6 Finance / Resource Implications**

- 6.1 The measures outlined in the report indicate a 10% increase in fees across all car parks. It is likely that this will lead to increased revenue by way of income if the changes to driver behaviour do not occur in the short term. The Council has outlined that it intends to continue subsidising the County Council's Park and Ride scheme and to support other environmental measures designed to improve air quality management and reduce congestion.
- 6.2 Costs are predicted to increase at a rate of 2.5% per year. Consumer Price Index for the year to September 2017 was 3%; to September 2018 was 2.4% and September 2019 was 1.7%. The proposed increase also mitigates some of the impact of inflation since the last increases were implemented.
- 6.3 Charges were last increased across the old Taunton Deane Borough Council area in 2016. Notwithstanding that there was a realignment of fees in Taunton to move to a more readily understood Short and Long Stay parking as part of the Pay on Foot parking project. However, these changes were cost neutral, as outlined and approved by Taunton Deane Full Council in February 2018.
- 6.4 Charges were last raised in the West Somerset Council in 2017.

## **7 Legal Implications (if any)**

- 7.1 Legal powers relating to the setting of Parking Places and fees are outlined in the Road Traffic Regulation Act (1984) (as amended) <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1984/27/contents>
- 7.2 References to specific elements of relevant legislation is set out in section 4 above.
- 7.3 Decisions on setting fees must be reasonable and proportionate and have a view to the reasons for the parking powers in the first place (i.e. the minimising of congestion in town centres). The Council is awarded powers to create off-street parking places – and then to charge for them – where it appears necessary to them for the purposes of relieving or preventing traffic congestion.

## **8 Climate and Sustainability Implications**

- 8.1 This measure is designed to directly influence the impact of traffic and congestion on the environment. The aspiration is to change driver behaviour and support initiatives that affect air quality and traffic management.

## **9 Safeguarding and/or Community Safety Implications**

- 9.1 There are no direct implications arising from this report.

## **10 Equality and Diversity Implications**

- 10.1 There are no implications for the main characteristics outlined by the Equalities Act.
- 10.2 Locally, rurality, low income and economic and social disadvantage are all considered when developing policy. It should be recognised that adoption of this schedule of fees has the potential to adversely affect some in these groups.

## **11 Social Value Implications**

- 11.1 There are no social value implications associated with this report.

## **12 Partnership Implications**

- 12.1 Somerset County Council provision of Park and Ride and other Highways activity are affected by these measures but they are positively affected.

## **13 Health and Wellbeing Implications**

- 13.1 These measures will enable people to give due regard to their own health and wellbeing, in particular in relation to unnecessary car journeys and the possibility of using alternative transport for some trips. This may include greater ability to travel on foot or bicycle.

## **14 Asset Management Implications**

- 14.1 None.

## **15 Data Protection Implications**

- 15.1 None.

## **16 Consultation Implications (if any)**

- 16.1 The existing off street parking places orders will need to be amended and amalgamated into a Notice to reflect these changes. Under regulation 25 of the Local Authorities Traffic Order Regulations (1996) it is possible to vary existing off-street parking charges by notice, i.e. without the need to consult (other than the police). <https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/media/1553/tdbc-off-street-parking-places-order-2019.pdf>  
<https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/media/1556/wsc-off-street-parking-places-order-2017.pdf>

## **17 Scrutiny Comments / Recommendation(s) (if any)**

- 17.1 Any comments and/or recommendations from the Scrutiny Committee on 5 February will be reported verbally to the Executive at its meeting on 10 February as the agenda will already have been published, and will be incorporated into the

report to Full Council on 19 February 2020.

**Democratic Path:**

- **Scrutiny Committee – 5 February 2020**
- **Executive – 10 February 2020**
- **Full Council – 19 February 2020**

**Reporting Frequency:**    **Annually**

**List of Appendices (delete if not applicable)**

Appendix A	Schedule of fees
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**Contact Officers**

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## Appendix A – Schedule of Fees



**SOMERSET WEST AND TAUNTON OFF-STREET PARKING CHARGES 2020/21**

			2020/21			2019/20			
		10% Increase	Charge Incl VAT (rounded)	VAT Rate	Charge Excl VAT	Charge Incl VAT	VAT Rate	Charge Excl VAT	% Increase
<b>Short Stay (TDBC area)</b>									
Coal Orchard, Crescent, Ash Meadows, Duke Elms Parade, Whirligig, Fons George	1 Hour	1.32	1.30	S	1.08	1.20	S	1.00	8.33%
	2 Hours	2.64	2.60	S	2.17	2.40	S	2.00	8.33%
	3 Hours	3.96	4.00	S	3.33	3.60	S	3.00	11.11%
<b>Long Stay (TDBC area)</b>									
Cannon Street, High Street, Orchard, Belvedere, Castle Street, Wood street, Enfield, Firepool, Kilkenny, Tangier, Victoria Gate	1 hour	1.21	1.20	S	1.00	1.10	S	0.92	9.09%
	2 hours	2.42	2.40	S	2.00	2.20	S	1.83	9.09%
	3 hours	3.63	3.60	S	3.00	3.30	S	2.75	9.09%
	4 hours	4.84	4.80	S	4.00	4.40	S	3.67	9.09%
	5 hours	6.05	6.00	S	5.00	5.50	S	4.58	9.09%
	6 hours	7.26	7.30	S	6.08	6.60	S	5.50	10.61%
	7 hours	7.70	7.70	S	6.42	7.00	S	5.83	10.00%
	Over 7 hours	8.25	8.20	S	6.83	7.50	S	6.25	9.33%
<b>TDBC Coach Park</b>									
Tangier Coach Park	All day	6.60	6.60	S	5.50	6.00	S	5.00	10.00%
<b>Wellington</b>									
South Street	1 hour	0.77	0.80	S	0.67	0.70	S	0.58	14.29%
	2 hours	1.10	1.10	S	0.92	1.00	S	0.83	10.00%
	3 hours	1.65	1.60	S	1.33	1.50	S	1.25	6.67%
	4 hours	2.20	2.20	S	1.83	2.00	S	1.67	10.00%
	All day	2.75	2.70	S	2.25	2.50	S	2.08	8.00%
Longforth Road, North Street	2 hours	1.10	1.10	S	0.92	1.00	S	0.83	10.00%
	3 hours	1.65	1.60	S	1.33	1.50	S	1.25	6.67%
	4 hours	2.20	2.20	S	1.83	2.00	S	1.67	10.00%
	All day	2.75	2.70	S	2.25	2.50	S	2.08	8.00%
<b>Minehead-Winter Tariff</b>									
Quay West & Warren Road Upper	1 hour	1.65	1.60	S	1.33	1.50	S	1.25	6.67%
	2 hours	2.86	2.90	S	2.42	2.60	S	2.17	11.54%
	4 hours	4.62	4.60	S	3.83	4.20	S	3.50	9.52%
	All day	6.27	6.30	S	5.25	5.70	S	4.75	10.53%
Clanville	2 hours	1.76	1.80	S	1.50	1.60	S	1.33	12.50%
	All day	4.62	4.60	S	3.83	4.20	S	3.50	9.52%
Alexandra Road	1 hour	0.88	0.90	S	0.75	0.80	S	0.67	12.50%
	2 hours	1.65	1.60	S	1.33	1.50	S	1.25	6.67%
	4 hours	2.75	2.70	S	2.25	2.50	S	2.08	8.00%
	All day	5.17	5.20	S	4.33	4.70	S	3.92	10.64%
Summerland	2 hours	1.10	1.10	S	0.92	1.00	S	0.83	10.00%
North Road	1 hour	1.54	1.50	S	1.25	1.40	S	1.17	7.14%
	2 hours	2.20	2.20	S	1.83	2.00	S	1.67	10.00%
	4 hours	3.08	3.10	S	2.58	2.80	S	2.33	10.71%
	All day	5.17	5.20	S	4.33	4.70	S	3.92	10.64%
<b>Porlock Winter Tariff</b>									
Porlock Central	1 hour	0.88	0.90	S	0.75	0.80	S	0.67	12.50%
	2 hours	1.65	1.60	S	1.33	1.50	S	1.25	6.67%
	4 hours	2.75	2.70	S	2.25	2.50	S	2.08	8.00%
	All day	5.17	5.20	S	4.33	4.70	S	3.92	10.64%
Doverhay	1 hour	0.88	0.90	S	0.75	0.80	S	0.67	12.50%
	2 hours	1.65	1.60	S	1.33	1.50	S	1.25	6.67%
<b>Dunster Winter Tariff</b>									
Dunster Steep	2 hours	1.65	1.60	S	1.33	1.50	S	1.25	6.67%
	4 hours	2.75	2.70	S	2.25	2.50	S	2.08	8.00%
	All day	5.17	5.20	S	4.33	4.70	S	3.92	10.64%
<b>Williton Winter Tariff</b>									
Williton Central	1hour	0.88	0.90	S	0.75	0.80	S	0.67	12.50%
	2 hours	1.65	1.60	S	1.33	1.50	S	1.25	6.67%
	4 hours	2.75	2.70	S	2.25	2.50	S	2.08	8.00%
	All day	5.17	5.20	S	4.33	4.70	S	3.92	10.64%
<b>Watchet Winter Tariff</b>									
Anchor Street, Market Street, Swain Street, Harbour Road, West Pier	1 hour	0.88	0.90	S	0.75	0.80	S	0.67	12.50%
	2 hours	1.65	1.60	S	1.33	1.50	S	1.25	6.67%
	4 hours	2.75	2.70	S	2.25	2.50	S	2.08	8.00%
	All day	5.17	5.20	S	4.33	4.70	S	3.92	10.64%
<b>Dulverton Winter &amp; Summer Tariff</b>									
Lion Stables	1 hour	0.77	0.80	S	0.67	0.70	S	0.58	14.29%
	2 hours	1.65	1.60	S	1.33	1.50	S	1.25	6.67%
	3 hours	2.20	2.20	S	1.83	2.00	S	1.67	10.00%
	All day	4.95	5.00	S	4.17	4.50	S	3.75	11.11%
<b>Guildhall Winter &amp; Summer Tariff</b>									
	1 hour	0.77	0.80	S	0.67	0.70	S	0.58	14.29%
	2 hours	1.65	1.60	S	1.33	1.50	S	1.25	6.67%
	3 hours	2.20	2.20	S	1.83	2.00	S	1.67	10.00%
	All day	4.95	5.00	S	4.17	4.50	S	3.75	11.11%

**SOMERSET WEST AND TAUNTON OFF-STREET PARKING CHARGES 2020/21**

			2020/21			2019/20			
		10% Increase	Charge Incl VAT (rounded)	VAT Rate	Charge Excl VAT	Charge Incl VAT	VAT Rate	Charge Excl VAT	% Increase
<b>Exmoor House Winter &amp; Summer Tariff</b>									
	1 hour	0.77	0.80	S	0.67	0.70	S	0.58	14.29%
	2 hours	1.65	1.60	S	1.33	1.50	S	1.25	6.67%
	3 hours	2.20	2.20	S	1.83	2.00	S	1.67	10.00%
	All day	4.95	5.00	S	4.17	4.50	S	3.75	11.11%
<b>Minehead Summer Tariff</b>									
Quay West, Warren Road Upper	1 hour	1.65	1.60	S	1.33	1.50	S	1.25	6.67%
	2 hours	3.30	3.30	S	2.75	3.00	S	2.50	10.00%
	4 hours	4.95	5.00	S	4.17	4.50	S	3.75	11.11%
	All day	6.60	6.60	S	5.50	6.00	S	5.00	10.00%
Clanville	2 hours	2.75	2.70	S	2.25	2.50	S	2.08	8.00%
	All day	5.50	5.50	S	4.58	5.00	S	4.17	10.00%
Alexandra Road	1 hour	1.10	1.10	S	0.92	1.00	S	0.83	10.00%
	2 hours	2.75	2.70	S	2.25	2.50	S	2.08	8.00%
	4 hours	3.30	3.30	S	2.75	3.00	S	2.50	10.00%
	All day	5.50	5.50	S	4.58	5.00	S	4.17	10.00%
Summerland	2 hours	1.10	1.10	S	0.92	1.00	S	0.83	10.00%
North Road	1 hour	1.10	1.10	S	0.92	1.00	S	0.83	10.00%
	2 hours	2.75	2.70	S	2.25	2.50	S	2.08	8.00%
	4 hours	3.30	3.30	S	2.75	3.00	S	2.50	10.00%
	All day	5.50	5.50	S	4.58	5.00	S	4.17	10.00%
<b>Porlock Summer Tariff</b>									
Porlock Central	1 hour	1.10	1.10	S	0.92	1.00	S	0.83	10.00%
	2 hours	2.20	2.20	S	1.83	2.00	S	1.67	10.00%
	4 hours	3.30	3.30	S	2.75	3.00	S	2.50	10.00%
	All day	5.50	5.50	S	4.58	5.00	S	4.17	10.00%
Doverhay	1 hour	1.10	1.10	S	0.92	1.00	S	0.83	10.00%
	2 hours	2.20	2.20	S	1.83	2.00	S	1.67	10.00%
<b>Dunster Summer Tariff</b>									
Dunster Steep	2 hours	2.20	2.20	S	1.83	2.00	S	1.67	10.00%
	4 hours	3.30	3.30	S	2.75	3.00	S	2.50	10.00%
	All day	5.50	5.50	S	4.58	5.00	S	4.17	10.00%
Park Street	1 hour	1.10	1.10	S	0.92	1.00	S	0.83	10.00%
	2 hours	2.20	2.20	S	1.83	2.00	S	1.67	10.00%
	4 hours	3.30	3.30	S	2.75	3.00	S	2.50	10.00%
	All day	5.50	5.50	S	4.58	5.00	S	4.17	10.00%
<b>Williton Summer Tariff</b>									
Central	1 hour	1.10	1.10	S	0.92	1.00	S	0.83	10.00%
	2 hours	2.20	2.20	S	1.83	2.00	S	1.67	10.00%
	4 hours	3.30	3.30	S	2.75	3.00	S	2.50	10.00%
	All day	5.50	5.50	S	4.58	5.00	S	4.17	10.00%
<b>Watchet Summer Tariff</b>									
Anchor Street, Market Street, Swain Street, Harbour Road, West Pier	1 hour	1.10	1.10	S	0.92	1.00	S	0.83	10.00%
	2 hours	2.20	2.20	S	1.83	2.00	S	1.67	10.00%
	4 hours	3.30	3.30	S	2.75	3.00	S	2.50	10.00%
	All day	5.50	5.50	S	4.58	5.00	S	4.17	10.00%
<b>Dulverton Summer Tariff</b>									
Lion Stables, Guildhall, Exmoor House	1 hour	0.77	0.80	S	0.67	0.70	S	0.58	14.29%
	2 hours	1.65	1.60	S	1.33	1.50	S	1.25	6.67%
	3 hours	2.20	2.20	S	1.83	2.00	S	1.67	10.00%
	All day	4.95	5.00	S	4.17	4.50	S	3.75	11.11%
Shopper 1 permit TDBC area	6 months	1,089.00	1,090.00	S	908.33	990.00	S	825.00	10.10%
	Annual	2,178.00	2,180.00	S	1,816.67	1,980.00	S	1,650.00	10.10%
Shopper 2 permit TDBC area	6 months	847.00	845.00	S	704.17	770.00	S	641.67	9.74%
	Annual	1,694.00	1,695.00	S	1,412.50	1,540.00	S	1,283.33	10.06%
Commuter permit TDBC area	6months	726.00	725.00	S	604.17	660.00	S	550.00	9.85%
	Annual	1,452.00	1,450.00	S	1,208.33	1,320.00	S	1,100.00	9.85%
Shopper Permit WSC area	Annual	44.00	45.00	S	37.50	40.00	S	33.33	12.50%
Named car park permits WSC area	6 months	165.00	165.00	S	137.50	150.00	S	125.00	10.00%
	Annual	214.50	215.00	S	179.17	195.00	S	162.50	10.26%
Business permits WSC area	6 months	231.00	230.00	S	191.67	210.00	S	175.00	9.52%
	Annual	423.50	425.00	S	354.17	385.00	S	320.83	10.39%
District permits WSC area	Before 10.00am (annual)	27.50	27.00	S	22.50	25.00	S	20.83	8.00%
	Weekly	27.50	27.00	S	22.50	25.00	S	20.83	8.00%
	Six monthly	187.00	185.00	S	154.17	170.00	S	141.67	8.82%
	Annual	330.00	330.00	S	275.00	300.00	S	250.00	10.00%
Parson Street WSC area	Annual	165.00	165.00	S	137.50	150.00	S	125.00	10.00%



## EXECUTIVE

Meeting	Draft Agenda Items
<b>22 January 2020</b>	SWP Annual Business Case
(FC 26 February)	Otterford Travellers Site
	Taunton Strategic Flood Alleviation Improvements Phase 2
	HRA Business Plan
	HRA Budget Setting
	HRA Acquisitions (confidential)
	East Quay Wall
	Budget Monitoring
	Budget Update and Outline MTFP 2020/21
<b>28 January 2020</b>	Design Guide - Masterplan Framework for the Major Development Allocations
(FC 26 February)	Taunton Garden Town Public Realm Guide
	SWT Prosperity/Economic Development Strategy
	Voluntary and Community Sector Grants Annual Fund Review
	Land South of Langaller
	HPC S106 Tourism Delivery Plan
<b>10 February 2020</b>	General Fund Revenue Budget and Capital Estimates 2020/21 (fees and charges)
(FC 19 February)	Capital, Investment and Treasury Management Strategies 2020/21
	Car Park Fees and Charges
	FOLGIS Report
	Performance Report (For Information)
	Otterford Travellers Site
	Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy and Action Plan
	Disposal of Land (confidential)
	P&R Procurement (confidential)
<b>18 March 2020</b>	Housing Strategy - Action Plan for SWT
(FC 31 March)	District Housing Action Plan
	Transformation - Lessons Learned - Audit
	North Taunton Woolaway Project - Phase B Update and Home Owner Acquisition Budget
	Annual Business Plan 2020/21

	Pay Policy Statement
	Small Scale Industrial Space LDO
	Monkton Heathfield Phase 2 Masterplan
	CIM Funding Recommendations from HPC POB
	FHSF HIF
	CIL Allocations
	Cannington CIM Fund Transfer
	Wellington Railway Station/Metro Link
	HRA Acquisitions (confidential) 1
	HRA Acquisitions (confidential) 2
	Social Value Strategy and Priorities
	Everyone Active Update
	Formation of Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) for Commercial Trading
	Disposal of HRA Property (confidential)
	Disposal of Development Property (confidential)
<b>22 April 2020</b>	Hinkley Phase 3 - Housing Funding Strategy
<b>May 2020</b>	Somerset West and Taunton Districtwide Design Guide & Urban Design Masterplan Frameworks - Feedback
	Public Realm Design Guide for Taunton Garden Town – Feedback
<b>June 2020</b>	Commercial Investment Strategy Review
<b>August 2020</b>	SWT Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience Plan and Somereste Wide Climate Change Strategy
<b>December 2020</b>	Commercial Investment Strategy Review

## FULL COUNCIL

Meeting	Draft Agenda Items
<b>3 December 2019</b>	Garden Town Charter and Checklist
	Creech St Michael Neighbourhood Development Plan
	North Taunton Woolaway Project - Phase A Update and Home Owner Acquisition Budget
	Council Tax Support Scheme for 2020/21
	Adoption of the International Definition of Anti-Semitism
	Financial Monitoring
<b>17 December 2019</b>	XR Petition
	Seaward Way (confidential)
	SWT Commercial Investment Strategy (confidential)
<b>14 January 2020</b>	Brewhouse Petition
	Taunton Bus Station (confidential)
	Firepool (confidential)
<b>27 January 2020</b>	East Quay Wall
(additional)	Environment Bill (for information)
	SWT Meeting Timetable
	HRA Acquisitions (confidential)
	Taunton BID (confidential)
<b>19 February 2020</b>	HRA Revenue Budget and Capital Programme Budget 2020/21
Budget Only	General Fund Revenue Budget and Capital Programme 2020/21 (fees and charges)
	Car Park Fees and Charges
	Capital, Investment and Treasury Management Strategies 2020/21
	Council Tax Resolution 2020/21
	HRA Business Plan Review
	Voluntary and Community Sector Grants Annual Fund Review
<b>26 February 2020</b>	Small Scale Industrial Space LDO
	Voluntary and Community Sector Grants Annual Fund Review
	FOLGIS Report
	Taunton Strategic Flood Alleviation Improvements Phase 2
	HPC S106 Tourism Delivery Plan

	SWT Prosperity/Economic Development Strategy
	Statement of Licensing and Gambling Policy
	CCTV
	B3191 SCC Report
	Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy and Action Plan
	Otterford Travellers Site
	P&R Procurement (confidential)
	PFH Reports
<b>31 March 2020</b>	North Taunton Woolaway Project - Phase B Update and Home Owner Acquisition Budget
	Pay Policy Statement
	Transformation - Lessons Learned - Audit
	Formation of Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) for Commercial Trading
	Charter for Compassion
	Tangier (confidential)
	Tonedale Mill (confidential)
	Scrutiny Annual Report
	PFH Year Summary
<b>August 2020</b>	SWT Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience Plan and Somerste Wide Climate Change Strategy

**SCRUTINY**

Meeting	Draft Agenda Items	Lead Officer	Agenda Setting
<b>5th February 2020</b>	Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy	Mark Leeman and H. Cook	
DH	CCG Fit For My Future Report	CCG	
	General Fund Revenue Budget and Capital Estimates 2020/21	Finance	
	Car Park Fees and Charges	S. Weetch/E. Collacott	
	FOLGIS Report	<i>J. Hassett</i>	
	Housing Revenue Account Budget Estimates 2020/21	Kerry Prisco	
<b>4th March 2020</b>	Empty Homes Update Report	Steve Perry	
WSH	Infrastructure Planning, Governance Arrangements and CIL Funding Update	Nick Bryant	
	<i>FOLGIS Report - TBC</i>		
	<i>Transformation Audit - TBC</i>		
	Hinkley Phase 3 Housing Funding Strategy	Mark Leeman	
	Social Value	Paul Harding & Mark Leeman	
<b>8th April 2020</b>	Travellers Policy Update	Ann Rhodes	
DH	Performance Update (For Information)	Malcolm Riches	
	Firepool Next Steps Report	Joe Wharton	
<b>13 May 2020</b>			
WSH			
<b>TBC</b>	Leisure Operator Performance Update Otterford B Housing Strategy Action Plan for SWT	Natalie Green Gerry Mills Mark Leeman	

