

# SOMERSET WEST AND TAUNTON COUNCIL

## COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WRITTEN ANSWERS TRACKER 2022/23

Date of Cttee	Scrutiny Cttee Request for information	Decision Maker /Directorate Responsible	Response to request for information	Date of response	Scrutiny Officer Comments/Update
29/06/2022	Query raised about the grant money from the Taunton Youth Community Centre (TYCC) legacy fund which was earmarked to be spent on the youth of Taunton. How was this money distributed to worthy causes and who decided who benefitted?	Cllr Chris Booth / Housing Directorate	<p><a href="https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk">Local groups awarded funding for youth support work (somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk).</a></p> <p>Comments from Christine Gale forwarded to the Committee.</p> <p>Somerset Community Foundation as administrator of the fund recommended both YMCA and Conquest as main recipients because they both operate within two miles from the Taunton Town Centre, with a focus on youth work.</p>	30/06/22	Scott Weetch / Christine Gale provided an update on the process for distributing this fund. (Legacy money had been held for 20 years).
29/06/2022	<p>How has the underspend in relation to staff salaries come about?</p> <p><b>Assets Staff</b> (para 6.14)</p>	Cllr Fran Smith / Housing Directorate	<b>Assets</b> - The underspend in relation to several staff vacancies during the year across the capital investment and asset management teams is due to staff leaving and periods of the posts being vacant during the recruitment process. This has been exacerbated during the year with difficulty in recruitment to	05/07/22	Simon Lewis / Chris Brown

	<b>Develop and Regen</b> (para 6.11)		<p>sufficiently experienced technical staff.</p> <p><b>Development and Regeneration -</b>  The underspend was due to two main reasons – a) staff turnover has and often does lead to budget savings as there are often periods of vacancy during the recruitment period. There has been a turnover of staff especially at project officer level over the past 12 months. b) one post has been held back from recruitment until the service is clear on delivery priorities. The post is a senior post earmarked for new build however the emerging low carbon retrofit strategy means this post may be retitled to support this area of work. During 2021/2022 the funding associated with this post was used to offset additional costs in the capital programme team.</p>		
29/06/2022	Why was there a lack of investment in air source heat pumps and insulation in Appendix A?	Cllr Fran Smith / Housing Directorate	The emerging low carbon retrofit strategy and delivery plan is seeking to align the capital decent homes programme and retrofit strategies to deliver works at pace, efficiently and within the resources the council has. The emerging strategy will be explored at a member briefing 1 <sup>st</sup> September and the strategy will be refined as it progresses to full Council in December 2022. This is three	05/07/22	Simon Lewis / Chris Brown

			<p>months earlier than previously proposed. The emerging strategy does prioritise fabric improvements over renewable heating systems in the early years as these measures can reduce more CO2 than changes to heating systems and reduce heat demand leading to more affordable warmth. It is important to note that grants are essential to ensure the council can move forward at pace on its retrofit and zero carbon ambitions and most grants for social landlords' support fabric first approaches rather than gas replacement. The service is discussing one grant scheme which could install some ASHP and solar PV and reduce the council's capital requirement which in turn could be used to speed up fabric measures or the replacement of gas and solid fuel systems to ASHP and Solar PV on well insulated council homes. In advance of the whole member briefing the housing service intend to discuss the emerging retrofit strategy with Cllr Mansell as the recent chair of the Community Scrutiny Committee working group on retrofit, Dixie Darch as portfolio holder for Climate Change and Cllr</p>		
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			Fran Smith as portfolio holder for housing in August.		
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