

Taunton

Bring Your Business to Taunton:
the South West's best connected town





Introducing Taunton

Taunton is Somerset's principal town and National Growth Point with a population of about 63,000. It is the major administrative, economic, cultural and retail centre in the county, as well as being a focus for many other services, including health, education and leisure.

Taunton has a large catchment population of about 350,000, including much of Somerset and parts of north and east Devon. It is located at the geographic centre of the South West, astride the strategic road and rail routes to and from the South West. It is also at the heart of an extensive network of local and sub-regional bus services and is a hub within both regional and national networks.

Taunton enjoys an exceptional level of self-containment, with about 82% of the workforce also living in the town. Taunton's regeneration programme, Project Taunton aims to set exemplary standards of quality, design and sustainability in its ambitious proposals.



Connections

Arguably the best connected town in the South West, Taunton is accessible by:

- Rail
 - direct links to London, Cornwall, Bristol and the North of England
 - commuter journey 1hr 40mins to and from Paddington
 - 5hrs 30mins to Brussels

- Road
 - 5mins from the town centre to M5, J25
 - 20mins to A303/M3
 - National Express hub with regular services to London Victoria and all London Airports
 - Park & Ride facilities already in existence with further to be developed

- Air
 - Both Bristol and Exeter International airports are within 45mins drive

- Foot and Cycle
 - Taunton is on the National Cycle Route 3 (Bristol to Land's End)
 - The town's topography is level. A network of local footpaths radiates from the town centre.
 - Two Counties Way, from Taunton to Starcross, Devon



Masterplan

Taunton's urban development framework (UDF) and masterplan (see above) were created by Terence O'Rourke, as a result of the town's designation as a Principal Urban Area (PUA) in 2001. It has since been designated a Strategically Significant Town (SSCT) and consequently one of the first 29 Growth Points.

The UDF identified:

- 3 riverside sites and a retail core comprising nearly 50 hectares of under-used town centre land
- 75% of the land is in local authority ownership

It also detailed the potential for:

- 80,000m² of employment floor space
- more than 2,000 new homes in the town centre
- 50,000m² of new retail space
- at least 7,000 jobs

The Project Taunton (formerly Taunton Vision) delivery team was established in 2005 to enable the regeneration.



Regeneration Areas

- Taunton's exciting new **commercial core**, Firepool, adjacent to the railway station and alongside the River Tone, will provide 50,000m³ of sustainable office space complemented by residential, retail and leisure facilities.
- The **cultural quarter** will benefit from major improvements to existing facilities including the Somerset County Cricket Club the Brewhouse Theatre & Arts Centre - which needs to be extended or replaced, and the Museum of Somerset currently undergoing a £6M refurbishment. The new creative heart of Taunton will bustle with a mix of independent shops, cafes, creative workshops and apartments linked by riverside walkways and new public spaces including Castle Green (see image above).
- The main **retail area** is subject to extensive redevelopment. New high street multiples and small independent shops will add value and provide a welcome alternative to large city shopping malls. A series of courtyards will connect with the town centre environment and attract visitors from the surrounding areas.
- Tangier provides an opportunity for edge of town **mixed-use development**. An ideal riverside location for businesses seeking flexible managed office space, for shopping and high quality homes.



Delivery

The Project Taunton delivery team is supported and funded by its partners:

- Somerset County Council (SCC)
- Taunton Deane Borough Council (TDBC)
- South West of England Regional Development Agency (SWRDA)
- Environment Agency (EA)

Significant parts of central Taunton are at risk of flooding, and these include three of the four major areas of change included in the masterplan.

In response, the key delivery partners commissioned Black & Veatch to do a Flood Risk Management Statement for Taunton which was completed in October 2006. The off-site flood storage solution identified in the study is due for completion before the end November 2008.

Project Taunton, this is where it all begins...



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Economy

- Somerset LSC figures show that 50,000 people work in just under 4,000 Taunton Deane businesses
- The number of jobs in the district of Taunton Deane is high compared to the population with 83.1% of the population economically active. This compares to 78.6% in Great Britain, overall. [Nomis (OMS)2007]
- 37.8% of employed personnel are in the group Soc 2000 major group 1-3 i.e. those in managerial and senior official positions, professional occupations and associate professional or technical positions. [Nomis (OMS)2007]
- 29.4% of Taunton Deane's residents have achieved the qualification NVQ4 or its equivalent, in comparison to a Great Britain rate of 28.6%
- Full time workers earn an average of £22,500 compared to a national average of £24,400
- The average house price in Somerset is £182,000 compared to the average in Greater London of £328,000 (Land Registry September 2008)
- Taunton is Somerset's administrative, retail and financial centre. It is home to Somerset County and Taunton Deane Borough Councils.
- Organisations of national significance operating from Taunton include the UK Hydrographic Office, the Charity Commission and Western Provident Association. Other major employers include Musgrove Park Hospital, IBM, education providers (including further education colleges with higher education centres and several leading independent schools)



Culture & Sport

Taunton is committed to strengthening its developing community by ensuring culture and sport is at the heart of the town's growth and, as such, has been chosen as a Living Places pilot.

In-town sporting and cultural venues provide a whole range of entertainment e.g:

- Sports venues include the Somerset County Cricket Club, which is undergoing a transformation with the addition of new seating, players areas, offices and conferencing facilities.
- The Brewhouse Theatre & Arts Centre
- Tacchi Morris and The Space
- Westival
- Cinema

Project Taunton will bring many of these experiences together in a new and lively cultural quarter peppered with riverside cafes and pavement bars. Central to the cultural scene is the planned urban village, at Coal Orchard, offering more of the independent shops and workspaces existing in St James Street and Courtyard and Riverside Place.



Location

Taunton is surrounded by some of Britain's most beautiful landscape including:

- Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)
- Quantock Hills (ANOB)
- Exmoor National Park
- Somerset Levels

And, it nestles conveniently between the north and south SW peninsular coastlines which in combination provides for an unrivalled diversity of out-of-town leisure activities.

Education and Training

Taunton is home to the whole range of education provision, state and independent; pre-school to post graduate and professional courses.

Ofsted praised 'Outstanding' preschools, schools and colleges provide our children and young people with a first class education.

Colleges provide Centres for Vocational Excellence (COVEs) in a variety of study areas including Construction & Sustainability and Business & Management.

A National Skills Academy for Construction (NSAfC) is planned to support the town centre regeneration.



Healthcare

Taunton offers the whole range of healthcare within easy reach of the town centre.

In 2007/08, the award-winning Musgrove Park Hospital earned the title Medium Trust of the Year.

Taunton's Nuffield Hospital allows members of the community who wish to do so, to choose a private hospital alternative.

The flagship UKSH Shepton Mallet Treatment Centre deals with NHS and private referrals for surgical and diagnostic procedures. The Centre proudly boasts 0% MRSA for inpatients.



Sustainability

Project Taunton's ground breaking **Taunton Protocol** has been developed to provide environmental, social and economic sustainability guidelines for all those involved in the town's regeneration, to ensure an urban environment that simultaneously enhances and compliments the town.

Recognised as exemplary practice, Project Taunton's Taunton Protocol was voted winner of RegenSW's Low-carbon Housing Competition 2007.

More information is available at www.sustainabletaunton.co.uk



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