

Somerset County Council

Cabinet - 15th March 2017

Discussion Paper – Potential new ‘Somerset Board’ Joint Committee

Cabinet Member(s): Cllr John Osman – Leader

Division and Local Member(s): All

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	Seen by:	Name	Date
	County Solicitor	Honor Clarke	6 March 2017
	Monitoring Officer	Julian Gale	6 March 2017
	Corporate Finance	Kevin Nacey	6 March 2017
	Human Resources	Chris Squire	6 March 2017
	Property / Procurement / ICT	N/A	
	Senior Manager	Pat Flaherty	6 March 2017
	Local Member(s)		N/A
	Cabinet Member	Cllr John Osman	6 March 2017
	Opposition Spokesperson	Cllr Jane Lock	6 March 2017
	Relevant Scrutiny Chairman	Cllr Leigh Redman for Scrutiny Children & Families Cllr Hazel Prior-Sankey for Scrutiny Adults and Health Cllr Tony Lock for Scrutiny Place	6 March 2017
Summary:	<p>There is a good and growing degree of collaboration across Somerset through various partnership arrangements, both formal and informal. Most of the formal partnership arrangements we have in the county are currently concerned about a specific issue or population, there is a no formal overarching joint committee that takes a broad or longer-term view on the strategic needs and development of the county.</p> <p>This paper is aimed at prompting a discussion in order to gauge interest across key partners for a 'Somerset Board', a formal joint committee that could take more of a strategic co-ordinated approach for our local population.</p>		
Recommendations:	<p>That the Cabinet discusses this proposal and endorses the Leader to take forward discussion with wider partners to gauge the degree of support for the approach in the county.</p>		

Reasons for Recommendations:	The Somerset Joint Strategic Needs Assessment shows us that, not only are our demographics in the county changing significantly in a relatively short period of time, but also the needs of our population are getting more complex. Our most vulnerable children and adults often have multiple needs which span across all aspects of life, including health, education, housing, employment and financial hardship. These needs do not recognise organisational boundaries; therefore it's important that we all work together across the whole county to improve the lives of the local people we serve.				
Links to Priorities and Impact on Service Plans:	This proposal links to the County Plan.				
Consultations and co-production undertaken:	This is a discussion paper, designed to prompt debate and gauge the level of interest in the county to develop more of a formal joint committee.				
Financial Implications:	There are no financial implications. This proposal could lead to better co-ordination of resources in the County and therefore better use of the 'Somerset Pound'.				
Legal Implications:	There are no direct legal implications of this discussion paper. Should there be a desire to take forward this proposal there will be a need to consider the legal framework in which this could happen.				
HR Implications:	There are no HR implications				
Risk Implications:	There are no identified risk implications.				
	Likelihood		Impact		Risk Score
Other Implications (including due regard implications):	This is a discussion paper, there are no implications identified				
Scrutiny comments / recommendation (if any):	Not applicable.				

1. Background

- 1.1. There is a good and growing degree of collaboration across Somerset through various partnership arrangements, both formal and informal. Most of the formal partnership arrangements we have in the county are currently concerned about a specific issue or population; there is a no formal overarching joint committee that

takes a broad or longer-term view on the strategic needs and development of the county.

- 1.2. This paper is aimed at prompting a discussion in order to gauge interest across key partners for a 'Somerset Board', a formal joint committee that could take more of a strategic co-ordinated approach for our local population.

1.3. **Making the Case**

The Somerset Joint Strategic Needs Assessment shows us that, not only are our demographics in the county changing significantly in a relatively short period of time, but also the needs of our population are getting more complex. Our most vulnerable children and adults often have multiple needs which span across all aspects of life, including health, education, housing, employment and financial hardship. These needs do not recognise organisational boundaries; therefore it is important that we all work together across the whole county to improve the lives of the local people we serve.

The 2014 peer review challenge for Somerset County Council (SCC) highlighted the need for the Council to take more of a leadership role for the county. In response to this challenge, the Council has taken a leading role in a number of developments including devolution proposals, the Somerset Rivers Authority and recently the development of four longer-term Vision Programmes. It has also taken the significant step in developing with Sustainability and Transformation Plan alongside health colleagues with a view to drive closer working with all elements of the NHS and SCC is also the lead behind the drive to share public sector buildings through the One Public Estate initiative. We already have close working relationships with our district council colleagues and with some of our neighbours with whom we share specific services. All this has been a good step forward; however, there is always more that can be done.

As a result of greater working together we have achieved great progress on some challenging issues that are really important to Somerset residents. The Somerset Growth Board and Health and Wellbeing Boards are excellent examples of what can be achieved with a shared vision and closer, more formal collaboration. Similarly, we have been involved in some very productive discussion with our Devon colleagues around devolution. It seems a natural step to start some discussions about the value of working more closely together in our county.

All public sector organisations are facing significant financial challenge, largely against a backdrop of more complex needs in the population and increasing demand for services. There is a strong argument to be made for a formal joint committee which enables us, as a county, to make best use of the Somerset Pound. It will also enable us to drive agreed strategies and initiatives across Somerset in a co-ordinated and more effective way, for instance the prevention agenda which is underpinning work across all individual parts of the public sector.

1.4. **What could it look like?**

What it could look like needs some debate, but just to begin some discussion, initial thoughts are that it could be:

- A formal Joint Committee that could meet in public
- A coordinated body that is empowered to take action and move forward

joint working on some of the important strategic issues we all face, agreeing financing of projects across the public and private sectors

- Made up of senior leaders in the county who have responsibility for significant resources or who can genuinely collaborate and secure real buy-in to provide significant benefit across the population.

2. Options considered and reasons for rejecting them

- 2.1. This is currently a discussion paper; no options have been considered at this stage.

3. Background Papers

- 3.1. Joint Strategic Needs Assessment:
<http://www.somersetintelligence.org.uk/jsna/>