

## SWT Corporate Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday, 1st June, 2022,  
6.15 pm

The John Meikle Room - The Deane  
House

The logo for Somerset West and Taunton, featuring the text "Somerset West and Taunton" in white on a teal background with a white swoosh at the bottom right.

### Agenda

**1. Appointment of Vice Chair**

To receive any apologies for absence.

**2. Apologies**

**3. Minutes of the previous Corporate Scrutiny Committee**

To approve the minutes of the previous meeting of the Committee held on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2022.

(Pages 5 - 12)

**4. 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.)

**5. 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 before Councillors debate the issue.

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webpage, but you can also access them on the [Somerset West and Taunton webcasting website](#).

- 6. Corporate Scrutiny Request/Recommendation Trackers** (Pages 13 - 40)

To update the Scrutiny Committee on the progress of resolutions and recommendations from previous meetings of the Committee.
- 7. Corporate Scrutiny Committee Forward Plan** (Pages 41 - 42)

To receive items and review the Forward Plan.
- 8. Executive and Full Council Forward Plan** (Pages 43 - 48)
- 9. Use of Urgency Powers and Supplementary Capital Budget for Coal Orchard Regeneration Project** (Pages 49 - 54)

This matter is the responsibility of the Executive Member for Corporate Resources

Report Author: Chris Hall, Director of Place and Climate Change
- 10. Access to Information - Exclusion of Press and Public (Appendix 1 and 4 only)**

During discussion of the following item (Appendix 1 and 4 only) it may be necessary to pass the following resolution to exclude the press and public having reflected on Article 13 13.02(e) (a presumption in favour of openness) of the Constitution. This decision may be required because consideration of this matter in public may disclose information falling within one of the descriptions of exempt information in Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972. Corporate Scrutiny will need to decide whether, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption, outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Recommend that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the next item of business (Appendix 1 and 4 only) on the ground that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 respectively of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, namely information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
- 11. Wellington Land Acquisition (The Green Spaces)** (Pages 55 - 88)

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor for

Economic Development & Asset Management

Report Authors: Joe Wharton, Assistant Director Major and  
Special Projects & Dr Joanne O'Hara, Programme Manager  
– Heritage at Risk

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A Pritchard', with a horizontal line underneath.

**ANDREW PRITCHARD**  
**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 Corporate Scrutiny Committee - 2 March 2022**

Present: Councillor Gwil Wren (Chair)

Councillors Ian Aldridge, Benet Allen, Marcus Barr, Sue Buller, Norman Cavill, Simon Coles, Ed Firmin, Roger Habgood, John Hassall, Libby Lisgo and Loretta Whetlor

Officers: John Dyson, Paul Fitzgerald, Steve Plenty, Kerry Prisco, Andrew Pritchard, Malcolm Riches, Richard Sealy, James Barrah, Chris Hall and Alison North

Also Present: Councillors Ross Henley, Janet Lloyd, Vivienne Stock-Williams and Brenda Weston

(The meeting commenced at 6.18 pm)

**11. Apologies**

The Chair advised before commencing the meeting that the order of agenda items had changed so that the Capital, Investment and Treasury Strategies 2022/23 to 2024/25 report would become item 9 and then be followed by the Capital, Investment and Treasury Strategies 2022/23 to 2024/25 report then finally the Corporate Performance Report as at Quarter 3 2021/22.

The Committee held a moment of reflection for Ukraine before starting the meeting.

Apologies were received from councillors Barrie Hall, Habib Farbahi and Nick Thwaites who was substituted by councillor Roger Habgood.

**12. Minutes of the previous Corporate Scrutiny Committee Meetings held on 26 January and 2 February 2022**

The Committee resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2022.

The Committee resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2022.

**13. 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 M Barr	All Items	Wellington	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr N Cavill	All Items	West Monkton	Personal	Spoke and Voted

Cllr S Coles	All Items	SCC & Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr L Lisgo	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr J Lloyd	All Items	Wellington & Sampford Arundel	Personal	Spoke
Cllr V Stock-Williams	All Items	Wellington	Personal	Spoke
Cllr B Weston	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke
Cllr L Whetlor	All Items	Watchet	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr G Wren	All Items	Clerk to Milverton PC	Personal	Spoke and Voted

14. **Public Participation**

There were no requests for public participation.

15. **Corporate Scrutiny Request/Recommendation Trackers**

The Chair noted the Corporate Scrutiny Request and Recommendation trackers.

16. **Corporate Scrutiny Committee Forward Plan**

The Chair advised that the meeting scheduled for 4<sup>th</sup> May 2022 would likely be cancelled due to the local elections taking place the following day.

The Committee resolved to note the forward plan.

17. **Executive and Full Council Forward Plan**

The Chair noted the forward plans.

18. **Corporate Scrutiny Chair's Annual Report**

The Committee resolved to note the Chair's Annual Report.

19. **Capital, Investment and Treasury Strategies 2022/23 to 2024/25**

The Corporate Finance Manager introduced the report and gave a presentation. The following points were raised during the presentation:

- The report included the capital strategy, investment strategy and the treasury management strategy. It also included the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy Statement, Prudential and Treasury indicators and laid out the Council's parameters for treasury management and borrowing.

- The report was a legal requirement of the Local Government Act 2003. It was made in line with the CIPFA Codes of Practice.
- The purpose of the report was to define how the capital programme was affordable and fit for purpose, to map investments and to control how treasury management activities were conducted within the Council.
- The report and the strategies would need Full Council approval.
- The strategies aligned with the revenue budgets, Housing Revenue Account (HRA) business plan and the capital programme.
- The report was produced as part of an annual cycle.
- Internal borrowing was used by the Council as part of treasury management to reduce risk exposure for the Council.
- It was clarified that within the report short-term borrowing was classed as borrowing under a year in length, whereas long-term borrowing was borrowing which was for a period greater than a year.

During the debate the following points were raised:

- It was asked what provision was in place for hyper-inflation. Officers responded that there was no specific provision for hyper-inflation as at the time the report was written it was not a possibility. Where borrowing was undertaken by the authority it was sought to be undertaken at a low rate which protected against rising interest rates and inflation.
- It was suggested that it was good that CIPFA rules had been tightened and it was raised that it seemed likely CIPFA rules would tighten further and that auditors would become stricter at year end.
- Concerns were raised about the impact of sudden changes in interest rates on borrowing.
- It was asked how many staff within the finance team were CIPFA trained. It was responded by the Section 151 (S151) Officer that the Council was very fortunate in terms of the number of staff within the finance team who were CIPFA trained. Team members regularly attended training and kept up with government guidance.
- It was asked how the risk register would be managed going forward regarding borrowing. Officers responded that there was a live risk register across the authority, which was regularly updated and reviewed, including reports being taken to the Audit and Governance Committee on a quarterly basis. The Council had treasury management advisors who would contact the Council as soon as they believed there was something the Council should respond to.
- It was asked about the complexity of the borrowing model now due to sources of borrowing having increased and whether this meant managing borrowing took greater officer time. Officers responded that it did take more officer time and that great care was taken in the management of the borrowing portfolio. The officer time invested paid off as it allowed better rates to be secured through research.
- It was raised that there was a drop predicted in the investment portfolio income in two years' time and it was asked what the factors were that had led to that decrease being predicted. It was responded by the S151 officer that the net income reduced as the cost of financing those investments increased due to increased borrowing costs.

- It was asked what proportion of the debt was serviced on long-term loans. It was responded by officers that at present 28% of borrowing was short-term, 72% long-term. Most of the long-term borrowing was for the HRA. At present more short-term borrowing was being done than previously to keep options open for the new Unitary council.
- It was asked whether there was also medium-term borrowing taken out by the Council. Officers responded that this was the case but that for the purpose of the report borrowing had been separated into short-term and long-term borrowing.
- Officers work thus far was commended and it was asked that officers continue to consider opportunities for obtaining good, affordable borrowing.
- It was asked what was in place to help those who were struggling to pay their council tax due to the rise in living costs. Officers responded that the Council was very aware of the impact the current national situation would have on some residents. The best thing anyone who was struggling could do was to contact the Council and speak to officers. The £150 payment from government for all residents in council tax bands A-D would hopefully be going out in early April.
- It was asked about the impact of Local Government Reorganisation on borrowing. Officers responded that reviewing and planning for borrowing was part of the workplan for the Finance Workstream which officers were working on as part of the transition work to the new authority.
- It was asked what the risk of the commercial investment portfolio was as a result of increasing interest rates. It was responded by officers that there was a risk and officers would continue to regularly review the situation as was normally done with all risks. However, the Council's borrowing would decrease each year so this would help to balance out rises in interest rates.
- It was raised that due to some of the commercial investment portfolio only having been completed in December 2021, only one quarter's worth of rent had been received from some properties in the current financial year.
- It was asked what interest was charged on internal borrowing. Officers responded that as interest was lower than borrowing costs currently, internal borrowing cost the Council less than external borrowing would as well as reducing risk to the Council. Interest was charged on borrowing between the HRA and General Fund and the interest was calculated at year end.
- A discrepancy in the report was highlighted. Officers responded that they would correct this ahead of the report progressing further through the democratic process.
- It was raised that in the current financial year, 21% of the Council's net revenue was spent on interest, next year it would be 23.1% of the Council's net revenue and by 2024/2025 it would be 38%. This raised a question of long-term sustainability of borrowing. Officers responded that the equivalent gross figures were predicted to be £4.03m (4.02% of turnover) in the current year, £3.93m (5.04% of turnover) the following year and £5.99m (7.37% of turnover) in 2024/25.

Cllr Buller left the meeting at this point, 19:36

- The Chair thanked officers for their report.

Councillor Whetlor left the meeting and then returned during the item so could not vote on the item.

The Committee resolved to note the recommendations in the report;  
2.1 Full Council is recommended to approve the CIT Strategies and MRP Statement for adoption with effect from 1 April 2022.

Cllr Firmin left the meeting 19:39.

20. **General Fund Financial Performance Report for Quarter 3 of 2021/22 (31 December)**

The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Resources introduced the report and raised the following points:

- The General Fund was forecasting an underspend of £620,000 after taking into account the total amount of proposed carry forwards which was just over £2m and a transfer of £570,000 to capital financing. Full Council approved the £570,000 transfer to capital financing last week.
- Covid-19 and the pace of economic recovery had continued to significantly impact the Council. Car parking income still remained significantly decreased. Nationally there have been similar reductions in car parking income as behaviours had changed.
- The Council remained in a strong financial position and continued to have General Fund reserves above the minimum required. Significant financial risks, including the transition to a new unitary authority, remained so holding reserves above minimum remained prudent.
- The current forecast for the financial year was an underspend of £1.7m and slippage of £8.3m.

During the debate the following points were raised:

- It was raised that parking income was being lost as a result of barriers failing to work, meaning that they had to be left open. The portfolio holder agreed that barriers malfunctioning was not good and noted that any malfunctions should be reported to the responsible officer.
- It was asked how much the Council had received in grants from the government over the past two years. Officers responded that they would provide a written answer.
- It was raised that there was not sufficient car parking in Watchet and that the car parks there were often full in Watchet.
- It was raised that within Taunton it was possible more people were using the park and ride at present as it was free.
- It was raised that the Community Scrutiny Committee had requested a report on car parking but had not received it yet.
- It was raised that Somerset West and Taunton Council had acted rightly in saving the park and ride for Taunton.
- It was suggested that it should be shown transparently what car parking income was used for.
- It was raised that there was a shortfall on expenditure at the end of the quarter as not as much money had been spent as expected. This appeared to happen every year. Allocation of budgets needed to be managed better so

that there would be more certainty and less volatility in figures particularly given local government reorganisation and how the Council's budgeting would feed into the budgeting for the new unitary authority. The Section 151 Officer responded that it was not possible to always predict the future with complete accuracy, but finance officers and budget holders worked closely together and met monthly to review forecasts and update assumptions in order to identify changes against budget as soon as possible so early reporting was enabled.

- Thanks were given to officers for their hard work.
- It was raised that there was complex spend across the Council meaning it was more difficult to accurately predict spend. It was asked what the average variation from planned budget was at the end of each financial year. The Chief Executive responded that there had been volatility in the first few years of the Council for example as a result of the pandemic and the Council had not had a line-by-line finance system when it was first created but this had now been built meaning that the 2022-23 should be more accurate. Work had already begun to ensure that the actual figures, not assumptions, would be ready for the draft budget process for the new authority. There had been changes to the budget in the current financial year but that had been for specific reasons in each case which would be documented.
- It was requested that any underspends for the next financial year would be identified as early as possible.
- Congratulations were given to the Section 151 officer and his team.

The Committee resolved to note the recommendations in the report;

2.1 This report is to be noted as the Council's forecast financial performance and projected reserves position for 2021/22 financial year as at 31 December 2021.

## 21. **Corporate Performance Report as at Quarter 3 2021/22**

The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Resources introduced the report and raised the following points:

- The report included the position in respect of the Council's key performance indicators (KPIs) and a summary of the Council's key business risks and issues together with the current status of actions being taken to address the risks and issues.
- There were five red and two amber indicators for KPIs which were being monitored closely.
- The report detailed five business risks and three issues.
- The response rate for freedom of information (FOI) requests had improved.
- Call response wait times had increased. This was due to more calls being received and average call durations having increased. Issues with waste and the rollout of RecycleMore had increased calls. Staff turnover within the team had also contributed to call response wait times increasing. Calls on average were answered in 2 minutes 44 seconds.
- Overall performance was strong in most areas. Over 88% of the year's council tax had been collected. Planning applications for large developments determined within 13 weeks was 100%.

Durning the debate the following points were raised:

- It was asked if figures were available for how many repeat calls were received for issues which were not dealt with in the first instance. Officers would provide a written response.
- It was asked whether improvements to Firmstep were being considered. Officers responded that Firmstep was being continually improved and recently work had been done around improving how complaints were processed.
- It was asked how many calls could be attributed to the rollout of RecycleMore. Officers responded that waste calls and the increase in calls this resulted in had been dealt with relatively well, particular team members were assigned to take waste calls and that system worked well. However, more generally in all areas the numbers of calls and length of time of calls had increased.
- It was asked if much time was lost to staff sickness, in particular stress due to the nature of the role of customer services being quite stressful. Officers responded that days were lost to stress and sickness but that it was managed closely, and time was spent investing in the staff and regularly checking in on their welfare.
- It was asked what directions councillors could give to their constituents to help with the tax rebate government was offering to help with rising energy bills. Officers responded that councillors could encourage residents to sign up to pay for their council tax by direct debit as this would mean they would receive the rebate payment faster. Managing expectations around when the payments would go out was also important as payments would not be received until late April.
- It was asked in which areas the higher numbers of complaints were being received and if these were the usual areas higher numbers of complaints were seen in. Officers responded that they would provide a written response as to the different areas where higher numbers of complaints were received. Some areas such as Housing had seen a significant increase in complaints, and this was a trend which was reflected nationally in housing.
- It was raised that experiences of interacting with customer services had been positive and was asked if thanks could be passed onto the team.
- It was questioned whether customer expectations rising had led to the increase in complaints.
- It was asked whether, excluding the increase in housing complaints, the number of complaints had increased. Officers responded that they would provide a written response.
- It was asked about the statistics for enforcement in various areas across the Council, such as environmental health. Officers responded that they would provide a written answer following the meeting.
- It was asked if any comparisons were available for call wait times with other Somerset authorities. Officers would provide a written answer after the meeting.
- Support was given for continuing to improve Firmstep and for the improvements already made.
- It was requested that long-term and short-term staff sickness be separated out in the report and asked whether Covid had had a big impact on staff sickness. Officers would provide a written answer after the meeting.

- It was asked how many planning enforcement orders were currently out and active versus how many had been closed down. Officers would provide a written answer after the meeting.
- It was suggested that it may be better to keep more staff on phones rather than moving them to work in reception.
- It was asked if staff turnover figures could be provided, particularly for planning staff. It was responded that there was an indicator which provided staff turnover for the whole organisation, but that more detailed figures could be provided in a written response.
- It was asked that more information be given on planning in these reports and that it be reported in such a way that shows the issues with planning as a result of the phosphates issue. Officers responded that they would be willing to provide alternate data sets if members wished for any other data measurements to be included in the report.

Councillor John Hassall and Cllr Whetlor left the room during the item and then returned and so could not vote on the item.

Cllr John Hassall left the meeting at 20:40

The Committee resolved to note the recommendations in the report;  
The Scrutiny Committee and Executive are asked to note the Council's performance report for quarter 3.

(The Meeting ended at 9.01 pm)

**SOMERSET WEST AND TAUNTON COUNCIL**  
CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WRITTEN ANSWERS TRACKER 2021/22

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Date of Cttee	Scrutiny Cttee Request for information	Decision Maker /Directorate Responsible	Response to request for information	Date of response	Scrutiny Officer Comments/Update
07/07/21	Q) <i>Outturn Report - Can the Finance team provide a comparison with this year's outturn and last years on debts written off?</i>	Cllr Ross Henley/Finance			Understood this information can be provided.
07/07/21	Q) <i>Performance Report – Extensions to Planning applications due to phosphates – further detail on how many had had multiple extensions?</i>	Cllr Mike Rigby / Planning	We don't hold that information and I am not clear of the relevance of whether they have had multiple extensions. The more pertinent information is the number of applications which are currently held in abeyance due to the need to provide measures to mitigate the impact of development on the Somerset Levels and Moors Ramsar site. As Rebecca reported to Planning Committee we currently have approximately 100 applications equating to approximately 2,300 dwellings and 13 sites awaiting the discharge of conditions equating to approximately 450 dwellings.	01/09/21	A verbal update was given to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee by Alison Blom-Cooper during the committee meeting on 3/11/21.
01/09/21	<i>2021/22 General Fund Financial Monitoring as at Qtr1</i>	Cllr R Henley & Cllr M Rigby /	Awaiting response. <i>(Check details of Qtr2 monitoring)</i>	10/11/21	Finance Business Partner currently checking with Stuart Noyce (may be a

Agenda Item 6

	Q) Collation of parking income was requested along with the projected shortfall with comparison to pre pandemic levels.	Finance/ Parking			delay due to leave commitments)
01/09/21	<i>2021/22 General Fund Financial Monitoring as at Qtr1 –</i> Q) Appendix A compared to the budget agreed in February was considered, with a requested for further information in comparison to the detail of the variances.	Cllr R Henley / Finance	Paul Maclean has asked Cllr Buller to contact him direct so that he can fully understand the query and provide a satisfactory response. - First email was 07/09/21 - To be followed up.		Paul Maclean – can provide a detailed written response. Email fwd on.  Emily Collacott and Paul Maclean.
01/09/21	<i>2021/22 – HRA Financial Monitoring as at Q1 -</i> There had been a revenue forecast overspend of £610k, with the recommendation setting out £869k, information relating to the variance in the figures was requested.	Cllr F Smith / Housing	The amount of £869k has been moved from HRA earmarked reserves to the HRA general reserves therefore increases the level of general reserves – this figure is not included in the Q1 year-end forecast	10/11/21	Information provided by Emily Collacott and confirmed by Kerry Prisco. Email dated 10/11/21
3/11/21	<i>Innovation District Update –</i> A request was made for the full report from the EIBC study. During the meeting Chris Hall agreed to supply a	Cllr M Kravis/ Development & Place	Chris Hall will redact the report and then make it available to members.	8/11/21	The redacted version of the report was published as part of the Executive Committee report for the Executive

	redacted version due to commercial sensitivity.				meeting held on 17 <sup>th</sup> November.
01/12/21	<p><i>Corporate Performance Report Q2 –</i></p> <p>QA) It was questioned whether an ecologist had been appointed to work on phosphates.</p> <p>QB) It was questioned how soon it is possible for an incoming call to be answered whether the wait time for calls to be answered included the automatic messaging at the start of the call.</p>	Cllr R Henley / Various Officers	<p>We advertised and failed to fill the agreed post of Nutrient Neutrality Officer and so we have a secondee from Arup on a part-time basis on a years contract to support the phosphates project. She is an ecologist.</p> <p>We do not currently include the time taken to listen to the messages and options at the beginning of the call.</p> <p>The benchmarking undertaken when the team was created found that most other organisations measure answering times from the same point (as all have statements about calls being recorded, GDPR etc). For SWT, the average time spent in the call routing process is around 80 seconds but this depends on the customer's choices on each call.</p> <p><i>Awaiting updated response from Lisa Tuck</i></p> <p>The target of 44 days was set in December 2020 for the current financial year and was based on Quarter</p>	10/12/21	Questions sourced as part of the Qtr 2 performance report by Malcolm Riches

	<p>QC) It was questioned how many quality employment opportunities had the Council attracted in the last few years, in terms of productivity what was the percentage increase and in which sectors.</p> <p>QD) It was questioned whether the average relet time of 44 days under homes and communities was normal.</p>		<p>2 Housemark metrics that showed a median performance of 44.5 days for District Councils that held housing stock at that time. In practice, meeting this target has been an enormous challenge both for us and across the Housing sector and we are currently falling short, as are most other Housing Providers. To illustrate this, Housemark data showed that the District Council average void turnaround time had increased to 49.8 days by Quarter 4 of 2020/21 (and no doubt has continued to further increase this year). Key factors that have affected turnaround time in this financial year have been:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of trades-staff due to Covid</li> <li>• Trades staff being re-prioritised onto repairs work to clear the backlog built up during Covid lockdown (when we only undertook emergency repairs to minimise the risk of transmission and in line with government guidance).</li> <li>• Inability to recruit skilled trades staff, due to a very competitive market, including the impact of the Hinkley project attracting workers to EDF.</li> <li>• Delays in receiving a range of materials to complete Voids works, due to Covid, Brexit and other external factors.</li> </ul> <p>This issue is not unique to SWT Council and is being experienced right across the Housing Sector. The Housing Directorate has an established plan to improve our Voids turnaround times that focuses on a number of areas of potential improvement and we are meeting regularly to ensure that progress is made on bringing average times down.</p>	04/01/2021	Simon Lewis
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As a Housing Management team, we also review our performance indicators as part of a wider suite to give us a rounded view of performance with respect to letting of properties. The Pulse statistical data for September 2021 does show us in the top quartile for the indicators “Proportion of dwellings vacant, but available to let”, and only marginally outside of top quartile performance for ‘Proportion of social homes let”, so our performance overall does give us some confidence that although improvement is required, we are not significantly out of step with other Housing Providers.

This relates to the General Fund monitoring report, Table 3 on p52.  
It is an improved position on asset management income compared to last year by c£150k. This is due to leases completing earlier than expected for units at Seaward Way and Lisieux Way.

At the end of September, performance for the year-to-date is 81% which is exceeding the target of 80%. Fly-tipping is dealt with by an external contactor and performance has improved during the year. Following a drop in performance in the first few months of this year, partly driven by a rise in the amount of fly-tipping, we continue to work closely with the contractor to closely monitor performance and drive improvement. It is important to note that the target

			<p>relates to the speed of response rather than a failure to respond.</p> <p>The national performance indicator which looks at the Council's performance in determining planning applications (major, minor and other) looks at the speed with which applications are dealt with within the statutory time period or an agreed extended period. Those applications which are held in abeyance as a result of the need to provide mitigation to ensure nutrient neutrality and ensure there is no impact on the Somerset Levels and Moors Ramsar site have not yet been determined and so would not be included in these figures. Most of these applications have an agreed extension of time so if they are determined in line with this agreement they will meet the targets.</p> <p><i>Answer listed under Recommendation Tracker as taken to Executive on 15 December 2021</i></p>	<p>04/01/2021</p> <p>04/01/2021</p>	<p>Malcolm Riches</p> <p>Malcolm Riches</p>
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QE) It was asked whether the asset management and completion of leases earlier than expected could be elaborated upon and clarification given.

QF) Fly tipping was raised as being a big issue and it was questioned what was being done to address this.

Cllr Mike Rigby

04/01/2021

Malcolm Riches

QG) Planning applications had been delayed due to phosphates, there were over 120 applications waiting to be decided so why does the report claim a high level of success. It was asked if officers could give a date for when these applications would be coming forward and say how many of the applications waiting were likely to go forward.

Cllr Marcus Kravis

Chris Hall issued response in consultation with the PFH – Marcus Kravis

	<p>QH) It was raised that a feasibility study for Employment Land in West Somerset was mentioned in the report, and it was asked why a feasibility for the whole of the district was not being undertaken. It was asked where the budget for this study was coming from and whether it was revenue or capital funds.</p>											
01/12/21	<p><i>2021-22 General Fund Financial Monitoring as at Q2 -</i> Q) An update was requested on how well asset management under External Operations and Climate Change was performing compared to previous years.</p>	Cllr R Henley / External Operations	<b>Asset Management Rental Income</b>									
			<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>2020/21 Budget</th> <th>2020/21 Outturn</th> <th>Budget Variance</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;">-£436,920.00</td> <td style="text-align: right;">-£519,066.41</td> <td style="text-align: right;">-£82,146.41</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			2020/21 Budget	2020/21 Outturn	Budget Variance	-£436,920.00	-£519,066.41	-£82,146.41	
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<b>-£328,210.00</b>	<b>-£483,774.21</b>	<b>-£155,564.21</b>										

05/1/22	<p><i>Infrastructure Funding Statement</i></p> <p>Q) Officers agreed to update members after the meeting regarding what would happen to CIL funds if parish councils were taken over or split as part of a new town or parish council was formed and whether the CIL funds could be ringfenced to be spent on certain projects.</p> <p>More detailed information within the IFS on the locations of the projects where S106 have been spent.</p> <p>Guidance for Councillors on CIL and S106 so they can see the differences between the different funding types</p>	Cllr M Rigby / Development and Place	<p><i>This issue is still being investigated with Shape Legal. As soon as an answer is received the Committee will be updated.</i></p> <p>The planning obligations team will enter the parish name at the front of the project descriptions going forward.</p> <p>Information sheets on CIL and S106 have been created and will be distributed to members.</p>	<p>21/02/2022</p> <p>21/02/2022</p> <p>21/02/2022</p>	<p>Rebecca Staddon, CILCommunity Engagement Officer</p> <p>Rebecca Staddon, CILCommunity Engagement Officer</p> <p>Rebecca Staddon, CILCommunity Engagement Officer</p>
26/01/22	<p><i>Draft General Fund Revenue Budget and Capital Estimates 2022/23</i></p>	Cllr Ross Henley/ Internal Operations	An email was set to all councillors with a detailed response to this question on Wednesday 23/2/22 in advance of the Full Council Budget Setting meeting.	23/02/2022	

	<p><i>Community Governance Review and Funding for a town council for Taunton</i></p> <p>Q) It was asked about the need for a settlement if a new town council was set up in Taunton and concerns were raised that this did not appear to have been planned for in the budget. Any new town council would need a budget to be able to provide services such as public toilets. Officers agreed to provide a full answer to the committee after the meeting and before the Full Council budget setting meeting.</p>				
26/01/22	<i>Draft General Fund Revenue Budget and Capital Estimates 2022/23</i>	Cllr Marcus Kravis/ Development & Place			

	<p><i>Enabling Innovation</i></p> <p>Q) It was questioned what the enabling innovation funding mentioned in the budget report was for. Officers responded that a response would be given after the meeting.</p>				
26/01/22	<p><i>Draft General Fund Revenue Budget and Capital Estimates 2022/23</i></p> <p><i>Gypsy Site</i></p> <p>Q) It was asked what was being done to help provide gypsy sites and if a site had been found. Officers responded that a response would be given after the meeting.</p>	Cllr Fran Smith/ Housing & Communities	A capital sum was allocated to Taunton Deane Borough Council to identify and then procure a suitable and sustainable gypsy and traveller site. Work took place to identify a suitable site however this proved difficult and none was agreed. This challenge has since been picked up by a County wide group that considers all public sector owned land in Somerset to find suitable sites to meet the needs of the travelling community across the county. The group has not yet concluded and presented its findings. The capital has been ringfenced for this purpose and will roll forward to contribute towards required funding, once this is resolved.	31/01/2022	Simon Lewis, Assistant Director of Housing and Communities.

26/01/22	<p><i>Draft General Fund Revenue Budget and Capital Estimates 2022/23</i></p> <p><i>Bus Station</i></p> <p>Q) An update on Taunton Bus Station was requested. Officers responded that a response would be given after the meeting.</p>	Cllr Mike Rigby/ Development & Place			
26/01/22	<p><i>Draft General Fund Revenue Budget and Capital Estimates 2022/23</i></p> <p><i>Broadband</i></p> <p>Q) It was asked what progress had been made on superfast broadband. Officers responded that a response would be given after the meeting.</p>	Cllr Marcus Kravis/ Development & Place			

03/2/22	<p><i>Community Engagement Hubs</i></p> <p>Q) What is the budget for the community engagement Hubs?</p> <p>How does SWT assess value for money?</p> <p>Is 34 live cases good or bad?</p> <p>Was there ever a target set?</p> <p>Are the live cases only linked to the two open sites?</p>	Cllr Marcus Kravis / Economic Development			
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03/2/22	<i>Innovation Centre / Team</i>	Cllr Marcus Kravis / Economic Development			
	Q) Who is on the Innovation Team?  Who is the SWT Officer Lead?				
03/2/22	<i>A358 Dualling Scheme</i>	Cllr Mike Rigby / Development and Place	<p>National Highways are responsible for organising the Community Liaison Forum meetings on the A358. These are essentially public consultation events with previous meetings held on 23 June, 7 October 2021 and recently the 15 February 2022.</p> <p>A list of parish councils invited to attend has been provided to members. National Highways will be asked if any presentations made at recent meetings can be uploaded to the SWT website.</p> <p>The lead officer on this at SWT is John Burton.</p>	03/02/22	Alison Blom Cooper, Assistant Director Strategic Place and Planning.
03/2/22	<i>Town Centre Health Checks</i>	Cllr Marcus Kravis / Economic Development		03/02/22	Alison Blom Cooper, Assistant Director Strategic Place and Planning.



	received in grants from the government over the past two years.				
2/3/22	<p><i>Corporate Performance Report as at Quarter 3 2021/22</i></p> <p>Q) It was asked if figures were available for how many repeat calls were received for issues which were not dealt with in the first instance.</p>	Customer Services / Internal Operations			
2/3/22	<p><i>Corporate Performance Report as at Quarter 3 2021/22</i></p> <p>Q) It was asked in which areas the higher numbers of complaints were being received and if these were the usual areas higher numbers of complaints were seen in.</p>	Customer Services / Internal Operations			
2/3/22	<p><i>Corporate Performance Report as at Quarter 3 2021/22</i></p> <p>Q) It was asked whether, excluding the increase in housing complaints, the</p>	Customer Services / Internal Operations			

	number of complaints had increased.				
2/3/22	<p><i>Corporate Performance Report as at Quarter 3 2021/22</i></p> <p>Q) It was asked about the statistics for enforcement in various areas across the Council, such as environmental health.</p>	Internal Operations			
2/3/22	<p><i>Corporate Performance Report as at Quarter 3 2021/22</i></p> <p>Q) It was asked if any comparisons were available for call wait times with other Somerset authorities.</p>	Customer Services / Internal Operations			
2/3/22	<p><i>Corporate Performance Report as at Quarter 3 2021/22</i></p> <p>Q) It was requested that long-term and short-term staff sickness be separated out in the report and asked whether</p>	Human Resources / Internal Operations			

	Covid had had a big impact on staff sickness.				
2/3/22	<p><i>Corporate Performance Report as at Quarter 3 2021/22</i></p> <p>Q) It was asked how many planning enforcement orders were currently out and active versus how many had been closed down.</p>	Planning / Development and Place			
2/3/22	<p><i>Corporate Performance Report as at Quarter 3 2021/22</i></p> <p>Q) It was asked if staff turnover figures could be provided, particularly for planning staff.</p>	Planning / Development and Place			



**SOMERSET WEST AND TAUNTON COUNCIL**  
CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION TRACKER 2021/22

Date of Cttee	Scrutiny Recommendation	Decision Maker /Directorate Responsible	Final Decision/ Response to recommendation/	Date of response	Implemented?	Officer Comments/Update
01/12/21	<p><b>Recommended:-</b> The Corporate Scrutiny Committee recommended to the Executive;</p> <p>1) Clarify why a small part of the district with little infrastructure is taking precedent to the County Town of Somerset.</p> <p>2) Clearly identify the costs both in terms of revenue and capital associated with these feasibility studies or business case studies in Minehead and West Somerset and future ones before January 2022.</p> <p>3) Which sites in Minehead and West Somerset are being considered and where will it fit within the overarching plans for Somerset West and Taunton.</p>	The Executive	<p>In consultation with the Portfolio Holder, Chris Hall (Director of Development and Place) prepared a set of responses which are as follows:-</p> <p>1) Clarify why a small part of the district with little infrastructure is taking precedent to the County Town of Somerset.</p> <p>Response – Specific activity around the Minehead and West Somerset geography has evolved in response to known demand and a long standing issue in finding available employment land opportunities. In particular, finding space to support local businesses seeking to grow, create new jobs and remain in the area. The 2021 Somerset West and Taunton Economic Development Needs Assessment report highlighted that between 2009 and 2018 little employment land was developed in West Somerset.</p>	15 <sup>th</sup> December 2021		

This action was incorporated into the annual plan approved by Full Council, this establishes areas of particular focus that services are then held accountable for the delivery of. The development of commercial units on Seaway Way, by the Council's development team, further evidenced the need for additional units and provides an opportunity for the Council to invest and therefore have a direct impact on employment land options, and opportunities.

The activity identified in the plan is in recognition of the difficulties faced by these areas, these are not the same across all areas of the district, but this is not an either or scenario, none of this work to build a development business case is detrimental to Taunton or other areas of the district. This delivery business case should also not be confused with any high level feasibility work on innovation district matters. This business case is specific with options for investment and potential returns to the Council. Overall, the project fits with the strategic ambitions of the SWT Economic Development

Strategy 2021-24, which specifically identified the need for new employment land sites across the district as one of eight key priorities to resolve going forward.

- 2) Clearly identify the costs both in terms of revenue and capital associated with these feasibility studies or business case studies in Minehead and West Somerset and future ones before January 2022.

Response - The cost of developing the WS Employment Feasibility Study was £27,450, and paid for using Hinkley Point C S106 allocations to support businesses in the West Somerset area.

A second phase of work was then carried out recently to explore each site in detail. This involved looking at key engineering issues (e.g., land clearance, construction, planning, highways, utilities), developing layouts and concept designs, and starting landowner discussions. This led to a comprehensive understanding of costs and the development of financially viable business cases.

£45k was made available to support this second phase of work from allocation towards employment site enabling schemes, which was recommended by Scrutiny in November 2020. To date £18,341.25 has been invoiced for by contractors working on the project.

This will lead to business cases for two potential employment land opportunities involving both pre-lets and speculative units for 11 businesses, delivering 65,000 square feet of premises and 175 new or safeguarded jobs.

Future costs will depend on any business case being brought through the democratic process for approval. Any report on this would be provided to Members on a confidential basis as it will contain land acquisition and development cost options.

- 3) Which sites in Minehead and West Somerset are being considered and where will it fit within the overarching plans for Somerset West and Taunton.  
Response - We are not able to disclose this whilst commercial

			<p>negotiations are underway as this may prejudice those negotiations and impact on our ability to secure either than land or a development contract at an affordable rate. Current land negotiation are off market.</p> <p>When the business case is ready to be presented, and we have a clear decision making route in light of the financial impact on Somerset Council, this will be provided to Members as a commercially confidential paper.</p>			
<p>03/11/21</p>	<p><b>Recommended:-</b> SWT Corporate Scrutiny Committee Recommended to the Executive that; A feasibility study is undertaken for the provision of an innovation hub based in Taunton and that the Council brings the results of such a study back through the democratic path when completed. The funding for this proposal is to be found within existing 2021/22 budgets where possible.</p>	<p>The Executive</p>	<p>Executive – 17<sup>th</sup> November 2021</p> <p>2.1 That the Executive resolve to progress the work identified in the ‘Developing the Innovation Ecosystem in Somerset West and Taunton – Framework for Action’ report and not to carry out an additional feasibility study for an innovation hub in Taunton, however,</p> <p>2.2. As part of SWT’s role as an enabler to deliver the space necessary for research and innovation within the district, the council will as part of the work of enabling the development of innovation assets to the next level, will finance and host a R&amp;I conference in Taunton by or during the summer 2022, bringing together business, academia,</p>	<p>17<sup>th</sup> November 2021</p>		

			developers, investors and the wider industries in order to progress development of R&I assets in Taunton and the wider district			
2/06/21	<p><b>Recommended:-</b> The Corporate Scrutiny Committee reviewed performance against the Commercial Property Investment Strategy (CPIS) and supported the following recommendations to the Executive;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. For transparency, gross and net income from the commercial investments to be made more readily available from the six monthly reviews with a link to be provided in future reports to the SWT website where this information is posted.</li> <li>2. The communications underpinning the CPIS both internally and externally need to be improved upon considerably, as it was considered important that people understood what the Council</li> </ol>	Full Council - Cllr R Henley – PFH Corporate Resources	<p>Full Council – 7<sup>th</sup> September 2021 –</p> <p>The Corporate Scrutiny Committee reviewed performance against the Commercial Property Investment Strategy (CPIS) and supported the following recommendations to the Executive; [NB this paper did not go to the Executive - therefore these recommendations will be considered by the Commercial Investment Board]</p> <p>For transparency, gross and net income from the commercial investments to be made more readily available from the six monthly reviews with a link to be provided in future reports to the SWT website where this information is posted. The communications underpinning the CPIS both internally and externally need to be improved upon considerably, as it was considered important that people understood what the Council was trying to do and why, and how this work inter-linked with the Corporate Priorities of the Council. The Corporate Scrutiny Committee was pleased to be informed that the legacy commercial properties will be incorporated in the next scheduled review paper that is to go to Full Council in December, but in</p>	7 <sup>th</sup> September 2021	Not clear if CIB has considered these recommendations have been adopted.	Report not planned to go to Executive – response to be reported in Full Council report and in introduction by PFH which has indicated the recommendations will be considered by the Commercial Investment Board in due course.

	<p>was trying to do and why, and how this work inter-linked with the Corporate Priorities of the Council.</p> <p>3. The Corporate Scrutiny Committee was pleased to be informed that the legacy commercial properties will be incorporated in the next scheduled review paper that is to go to Full Council in December, but in advance of this, a light-touch document is requested to be circulated to the Committee.</p>		<p>advance of this, a light-touch document is requested to be circulated to the Committee.</p>			
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**Total Recommendations for 21/22:**

**Agreed:**

**Agreed in Part:**

**Not Agreed:**

**TBD:**



	<b>CORPORATE SCRUTINY</b>	
<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Draft Agenda Items</b>	<b>Lead PFH/ Lead Officer</b>
<b>6 July 2022</b>	GF Financial Monitoring – Outturn Position 2021/22	Kerry Prisco / PFH Corporate Resources
SRD - 24 June	Corporate Performance Report Q4	Malcolm Riches / PFH Corporate Resources
Exec RD - 8 July	Connecting our Garden Communities	Graeme Thompson / PFH Planning & Transport
Informal Exec RD - 7 June		
SMT RD - 25 May		
<b>3 August 2022</b>		
SRD - 22 July		
Exec RD - 5 August		
Informal Exec RD - 5 July		
SMT RD - 22 June		
<b>7 September 2022</b>	GF Financial Performance 2022/23 Q1	Emily Collacott / PFH Corporate Resources
SRD - 25 August	Corporate Performance Report Q1	Malcolm Riches / PFH Corporate Resources
Exec RD - 9 Sept	Firepool	Graeme Thompson / PFH Planning & Transport
Informal Exec RD - 9 August	<b>NO MORE ITEMS</b>	
SMT RD - 27 July		
<b>5 October 2022</b>		
SRD - 23 September		
Exec RD - 7 Oct		
Informal Exec RD - 6 Sept		
SMT RD - 24 August		
<b>2 November 2022</b>		
SRD - 21 Oct		
Exec RD - 4 Nov		
Informal Exec RD - 4 Oct		
SMT RD - 21 Sept		
<b>7 December 2022</b>	GF Financial Performance 2022/23 Q2	Emily Collacott
SRD - 25 Nov	Corporate Performance Report Q2	Malcolm Riches
Exec RD - 9 Dec	General Fund 2023/24 Draft Budget Update	Emily Collacott
Informal Exec RD - 8 Nov		
SMT RD - 26 Oct		
<b>4 January 2023</b>		
SRD - 15 Dec		
Exec RD - 6 Jan		
Informal Exec RD - 6 Dec		
SMT RD - 23 Nov		
<b>BUDGET CYCLE</b>	Capital, Investment and Treasury Strategy 2023/24	John Dyson
	General Fund Revenue Budget and Capital Estimates 2023/24	Paul Fitzgerald
<b>1 February 2023</b>		

SRD - 20 Jan		
Exec RD - 3 Feb		
Informal Exec RD - 3 Jan		
SMT RD - 14 Dec		
<b>1 March 2023</b>	GF Financial Performance 2022/23 Q3	Emily Collacott
SRD - 17 Feb	Corporate Performance Report Q3	Malcolm Riches
Exec RD - 3 March		
Informal Exec RD - 1 Feb		
SMT RD - 18 Jan		

**EXECUTIVE**

<b>Executive Meeting</b>	<b>Draft Agenda Items</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>
<b>15 June 2022</b>	Ecological Vision and Action Plan	Katherine Church
<b>venue =</b>	Task and Finish Group Report on Council Housing Zero Carbon Retrofit	Marcus Prouse/Cllr Dave Mansell/Cllr
Exec RD = 3 June	Green Space Acquisition (confidential)	Jo O'Hara
Informal Exec RD = 4 May	North Taunton Woolaway Project Purchases	Jane Windebank
SMT RD = 20 April		
<b>20 July 2022</b>	GF Financial Monitoring – Outturn Position 2021/22	Emily Collacott
<b>venue =</b>	HRA Financial Monitoring – Outturn Position 2021/22	Kerry Prisco
Exec RD = 8 July	Corporate Performance Report - Outturn Position 2021/22	Malcolm Riches
Informal Exec RD = 7 June	Information and Records Management Policy	Lauren Davis
SMT RD = 25 May	Digital Information Policy	Lauren Davis
	Member Information Policy	Lauren Davis
	Connecting our Garden Communities	Graeme Thompson
<b>17 August 2022</b>	CCTV	Sally Parry/Scott Weetch
<b>venue =</b>		
Exec RD = 5 August		
Informal Exec RD = 5 July		
SMT RD = 22 June		
<b>21 September 2022</b>	GF Financial Performance 2022/23 Q1	Emily Collacott
<b>venue =</b>	HRA Financial Performance 2022/23 Q1	Kerry Prisco
Exec RD = 9 September	Corporate Performance Report Q1	Malcolm Riches
Informal Exec RD = 9 August	Firepool	Graeme Thompson
SMT RD = 27 July	<b>NO MORE ITEMS</b>	
<b>19 October 2022</b>		
<b>venue =</b>		
Exec RD = 7 October		
Informal Exec RD = 6 September		
SMT RD = 24 August		
<b>16 November 2022</b>	Marina Lease	Andrew Pritchard/Jonathan Stevens
<b>venue =</b>		
Exec RD = 4 November		
Informal Exec RD = 4 October		
SMT RD = 21 September		

<b>21 December 2022</b>	GF Financial Performance 2022/23 Q2	Emily Collacott
<b>venue =</b>	HRA Financial Performance 2022/23 Q2	Kerry Prisco
Exec RD = 9 December	Corporate Performance Report Q2	Malcolm Riches
Informal Exec RD = 8 November	Housing Revenue Account 2023/24 Draft Budget Update	Kerry Prisco
SMT RD = 26 October	General Fund 2023/24 Draft Budget Update	Emily Collacott
<b>18 January 2023</b>		
<b>venue =</b>		
Exec RD = 6 January		
Informal Exec RD = 6 December		
SMT RD = 23 November		
<b>Budget - TBC</b>	Capital, Investment and Treasury Strategy 2023/24	John Dyson
<b>venue =</b>	General Fund Revenue Budget and Capital Estimates 2023/24	Paul Fitzgerald
Exec RD =	Housing Revenue and Capital Budget Setting 2023/24 including Dwelling Rent Setting 2023/24 and 30 Year Business Plan Review	Paul Fitzgerald
Informal Exec RD =		
SMT RD =		
<b>15 February 2023</b>		
<b>venue =</b>		
Exec RD = 3 February		
Informal Exec RD = 3 January		
SMT RD = 14 December		
<b>15 March 2023</b>	GF Financial Performance 2022/23 Q3	Emily Collacott
<b>venue =</b>	HRA Financial Performance 2022/23 Q3	Kerry Prisco
Exec RD = 3 March	Corporate Performance Report Q3	Malcolm Riches
Informal Exec RD = 1 February	SWT Pay Policy	Nicky Rendell
SMT RD = 18 January		
<b>Items to be Confirmed</b>	RIPA Policy	Amy Tregellas
	Firepool Design Guidance and Masterplan	Graeme Thompson/Tim Bacon
<b>Officer/Portfolio Holder Key Decision</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Lead Officer/PFH</b>

Portfolio Holder Key Decision	Contract - The Award of a Contract to MD Building Services to provide support to the Housing Property team in respect of responsive maintenance , works to major voids and out of hours support.	David Carpenter/Cllr Fran Smith
Portfolio Holder Key Decision	Approval to award a contract to carry out an annual programme of electrical testing and associated remedial works on circa. 1200 properties	David Carpenter/Cllr Fran Smith
Portfolio Holder Key Decision	ancillary roofline products (soffits and fascias) and insulation where deemed necessary	Ian Candlish/Cllr Fran Smith



**FULL COUNCIL**

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Report Deadline</b>	<b>Draft Agenda Items</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>
<b>24 May 2022</b>	<b>12 May 2022</b>	<b>Annual Council Meeting</b>	
		Council Committees for 2021/2022 and their Terms of Reference	Amy Tregellas
		Appointment of Representatives on Outside Bodies	Clare Rendell
		To authorise the sealing or signing of documents to give effect to any decisions taken	Amy Tregellas
		Decision taken under the urgency rules regarding the Council Tax Discretionary Energy Payment Scheme	Paul Harding
		Delegation Powers to the Parish Councils	Alison Blom-Cooper/Amy Tregellas
		Temporary Appointment of Members to Town and Parish Councils	Kevin Williams/Marcus Prouse
<b>05 July 2022</b>	<b>23 June 2022</b>	PFH Reports	
		Green Space Acquisition (confidential)	Jo O'Hara
		Ecological Vision and Action Plan	Katherine Church
		Decision taken under the urgency rule	Chris Hall
		Petition - TACC	Sarah Ellwood
		Scheme of Delegation	Kevin Williams/Marcus Prouse
		Capital Supplementary Budget for the Blue Anchor Coastal Defence Scheme	Steve Hughes
		Six Monthly Commercial Property Investment Performance	Joe Wharton
		Placeholder	Joe Wharton
<b>06 September 2022</b>	<b>24 August 2022</b>	PFH Reports	
		Constitution Update	Amy Tregellas/Kevin Williams
		Community Governance Review for the Unparished Area of Taunton	Marcus Prouse/Kevin Williams
		CCTV	Sally Parry/Scott Weetch
<b>05 October 2022</b>	<b>TBC</b>	Firepool	Graeme Thompson
		<b>SPECIAL MEETING - TO BE CONFIRMED</b>	
<b>06 December 2022</b>	<b>24 November 2022</b>	Marina Lease	Andrew Pritchard/Jonathan Stevens
		PFH Reports	
		Review of the Commercial Property Investment Activity and Performance Report	Joe Wharton

<b>07 February 2023</b>	<b>26 January 2023</b>	PFH Reports	
		Delegation of Returning Officer for Potential Parish Election 2023	
<b>23 February 2023</b>	<b>TBC</b>	Housing Revenue and Capital Budget Setting 2022/23 including Dwelling Rent Setting 2022/23 and 30 Year Business Plan Review	Paul Fitzgerald
<b>Budget Only</b>		General Fund Revenue Budget and Capital Estimates 2022/23	Paul Fitzgerald
		Council Tax Setting 2022/23	Paul Fitzgerald
		Capital, Investment and Treasury Strategy 2023/24	John Dyson
<b>28 March 2023</b>	<b>16 March 2023</b>	PFH Reports	
		SWT Pay Policy	Nicky Rendell
		Scrutiny Annual Reports x 2	
		Audit and Governance Annual Report	

*Report Number: SWT 68/22*

## **Somerset West and Taunton Council**

### **Corporate Scrutiny Committee – 1<sup>st</sup> June 2022**

#### **Use of Urgency Powers and Supplementary Capital Budget for Coal Orchard Regeneration Project**

**This matter is the responsibility of the Executive Member for Corporate Resources**

**Report Author: Chris Hall, Director of Place and Climate Change**

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

- 1.1 Following a period of poor performance, the programme team served a termination notice on Midas on 27th January 2022. During the notice period Midas announced their intention to appoint administrators, left site and have not returned.
- 1.2 The contract was officially terminated by SWT on 25th Feb 2022 following expiry of the notice. A plan to complete the outstanding works was established.
- 1.3 Whilst Midas owed money to its supply chain SWT were up to date with contractual payments at the point of termination.
- 1.4 The team have worked hard to establish the programme of works necessary for completion in addition to securing contractors and material supply.
- 1.5 Having taken into account the approved budget, including contingency and incentives fund, the budget gap to completion is estimated at £775,000.
- 1.6 Urgency powers of the Chief Executive were used to add £675,000 of these costs to the capital programme, a decision usually reserved for Full Council but required urgently due to the limited ability to establish a special Full Council meeting during the pre-election period. Using these powers has allowed the scheme to continue, whilst reducing the risk of further delays and cost growth.
- 1.7 Since the urgent decision further costs have been identified which increase the overall gap by £100,000. This report seeks to add this addition amount to the capital programme.

#### **2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 Note the use of urgency powers by the Chief Executive who approved the increased capital budget allocation of £675,000 towards the completion of the Coal Orchard regeneration scheme.

- 2.2 Note the allocation of a refundable £45,000 bond to National House Building Council, approved by the S151 Officer and managed through cash flow.
- 2.3 Allocate additional supplementary capital budget of £185,000 to an Ear Marked Reserve to manage any potential financial liabilities under warranty claims, to be funded through capital receipts.
- 2.4 Delegate decision to allocate funds from this reserve and approve related uplifts in relevant budgets to the Director of Development and Place, the Assistant Director Major and Special Projects and the S151 Officer.
- 2.5 Approve an additional £100,000 allocation to the capital programme, to be funded by capital receipts.

### **3 Risk Assessment**

- 3.1 There are no risks associated with the use of the Council's urgency powers.
- 3.2 There remain risks in delivery of the scheme, but these are being managed by the delivery team and reduce with each phase completing. We are in the final stages of the delivery programme.
- 3.3 Should Council not support the additional £100,000 capital allocation completion of the scheme will be at risk.
- 3.4 Should Council not support the creation of a warranty reserve we will not be able to establish an NHBC warranties on the properties for sale, making mortgage lenders for those units unable to release funds leading to a collapse of the sale.

### **4 Background**

- 4.1 The Coal Orchard scheme is a mixed use regeneration scheme made up of residential units, commercial space, and public realm.
- 4.2 The fixed price contract was awarded to Midas following a competitive public procurement exercise.
- 4.3 The programme team became increasingly dissatisfied with the performance of Midas and despite a range of control measures being implemented, progress slowed to an unacceptable level and notice of termination was issued on 27th January 2022.
- 4.4 During this notice period Midas announced their intention to appoint administrators and left site. In doing so the programme team had to ensure the security of the site, the materials already paid for and site insurance. They also had to manage a range of subcontractor contacts wishing to gain entry to collect their own tools.
- 4.5 The cost of these initial actions was met by reallocating underspends within the Development and Place directorate.
- 4.6 We are aware that most of the subcontractors working on the scheme are owed money from Midas. SWT are not in a position to step in and pay these costs as the council has already paid Midas for these works in accordance with the contract valuations. The contract also required Midas to pay their supply chain on receipt of council funds, and

evidently in part they did not do so.

- 4.7 The Midas contract was entered at a fixed price. This usually affords the client (Somerset West and Taunton Council) a level of protection against increasing costs, however when this contract was terminated (which it would have done through the administration process even if SWTC hadn't proactively terminated) we become exposed to the rising costs of labour and materials. We consider that the rising costs were a key contributor to the poor performance and so a cost increase to the Council had become inevitable.
- 4.8 The team has engaged a range of contractors to complete the project, many of which were part of the original supply chain. This has been a testing time for both parties due to the debt owed by Midas.
- 4.9 Under the Midas contract National House-Building Council (NHBC) warranties would have been provided and funded. In the absence of the contract Somerset West and Taunton Council needs to establish these warranties to cover any future issues with properties post sale. Whilst there are other warranty providers NHBC are recognised as being one of the leaders and we know them to be acceptable to mortgage lenders. To join the NHBC scheme we must pay the developer bond of £45,000. This bond is to protect NHBC from the failure of the developer (SWTC). Whilst we are a public body and cannot fail in the way private developer might, we are still required to pay the bond. This would be returned to the Council on conclusion of the 2.5 year initial defects warranty period.
- 4.10 The bond held by NHBC is to cover administration of the warranty process in the event of our failure. It does not pay for remedial works for which we must demonstrate access to sufficient funds. We proposed to do this by establishing an Earmarked Reserve of £185,000. Consideration was given to providing this through general reserves, however as it would be necessary to draw upon this funding to manage warranty claims, approval to spend the money is required.
- 4.11 It is easy to misunderstand the warranty process as we are joining a scheme but remain financially responsible for claims. It could be considered as an NHBC managed self-insurance scheme. A contractor has been identified to oversee the process on our behalf.

## **5 Links to Corporate Strategy**

### 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.

Objectives:

Increase the number of affordable and social homes in our urban towns, rural and coastal communities; including those built by the Council

A financially self-sufficient Council which has expanded its commercial activity and generated more income in order to support service provision.

Objectives:

Pursue commercial investment opportunities that generate additional income that can be reinvested in service delivery in order to protect or enhance services on which our communities rely. Supported by a commercial investment strategy

Meet the challenge of Government completely withdrawing the Council's grant funding

Ensure our land and property assets support the achievement of the council's objectives (including service delivery, regeneration projects and community initiatives)

## 6 Finance / Resource Implications

- 6.1 Owing to the circumstances described above the scheme could not be completed within the approved budget, and the level of additional spend cannot be met within the directorate through in year underspends. In order to be able to commit to further costs of the scale required to complete the project it is appropriate to secure additional budget approval in line with the Council's Financial Procedure Rules. The additional capital required exceeded officer delegations and required the use of urgency powers to continue the works to completion on a timely basis with minimised risks.
- 6.2 A Supplementary Capital Budget increase of £675,000 was approved through the urgent decision taken by the Chief Executive Officer. A further increase of £100k is also required due to additional costs emerging that were not initially identified.
- 6.3 The S151 Officer has supported proposals to finance the budget for the additional capital costs as summarised below.

**Table 1: Financing the Increased Capital Costs**

Source	Amount £
Environment and Leisure Initiatives Fund (2022/23 Revenue Budget)	£50,000
Future High Streets Fund capital grant reallocation	£250,000
Temporary Borrowing initially – to be repaid by capital receipts from disposals	£475,000

- 6.4 The Environment and Leisure Fund is a one-off fund created as part of approved budget for 2022/23 financial year. It allows for the delivery of works and improvements that have been desirable but traditionally unfunded, such as to parks and open spaces. The allocation from this fund reflects the improved open space area that the project will deliver.
- 6.5 The Future High Streets Fund (FHSF) capital grant funding was awarded to deliver a range of improvements across Taunton. With the known costs for various FHSF activity planned thus far this budget had some capacity. With the agreement of Dept of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) £250,000 has been transferred to support the completion of the Coal Orchard.
- 6.6 The balance of £475,000 will initially be funded through internal capital borrowing as up-front bridging finance; and will ultimately be financed by the anticipated uplift in the

capital receipts to be generated through this development as identified in Table 2 and 6.8 below. The S151 Officer will oversee this bridging requirements and setting aside of future capital receipts to repay this debt.

- 6.7 The cost to deliver the scheme has increased, as has its capital value. During 2021 Taunton was identified as having the highest percentage in property price growth in the country at 21.8% (Revealed: the UK's 2021 house price growth winners - Halifax (insideconveyancing.co.uk)) This price increase has and will continue to lead to higher sale values of the residential units.
- 6.8 Whilst there remains the chance of property price fluctuation, the limited supply locally continues to feed price growth. The open market units that have been sold to date (Subject To Contract) have all achieved a higher price than the initial business case estimated.

**Table 2: Projected Capital Receipts from This Development**

	No. of units	Business case income	Actual sales + Future values	Estimated Capital Growth
Original business case residential units	40	£6,680,147	£7,554,344	£874,188

- 6.9 Of the 29 units put to market for sale to date, 24 have been sold. The other 11 units are for future sale upon completion of the current lease to the University of Plymouth. The estimated valuation of these takes account of the equivalent unit type sale agreed price with an uplift in the region of 8%. These properties will complete on their leases in September 2023.
- 6.10 As outlined above in 4.9 the provision of a refundable bond will be deposited with NHBC for the sum of £45,000. This covers a period of 2½ years, at which point the bond will be refunded to the Council. This will be held on the balance sheet as a long-term receivable as a full refund is expected at the end of the term.
- 6.11 The allocation of £185,000 to an Earmarked Reserve to underwrite warranted costs is proposed to be funded by capital receipts. The funds will only be called upon in the event the Council has relevant future financial obligations to meet. It is proposed to delegate decision to allocate funds from this reserve and approve related uplifts in relevant budgets to the Director of Development and Place, the Assistant Director Major and Special Projects and the S151 Officer.
- 6.12 With the commercial units within the Coal Orchard development having been complete prior to the Midas contract termination all the additional costs included in this report relate to the residential units and public realm area. For this reason, the report is focused on the capital cost and value increases and excludes commercial rental price for the urgency decision.

**Financial Implications for Somerset Council**

- 6.13 The completion of the Coal Orchard regeneration scheme will clearly lead to assets transferring to the unitary authority on 1 April 2023. The obligations in respect of the bond and warranty will continue beyond vesting day such that ongoing risk management obligations and any potential surpluses arising from set aside funds would return to the unitary council as the successor local authority to SWTC.

6.14 It is anticipated that the additional costs associated with completing the capital development will be incurred prior to vesting day. Similarly, capital receipts from the disposal of residential units are likely to occur either side of vesting day. The financing strategy for this scheme including planned use of capital receipts generated to reduce ongoing debt financing requirements will be advised to the unitary's S151 Officer through LGR transition arrangements. The rights and obligations in respect of commercial units will also transfer to the unitary on 1 April 2023.

## **7 Legal Implications**

7.1 The Deputy Monitoring Officer has provided guidance on the governance process and correct use of Urgency Powers.

## **8 Asset Management Implications**

8.1 There are no new Asset Management implications, the decision to build the scheme forms part of the original business case and Council approval. There would have been implications should the scheme not have completed.

## **9 Consultation Implications**

9.1 The use of the Council's urgency powers requires consultation and agreement of the chair of Corporate Scrutiny, which was provided by Cllr Wren on 30th March.

### **Democratic Path:**

- **Corporate Scrutiny Committee – Yes 1<sup>st</sup> June 2022**
- **Executive – No**
- **Full Council – Yes 5<sup>th</sup> July 2022**

**Reporting Frequency: Once only**

### **Contact Officers**

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Report Number: SWT 69/22

## **Somerset West and Taunton Council**

### **Corporate Scrutiny Committee – 1<sup>st</sup> June 2022**

#### **Wellington Land Acquisition (The Green Spaces)**

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor for Economic Development & Asset Management

Report Authors: Joe Wharton, Assistant Director Major and Special Projects & Dr Joanne O'Hara, Programme Manager – Heritage at Risk

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

- 1.1 Wellington Land Acquisition: To inform Members of a proposed future land consolidation project for Wellington to protect the open green spaces and enhance community provision, and to seek approval for SWT to purchase land using CIL allocated funds and to provide for disposal on a long-term lease to the Wellington Town Council (WTC) for its future management.

#### **2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 To seek approval for the recommendations set out the Confidential Appendix 1.

#### **3 Risk Assessment**

- 3.1 The main risk is the acquisition of a large piece of land that comes with responsibilities for maintenance and possible liabilities. Discussions are advanced with Wellington Town Council over Heads of Terms for a long term lease in order to mitigate this risk and ensure they accept the lease on acquisition.

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

- 4.1 This project seeks to purchase an area of agricultural land and green space in Wellington that connects Rockwell Green, Tonedale and Wellington ('the Green Spaces'). This will allow the creation of a coherent plan in line with SWTs Green Infrastructure Strategy to provide enhanced green space for the residents in Wellington. The following appendices accompany this report

- 4.1.1 Appendix 1 Confidential.

- 4.1.2 Appendix 2 shows the red line plan for the land for acquisition.

- 4.1.3 Appendix 3 shows the proposed division of the Green Spaces for community use.

- 4.1.4 Appendix 4 Confidential.

- 4.1.5 Appendix 5 shows the Fox's Field red line (already acquired by SWT).

- 4.2 This project may facilitate future improvement of the pedestrian access between

Wellington and Tonedale using green spaces rather than primary roads, enhance the environment for the wellbeing of the community, deliver youth sports pitches for leisure and provide additional allotments. It could also deliver a Community Farm to provide food production for local people as well as employment and training opportunities for young and disadvantaged groups.

4.3 It is proposed that SWT purchase the Green Spaces and then immediately transfer responsibility via a long-term lease (up to 125 years) to the Wellington Town Council who will in turn work with the groups listed below, to include but not limited to:

4.3.1 Wellington Community Food;

4.3.2 Wellington Mills CIC; and

4.3.3 Transition Town Wellington.

4.4 It is proposed that the lease to WTC should also include the open space adjacent to Tonedale Mill known as Foxes Field. This area was purchased in 2018 by SWT. Approval has previously been sought for a long lease to a community group, and its inclusion in the Town Council lease would give greater cohesion in the delivery of community amenities.

4.5 The Green Spaces have not been actively managed and the pedestrian access is fragmented. The land also neighbours the Wellington Sports Centre, Nature Reserve and Wellington Park and Recreation Ground. Wellington Park (RPG, Grade II\*) holds a Green Flag award and is a prized open space for the community. This would further bolster the green space which has been invested in by SWT for the residents of Wellington.

4.6 It is not intended as part of this transaction to acquire The Ponds or the various waterways crossing the Green Spaces – these are in separate ownership (Mancraft Limited and The Crown Estate).

## **5 Links to the Corporate Strategy:**

### **Environment and Economy:**

5.1 *“Shape and protect our built and natural environment, supported by a refreshed Local Plan and develop our heritage, culture and leisure offer including a clear vision and delivery plan for the Taunton Garden Town.”*

### **The Green Infrastructure Strategy:**

5.2 *“Create and enhance green infrastructure across the Borough, particularly at Taunton and Wellington, and maximise its potential to meet a diversity of functions, including wildlife habitat, recreation, flood alleviation and visual amenity, and to identify opportunities for GI within and adjacent to potential development areas to inform the LDF, and to identify approaches to funding and implementation of the green infrastructure proposals.” and*

5.3 *“As shown in Figure 3.4, Wellington has good provision of access to formal parks and gardens. Similarly to Taunton, Wellington has significant areas of deficiency in access to local open space, including in central Wellington and at Rockwell Green and Tonedale. Parts of north, central and south Wellington are currently deficient in play areas, and most of the town is deficient in access to a young person’s space.” and*

- 5.4 *“With the exception of small areas on the north western and north eastern fringes of Taunton, the town meets the 1km distance standard for provision of allotments. The provision in Wellington is not so good, where most of the central and eastern areas of the town are more than 1km from an allotment.”*

## **6 Finance / Resource Implications**

- 6.1 The opportunity to create the Green Spaces was brought to this Council’s attention by local community groups in Wellington. The purpose of the acquisition is to provide a facility identified as *‘land to provide a country park, an expansion of existing allotments, the provision of a community farm and the further development of community sports facilities for the benefit of Wellington, Rockwell Green as well as additional land identified for conservation benefits for the area as a whole’*.
- 6.2 The land will be capitalised as a community asset on the Balance Sheet of Somerset West and Taunton Council, measured at depreciated historic cost (although as the asset is land it would not ordinarily be depreciated). It is proposed that Somerset West and Taunton Council will lease the Green Spaces and Foxes Field to Wellington Town Council on a long lease at a peppercorn rent and, although terms are still to be agreed, it is expected that an annual financial contribution by Wellington Town Council towards maintenance will be agreed on an ongoing basis as part of a 5 year rolling management plan. A termination clause in the lease will be provided should Wellington Town Council not adhere to the terms of the lease. It is also expected that any future surpluses accruing to Wellington Town Council from sub-leases of the Green Spaces would be re-invested into the site.
- 6.3 Considerable future investment by Wellington Town Council will be needed on the site in the coming years to deliver the desired community benefits but the purpose of this report is to secure the land so that the future plans can be delivered in consultation with the local community, which is a vital and necessary stage of the process.
- 6.4 The submission by Somerset West and Taunton Council was unsuccessful in obtaining funds for this project from the Levelling Up Fund in Round 1. This land was originally identified in the Levelling Up Bid in 2021 and part of the recommendations in the paper that was approved by Full Council on 7 September 2021.
- 6.5 It is now proposed to purchase the land for The Green Spaces using Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) allocated funds. This is utilising funds already held in CIL capital reserves and would not result in additional borrowing costs or an increase in Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) for capital debt repayment.
- 6.6 The proposal to acquire this land requires updates to the current approved budget within the Capital Programme, in order to put together the total budget in 2022/23 under Community Development:
- 6.7 VAT considerations: as SWT is not expected to incur any development costs and the lease is a peppercorn, it is not expected that the plot will be opted to tax and this will not impact the partial exemption calculation. Professional advice will be sought if required.

### **Financial Implications for Somerset Council:**

- 6.8 The proposals in this report would provide an asset on the Council’s Balance Sheet that will transfer to Somerset Council on 1 April 2023 at book value.

- 6.9 The structure of the lease arrangement means there should be limited ongoing implications regarding freehold ownership of the asset. Maintenance costs will be covered by Wellington Town Council. The unitary authority's ongoing interests will be suitably protected in the lease as described above, and will need continued oversight. As the lease is proposed at peppercorn ongoing income is insignificant.
- 6.10 The proposed increase in budget utilises existing capital reserves, which therefore places a commitment to use these reserves prior to vesting day but does not result in increased financing costs in subsequent years.

## **7 Legal Implications**

- 7.1 The Council may dispose of land held by it in any manner it wishes.
- 7.2 Section 123 LGA 1972 requires that any disposal of land, other than by way of a short tenancy, must not be for a consideration less than the best that can reasonably be obtained.
- 7.3 In disposing of the Green Spaces and Foxes Field to WTC on a long-lease at a peppercorn rent, the Council will need to firstly comply with various statutory obligations, as follows:
- 7.3.1 Before making a final decision on the disposal, the Council must advertise its intention to do so and consider any objections received (S123 LGA 1972);
  - 7.3.2 The Council must be satisfied that it is achieving the best consideration reasonable obtainable for the land or (if disposing at an undervalue of less than £2 million) that it considers the disposal will help it to secure the promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental well-being of its area (S123 LGA 1972 and Circular 06/03 General Disposal Consent 2003). The justification for proposed disposal to Wellington Town Council at a peppercorn rent is set out in Section 6.2 and 6.3 of this Report.
- 7.4 In effectively providing a public subsidy to Wellington Town Council, the Council must ensure that it complies with the obligations in the UK-EU Trade and Co-operation Agreement and be satisfied that the subsidy does not carry any appreciable risk of triggering a dispute with a trade partner under the terms of the applicable Wellington Town Council rules or the UK's Free Trade Agreements. Officers are satisfied that the proposed disposal at an undervalue complies with these requirements.
- 7.5 At the time of writing this report, Officers are seeking legal clarification as to whether the formal consent of the Executive of Somerset County Council is required for the proposed leasehold disposal to Wellington Town Council pursuant to the Section 24 Direction issued by the Secretary of State on 10<sup>th</sup> May 2022. It is recommended that Officers be given delegated authority to seek such consent if it is required. The S151 Officer has already informed the LGR Finance Board of the proposals for transparency.

## **8 Climate and Sustainability Implications**

- 8.1 The proposal is significant in protecting the green spaces of Wellington and Tonedale. Having control of this area could significantly enhance the natural environment, and fulfil the aims The Green Infrastructure Strategy in this area of Wellington.
- 8.2 This could improve the existing infrastructure by enhancing pedestrian and cycling routes. It can also deliver a community garden, potential wetland, tree planting or

allotments, amongst other possible uses.

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

- 9.1 Securing the Green Spaces puts us one step closer to being able to develop the green site and in particular create safe and green routes between Tonedale, Rockwell Green and Wellington.

## **10 Equality and Diversity Implications**

- 10.1 These proposals seek to enhance the built and natural environment for the benefit of the whole community. In practical terms these projects could physically open additional spaces for members of the community who are currently excluded. The proposal is also seeking the delivery of youth provision by expanding allotments and delivering youth pitches. Volunteering and employment opportunities can also be delivered through the community farm.

## **11 Social Value Implications**

- 11.1 The acquisition of the Green Spaces would have considerable amounts of social value. It will protect a large amount of green space which has a low agricultural value partly due to its fragmented location that will have a very high community value in the future. The potential future uses of the site will be put out for consultation with the community and our partners will seek high levels of community engagement with developing these plans.

- 11.2 Wellington Town Council and Wellington community groups have already commenced substantial community consultation and current ideas include the provision of further allotments, youth sports pitches and a community garden to be created in the Green Spaces are all testament to the social value of this acquisition. Projects being considered and developed include:-

Develop a Community Farm:

- 11.3 Work is already underway on developing plans to develop a Community Farm to provide affordable sustainably produced food. Wellington Community Food Ltd has been established and with financial support from the WTC has developed a 5 year business plan showing that it is a viable proposition – all it needs is land. This will link into the Council's commitment to reducing the town's carbon footprint and help raise awareness of the Climate and Ecological Emergencies and how lifestyle and consumption choices can have a positive impact on the planet

Extend the allotments to provide extra capacity and reduce/eliminate of the waiting list:

- 11.4 The Town Council has a waiting list of people looking to take on an allotment at The Basins. This land it will provide the ability to extend the existing allotment area creating additional plots. As with the Community Farm by making more allotments available this will encourage greater self-sufficiency in food production and support the reduction of the town's carbon footprint.

Improve active travel options around the town i.e. between Rockwell Green/Basins/Tonedale Mill/Westford:

- 11.5 Linking in with the development of the town's Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure

Plan (LCWIP) we will increase active travel options around the town through the creation of multiuser access tracks linking Tonedale to Rockwell Green and Westford).

- 11.6 By having an LCWIP this will enable stronger applications for funding to improve those links.

Develop additional junior playing pitch capacity:

- 11.7 The Sports Federation is invited to look at using part of the land to develop additional junior playing pitches to cope with increased demand caused by the town's growing population.

Plant trees to help the town reduce its carbon footprint:

- 11.8 Owning land means more trees can be planted to offset carbon emission and address biodiversity issues helping the town to meet its target of seeking to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030.

Improve habitats and landscape of the area:

- 11.9 Create nature rich habitats on a significant proportion of the land.

Increase Carbon Storage:

- 11.10 There is potential to sequester carbon within the soil and trees contributing to the Councils commitment for the Town to move towards being carbon neutral.

## **12 Partnership Implications**

- 12.1 Somerset West and Taunton Council is seeking to lease directly to Wellington Town Council, but would continue to remain a key stakeholder in the delivery of the site alongside group such as Wellington Community Food, Wellington Sports Federation, Transition Town Wellington and Wellington Mills CIC.

## **13 Health and Wellbeing Implications**

- 13.1 The Green Spaces will allow accessible amenity space for the community to use and enjoy in terms of recreation space, exercise through sports pitches and allotments and in availability of fresh produce.

## **14 Asset Management Implications**

- 14.1 SWT would seek to immediately transfer the land to the Wellington Town Council on terms which are currently being agreed. Somerset West and Taunton Council will pass all maintenance liabilities to Wellington Town Council whilst retaining an overseeing role by way of the proposed 5 year rolling management plan. It is envisaged that they would work with other end users for community activities to be provided throughout the space.
- 14.2 The Section 24 requirement comes into force on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2022 and the onward disposal of this land would need to follow the process once it has been clarified.

## **15 Consultation Implications**

- 15.1 The sites are important for the community of Tonedale and Wellington more widely. Consultation for the sub-leases of the area would be conducted by Wellington Town

Council.

## 16 Informal Executive Comments

16.1 A discussion was held at informal executive and Members were supportive of the proposals.

### Democratic Path:

- Corporate Scrutiny Committee – Yes 1<sup>st</sup> June
- Executive Committee – Yes 16<sup>th</sup> June 2022
- Full Council – Yes 5<sup>th</sup> July 2022

**Reporting Frequency: Once only**

### List of Appendices

Appendix 1	Confidential
Appendix 2	Plan of Proposed Acquisition
Appendix 3	Proposed Community Uses
Appendix 4	Confidential
Appendix 5	Plan of Fox's Field

### Contact Officers

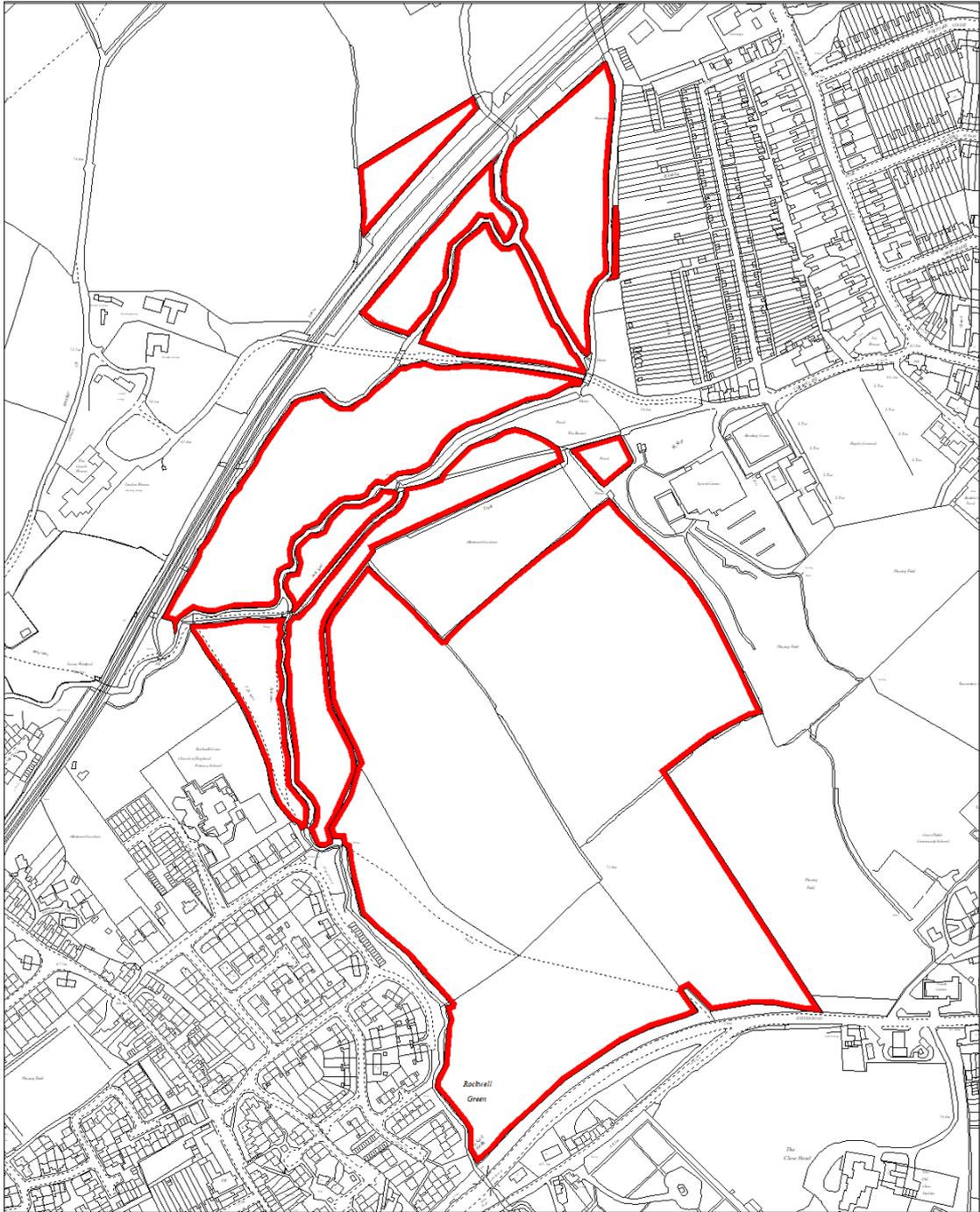
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Plan title: Land at the Basins, Wellington

Case type:

Key

Map title: ST1220NE  
Scale: n/a

Coordinates: 312849,120619  
Area: Perimeter:

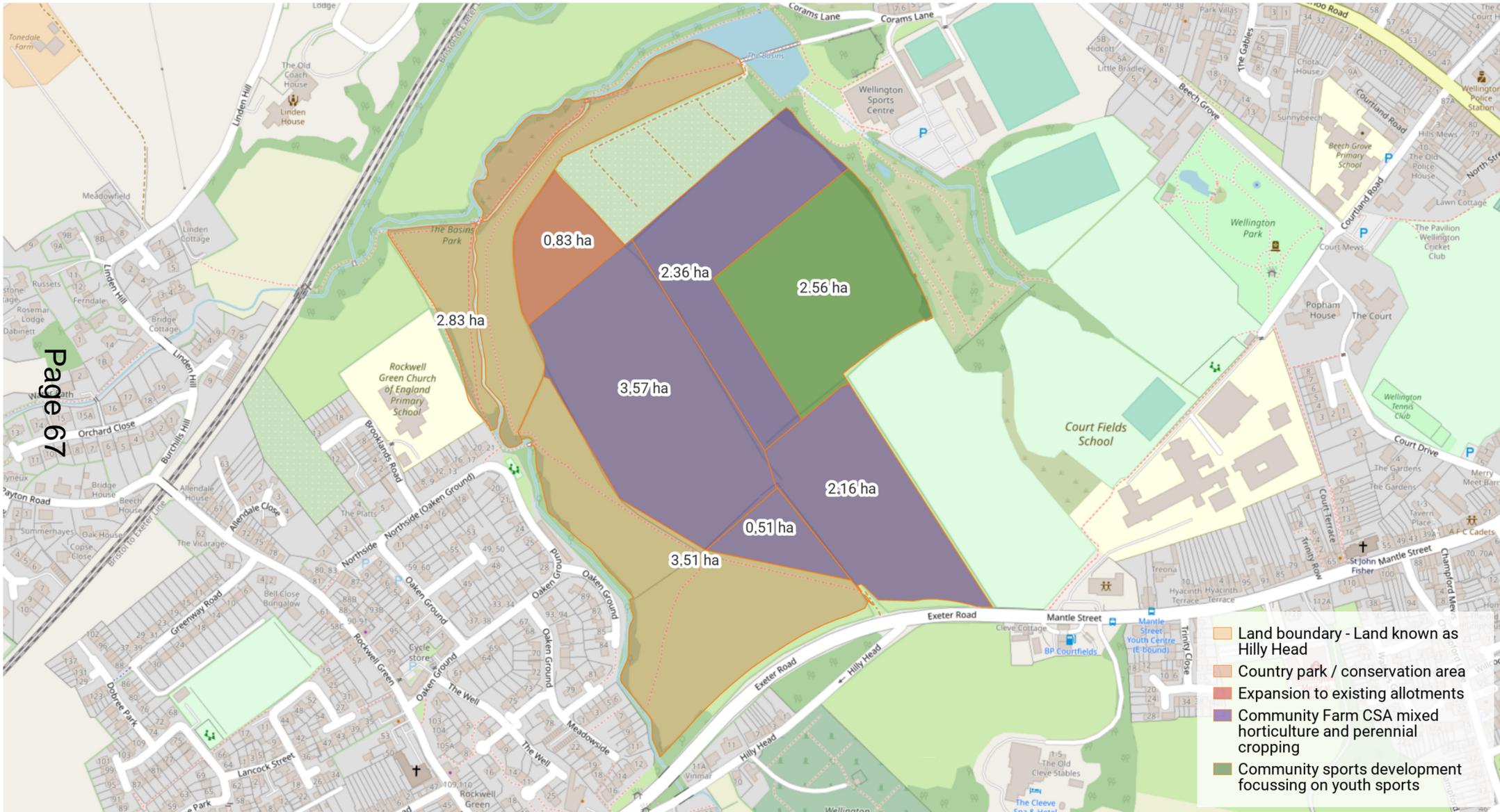


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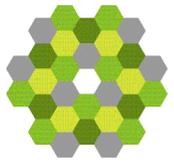
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Administrative area **Somerset : Somerset  
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