

**WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF THE  
POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING  
HELD AT GROVE HOUSE ON  
MONDAY 18<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2023**

**Meeting Commenced:** 7:02 pm

**Meeting Concluded:** 9.10 pm

**PRESENT:** Councillors Alan Peak (Chair), Gill Bute, Mark Canniford, Peter Crew (S), John Crockford-Hawley, Hugh Malyan, Robert Payne, Tim Taylor and Helen Thornton.

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Councillor Jemma Coles, Malcolm Nicholson (Town Clerk), Sarah Pearse (Deputy Town Clerk/ Responsible Financial Officer), Samantha Bishop (Committee & Office Manager), Fiona Walsh (Finance Officer), Molly Maher (Development Officer), Becky Walsh (Communications Officer) and Dan Heley (Member of the public).

<b>234</b>	<b>To receive Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes</b>  Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Lisa Pilgrim who was substituted by Peter Crew and Martin Williams with no substitute.  It was noted that Councillor Jemma Coles was in attendance.
<b>235</b>	<b>To receive Declarations of Interest</b>  There were none received.
<b>236</b>	<b>To approve the minutes of the Policy &amp; Finance Committee Meeting held on the 16<sup>th</sup> October 2023</b>  The minutes had been previously circulated with the agenda.  <b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Gill Bute <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Hugh Malyan  A vote was taken and <b>carried</b> . Accordingly, it was:  <b>RESOLVED:</b> That the minutes be approved and signed by the Chair.
<b>237</b>	<b>To receive the minutes of the Working Party to Review Expenditure &amp; Governance held on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2023</b>  The minutes had been previously circulated with the agenda.  <b>RESOLVED:</b> That the minutes be noted.
<b>238</b>	<b>To receive the minutes of the HQ Working Party Meeting held on the 1<sup>st</sup> December 2023</b>  The minutes had been previously circulated with the agenda.

	<p>The latest contract valuation was noted at £55,000 over budget based on infinitive costs outlined within the report circulated at the meeting.</p> <p>It was clarified that that £167,40 was already approved from general reserves and so £38,260 was needed to be funded from capital reserves approved by the Town Council.</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor John Crockford-Hawley  <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Peter Crew</p> <p>A vote was taken and <b>carried</b>. Accordingly, it was:</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the minutes and latest contract valuation be noted for approval be full council. £55,000.</p>
<p><b>239</b></p>	<p><b>To receive the minutes of the Civic Consultation Meetings held on the 30<sup>th</sup> November 2023</b></p> <p>The minutes had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the minutes be noted.</p>
<p><b>240</b></p>	<p><b>Monthly Financial Reports: September &amp; October 2023</b></p> <p><b>a) For Approval</b>  Schedule of Unapproved Expenditure</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Robert Payne  <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Tim Taylor</p> <p>A vote was taken and <b>carried</b>. Accordingly, it was:</p> <p><b>.1 RESOLVED:</b> That the Schedule of Unapproved Expenditure for September &amp; October 2023 be approved.</p> <p><b>b) For Noting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Bank Reconciliations</li> <li>ii. Budgetary Control Report</li> <li>iii. Bank Interest Report</li> <li>iv. Schedule of Receipted Income</li> <li>v. Bad debt report</li> <li>vi. Overspend report</li> </ul> <p><b>.2 RESOLVED:</b> That reports b) i – vi be noted.</p>
<p><b>241</b></p>	<p><i>The Chair brought forward item 13. For discussion before the budget.</i></p> <p><b>Waterpark Operation and Business model for April 2024</b>  The report of the Deputy Town Clerk / Assistant Town Clerk as directed by Tourism &amp; Leisure Committee was available at the meeting.</p> <p>The report had been considered and recommended by the Tourism &amp; Leisure Committee and the figures were considered to be conservative (kiosk sales were based on £3.00 admission and 18,000 visits).. The kiosk business model would help to control</p>

	<p>concessions and would with a view to working towards a resident’s cards in future years. This was considered a revenue opportunity for the council. The kiosk ‘Clara’s @ the Park’ would look to keep the concept simple and affordable. It was thought the proposal would help with waste issues and freeing up ground staff with water testing.</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Peter Crew  <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Helen Thornton</p> <p>A vote was taken and <b>carried</b>. Accordingly, it was:</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> To approve the Waterpark Operational Business Model / Feasibility Study outlined in the April 2024 proposal. For inclusion within the 2024/25 budget.</p>
<p><b>242</b></p>	<p><i>The Chair brought forward item 17. For discussion before the budget.</i></p> <p><b>To approve the Town Council Charges for the year 2024/2025</b>  The charging schedule for 2024 / 2025 had been previously circulated.</p> <p>It was reported that the officers proposed a general 10% increase across the board with some exceptions. Additional discretion was needed in some areas and flexibility was requested around the Blakehay and Museum for approval by the Town Clerk. For inclusion within the 2024/25 budget.</p> <p>It was noted that the Blakehay review would have an impact on the charges.</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Mark Canniford  <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Helen Thornton</p> <p>A vote was taken and <b>carried</b>. Accordingly, it was:</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the Town Council Charges for the year 2024/2025 be approved and allow for flexibility at the discretion of the Town Clerk in some areas.</p>
<p><b>243</b></p>	<p><i>The Chair brought forward item 18. For discussion.</i></p> <p><b>To recommend a Draft Budget for 2024/2025 to Town Council</b></p> <p>The draft budget had been previously circulated.</p> <p>The Deputy Town Clerk informed that as per individual group and group leader discussions, the budget was as presented, reflecting an 8.6% increase.</p> <p>A proposal was made to increase the Community Services budget by £25,000 to fund street cleaning via self-help initiatives and voluntary groups.</p> <p>Discussion ensued on the draft budget and as a compromise it was</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Tim Taylor  <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Helen Thornton</p> <p>A vote was taken and <b>carried</b>. Accordingly, it was:</p>

**243.1 RESOLVED:** To add £10,000 into the Community Services Committee Small and Voluntary Grants budget, ringfenced for street cleaning initiatives.

A **proposal** was made to decrease the Community Events budget by £20,000, which was not seconded and was therefore **lost**.

It was then

**PROPOSED BY:** Councillor Alan Peak

**SECONDED BY:** Councillor Helen Thornton

To increase the Environmental Budget by £25,000.

A vote was taken and **carried**. Accordingly, it was: **lost**

Concern was raised that before the commencement of the meeting, members were informed that a report had been sent to the council from Somewhere To Go in support of their current Service Level Agreement. However, the report had not been received by Officers as yet and therefore had not been circulated to members for consideration.

It was noted that the report had been requested back in the summer and its latest submission was considered inefficient, for consideration within the budget.

Discussion ensued regarding the purpose of the SLA and it was noted that there was time between now and the Town Council meeting in January to review the report.

As members were conscious of the risks of withdrawing funding without full information, it was compromised that as long as satisfactory data reports were received before the Town Council meeting, there would be no change.

Discussion ensued regarding the Blakehay Theatre and a proposal was made to reduce funding by £24,000. However, it was felt that in order to conduct the review, the budget figures should remain the same. The review was planned to conclude by March/April and would be reviewed by the Expenditure & Governance Working Party for recommendation the Heritage Arts & Culture Committee and the proposal was therefore withdrawn.

*Member of the public left at 8.30pm.*

It was then:

**PROPOSED BY:** Councillor John Crockford-Hawley

**SECONDED BY:** Councillor Mark Canniford

A vote was taken and **carried**. Accordingly, it was:

**243.2 RESOLVED:** To remove £50,000 from expenditure to replenish General Reserves.

Discussion then turned to staffing levels and it was:

**PROPOSED BY:** Councillor Mark Canniford

**SECONDED BY:** Councillor John Crockford-Hawley

A vote was taken and **carried**. Accordingly, it was:

	<p><b>243.3 RESOLVED:</b> To remove the £38,000 from the Central Services staffing budget to fund the Climate Change Officer position.</p> <p>Debate turned to the CAB drop in centre in the Sovereign and it was:</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor John Crockford-Hawley  <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Mark Canniford</p> <p>A vote was taken and <b>carried</b>. Accordingly, it was:</p> <p><b>243.4 RESOLVED:</b> To add £25,000 to the Community Services budget to fund the Citizens Advice Bureau drop in centre in the Sovereign Centre to be released on condition that it remained open in 2024.</p> <p>With the above amendments, the budget and Precept requirement for 2024/2025 = £3,135,840 (increase was at 6.8%), band D at £116.73 and the precept increase at 5.6%.</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Alan Peak  <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Gill Bute</p> <p>A vote was taken and <b>carried</b>. Accordingly, it was:</p> <p><b>243.5 RESOLVED:</b> That the draft budget, incorporating the above changes, be recommended to the Town Council for approval at its meeting on the 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2024.</p>
<p><b>244</b></p>	<p><i>Item 10.</i></p> <p><b>NNDR Rebate Weston Museum</b></p> <p>The report of the Deputy Town Clerk had been previously circulated.</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Peter Crew  <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Gill Bute</p> <p>A vote was taken and <b>carried</b>. Accordingly, it was:</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To formally note the conclusion of the NNDR refund rebate and receipt of monies as a result which will go back into the councils General Reserve Balances.</li> <li>2. To approve the payment of fees as due to Avison Young to the value of £58,636.46 plus VAT.</li> </ol>
<p><b>245</b></p>	<p><b>Interim Internal Audit Report</b></p> <p>The audit report had been previously circulated.</p> <p>A vote was taken and <b>carried</b>. Accordingly, it was:</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> To note the Interim Internal Audit report.</p>

<p><b>246</b></p>	<p><b>Medium Term Financial Plan 2024 / 2025</b> (including Capital forecast)</p> <p>The financial plan had been previously circulated with the agenda which outlined changes in yellow. A further balance sheet was available on the table.</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor John Crockford-Hawley  <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Helen Thornton</p> <p>A vote was taken and <b>carried</b>. Accordingly, it was:</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> To approve changes to the Medium-Term Financial Plan 2024 / 2025.</p>
<p><b>247</b></p>	<p><b>PPM Update – issue of Purchase Order for revision of PPM programme following appointment of Contract Surveyor</b></p> <p>The report of the Deputy Town Clerk and Senior Development Officer had been previously circulated.</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor John Crockford-Hawley  <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Mark Canniford</p> <p>A vote was taken and <b>carried</b>. Accordingly, it was:</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To approve the issue of the purchase order to Currie Brown following appointment as the councils Building Surveyor to undertake the quinquennial programme. - £27,800</li> <li>2. To receive and approve the use of the schedule of rates related to the Building Surveyors professional services for use over the duration of the contract as required following the procurement exercise undertaken and subsequent appointment in June 2023.</li> </ol>
<p><b>248</b></p>	<p><b>Town Council Vehicles</b></p> <p>To receive the report of the Deputy Town Clerk and Grounds Manager.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> To defer this item until the February meeting.</p>
<p><b>249</b></p>	<p><b>Town Quarry Revised Heads of Terms</b></p> <p>The report of the Town Clerk and revised heads of terms had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor John Crockford-Hawley  <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Mark Canniford</p> <p>A vote was taken and <b>carried</b>. Accordingly, it was:</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To approve the Heads of Terms reported as the basis for a ‘peppercorn’ long Lease of the Quarry and to authorise the Town Clerk to complete the Lease.</li> </ol>

	<p>2. To note that further reports will be brought to committee on the timescale and terms of future occupation and reopening of the site.</p>
250	<p><b>To Approve the amended Social Value Procurement Policy</b> The report of the Town Clerk had been previously circulated.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> To defer this item until the February meeting.</p>
251	<p><b>Social Media Report</b></p> <p>The report of the Communications Officer which provided an update on the use of Twitter (rebranded as “X”) had been previously circulated.</p> <p>The rebranding and shift were part of the owner’s attempt to turn X into an app that was seen as an “everything” platform which allowed users to do things like banking, e-commerce, and expanded social media features<sup>1</sup>. The conversations on the platform were becoming more toxic as the restrictions had been lifted. The Town council had experienced issues for Weston Museum recently which spilled over onto the Town Council twitter feed since the restrictions had been lifted and responses often escalate quickly and unlike other social media platforms, there is no control in terms of deleting comments or turning comments off. This can create reputational damage with the ‘right to reply’ being challenging.</p> <p>The council had 1,824 Followers on Twitter/X.</p> <p>The report outlined ‘for and against’ considerations to help members decide if the council should leave the platform.</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Peter Crew <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Mark Canniford</p> <p>A vote was taken and <b>carried</b>. Accordingly, it was:</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the council withdraws and removes its Twitter account.</p>
252	<p><i>To resolve under the Public Bodies (Admissions of Meeting) Act 1960 to exclude the public and press for the following item by reasons of the confidential nature of the business.</i></p>
253	<p><b>Bad Debt Report</b></p> <p>The report of the Deputy Town Clerk had been previously circulated.</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Peter Crew <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Mark Canniford</p> <p>A vote was taken and <b>carried</b>. Accordingly, it was:</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> To write off debt no1 and that officers decide what further action could be taken to pursue debt no 2.</p>

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.10 pm

Signed.....Dated.....  
Chair of the Policy & Finance Committee



# **Executive Summary**

# **Community Ownership**

# **Fund Application**

# **Old Town Quarry**

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## **Summary of Application**

### **Basic Information**

- Unique Tracking Number: ANON-1AQE-KUGD-K
- Description of main purpose and activities of the Town Council (1.1.4 / 1.1.5)
- Previous project examples provided (1.1.1.6):
  - o Weston Museum
  - o Blakehay Theatre
  - o Castle Batch Play Area
- Organisation Address (1.1.10) prior to move to Waterloo Street – Listed as Grove House
- Not a partnership application (1.1.13)
- Applicant information (1.2) – Listed as Sarah Pearse with development@ email address.
- Project name (2.1.2) Old Town Quarry
- Asset current use (2.1.3)
- Project Summary (2.1.4)
- Planned activities and services (2.1.5)
- Asset type listed as other (2.2.1) description provided “Multi use community site – artist studios, café, community events space and artistic hub”
- Attached head terms of lease to demonstrate how the asset will be leased (2.2.2)
- Expected date of lease agreement commencing 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 (2.2.2.3)
- Attached NSC press release announcing closure (2.2.2.6.4)
- Who uses the asset, how would losing the asset affect the community, why would it be lost without intervention, and why would it be better under community ownership (3.1.1 / 3.1.2 / 3.1.3 / 3.1.4)
- How have we engaged with the community, local support for the project which includes letters of support upload (3.2.1 / 3.3.1)

- Our fundraising activities (3.2.2)
- Partnerships formed (3.2.3)
- Links with local plans (3.2.4)
- Community benefits we plan to deliver, how they will be sustained over time, and how we will ensure the whole community benefits (3.4.2 / 3.4.3 / 3.4.4)
- Environmental sustainability of the project (3.5.1)
- Capital investment required, capital costs (4.1.1) set at £671,992 with a breakdown provided (4.1.3)
- Matching funding provided £200,000 (4.1.4.1)
- Revenue funding allocation of £28,000 (4.1.6.1) and how this will help to runs the asset (4.1.6.2)
- Feasibility studies carried out (4.2.1)and those still to take place (4.2.2.1)
- Risk register attached to application (4.3.1) can be found here:  
[\\microshade\WSM\\$\Shared\Restricted\Finance\OLD TOWN QUARRY\Grant funding application\Community Ownership Fund\Full application\Attachments\Risk Register\risk register draft.xlsx](#)
- Summary of operational costs (4.4.1)
- Skills of the project team (4.5.1)
- List of board members provided is the list of 31 councillors 2023-2027 administration (4.6.1) and explanation of governance structure (4.6.2)
- How the views of the community have been considered (4.6.3), how it will be accountable to local people (4.7.1) and any barriers they might face (4.7.2)
- A full business plan was submitted with the application and can be found it:  
[\\microshade\WSM\\$\Shared\Restricted\Finance\OLD TOWN QUARRY\Grant funding application\Community Ownership Fund\Full application\Attachments\Business plan appendices\submitted Business Plan - Old Town Quarry.pdf](#) A new version of the business plan has been created with not content changed, just the order of the appendices corrected.

## Main Proposal Points Summarised from Application

### 1. [Historic Quarry](#)

(2.1.3) Until its closure the quarry was being used primarily as work spaces for local artists, and a café opened 3/4 days a week. A variety of trades and artforms were represented, including a blacksmith studio, tree surgeon, stonemason, pottery, fine art, printmaking to name a few. It is essential that the site is reopened as soon as possible. It was shut by the unitary authority following health and safety concerns. This has meant that the artists and trades have had to evacuate site.

(3.1.1) Current Audiences - The Quarry has an established an informal 'Guardians of the Quarry' group who are invested in securing the long-term operation of the site. This group is made up of existing residents at the quarry including the trades, artists and café workers. The café draws in a dedicated customer base, given its unique offer. We hope to expand the community which, prior to September 2023, benefitted from the site. There are no specific statistics on site uses, as until September 2023 it was run by the Civic Society who did not keep any formal data. However, the level of public outcry during the closure is indicative of how loved the site is/was.

### 2. [Future Plans](#)

(2.1.4) This project will transform Weston's Old Town Quarry into a landmark art culture and heritage asset, to become a dynamic new hub for culture, creative and digital enterprise. NSC have resolved to grant WSMTC a lease for 25 years for the future management and control of the property. Weston Town Council have worked closely with specialists and local community experts to create an ambitious programme for redevelopment and rejuvenation of the Old Town Quarry. In terms of capital works this will include:

- essential repairs to the main building roof
- sympathetically redesign and replacement studios within main building
- redevelop the barn for use by WTC
- make good where there is water damage to the small store roof and redecorate
- construction of additional artist studios (wooden cabins)
- increase toilet provision for general public and occupants
- carry out conservation works to the historic timber way bridge
- creation of an information centre to Worlebury Hillfort

The existence of the Quarry today is the result of an extraordinary community effort to refurbish and maintain a historic site on a shoe string. Buildings on site need significant updating to ensure longevity, the footprint of the site provides huge potential for cultural regeneration in an area with limited cultural infrastructure. The proposed building project includes the refurbishment of existing studios and café and expansion using environmentally friendly 'prefab' pods to include new studio, workshops exhibition and education spaces as well as enhanced public realm facilities. The Town Council are dedicated to achieve Net Zero by 2030 and we think this project could provide a national exemplar for environmentally friendly redevelopment. A new event space will enable an ambitious new cultural programme

and support new revenue streams for the partners involved as well as enabling greater community involvement in creative and cultural programming.

(2.1.5) There are several spaces at the Old Town Quarry which offer individual and unique uses.

- Artist Studios – there are artist studios in the main building. We would look to have these occupied again, and create a programme of open days to allow the public the opportunity to see new art forms. This could also take the form of a learning offer, with opportunities for students to shadow artists. As well as the existing studios, we are looking to install new outdoor studios on site.
- Outdoor Artistic Programme – Super Culture created a programme of live entertainment at the Quarry. This included music, comedy, cabaret, theatre, dance, and spoken word. We would work with Super Culture on board to make this a standing feature of the site.
- Café – The café at the Quarry has been in operation for the past 17 years. We want to ensure its longevity. Using asset-based community development principles we want to understand who is best placed to manage this element of the site as the income generation is key to supporting an affordable Art function within the studios.
- Information point for Worlebury Hillfort – The quarry is a perfect location to introduce an information station. There is an access route to the hillfort that runs alongside the quarry. We see this as an opportunity to educate more people about this important historical site.
- Programme of Events – as well as tapping into the heritage arts and culture sector with events and performances, the town council will utilise its Climate and Community and Community Wellbeing Development Officers to offer a series of health and wellbeing events and environment and climate awareness events.

(2.2.2.3) The intention to enter into a lease agreement and authority to take over has been resolved by both NSC and WSMTC by formal resolution. Lease documents and heads of terms are being finalised with legal teams from both councils and will be approved and signed in January 2024 (working to scheduled council meeting dates). The Lease agreement will commence on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024.

(3.1.1) Future aspirational audiences - Since the Covid pandemic, the town has seen a surge in community participation and desire for local services. Not only did the lockdown demonstrate an overwhelming level of social isolation within the town, and nationally, it also highlighted gaps and a lack of links between existing services to local areas. In particular, within the heritage arts and culture sector. Addressing this has been one of WSMTC's primary focus since the lockdown, with the creation of a dedicated and directly employed community resilience team. There has also been a demonstrable increase in partnership working, to enable community development and growth. Following the principles of asset-based community development has allowed our audiences to expand exponentially, as we have, in effect, knocked down the walls to all the local echo chambers. This project will benefit from this increase audience, and will also ensure that through the ongoing consultation, a wider understanding of strengths within the community will be utilised.



In using this connective approach, to maximise community building, we aim to reach the following demographics within the community:

- local artists
- school and college students
- members of the LGBTQ+ community
- A wide variety of different cultures and ethnic backgrounds, representative of the town, working with local organisations such as Racial Equality North Somerset
- Tourists
- Heritage and wildlife enthusiast
- People facing social isolation

WSMTC is dedicated to creating services which are inclusive to the fullest possible extent, not only physically but also mentally, emotionally, academically and culturally. The Council has a growing network of community partners representing many cultures, religions and races through the Anti-Racism Working Group. In addition, it actively supports the LGBTQ+ community in the town both of which are underrepresented in Art and Cultural projects in the town.

### 3. Loss of the asset

(3.1.2) The loss of this significant community asset would have a far-reaching effect to the town most recognisably with direct impacts on community connectivity and the demise of what has been a grass roots community building endeavour from its inception. Economic growth within the community art and cultural offer will be lost alongside education and wellbeing offers that this unique and environmental important site holds.

The Quarry was home to artists and trades, with one tenant having been there for 24 years. The 18 tenants who, prior to September 2023, occupied the quarry rely on the site for their livelihood. The blacksmith who worked from the site was the only blacksmith within the town boundary. This heritage trade is no longer in operation. One of the artists operated a unique kiln, one of few operating within the country. This will all be permanently lost and many are now struggling to find suitable alternative venues even temporarily to continue their vocations.

The site has offered educational opportunities in connection with Weston College. Students have been given the opportunity to shadow artists. One of the tenants used to be an art teacher at a local secondary school and had been supporting students achieve their GCSE art. There is no other site in the town that offers the tranquillity and diversity to be able to engage in such a wide-ranging offer ( Environmental / Wildlife / Wellbeing and Culture).

(3.1.3) Without WSMTC working to enable community intervention the site will not reopen. The facility needs proper management and the ability to attract investment. Without both it will be lost to the community and will fall into further decay and eventual dereliction. This will be a further 'hit' to the already weak cultural infrastructure in the town.

Having shut in September 2023, with NSC unable to continue running the site due to lack of resources. WSMTC has been keen to ensure the site remains in community use, and still intends to do so regardless of the closure, but this relies on support with funding in order to make it sustainable in the long term. We are in a unique position that we have legislation on our side, as well as the capacity to deliver appropriate governance and compliance.

Crucial investment is needed in both structure and management, particularly surrounding tenant licences. Many of the previous tenants were without agreements, having never having been issued or them having lapsed years previous. This meant that it would have been difficult for the community group running the site to issue inflationary rent increases. In the long term this affected the financial viability of the site.

(3.1.4) The position of the town council will allow the site to be bolstered from above and, whilst being developed from below will better serve the community. Working with community and local partners and applying Asset Based community Development principles, we will ensure we deliver services and initiatives that the community need, whilst giving it all the structure required from a multifaceted site. We are not an organisation with a rigid audience.

#### 4. Community

(3.2.1) In 2021, when WSMTC first announced its intention to take over the site, we began holding meetings with the existing community at the quarry. Initially this enabled us to understand what was working well, and what could be improved. This informed a lot of the plans we have created today, recognising that some of these tenants had been on site for 20+ years.

We have endeavoured to remain as transparent as possible throughout the process, by holding numerous community engagement evenings at Weston Museum to discuss opportunities and create visions for the site. A communications plan would be developed as part of the redevelopment to ensure not only engage throughout the refurbishment, but also build momentum for the reopening of the site.

We have worked closely with the unitary authority since 2021 to ensure the process of our take over was as smooth as possible. Whilst the closure of the quarry due to Health and safety considerations was unfortunate, our preparation works carried out to date should ensure that this closure is not long term following the remedial and redevelopment works.

(3.3.1) Due to the diverse nature of the site, we felt it was important to consult with more than just artists, as such we have worked with the following groups to develop ideas for the site:

- North Somerset Council - have supported our plans to take over the management of the site. This has included support with legal and structural issues as they have arisen. They have shared knowledge and survey information with us where prudent.
- Civic Society – are keen to continue to protect the heritage of the site. As previous license holders, they have been integral to the discussions of our

take over, they have attended meetings, enabled meetings with current tenants, and provided key information to inform our business plan and strategy

- Weston Museum – as one of the Town Council Services, they are onboard to support a learning offer at the Quarry and replicate the success of the learning sessions held at the Museum. We will be able to benefit from their experience, particular reopening after a lengthy closure period, and setting up a café from scratch.
- Super Culture – have not only used the site previously for a programme of artist events, but are also keen to continue this moving forward. They have a vast array of regional, national and international artists and performers who we hope to see bring new artforms into the town and with it a flourishing audience. They have also provided written support for our project
- Weston College – as a provider of 16+ education, they are onboard to support the learning and skills development offer at the site. There is a lack of artistic and heritage skills development opportunities within the town, and we hope to improve this with the support of the College.
- Friends of Weston Museum
- Hub Weston CIC – discussions have begun with Hub Weston as a potential option for the running of the café and several studios. They have been involved with WSMTC since we announced our plans take over the site, and have supported us with expertise, have facilitated meetings, and business model planning.
- Friends of Worlebury Hillfort – have provided a letter of support. We will work closely with them to create the information station for the Worlebury hillfort
- The For All Healthy Living Company – are a long running community partner of WSMTC. We have worked with them since 2020 and they have been keen in developing our understanding of the importance of community wellbeing, and helped develop practises to support this offer.

(4.6.3) In recent years the town council has restructured its approach to community engagement. We now encourage active engagement as opposed to passive participation. simply relying on online surveys is not enough to get a well-rounded view from the community. We will mirror a recent redevelopment project, the creation of a SEND inclusive play area, will hold several in person, themed, community engagement sessions.

We will develop a communications plan in order to ensure that all of our invitations for sessions reached the broadest audience. We will recognise the need for more rounded engagement to maximise response levels. We will proactively encourage lines of communication to continue after the reopening and will have a dedicated Facebook page and website to receive comments from the community.

By applying Asset Based Community Development principles and proactively working to our adopted community outcomes we hope to replicate prior success in community building and maximise community capacity at the Quarry to ensure its future.

(4.7.1) We would look to set up a community focus group to meet quarterly to share ideas objectives and manage performance, this would include artists, stakeholders, community partners, councillors and council officers. Our services are kept under constant review through our budget setting process and annual strategy review. Part of this is the newly adopted medium term financial plan and associated your town your voice survey. In this, we ask the community to evaluate our services. this is then used to inform the budget setting process. This will ensure that programming at the Quarry is built from the ground up, with constant consideration of the community.

(4.7.2) Location – this is a hillside location, located a short walk from the town centre. Whilst there is bus stop outside the site, the bus routes are not fully accessible for the whole community, with in recent years the services having been cut whilst the town continues to expand. Lack of understanding site facilities and existence as a community venue – some members of the community are currently unaware of the site, or may be aware of it, but do not understand its services to know they can access it. Disrepair of buildings and lack of maintenance to various parts of the site – whilst the buildings are accessible, the natural elements of the site might prove tricky for some users e.g. uneven ground, grassy areas which are difficult to use in wet weather etc.

## 5. Financials

(3.2.2) Weston-super-Mare Town Council has allocated £200,000 in community infrastructure levy funds following community support to do so. They have been placed into an earmarked reserve.

We plan to continue fundraising throughout the development of the site, with long term aims dependant on successful bids. A fundraising strategy will be devised to follow the 10-year strategy to ensure timeline goals are met. The council's development team are exploring grant opportunities with Natural England specifically in recognition of the environmental needs within the site.

### **Refurbishment Costs - estimates**

Refurbishment Build Capital Costs	562,992
Other Capital Costs	109,000
<b>Total Capital Costs</b>	<b>671,992</b>

### **Revenue Costs**

£20,000	Professional fees, for audience development
	Environmental and wildlife conservation
	Tree Management plans
£5,000	Employment of consultant to review Café Operation agreements
£3,000	Cultural events programme set up and community booking systems

(4.1.6.2) We have included a value of £28,000 within our application for use in year. This is to enable us to be fully develop final operational plans and aspirations for the

Quarry. We recognise there is a need to engage with outside consultants who have experience in community led projects and also to recognise there will be a start-up programming costs from our existing community partnerships which they would otherwise have to absorb.

All capital and revenue costs associated with this project, for the purpose of this application are shown as net of VAT, as the council is able to reclaim all VAT incurred.

(4.4.1) All revenue surplus generated by the quarry will be reinvested into the following year. Events, workshops and the Café concession are key areas to supporting the sites running costs and ensure that the community art studios remain affordable. WSMTC will absorb all the majority of the grounds and site maintenance costs through its existing service operations which are already being funded through the precept levy.

Operating costs will be minimal at the site and have been forecast over the next 4 years based on information provided by the previous leaseholder, alongside existing data we have from running other community assets in the town.

Rental income from artists will be fully inclusive to consider utility costs and access to the internet. We are committed to keep costs down for the community in this area and only aspire to cover the direct premises and maintenance costs.

There is a need to gain revenue support grants (albeit minimal) to support the aims of the strategic plan, if these are not fulfilled the impact will be a reduction in the surplus reinvested rather.

## 6. Partnerships

(3.2.3) Super Culture – Super Culture as an existing community partner will support events programming at the Quarry.

We are in conversations with a CIC about a potential sublease to manage part of the site, but would like to undertake feasibility studies to understand who is best placed to deliver this part of the site.

Weston Museum – a services run by WSMTC, the museum team will be able to support the heritage offer at the old town quarry. In particular the development of the information point for Worlebury hillfort and tailored inclusive educational workshops.

North Somerset Council – As well as supporting the take over of the site, officers at NSC who are instrumental in the management of Worlebury Hillfort will be on hand to support the creation of the information point for Worlebury hillfort.

## 7. Bigger Picture

(3.2.4) The Town Council holds an important position on several boards, including the Placemaking Agency and Town Centre Partnership. As such many of the regional redevelopment plans have a big focus on Weston, and more specifically the future of the Quarry.

NSC's Placemaking Strategy for Weston specifically references the redevelopment of the Quarry, written as the existing owners and operators of the site it notes "North

Somerset Council will seek investment partners to relaunch the Quarry to become a year-round cultural asset for the town and serve as a Visitor Centre for the Worlebury Hill Fort”.

NSC’s Corporate Plan 2020-2024, whilst not specifically referencing the Quarry, notes that “Weston-super-Mare - our largest town is set to become the second biggest settlement in the West of England over the next decade. Opportunities include the University Centre, Enterprise Area, Food Works and the developing arts, culture and heritage scene”. They recognise the need for a “flourishing arts, culture and heritage sector” and the importance this plays in “supporting inclusive growth, placemaking and healthier communities”.

Finally, North Somerset Council’s Creative Industries Support Plan states that “There is persistent demand for ‘messy’/artisan workspace in Weston-super-Mare not met through existing provision”, something which we aim to resolve through the introduction of more studio space.

#### 8. [Benefits of the project](#)

(3.4.2) This project will primarily offer people access to heritage arts and culture, which is considered a luxury by many in the local community. By expanding the offer available to local artists and artistic practitioners, we hope to increase employment and economic opportunities for a community which is overlooked in the area.

WSM is home to a very diverse community, particular when it comes to deprivation metrics. The town has several LSOA’s in the bottom 10% most deprived neighbourhoods in the country, and other which are in the top 20% least deprived. These statistics and disparity can lead to a lack of community pride and a negative perception of certain areas. The LSOA which the quarry resides in is an area of deprivation, in particular health deprivation (20% most deprived) and living environment (10% most deprived). The work we hope to achieve at the Quarry will help to target this, not just the perception, but also increasing people’s access to the living environment and the health benefits that come with this. Access to outdoor spaces has been shown to improve physical and mental health, by improving respiratory health, improving mood, reducing stress, mental restoration, boosted immune function and improved emotional wellbeing to name a few. By targeting these LSOAs or neighbourhoods, we hope to create a sense of belonging. By opening the doors to community members searching for various outlets- art, environment, social integration- we hope to create communities where they didn’t previously exist.

(3.4.3) We have created a 10-year strategy: our vision statement is “To ensure the Old Town Quarry remains a vibrant, prosperous, cultural, greener, and inclusive place for everyone to enjoy, whilst having regard for the importance of its heritage within the Town”. In this strategy we have mapped out the redevelopment of the site, from the initial capital programme of improvement works, to the aspirational construction of a community arts venue following a steady increase of use by the community. The strategy for the quarry follows the format of the wider town council strategy, focusing on our 5 pillars ([attached to business plan](#)). The shorter-term aims are mostly capital works (0-1 years) which includes (non-exclusively):

- develop a programme for the redevelopment of the Old Town Quarry
- carry out essential repairs to main building roof
- sympathetically redesign and replace studios within main building (to conform with necessary regulations)
- to redevelop the barn for use by WSMTC
- to make good where there is water damage to the small store roof and redecorate
- construction of additional artist studios (wooden cabins)
- to create a site-specific management plan to include (non-exclusive) details of wildlife considerations, plant flora and general maintenance

In the short term these are essential to creating the site we envisage. Longer term aims are more around identity and will ensure that we achieve and sustain the aforementioned benefits (0-10 years) which includes (non-exclusively):

- To develop our online presence on a range of social media platforms in order to publicise our creative work, establish dialogue with other creative communities and practitioners and inform the wider public.
- developing a programme of events regarding environment and climate change
- to put a tree management plan in place
- To identify opportunities for Health and Wellbeing Events and Activities
- To have regards for accessibility to the site, recognising the TC commitment to being “Disability Confident”
- To increase toilet provision for general public and occupants
- to identify opportunities for educational workshops
- to work with local business to find opportunities for income generation
- to carry out consultation as necessary to aid the process for the redevelopment of the Old Town Quarry
- to maximise café opportunities including events and as a venue for special events
- To strengthen social cohesion through running and supporting activities events, festivals, youth initiatives and clubs
- to carry out conservation works to the historic timber way bridge
- To create an open day programme for the studios

(3.4.4) The Old Town Quarry, when reopened to the public, will be free, accessible and open 6 days a week. At the town council we recognise the difference between being inclusive and active engagement. Whilst we recognise there will be no barriers to participation, this is not to say that people will not have personal barriers. The first one of these barriers we need to overcome is ensuring that everyone is aware of the quarry and its services and initiatives. We will create a robust communication plan to ensure we engage with all areas of the community. This will include engagement with specific under-reached community groups, which we hope to achieve through existing relationships with our community partners.

There will be a focus on community led events and initiatives which will provide efficacy and connectivity to already established areas in the community whilst attracting both local residents and tourists to the town through common interests.

## 9. Environment

(3.5.1) We are looking to maintain and enhance a site of natural beauty. In retaining the asset in community ownership, we avoid any possibility of it being demolished or repurposed for commercial means.

We have commissioned several surveys of the site to better understand the habitats, including an arboriculture survey, an ecological survey, a building and structure survey, a bat survey and we have also had peregrine falcon experts visit the site to offer advice. These surveys have identified certain obligations we have to follow, particularly surrounding the roosting and hibernation patterns of the local wildlife. We will ensure any works are done sensitively.

Working with a local naturalist and lepidopterist we have identified in addition to the falcons, sometimes Ravens nest on the cliffs which enclose the Quarry. In the grassy area beyond the entrance to the blacksmith's former site there is a colony of the Ringlet butterfly which we will conserve. In addition, Wych elms around the car park are believed to host the White letter hairstreak butterfly. The protection of all wildlife will be a priority to ensure there is no loss of important participants in the eco system at the site.

The Town Council is committed to be carbon neutral by 2030. In relation to our buildings, we have begun exploring zero carbon electrical providers and would endeavour to do the same at the quarry. There is no gas used at the site. We will use a renewable source for any water or heating requirements. We are looking to introduce solar panels at the quarry in order to make our energy usage more efficient. We would explore opportunities for water harvesting at the site. With the grounds team being relocated to the site, this can support the planting function of the council.

We are keen to ensure that the physical environment of the site remains an undisturbed as possible. Our plans for additional structures aim to be complimentary to their location. We are looking to install new artist studios in a fairly wooded area, and want these to be wooden sustainably sourced structures so not as to disrupt site lines or habit whilst having regard for material uses. At the back of the site there is an existing metal structure which used to be the processing site when it was a working quarry. This needs to be demolished as it is no longer structurally sound. In its place we would like to create an artist village using recycled metal shipping containers to maintain the industrial nature of the site and pay respect to its heritage a future long-term project.

## 10. Feasibility Studies and Planning

(4.2.1) WSMTC began exploring the take over of the Quarry in late 2019 but this did not come into fruition with the previous lease holder remaining in place. More recently we have had extensive surveys carried out and begun design plans to understand how the existing structures could be improved or reimaged. We have



held one-on-one interviews with the previous tenants to understand what was working well and what wasn't in order to better understand operational requirements of the sites. We have begun community consultation to understand community perception of the site, and have found this to be favourable. Since the closing of the site in September 2023, there has been an outcry of pleas from the community to ensure the future of the site is secured.

Several risk assessments have been carried out of the site, both in terms of its operation and its structures. ( Attached in Business Plan Appendix 3)

Since discussions began to explore the take over, we have developed a medium-term financial plan to ensure we considered the quarry in capital programming.

Several events have been held at the quarry, some internal and others by community partners to gauge the appetite for more heritage, arts and culture events.

Town Councillors have been kept up to date with the development of plans through update reports to various committee meetings. this will ensure that when decisions are required regarding the redevelopment, the councillors will be in a position to act quickly having been kept up to date throughout.

(4.2.2.1) We would benefit from further feasibility studies regarding the operation of the site. We have a community partner engaged to potentially support the running of the café and several of the studios, but this could be better understood. In wanting to ensure long term stability, during the capital programme stage, we would like to engage a consultant to help us understand the business need, which will therefore inform any decisions about the cafe's operation.

Tenancy agreements with artists and occupiers would also be beneficial to explore further, in order to understand the market to ensure we remain viable, whilst also being affordable for local artists.

Whilst we have explored the environmental impacts from all angles (climate, living environment, structural environment), it would be good to bring this all under one plan or strategy for the site with better understanding for who is responsible for each area.

## **Full Application**

### 1. About your organisation

#### 1.1. Organisation information

##### 1.1.1. Your unique tracker number

## **ANON-1AQE-KUGD-K**

##### 1.1.2. Organisation name

Weston-super-Mare Town Council

##### 1.1.3. Does your organisation use any other names?

If 'No', go to **1.1.4.**

##### 1.1.4. What is your organisation's main purpose? (maximum 500 words **445 words currently**)

Weston super Mare Town Council (WSMTC) support and deliver community services at the community level of local government. At its heart, the council is devoted to enabling community growth, sustainability and to encourage cohesion within service provision across the town delivered by ourselves and community partners. The Town Council adopted 6 community outcomes to hold itself accountable to deliver services and initiatives that truly benefit the community. These outcomes are: Connectivity, Collaboration, Resilience, Community Capacity, Collective Efficacy and Community Cohesion (**6 outcomes document in business plan**).

WSMTC commits itself to supporting the entire community of Weston-super Mare, a community of 80,000. The community is at the centre of the Town Council's objectives. Its adopted 10-year Strategy with five overarching pillars reflect our aims for Weston-super-Mare:

- Weston View – Measures to promote and better present the Town.
- Cleaner and Greener – Measures to improve the local environment.
- Healthier and Happier – Measures to promote the health and wellbeing of local residents.
- A Bright Future – Measures to support and enhance the local economy.
- Heritage, Arts and Culture– Measures to ensure that Weston super Mare thrives as a vibrant place for arts and culture

WSMTC also works to the principles of its Medium-Term Financial Plan (MFTP). The MFTP is important in putting in place a clear link between WSMTC's strategic aims and targets and the priorities of the local community, as set out in WSMTC's Strategy. This helps to ensure that financial resources are allocated to services in a way that supports the delivery and achievement of these aims and priorities.

Community engagement is an important function of the Council, with robust consultation allowing the views of the community and local taxpayers to be sought and then used to inform future decisions around allocation of resources, investment in services, and where any required efficiency savings should be targeted. The creation of a “Your Town Your Voice” consultation process (questionnaire and community engagement sessions) has been created to facilitate this. The MTFP developed a renewed focus on asset-based community development, ensuring that we understand what assets already exist in the community, areas which are lacking and most importantly where we are best placed to offer support.

WSMTC is the democratically elected parish council representing the civil “parish” and people of the town of Weston-super-Mare, including Worle and Uphill. The Council was re-founded in 2000 following a community governance review to carry out the civic role of the former borough (which had been abolished in 1974 leaving Weston without its own council, unlike any of the other 39 parishes in North Somerset). There are 31 councillors elected every 4 years who take no allowances, as well as a team of employed staff to implement their decisions.

This is what the organisation was set up to achieve

#### 1.1.5. Tell us about your organisation's main activities (maximum 500 words 354)

The Town Council, whilst one of the largest town councils in the country, it is still a community council in its operation. This means that through its governance and level of accountability it is a trusted democratic resource which has not only the capacity, but also the responsibility to deliver a variety of services and initiatives. Whether this be through the enhancing of the town environment both commercially (Visit Weston and our visitor information services) and environmentally (climate change initiatives and principles), providing opportunities for engagement in heritage arts and culture (Weston Museum, Blakehay Theatre), engagement with the community regarding their wellbeing (parks and play areas, wellbeing initiatives), or basis outdoor amenities (dog bins, bus shelters, public toilets, noticeboards).

Under the general power of competence (Localism Act 2011 s1(1)) the council has the power to do anything that individuals generally may do as long as they are not in breach of any laws. This has enabled the Town Council to develop many services and initiatives since its inception in 2000 which includes:

- Community led environmental projects such as the creation of a Community Fridge and Tree Nursery
- Community Wellbeing opportunities and events such as the programme of free wellbeing events in our dedicated Wellbeing Park
- Supporting culture and heritage event programming such as the Weston Wallz project in collaboration with community partners and Upfest
- The restoration and saving of grade II listed and historical buildings within the town for community use
- The council is committed to working with its community and has now funded a community reliance team of officers who work directly with community partners to provide further services enabling community led projects to come to fruition that otherwise wouldn't

There are certain obligations which by law a Local Council must fulfil, which includes:

- a) It must appoint such officers as it believes necessary for the proper discharge of its functions;
- b) It must make Standing Orders for the supply of goods and services to the Council.
- c) Obligated to achieve best value in the delivery of all its functions.

Include any activities you undertake in order to achieve the organisation's purpose.

#### 1.1.6. Have you delivered projects like this before?

If 'Yes', go to **1.1.6.1.**

##### 1.1.6.1. Describe your previous projects(maximum 500 words 478)

WSMTC has run several large-scale redevelopment projects over the years, in a variety of settings, utilising a variety of services and skills

Weston Museum – in 2017 Weston Museum reopened after a 2-year closure with a large-scale redevelopment of the site. Totalling £1.8 Million, this project included:

- the complete strip out of the old exhibitions working with a large group of volunteers from the local community
- restructure of layout to allow for introduction of lift following community pressure to improve accessibility
- replacement glass atrium roof
- complete redesign of exhibitions and displays following extensive community engagement
- brand new business plan including the introduction of several new posts (learning and events officer, volunteer coordinator) to better meet community need
- development of a 5-year activity plan to ensure we delivered a sustainable community hub

Blakehay Theatre – WSMTC took over the Blakehay Theatre following community pressure to maintain this much-loved site. We redeveloped it as a community theatre, recognising that there was not one locally. Throughout the years we have kept the service under constant programme reviews to ensure we adapt to changing community needs. There has been constant investment, both from the council and through grant funding. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the Blakehay Theatre had to close its doors and remain shut when other service began to reopen. Given the age of the building there was a lack of adaptations to support clean air ventilation which at the time was a requirement of reopening. A £323,000 grant was awarded to allow for a new ventilation system, as well as enable other Covid adaptations (dressing rooms split in half, new ramps to allow for an accessible circular route in and out of the building, virus neutralisers, screens, hand sanitising stations). The decision was made to combine the project with another scheduled, the complete rewire of the

building (in order to support the ventilation system). The total project cost was £491,235 and took place over 6 months. When reopened, these adaptations provided affordable, dedicated and better equipped spaces to be used for community classes in recognition of the lack of resource in the town.

Castle Batch SEND Play Area – WSMTC opened its new inclusive SEND play area in July 2023. This was a bespoke project which met a particular need, given the lack of provision locally. Following an extensive consultation process, where the demonstrated community need far outstripped the budget available, we were able to double our budget and working with play designers create a scheme valued at £400,000. It was essential that we worked with relevant community partners to understand what that need looked like, this approach also allowed external funding to be realised. The scheme included specialist equipment (wheelchair trampoline, swing and roundabout), adapted safety surfacing to allow for vision impairments, installation of sensory play panels and communication boards.

All of our project works requires a robust procurement process, development of risk assessments, working with specialists, design consultants and community stakeholders.

#### 1.1.7. Type of organisation

Select one option

- Charitable incorporated organisation (CIO)
- Co-operative, such as a community benefit society
- Community interest company (CIC)
- Company limited by guarantee
- Scottish charitable incorporated organisation(SCIO)
- **Parish, town or community council**
- Other

If 'Parish council', go to **1.1.8.**

#### 1.1.9. Is your organisation a trading subsidiary of a parent company?

If 'No', go to **1.1.10.**

#### 1.1.10. Organisation address

Weston-super-Mare Town Council  
Grove House  
Grove Park  
Weston-super-Mare  
BS232QJ

#### 1.1.11. Website and social media

Website: [wsm-tc.gov.uk](http://wsm-tc.gov.uk)

Facebook: Weston-super-Mare Town Council

Twitter: @Wsmtc

For example, your company's Facebook, Instagram or Twitter accounts (if applicable)

1.1.12. Is your correspondence address different to the organisation address?

If 'No', go to **1.1.13**.

1.1.12.1. Correspondence address

1.1.13. Is your application a joint bid in partnership with other organisations?

NO

1.2. Applicant information

1.2.1. Name of lead contact

Sarah Pearse

This does not have to be the same person as the lead contact for your expression of interest.

They will receive all the information about this application.

1.2.2. Lead contact job title

Deputy Town Clerk / Responsible Financial Officer

1.2.3. Lead contact email address

development@wsm-tc.gov.uk

1.2.4. Lead contact telephone number

01934632575

2. About your project

2.1. Project information

2.1.1. Have you applied to the Community Ownership Fund before?

If 'No', go to **2.1.2**.

2.1.2. Project name

The Old Town Quarry

This is what your project will be called within your organisation and by the public.

Choose a name that describes your project. For example, the name of your asset, or a link to your asset's location

2.1.3. Tell us how the asset is currently being used, or how it has been used before, and why it's important to the community (maximum 500 words)

Until its closure in September 2023, the quarry was being used primarily as work spaces for local artists, and a café opened 3/4 days a week. A variety of trades and artforms were represented, including a blacksmith studio, tree surgeon, stonemason, pottery, fine art, printmaking to name a few.

It is essential that the site is reopened as soon as possible. It was shut by the unitary authority following health and safety concerns. This has meant that the artists and trades have had to evacuate site.

2.1.4. Give a brief summary of your project, including what you hope to achieve (maximum 500 words)

This project will transform Weston's Old Town Quarry into a landmark art culture and heritage asset, to become a dynamic new hub for culture, creative and digital enterprise.

The site is currently under the management North Somerset Council (NSC) if the unitary authority, with the previous tenant having surrendered their lease. NSC have resolved to grant WSMTC a lease for 25 years for the future management and control of the property.

Weston Town Council have worked closely with specialists and local community experts to create an ambitious programme for redevelopment and rejuvenation of the Old Town Quarry. In terms of capital works this will include:

- essential repairs to the main building roof
- sympathetically redesign and replacement studios within main building
- redevelop the barn for use by WTC
- make good where there is water damage to the small store roof and redecorate
- construction of additional artist studios (wooden cabins)
- increase toilet provision for general public and occupants
- carry out conservation works to the historic timber way bridge
- creation of an information centre to Worlebury Hillfort

Through our existing services we have reached an audience of over 500K in the last year.

WSM is a vibrant and creative place and there is a strong sense of cultural appetite and momentum building – particularly post SEE MONSTER – but it is still an area of

significant deprivation and there are big gaps in opportunity and infrastructure is fragile. There is a significant grassroots visual arts community, and Weston College's visual arts FE/HE provision is rapidly expanding, but extensive consultation and involvement in WEVAA has pointed to a critical lack of studio and regularly open exhibition space as a major inhibitor to viable career progression.

The existence of the Quarry today is the result of an extraordinary community effort to refurbish and maintain a historic site on a shoe string. Buildings on site need significant updating to ensure longevity, the footprint of the site provides huge potential for cultural regeneration in an area with limited cultural infrastructure.

The proposed building project includes the refurbishment of existing studios and café and expansion using environmentally friendly 'prefab' pods to include new studio, workshops exhibition and education spaces as well as enhanced public realm facilities. The Town Council are dedicated to achieve Net Zero by 2030 and we think this project could provide a national exemplar for environmentally friendly redevelopment.

A new event space will enable an ambitious new cultural programme and support new revenue streams for the partners involved as well as enabling greater community involvement in creative and cultural programming – the SEE MONSTER Think Tank model will be expanded to ensure community voice and co-design is at the heart of programming the space.

#### 2.1.5. Tell us about the planned activities and/or services that will take place in the asset(maximum 500 words 478words)

There are several spaces at the Old Town Quarry which offer individual and unique uses.

Artist Studios – there are artist studios in the main building. We would look to have these occupied again, and create a programme of open days to allow the public the opportunity to see new art forms. This could also take the form of a learning offer, with opportunities for students to shadow artists. As well as the existing studios, we are looking to install new outdoor studios on site. A long-term aspiration is the creation of a community arts venue towards the back of the site in the space of the former blacksmith area. We would also like to offer artists opportunities to create exhibitions of their work, with several suitable spaces across the site.

Outdoor Artistic Programme – during the Covid-19 pandemic, there was a need to find new ways of engaging the community in arts and culture. Super Culture rose to the occasion and created a programme of live entertainment at the Quarry. This included music, comedy, cabaret, theatre, dance, and spoken word. We would work with Super Culture on board to make this a standing feature of the site. 'Live at the Quarry' ran for 17 days and presented a variety of performances suitable for a range of audiences, showcasing internationally acclaimed acts alongside some outstanding local and regional talent. In addition, the Town Council also has capacity



to programme events. During lockdown, the council's combined services held a 'Comedy at the Quarry' event.

Café – The café at the Quarry has been in operation for the past 17 years. We want to ensure its longevity. We have begun conversations with a local organisation, who currently run several successful sites including a public house and a café, to understand if they would be a good fit for the site. Using asset-based community development principles we want to understand who is best placed to manage this element of the site as the income generation is key to supporting an affordable Art function within the studios.

Information point for Worlebury Hillfort – The quarry is a perfect location to introduce an information station. Worlebury Camp is an Iron Age hillfort that occupies 10 hectares of land at Worlebury Hill. It has been designated a scheduled monument since 1915, and is a nationally important archaeological site due to its rare coastal location, size and considerable defences. There is an access route to the hillfort that runs alongside the quarry. We see this as an opportunity to educate more people about this important historical site.

Programme of Events – as well as tapping into the heritage arts and culture sector with events and performances, the town council will utilise its Climate and Community and Community Wellbeing Development Officers to offer a series of health and wellbeing events and environment and climate awareness events. The Community Wellbeing Development Officer has previously run a summer long programme of wellbeing events at one of our parks which included yoga, mindfulness walks and litter picking to name a few.

#### 2.1.6. Address of the community asset

Old Town Quarry

South Road

Weston super Mare

BS23 2LS

#### 2.1.7. In which constituency is your asset?

Weston-super-Mare

#### 2.1.8. In which local council area is your asset?

North Somerset Council

## 2.2. Asset information

### 2.2.1. Asset type

Select how the asset is mainly used. For example, if it is a theatre that also has a cafe, select 'Theatre'

- Community centre
- Cinema
- Gallery
- Museum
- Music venue
- Park
- Post office building
- Pub
- Shop
- Sporting or leisure facility
- Theatre
- Other

If 'other', go to **2.2.1.1.**

#### 2.2.1.1. Type of asset (other)

Multi use community site – artist studios, café, community events space and artistic hub

### 2.2.2. How do you intend to take community ownership of the asset?

- Buy the asset
- Lease the asset
- Already owned by organisation
- Already leased by organisation

If 'lease the asset' go to **2.2.2.1., 2.2.2.2., 2.2.2.3.,and 2.2.2.6.**

#### 2.2.2.1 Upload asset valuation or lease agreement

heads of terms for the lease.

Please upload evidence that shows the asset valuation (if you are buying the asset) or the lease agreement (if you are leasing the asset).

If you are buying the asset: this could be an official document showing the asset's value from an independent surveyor or similar professional.

If you are leasing the asset: this could be a copy of your tenancy agreement, or agreed heads of terms, showing at least 15 years tenancy with reasonable break clauses.

It should be a single file no bigger than 5MB in an accepted format (jpg, jpeg, png, pdf, txt, doc, docx, odt, csv, xls, xlsx, ods).

2.2.2.2. Do you know who currently owns your asset?

If 'Yes', go to **2.2.2.2.1.**

**2.2.2.2.1. Name of current asset owner - North Somerset Council.**

2.2.2.3. Describe the expected sale process, or the proposed terms of your lease if you are planning to rent the asset(maximum 500 words)

The intention to enter into a lease agreement and authority to take over has been resolved by both NSC and WSMTC by formal resolution. Lease documents and heads of terms are being finalised with legal teams from both councils and will be approved and signed in January 2024 (working to scheduled council meeting dates). The Lease agreement will commence on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024.

2.2.2.4. Expected date of sale or lease(maximum 500 words)

01/04/2024

2.2.2.6. Is your asset currently publicly owned?

If 'Yes', go to **2.2.2.6.1, 2.2.2.6.2., 2.2.2.6.3. and 2.2.2.6.4.**

**2.2.2.6.1 Tell us about the person you have spoken to at the relevant public about the asset**

North Somerset Council – Jenny Ford Assistant Director and Julia Stuckey North Somerset Council's Placemaking Manager.

**2.2.2.6.2. When you buy or lease a publicly owned asset, the public authority must continue to be responsible for delivering any statutory services the asset provides**

This includes things like social care, waste collection and planning services.

We do not define individual libraries as statutory services for this purpose.

**2.2.2.6.3. Grants from this fund cannot be used to buy the freehold or premium on the lease of a publicly owned asset. Money must only be used for renovation and refurbishment costs**

**2.2.2.6.4. Upload evidence to confirm the above information and that the asset is at risk**

This could be from:

- a letter from an appropriate public authority officer or cabinet member
- a published cabinet paper from a local authority

It should be a single file no bigger than 5MB in an accepted format (jpg, jpeg, png, pdf, txt, doc, docx, odt, csv, xls, xlsx, ods).

### 2.2.3. Why is the asset at risk of closure?

Select all that apply

- Closure
- Sale
- Neglect or dereliction
- Unsustainable current business model
- Listed for disposal
- Part of a Community Asset Transfer

### 2.2.4. Is this a registered Asset of Community Value (ACV)?

No

## 3. Strategic case

This section is worth **53%** of the assessment criteria.

### 3.1. Community use

#### 3.1.1. Who in the community uses the asset, or has used it in the past, and who benefits from it? (maximum 500 words)

##### Current Audiences

The Quarry has an established an informal 'Guardians of the Quarry' group who are invested in securing the long-term operation of the site. This group is made up of existing residents at the quarry including the trades, artists and café workers. The café drawers in a dedicated customer base, given its unique offer. We hope to expand the community which, prior to September 2023, benefitted from the site.

There are no specific statistics on site uses, as until September 2023 it was run by the Civic Society who did not keep any formal data. However, the level of public outcry during the closure is indicative of how loved the site is/was.

##### Future aspirational audiences

Since the Covid pandemic, the town has seen a surge in community participation and desire for local services. Not only did the lockdown demonstrate an overwhelming level of social isolation within the town, and nationally, it also highlighted gaps and a lack of links between existing services to local areas. In particular, within the heritage arts and culture sector. Addressing this has been one of WSMTC's primary focus since the lockdown, with the creation of a dedicated and directly employed community resilience team. There has also been a demonstrable increase in partnership working, to enable community development and growth. Following the principles of asset-based community development has allowed our audiences to expand exponentially, as we

have, in effect, knocked down the walls to all the local echo chambers. This project will benefit from this increase audience, and will also ensure that through the ongoing consultation, a wider understanding of strengths within the community will be utilised. In using this connective approach, to maximise community building, we aim to reach the following demographics within the community:

- local artists
- school and college students
- members of the LGBTQ+ community
- A wide variety of different cultures and ethnic backgrounds, representative of the town, working with local organisations such as Racial Equality North Somerset
- Tourists
- Heritage and wildlife enthusiast
- People facing social isolation

By expanding the offer at the site, we hope to open the door to many more visitors from the above list. WSMTTC is dedicated to creating services which are inclusive to the fullest possible extent, not only physically but also mentally, emotionally, academically and culturally. The Council has a growing network of community partners representing many cultures, religions and races through the Anti-Racism Working Group. In addition, it actively supports the LGBTQ+ community in the town both of which are underrepresented in Art and Cultural projects in the town. There is opportunity for the Quarry to work towards not just inclusivity and equality of opportunity, but also active engagement and equity.

[Include any specific uses and how many people take part in these activities.](#)

[Reference any statistics you have to reinforce this. For example, data on footfall](#)

[3.1.2. Tell us how losing the asset would affect, or has already affected, people in the community \(maximum 500 words\)](#)

The loss of this significant community asset would have a far-reaching effect to the town most recognisably with direct impacts on community connectivity and the demise of what has been a grass roots community building endeavour from its inception. Economic growth within the community art and cultural offer will be lost alongside education and wellbeing offers that this unique and environmental important site holds.

The Quarry was home to artists and trades, with one tenant having been there for 24 years. The 18 tenants who, prior to September 2023, occupied the quarry rely on the site for their livelihood. The blacksmith who worked from the site was the only blacksmith within the town boundary. This heritage trade is no longer in operation. One of the artists operated a unique kiln, one of few operating within the country. This will all be permanently lost and many are now struggling to find suitable alternative venues even temporarily to continue their vocations.

The site has offered educational opportunities in connection with Weston College. Students have been given the opportunity to shadow artists. One of the tenants used to be an art teacher at a local secondary school and had been supporting students achieve their GCSE art. There is no other site in the town that offers the tranquillity and diversity to be able to engage in such a wide-ranging offer ( Environmental / Wildlife / Wellbeing and Culture).

Where possible give examples of these effects, such as important services ending or having to travel a significant distance to use a similar asset

### 3.1.3. Why will the asset be lost without community intervention? (maximum 500 words)

Without WSMTC working to enable community intervention the site will not reopen. The facility needs proper management and the ability to attract investment. Without both it will be lost to the community and will fall into further decay and eventual dereliction. This will be a further 'hit' to the already weak cultural infrastructure in the town.

Having shut in September 2023, with NSC unable to continue running the site due to lack of resources. WSMTC has been keen to ensure the site remains in community use, and still intends to do so regardless of the closure, but this relies on support with funding in order to make it sustainable in the long term. We are in a unique position that we have legislation on our side, as well as the capacity to deliver appropriate governance and compliance.

Crucial investment is needed in both structure and management, particularly surrounding tenant licences. Many of the previous tenants were without agreements, having never having been issues or them having lapsed years previous. This meant that it would have been difficult for the community group running the site to issue inflationary rent increases. In the long term this affected the financial viability of the site.

Include any evidence you have that its use by the community will be threatened.

For example, by the owner's intention or an imminent sale

### 3.1.4. Explain how the community will be better served with the asset under community ownership

The position of the town council will allow the site to be bolstered from above and, whilst being developed from below will better serve the community. Working with community and local partners and applying Asset Based community Development principles, we will ensure we deliver services and initiatives that the community need, whilst giving it all the structure required from a multifaceted site. We can allow for creative freedoms by providing an adaptable environment, and ensure that all statutory considerations are covered. Only by working this way will we secure this investment for the future. We are also able to focus more on inclusion. We are not an

organisation with a rigid audience. Our councillors represent the entire community, regardless of demographics. For this reason, we not only want to ensure the entire community have the ability to access services, but that they actually want to.

[Include why this is preferable to any other type of ownership](#)

### 3.2. Community engagement

#### 3.2.1. Tell us how you have engaged with the community about your intention to take ownership of the asset (maximum 500 words)

In 2021, when WSMTC first announced its intention to take over the site, we began holding meeting with the existing community at the quarry. Initially this enabled us to understand what was working well, and what could be improved. This informed a lot of the plans we have created today, recognising that some of these tenants had been on site for 20+ years. We continued these meetings through the years since to ensure we maintain a focus on community delivery.

We have endeavoured to remain as transparent as possible throughout the process, by holding numerous community engagement evenings at Weston Museum to discuss opportunities and create visions for the site. Our communications officer offering updates at every available stage to the community. A communications plan would be developed as part of the redevelopment to ensure not only engage throughout the refurbishment, but also build momentum for the reopening of the site. These engagement initiatives will continue to allow a fluid and community collaborative approach to the project's development.

We have worked closely with the unitary authority since 2021 to ensure the process of our take over was a smooth as possible. Whilst the closure of the quarry due to Health and safety considerations was unfortunate, our preparation works carried out to date should ensure that this closure is not long term following the remedial and redevelopment works. We will work with NSC Communications teams, the Place directorate, Super Culture and other community stakeholders to promote the site and advise of project developments as we believe this approach demonstrates the importance of community cohesion.

[Give examples of the different ways you've engaged with people, and how this has shaped your project plans](#)

#### 3.2.2 Describe your fundraising activities(maximum 500 words)

Weston-super-Mare Town Council has allocated £200,000 in community infrastructure levy funds following community support to do so. They have been placed into an earmarked reserve.

We plan to continue fundraising throughout the development of the site, with long term aims dependant on successful bids. A fundraising strategy will be devised to follow the 10-year strategy to ensure timeline goals are met. The council's

development team are exploring grant opportunities with Natural England specifically in recognition of the environmental needs within the site.

### 3.2.3. Tell us about any partnerships you've formed, and how they'll help the project be successful (maximum 500 words)

Super Culture – Super Culture as an existing community partner will support events programming at the Quarry. As a member of the town councils Heritage Arts and Culture Committee, Super Culture have been a long-term partner of the council. In 2018 Theatre Orchard (who since merged with Culture Weston to become Super Culture in August 2023) became North Somerset's first Arts Council National Portfolio Organisation. Since becoming an NPO, Theatre Orchard's programme has reached 125,000 people, created paid opportunities for over 400 artists, presented more than 160 productions, 8 festivals, 28 new work commissions and worked with 6,000 people through creative engagement. Super Culture specialise in creative placemaking and community participation – producing ambitious, diverse work with, for and by the people of North Somerset.

We are in conversations with a CIC about a potential sublease to manage part of the site, but would like to undertake feasibility studies to understand who is best placed to deliver this part of the site.

Weston Museum – a services run by WSMTC, the museum team will be able to support the heritage offer at the old town quarry. In particular the development of the information point for Worlebury hillfort and tailored inclusive educational workshops.

North Somerset Council – As well as supporting the take over of the site, officers at NSC who are instrumental in the management of Worlebury Hillfort will be on hand to support the creation of the information point for Worlebury hillfort.

For example, any agreements you've reached with other local businesses or community organisations

### 3.2.4. Tell us how your project supports any wider local plans (maximum 500 words)

WSMTC works closely with NSC. Their council office base is also in Weston super Mare which greatly supports our capacity to work together. The Town Council holds an important position on several boards, including the Placemaking Agency and Town Centre Partnership. As such many of the regional redevelopment plans have a big focus on Weston, and more specifically the future of the Quarry.

NSC's Placemaking Strategy for Weston specifically references the redevelopment of the Quarry, written as the existing owners and operators of the site it notes "North Somerset Council will seek investment partners to relaunch the Quarry to become a year-round cultural asset for the town and serve as a Visitor Centre for the Worlebury Hill Fort".

NSC's Corporate Plan 2020-2024, whilst not specifically referencing the Quarry, notes that "Weston-super-Mare - our largest town is set to become the second



biggest settlement in the West of England over the next decade. Opportunities include the University Centre, Enterprise Area, Food Works and the developing arts, culture and heritage scene". They recognise the need for a "flourishing arts, culture and heritage sector" and the importance this plays in "supporting inclusive growth, placemaking and healthier communities".

Finally, North Somerset Council's Creative Industries Support Plan states that "There is persistent demand for 'messy'/artisan workspace in Weston-super-Mare not met through existing provision", something which we aim to resolve through the introduction of more studio space.

These could include plans led by the council, local businesses or the community

### 3.3. Local support

#### 3.3.1. Tell us more about the local support for your project (maximum 500 words)

Due to the diverse nature of the site, we felt it was important to consult with more than just artists, as such we have worked with the following groups to develop ideas for the site:

- North Somerset Council - have supported our plans to take over the management of the site. This has included support with legal and structural issues as they have arisen. They have shared knowledge and survey information with us where prudent. They have provided written support to the project and in general been an advocate of our plans to take over the site.
- Civic Society – are keen to continue to protect the heritage of the site. As previous license holders, they have been integral to the discussions of our take over, they have attended meetings, enabled meetings with current tenants, and provided key information to inform our business plan and strategy
- Weston Museum – as one of the Town Council Services, they are onboard to support a learning offer at the Quarry and replicate the success of the learning sessions held at the Museum. We will be able to benefit from their experience, particular reopening after a lengthy closure period, and setting up a café from scratch.
- Super Culture – have not only used the site previously for a programme of artist events, but are also keen to continue this moving forward. They have a vast array of regional, national and international artists and performers who we hope to see bring new artforms into the town and with it a flourishing audience. They have also provided written support for our project
- Weston College – as a provider of 16+ education, they are onboard to support the learning and skills development offer at the site. There is a lack of artistic and heritage skills development opportunities within the town, and we hope to improve this with the support of the College.
- Friends of Weston Museum
- Hub Weston CIC – discussions have begun with Hub Weston as a potential option for the running of the café and several studios. They have been involved with WSMTC since we announced our plans take over the site, and

have supported us with expertise, have facilitated meetings, and business model planning.

- Friends of Worlebury Hillfort – have provided a letter of support. We will work closely with them to create the information station for the Worlebury hillfort
- The For All Healthy Living Company – are a long running community partner of WSMTC. We have worked with them since 2020 and they have been keen in developing our understanding of the importance of community wellbeing, and helped develop practises to support this offer.
- The following are local community partners who we have engaged to ensure they support the project, and will ensure the maintain our inclusive approach to developing the site:
  - Racial Equality North Somerset
  - North Somerset LGBTQ+ Forum
  - We See Trees

This can include:

- surveys of the community
- town hall meetings you have run
- the estimated number of volunteers you have for your project
- a letter from your local MP

If you plan to upload any supporting evidence below, reference it here.

### 3.3.2. Upload supporting evidence (optional)

Letters of support

- NSC
- super culture
- Weston college
- friends of Worlebury hillfort
- wellbeing collective.

Upload evidence to show the support you have from the community.

It should be a single file no bigger than 10MB in an accepted format (jpg, jpeg, png, pdf, txt, doc, docx, odt, csv, xls, xlsx, ods).

### 3.4. Community benefits

#### 3.4.1. What community benefits do you expect to deliver with this project?

Select **all** that apply

- Community pride and perceptions of the local area as a place to live
- Social trust, cohesion and a sense of belonging
- Participation in community life, arts and culture, or sport
- Local economic outcomes, such as employment and volunteering opportunities, and employability and skills

- Delivering positive impact in physical and mental health, and reducing loneliness and isolation

3.4.2. Tell us about these benefits in detail, and how the asset's activities will help deliver them(maximum 500 words)

- Community pride and perceptions of the local area as a place to live
- Social trust, cohesion and a sense of belonging
- Participation in community life, arts and culture, or sport
- Local economic outcomes, such as employment and volunteering opportunities, and employability and skills
- Delivering positive impact in physical and mental health, and reducing loneliness and isolation

This project will primarily offer people access to heritage arts and culture, which is considered a luxury by many in the local community. by expanding the offer available to local artists and artistic practitioners, we hope to increase employment and economic opportunities for a community which is overlooked in the area.

WSM is home to a very diverse community, particular when it comes to deprivation metrics. The town has several LSOA's in the bottom 10% most deprived neighbourhoods in the country, and other which are in the top 20% least deprived. These statistics and disparity can lead to a lack of community pride and a negative perception of certain areas. The LSOA which the quarry resides in is an area of deprivation, in particular health deprivation (20% most deprived) and living environment (10% most deprived). The work we hope to achieve at the Quarry will help to target this, not just the perception, but also increasing people's access to the living environment and the health benefits that come with this. Access to outdoor spaces has been shown to improve physical and mental health, by improving respiratory health, improving mood, reducing stress, mental restoration, boosted immune function and improved emotional wellbeing to name a few. By targeting these LSOAs or neighbourhoods, we hope to create a sense of belonging. By opening the doors to community members searching for various outlets- art, environment, social integration- we hope to create communities where they didn't previously exist.

Include how the asset will address any specific needs the community faces, and how you researched these

3.4.3. Explain how you plan to deliver and sustain these benefits over time (maximum 500words)

We have created a 10-year strategy: our vision statement is "To ensure the Old Town Quarry remains a vibrant, prosperous, cultural, greener, and inclusive place for everyone to enjoy, whilst having regard for the importance of its heritage within the Town". In this strategy we have mapped out the redevelopment of the site, from the initial capital programme of improvement works, to the aspirational construction of a community arts venue following a steady increase of use by the community. The strategy for the quarry follows the format of the wider town council strategy, focusing

on our 5 pillars ([attached to business plan](#)). The shorter-term aims are mostly capital works (0-1 years) which includes (non-exclusively):

- develop a programme for the redevelopment of the Old Town Quarry
- carry out essential repairs to main building roof
- sympathetically redesign and replace studios within main building (to conform with necessary regulations)
- to redevelop the barn for use by WSMTC
- to make good where there is water damage to the small store roof and redecorate
- construction of additional artist studios (wooden cabins)
- to create a site-specific management plan to include (non-exclusive) details of wildlife considerations, plant flora and general maintenance

In the short term these are essential to creating the site we envisage. Longer term aims are more around identity and will ensure that we achieve and sustain the aforementioned benefits (0-10 years) which includes (non-exclusively):

- To develop our online presence on a range of social media platforms in order to publicise our creative work, establish dialogue with other creative communities and practitioners and inform the wider public.
- developing a programme of events regarding environment and climate change
- to put a tree management plan in place
- To identify opportunities for Health and Wellbeing Events and Activities
- To have regards for accessibility to the site, recognising the TC commitment to being “Disability Confident”
- To increase toilet provision for general public and occupants
- to identify opportunities for educational workshops
- to work with local business to find opportunities for income generation
- to carry out consultation as necessary to aid the process for the redevelopment of the Old Town Quarry
- to maximise café opportunities including events and as a venue for special events
- To strengthen social cohesion through running and supporting activities events, festivals, youth initiatives and clubs
- to carry out conservation works to the historic timber way bridge
- To create an open day programme for the studios

[Include the key milestones you intend to meet in order to deliver these benefits](#)

[3.4.4. Tell us how you'll make sure the whole community benefits from the asset \(maximum 500 words\)](#)

The Old Town Quarry, when reopened to the public, will be free, accessible and open 6 days a week. At the town council we recognise the difference between being inclusive and active engagement. Whilst we recognise there will be no barriers to participation, this is not to say that people will not have personal barriers. The first

one of these barriers we need to overcome is ensuring that everyone is aware of the quarry and its services and initiatives. We will create a robust communication plan to ensure we engage with all areas of the community. This will include engagement with specific under-reached community groups, which we hope to achieve through existing relationships with our community partners.

There will be a focus on community led events and initiatives which will provide efficacy and connectivity to already established areas in the community whilst attracting both local residents and tourists to the town through common interests.

For example, people who have not used the asset in the past, and other people who live in the local area.

Where possible, reference any data you have on protected characteristics and equality impacts.

### 3.5. Environmental sustainability

#### 3.5.1. Tell us how you have considered the environmental sustainability of your project(maximum 500 words)

We are looking to maintain and enhance a site of natural beauty. In retaining the asset in community ownership, we avoid any possibility of it being demolished or repurposed for commercial means.

We have commissioned several surveys of the site to better understand the habitats, including an arboriculture survey, an ecological survey, a building and structure survey, a bat survey and we have also had peregrine falcon experts visit the site to offer advice. These surveys have identified certain obligations we have to follow, particularly surrounding the roosting and hibernation patterns of the local wildlife. We will ensure any works are done sensitively.

Working with a local naturalist and lepidopterist we have identified in addition to the falcons, sometimes Ravens nest on the cliffs which enclose the Quarry. In the grassy area beyond the entrance to the blacksmith's former site there is a colony of the Ringlet butterfly which we will conserve. In addition, Wych elms around the car park are believed to host the White letter hairstreak butterfly. The protection of all wildlife will be a priority to ensure there is no loss of important participants into the eco system at the site.

The Town Council is committed to be carbon neutral by 2030. In relation to our buildings, we have begun exploring zero carbon electrical providers and would endeavour to do the same at the quarry. There is no gas used at the site. We will use a renewable source for any water or heating requirements. We are looking to introduce solar panels at the quarry in order to make our energy usage more efficient. We would explore opportunities for water harvesting at the site. With the grounds team being relocated to the site, this can support the planting function of the council.

We are keen to ensure that the physical environment of the site remains as undisturbed as possible. Our plans for additional structures aim to be complimentary to their location. We are looking to install new artist studios in a fairly wooded area, and want these to be wooden sustainably sourced structures so not as to disrupt site lines or habit whilst having regard for material uses. At the back of the site there is an existing metal structure which used to be the processing site when it was a working quarry. This needs to be demolished as it is no longer structurally sound. In its place we would like to create an artist village using recycled metal shipping containers to maintain the industrial nature of the site and pay respect to its heritage a future long-term project.

This could include:

- any low or zero carbon approaches you will adopt during construction
- how the asset will align with Net Zero initiatives in future
- how you will measure and reduce the asset's environmental impact

#### 4. Management case

This section is worth **47%** of the assessment criteria.

##### 4.1. Funding required

###### 4.1.1. Capital funding request

£671,992

Capital costs are the costs of buying or leasing your asset and paying for refurbishment.

Community Ownership Fund (COF) will fund up to 80% of your capital costs, up to a maximum of £2million.

At least 20% of the total capital costs of your project must be covered by other sources (match funding). For example:

- You want to purchase a community asset which costs £2,500,000. You can apply for £2m from COF, and must raise the remaining £500,000 from other sources.
- You want to purchase a community asset which costs £250,000. You can apply for £200,000 from COF, and must raise the remaining £50,000 from other sources.

(In exceptional circumstances, you may only need to secure 10% in match funding. Your development support provider will have already confirmed this with you if you're eligible.)

If successful, you must spend all the funding within 12 months.

4.1.2. If successful, will you use your funding in the next 12 months?

YES

4.1.3. Capital costs for your project

Tell us about your total capital costs.

**Refurbishment Costs - estimates**

Refurbishment Build Capital Costs	562,992
Other Capital Costs	109,000
<b>Total Capital Costs</b>	<b>671,992</b>

**Remember, you can apply for up to 80% (or 90% if the development support provider has confirmed you're eligible to do this) of your capital costs, up to a maximum of £2 million.**

**You can use your business plan to provide information that supports your answers.**

**Describe the cost.**

**Amount.**

4.1.4. Have you secured any match funding yet?

If 'Yes', go to **4.1.4.1. and 4.1.4.2**

4.1.4.1. Secured match funding

Tell us which sources of funding you have already secured as match funding.

Match funding sources could include:

- public bodies
- devolved administrations
- charitable trusts
- national lottery funders
- community shares
- social investors
- other lenders
- Source of secured funding

4.1.4.2. Have you already spent the match funding you have secured?

NO

4.1.5. Have you identified, but not yet secured, any additional match funding?

If 'No', go to **4.1.6.**

4.1.6. Are you applying for revenue funding from the Community Ownership Fund?

Revenue costs go towards running the asset once you've taken ownership of it. This might include general costs, including for:

- utilities
- staffing
- appointing external consultants

Remember, you can apply for up to fifty thousand pounds (£50,000) of your revenue costs (no more than 20% of your capital funding).

You can use your business plan to provide any information that supports your answers

If 'Yes', go to **4.1.6.1. and 4.1.6.2.**

If 'No', go to **4.2.**

4.1.6.1. Revenue costs (optional) – **We Said £28,000 in our EOI**

£20,000      Professional fees, for audience development

Environmental and wildlife conservation

Tree Management plans

£5,000      Employment of consultant to review Café Operation agreements

£3,000      Cultural events programme set up and community booking systems

Tell us about the total revenue costs of your project.

describe the cost

These are the running costs of the project. This might include general costs, including for:

- utilities
- staffing

Remember, you can apply for up to £50,000 of your revenue costs (no more than 20% of your capital funding).

You can use your business plan to:

- tell us why you need revenue funding
- provide any information that supports your answers



## Describe the cost.

### Amount.

#### 4.1.6.2. Tell us how the revenue funding you've requested will help run the asset

We have included a value of £28,000 within our application for use in year. This is to enable us to be fully develop final operational plans and aspirations for the Quarry. We recognise there is a need to engage with outside consultants who have experience in community led projects and also to recognise there will be a start-up programming costs from our existing community partnerships which they would otherwise have to absorb.

All capital and revenue costs associated with this project, for the purpose of this application are shown as net of VAT, as the council is able to reclaim all VAT incurred.

Include the specific needs it will meet, and how you'll meet these needs once you've spent the funding.

## 4.2. Feasibility

This is analysis which tests the ability of your project to deliver its objectives.

You should use your feasibility studies to:

- test the context and resources within which the project is operating, including market analysis and whether the financial, technical and management capabilities are strong enough to deliver the range of uses planned for the asset
- test the viability and sustainability of the project in the long term
- develop a strong business plan

You can use your business plan to provide evidence to support your answers.

#### 4.2.1. Tell us about the feasibility studies you have carried out for your project (maximum 500 words)

WSMTC began exploring the take over of the Quarry in late 2019 but this did not come into fruition with the previous lease holder remaining in place. More recently we have had extensive surveys carried out and begun design plans to understand how the existing structures could be improved or reimagined. We have held one-on-one interviews with the previous tenants to understand what was working well and what wasn't in order to better understand operational requirements of the sites. We have begun community consultation to understand community perception of the site, and have found this to be favourable. Since the closing of the site in September 2023, there has been an outcry of pleas from the community to ensure the future of the site is secured.

Several risk assessments have been carried out of the site, both in terms of its operation and its structures. ( Attached in Business Plan Appendix 3)

Since discussions began to explore the take over, we have developed a medium-term financial plan to ensure we considered the quarry in capital programming.

Several events have been held at the quarry, some internal and others by community partners to gauge the appetite for more heritage, arts and culture events.

Town Councillors have been kept up to date with the development of plans through update reports to various committee meetings. this will ensure that when decisions are required regarding the redevelopment, the councillors will be in a position to act quickly having been kept up to date throughout.

#### 4.2.2. Do you need to do any further feasibility work?

If 'Yes', go to **4.2.2.1.**

##### 4.2.2.1. Describe the feasibility work you still need to complete (maximum 500 words)

We would benefit from further feasibility studies regarding the operation of the site. We have a community partner engaged to potentially support the running of the café and several of the studios, but this could be better understood. In wanting to ensure long term stability, during the capital programme stage, we would like to engage a consultant to help us understand the business need, which will therefore inform any decisions about the cafe's operation.

Tenancy agreements with artists and occupiers would also be beneficial to explore further, in order to understand the market to ensure we remain viable, whilst also being affordable for local artists.

Whilst we have explored the environmental impacts from all angles (climate, living environment, structural environment), it would be good to bring this all under one plan or strategy for the site with better understanding for who is responsible for each area.

Include details of your plans and when you expect to complete them

#### 4.3. Risk

We want to understand any risks your project may face and how you intend to mitigate them. They can be during the planning or delivery stages, or after you have taken ownership of the asset.

This does not include any risks to the asset or why it may close, which we asked you about earlier in your application.

Examples of risks include:

- planning consent for any work needed on the asset
- potential issues with the supply of building materials
- staffing departures during delivery of your project

#### 4.3.1. Risks to your project (document upload)

##### Risk register attached

Upload a document detailing any risks your project may face.

You should include:

- a description of the risk
- the likelihood of it happening
- when it may occur
- how you intend to mitigate it
- the likelihood of it happening after mitigation

Do not include any risks to the asset or why it may close, which we asked you about earlier in your application.

It should be a single file no bigger than 10MB in an accepted format (jpg, jpeg, png, pdf, txt, doc, docx, odt, csv, xls, xlsx, ods).

#### 4.4. Operational costs

##### 4.4.1. Summarise your income and operational costs for the running of the asset (maximum 500 words)

All revenue surplus generated by the quarry will be reinvested into the following year. Events, workshops and the Café concession are key areas to supporting the sites running costs and ensure that the community art studios remain affordable. WSMTC will absorb all the majority of the grounds and site maintenance costs through its existing service operations which are already being funded through the precept levy. By reallocating staff and revision of job descriptions this can be achieved.

Operating costs will be minimal at the site and have been forecast over the next 4 years based on information provided by the previous leaseholder, alongside existing data we have from running other community assets in the town.

Rental income from artists will be fully inclusive to consider utility costs and access to the internet. We are committed to keep costs down for the community in this area and only aspire to cover the direct premises and maintenance costs.

There is a need to gain revenue support grants (albeit minimal) to support the aims of the strategic plan, if these are not fulfilled the impact will be a reduction in the surplus reinvested rather.

We have provided a full breakdown of the revenue costs in the business plan (Appendix 6)

Include how you see it working over the next three years. You must use your business plan to provide a forecast of figures.

#### 4.5. Skills and resources

4.5.1. Describe any relevant experience you have delivering similar projects or running an asset (maximum 500 words)

##### **Dedicated Project Team**

The team ultimately reports to the Council and Town Clerk as head of service. The team has two main components to ensure delivery of the application, one with a main focus on the Building and Refurbishments – being led by the Council's appointed surveyor Hong Lau of Currie Brown Surveyors, the other with a focus on the development of the business plan and site operations – Sarah Pearce, Fay Powell and Molly Maher collectively. Co-ordination of the whole plan is being led by Sarah Pearce the Council's Deputy Town Clerk

**Town Clerk** - is head of the paid service and overall Responsible Officer for the project and town council staff. Malcolm joined the Council in 2009 as Town Clerk and head of paid service. He chairs the Senior Management Team and is responsible for the strategic and operational management of the Council, legal and administrative matters and the democratic decision-making process. He is a practising Solicitor and holds an upper second-class honours degree of Bachelor of Laws (LL.B) from the University of Warwick, a Diploma in Management Studies, IOSH Directing Safely and the CILCA qualification in Local Council Administration. He has worked in local government since 1981 and was previously Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer at North Somerset Council.

**Deputy Town Clerk / RFO – Project Co-ordinator** - has worked for the Council for over 17 years and is the Council's section 151 officer. She is a member of the Council's Senior Management team and is responsible for the council's financial affairs. Sarah's qualifications include: BA in Community Governance and Leadership, Full AAT qualifications for accountancy, IOSH Managing Safely, CILCA qualification in Council Administration, she is a Fellow for the Institute of Local Council Management. Sarah has worked with Molly Maher on numerous other grant applications and also oversees the Council's Asset Management Programme and leads the council's community resilience team.

**Assistant Town Clerk (Operational Services)** - joined the Council in 2019 as the council's Grounds Manager, for the last two years Fay has been part of the Senior Management team and oversees all of the council's operational services. Fay brings extensive operational knowledge of the local area and delivery of services having worked in local government for 20 years. Fay is currently undertaking her CILCA qualification in Local council administration

**Senior Development Officer** - has worked for the Council since 2018 as Senior Development Officer and since this time has worked on key capital projects that the

Council has undertaken, securing grant funding to enable them to happen. Projects include the hugely successful Blakehay Refurbishments (£323,000 total project value) and more recently the SEND Play refurbishment scheme at Castle Batch to provide a focused SEND community facility (£400,000 total project value).

**Refurbishment Project Lead** - has over 20 years' experience of working in the construction industry delivering building surveying services in the public and private sectors. Hong's skills include: Architectural design, building pathology/defect analysis, statutory compliance, project management and contract administration of residential and commercial projects.

4.5.2. Do you have any plans to recruit people to help you manage the asset?

If 'Yes', go to **4.5.2.1**.

4.5.2.1. Tells us about the roles you'll recruit(maximum 500 words)

These should be positions which will help you effectively manage the asset during community ownership.

Include the:

- role
- main responsibilities

You can use your business plan to provide evidence to support your answers.

4.6. Community representation

4.6.1. List the members of your board(maximum 500 words)

The Council is made up of 31 councillors, representing ten wards. Councillors are elected by residents of their ward every four years and take no financial compensation.

NAME	PARTY	WARD
APLIN, Marc	CON	NORTH WORLE
ARMSTRONG, Ray	LIB DEM	HILLSIDE
BAILEY, Roger	CON	UPHILL
BELL, Mike	LIB DEM	CENTRAL
BAMBRIDGE, Joe	LIB DEM	WORLEBURY
BUTE, Gillian	CON	UPHILL
CANNIFORD, Mark	LIB DEM	HILLSIDE
CARSON, John	LABOUR	SOUTH WORLE
CHARD, Annabelle	LABOUR	WINTERSTOKE
CLAYTON, James	LABOUR	BOURNVILLE
COLES, Jemma	LIB DEM	MID WORLE
CREW, Peter	CON	SOUTH WORLE

CROCKFORD-HAWLEY, John	<b>LIB DEM</b>	HILLSIDE
CRONNELLY, Ciaran	<b>LABOUR</b>	WINTERSTOKE
GIBBONS, Catherine	<b>LABOUR</b>	BOURNVILLE
HARRISON-MORSE, Simon	<b>LABOUR</b>	MILTON
JAMES, Owen	<b>LABOUR</b>	SOUTH WORLE
MALYAN, Hugh	<b>LABOUR</b>	SOUTH WORLE
PAYNE, Robert	<b>LIB DEM</b>	CENTRAL
PEAK, Alan	<b>LABOUR</b>	BOURNVILLE
PECAK-MICHALOWICZ, Justyna	<b>CON</b>	NORTH WORLE
PEPPERALL, Marcia	<b>CON</b>	NORTH WORLE
PILGRIM, Lisa	<b>CON</b>	WORLEBURY
REYNOLDS, Caroline	<b>LIB DEM</b>	CENTRAL
SKEEN, Robert	<b>LABOUR</b>	MILTON
STANDFIELD, John	<b>CON</b>	MID WORLE
TAYLOR, Timothy	<b>LABOUR</b>	MILTON
THORNTON, Helen	<b>LABOUR</b>	UPHILL
TUCKER, Richard	<b>LABOUR</b>	MILTON
WILLIAMS, Charles	<b>LABOUR</b>	WINTERSTOKE
WILLIAMS, Martin	<b>CON</b>	WORLEBURY

Include their:

- role
- main responsibilities

You can use your business plan to provide evidence to support your answers.

4.6.2. Tell us about your governance and membership structures (maximum 500 words)

As a statutory body the council has robust policies and procedures to deal with governance of all council activities and service delivery via its standing orders, financial regulations and strategy. 31 elected Members make up the Town Council, which has six Standing Committees, together with Sub-Committees and working parties as required. Meetings of the Town Council and most Committees are held bi-monthly, with the exception of the Planning Committee which meets more frequently in order to comply with consultation requirements. The Old Town Quarry would sit under the governance of the councils Heritage Arts and Culture Committee.

Officers of the Council support Members by servicing all meetings, responding to Member enquiries and implementing the policies of the Council.

4.6.3. Explain how you'll consider the views of the community in the running of the asset(maximum 500 words)

In recent years the town council has restructured its approach to community engagement. We now encourage active engagement as opposed to passive

participation. simply relying on online surveys is not enough to get a well-rounded view from the community. We will mirror a recent redevelopment project, the creation of a SEND inclusive play area, will hold several in person, themed, community engagement sessions. This allowed stakeholders and community members to come together and get their voices heard. We had focus sessions on community building, working in collaboration with existing users. We will again hold sessions on important topics such as anti-social behaviour bringing together local police, community response officers, councillors, local organisations as example, NSC, and local play provision leaders in a way that hasn't been achieved before.

We will develop a communications plan in order to ensure that all of our invitations for sessions reached the broadest audience. We will recognise the need for more rounded engagement to maximise response levels. We will proactively encourage lines of communication to continue after the reopening and will have a dedicated Facebook page and website to receive comments from the community.

By applying Asset Based Community Development principles and proactively working to our adopted community outcomes we hope to replicate prior success in community building and maximise community capacity at the Quarry to ensure its future.

[e how they'll be involved in decision making, and how you'll measure public support for your decisions](#)

#### 4.7. Inclusiveness and integration

##### 4.7.1. Tell us how the asset will be accountable to local people, and involve them in its running(maximum 500 words)

We would look to set up a community focus group to meet quarterly to share ideas objectives and manage performance, this would include artists, stakeholders, community partners, councillors and council officers. Our services are kept under constant review through our budget setting process and annual strategy review. Part of this is the newly adopted medium term financial plan and associated your town your voice survey. In this, we ask the community to evaluate our services. this is then used to inform the budget setting process. This will ensure that programming at the Quarry is built from the ground up, with constant consideration of the community.

[This means how you'll involve everyone in key decisions, such as how the asset is used](#)

##### 4.7.2. Describe anything that might prevent people from using the asset or participating in its running (maximum 500 words)

- Location – this is a hillside location, located a short walk from the town centre. Whilst there is bus stop outside the site, the bus routes are not fully accessible for the whole community, with in recent years the services having been cut whilst the town continues to expand

- Lack of understanding site facilities and existence as a community venue – some members of the community are currently unaware of the site, or may be aware of it, but do not understand its services to know they can access it.
- Disrepair of buildings and lack of maintenance to various parts of the site – whilst the buildings are accessible, the natural elements of the site might prove tricky for some users e.g. uneven ground, grassy areas which are difficult to use in wet weather etc.

For example, high membership costs or exclusive eligibility criteria which prevent people from participating

## 4.8. Business plan

### 4.8.1. Business plan (document upload)

#### Business plan attached

Upload your business plan.

Include any information that supports the answers in your application. All figures must match those you've given in the management case section.

It should be a single file no bigger than 10MB in an accepted format (jpg, jpeg, png, pdf, txt, doc, docx, odt, csv, xls, xlsx, ods).

Your business plan should include (but is not limited to):

- Information about the capital element of your project. This could include:
  - information about your completed or planned feasibility studies. This could include any relevant surveys
  - a programme with key milestones for completion of your project
  - your skills and resources to manage the capital project, including relevant project management expertise

A financial breakdown of your project. This should include:

- a clear breakdown of the total capital project costs and explanation of how these have been calculated. This could include any quotes or cost benchmarking
- whether the costs include irrecoverable VAT
- the capital funding request from the Community Ownership Fund
- the total amount of match funding required
- sources of match funding secured to date
- sources of match funding still to be secured
- timescales and potential sources for securing all outstanding match funding



Information about how the asset will be used and managed in the future. This should include:

- a discussion of planned activities and/or services that will take place in the community asset
- your full financial forecasts, including income sources and costs with an evidenced set of assumptions
- a clear breakdown of the revenue project costs and explanation of how these have been calculated
- your cashflow and revenue budgets
- any supporting evidence that you will deliver the benefits to the community you have outlined

A consideration of risks and mitigations of both the capital works/spend and the ongoing operation of the asset

Organisational and governance information. This should include:

- your organisation's governance and membership structures, with supporting evidence
- members of your board, including their role and main responsibilities
- supporting evidence of how you will manage finances and prevent fraud. For example, copies of your policy documents
- supporting evidence of how you will manage performance and risks. For example, copies of your policy documents

## 5. Subsidy control and state aid

### 5.1. Project qualification

#### 5.1.1. Does your project meet the definition of a subsidy?

No

6. Check declarations

6.1. Final confirmations

*6.1.1. Confirm you have considered subsidy control and state aid implications for your project, and the information you have given us is correct*

*6.1.2. Confirm you have considered people with protected characteristics throughout the planning of your project*

*6.1.3. Confirm you have considered sustainability and the environment throughout the planning of your project, including compliance with the government's Net Zero ambitions*

*6.1.4. Confirm you have a bank account set up and associated with the organisation you are applying on behalf of*

*6.1.5. Confirm that the information you've provided in this application is accurate to the best of your knowledge on the date of submission*

**Business Plan (excluding appendices)**

Terms

Weston-super-Mare Town Council – WSMTC

North Somerset Council – NSC

Heritage Arts and Culture - HAC

Section 1 - Executive Summary

1.1 The Project Vision

*‘To ensure the Old Town Quarry remains a vibrant, prosperous, cultural, greener, and inclusive place for everyone to enjoy, whilst having regard for the importance of its heritage within the Town.’*

The Old Town Quarry has the potential to grow as a cultural and artistic hub in Weston-super-Mare. Not only home to a diverse range of wildlife, the site has become known as a haven for local artists and diverse events. We wish to develop this further over the duration of our ten-year strategy (Appendix 1), working with community partners to achieve this.

The many opportunities for this much-loved site have been recognised by WSMTC who believe working with partner organisations and the community of artists at the Old Town Quarry, would safeguard the asset within the town and enable growth and expansion to both culture and heritage whilst having regard for the Placemaking objectives set out by NSC.

1.2 How This Will Be Achieved

We will achieve this through the sensitive redevelopment of the existing Old Town Quarry site by modernising and creating new studio spaces for community artists to work and provide dedicated spaces for exhibits and displays. We will also create a refurbished café area and space for WSMTC’s in house grounds maintenance operations team within the two existing barn buildings. The creation of new public toilets and a dedicated, maintained outdoor space for events within the site. Working around, and providing a safe home for the Old Town Quarry’s multitude of wildlife which will provide one of many opportunities to bring education and learning sessions to the site.

**The project's aims are to:**

- Bring the Old Town Quarry site to life with a robust community offer for visitors and occupants to enable access to HAC whilst appreciating the importance of the original setting and locality in order to preserve its use in the present day
- Improve physical access around the site with the sympathetic redesign of studios for artist's in the main barn building additional dedicated outdoor 'cabin 'style studios
- Create public gallery spaces and offer new experiences in the exhibition of the Old Town Quarry artists works, by refurbishing current location and opening up new external gallery space adjacent to the studio cabins
- essential repairs to the main building roof
- Carry out conservation works to the historic timber way bridge and provide interpretation of its original Heritage use
- Create a clearer identity for the site and its role in the local community through better marketing
- Create a new event space to enable an ambitious new cultural programme and support new revenue streams for the partners involved as well as enabling greater community involvement in creative and cultural programming – the SEE MONSTER Think Tank model will be expanded to ensure community voice and co-design is at the heart of programming the space whilst having regard for the towns place making objectives
- Ensure everyone has access to the site and have ability learn about the Wildlife and Heritage links that the Old Town Quarry has to the town and surrounding areas through the development of a Wildlife programme and visitor information point for the Neighbouring Worlebury Hillfort.
- Develop a dedicated space for the Grounds maintenance teams to primarily maintain the Old Town Quarry site and ensure the safety and care of the wildlife present (alongside general caretaking duties) and to support grounds maintenance services provided at the historic Milton Road Cemetery (former arboretum)
- Provide more opportunities for participation and community involvement through art and heritage workshop activities, outreach offers, Community or student display opportunities, artist studio open days and exhibition offers and events and activities based on what we have learned through consultation
- Introduce an education offer to schools at the Old Town Quarry working with the museum learning team and community partners to support the National Curriculum to promote arts and heritage
- Working with a community partner to manage and improve the kitchen facilities, café seating area and catering offer to create a welcoming and attractive meeting place
- Improve and make stronger links with heritage, visitor and tourism sites in and around Weston
- Sustain the excellent working relationship with NSC and look for new partnerships within the direct and wider communities to improve sustainability and resilience

## Item 4.1

- Ensure the financial sustainability of the museum through chargeable activities, regular reviews of studio charges, dedicated events whilst supporting artists to sell their works through gallery exhibitions and open days
- Ensure the site is open 7 days per week (seasonally – April to September) and no less than 5 days a week out of season

### 1.3 Why the Project is Important

The existence of the Old Town Quarry today is the result of an extraordinary community effort to refurbish and maintain a historic site on a shoe string. Buildings on site need significant updating to ensure longevity, the footprint of the site provides huge potential for cultural regeneration in an area with limited cultural infrastructure. It has been home to a dedicated community of 15 artist's who have over the years have worked tirelessly to create an Artist hub within the town. Unfortunately, the site has had to close in September 2023 following Health & Safety and building surveys which have condemned some areas of the core infrastructure and buildings on the site. It is currently deemed as unsafe for occupation until essential repairs are undertaken, primarily as a result of the lack of investment and ability to manage the asset by the previous lease holder despite best intentions and tremendous efforts over the years. The Artists and Old Town Quarry occupants have had to leave the site and find temporary spaces to work which is not ideal.

There is clear indication of the importance of The Old Town Quarry to local communities following the closure resulting in public outcry at the prospect of the community losing its much-loved asset. WSMTC has been working closely with NSC, to take over the site to secure its future and the long-term lease is in the final stages with legal teams having already gained formal approval from both parties to do so, and the surrender of the lease to the previous holder. Aware of the poor upkeep of the site, buildings and the lack of investment over a number of years, it planned from the outset to look and apply for grant funding to redevelop the Old Town Quarry and to enhance the community offer, knowing that this would be the only way to ensure its sustainability and viability for the long term.

The project is also important because it will conserve the heritage of the site as well as ensuring the environmental and wildlife that is there is protected. It will enable greater publicly accessible information to the important Worlebury Hillfort Grade which lies to the rear of the site in a neighbouring site. The project will increase gallery studios enabling Art produced or commissioned at the Old Town Quarry to go on public display for audiences to enjoy and learn about. This will provide revenue opportunity to support this much need community.

The redevelopment project is crucial to enabling us to attract more visitors, to generate more income and thus to remain sustainable for the long term. Undertaking this will improve and extend partnership working within the community, opportunities for learning, community engagement and volunteering. It will make a key contribution to Weston's tourism offer and thus benefit the local economy.

## 1.4 Public Benefits

The redevelopment of The Old Town Quarry will offer the following public benefits:

- Access to a site of heritage significance to the town to explore Arts and culture within the town
- Local visitors and tourist will benefit from the creation of sympathetic restoration of the site to allow Art to be produced in dedicated spaces, that allow for public viewing. As well as providing a space for activities, we also want this facility to be available for use by the community outside of the studio normal opening hours, such as for outdoor seasonal events, wildlife, heritage and conservation talks, workshops and evening Art activities organised by the resident Artists
- Opportunities for schools and young learners to access local heritage working with Weston Museum and other community partners to deliver through the development of a learning programme based on the sites former use and the neighbouring Worlebury Hillfort.
- The opportunity to create incubation studios for up and coming artists who have just left college wishing to pursue a career for a dedicated period of time at affordable rates
- Improved accessible toilet provisions at the site (currently only 1) to enable more people with varying needs to access the site
- Improved café area and Art Gallery space via a sympathetic refurbishment to the existing much-loved space
- A better visitor experience for families through the creation of new family events and cultural programme
- Protection and conservation of regionally significant wildlife and heritage assets. This will secure the Old Town Quarry's long term viability for current and future generations of Weston people as well neighbouring communities and visitors to the town
- Opportunities for volunteering, work experience and community involvement during the development phase of the project
- More ways in for currently under-represented parts of the Arts community to have access to opportunities in dedicated studio spaces
- More ways for working with local community partners at the Old Town Quarry using Asset Based Community Development to maximise connectivity, collaboration, resilience, community capability, collective efficacy and community cohesion when it re-opens. This will enable community ownership of individual events and of specified areas within the site. The new studios and maintained event spaces will be key locations to allow this to happen
- Availability of the site for uses by local communities in ways other than the café and Artist hub so that more people can access events spaces at dedicated points in the year that considers the needs of the wildlife on the site.
- The creation and development of a new Website for the Old Town Quarry and its residents to promote and provide accessible public information
- Better publicity and external signage information to help visitors plan their day

## Item 4.1

Overall, we seek to increase past visitor numbers to a minimum of 20,000 a year and to create Cultural and Art opportunities for the immediate and surrounding Art community.

### 1.5 Project Capital Costs

Following extensive surveys and condition reports having already been undertaken by both WSMTC and NSC we have been able to obtain initial estimates for capital works. We have had full elevation and building plans commissioned along with arboriculture plans for the site to allow aspirations for refurbishment to be developed. We have taken advice from our local planning authority in the refurbishment plans drawn. The councils Quantity Surveyor has costed these initial plans to provide detail for the purpose of this application, these will need to be reviewed ahead of formal procurement to build design specifications and to encompass any final architectural design changes following any planning conditions that could arise.

The immediate Capital Investment value for the Quarry is £671,992 and is broken down as follows: Full details of this can be found in the supporting Business plan provided.

#### **Refurbishment Costs - estimates**

Refurbishment Build Capital Costs	562,992
Other Capital Costs	109,000
<b>Total Capital Costs</b>	<b>671,992</b>

This investment will allow the site to reopen as a community focused facility supporting Heritage, Arts and Culture. It will address all of the issues that resulted in the need to close in September 2023 whilst also creating a sustainable, environmentally considerate facility that is accessible to the whole community.

There is no cost for the immediate lease agreement as this is coming from North Somerset District Council and as such cannot encroach any double taxation by making a charge to local residents. As such the lease is on a peppercorn basis for a period of 25 years minimum.

WSMTC have secured investment via the Community Infrastructure levy to support this grant application to a value of £200,000 this equates to 29% of the overall project costs (Capital and other).

## Item 4.1

We believe there are still opportunities for community fundraising. In the past we have found that this works to both raise funds, and also awareness of the project. We do not need any additional funds to be able to carry out the capital costs identified, but long-term redevelopment will require additional funding. We are exploring further grant funding specifically for environmental and Climate initiatives that could be developed in the future at the site. Working with Super Culture who are a National Portfolio Holder with the Arts Council England we hope to be able to access funding to support cultural programmes at the quarry following the refurbishment and reopening, having already acted as a partner to towns overreaching programme in the town.

Further details and timescales for further funding needs can be seen in the attached 10-year strategic plan to support this application. ( Appendix 1 of the Business plan)

### 1.6 Project Programme

If this bid is successful, the provisional project programme is outlined below:

- October 2023 Final documents submitted for Planning permission
- January 2024 Bid Approval
- January 2024 25-year minimum lease signed with NSC to start (01.04.24)
- April 2024 Procurement for contracts for works
- May – July 2024 Construction and first phase refurbishment works period
- August 2024 Events programme developed and started
- September – March 25 Continued refurbishment second phase and further studio openings

Please refer to the 10-year Strategic Plan at Appendix 1 for more information.

### 1.7 Ensuring the Old Town Quarry's Long-Term Financial Future

The Old Town Quarry will be core funded by WSMTTC, which raises its funding through its precept. All revenue budgets are reviewed annually within WSMTTC's budget setting process. As a parish council the precept is not subject to central Government capping. The Old Town Quarry has received wide-scale support from across WSMTTC, which is committed to supporting the Old Town Quarry's long term operation when it re-opens. The net running costs of the Old Town Quarry are guaranteed to be met by WSMTTC.

It is WSMTTC's intention to review all licence and occupation charges for Artists Studios, working with two established Community partners to manage the site and its operations. The aim is to ensure that the site remains, attractive to Artists, is affordable and



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allows for essential growth within this community. This, together with a new operating model and a more commercial approach to income generating activities, will support revenue costs needed to operate the site. Artists will have opportunity to raise income for themselves through sales achieved individually.

WSMTC have formed a dynamic partnership with numerous community partners and NSC to create an ambitious programme for redevelopment and rejuvenation of the Old Town Quarry.

It is envisaged a community partner would operate the Café function and work to manage the Artist Studios in the main building day to day. Capital investment into the café area would be required to bring it up to necessary working standards.

Super Culture working with WSMTC would oversee a comprehensive events and creative programme to run annually year on year. Funding via already established Arts Council England and via WSMTC revenue budgets would enhance this offer and programme.

WSMTC will oversee the general management and operations of the site as a whole and will develop both environmental and wildlife policies together with necessary Arboricultural maintenance programmes which, will work alongside the general grounds and building maintenance, compliance and health and safety schedules

The provision of rentable event spaces, such as the Outdoor area space, will enhance the community offer by having space available for local community groups to hire for their events and for business to use for outdoor functions. Ticketed events, such as Heritage and Wildlife talks, themed drama and music will also add to community engagement and increase income. Improvements to both the cafe and Gallery/ shop areas will ensure that the Old Town Quarry is a welcoming and attractive venue to meet friends or visit as a tourist, with improved revenue streams coming from each area.

During the closure period, WSMTC will concentrate on developing the Artists studio offer and events programmes working with local artists and community partners to maintain and build engagement with current and potential users, with the aim of growing sustained affinity and support for when the Old Town Quarry re-opens.

A summary of the project operating costs for the Old Town Quarry for the next 4 years is below.

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>NOTES</b>	<b>BUDGETED EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>BUDGETED INCOME</b>	<b>Reinvestment from previous year</b>	<b>NET SURPLUS / DEFICT (including previous year surplus) £</b>
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2023/2024	<b>Year before NSC Closing / WSMTC Strategic Development</b>	<b>£20,500</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>-£20,500</b>
2024/ 2025 Year 1	<b>1<sup>st</sup> year Refurbishment and Part Occupation</b>	<b>£74,400</b>	<b>£74,908</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£508</b>
2025/ 2026 Year 2	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> year Full Occupation</b>	<b>£48,574</b>	<b>£77,007</b>	<b>£508</b>	<b>£27,925</b>
2026/2027 Year 3		<b>£49,233</b>	<b>£83,075</b>	<b>£27,926</b>	<b>£5,917</b>
2027 /2028 Year 4		<b>£49,853</b>	<b>£70,609</b>	<b>£5,917</b>	<b>£14,839</b>

The projections from 2025/2026 onwards reflect the studios at full capacity and a full year events programme to be able to attract income. Income projections are cautious and all efforts will be made to minimise the net cost to WSMTC through the income-generating measures summarised above. Please refer to section 6 of this plan for further details.

### 1.8 Main Risks

- Failure to secure sufficient capital funding to undertake the project
- Challenging construction phase delivery timescales
- Volatile construction market conditions may result in tenders coming back in excess of the budget available
- Failure to generate sufficient income during the operational phase to remain sustainable

A full risk register can be found below (Appendix 3).

## Section 2 – About Our Organisation

### 2.1 Description of Our Organisation

WSMTC was established in 2000. The strategic aims of WSMTC are to:

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- Deliver services to the highest quality in terms of efficiency, effectiveness and value for money
- Conduct business openly and democratically consulting widely with parishioners and interested parties
- Comply with its Code of Conduct and the Nolan Principles in public life
- Obtain from contractors and partners the best possible service value whether from statutory bodies or sub-contracted services
- Consult with local people regarding the provision of new services and facilities
- Act in the best interest of local people in making representation to:
  - NSC
  - Outside Agencies
  - Central Government
  - Other appropriate private or public sector groups
- Operate in the letter and the spirit of the Equality Act 2010 and in the exercise of all its functions, have due regard to the need to:
  - (a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act;
  - (b) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant 'protected characteristic' and persons who do not share it;
  - (c) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant 'protected characteristic' and persons who do not share it.

WSMTC is one of the largest parish council in the country with a total of 31 elected members, all of whom volunteer time and commitment, without remuneration, to WSMTC's aims and objectives.

WSMTC has 65 paid staff employees, 23 of whom are full time, 19 part time and 23 casual members of staff who are called upon to support services when required.

WSMTC maintains the following facilities:

- Weston Museum (since April 2011).
- The historic Milton Road Cemetery (since October 2003). The Bell Tower was repaired and re-opened in November 2010 with the help of a Heritage Lottery Fund grant.
- The Blakehay Theatre (since 2004).
- Various play areas (including the All Inclusive SEND Play Area at Castle Batch), allotment sites and grounds.
- The Water Adventure Play Park, with water fountains and conventional play equipment, opened July 2010 with support from CABE and NSC.

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- Visitor Information Services – Satellite location on the seafront

These facilities have specific supervision by staff supported by an increasingly dedicated and growing band of volunteer helpers.

The Old Town Quarry sits within the Great Weston conservation Area. The site is home to a significant amount of protected wildlife and as such is a key environment site which has local and regional significance, the buildings reflect the rich history of Weston-super-Mare and its surrounding area from times of when the Old Town Quarry was in full operation. Over a half a century ago, WSMTC is determined to see this community asset in the heart of the town restored and safeguarded as a community driven local asset.

WSMTC and NSC have now agreed for the signing of a 25-year peppercorn lease for site which will enable us the opportunity to secure its long term future through financial sustainability (Appendix 5). The site was previously managed by an organisation who subleased the studios and café space. There was no day to day oversight of the site, as in the long term this has affected its cohesion and ability to be managed effectively. There is representation of a vast array of skills and artforms on the site, but it was missing the opportunity to showcase this.

The net running costs of the Old Town Quarry are guaranteed to be met by WSMTC. WSMTC is intending to maintain the site as free entry, but will raise income through rental of studios and the café. We envisage the site making a profit (to be reinvested) in the long term. WSMTC is able to raise funding via a precept on the unitary authority (NSC) and there is currently no capping on any precept levy required by WSMTC. Whilst all efforts will be made to keep this to a minimum it does provide security for the Old Town Quarry in the short term whilst establishing its profitability.

### 2.2 Local Strategic Context

Weston-super-Mare has a resident population of over 80,000. With recent placemaking efforts, there is recognition of the importance in the development of asset-based community projects to enhance the offer. The town has grown considerably over the past 40 years and further expansion continues. It is also a very popular seaside tourist destination welcoming 3 million staying and day visitors annually. We work closely with NSC and tourism partners in the town. A key aim of the redevelopment project is to ensure that the Old Town Quarry becomes a must-see visitor attraction for locals and tourists alike, and we will continue to work closely with our partners to achieve this.

WSMTC produced a strategy for the Old Town Quarry (see appendix 1) 2023-2033, which outlines in brief WSMTC's core values for the Old Town Quarry:

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- **Weston View** - Measures to promote and better present the Old Town Quarry.
- **Cleaner and Greener** - Measures to improve the local environment at the Old Town Quarry.
- **Healthier and Happier** - Measures to promote the health and wellbeing of visitors and occupants to the Old Town Quarry.
- **A Bright Future** - Measures to support and enhance the local economy.
- **Heritage, Arts and Culture** - Measures to ensure that Old Town Quarry thrives as a vibrant place for arts and culture.

### CURRENT PERFORMANCE

The existence of the Old Town Quarry today is the result of an extraordinary community effort to refurbish and maintain a historic site on a shoe string. The site has been managed through lease by a community organisation since c1999. There has been no capacity or ability for understanding of visitor numbers throughout this period, and as such it is difficult to paint an accurate picture. This information is however, available from the operation of other local sites and organisations, and allows us to set a baseline for the local area and gives ability to understand the community opportunities which lie waiting at the Old Town Quarry.

Beneficiary Type	Weston Museum	Blakehay Theatre	The Stables CIC	Super Culture	Total
Artists, creatives or specialists		34	412	107	<b>553</b>
Staff	9	3	18	13	<b>43</b>
Audience (live)	29,533	4,572	1,440	42,470	<b>78,015</b>
Audience (broadcast, online, in writing)	187,314	280,578	0	250,000	<b>717,892</b>
Other users of your building or services			52,000		<b>52,000</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>216,856</b>	<b>285,187</b>	<b>53,870</b>	<b>292,590</b>	<b>848,503</b>

### KEY OBJECTIVES ACHIEVED 2023/2024

- Development of community partner relationships
- Community engagement with current artists
- Resolution from both WSMTC and NSC and an agreement to enter a 25-year lease

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- Ecological Surveys including bat survey and tree management plan
- Specialist advise specifically regarding the local wildlife – Peregrine falcons, butterflies, bats etc.
- Building surveys and production of site plans both current and aspirational
- Creation of 10-year strategy for the redevelopment of the site
- Submission of planning permissions for refurbishment works

### KEY OBJECTIVES 0-2 Years (2023/25)

- Develop a programme for the redevelopment of the Old Town Quarry
- Develop a communications plan for the Old Town Quarry
- Carry out essential repairs to main building roof
- Sympathetically redesign and replace studios within main building (to conform with necessary regulations)
- To redevelop the barn for use by WSMTC
- to create a compliance programme for ongoing maintenance of the site
- Day to Day management of the site
- to make good where there is water damage to the small store roof and redecorate
- To develop our online presence on a range of social media platforms in order to publicise our creative work, establish dialogue with other creative communities and practitioners and inform the wider public.
- construction of additional artist studios (wooden cabins)
- to create a site-specific management plan to include (non-exclusive) details of wildlife considerations, plant flora and general maintenance
- To take over management of the grounds
- to relocate WSMTC's Ground Team
- To increase toilet provision for general public and occupants
- to carry out consultation as necessary to aid the process for the redevelopment of the Old Town Quarry
- To create an open day programme for the studios
- to create an artist open day and workshop programme
- to offer exhibition space and develop an exhibition programme

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- to develop an outdoor art work programme

### KEY OBJECTIVES 1-5 Years (2024/2028)

- To work with the TC Climate and Community Development Officer on developing a programme of events regarding environment and climate change
- To work with an Arboricultural consultant to put a tree management plan in place
- To identify opportunities for Health and Wellbeing Events and Activities
- to identify opportunities for educational workshops
- to develop a community events programme
- to maximise café opportunities including events and as a venue for special events
- for the TC's Own "Ever Forward" continue to find new innovative ways to host events and shows at the Old Town Quarry
- To strengthen social cohesion through running and supporting activities events, festivals, youth initiatives and clubs

### KEY OBJECTIVES 1-10 Years (2024/2033)

- To have regards for accessibility to the site, recognising the TC commitment to being "Disability Confident"
- Deliver services to the highest quality in terms of efficiency, effectiveness and value for money.
- Promote and celebrate the Old Town Quarry as a site of local historical interest
- to carry out conservation works to the historic timber way bridge
- construction of a community arts venue in former Blacksmith area (subject to grant funding)
- creation of an information centre to Worlebury Hillfort

## Section 3 - Development of the Project

### 3.1 Background

WSMTC restarted discussions to take the lease of the Old Town Quarry over in 2019. At the request of Weston Civic Society, WSMTC agreed to explore taking over the Old Town Quarry as an arts and cultural community facility. The Old Town Quarry is owned by and the responsibility of NSC, following the Civic Society's lease surrender (September 2023). The site has been closed since the lease was surrendered due to health and safety issues.

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The site was home to a group of artists who have informally adopted the name “Guardians of the Old Town Quarry”.

We understand that the Old Town Quarry has a unique, positive identity, however there is opportunity to further transform it as a key destination not only for heritage, arts and culture but for leisure, events, and visiting.

Through this much-loved community asset, we will aim to create a cleaner, greener, safer, more vibrant place to enjoy. Putting a strong emphasis on community.

We believe community engagement is needed to ensure that the people of our community are at the forefront of how we shape the outcomes we strive to achieve. Working with our partners we will use a range of channels for communication to connect with people, including social media alongside the more traditional methods.

The Old Town Quarry had suffered from a lack of investment over the years. WSMTC will take on responsibility for the Old Town Quarry with a full understanding of fundamental issues around staffing, lack of investment, poor upkeep of the buildings and the urgent need to make the site financially sustainable. WSMTC planned from the outset to look and apply for grant funding to redevelop the Old Town Quarry and to enhance the visitor offer.

### 3.2 Decision to Undertake the Project

The Old Town Quarry has served its community well in recent years under the previous leasehold from their initial takeover and creation of the community asset as it is today. However, it has suffered from a lack of capital investment and minimal management and drive in the last few years to be able to fully realise the community asset and gain essential recognition of its importance to the town with regard to heritage, arts and culture. Visitor facilities are becoming increasingly outdated and in need of significant improvement. There is no dedicated art, cultural, or environmental management or programming to promote the current artists, with this being left to them as individuals with little to no support from the wider community. In short, the Old Town Quarry is not meeting the needs and expectations of the local and wider community.

The Old Town Quarry is also not making the most of its location in a prime tourist destination, or of opportunities to generate income. This will be crucial to ensure the Old Town Quarry’s long-term sustainability, and through this the long-term protection of regionally-significant community asset.



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WSMTC planned from the outset to look and apply for grant funding to support its ability to redevelop the Old Town Quarry on its present site and to enhance the community and visitor experience upon takeover, knowing that this was the only solution to ensure the Old Town Quarry 's long-term viability.

### 3.3 Project Objectives

The shorter-term aims are mostly capital works (0-1 years) which includes (non-exclusively):

- Develop a programme for the redevelopment of the Old Town Quarry
- Carry out essential repairs to main building roof
- Sympathetically redesign and replace studios within main building (to conform with necessary regulations)
- To redevelop the barn for use by WSMTC
- to make good where there is water damage to the small store roof and redecorate
- Construction of additional artist studios (wooden cabins)
- to create a site-specific management plan to include (non-exclusive) details of wildlife considerations, plant flora and general maintenance

In the short term these are essential to creating the site we envisage. Longer term aims are more around identity and will ensure that we achieve and sustain growth (0-10 years) which includes (non-exclusively):

- To develop our online presence on a range of social media platforms in order to publicise our creative work, establish dialogue with other creative communities and practitioners and inform the wider public.
- developing a programme of events regarding environment and climate change
- to put a tree management plan in place
- To identify opportunities for Health and Wellbeing Events and Activities
- To have regards for accessibility to the site, recognising the TC commitment to being “Disability Confident”
- To increase toilet provision for general public and occupants
- to identify opportunities for educational workshops
- to work with local business to find opportunities for income generation
- to carry out consultation as necessary to aid the process for the redevelopment of the Old Town Quarry
- to maximise café opportunities including events and as a venue for special events

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- To strengthen social cohesion through running and supporting activities events, festivals, youth initiatives and clubs
- to carry out conservation works to the historic timber way bridge
- To create an open day programme for the studios

### 3.4 Development Work

WSMTC has undertaken a number of engagement events both collectively and on individual basis with the current artists at the Old Town Quarry, in order to understand and ask them to help develop ideas on how the site could be improved to meet their needs. They are keen to keep the community essence of the site and help shape the new galleries, art exhibitions alongside artists open days and workshops planned for when the Old Town Quarry has re-opened after refurbishment.

In excess of 200 responses have been made following the temporary closure of the site were received from various targeted audiences including current users and artists, community groups, volunteers, councillors expressing their concern about the loss of this community asset and the importance of art and culture to the town's success. As such interest in the project has been both positive and supportive.

Through WSMTC's development process professional teams have been carrying out building, health & safety, ecological and wildlife surveys to enable the submission of necessary planning permissions for refurbishment works.

Consultation with a Local CIC (The Stable) to explore options for the management of the café and with Super Culture for the management for cultural programming have been positive. A number of pilot activities were developed and held by both WSMTC and Super Culture following the COVID pandemic to showcase the ability to hold community focused events, which included, outdoor cinema, live comedy performance, music, spoken word and craft workshops to name a few. The majority of events were successful with some good evaluation to be able to develop these further.

WSMTC's aspirations for the project sees the majority of the Old Town Quarry only having sympathetic refurbishment to the two main buildings the creation of public toilet facilities and community art studios. Further plans include the part relocation of WSMTCs ground maintenance team to oversee the extensive grounds area along side all compliance and caretaking requirements of the site. The cost for this plan meant a projected £499,992 shortfall on funding.

WSMTC recognised the need to invest further into the project and a resolution was passed to use Community Infrastructure Levy Funds, for which the redevelopment plans met the pre-agreed criteria, to the value of £200,000.

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Applications were submitted to the Arts Council England – Capital Investment programme but unfortunately due to over subscription were unsuccessful.

### 3.5 Community Involvement and ongoing Development:

For the future development a number of future audiences have been identified, these are:

- Local Community Artists and Culture Makers
- Weston College – Art Faculty
- Existing and new community partners
- Local primary and secondary schools
- Existing visitors to the Old Town Quarry
- Surrounding neighbourhood
- Community groups and local wildlife and heritage clubs and societies
- The Multi-Cultural Society
- Town Council Members
- Volunteers

The development of the site and importantly the management, operation and programming will depend on outcomes and needs assessments of the targeted audience.

However initial consultation audiences identified areas felt to be must haves or keeps.

The site:

- The community of local artists
- Dedicated gallery spaces to promote community art
- Artists Open days
- The cafe – but look at improving the kitchen and opening times
- Opening times to include evenings and Weekends (seasonally)
- Access to the site to enjoy its natural surrounding
- Access to wildlife talks and ability to view (managed)
- A Cultural programme of events and activities
- An information hub for Worlebury Hillfort
- The historic fabric of the buildings still being accessible

- The shop

## Section 4 Project Details

### 4.1 What the Project Will Do

The site is home to a community of artists, and is in risk of remaining closed. WSMTC have agreed to take over the lease and want to reimagine the use of the site to ensure growth and longevity. Working with the community we will safeguard the asset within the town and enable growth and expansion to both culture and heritage whilst having regard for the Placemaking objectives set out by NSC. We envisage this would also be a lasting legacy project for other art and creative projects in the south west area where currently there is a lack of usable dedicated space to be able to do.

The Old Town Quarry is popular amongst its visitors and has a committed group of artists and frequenters. We do recognise, however, that the audience has become stagnant, with many noting it is a hidden gem that not many people are aware of. It is a short walk from the centre of the Town and is accessible to all. The site itself is in a neighbourhood amongst the 30% most deprived in the country, and close to neighbourhoods in the bottom 10%. We have an opportunity to engage with members of the community who might not otherwise be able to access the arts. We will create a robust marketing strategy to expand our audience, beneficiaries and access for creative people. We recognise the importance that HAC play in the physical and mental health and wellbeing of our community, with the WSMTC strategy prioritising HAC in our 5 value pillars.

There will be a big emphasis on community engagement for the development of the site, recognising that in order to create a space for a cultural community, we need to ensure we deliver what the community want. This can only be achieved through involving them in the process. This will ensure the activities we deliver are richer and more relevant, resources go further, and we deliver greater civic and social benefits. WSMTC also manager the Blakehay Theatre and Weston Museum and actively support Super Culture and their extensive delivery of cultural activities. We would look to involve them all in the project delivery, hosting outdoor performances and activities. The Museum learning sessions in particular aim to attract our younger audiences.

Through this project we will look to set a national example of how HAC should be inclusive to the fullest possible extent. We aim to find new ways of breaking the cycle of opportunities to establish and sustain a creative career unfairly dependent on personal background. As well as designating a space for artists to create, we want to offer a full circle experience, with artist open days and exhibitions to showcase works. NSC, WSMTC and Super Culture have a track record of showcasing nationally and internationally renowned works (SEE Monster, Upfest's Weston Wallz etc), and bringing the work of local practitioners and artists into the spotlight.

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This legacy gives us an opportunity to appeal to a broad national audience. We recognise the importance of sites such as these in the pursuit of a Creative & Cultural Country.

The community of artists are an important part of the sites Ambition and we would like to expand the opportunities here for more artists, being considerate of accessibility and adaptability for all artforms. We will put in new studios to expand the offer available, and host artist open days to showcase works. Having the right space to work is important for the Quality of works produced.

WSMTC have already recognised our Environmental Responsibility, having declared a climate emergency, pledged to become carbon neutral by 2030 and employed a dedicated climate officer. We will ensure this carries through to our project. The site poses an exciting opportunity, hosting a diverse array of habitats. The site is home to peregrine falcons, bats, dormice and other protected species. We are keen to ensure the activities and projects taking place on the site are both considerate and serve to enhance knowledge.

Representing a town of 80,000 people, WSMTC are dedicated to ensuring all voices are heard. We work to the principles of asset-based community development, recognising that the best ideas and projects are community driven. We recognise that we need to actively engage to ensure the entire community is represented, acknowledging where barriers limit participation and prohibit Inclusivity & Relevance.

## 4.2 Business Model

WSMTC is taking the opportunity of closure and refurbishment to change the existing operational business model which it would inherit from the existing tenants. This model has not proven sustainable in the long term.

The focus going forward will be delivering a sustainable, accessible and vibrant arts, culture and heritage facility which will meet the demands of the local community and tourist industry within our seaside resort.

Artist Studios – there are artist studios in the main building. We would look to have these occupied again, and create a programme of open days to allow the public the opportunity to see new art forms. This could also take the form of a learning offer, with opportunities for students to shadow artists. As well as the existing studio, we are looking to install new studios on site. A long-term aspiration is the creation of a community arts venue towards the back of the site in the space of the former blacksmith area. We would also like to offer artists opportunities to create exhibitions of their work, with several suitable spaces across the site.

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Outdoor Artistic Programme – during the Covid-19 pandemic, there was a need to find new ways of engaging the community in arts and culture. Super Culture rose to the occasion and created a programme of live entertainment at the Old Town Quarry. This included music, comedy, cabaret, theatre, dance, and spoken word. We would like to bring Super Culture on board to make this a standing feature of the site. ‘Live at the Quarry’ ran for 17 days and presented a variety of performances suitable for a range of audiences, showcasing internationally acclaimed acts alongside some outstanding local and regional talent. In addition, WSMTC also has capacity to programme events. During lockdown, WSMTC’s own officers held a ‘Comedy at the Quarry’ event.

Café – The café at the Old Town Quarry has been in operation for the past 17 years. We want to ensure its longevity. We have begun conversations with a local organisation, who currently run several successful sites including a public house and a café, to understand if they would be a good fit for the site. Using asset-based community development principles we want to understand who is best placed to manage this element of the site.

Information point for Worlebury Hillfort – The Old Town Quarry is a perfect location to introduce an information station. Worlebury Camp is an Iron Age hillfort that occupies 10 hectares of land at Worlebury Hill. It has been designated a scheduled monument since 1915, and is a nationally important archaeological site due to its rare coastal location, size and considerable defences. There is an access route to the hillfort that runs alongside the Old Town Quarry. We see this as an opportunity to educate more people about this important historical site.

Programme of Events – as well as tapping into the HAC sector with events and performances, WSMTC will utilise its Climate and Community and Community Wellbeing Development Officers to offer a series of health and wellbeing events and environment and climate awareness events. The Community Wellbeing Development Officer has previously run a summer long programme of wellbeing events at one of our parks which included yoga, mindfulness walks and litter picking to name a few.

### **Earned Revenue**

Earned revenue will be generated through the business operations at the Old Town Quarry.

We are expecting rental income to increase from previous levels, as there had been no inflation added for a considerable number of years. The new rental rates will be set for a period, but they will be increased to meet a more realistic and currently national rate.

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In addition, an upgraded catering/café facility will serve Old Town Quarry visitors and also attract its own users who may not wish to utilise the rest of the site. Whilst it is envisaged that this part of the site will be managed by an external organisation, there will still be rental/concession funds raised.

### 4.3 Total Project Costs

The total project costs are expected to be £1,581,014 made up as follows:

Project capital build & refurbishment costs	£ 502,992
Fees	£ 57,000
Other project cost	£ 112,000

**TOTAL Capital Costs** **£671,992**

Plus:

Project development costs	£ 28,000
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**TOTAL** **£699,992**

### 4.4 Capital Funding Strategy

**Value of project works** **£699,992**

Source	Other Amounts	Status	Percentage
WSMTC CIL Funding	£200,000	Secured and in earmarked reserve	29%
Community Ownership Funding	£499,992	Pending successful application	71%
<b>Total</b>	<b>£700,000</b>		

#### 4.5 Construction Phase Delivery

The construction phase will be undertaken in several phases. These are broadly outlined below:-

- Design & Specification
- Procurement
- Authorisation
- Contract Works
- Inspection & Commissioning

Following notification of a successful bid, WSMTC project manager will appoint consultants to support the delivery of the main elements of the construction phase. Procurement will be undertaken in accordance with WSMTC Financial Regulations and Government guidelines.

Further detail on the main elements of the construction phase is set out below under the headings used above:-

##### 1. Strip Out Asbestos

As part of the development stage a refurbishment and demolition survey will be undertaken. Any findings will be dealt with within the construction programme. A specification of works will be prepared by an asbestos consultant.

Prior to asbestos removal, statutory notification will be made to the HSE, upon completion of removal air tests will be undertaken and a removal certificate issued to allow the main works to commence.

##### 2. Refurbishment Works

The main works will be designed and specified by WSMTC's appointed building surveyor and project lead (see 7.1) upon notification of the bid and based upon the approved plans. The contract works will be procured, following placement of adverts for expressions of interest, financial and health & safety assessments will be undertaken of interested contractors. From this a tender list will be prepared to obtain competitive tenders. The works will be undertaken under a JCT intermediate form of contract administered by the Architect.



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The project lead will be responsible for inspecting the work and undertaking snagging at the end of the project before issuing a certificate of practical completion.

3. Occupation of studios following agreement a license to occupy with artists  
We will engage local artists who have interest in studio space, first those who previously occupied the site, to agree licenses to occupy.
4. Staff transfer to building  
Once the main works are complete the grounds team staff will transfer to the site.
5. Open refurbished site  
Final inspections will be undertaken by the professional services team overseen by the project lead and project coordinator to ensure works are to a high standard. Upon receipt of the necessary completion certificates for electrical installation, building regulations, fire alarms, security alarms and any other statutory requirements, the site will be ready for opening.

### Section 5 – The Market

As recognised in 2.4 local strategic context, there is a lack of specific evidence regarding the current audience due to how the site was previously managed. Notwithstanding the demonstrable public support and engagement with pilot events held in the last 2 years. With the level of public outcry over the loss of the site (following its closure in September 2023), and the current visitor and creatives numbers from various services and sites within the town, we are confident in our assumptions for future community growth.

#### 5.1 Future aspirational audiences

##### *5.1.1 Community*

Since the Covid pandemic, the town has seen a surge in community participation and desire for local services. Not only did the lockdown demonstrate an overwhelming level of social isolation within the town, it also highlighted gaps and a lack of links between existing services. Organisations and local providers had been working in silos, with their own community echo chambers ensuring that audiences and engagers were stagnant. Addressing this has been one of WSMTC primary concerns since the lockdown, with the creation of a community resilience team, and an increase in partnership working. Following the principles of asset-based community development has allowed our audiences to expand exponentially, as we have, in effect, knocked down the walls to all the

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local echo chambers. This project will benefit from this increase audience, and will also ensure that through the ongoing consultation, a wider understanding of the community will be utilised. In utilising this approach, we aim to reach the following demographics within the community:

- local artists
- school and college students
- members of the LGBTQ+ community
- A wide variety of different cultures and ethnic backgrounds, representative of the town, working with local organisations such as Racial Equality North Somerset
- Tourists
- Heritage and wildlife enthusiast
- People facing social isolation

### *5.1.2 Heritage Arts and Culture*

The South West has a reputation for bringing in national and international audience. In 2015 the Dismaland arts installation by Banksy was housed in the Tropicana on Weston Seafront. This was the catalyst of nearly 10 years of large-scale investment and further engagement in the HAC scene in Weston-super-Mare and the south west more broadly. It was certainly credited as a big motivation for choosing the site as home of the arts installation SEE Monster in 2022. Weston-super-Mare has been recognised as a priority place by Arts Council England. With this comes inward investment on infrastructure and businesses, and has certainly informed WSMTC's policy of providing funding for community events which must:

1. To promote activities that have regard for the benefit of local residents
2. To promote activities which aim to support the creative sector of Weston-super-Mare
3. To encourage further investment in the HAC Community

### Glow 2023

GLOW 2023 was Weston's second annual light festival. Following sell-out success in 2022, it was expanded to new town centre locations, showcasing new commissions & community projects – aimed at local people & visitors, offering free access to spectacular

## Item 4.1

art they might not normally see. Over 4 days, GLOW transformed public space with spectacular and enchanting illuminations with site-specific light and sound installations, projection mapping and live performance, showcasing artwork from renowned national and local artists and the community. It was free to attend, aimed at local people and visitors from the West of England.

Data from the event shows the following:

- 73% of audiences were from WSM. The number of visitors to GLOW 2023 from outside Weston increased by 17% compared to 2022.
- Audiences are less frequent attenders (50% attend a cultural event or participate in arts and cultural activities twice per year or less)
- 93% visit with other people, including friends and family
- 68% of attendees visited with children under 16
- Audiences broadly reflected the gender, age, ethnic and socioeconomic profile of the town.

### *5.1.3 People and Nature*

The 'People and Nature Survey for England: Data and publications from Adults survey year 1 (April 2020 - March 2021)' gives us the following data.<sup>1</sup>

- More than six in ten people had visited green and natural spaces in the last 14 days
- Just over 4 in 10 (42%) people agreed that they had increased their time spent outside during Covid, and nearly a third (30%) agreed that they had increased the amount of time they spent noticing nature and wildlife since the start of coronavirus restrictions.
- 94% of adults felt that spending time outdoors was good for their physical health, and 92% thought it was also good for their mental health.
- Having a lower household income, fewer qualifications, living in a more deprived area and being in bad health (and in some instances being unemployed) were all associated with greater risk of low engagement with and access to nature and the outdoors. This included

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/the-people-and-nature-survey-for-england-data-and-publications-from-adults-survey-year-1-april-2020-march-2021-official-statistics/the-people-and-nature-survey-for-england-data-and-publications-from-adults-survey-year-1-april-2020-march-2021-official-statistics-main-finding>

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fewer visits to green and natural spaces in the last 14 days, seeing coronavirus as a barrier to getting outdoors, reduced access to garden space or an allotment, and lower likelihood of reporting that 'being in nature makes me happy'.

- People in the South West were 40% less likely to visit local green and natural spaces compared to other regions.

### 5.1.4 Tourism

Visit Britain's 'Visitor Attraction Trends in England 2021' gives us the following data.<sup>2</sup>

- Visitor admission trends by attraction - In 2021/22 there has been a 7% increase in visits to public gardens, 51% increase to historic properties, 114% increase to museums/art galleries and a 20% increase in wildlife attractions (since the previous year) Figure 1.
- Visitor Admission Trends 2022: By Region – whilst visitor numbers dropped in the South West by 60%, year one of recovery (2020-2021) saw them increase 52%, and year two (2021/2022) saw them increase a further 20%.
- Visitor Admission Trends 2022: By Admission Charge, Area Type & Attraction Size – Free attractions saw the largest decline in 2020 in visitor numbers (71%), however following the reopening after Covid, in 2022 there was a 79% increase. When cross referenced by attraction type, these numbers increased (figure 2).

With the above in mind, and a regional and national increase in visitor numbers to attractions across the country, we are confident that the Old Town Quarry will benefit from the tourism industry.

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<sup>2</sup> chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.visitbritain.org/sites/default/files/vb-corporate/Domestic\_Research/annual\_attractions\_survey\_2022\_full\_trends\_report.pdf Pages 18 – 35.



### 5.1.5 Conclusions

The above data regarding community, HAC, people and nature and tourism enable us to set clear goals regarding our future audience.

- By creating a community hub that will provide access to creative arts, education and career development in the art sector, access to information on the towns heritage, which has regard for the environment and the local wildlife, we are enabling community access to a sustainable and resilient offer.
- We want to increase access for people who do not have access to green spaces, which we hope to see an increase in their physical and mental health
- We hope that the steady increase in the growth of tourism will ensure that visitors to the town are aware of the Old Town Quarry
- The example set by previous arts installations provides reassurance that this site will not only contribute to economic growth locally, but also benefit from an audience base that is eager for more opportunities to ensure in HAC locally.

## Section 6 – Financial Appraisal

### 6.1 – Revenue Projections

Please refer to separate spreadsheet at Appendix 6 for a full breakdown of our revenue projections. All projections are shown net of VAT.

### 6.2 Running costs

#### 6.2.1 Open Phase (2025/2026 onwards)

Repairs and maintenance of the site falls into WSMTC's ongoing 60-year life cycle plan and is further broken down into five-year phases. This plan has been revised to take into account the maintenance of the site and the refurbishments undertaken as part of the project. This programme is overseen centrally within WSMTC, and utilises the current contracted out service to John West Contractors Ltd Weston–super-Mare.

We will have to pay NNDR for the site.

Utility costs are based on current values with increases allowed for inflation.

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Any other running costs as a result of new activities will be offset against chargeable income against this activity.

All other running cost provisions are based on known requirements and include health and safety, insurance and security of the building.

The net running costs of the Old Town Quarry are guaranteed to be met by WSMTC. WSMTC is able to raise precept requirements via the unitary authority (NSC). There is currently no capping on any precept levy required by WSMTC, and whilst all efforts will be made to keep this to a minimum it does provide security for the Old Town Quarry service.

### 6.3 Income

#### *6.3.1 – Open Phase ( 2025/2026 – onwards)*

There is a need to ensure the sustainability of the Old Town Quarry going forward to minimise the cost to WSMTC via its precept levy. We are expecting income to increase from previous levels after reopening. The increase in income has arisen by the following streams having been fully reviewed or newly introduced:

- Cafe function – we expect to raise income through café concession or income.
- Studio license to occupy – will we use a m<sup>2</sup> unit rate for rental of the studios to ensure that the income is reflective of the size. This has been set through research of neighbouring towns and cities to understanding a regional average.
- Other activities include charging for events which will be priced on an individual basis, with income going to the organisation running the event, with a percentage of the ticket sale coming to WSMTC in order to keep it accessible to the community. It is hoped that this will ensure that even the smallest community groups could host events without fear of large overheads, whilst still providing a modest revenue streams to support long term financial stability.

We have been cautious with our income assumptions and have put a reliance on expert advice in relation to cafe and rental projections.

## Section 7 – Management and Staff

### 7.1 Project Management and Development Phase

WSMTC has in place a dedicated Project Team to oversee the development and completion of the development and refurbishment phase of the project.

The team ultimately reports to WSMTC and Town Clerk as head of service. The team has two main components to ensure delivery of the application, one with a main focus on the Building and Refurbishments – being led by WSMTC’s appointed surveyor Hong Lau of Currie Brown Surveyors, the other with a focus on the development of the business plan and site operations – Sarah Pearce, Fay Powell and Molly Maher will collectively. Co-ordination of the whole plan is being led by Sarah Pearce WSMTC’s Deputy Town Clerk

#### **Malcolm Nicholson - Town Clerk**

Malcolm is head of the paid service and overall Responsible Officer for the project and WSMTC staff.

Malcolm joined WSMTC in 2009 as Town Clerk and head of paid service. He chairs the Senior Management Team and is responsible for the strategic and operational management of WSMTC, legal and administrative matters and the democratic decision-making process. He is a practising Solicitor and holds an upper second-class honours degree of Bachelor of Laws (LL.B) from the University of Warwick, a Diploma in Management Studies, IOSH Directing Safely and the CILCA qualification in Local Council Administration. He has worked in local government since 1981 and was previously Solicitor to WSMTC and Monitoring Officer at NSC.

#### **Sarah Pearce Deputy Town Clerk / RFO – Project Co-ordinator**

Sarah has worked for WSMTC for over 17 years and is WSMTC’s section 151 officer. She is a member of WSMTC’s Senior Management team and is responsible for WSMTC’s financial affairs. Sarah’s qualifications include: BA In Community Governance and Leadership, Full AAT qualifications for accountancy, IOSH Managing Safely, CILCA qualification in Council Administration, she is a Fellow for the Institute of Local Council Management. Sarah has worked with Molly Maher on numerous other grant applications and also oversees WSMTC’s Asset Management Programme and Health & Safety compliance.

#### **Molly Maher, Senior Development Officer**

Molly has worked for WSMTC since 2018 as Senior Development Officer and since this time has worked on key capital projects that WSMTC has undertaken, securing grant funding to enable them to happen. Projects include the hugely successful Blakehay



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Refurbishments (£323,000 total project value) and more recently the SEND Play refurbishment scheme at Castle Batch to provide a focused SEND community facility (£400,000 total project value).

### **Fay Powell, Assistant Town Clerk (Operational Services)**

Fay joined WSMTC in 2019 as WSMTC's Grounds Manager, for the last two years Fay has been part of the Senior Management team and oversees all of WSMTC's operational services. Fay brings extensive operational knowledge of the local area and delivery of services having worked in local government for 20 years. Fay is currently undertaking her CILCa qualification in Local council administration to further support her knowledge of Community events and facilitation.

### **Hong Lau – Refurbishment Project Lead**

Hong has over 20 years' experience of working in the construction industry delivering building surveying services in the public and private sectors. Hong's skills include: Architectural design, building pathology/defect analysis, statutory compliance (planning, building regulations, party wall, housing, licensing), project management and contract administration of residential and commercial projects.

### **Super Culture – Community Partner**

In 2018 Theatre Orchard (who since merged with Culture Weston to become Super Culture in August 2023) became North Somerset's first Arts Council National Portfolio Organisation. Since becoming an NPO, Theatre Orchard's programme has reached 125,000 people, created paid opportunities for over 400 artists, presented more than 160 productions, 8 festivals, 28 new work commissions and worked with 6,000 people through creative engagement. Super Culture specialise in creative placemaking and community participation – producing ambitious, diverse work with, for and by the people of North Somerset.

### **Hub Weston CIC – Community Partner**

Hub Weston CIC is a not for profit community interest company, responsible for The Stable, The Stable Games Room, Stable Foundations, The Stable Pop Up Shop and Stable Cafe.

The Stable is a community enterprise centre aimed at supporting start up social enterprises and businesses, charities, the VCSE sector, community projects and employability programmes in North Somerset.

We are home to Artists and Makers, A large variety of VCSE groups and organisations, Health and Wellbeing Practitioners, Design and Build Engineers, Writers and an array of Project Managers

### **Community Artists – Development and Existing**

#### 7.2 Operational Phase

We are taking the opportunity to review the existing operation and offer at the Old Town Quarry to maximise community benefit and meet the requirement and planned objectives of the new facility. The focus will be on the community offer and visitor experience whether that is occupying space as a resident artist, visiting the gallery displays, cultural programmes, workshops or events, education information, cafe or outdoor community spaces to soak up the wildlife and environment. The day to day site management will be overseen by WSMTC working with trusted community partners to manage and oversee aspects within the site.

##### *7.2.1 Volunteers and Community Partners*

Volunteers, community groups and community partners and groups are key to the ongoing service delivery of WSMTC's vision for the Old Town Quarry.

##### *7.2.2 Caretaking & Site Maintenance*

### **Property Maintenance**

WSMTC has in place a fixed term contract for its entire property portfolio with a local building contractor John West. Programmed maintenance on the building will be undertaken as required following WSMTC's 5-year programme. (reviewed annually). John West Contractors (Local Contractor) is also appointed for reactive and emergency maintenance as required. For works over £5,000 a full procurement exercise is undertaken as per WSMTC's financial regulations. The maintenance contract is overseen by WSMTC's appointed contract administrator, Hong Lau of Currie Brown, to ensure the work is carried out correctly at each building.

### **Grounds Maintenance**

WSMTC has a dedicated in-house grounds maintenance team who will have a base at the Old Town Quarry to undertake all general caretaking, and health and safety compliance management. The team have extensive knowledge of grounds and environmental

management and consist of 9 members of staff. In addition to support this team WSMTC has a dedicated contract for Arboricultural and tree services due to the importance and significance of the site.

### **Environmental & Wildlife Conservation**

Project development so far has benefitted from several local experts and practitioners. We have a tree management plan for the site, and our wildlife surveys provide guidance on how to care for the various species, including statutory responsibility, during the build stage. We would like to see all of these separate components be combined under one strategy for the site to ensure we have full understanding of all environmental and wildlife conservation responsibilities.

#### Section 8 – Monitoring & Evaluation

##### 8.1 Refurbishment Phase

Monitoring and evaluation are two separate processes. Monitoring is the routine assessment of ongoing activities and progress, while evaluation is the periodic assessment of overall achievements. Monitoring looks at what is being done, whereas evaluation examines what has been achieved or what impact has been made.

Regular monitoring of the project and evaluation against key targets and programmes within the business plan and 10-year strategy can allow the early identification of potential problems allowing cost effective solutions to be determined. A comprehensive project evaluation will include the distinct elements listed below:

- **Monitoring:** to assess whether the project is being implemented as was planned. A project monitoring system enables continuous feedback on the status of programme implementation, identifying specific problems as they arise.
- **Process evaluation:** to analyse how the project operates. Focuses on potential problems in delivery of the scheme. Identifies key routes to resolve issues.
- **Cost Evaluation:** to assess project costs to ensure delivery within available budgets
- **Quality Evaluation:** to determine whether the project has delivered the scheme to the required standards, through ongoing monitoring of the construction works.
- **Delivery Evaluation:** to determine whether the project has delivered the scheme within the anticipated time frame, through ongoing monitoring of the construction works.

The construction works are broken down into three key areas that provide information that can be used for monitoring and evaluation of the project.

## 8.2 Final Development Stage

During the final development stage, the concept for the operation of the site will be the focus for development whilst the refurbishment works are undertaken and all necessary Planning Consent and Building Regulations approval have been obtained.

## 8.3 Procurement

The procurement of the works will be in accordance with the requirements of WSMTC's standing orders and abide by government procurement guidelines.

The works will be tendered with an Expression of interest stage, which will include the initial advert and allow us to ensure our tender list meets standing orders (must be Real Living Wage Employer, must have no enforcement notices under HSE) and pass on aggregate against pre-set criteria.

The second stage tender documents will include a full detailed, specification and schedule of works that will need to be priced as part of the tender, also the requirement to submit a project programme. The tender returns will be compared against the design information for the first stage of the project evaluation.

## 8.4 Construction

The works will be let on a JCT contract as required. As part of the contract negotiation and mobilisation of the work the following documents will be prepared and agreed, these will be used as the baseline to monitor the project against during the contract phase and will provide the information for the second stage of the project evaluation.

- Programme - a detailed project programme will be agreed and regular monitoring of progress on site against the projected programme will be undertaken.
- Cash Flow Forecast - a detailed cash flow forecast will be prepared to predict monthly valuations based on the tendered costs against that projected programme. This will be monitored against the monthly valuations as a second check on programme.
- Detailed Priced Specification- a full breakdown of the project costs will be used to monitor work completed to a satisfactory standard against the monthly valuations under the contract.

Monitoring and recording of costs, progress and quality during the contract period will be undertaken through:

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- Informal weekly site visits by the project manager to monitor progress and quality of workmanship.
- Regular monthly contract meetings ( to be undertaken between project meetings, to ensure formal meetings every two weeks) project manager and contract manager, to discuss and minute progress, costs, material supply, labour availability. Progress and costs to be evaluated against master programme and information.
- Regular monthly project meetings between client, project team and contract team, to discuss and minute progress, costs, material supply, labour availability. Progress and costs to be evaluated against master programme and information.
- Monthly valuations to be undertaken between client's Quantity Surveyor and Contractor's Quantity Surveyor to value and agree work completed in last month in line with contract requirements. Valuations monitored against cash flow forecast to evaluate progress.

### 8.5 Operational Phase

A number of monitoring and evaluation methods will be used to track and understand the changes the project has made to the local community and its service delivery.

On completion of the capital project and once the doors have reopened:

- all events will be monitored and evaluated in order to identify potential improvements and develop new ideas
- the Old Town Quarry will encourage visitors to express their opinion by using both traditional feedback forms and electronic responses
- footfall will be analysed for seasonal and event fluctuations and compared to previous years prior to the refurbishment
- periodic meetings will be held to help gauge public and user group feelings towards the improved facility
- income figures will be analysed to understand spend per head
- surveys will be taken to understand where the Old Town Quarry visitors come from, why they have visited and their motivation for their visit.

To evaluate the project through its lifetime, the Old Town Quarry will return to previously consulted groups to gain an understanding of how they saw the project and their evaluation of the finished Old Town Quarry, after being part of the initial consultation and design stages. The continued and increasing engagement of the community will be a key indicator of commitment. Regular meetings will be organised with key target audiences to ensure need is being met.

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Customer satisfaction surveys will be undertaken annually to measure and ensure an improvement in ratings and to ensure the basic generic learning outcomes (skills, knowledge and understanding, activity, enjoyment and attitudes) and general social outcomes are achieved.

Staff managed by WSMTC will be asked to complete an annual appraisal which covers personal development, highlighting new things they have learnt, what training they have participated in or identifying new training opportunities, improvements in confidence, knowledge and changes in attitudes such as enhanced social skills and deeper understanding of customer requirements.

Most of all, evaluation will be about telling a story of how the Old Town Quarry was prior to the refurbishment, what process WSMTC and partner organisations took to develop the project, what changes this created and what was the outcome of the finished project.

[Appendix 1 – Old Town Quarry Strategy \(2023-2033\)](#)

[Appendix 2 – 6 Community Outcomes](#)

[Appendix 3 – Risk Register](#)

[Appendix 4 – Site Plans](#)

[Appendix 5 – Letter of Intent – North Somerset Council](#)

[Appendix 6 - Costings](#)

## **Policy & Finance Committee Meeting 11<sup>th</sup> December 2024**

### **Old Town Quarry -Staffing requirements (Project Management and Development)**

#### **Report of the Deputy Town Clerk**

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As a result of current staff levels (internal and upcoming changes to the Senior Management team) alongside other projects already started or due to commence it is felt that consideration is needed with regard to the project management and staffing requirements of the successful Community Ownership Fund (COF) grant award for the Old Town Quarry. The council is currently already committed to undertaking the following in 2024:

- Finalising and project management of the refurbishment works at HQ
- Project management of the move from Grove House & Grove Lodge to Waterloo street
- Waterpark revised operational model implementation (for April 2024) and introduction of kiosk operations
- Review of Parks & Play area capital programmes and development of a Play Strategy– including procurement for the Waterpark 2024 (Play provision only – not splash)
- Blakehay Theatre business review (currently underway)

#### **1.0 Project Manager / Consultant services**

The COF grant has a very tight turnaround of one year to get works completed as per the business model and application (details provided in 4.1 above). All larger scale project management works would normally be undertaken by the Deputy Town Clerk. However, with changes to the senior management structure occurring as a result of the Town Clerks retirement 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024, there is likely to be additional strain on existing capacity to be able to do so alongside already committed works (detailed above).

#### **1.1 Recommendation:**

Within the COP grant a provision of £20,000 was recognised for professional fees and it is therefore suggested that an external project manager/ consultant be appointed with immediate effect to undertake the project works and evaluation for the COP grant. This would still sit under the supervision of the DTC whilst working alongside the Senior Development Officer to enable the grant to be completed within required timescales and provide the essential continuity to the project. The successful applicant would need to have demonstrable experience in grant project delivery of this kind and knowledge of council processes and procedures ideally.

#### **2.0 Climate Development Officer**

The Town Council adopted the Old Town Quarry 10-year plan 20<sup>th</sup> February 2023 and the business plan produced for the COP grant award is based and has

expanded the principle of its content. Extract from the Strategy and from the Business Plan with regard to the Environmental elements of the project can be found on pages 16 (Section 9) and pages 51-53. Also, in Appendix 1 (page 7). Of section 4.1 above.

The site itself we know from extensive surveys undertaken by both North Somerset Council (NSC) and ourselves has extensive wildlife and environmental aspects that will now need to be fully managed. This it is felt has created an opportunity which has been included in the grant application; to develop a robust wildlife and environmental management programme and create a series of specific and sympathetic events programme alongside education workshops to complement this.

The application was written based on there being a Climate Development Officer in post, without this position we currently do not have capacity within existing staff to be able to achieve this element of work on the project.

Any changes to the project from the business plan and application submitted will require us to advise COP under the terms of the offer and they do reserve the right to reassess and withdrawn any offer made.

#### **2.1 Recommendation:**

Following on from the evaluation report and recommendations from the Personnel committee, reconsideration should be given to the continuation of the Climate Development Officer role to be able to fulfil the ambitions of the Old Town Quarry project work with regards to the environmental & climate works. The role would also be utilised to continue to support the councils Road map to Zero ambitions and the required monitoring and evaluation. Time would also be used in the development of the Hub Zero unit for environmental projects at the Sovereign centre which has not been fully fulfilled and is not likely to continue without staffing support. It is suggested this could be for a further 2-year appointment and then subject to review.

#### **Members are requested to:**

Approve recommendations set out in 1.1 & 2.1 above.

Sarah Pearce  
Deputy Town Clerk



## **Policy and Finance Committee Meeting Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2024**

### **Authorised Signatories – Town Council Bank Accounts**

#### **Report from the Deputy Town Clerk / Responsible Financial Officer**

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#### **1.0 Overview**

The Town council at its meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2022 approved the current nominated positions for bank signatories to be included within the bank mandates which require four signatories (Lloyds Bank).

Nominated signatory positions of:

- 1) Mayor – Chairman of Council
- 2) Deputy Mayor
- 3) Leader of Council
- 4) Chairman of Policy & Finance Committee

#### **2.0 Payment Release – online banking**

As part of the process to release monies following approval by elected members nominated, members of the Senior Management team then carry out the banking process online to release payments from the bank.

Currently there are 3 nominated senior managers who are able to perform this function which requires 2 people to do so for every transaction. (TC/DTC/ATC)

#### **3.0 Separation of Duty**

In order to work within financial regulations and best financial practices the council has in place a separation of duty for the processing of financial transactions a release of monies from the bank, this has been approved by audit. For example, the DTC/RFO – does not routinely process payments from invoices as they are responsible for checking transactions ahead of members approval (This will only be done in emergencies or in the event of staff absence within the finance team). Likewise, the Finance Officer is the person who produces the payment run for authorisation by members not the DTC/ RFO. The Finance Officer does not have any budget responsibilities due to the role they carry out in the preparation of financial transactions.

It is recommended that any temporary addition to the online banking process (internal authorised person) to release payments should not have any budget responsibility or have any involvement in financial processing.

With the Town Clerk Leaving 31.01.23 the council will be working at risk as there is only 2 remaining senior managers able to physically release the online authorised payment. The process requires 2 people to release any payment – therefore if one of the existing members of staff was taken ill or absent from work no payments could

be released from the bank online. ( It would go back to cheques signed by councillors which is not ideal as the main ability to make payment).

**4.0 Recommendation:**

To approve the Town Clerk Secretary to have administration setup for – **payment release** only on the council's bank accounts to make the 3<sup>rd</sup> Authorised internal person for online banking. This should be reviewed following any changes made to the senior management team and replacement of current staffing positions as required.

**Members are requested to:**

To approve recommendations in 4.0 above