

Local Community Network Meeting Notes

Local Community Network - Taunton

Date: 13 January 2025

Time: 6.30pm

Location: Taunton Town Council Chamber, Deane House, Taunton

Chaired by: Dawn Johnson

Attendance:

Name:	Representing
Federica Smith-Roberts	Somerset Council
Fran Smith	Somerset Council
John Hunt	Somerset Council
Simon Coles	Somerset Council
Hazel Prior- Sankey	Somerset Council
Tom Deakin	Somerset Council
Bev Fernandes	Taunton Town Council
Glenn Gapper	Trull Town Council
Graham Withnell	Norton Fitzwarren Parish Council
Sandra Lawson	Somerset Citizens, Climate Action Taunton
Vicki Phillips	YMCA Taunton
Janet Lloyd	SALC
Phil Durban	Bishops Lydeard Residents Action Group
Andrew Pritchard	Mind in Somerset / Connect Somerset
Nigel Pearce	Taunton Business Chamber

Richard Holt	CICCIC / Taunton Business Chamber
Barrie Childs	Bus Partnership
Dee Childs	Norton Fitzwarren Parish Council
Ray Tully	Taunton Minster
Marcus Prouse	Taunton Town Council
Chris Hall	Executive Director, Community Place and Economy, Somerset Council
Sara Skirton	Service Director Partnerships, Localities and Culture

Virtual attendees:

Name:

Mike Ginger	Taunton Area Cycling Campaign (TACC)
Sam Murrell	Link Officer, Somerset
Tony Taylor	Bishops Hull Parish Council
Marion Nieuwenhuizen	TACC
Fern Pearce	Somerset Council
Kate Hellard	Somerset Council
Emma Plummer	Somerset Council

Apologies

Name:

Sam Bushen	Avon and Somerset Police
Lee Baker	Somerset Council
Mike Rigby	Somerset Council
Caroline Ellis	Somerset Council
Andy Sully	Somerset Council
Richard Austin	Taunton Minster

Agenda item: Summary of key points of discussion and outcome:**Item 1 Introductions (including any apologies for absence)**

The Chair, Somerset Councillor, Cllr Dawn Johnson introduced the meeting, welcomed the room and online attendees and thanked Taunton Town Council for hosting the LCN meeting.

Apologies were received as noted above.

Item 2 Update on Taunton LCN Working Groups**Young People's Working Group**

The Chair Young People's (YP) Working Group (WG), Bev Fernandes, presented the previously circulated YP WG report providing an update and advising that all Taunton LCN Parish and Town Council LCN representatives and Clerks have been invited to the next meeting of the YP WG on 3 February 2025, to share their experience of youth provision in the area.

Discussion:

- **Presentation by Bel Deering:** Discussed engaging young people in preparedness activities such as flooding – workshop to be held 27 February 2025
- **Projects and space: including Go create, YMCA,** fearless and ongoing concerns that the space to carry this out was needed in both terms of availability and affordability.
- **Engagement with Parish Councils:** Encouraged parish councils to share their experiences and needs regarding youth provision
- **Membership of the YP WG:** currently charities and organisations and the current positive work and networking, the need for engagement from Parish Councils to advise and look at the work with young people in the Parishes and what is available across the LCN area.
- **Young People engagement:** current activities and potential areas for engagement from the Young People plan VRU partnership survey and McDonalds hub
- **Wellington Town Council:** King's Arm youth hub example, one team and school engagement
- **Safe Spaces for Youth:** Safe spaces where young people can go, which are warm, dry, have Wi-Fi, and affordable snacks.

Highways Working Group

The Chair Taunton LCN Highways WG, Graham Withnell, provided a verbal update on the Highways WG meeting held 17 October 2024.

Discussion:

- **Taunton LCN Highways Working Group representation:** agreement at the 17 October Hwys WG meeting to include a Unitary Council representative.
- **Taunton LCN Highways Working Group meeting Planned maintenance schemes report pack:** the value of receiving the packs and request to ensure that they are available for the Hwys meetings.
- **Communication:** reporting problems on the road, communication and updates of works taking place / overhanging vegetation.
- **Resource allocation, Maintenance and Potholes:** The group also addressed issues related to pothole maintenance. There was a discussion about the challenges faced due to limited resources and the need for better resource allocation for highway maintenance, a clear plan and budget for addressing issues.
- **Collaboration with Parish Councils:** It was suggested that Parish Councils collaborate to address various issues. This collaboration could involve sharing resources and working together on common problems, this could be considered through the Enhanced Highways Maintenance Scheme.
- **Bus travel:** The group discussed the Taunton Town hub, routes around the local area and whether it would be useful to have community travel working group.
- **Next Meeting:** The next meeting for the Highways WG is scheduled for 30th January 2025. The group plans to follow up on parking, speeding, and maintenance issues discussed in the previous meeting.

Cross LCN Active Travel Steering Group

The Chair asked for a nomination / volunteer to represent the Taunton LCN on the Cross LCN Active Travel Steering Group.

There was no nomination from attendees at the meeting, the Chair requested that attendees share the information and contact the LCN Link Officer with a nomination or volunteer.

The Chair thanked Graham and Bev for the reports and thanked all involved in the Working Groups for their fantastic work and the positive outcomes and networking that is being achieved.

Item 3 **Local Plan Engagement**

A short video was played to advise of the early engagement taking place to support the development of the new Somerset Local Plan, to gather insight into challenges and opportunities facing communities across Somerset.

Discussion:

- **Call for Sites:** This is an open invitation for landowners and others to suggest potential development areas. This process will continue for the next six weeks.
- **Early Engagement:** This stage involves gathering ideas and priorities from residents, parish councils, and other stakeholders.
- **Workshop:** all Parish Councils representatives encouraged to attend a place workshop to be held 24 February 2024.
- **Focus on Seldom-Heard Groups:** The engagement process aims to include hard to reach groups to ensure a balanced understanding of the diverse needs within Somerset.
- **Ongoing Engagement:** The engagement process will continue throughout the plan-making stages, with opportunities for public consultation and feedback.
- **Engagement with Stakeholders:** Ensure that stakeholders, including small businesses and community groups, are engaged in the consultation process.

The next steps include stage two, "Setting the Scene," which will combine early engagement activities with other evidence bases and site assessments. This will lead to the first draft of the local plan, followed by wider public engagement in 2025. Stage three, "Have Your Say," will involve statutory consultation with key stakeholders and the public. The plan is expected to be adopted in 2028.

Item 4 **Recent Topics of interest from Parish Councils**

Somerset Council Executive Director, Community Place and Economy, Chris Hall and Somerset Council Service Director Partnerships, Localities and Culture, Sara Skirton provided an update and developments of LCNs, via PowerPoint Presentation.

Discussion:

- **Improving Resident Engagement:** There was a strong emphasis on creating a specific LCN website / information sharing page and consider using social media to communicate with residents and share achievements. This is seen as vital for representing residents. Recognised the use of multiple channels of communication, social media, and that it is important to use other methods as well, such as flyers, community bulletin boards, local newspapers, and word of mouth.

- **Clear Pathway to Somerset Council:** Establishing a clear pathway for the minutes of LCN meetings to be passed through to Somerset Council. This would ensure that the concerns and priorities discussed in LCN meetings are communicated to Somerset Council.
- **Workshop on LCN Vision and Approach:** Request for a workshop to discuss the vision and approach of LCNs. This would help ensure that LCNs remain inclusive and effective in representing community interests.
- **Flexible Meeting Formats:** Offer a mix of formal and informal meetings to cater to different preferences. Some people might feel more comfortable sharing their ideas in a casual setting.
- **Feedback Mechanisms:** Look at easy ways for people to provide feedback and suggestions, even if they can't attend meetings in person. This could include online surveys or suggestion boxes.
- **Role of LCNs in Housing and Planning:** The role of LCNs in addressing the housing crisis and the reintroduction of housing targets by the government, the housing need in Taunton and how we can support both those in need of housing and rough sleeping to see if there are innovative ways we can tackle the issue. The importance of involving LCNs in the local plan and ensuring that community priorities are heard by key stakeholders.

The Chair thanked the Somerset Officers for their attendance, presentations and sharing the helpful update, information and knowledge and thanked all at the meeting for their contribution and discussion.

Item 5 **Date of future meetings / Actions**

3 April 2025 – Trull Village Memorial Hall, Church Rd, Trull, Taunton TA3 7JZ
6.30 – 8.30pm

7 July 2025 – Annual General Meeting – John Meikle Room, the Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton TA1 1HE 6.30 – 8.30pm

The Chair thanked all for their attendance, contribution and the positive engagement for future opportunities.

Actions

Action Description	Action by Name	Action by date
Invite Jo Patterson, Service Manager Transport Schemes Somerset Council to attend the Taunton LCN April meeting to provide an update the Taunton Transport Hub Consultation and progress	Michelle Brooks	28 January 2025
Condition of Market House roundabout Taunton - Circulate response from Full Council	Michelle Brooks	31 January 2025 With notes
One.network training session circulate to the Taunton LCN Membership	Michelle Brooks	31 January 2025 With notes
Escalate the request the continued production of highways schemes packs	Michelle Brooks	29 January 2025
Circulate EHM information use of Kier	Michelle Brooks	23 January 2025
Cycleway right of way Aldi – add to Hwys agenda for 30 January	Michelle Brooks	22 January 2025
Send footage to MB cycle way Aldi	Mike Ginger	28 January 2025
Send Active Travel volunteer survey young people	Mike Ginger	28 January 2025
Organise Combined Local Plan Workshop, if required	Michelle Brooks	23 January 2025 – not available due to resources
Current Locals Plans – request current local plans from Planning Policy Team	Michelle Brooks	31 January 2025
Attend Workshop 24 February - All Town and Parish Councils representatives in the LCN will be invited to a workshop on February	Parish Councils representative / Michelle Brooks	23 January 2005

24 th / resend link and invitation		
Follow up with the Planning Policy Team regarding Engagement with Stakeholders: Ensure that stakeholders, including small businesses and community groups, are engaged in the consultation process	Kate Hellard	31 January 2025
Chair Workshop to discuss evolving and developing LCNs, including: website development, use of social media and wider membership engagement	Kate Hellard	14 February 2025
Circulate Taunton LCN notes	Michelle Brooks	31 January 2025
Circulate Taunton LCN slides	Michelle Brooks	20 January 2025
Share template over hanging vegetation with Cllr John Hunt and resend to Taunton LCN Parish Council Clerks	Michelle Brooks	31 January 2025