

10 Delivery

10.1 Governance

Constructive collaboration across multiple agencies, including but not limited to Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) authorities, is at the core of the Taunton Waterways Strategy. It has been central to the formation of the Strategy and should remain at its heart going forward so that decision-making that affects the Waterways Corridor continues to benefit from the valuable perspectives of a cross-section of informed stakeholders.

Specifically in relation to water management, the Taunton Waterways Management and Maintenance Plan (Appendix B page 20) identifies the need for a governance framework to be developed for the future maintenance of important water management assets. This is in response to shortcomings in current arrangements associate, with multiple bodies, a lack of clarity on responsibility, helpful but reactive maintenance and no guarantee that current maintenance will continue in perpetuity. Given the critical importance of well-planned and maintained

water management to Taunton's safety and success, a stronger governance framework would be beneficial.

Beyond effective water management, stronger and clearer governance is also required to ensure that the wider Outcomes from Investment are achieved over the long term, in alignment with the Taunton Garden Town Vision.

The establishment of robust governance to oversee implementation of the Taunton Waterways Strategy is therefore a Top Priority, with the purpose being "To maximise the positive placemaking, environmental and community outcomes that can be achieved from every investment made in water management and waterside development."

Governance by existing bodies

The terms of reference for the majority of FCERM authorities are tightly drawn around water management matters with specific responsibilities for each authority in isolation making them unsuitable for

governing the wide-ranging Waterways Strategy.

There are also established **partnerships**, notably FWAG's Somerset Catchment Partnership (SCP) and the Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA), that do have a wider remit and a commitment to collaborative working, making them better suited to take on the Taunton Waterways governance role. However, their terms of reference are also primarily focused on water management (catchment scale improvement to Somerset's water environments in the case of the SCP and supporting implementation of the 20 Year Flood Action Plan for the SRA) and, whilst these are both inter-related with the Waterways Strategy, it would not be appropriate to propose a revision to their terms to oversee implementation of the much more expansive Waterways agenda.

If it **were** possible to add the Taunton Waterways governance role to another existing group with an established and focused agenda, there is a significant risk that it would become a single item on what are already likely to be full agendas.

It may be perceived to be peripheral to core business and, therefore, is likely to be one of the first items to be dropped if time runs out.

The exception would be the Taunton Garden Town Advisory Board whose core functions include leading the Garden Town project and its delivery, of which the Taunton Waterways Strategy and Guidance is a fundamental component. The Strategy therefore conforms to current terms of reference.

Preparation of the Strategy has been overseen by the Taunton Garden Town team who report to the existing Advisory Board, and there are clear benefits of continuity as the Strategy moves from formulation to implementation.

The alternative is to establish a bespoke Steering Group.

A new Taunton Waterways Steering Group

The Somerset Water Management Partnership is an interesting model that could inform a new Taunton Waterways Steering Group. The Partnership's website states that it provides "...a forum for consultation and to debate issues around water management..." in the catchment areas of the Parrett, Brue, Axe and their tributaries. Their vision statement is for "A sustainable approach to water and land use management that, wherever possible:

- benefits the social, economic and cultural life of the catchments
- conserves and enhances the natural environment"

The forum is "...an opportunity for a group of stakeholders to meet to consider water matters of significance affecting, or with the potential to affect, the communities, landscape, economy and ecology."

The breadth of relevant issues is similar to those of the Taunton Waterways Strategy

and it would be possible to establish a comparable partnership for the River Tone, but with aims and objectives that go beyond discussion and are specifically more advisory and strategic, to enable it to operate as an effective Steering Group and to assist responsible bodies with considered decision-making that is couched in the approved Strategy.

The aims and objectives for a bespoke Taunton Waterways Strategy Steering Group would need to be agreed with partners but may include:

- To work in partnership to promote an outcomes-led approach to all investment in Taunton's Waterways Corridor, in line with the Taunton Waterways Strategy and Guidance.
- To work together to inform integrated and sustainable responses to the issues and opportunities addressed in the Strategy.
- To work collectively to advise on and steer emerging strategies, projects and proposals.

- To increase awareness and understanding of water-related issues and opportunities within partner organisations and the Taunton community.
- To lend weight to funding applications and strategic promotion.

The Steering Group composition would broadly reflect the make-up of the Stakeholder Team that has informed the drafting of the Strategy and Guidance, with representatives of each responsible group as outlined below:

1. Chair - Taunton Garden Town Team (Somerset Council)
2. Deputy - Planning Team
3. Lead Local Flood Authority (Somerset Council)
4. Environment Agency
5. Somerset Wildlife Trust
6. Wessex Water
7. Canal and River Trust
8. Highways and Active Travel (Somerset Council)
9. Climate Change (Somerset Council)

10. Taunton Town Council
11. A representative community organisation, such as Taunton River Watershed Alliance.

There would be a cost involved in formally establishing a Steering Group from scratch. Potential funding sources may include Ofwat Innovation Fund and UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF). There are likely to be further challenges in terms of the ability of the Council to resource and administer an additional governance body.

10.2 The need for a fresh approach to funding water management

Under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, Local Authorities were given significant new responsibility for delivering local flood risk management. The Act effectively gave Somerset Council a leadership role as the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA).

LLFAs are required to:

- Develop, maintain and apply a local flood risk strategy
- Investigate all flooding incidents, where deemed to be necessary
- Maintain a register of assets relevant to flooding
- Adopt and maintain SuDS and approve drainage systems for construction work, in their capacity as SuDS Approving Bodies (SABs); and
- Co-operate with other Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) authorities, for example through building partnerships and ensuring effective multi-agency working.

In an era of budgetary constraints for Local Authorities, it can be a significant challenge for an LLFA to compete with other funding priorities for both capital and resource to deliver their statutory duty under the Act.

It is difficult to plan long term with a year-on-year funding approach for Local Authorities when trying to align with other longer-term programmes to which other FCERM organisations are committed.

Similarly, other Risk Management Authorities (RMAs) are able to secure funding to deliver operational requirements but have traditionally, and understandably, focused on securing funds that will deliver the minimum functional scheme necessary to deliver the operational benefit.

In recent years, the need to address climate change, help nature recovery and achieve healthier living have become established in political agendas and so there is greater recognition of the value of delivering such benefits through public funded schemes, including for flood risk management. However, the level of collaboration across RMAs remains limited and so opportunities for efficient cross-funding may be missed.

Therefore, a more innovative and expansive approach is needed to fund local water management, identifying the wider range of positive outcomes that can be achieved from investment in waterways and seeking funding that encompasses the delivery of those wider benefits. Casting the 'outcomes net' wider increases opportunities for funding that, historically, have not been considered. That approach is central to the Taunton Waterways Strategy.

It means that water management schemes themselves may need to be designed differently, and the planning and development process associated with those schemes will need to be more collaborative and inclusive, so that they are effective at achieving the wider benefits in addition to their primary functional purpose.

10.3 Potential Funding Sources

Sourcing funding and investment is key to the ability to deliver the frameworks and projects identified within this Strategy. Potential funding sources, reflecting the breadth of positive Outcomes from Investment are summarised in List 10.1 in the following pages.

List 10.1 Taunton Waterways Funding Sources

Flood Risk Management/ Waterbodies

Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Grant-in-Aid Funding from Environment Agency

Summary: For flood and coastal erosion projects (FCERM) proposed by Risk Management Authorities (RMAs). Includes scope to fund development of strategies for reducing flood risks.

Applicability: Specific to flood and coastal erosion projects, as reflected by eligibility criteria. Extra funding is available if environmental benefits can be demonstrated. In addition to specific physical projects, funding is available ‘to develop a strategy to reduce flood or coastal erosion risks across several connected areas’ which could fund.

Somerset River Authority

Summary: The SRA oversees the Somerset Levels and Moors Flood Action Plan, and funds works that meet Flood Action Plan objectives.

Applicability: Important funding source because the eligibility criteria closely reflect the breadth of the Taunton Waterways Strategy’s stated Outcomes from Investment.

Westcountry Rivers Trust

Summary: Not a funding source as such, but a partner with valuable resource for delivering positive change. Focused on ‘bringing rivers to life in the Westcountry to achieve our vision and benefit nature, people and local economies’.

Applicability: WRT does not have funding but is resourced to support others in delivering education, citizen science and training programmes. Its aims are closely aligned with those of the Taunton Waterways Strategy

FWAG South West Somerset Catchment Partnership (SCP)

Summary: FWAG SW provides independent advice, combining an

understanding of farming systems, land management and farm businesses with habitat creation, habitat management and species conservation to effect positive environmental change in the wider landscape.

Applicability: Of particular relevance to the wider Catchment Framework

Canal and River Trust

Summary: Itself funded by People’s Postcode Lottery through the Postcode Earth Trust, CRT spends over £150m each year maintaining and improving the river and canal network nationally.

Applicability: CRT’s priorities are broadly aligned with those of the Taunton Waterways Strategy.

Environment Agency Fisheries Improvement Fund

Summary: Reinvests fishing licence income back into projects that provide positive outcomes for anglers.

Examples of projects that could receive FIP funding include projects that create fish passages, sustainable habitats, urban fisheries and improve local angling club fisheries.

Applicability: Specific to fishing infrastructure and access

Wessex Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC) Local Levy

Summary: The local levy is an additional, locally raised, source of income for flood and coastal erosion risk management projects to supplement national funding. Wessex RFCC raises a local levy on County Councils and Unitary Authorities within its boundary. The local levy is used to secure national funding (as part of the partnership funding mechanism) to invest in projects that are designed to reduce flood and coastal erosion risk for local communities.

Applicability: Focused on flood risk management operations so a potential funder for locally important flood risk management projects that are not funded nationally by Grant in Aid. However, the RFCC is committed to achieving the broader ambitions of the National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy which include achieving sustainable growth and regeneration, economic development, enhancing the environment and embracing nature-based solutions and so it may be a potential funder of strategic frameworks aimed at unlocking sustainable development.

Environmental Improvements

Wessex Water Environment Fund

Summary: Part of the Wessex Water Foundation, the Environment Fund supports charitable and community activities that improve local biodiversity or have a positive impact on the environment for local people.

Applicability: Scope for funding initiatives that arise from the Community Framework

Natural England Species Recovery Programme

Summary: Natural England has been delivering its flagship Species Recovery Programme (SRP) for over 30 years, focusing on bespoke conservation action to reverse the fortunes of our most threatened native species. The Programme covers capital research and development, and capital interventions. A Capital Grant Scheme (CGS) has been introduced for 2023/24 and 2024/25 to complement the Species Recovery Programme.

Applicability: Specifically targeted at species recovery. Note, the initial application window has closed, but there may be further windows.

Nature Recovery Network - Countryside Stewardship

Summary: For farmers and landowners - pays for targeted actions relating to specific locations, features and habitats to contribute to environment and climate goals.

Applicability: To be replaced by NCF

Nature Recovery Network: Local Nature Recovery

Summary: Local Nature Recovery is the improved and more ambitious successor to the Countryside Stewardship scheme in England. It will pay for locally-targeted actions to make space for nature in the farmed landscape and the wider countryside, alongside food production. Through LNR the government wants farmers and landowners to be able to enter into private arrangements such as carbon trading, providing biodiversity net gain and nutrient trading.

Applicability: LNR may help fund strategic initiatives involving arrangements for carbon trading, providing biodiversity net gain and nutrient trading which could unlock strategic growth in Taunton. Scope for funding interest in the Catchment Framework.

Nature Recovery Network: Sustainable Farming Incentive

Summary: Pays farmers to adopt and maintain sustainable farming practices that can protect and enhance the natural environment alongside food production.

Applicability: Scope for funding interest in the Catchment Framework

Nature Recovery Network - Landscape Recovery

Summary: Landscape Recovery will pay for bespoke, longer-term, larger scale projects to enhance the natural environment. Intended for farmers and landowners.

Applicability: Whilst intended for farmers and landowners, it worth exploring the potential for Landscape Recovery funding to support preparation of the Linear Water Park Concept or Biodiversity Framework for example.

Natural England's Nutrient Mitigation Scheme

Summary: Government is developing a package of support to ensure that developers and local planning authorities can achieve nutrient neutrality as quickly as possible. Nutrient Mitigation Schemes can be set up with support from DEFRA and DLUHC, recouped from the sale of 'nutrient credits' to housebuilders.

Applicability: Scope to fund nutrient mitigation proposals that are capable of unlocking strategic growth in Taunton

Future Parks Accelerator

Summary: FPA is a collaboration with National Lottery Heritage Fund, the National Trust and the DLUHC aimed at supporting local authorities to improve quality, sustainability, connectivity and access to urban green space.

Applicability: FPA does not have funding but is resourced to support others to make parks and green spaces more sustainable.

It includes advice on habitat banks. Its aims are closely aligned with those of the Taunton Waterways Strategy

Tree Planting/Woodland Creation

Forestry England Woodland Partnership

Summary: A leasehold scheme creating new woodlands across England in partnership with private and public landowners by offering a commercial rent to landowners. Woodland designed, created and managed by Forestry England.

Applicability: Appropriate for large scale woodland creation in the wider catchment, which could deliver considerable benefit in terms of natural water management

England Woodland Creation Offer (EWCO)

Summary: Landowners, land managers and public bodies can apply to the England Woodland Creation Offer (EWCO) for support to create new woodland, including

through natural colonisation, on areas as small as one hectare.

Applicability: Appropriate for smaller scale woodland creation in the wider catchment, with additional payments for societal benefits which would include water management

Local Authority Treescapes Fund (LATF)

Summary: The LATF is part of the Government's Nature for Climate Fund and is for local authorities to restore tree cover in non-woodland areas which may have been impacted by issues such as disease, habitat degradation or ageing tree stock. The fund aims to improve landscape connectivity and provide benefits to ecosystems and society, such as carbon absorption, flood protection and support for biodiversity.

Applicability: Very relevant but time limited. The fund is focused on planting and natural colonisation of trees in areas outside of woodlands, including parklands, riparian zones, urban areas, beside roads

and footpaths. It aims to provide benefits including flood protection.

Urban Tree Challenge Fund (UTCF)

Summary: The fund provides 80% of the costs for planting and establishing trees in urban and peri-urban areas.

Applicability: No specific reference to funding being related to the wider benefits of tree planting.

Somerset Trees for Water Programme

Summary: To provide targeted tree planting in locations which will improve water management and reduce – or slow the flow of – water across the main watercourses of Somerset. Funded by the Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA) and led by Reimagining the Levels (RtL) in partnership with FWAG SW and the Woodland Trust

Applicability: Relevant to water management in the wider catchment.

Woodland Trust MOREwoods

Summary: MOREwoods funding is available for any landowners or farmers to plant a woodland on their land.

Applicability: Appropriate for smaller scale woodland creation in the wider catchment. No specific reference to funding being related to the wider benefits of tree planting

Woodland Trust MOREhedges

Summary: MOREwoods funding is available for any landowners or farmers to plant hedges on their land. The MOREhedges scheme can cover up to 75% of the cost of planting 100 metres or more of new hedging and allow a large tree to grow every six metres.

Applicability: No specific reference to funding being related to the wider benefits of tree planting.

Development and Regeneration

Individual Investment Propositions

Summary: Investment in a business venture, from small scale start-up through to proposals to re-purpose assets such as the Pumphouse or Debenhams building.

Applicability: There are numerous opportunities within the Strategy for income generating investments.

UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)

Summary: The primary goal of the UKSPF is to build pride in place and increase life chances across the UK. All places across the UK will receive a conditional allocation from the UKSPF including Somerset.

Applicability: If not already secured and allocated, the SPF provides an opportunity to invest in delivering the Strategic Goals for Taunton Waterways via the Priority Investments

Brownfield, Infrastructure and Land Fund

Summary: The fund's purpose is to unlock strategic housing sites including housing-led, mixed-use opportunities where brownfield, infrastructure or land projects face delivery and/or viability challenges.

Applicability: Redevelopment sites in Taunton tend to face viability and therefore deliverability challenges owing to a combination of relatively low property values and high costs associated with site remediation requirements. The ability to maximise developable area is constrained by the need to deliver BNG, strategic flood risk mitigation and public open space, and there are additional challenges related to nutrient management. The Taunton Waterways Strategy provides a whole town approach to addressing these challenges, by coordinating a strategic response to off-site delivery of green space, healthy living, BNG and nutrient management, AND achieving enhanced property values over time.

Funding requires projects to be in contract by 31st March 2026, thereby limiting eligibility.

Delivery of development sites

Summary: Planning consents.

Applicability: Determination of planning application for redevelopment needs to consider the Taunton Waterways Strategy and strive for the best outcomes to be delivered from each proposed development

Developer Contributions: Section106 Agreements

Summary: Section 106 agreements are used to make a development proposal acceptable in planning terms, that would not otherwise be acceptable, and are focused on the mitigation of site specific impacts.

Applicability: S106 requirements need to be related to the development. The major redevelopment sites lie within the Waterways Corridor so, subject to viability, some investment can be expected.

Developer Contributions: Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

Summary: The CIL is a standard charge to help pay for the provision, improvement, replacement, operation and maintenance of infrastructure. CIL applies to new floor space and charges are based on the size, type and location of the new development.

Applicability: Scope to deliver some potential Waterways investments provided they are compatible with CIL spending criteria.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

Summary: The proposed development of the allocated sites will need to demonstrate how a minimum of 10% BNG will be achieved. Achieving this on site is generally the preferred approach but, given viability challenges, the Linear Water Park concept offers an opportunity for coordinated and local BNG delivery, funded by the developers.

Applicability: The Biodiversity Framework for the Waterways will provide the strategic framework for implementing off-site but local BNG, in a coordinated manner that delivers maximum positive outcomes from investment, local to the development sites.

Sport and Arts

Sport England Small Grants Programme
Summary: The Small Grants Programme seeks to develop opportunities for communities to get more people physically active.

Applicability: Some of the Outcomes from Investment focus on helping to people to have more active and healthier lives, and the Strategic Frameworks will identify specific projects in more detail. It is anticipated that some of these will be eligible for Sport England funding.

Sport England: Active Together

Summary: A £7.5 million fund as part of a support package to help clubs and organisations set up and run crowdfunding campaigns related to the ongoing impact of Covid-19, as well as the emerging energy, cost of living or other local crises - such as adverse weather.

Applicability: Potential support to Taunton's waterside recreation clubs that are marginal and at risk.

Arts Council England Cultural Development Fund (CDF)

Summary: The aim of the fund is to level up through investment in culture. The fund will unlock local growth and productivity, increase access to creativity and culture, and regenerate communities. It will achieve this through capital investment in transformative place-based creative and cultural initiatives.

Applicability: The deadline has passed. In the event of another round, the

Community and Cultural aspects of the Waterways Strategy would appear to be eligible for funding.

Air Quality and Climate Change

DEFRA Air Quality Grant Scheme

Summary: The scheme provides funding to eligible local authorities to help improve air quality.

Applicability: Current round concluded in 2023.

National Lottery UK Portfolio: Climate Action Fund

Summary: The Climate Action Fund is supporting communities across the UK to take action on climate change. The fund aims to involve more people in climate action and the organisation wants to inspire bold and exciting change

Applicability: An application could build on Taunton's need to manage flood risk (that results from climate change) in a

way that delivers a wide range of positive outcomes for the community. Funding would need to be sought for a specific project or initiative, such as , for examples, investment in delivering the actions that emerge from the Tributaries Framework.

Local Climate Bonds (LCB)

Summary: LCBs have the potential to raise millions of pounds for green projects in the UK. They are regulated investment products launched by Councils to access cost-effective funding for specific decarbonisation projects, offering local people an opportunity to invest in their area in a way similar to crowdfunding and to make a return from doing so.

Applicability: Somerset Council is not yet a 'Committed Council'. Could be applied to specific decarbonisation projects, such as hydro power generation or the cooling of plant by water.

Active Travel England

Summary: DfT's funding for high-quality walking and cycling routes.

Applicability: Active Travel Fund 4 Extension has been concluded

Community

The Community Ownership Fund: Round 4

Summary: Funding for community organisations to take ownership of local community assets at risk of loss, and to support community groups where the asset is already in community ownership but needs essential renovations to be sustainable for the long-term benefit of the community.

Applicability: No suitable assets have been identified in the Strategy to date.

Wessex Water Community Fund

Summary: This fund is part of the Wessex Water Foundation and aims to support community-based activities or projects that meet a local need and seek to improve the lives of local people who are in most need of support. These activities or projects should be informed by the people or community it seeks to serve and have considerable reach.

Applicability: May be appropriate for projects and initiatives identified through the Strategic Frameworks. The preparation of a part of the Community Framework itself may be eligible.

Crowd Funding

Summary: Crowdfunding is a way of raising finance by asking a large number of people each for a small amount of money.

Applicability: May be appropriate for projects that emerge from the Strategy.

National Lottery Community Fund

Summary: Awards money raised by National Lottery players to fund great ideas that help communities to thrive.

Applicability: Scope for funding of the Community Framework or Tributaries Framework, and/or projects that emerge from them.

Sponsorship

Summary: Scope for local business sponsorship of local assets.

Applicability: May be appropriate for smaller projects and initiatives, including the Quick Wins.