

County Council
Wednesday 26 April 2017
10.00 am Council Chamber - Shire Hall,
Taunton



To: The Members of Somerset County Council

You are requested to attend the Meeting of Somerset County Council on Wednesday 26 April 2017 to transact the business set out in the agenda below.

Anyone requiring further information about the meeting, or wishing to inspect any of the background papers used in the preparation of the reports referred to in the agenda please contact Mike Bryant on 01823 359048 or mbryant@somerset.gov.uk

Issued By Julian Gale, Strategic Manager - Governance and Risk - 18 April 2017

Guidance about procedures at the meeting follows the printed agenda.

This meeting will be open to the public and press, subject to the passing of any resolution under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972.

This agenda and the attached reports and background papers are available on request prior to the meeting in large print, Braille, audio tape & disc and can be translated into different languages. They can also be accessed via the council's website on www.somerset.gov.uk/agendasandpapers



RNID typetalk

Council Chamber and Hearing Aid Users

To assist hearing aid users, Shire Hall has infra-red audio transmission systems. To use this facility we need to provide a small personal receiver that will work with a hearing aid set to the T position. Please request a personal receiver from the Committee Administrator and return it at the end of the meeting

AGENDA

Item County Council - 10.00 am Wednesday, 26 April 2017

– Celebrating Somerset's Authors

The Chairman wishes to celebrate famous Somerset authors by including a quote on each Full Council agenda from an author to guide the Council's thoughts and actions at today's meeting.

Arthur C Clarke

"In my life I have found two things of priceless worth - learning and loving. Nothing else - not fame, not power, not achievement for its own sake - can possibly have the same lasting value. For when your life is over, if you can say 'I have learned' and 'I have loved,' you will also be able to say 'I have been happy.'"

**** Public Guidance notes contained in agenda annexe ****

1 Apologies for Absence

2 Declarations of Interest

Details of Cabinet Member interests in District, Town and Parish Councils will be displayed in the meeting room. The Statutory Register of Member's Interests can be inspected via the Community Governance team.

3 Minutes from the meeting held on 15 February 2017 (Pages 7 - 46)

Council is asked to confirm the minutes are accurate .

4 Public Question Time

(see explanatory notes attached to agenda)

This item includes the presentation of petitions. Details of any public questions / petitions submitted will be included in the Chairman's Schedule which will be made available to the members and to the public at the meeting.

For Decision

5 Report of the Monitoring Officer (Pages 47 - 54)

To consider a report with recommendations by the Monitoring Officer.

The recommendations relate to:

- The proposed amalgamation of the Standards and Constitution Committees
- Members Code of Conduct training
- The appointment of Deputy Section 151 Officers
- The review of the Scheme of Members' Allowances

Item County Council - 10.00 am Wednesday, 26 April 2017

6 Report of the HR Policy Committee (Pages 55 - 70)

To consider a report with recommendations from the Chairman of the HR Policy Committee.

The recommendations relate to the revised Pay Policy Statement for 2017/18.

For Information

7 Report of the Leader and Cabinet - Items for Information (Pages 71 - 82)

To receive reports by the Leader of Council summarising key decisions taken by him and the Cabinet, including at the Cabinet meetings held on 20th February 2017, 15th March 2017 and 12th April 2017.

(Note: Member Questions to the Leader and Cabinet Members will be taken under this item)

8 Annual Report of the Scrutiny Committee for Policies, Adults and Health (Pages 83 - 92)

To receive a report by the Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee for Policies, Adults and Health.

9 Annual Report of the Scrutiny Committee for Policies, Children and Families (Pages 93 - 98)

To receive a report by the Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee for Policies, Children and Families.

10 Annual Report of the Scrutiny Committee for Policies and Place (Pages 99 - 102)

To receive a report by the Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee for Policies and Place.

11 Annual Report of the Audit Committee (Pages 103 - 106)

To receive a report by the Chairman of the Audit Committee.

12 Annual Report of the Leader of the Council (Pages 107 - 116)

To receive the Annual Report of the Leader of the Council.

13 Annual Report of the Cabinet Member for Customers and Communities (Pages 117 - 122)

To receive the Annual Report of the Cabinet Member for Customers and Communities.

Item County Council - 10.00 am Wednesday, 26 April 2017

14 **Leader of the Council's Final Remarks**

Concluding remarks by the Leader of the Council

15 **Chairman's Final Remarks and Closure**

Concluding remarks by the Chairman of the Council at the end of the quadrennium.

SOMERSET COUNTY COUNCIL – FULL COUNCIL MEETINGS

GUIDANCE FOR PRESS AND PUBLIC

Recording of Meetings

The Council in support of the principles of openness and transparency allows filming, recording and taking photographs at its meetings that are open to the public providing it is done in a non-disruptive manner. Members of the public may use Facebook and Twitter or other forms of social media to report on proceedings and a designated area will be provided for anyone who wishes to film part or all of the proceedings. No filming or recording will take place when the press and public are excluded for that part of the meeting. As a matter of courtesy to the public, anyone wishing to film or record proceedings is asked to provide reasonable notice to Michael Bryant, Senior Community Governance Officer, County Hall, Taunton, Somerset, TA1 4DY 01823 359048 mbryant@somerset.gov.uk so that the Chairman of the meeting can inform those present.

We would ask that, as far as possible, members of the public aren't filmed unless they are playing an active role such as speaking within a meeting and there may be occasions when speaking members of the public request not to be filmed.

The Council will be undertaking audio recording of some of its meetings in Shire Hall as part of its investigation into a business case for the recording and potential webcasting of meetings in the future.

A copy of the Council's Recording of Meetings Protocol should be on display at the meeting for inspection, alternatively contact the Committee Administrator for the meeting in advance

Members' Code of Conduct Requirements

When considering the declaration of interests and their actions as a councillor, Members are reminded of the requirements of the Members' Code of Conduct and the underpinning Principles of Public Life: HONESTY; INTEGRITY; SELFLESSNESS; OBJECTIVITY; ACCOUNTABILITY; OPENNESS; LEADERSHIP. The Code of Conduct can be viewed at: <http://www.somerset.gov.uk/organisation/key-documents/the-councils-constitution/>

EXPLANATORY NOTES: QUESTIONS/STATEMENTS/PETITIONS BY THE PUBLIC

General

Members of the public may ask questions at ordinary meetings of the Council, or may make a statement or present a petition – **by giving advance notice**.

Notice of questions/statements/petitions

Prior submission of questions/statements/petitions is required in writing or by e-mail to the Monitoring Officer – Julian Gale (email: jjgale@somerset.gov.uk) by MIDDAY ON THE FRIDAY PRECEDING THE MEETING. The Monitoring Officer may edit any question or statement in consultation with the author, before it is circulated, to bring it into an appropriate form for the Council.

In exceptional circumstances the Chairman has discretion at meetings to accept questions/statements/ petitions without any prior notice.

Scope of questions/statements/petitions

Questions/statements/petitions must:

- (a) relate to a matter for which the County Council has a responsibility, or which affects the County;
- (b) not be defamatory, frivolous or offensive;
- (c) not be substantially the same as a question/statement/petition which has been put at a meeting of the Council in the past six months; and
- (d) not require the disclosure of confidential or exempt information.

The Monitoring Officer has discretion to reject any question that is not in accord with (a) to (d) above. The Monitoring Officer may also reject a statement or petition on similar grounds.

Record of questions/statement/petitions

Copies of all representations from the public received prior to the meeting will be circulated to all members and will be made available to the public attending the meeting in the Chairman's Schedule, which will be distributed at the meeting. Full copies of representations and answers given will be set out in the minutes of the meeting.

Response to Petitions

Normally the Council will refer any petition to an appropriate decision maker for response – see the Council's Petition Scheme for more details. The organiser will also be allowed 2 minutes at the meeting to introduce the petition, and will receive a response from a relevant member (normally a Cabinet member).

If a petition organiser is not satisfied with the council's response to the petition and the petition contains more than 5000 signatures (approximately 1% of Somerset's population) the petition organiser can request a debate at a meeting of the County Council itself. The Chairman will decide when that debate will take place.

Access and Attendance

The County Council meeting in Shire Hall is open to the public but there is limited capacity for health and safety reasons. The Council Chamber in Shire Hall is located on the first floor of the building. Shire Hall is used principally by the Courts Service and their staff are responsible for security arrangements at the main entrance. **All those attending the council meeting and the courts are required to pass through the security 'gate'. At peak times this can take well over ten minutes – so please arrive early.**

If numbers attending exceed capacity then priority will be given to those who have registered to speak at Public Question Time and thereafter admittance will be on a first come, first served basis.

The design of Shire Hall and the listed Council Chamber is not ideal for those using wheelchairs, with restricted widths in corridors and elsewhere, but council officers will ensure they have access to the meeting if at all possible.

COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the County Council held in the Council Chamber - Shire Hall, Taunton, on Wednesday, 15 February 2017 at 10.00 am

Present: Cllr M Adkins, Cllr J Bailey, Cllr A Bown, Cllr R Brown, Cllr P Burridge-Clayton, Cllr Coles, Cllr S Crabb, Cllr H Davies, Cllr A Dimmick, Cllr J Dyke, Cllr J Edney, Cllr D Fothergill, Cllr M Fysh, Cllr A Gloak, Cllr A Govier, Cllr D Greene, Cllr A Groskop, Cllr D Hall, Cllr P Ham, Cllr M Healey, Cllr R Henley, Cllr D Hill, Cllr A Horsfall, Cllr J Hunt, Cllr D Huxtable, Cllr C Lawrence (Chairman), Cllr C Le Hardy, Cllr M Lewis, Cllr J Lock, Cllr T Lock, Cllr D Loveridge, Cllr T Napper, Cllr F Nicholson, Cllr G Noel (Vice-Chairman), Cllr L Oliver, Cllr J Osman, Cllr J Parham, Cllr N Pearson, Cllr H Prior-Sankey, Cllr L Redman, Cllr M Rigby, Cllr D Ruddle, Cllr J Shortland, Cllr H Siggs, Cllr T Venner, Cllr L Vijeh, Cllr W Wallace, Cllr A Wedderkopp, Cllr D Wedderkopp, Cllr J Woodman, Cllr N Woolcombe-Adams and Cllr D Yeomans

Apologies for absence: Cllr J Clayton, Cllr J Denbee and Cllr D Tanswell

256 Declarations of Interest - Agenda Item 2

Declarations of Interest were made as set out in Appendix A to these minutes and Members' written notifications of interests were affixed to the Notice board at the back of the Council Chamber for the duration of the meeting.

257 Minutes from the meeting held on 30 November 2016 - Agenda Item 3

The Minutes, including attached Appendices, of the meeting of Council held on 30 November 2016 were signed as a correct record.

258 Chairman's Announcements - Agenda Item 4

(1) The Chairman made reference to Holocaust Memorial Day on 26th January 2017, and thanked Tom Rutland for his work.

(2) The Chairman welcomed the three young people who were accompanying the Leader of the Council as a part of Take Over Day.

(3) The Chairman made reference to the recent death of ex-County Councillor Lt Commander Maurice Ingram.

(4) With the Chairman's permission Cllr David Huxtable and Cllr Dave Loveridge paid tribute to Lt Commander Ingram.

(5) The Chairman made reference to the recent death of ex-County Councillor John Edwards.

(6) With the Chairman's permission Cllr Frances Nicholson paid tribute to Mr Edwards.

259 Public Question Time - Agenda Item 5

(1) Public Questions / Statements / Petitions (under 5000 signatures): Notice was received of questions / statements / petitions regarding:

Public Questions / Statements:

1. Council Budget
From Gordon Czapiewski

Response from Cllr John Osman – Leader of the Council

2. Budget Proposals
From Alan Debenham

Response from Cllr Harvey Siggs – Cabinet Member for Resources

3. MTFP and Budget Monitoring
From Nigel Behan – Unite

Response from Cllr Harvey Siggs – Cabinet Member for Resources

4. Medium Term Financial Plan / Learning Disability Social Enterprise /
Homecare
From Liz Payne-Ahmadi

Response from Cllr Harvey Siggs – Cabinet Member for Resources / Cllr
William Wallace – Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care

5. Learning Disability Provider Service
From Sean Cox

Response from Cllr William Wallace – Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care

6. Learning Disability Provider Service
From Suzanne Matthews

Response from Cllr William Wallace – Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care

7. Learning Disability Provider Service
From Nigel Behan – Unite

Response from Cllr William Wallace – Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care

8. Learning Disability Provider Service
From Paul Kitto

Response from Cllr William Wallace – Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care

9. Learning Disability Provider Service
From Ewa Marcinkowska

Response from Cllr William Wallace – Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care

10. Learning Disability Provider Service
From Jenny Winchester

Response from Cllr William Wallace – Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care

11. Learning Disability Provider Service
From Jeanette Cave

Response from Cllr William Wallace – Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care

12. Learning Disability Provider Service
From Nick Batho

Response from Cllr William Wallace – Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care

13. Stroke Services
From Amanda Broom

Response from Cllr William Wallace – Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care

Full details of the questions given at the meeting and / or in writing following the meeting are set out in Appendix B to these Minutes.

260 **Report of the Head of Finance on the Robustness of the Estimates and the Adequacy of Reserves and Balances - Agenda Item 6**

(1) The Council considered a report (Paper 6) by the Section 151 (S151) Officer and Director of Finance and Performance, which set out the opinion of the S151 Officer on the robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the calculation and the adequacy of reserves as required under Section 25(1) of the Local Government Act 2003.

(2) During debate on the item the following issues were raised: funding for the Learning Disability Provider Service; and the legal robustness of the budget.

(3) The recommendations within the report were proposed by Cllr John Osman and seconded by Cllr Harvey Siggs.

(4) The Council RESOLVED by a majority to note that, in the opinion of the Section 151 Officer:

a) “The estimates used in the production of the budget proposal for 2017/18 are adequately robust.”

The County Council further noted the following statement, made on the basis of the assessments contained in this report:

b) “Based on the assessment of the reserves, contingencies and balances, the key financial risks identified, and the thorough process used for developing the Medium Term Financial Plan, I have determined that the level of reserves, contingencies and balances for the 2017/18 financial year is adequate”.

261 **Report of the Leader and Cabinet - Agenda Item 7**

(1) The Council considered a report (Paper 6) by the Leader and Cabinet which set out the recommendations to Council arising from the meeting held on 6 February 2017.

(2) The recommendations within the report were proposed by Cllr John Osman and seconded by Cllr Harvey Siggs.

(3) Cllr Osman introduced the section of the report relating to the devolution proposals, highlighting the following points: the strong partnership across the South West region; formally negotiating with central Government; formalising work through the creation of a joint committee; the Heart of the South West's Productivity Plan; and improving the quality of life for Devon and Somerset residents. Cllr Osman further thanked Julian Gale for his work.

(4) During debate on the devolution proposals the following issues were raised: circulation of the 'green paper' on the Productivity Plan; ensuring transparency and accountability; A303 and A358 improvements; elected Majors; working with the Local Enterprise Partnership; the region coming together as one voice; the role of the Police and Crime Commissioner; the County's productivity deficit; affordable housing; and the pay rise awarded to the Heart of the South West LEP Chief Executive.

(5) The Council **RESOLVED** by a majority to adopt the following recommendations:

Devolution the way forward

1. To note the update about the HotSW Combined Authority / devolution deal proposals (including noting that a Joint Committee, if established, will have responsibility for developing future 'deal' and combined authority proposals for recommendation to the constituent authorities);
2. To approve the proposals for the HotSW Productivity Plan preparation and consultation proposals (including noting that a Joint Committee, if established, will have responsibility for approving and overseeing the implementation of the Productivity Plan);
3. To agree:
 - (a) 'In principle' to the establishment of a HotSW Joint Committee with a Commencement Date of Friday 1st September 2017 in accordance with the summary proposals set out in this report;
 - (b) That the 'in principle' decision at (a) above is subject to further recommendation and report to the constituent authorities after the County Council elections in May 2017 and confirmatory decisions to: approve the establishment of the Joint Committee; a constitutional 'Arrangements' document; an 'InterAuthority Agreement' setting out the support arrangements; appoint representatives to the Joint Committee; and appoint an Administering Authority.

(6) Cllr John Osman highlighted the following points regarding the 2017 Revenue Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan: the cut of £120m to the Council's Revenue Support Grant over the past 8 years; the impact of these reductions on service provision ; the need for tough decisions to be made to enable a balanced budget; increasing demand for services; servicing the Council's debts; Council tax has been frozen for 6 of the last 8 years; Somerset has the second lowest Council Tax rate of all rural authorities; the 2% Adult Social Care increase; meeting the Secretary of State; and that the budget proposals had been presented at both Cabinet and Scrutiny Committee meetings.

Cllr Osman further introduced the themed approach to setting the Council's budget; noting: a £1.35m saving from the former SouthWest One contract; reducing the use of agency staff; apprentices; better procurement; sharing services; reducing the number of high cost placements; and transport integration. Cllr Osman commended the budget to the Council, noted that no alternative budget had been proposed, and thanked all officers and Members for their work.

(7) Cllr Harvey Siggs added to the points raised by Cllr Osman, highlighting: the lack of an alternative budget; that £18.1m of savings had to be found; and the importance of robust budget monitoring.

(8) Cllr David Hall introduced the Technology and People (TAP) theme, noting: the importance of using technology to improve productivity and efficiency; the £2m of savings included in the TAP theme; capital investment; and that he was confident this level of saving could be achieved.

(9) Cllr Frances Nicholson introduced the Productivity and Culture theme highlighting: the importance of policies and processes on productivity; and reducing agency staff costs, whilst accepting the requirement for essential Social Workers.

(10) Cllr Harvey Siggs introduced the Commercial and Third Party Spend theme highlighting: the theme includes all Council service areas; savings were to be achieved through procurement, strategic sourcing and contract management; and this theme would save £6m over 4 years.

(11) Cllr Anna Groskop introduced the Stronger Communities theme, noting: the importance of sustainable and empowered communities; managing demand; prevention; and the importance of working in partnership.

(12) Cllr William Wallace introduced the Partnership and Integration theme, noting: exploring opportunities to reduce costs through partnership working; and collaboration with other councils.

(13) Cllr Christopher Le Hardy introduced the service re-design theme, noting: the theme was part of an on-going improvement programme; the commissioning approach; value judgements; and achieving 'better for less'.

(14) Cllr David Fothergill introduced the transport theme, noting: the theme was a sub-set of service redesign; the theme included both adults and children's services; and investment in the Councils vehicle fleet.

(15) Cllr Sam Crabb highlighted his role as the Opposition Spokesman for Resources, noting the following points: the shambolic way central Government have presented budget figures; the budget presented today shows a lack of strategic thinking and decisive decision making; the obligation of all Members to set the Council's budget; the Council had overspent by £13m this financial year; the realisation of proposed savings was becoming more difficult; only 60% of proposed savings were achieved over the past 2 years; service redesign will affect the vulnerable; CAHMS is the lowest funded in England; reducing out of county placements; software systems for Social Workers; increasing the savings target for the Productivity and Culture theme; shared service savings; income generation; and the removal of bus services.

Cllr Crabb further noted that: it was unhelpful that he had been filmed at a recent Cabinet meeting; fake news; the additional grant awarded to Surrey County Council; achieving a better settlement for Somerset; and the lack of progress in Children's Services. Finally Cllr Crabb noted that it was impossible to present an alternative budget as no substantive figures had been presented, and called on all Members to vote against the proposed budget.

(16) Cllr Osman responded to the points raised by Cllr Crabb, noting: no amendments to the budget had been proposed; the need for a new budget setting approach; the improvements in Children's Services; there had been no borrowing over the past 8 years; and servicing the Council's existing debt.

(17) During debate on the 2017 Revenue Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan the following issues were raised: alternative budgets; achieving the proposed savings; locum Social Workers; Step-Up to Social Work training; the importance of 'invest to save'; funding the Council's pension deficit; the role of apprentices; providing Members with full details of the 2017 revenue budget; the role and position of the S151 Officer; contacting CIPFA; the demonstration outside of Shire Hall; funding for the Somerset Rivers Authority; appointments to the Council's Scrutiny Committees; working with Parish Councils; the Northern Inner Distributor Road; the removal of the invest to save budget; 'cost-shunting'; and the risks associated with the themed budget setting approach.

(18) Cllr Osman responded to the points raised in debate, noting: the Somerset Rivers Authority had levered significant funding; risk assessments were included in the paperwork for today's meeting; the role of the S151 Officer; the Council was looking to work with partners including the NHS; and that no Social Workers had left the Council and been re-employed through an employment agency.

(19) Cllr Siggs highlighted that the Council's internal auditors and CIPFA had previously commended the Council's budget setting process.

(20) A named vote was taken regarding the 2017 Revenue Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan, and the Council **RESOLVED** by a majority vote to adopt

the following recommendations (by 30 votes for to 22 votes against with no abstentions):

2017/18 Revenue Budget and the Medium Term Financial Plan

1. A net revenue budget requirement of £311,772,100 for 2017/18 as shown in Appendix A
2. The 2017/18 savings targets for each Theme as shown in section 4.4 and any linked financial impacts occurring in future years, after having due regard to the potential impacts identified.
3. A Council Tax increase of 3.99% (including 2% for Adult Social Care) giving a Band D value of £1,111.95, resulting in a Council Tax requirement of £214,316,900 (section 7.1 & 7.2) as detailed in Appendix D
4. Continuing the Council Tax precept of £12.84 within the base budget for the shadow Somerset Rivers Authority (representing no rise from 2016/17). This results in a Council Tax requirement of £2,474,800 (section 7.3) as detailed in Appendix D 5. That delegated authority is given to the Cabinet, in consultation with the Section 151 Officer, to make appropriate changes to the 2017/18 budget, within the overall envelope of resources agreed by the County Council
5. To delegate powers to the Leader and the Director of Finance to finalise budget proposals and recommendations to Full Council, updated to take into account new information in the Final Local Government Financial Settlement if this is available
6. To continue to campaign for fairer funding for Somerset County Council, to ensure County Plan priorities are fully funded
The County Council is also recommended to note:
7. Whilst the Council is able to present a balanced budget for 2017/18, it is on the basis that all targets included against each MTFP Theme are achieved

That the implementation of specific savings proposals under each theme will be subject to decisions by the Leader of the Council, Cabinet, Cabinet Members or Officers in accordance with the Leader's Scheme of Delegation, after having due regards to consultation results and any potential impacts identified.

Votes cast as follows:

For Cllr M Adkins Cllr A Bown Cllr R Brown Cllr P Burridge-Clayton Cllr J Edney	Against Cllr J Bailey Cllr S Coles Cllr S Crabb Cllr H Davies Cllr A Dimmick
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Cllr D Fothergill Cllr M Fysh Cllr A Groskop Cllr D Hall Cllr P Ham Cllr M Healey Cllr D Hill Cllr J Hunt Cllr D Huxtable Cllr C Lawrence Lt Col Le Hardy Cllr M Lewis Cllr T Napper Cllr F Nicholson Cllr G Noel Cllr L Oliver Cllr J Osman Cllr J Parham Cllr D Ruddle Cllr H Siggs Cllr L Vijeh Cllr W Wallace Cllr D Wedderkopp Cllr J Woodman Cllr N Woollcombe-Adams Cllr D Yeomans	Cllr J Dyke Cllr A Gloak Cllr A Govier Cllr D Greene Cllr R Henley Cllr A Horsfall Cllr J Lock Cllr T Lock Cllr D Loveridge Cllr N Pearson Cllr H Prior-Sankey Cllr L Redman Cllr M Rigby Cllr J Shortland Cllr T Venner Cllr A Wedderkopp
Abstained None	

(21) Cllr John Osman introduced the section of the report regarding the appointment of external auditors.

(22) The Council **RESOLVED** by a majority to adopt the following recommendations:

1. Adopt the Treasury Management Strategy (as shown in Section 2 of the report).

Approve the Annual Investment Strategy (as shown in Section 3 of the report) and proposed Lending Counterparty Criteria (attached at Appendix B to the report).

262 **Report of the Leader and Cabinet - Items for Information** - Agenda Item 8

(1) The Council considered a report (Paper 10) introduced by the Leader of Council that summarised the key decisions taken by the Leader and Cabinet Members between 22 November 2016 and 3 February 2017, together with the items of business discussed at the Cabinet Meetings on 14 December 2016; 18 January 2017 and 6 February 2017.

(2) Cllr John Osman and Cllr David Hall responded to a written question from Alan Dimmick regarding the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership.

(3) Cllr John Osman responded to a written question from Cllr Sam Crabb regarding future funding for Somerset County Council, and undertook to provide a written response.

(4) Cllr David Hall responded to a written question from Cllr Ross Henley regarding household waste recycling centres opening times.

(5) Cllr David Fothergill responded to written questions from Cllr Ross Henley regarding slinky bus services and the Henlade park and ride site, and undertook to provide a written response. Cllr Fothergill further responded to questions asked at the meeting by Cllr Simon Coles regarding the Northern Inner Distributor Road, and Cllr Hazel Prior-Sankey regarding a consultation on improvements to the A358.

(6) Cllr Frances Nicholson responded to written questions from Cllr Jane Lock regarding universal services, OFSTED inspections and support services for schools and undertook to provide written responses. Cllr Nicholson further undertook to provide a written response to a question asked at the meeting by Cllr John Parham regarding the creation of multi-academy trusts.

(7) The Council received the Annual Report of the Cabinet Member for Children and Families at this point in the meeting (Paper 13) detailing key activities and achievements from the last year of those services that fall under his Cabinet responsibilities.

(8) Cllr William Wallace responded to written questions from Cllr Jill Shortland regarding Stroke Services and Cllr Mike Rigby and Cllr Jane Lock regarding the Learning Disability Provide Service.

(9) The Council received the Annual Report of the Cabinet Member for Resources at this point in the meeting (Paper 14) detailing key activities and achievements from the last year of those services that fall under his Cabinet responsibilities.

(10) Cllr John Osman responded to a question asked at the meeting by Cllr Terry Napper regarding the status of the village green application for Tor Leisure in Glastonbury, and undertook to provide a written response.

(11) The Council received the Improvement and Transformation in Somerset: report of the Cabinet Member for Corporate Improvement at this point in the meeting (Paper 15). Cllr Le Hardy highlighted the considerable on-going work.

263 **Report of the Scrutiny Committee for Policies and Place - Agenda Item 9**

(1) The Council received the report (Paper 13) from the Chairman of the Scrutiny for Policies and Place Committee, Cllr Tony Lock.

264 Report of the Scrutiny Committee for Policies, Adults and Health - Agenda Item 10

(1) The Council received the report (Paper 11) from the Chairman of the Scrutiny for Policies, Adults and Health Committee, Cllr Hazel Prior-Sankey.

(2) Cllr Prior-Sankey thanked the Scrutiny for Polices, Adults and Health Vice-Chairman, officers and partners in health

265 Report of the Scrutiny Committee for Policies, Children and Families - Agenda Item 11

(1) The Council received the report (Paper 11) from the Chairman of the Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee, Cllr Leigh Redman.

(2) Cllr Redman thanked officers, governor representatives and the Scrutiny for Polices, Children and Families Vice-Chairman.

266 Report of the HR Policy Committee - Agenda Item 12

(1) The Council received the report (Paper 12) from the Chairman of the HR Policy Committee, Cllr Anna Groskop.

267 Annual Report of the Cabinet Member for Children and Families - Agenda Item 13

The Council considered the report under agenda item 8, Report of the Leader and Cabinet – Items for Information – minute AK263 refers.

268 Annual Report of the Cabinet Member for Resources - Agenda Item 14

The Council considered the report under agenda item 8, Report of the Leader and Cabinet – Items for Information – minute AK263 refers.

269 Improvement and Transformation in Somerset: report of the Cabinet Member for Corporate Improvement - Agenda Item 15

The Council considered the report under agenda item 8, Report of the Leader and Cabinet – Items for Information – minute AK263 refers.

CHAIRMAN

Meeting of Somerset County Council held in the Council Chamber, Shire Hall,
Taunton on Wednesday 15 February 2017 at 10:00am

Details of the declarations of interest referred to in Minute AK257 are given below.

Agenda item 2 - Declarations of Interest

Councillors' declarations to record membership of District Councils - as detailed on lists displayed in the Council Chamber - are taken as having been declared by these Councillors to be personal interests in the business of the County Council meeting, and are not declared orally at the meeting.

Further personal interests declared at the meeting:

Cllr John Bailey – as both he and his wife are in receipt of SCC pensions

Cllr Sam Crabb – as a Governor of Stanchester Academy, the Chair of the Management Committee of the South Somerset Partnership School and the Chair of Marston Magna Parish Council.

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Meeting of Somerset County Council held in the Council Chamber, Shire Hall, Taunton on
Wednesday 15 February 2017 at 10.00am

Agenda Item 5 - Public Question Time

Details of the questions / statements and petitions referred to in Minute AK260 and responses given at the meeting are given below.

Public Questions / Statements / Public Petitions (under 5000 signatures)

1. Council Budget

From Gordon Czapiewski

Referring to the posting on the SCC website "Budget plans endorsed by Cabinet, 6 February 2017":

- Re. "£10m from redesigning services and bringing spend in some key areas -such as care placements for children and adults – into line with good performing authorities."
- Can you identify the Authorities and equivalent examples of practices that you intend to adopt, i.e. which service is affected and what change is to be implemented?
- Re. "Cabinet also endorsed a Council Tax increase of 1.99 per cent. A further 2 per cent ring-fenced for Adult Social Care was also supported along with keeping the Somerset Rivers Authority precept at the last year's level of 1.25 per cent"
- Why was the rise limited to only 2% when 3% is allowed by central government?
- Do other councils nationally pay an SRA equivalent

Response from Cllr John Osman – Leader of the Council

Thank you for the questions –. You raise a number of points on the subject of council tax and we will be having a debate on our budget and the themes including our plans to redesign services later in the meeting to which members of the public are invited to stay and listen to.

For clarity in relation to council tax, I would add that Government has given councils permission to raise the Adult Social Care precept to 3% for the next two years but if they do so, they cannot raise it the year after. The choice was between increases of 3%, 3% and then no increase or 2, 2, 2. We think 2 + 2 + 2 is more sustainable for budget planning and more reasonable for the tax-payer.

In response to reaction to flooding across our Council and the prompt action this Council took when our residents needed it most, I can confirm other Councils do not have a Rivers

Authority in the same way. I would also point out that this Council does not “pay” the rivers authority.

Finally, my thanks for the question and the opportunity to contrast the political appetite for raising council tax. This administration believes in not taxing hard-pressed families whenever it can. The Lib Dem opposition in its last eight years in office raised council tax by a total of 62%. And they have gone on record in a public meeting that they would not rule out a further 15% increase if they won power. That’s the difference between the two parties, low tax, zero borrowing, efficient and effective services versus high tax, high borrowing, inefficient and ineffective services. A clear choice. A clear plan.

2. Budget Proposals

From Alan Debenham

1. Today’s budget proposals regarding increasing the County Council’s very large chunk of the Council Tax by 3.99%, on top of last year’s Social Care and Flood Alleviation uplifts, plus further planned annual increases of 3.99%, are a vicious U-turn on previous Tory addiction to Council Tax freezes. Such well above inflation increases, coupled with severe decreases in services provided, not only create cash hardship for vulnerable residents, but also great difficulty in understanding how it is fair to have to pay much more for much less. How can the Council now explain this madness emanating from Tory government’s continued severe austerity cuts, via further withdrawal of Revenue Support Grant, simultaneous with transferring what should be national taxation to local Council taxpayers by now pushing and promoting an annual 3.99% rise ?
2. Also, as most people are aware, allowing the hypothecated 2% annual increase purely for adult social care is very inadequate - both to recover previous cuts of over 25% or to meet present required demand - and very unfair because Council tax delivery base does not fairly match care needs. The Council leader is on record, more so than ever this year, on pleading loudly about the Council’s underfunding, saying at last Cabinet that he was lobbying the Secretary of State this week for explanation and help. What result has he achieved and has he been able to get a similar “sweetheart” deal to Surrey County Council’s regarding retaining 100% of business rates, albeit as part of a national pilot ?
3. How have, or will have, residents an ability to see direct improvements (or less cuts?) in Social Care service as a result of their hypothecated Council tax increases and increased Better Care national support when already implementation of the 2014 Social Care Act is faltering, the newly emerged Sustainability Transformation Plans won’t deliver without proper upfront funding, and latest news says acclaimed Social Care and Hospital integration is simply not working, despite new finance and drive ?
4. When will this Council and our Councillors really stand up for its services and its residents by both denouncing the government’s right-wing imposition of severe public spending austerity policies – hitting local government hardest - which simply do not work in terms of solving national debt (increased from £1.2 to £1.6 trillion since 2010) AND by organising councils in the South West to fight-back by concerted protest actions, not by embracing government promoted HotSW mergers which involve pseudo-devolution in return for a new mayor and new cuts ?

Response from Cllr Harvey Siggs – Cabinet Member for Resources

We will have a full budget debate later in this meeting so I invite Alan to stay for that. I can answer his specific points now about losing our revenue support grant.

In short Alan, you answer your own question. The explanation is simple. If Somerset CC loses £16m in Revenue Support Grant, it has no choice but to identify savings and raise council tax. The council tax increase of 3.99% replaces only half of what we lost and therefore the rest must come from savings. Costs have not stood still and so savings must increase.

You raise a point about working closely with our communities and our partners to improve the response and support we provide. We can demonstrate credible improvements within West Somerset where our work has been most advanced and is now rolling out across the county. We do not accept that the Care Act is faltering and believe that it is through closer working with colleagues across health that our residents will get a better outcome as well as ensuring we utilise our resources to maximum effect.

And finally, lobbying will not bear fruit overnight. The government funds all councils through a complex series of allocations and the funding review and the business rates bill will ultimately be the result. We have to wait a bit longer to know whether the hard work we put in has an effect. The leader is due to meet senior members of government again later this month to reiterate our position.

3. MTFP and Budget Monitoring

From Nigel Behan – Unite

Q1 In February 2016 this Council set a “balanced budget” for 2016/17. Based on the end of the accounting period (Quarter 1) April to June 2016 there was a forecast “overspend”/ “underfund” for the year 2016/17 of approximately £24m.

- i) Will you explain how the financial planning and forecasting was so adrift just 3 months in to the (as then) new financial year?
- ii) What factors were not anticipated?
- iii) Was this poor planning or artificially low budget setting in February 2016?
- iv) How can we be assured that this meetings “balanced budget” will not be so wayward in the same accounting quarter (on a £300+m budget)?

Q2 This year’s MTFP is based on 7 Themes, unlike previous years where specific service “savings” (and “cuts”) have been identified in the budget papers with corresponding Impact Assessments.

- i) Please detail the “planned” savings by service area?
- ii) Please can you identify the cuts by service area?
- iii) How can alternative budgets be proposed if, as this seems, the savings and cuts cannot be clearly identified?
- iv) How can electors, citizens, residents and council taxpayers, community and voluntary organisations clearly identify the impact of the savings and cuts and participate in meaningful consultation?

- v) Is there a risk register associated with each specific service area savings?

Response from Cllr Harvey Siggs – Cabinet Member for Resources

Q1 The budget set last February was robust but it did rely upon services absorbing some of their own pressures and managing their demand. In some cases it has been difficult for service managers to see how they could do that and it has taken longer to put management actions in place to address this and deliver the savings required to get budgets under greater control. The overspend projections have therefore steadily come down. This was neither poor planning nor poor budget-setting but each quarter should be viewed as a progress report to the way in which budgets now have to be managed.

Q2 Nigel has missed the point of the themed approach this year to the MTFP. We have had the service cut approach previously in place and it has over the last two years started to run out of gas. As austerity bites harder, the MTFP cuts have been tougher to deliver and we have not had as much success as we would like using the percentage-based approach for all services that produced the long lists of savings.

As has been said at three Scrutiny and Cabinet meetings in the last month, our normal governance process applies so that when these targets are sufficiently formulated into decision reports, having had the necessary consultation with the required impact and risk assessments, there will be opportunity for members of the public, service users and all councillors to comment and engage in the decisions.

4. Medium Term Financial Plan / Learning Disability Social Enterprise / Homecare

From Liz Payne-Ahmadi

- 1) Please could you explain why you have limited the Council Tax increase to 3.99% when further cuts are being made to so many public services? Surely greater revenue from this source would maintain a range of services on which so many depend?
- 2) Huge concern has been raised about the provision of LD services through a newly formed social enterprise operational from 2017/18 including loss of jobs and vital provision and a high risk strategy for the sustainability of the project going forward. Despite this, on p.96 of the papers for this meeting, you describe the change as "an exciting new chapter in the delivery of LD services". Does this mean that you plan to treat other services in like manner in the future? How do you respond to the grave concerns that have been raised about the proposals Dimensions UK are planning to implement in respect of LD? What are your contingency plans for LD should the new social enterprise fail?
- 3) You state (also on p.96) that SCC is working with community groups in West Somerset to develop a new approach through which older people will place less reliance on traditional services like homecare. This approach, you say, will help them to maintain their independence. Please could you explain how removing or scaling down services on which people rely for their independence can possibly help them to maintain it?

Response from Cllr Harvey Siggs – Cabinet Member for Resources

There is perhaps a little misunderstanding as to what levels of council tax we are allowed to raise without incurring the cost of a public referendum. You ask about revenue to support our services, we are capped by government and only allowed to raise 1.99% on council tax to achieve this.

In respect of raising council tax specifically to support Adult Social Care, that has been answered earlier.

However, I do understand the thrust behind the question and I would agree that increasing revenue is critical to our future funding. We would prefer to generate this income with our long-term vision for more business parks, a garden town or two and spread the burden of taxation rather than hike up tax each year to cover the shortfall. Can I too remind everyone that during the last Lib Dem administration they raised council tax by 62% over 8 years. This may be a clue as to why Government introduced capping.

My colleague Cllr William Wallace will respond separately to your questions about the Learning Disability Provider Service and community groups in West Somerset.

Response from Cllr Cllr William Wallace – Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care

First my profound apologies for the length of time this response has taken before being sent to you the service have taken steps to ensure this does not happen again.

You asked a number of questions which were answered in our Council meeting but I did say at the time I would write a response covering off some of the further issues.

In relation to my area, you specifically asked questions about our learning disability provider service and secondly about our community work in West Somerset.

First – LDPS. We believe that the establishment of the new social enterprise is an exciting change that will result in better quality, progression based services ensuring better outcomes for the people it supports. However, in order for this to be successful, the new organisation will need to be sustainable and we therefore understand the rationale for the new social enterprise putting forward the proposals for consultation that it has. We do not expect the new social enterprise to fail, but as part of the process we have undertaken contingency arrangements are in place that we would follow in the extremely unlikely event that it did.

Secondly – West Somerset. Firstly we have not cut services in West Somerset. In response to increasing demand and limited resources we have looked at how we can respond better to ensure we are able to provide the support that people need, as quickly and locally as possible. We want to enable and support people to live independently, because this is what they tell us they want. We recognise that the way that we have been working has not always done this. Our primary goal in reviewing and trialling new ways of working has been to ensure that we have good conversations with people about what matters to them and ensure that we find solutions that will make a difference to their quality of life and wellbeing and to enable them to live at home for as long as possible. Some fuller detail might be helpful to explain this.

In West Somerset we have piloted a new approach to look beyond the traditional ways of supporting people by engaging with partners in our communities so that we are able to provide a wider range of opportunities for people that better support their needs and enable people to be more in control of their lives. By broadening the range of options we are able to tailor support and make it more personal. The trail lasted 6 months with really positive results so we are now rolling this approach out across the county. Some examples of how West Somerset residents have benefited:

While working with an elderly couple living in a rural area it became apparent that they were feeling increasingly lonely and isolated due to one of them having very poor mobility. The carer was struggling to cope and had asked for some respite care. Traditionally we would have put in a package of care so that someone from a home care agency would have some to the home and sat with the cared for person while the carer went out for a few hours or the day. Working in the new way, the social care worker talked to the couple about what mattered to them and it became apparent that the church had been a really important part of their life and that their isolation from this community had had a big impact on their wellbeing. The social worker linked with the local community agent who then worked with the local church community and within a day the church community agreed to set up a rota to visit the couple and enable the carer to have regular breaks. The couple are now connected to their friends in the church community and feel really well supported, this has enabled them to stay living at home. The outcome for the couple is so much better than had we simply reverted to putting in a package of care as although the carer would have been able to have time to recuperate, the cared for person would not have had someone they knew and shared interests with looking after them. So although this resulted in no cost to the authority except in terms of taking the time to listen and find solutions that would make a difference, the primary driver in seeking a solution was to enhance the couples lives, it was not cost driven.

One of our elderly residents in Sheltered Housing had been using the call bell every afternoon. Traditionally this might have led to the person being moved as the other residents were complaining. Taking time to listen and have a good conversation about what was important to the person, the adult social care worker identified that he was very lonely and desperately wanted to stay living in his home. The adult social care worker asked the community to help and there is now a rota of volunteers visiting the person. The number of times the call bell is used has reduced dramatically as the elderly person is now much happier and feels part of the local community. Again a really positive outcome for the person with no cost to the authority.

It is important to note that Home Care is still offered to people that need it and are eligible. The new approach has simply enabled us to ensure we are directing the right support to the right people to optimise the use of our limited resources and more importantly focus on ensuring we are fully listening to what matters to people. During the trial the West Somerset team demonstrated that the wait time for social care reduced; staff are more empowered and able to respond proportionately in a way that supports wellbeing as well as need; paid for care (eg Home Care, residential placement) is directed to those that really need it and reviewed regularly to ensure we are supporting recovery not dependency.

I hope this full response helps ease your concerns about the two issues raised and again I offer my full apologies for the very late nature of this response.

5. Learning Disability Provider Service

From Sean Cox

1. Dimensions, the proposed operator for the outsourced learning disability service, claim they have to make cuts to staffing and possibly close day centres because of a lack of funding. With this in mind, why is the cabinet proposing to only raise a 2% social care levy rather than the full 3% available in 2017/2018 and 2018/2019?
2. Does the cabinet agree that if the full 3% care levy (rather than 2%) were used across both years that it is available for, an extra four million pounds would be available for adult services, and this would ameliorate the need for further measures set out by dimensions in their letter to staff?
3. Numbers of people with learning disabilities are expected to rise by 13% in Somerset by 2020, and go up from 2500 to 11000 by 2030. Given this demographic challenge, is now not the right time to expand the council tax base by using the full social care precept of 3% in 2017/2018 and 2018/2019?

Response from Cllr William Wallace – Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care

First my profound apologies for the length of time this response has taken before being sent to you, the service have taken steps to ensure this does not happen again.

I understand that staff were written to outlining the areas where Discovery felt that changes need to be considered as part of the work that it is doing to ensure it is competitive within the local market. This is a market in which the council is not the only customer as people increasingly choose to commission their own care and support, and if it is to be successful it will need to be offer services that people want at a cost that they can afford. Now that the transfer has been completed I expect that Discovery will enter into a period of consultation in relation to any changes that it is proposing to make.

In your questions you have also asked why the council did not agree a higher Council Tax precept for adult social care. In terms of background it is probably helpful for me to explain that the precept cannot exceed a maximum of 6% over three years. This means that if it was raised by 3% this year we would not be able to raise it by more than a total 3% over the next two years, and that funding would therefore potentially decline in one of both of these years which is something that the Cabinet, while carefully considering the options, wished to avoid. The precept is also for the whole of Adult Social Care and we would therefore not be able to allocate it all to one organisation when the entire sector is experiencing similar financial pressures.

I continue to believe that, now that it has been completed, the transfer to Discovery will result in better quality, progression based, services and outcomes for the people it supports.

Again, my sincere apologies for the delay in this response being sent out to you.

6. Learning Disability Provider Service

From Suzanne Matthews

1. The minutes of the cabinet meeting on 11 July 2016 show that the member for adult social care expected a “small reduction” in cost from outsourcing the learning disability service, predicted to be £4m by the sixth year of the contract. Now that Dimensions have announced the cuts they plan to make to achieve such a reduction, what evidence does the cabinet have that quality can be maintained?
2. Given that the £4m reduction in cost of the learning disability service is apparently responsible for Dimensions’ cuts package which undermines the stated rationale of the transfer, will the cabinet explain why they are not planning to raise the full care precept when this could fill the gap in provision?
3. Consultations with learning disability service users and carers showed they valued continuity of care and were concerned about disruption of caring relationships. Dimensions have already noted a high level of anxiety among staff owing to proposed job losses and changes to working practices, terms and conditions. What evidence does the cabinet have that this will not jeopardise provision for vulnerable adults?

Response from Cllr William Wallace – Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care

First my profound apologies for the length of time this response has taken before being sent to you, the service have taken steps to ensure this does not happen again.

I understand that staff are anxious and we are working with Discovery to ensure that they are as well informed as they can be and that they get the answers to the questions they have asked in order to reduce this as much as possible. Ensuring that people with learning disabilities get a high quality service is the most important thing to both the council and new social enterprise, but in order to achieve this it will need to be sustainable, and we therefore understand the rationale for Discovery indicating the areas in which it wishes to consult on changes in the way that it has. We are working closely with Discovery in order to ensure that the care and support that is provided is not only not jeopardised, but improved.

In your questions you have also asked why the council did not agree a higher Council Tax precept for adult social care. In terms of background it is probably helpful for me to explain that the precept cannot exceed a maximum of 6% over three years. This means that if it was raised by 3% this year we would not be able to raise it by more than a total 3% over the next two years, and that funding would therefore potentially decline in one of both of these years which is something that the Cabinet, while carefully considering the options, wished to avoid. The precept is also for the whole of Adult Social Care and we would therefore not be able to allocate it all to one organisation when the entire sector is experiencing similar financial pressures.

I continue to believe that, now that it has been completed, the transfer to Discovery will result in better quality, progression based, services and outcomes for the people it supports.

Again, my sincere apologies for the delay in this response being sent out to you.

7. Learning Disability Provider Service

From Nigel Behan - Unite

The Unite/ESSU statement (appendix A) on the proposal to transfer 1200 staff to the Dimension s Uk Ltd Group and supplemental:

<http://www.european-services-strategy.org.uk/news/2017/social-enterprise-plans-wage-cuts-redundancies/>

Q1 The existing turnover rate of staff in LDPS is high at about 15% and in the Autumn there were approximately 140 posts vacant.

Children's Services has been rated "inadequate" for 3 years by Ofsted and the service recovery has been blighted by staff turnover and recruitment and retention problems. How does the Cabinet member for Adults, this Council and the Director of Adult Social Services believe the recruitment and retention of staff in LDPS will be improved by proposals to drastically cut the pay, terms and conditions of the staff after outsourcing and transfer to Dimensions UK Ltd.

Q2 Can we please have a list of the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that will be used to monitor the outsourcing contract after staff transfer to Dimensions UK Ltd (which is currently proposed in just 6 week's time)? Where the KPIs are applicable to the In-House Service will they be baselined with the current In-House performance so that we can all see what better, worse or similar performance looks like if the outsource and staff transfer of this vital service to Dimensions UK Ltd proceeds?

Q3 How does the Council think this vital service to a vulnerable group of people (more than "customers") will be safely delivered if the staff are demotivated and demoralised by these cuts to pay, terms and conditions?

Q4 Given there are County Council elections in May and there is a possibility of a change in the Administration will the Council delay any outsource with staff transfer of LDPS to Dimensions UK Ltd so that a post-election review can take place?

Q5. Can the current agreement with Dimensions UK Ltd be set aside or cancelled?

Q6.

a) Will SCC demand a commitment from Dimensions UK Ltd to keep day centres open and have a veto on the proposals to close them and intervene if service users, parents, carers, families demand it?

b) In the light of the the recent proposals from the outsourcing contractor (Dimensions UK Ltd) will you please supply a copy of the updated Risk register and Issues Log?"

Response from Cllr William Wallace – Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care

First my profound apologies for the length of time this response has taken before being sent to you, the service have taken steps to ensure this does not happen again.

You raise a number of key issues which we have debated fully in Council and in public meetings since. However I feel it only right to restate the ambition of the social enterprise which is to improve the outcomes for our service users.

You will know that with increasing numbers of service users turning away from SCC and instead using their personal budgets in other ways – which incidentally is a good thing to have the choice – this means that the LDPS is financially unsustainable.

I know you disagree with the direction we have taken to deal with this circumstance but we are both aligned when we say that it is all about the outcomes.

You will also be aware of the misinformation and inaccuracies that have been published – especially on social media – about the transfer of staff.

I can assure you that as a commissioning body we retain our oversight of engagement and consultation and we have had discussions at the highest level with Dimensions both in Somerset and nationally to ensure that the proper process is followed.

You asked for key performance indicators to be provided and I have sent these electronically to you.

You asked further questions about deferring the contract which due to the time lapsed in sending this response have now been overtaken by events.

I hope you will agree that through our public meetings in Council, in Cabinet and in Scrutiny, we have discussed and answered all questions as they have arisen.

I know you are disappointed at the decision as taken but hope you will continue to work on behalf of all our service users.

Again my apologies for the very late response to your questions.

8. Learning Disability Provider Service

From Paul Kitto

I have worked with the vulnerable people of Somerset for over twenty five years and I and many other colleagues that I work with feel that now we need to speak up to ensure the quality of services are ensured for these vulnerable people part of the process of outsourcing was consultations with service users and their families which showed that in the transfer they wanted a continuity of service with the retention of current experienced and knowledgeable staff.

The Dimensions letter of intent stated that they intend to make an economic, technical or organisational case to allow them to overturn TUPE protections. UNISON asked 2 months ago for the ETO reason; Dimensions have still not provided any evidence of a financial reason.

IN Summery

Numbers of people with learning disabilities are expected to rise by 13% in Somerset by 2020, and go up from 2500 to 11000 by 2030. Given this demographic challenge, is now not the right time to expand the council tax base by using the full social care precept of 3% in 2017/18 and 2018/19?

How can the cabinet justify its proposal to hand over the LD service to Dimensions when they have announced cuts and possible closures specifically in order to reduce costs? Does the cabinet believe ending up with one bidder for the learning disabilities contract shows that there is too little capacity in the provider market for social-enterprise run learning disability provision?

With less than two months to the transfer staff believe that not enough time has been given through consultation to ensure that quality of staff will be retained which was clearly evident and requested from families who have vulnerable people currently receiving our quality service therefore how can the council go against the wishes of the people of their constituency.

Closing Thought

Have Somerset County Council learnt anything - back-office staff in Somerset were outsourced to South West One. This was a disaster and SCC had to take the service back before the end of the contract. The stage is set for another disaster except this time it is not back-office staff or systems but vulnerable service users and their families yes people of Somerset that would be severely affected if the service were to be effective.

Response from Cllr William Wallace – Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care

First my profound apologies for the length of time this response has taken before being sent to you, the service have taken steps to ensure this does not happen again.

May I also thank you for the questions you raised and the commitment you have shown – as a union member, staff and family member. We have listened carefully to all the questions raised and I know that whilst we have differences in this issue, we all in reality want the same thing, the best outcomes possible for our service users.

My formal response to your questions are as follows:

We continue to believe that the establishment of the new social enterprise will result in better quality, progression based, services and outcomes for the people it supports. We understand that staff are anxious and are working with the new social enterprise to ensure that they are as well informed as they can be, and that they get the answers to the questions they have asked in order to reduce this as much as possible. Ensuring that people with learning disabilities get a high quality service is the most important thing to both the council and new social enterprise, but in order to achieve this it will need to be sustainable, and we therefore understand the rationale for the new social enterprise putting forward the proposals for consultation that it has. We are working closely with the new social enterprise in the run up to the transfer in order to ensure that the care and support that is provided is not only not jeopardised, but improved.

In your questions you have also asked why the council did not agree a higher Council Tax precept for adult social care. In terms of background it is probably helpful for me to explain that the precept cannot exceed a maximum of 6% over three years. This means that if it was raised by 3% this year we would not be able to raise it by more than a total 3% over the next two years, and that funding would therefore potentially decline in one of

both of these years which is something that the Cabinet, while carefully considering the options, wished to avoid. The precept is also for the whole of Adult Social Care and we would therefore not be able to allocate it all to one organisation when the entire sector is experiencing similar financial pressures.

You also asked about the procurement and why this resulted in a single bidder in the final stage. This has been a unique procurement in that stakeholders were very clear in their feedback in 2014 that the new organisation needed to be a social enterprise and that they did not wish to see the service “broken up”, which would have resulted in multiple smaller contracts. This inevitably limited the number organisations that were likely to respond. Although the number of organisations involved reduced during the process following on from the initial Pre-Qualification Questionnaire, at each point this was for reasons outside of the control of the Council and not as a result of the way the procurement was undertaken, beyond the contract size and social enterprise requirement.

I continue to believe that now that it has been completed the transfer to Discovery will result in better quality, progression based, services and outcomes for the people it supports.

Again, please accept my full apologies for the lateness of this response and I hope that we can agree to work closely to ensure our service users have the best support possible.

9. Learning Disability Provider Service

Petition and Questions from Ewa Marcinkowska

The subject of the petition is: We staff, service users and their families were promised a quality service with continuity of staff. Only on one set of terms and conditions far staff can we ensure this is achieved. The signatories demand that Learning Disabilities staff are kept on one set of terms and conditions.

Questions:

1. In consultations since 2014 the council has emphasised the need for the learning disability service to be transferred on the basis of care quality, and a paper about the future commissioning of services stated “there are no savings targets associated with this decision”. How can the cabinet justify its proposal to hand over the LD service to Dimensions when they have announced cuts and possible closures specifically in order to reduce costs?

2. Could the cabinet explain which of the cuts to staffing, terms and conditions, and day centre provision outlined in Dimensions’ additional measures letter it believes are conducive to its stated aims for the transferral of learning disability services, namely “sustainable and high quality services” .

Response from Cllr William Wallace – Cabinet Member for Adult Social Car

First my profound apologies for the length of time this response has taken before being sent to you the service have taken steps to ensure this does not happen again.

You argue passionately about the future of the learning disability provider service and I am grateful for your commitment and contribution to our Council over so many years.

I have to say there are elements of your points that I do not agree with but there are others when we are in unison – such as the need for change.

I believe that both in Council and in Cabinet we have had a full and forthright debate about the social enterprise contract however I would make the following points. The subject has been well-aired even if there was disagreement over the outcome.

We continue to believe that the establishment of Discovery will result in better quality, progression based services and outcomes for the people it supports. We understand that staff are anxious and are working with Discovery to ensure that they are as well informed as they can be and that they get the answers to the questions they have asked in order to reduce this as much as possible. Ensuring that people with learning disabilities get a high quality service is the most important thing to both the council and new social enterprise, and we are working closely with the new social enterprise in the run up to the transfer in order to ensure that the care and support that is provided is not only not jeopardised, but improved. For these reasons I do not believe that a deferral of the transfer would have been in the interests of the service, the people who use it and also their families and this is why the transfer went ahead on 1st April 2017.

We all have a part to play in the future of Discovery and I hope that despite our differences I can count on your continued passion and involvement in this key area of our Council.

Again my apologies for the lateness of this response.

10. Learning Disability Provider Service

From Jenny Winchester

1. When the decision was made by Council on 11th July 2016 to award the LDPS contract to the remaining bidder Dimensions, there was a recommendation that any profit made by the SEV would be kept in Somerset.

Can the Council confirm that this recommendation is to be implemented?

If this is not the case can the Council justify to the Somerset tax payer that any profit made by the SEV could potentially be used by the Dimensions group to benefit a non-profitable part of their organisation.

2. In an interview on 10 February, the councillor Wallace stated that no frontline staff would be affected by the transfer of the learning disability service to Dimensions. Can you explain how this can be true when Dimensions have stated in their further measures letters that they predict redundancies, cuts to salaries and to terms and conditions?

3. Turnover rates in the LDS are about 17% per year. Service users and their supporters have repeatedly stated they value continuity of care. What evidence does the cabinet have that planned cuts to terms and conditions will not increase the turnover rate further, hitting quality of care?

4. The LDS relies on committed and skilled staff to deliver the care its users expect. Does the cabinet think that cutting wages to only 10 or 20p above the legal minimum, as outlined by Dimensions, is suitable treatment for these staff?

5. Background provided for the transfer of the LDS service to Dimensions did not suggest that large scale restructuring and changes to terms and conditions would be necessary. Does the cabinet agree that the proposed transfer date of 1 April does not provide sufficient time for the legal consultation requirements and opens SCC to risk from legal challenge?

6. Dimensions propose to cut sick pay to the legal minimum in the LDS service, meaning staff will be more likely to attend work while sick as they would otherwise not receive pay for the first three days of illness. Would the cabinet member want a vulnerable person they knew to be looked after by a sick member of staff and why do they think this is acceptable for others?

Response from Cllr William Wallace – Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care

First my profound apologies for the length of time this response has taken before being sent to you, the service have taken steps to ensure this does not happen again.

The new social enterprise is a separate legal entity within the Dimensions Group. As a not for profit organisation it will not have shareholders and will not pay dividends. However, in order to meet its objective of being financially sustainable, it will aim to make a small surplus. All surpluses will be transferred to reserves, and as a social enterprise with the Social Enterprise Mark, it will be required to apply 50% of those surpluses to social initiatives in Somerset. The remaining reserves will either remain in the new social enterprise to support any working capital required, or be applied to social objects across the not for profit Dimensions group of which it is a member (which are consistent with the social objects of the new social enterprise).

11. Learning Disability Provider Service

From Jeanette Cave

Can the cabinet point to successful and unsuccessful examples of outsourcing of a learning disability service elsewhere and explain how they have learned lessons from these for their attempt to give Somerset's service to Dimensions?

Response from Cllr William Wallace – Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care

First my profound apologies for the length of time this response has taken before being sent to you, the service have taken steps to ensure this does not happen again.

I am grateful you took the time to raise points and issues about our learning disability provider service and hope you would agree that the subject was well debated and discussed even if you did not support the final outcome.

As you would have heard, our director of adults social services Stephen Chandler is very experienced in this area and indeed you referenced him in your question in relation to his former post in Shropshire.

My formal answer to your points is as follows:

In terms of the potential for changes to day services that you make reference to, there will be a review of day services, of which day centres are a part. It will last roughly a year and people who use services and carers will be absolutely central to it. We can't pre-empt the outcome of that review, nor rule anything out, but the aim is to make any changes that are needed so that services are better suited to what people want and help them to achieve their outcomes. The council has always been clear that we expected that services would need to change over time in the same way that they always have, and this is as much the case for day services as any other service.

Somerset County Council is unique in having retained a large in-house learning disability service for much longer than other local authorities. The majority of other councils transferred services to other providers over a decade ago, with a wide range of arrangements existing across the country. However, the approach that we have taken with the creation of Discovery is not directly comparable other transfers as the approach of procuring an organisation to create a new social enterprise has not been undertaken at this scale before. The reason we took this approach was that while a standard tender approach was rejected by stakeholders, there were also significant risks with creating a brand new independent organisation. We strongly believe that the approach we have taken both addresses the concerns of stakeholders while ensuring that Discovery is supported by an experienced and respected organisation in the sector.

I continue to believe that, now that it has been completed, the transfer to Discovery will result in better quality, progression based, services and outcomes for the people it supports.

Again I am grateful for your input into the debate and apologies once again for the very late response to your questions.

12. Learning Disability Provider Service

From Nick Batho

I have been involved in the evolution of in house LD Services into a Social Enterprise from the beginning. Until very recently it seemed as though we were heading in the right direction and that everything was in place to deliver a bright future for Customers, for their families and for the staff. All of a sudden our plans are starting to unravel. I have a lot of sympathy with what Unison are saying. It was never intended that staff should take a pay cut or see a worsening of their non salary benefits and it was certainly never in our plans that staff unable to accept new terms and conditions should be forced to leave the service, causing disruption to those they support. Staff who are transferring thought they would be protected by TUPE but it seems they were wrong.

Equally I can see where Dimensions are coming from. When we evaluated their bid we were impressed by their plans to improve the lives of adults with LD. But in order to put them into practice, to "make a difference" as Dimensions would put it, they need to deliver

a sustainable service for the long term and now they are saying the only way they can do that in the current financial climate is to streamline the cost of the workforce.

I'm sure you would agree that it is unacceptable for SCC to force an extremely loyal and very low paid workforce to accept a pay cut. It is equally unacceptable to disrupt the lives of vulnerable Customers who value continuity of care above everything else. I wonder if Councillors would have supported the formation of a Social Enterprise if they had been told of these consequences at the time the votes were cast.

So Mr Chairman can I urge you and your colleagues, as Commissioners of the Learning Disability Service and current employers of transferring staff, to address this issue with the utmost urgency? We cannot allow the Social Enterprise to start life with a disillusioned workforce, worried Customers and families and the potential for a very damaging dispute over Terms and Conditions.

What is needed is immediate consultation between all parties involved, including SCC, and a willingness by yourselves to relieve the financial pressure, so that the painful measures I have just identified, which will have such an adverse effect on staff and Customers alike, are no longer necessary.

Response from Cllr William Wallace – Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care

First my profound apologies for the length of time this response has taken before being sent to you, the service have taken steps to ensure this does not happen again.

I fully appreciate your involvement from the very outset of our plans in relation to the social enterprise and again thank you for your commitment to the service users you represent so whole-heartedly.

I do thank you for your comments and question. We do recognise the importance of balancing the transformation of services but also maintaining and delivering a financially sustainable service. We, like you, understand the value of our staff and their critical role in supporting customers and carers and will do all we can to ensure all the necessary consultation takes place between all parties.

I do understand the strong feelings expressed by our staff and agree with you that we need to work closely with Dimensions to ensure that we can bring staff with us on a journey that I know you support. There has been a lot said, some of it inaccurate, but there is no doubt that staff are hard-working, committed, and willing to do all they can for the good of our service users. That is why I am confident we can find a way forward that will be of benefit to those who need our support the most.

My apologies again for the late response and I look forward to seeing you again in the near future.

13. Stroke Services

From Amanda Broom

I would like to ask to see the impact statements and reports which Cllr Wallace has seen - I believe these have been used as evidence in the decision to remove the funding for the Stroke Association. I would like to see the proof that there is no longer a need for this service in Somerset.

Response from Cllr William Wallace – Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care

First my profound apologies for the length of time this response has taken before being sent to you, the service have taken steps to ensure this does not happen again.

I am happy to make the Impact Assessments produced by both SCC and the CCG available and indeed we shared these with the Stroke Association in early January.

You will be aware that since this service began, a range of other services that provide similar support to wider groups have become available via investment in community support options. These include health coaches, health connectors, village agents, community hubs, carers services and Carers Voice groups. In addition there are numerous Stroke Clubs which will continue and the Early Supported Discharge approach with Stroke is changing the way stroke sufferers are supported. Existing stroke support groups and volunteers will still be supported and the Clinical Commissioning Group are working with the Stroke Association to ensure a smooth transition for any people currently receiving individual services.

I hope this fully answers your question and again I do apologise for the delay in sending this response.

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APPENDIX C

Meeting of Somerset County Council held in the Council Chamber, Shire Hall, Taunton on Wednesday 15 February 2017 at 10.00am.

Written responses to questions to Cabinet Members

The following questions were asked of the Cabinet Members during the County Council meeting, who undertook to give written responses:

Written questions:

1. Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership

From Cllr Alan Dimmick

1. Somerset County Council (SCC) is the accountable body for the Heart of The South West (HotSW) Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). In January 2017 announcement made of a substantial pay award (26%) amounting to £25,000:00 (or there about) to the CEO of the HotSW LEP. Will the leader agree that this is an example of an unelected body having (almost) unlimited access to public funds, and that despite being the accountable body SCC being powerless to prevent this excess. It is noted that the Leader has publicly condemned this excess. Question 1- With the continued austerity measures being imposed on this Council by central government, what measures (if any) will be put in place to prevent future repeats of this nature.

2. SCC paid £10,243:00 on agency cost (12 month total to July 2016) to the HotSW, what is the total cost to SCC (their share of the partnership) amount to by the end of this financial year. Is it anticipated that this cost will increase in the 1017/18 financial year, if so by how much?

3. The HotSW is engaged in negotiations with funding agreements for Growth Deal 3. Question 3- What is the total money (to date) has been spent on Growth Deals 1 &2. What is the number of full time permanent jobs created? Have any lessons been learned?

4. As the accountable body for the HotSW, is the SCC leadership satisfied with the performance (so far) of the HotSw LEP.

Response from Cllr John Osman – Leader of the Council

With regard to the pay increase my position on it has been absolutely clear – I personally do not support it. The LEP Board however determines these things and we have a say but not a control. That is how LEPs work up and down the country.

On your question about the accountable body status. SCC will on occasion in its capacity as accountable body supporting the LEP pay sums to staffing agencies for tasks commissioned by the LEP. All of this is financed from the LEP's resources. SCC, as expected by Government, makes an annual contribution to the LEP budget - in 2016/17 this contribution was £20,000.00, which amounts to approximately 1.25% of the LEP's annual income. Other major sources are; Government Grant £500,000 (31%), Growth Deal (top slice) £800,000 (50%), Interest on Cash Balances £100,000 (6%) with the remainder similar contributions to SCC's from partner authorities. We understand that the LEP currently has no plans to take on additional agency staff in 2017/18 but this will be dependent on any emerging initiatives.

You ask about the growth deal programme. The Growth Deal programme for the Heart of the South West area started in April 2015. In 2015/16 £24.79m of Growth Deal funds received from Government were invested in projects and in 2016/17 a further £45.08m is forecast to be spent by the end of the financial year; a cumulative total of £69.87m.

Examples of Somerset projects benefitting from this include the Somerset energy innovation centre, roundabout improvements at Huntworth near Bridgwater and infrastructure at Yeovil College and Taunton and Bridgwater sites of BAT College.

In total £57.5m is awarded to Somerset over the period to 2020/21 through Growth Deals 1 and 2

The target for permanent FTE jobs created or safeguarded through the LEP's Growth Deal programme is 20,399 between 2015 and 2025; as this is early in the life of the programme this data will be collected through subsequent monitoring as the outcomes of investments are secured.

As the LEP's accountable body SCC is participating in the national LEP network Peer Review programme. Feedback is expected later in February. We have worked with the LEP to act on the feedback received from various audit processes, conducted through SWAP and the Government's direct monitoring as well as constantly reviewing our own internal processes.

On performance: The LEP has been effective in securing resources on behalf of SCC and our partners to invest in economic growth and infrastructure in Somerset and the wider Heart of the South West area.

SCC is a key partner in the LEP; equally we look to challenge the LEP in its work so that it makes the best possible cases to Government about the investment needs of the Heart of the South West and manages the funds it receives so that Somerset businesses and communities benefit as a result.

2. Future Funding for Somerset County Council

From Cllr Sam Crabb

Did you get a response to the letter you wrote to the Prime Minister at the end of September 2016?

If yes could you share that reply with us please?

Was it upon the Prime Minister's advice that your cabinet decided to go for a 2% increase this April relating to Social Services costs?

As a reminder of the letter that you made public a copy is given below.

29th September 2016

Dear Prime Minister,

Future Funding for Somerset County Council.

I write to you not only as Leader of Somerset County Council, but also as a life-long Somerset resident that cares passionately about its residents, communities and businesses.

I ask that your Government takes a new approach to Local Government finance and stop the austerity plans that will see all Central Government grants to Councils cease by 2020.

Historically Somerset has been chronically underfunded and did not receive its fair share of either grant or education funding. Unfortunately, no previous Government was brave enough to redress the inequity.

To compound the underfunding over the last six years, which has seen £100m removed from our budgets, we also face the following further challenges:

- Average age of our County's retired population has risen significantly and continues to rise.
- Demand for our adults and children's services has vastly increased.
- Minimal reserves mean this Council is finding it increasingly more difficult to balance its budget.

The Council, its Councillors, officers and its partners have worked hard to make efficiencies, absorb reductions, restructure our services and try to provide good quality services.

Despite this I am sorry to say if changes are not immediately made to the funding system, the viability of our critical services, those helping some of the most vulnerable people in our society including Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care, will be under grave threat.

Somerset is not alone, the financial difficulties we face, all other upper tier Councils face. This is therefore a national issue.

I therefore call for Central Government to:

1. Make no further reductions to Local Government in the Autumn Statement.
2. Immediately stop the planned Local Government grant funding reductions.
3. Confirm the amount of Business Rates that will be retained by all Councils in 2020.

This simple proposal will give Councils a period of stability, allow us to plan our financial positions, stop the reductions in our service and provide the critical services to these vulnerable residents that truly need them.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,
Cllr John Osman
Leader of Somerset County Council

Response from Cllr John Osman – Leader of the Council

Members will recall I wrote to the prime minister to explain the difficult financial position the county council was in.

The letter was passed to Marcus Jones minister for local government by the prime minister.

As members have heard I am due to

- 1) meet with Marcus Jones on 1st March*
- 2 meet with sec of state on 23 Feb*

I will keep you updated.

3. Household Waste Recycling Centres – Opening Times

From Cllr Ross Henley

When will this council and the waste partnership re introduce sunday afternoon opening and re open on the other two days of closure each week at chard and poole hwrc . This is in light of already seven day opening at priorswood hwrc .

Response from Cllr David Hall – Cabinet Member for Business, Inward Investment and Policy

This is a matter for the Somerset Waste Partnership not this council however I understand that the Somerset Waste Partnership are planning to review Recycling Centre provision as part of a Core Services Contract Review commencing in 2018. However expectations will need to be balanced around the on-going financial pressure of the County Council.

4. Universal Services / OFSTED Inspection / Support Services to Schools

From Cllr Jane Lock

1. What Universal Services for children are available in Somerset and how has this changed over the last 4 years?
2. Will Councillor Nicholson share with Council the initial findings of the recent OFSTED inspection of Safeguarding?
3. Can Councillor Nicholson inform Council which support services to schools will now be charged for and the levels of increase for those already charged for?

Response from Cllr Frances Nicholson – Cabinet Member for Children and Families

The NHS, and the Council both provide a wide range of Universal Services for children. One of the largest in terms of budget and most important in terms of improving outcomes for all children is of course education. I am pleased to report that over the last 4 years we have moved from 63% of schools rated as “good” or better. This year as we currently stand 95% are “good” or better. Key Stage 1 is on an upward trend, Key Stage 2 for the first time ahead of national averages and in the last rating the 4th most improved Local Authority area for GCSE. So in terms of universal services for our schoolchildren we have a very positive story and I know that all political parties will applaud our staff, teachers, and our schools who are achieving in this area.

There has been no recent OFSTED inspection of Safeguarding. I assume the Opposition leader is referring to the recent Monitoring Visit of the Safeguarding Teams. The report is not yet published and it would therefore be inappropriate for me to comment.

My annual report on today’s agenda refers to the previous Monitoring Visit and a letter from the Edward Timpson Minister of State; both refer to the substantial progress being made to improve children’s services.

Moving on to charges for Support Services for Education. Paid for professional, advisory and support services are offered by the SSE which is a commercially traded service. All schools – whether Academy or Maintained - receive direct funding to purchase support services. They can source such support from a variety of sources including private firms as well as SSE. That so many choose to spend this money with SSE underlines the quality of services offered and their value for money. In fact, every single school in Somerset buys at least one service package from SSE.

The price increases proposed for the 2017-18 academic year are modest. There are no new charges for services not previously charged for. The proposed price increase for services already charged for is 3% for most services, with some services below this and a limited number at 5-6%. The rationale for price increases include the need to cover costs and at the same time to remain competitive. I must stress again schools are under no obligation to purchase services from SSE.

5. Slinky Bus

From Cllr Ross Henley

Why does this council discourage people from registering for the slinky bus if they have any access to a car in west buckland and from using the slinky bus service to wellington . This council withdrew the bus service from this route and promoted the slinky bus as the alternative service on the same route . The previous stand alone bus service did not stop car owners from getting on the bus . Shouldnt we be encouraging rather than discouraging people to use public transport to cut congestion and emmissions particularly on a route from west buckland to wellington which our same highways dept is correctly looking at measures to ease traffic problems.

Response from Cllr David Fothergill – Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport

The main reason for disqualifying people who have access to a vehicle from using the Slinky bus is so that residents who do not have any means to get about (such as no access to a car) are prioritised for this service.

The Slinky only generally operates two 16 seater mini-buses per district, and without this regulation it could further isolate those who need it most by being unavailable when they need it, as the bus is booked on a first come first served basis. It is vitally important that this service continues to provide a means of access to basic services for those who have no alternative, rather than being used by people who can easily drive to access those services.

6. Henlade Park and Ride

From Cllr Ross Henley

After many months of promises when is work actually going to start to tidy up the dreadful scruffy state of the park and ride at henlade in my division and when will we ever see toilet facilities introduced for customers on site.

Response from Cllr David Fothergill – Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport

We will be looking to seek quotes for an initial tidy up of the site and a regular maintenance schedule shortly, with a view to having arrangements in place early in the new financial year.

The Council is currently exploring options and opportunities for enabling some appropriate commercial use of the park and ride sites which would also provide toilet facilities. This is at an early stage of planning and discussion and a further update and timescale can be provided once there is a firm proposal.

I am sure that the local member will be pleased that we awarded a CCTV contract for Taunton Gateway Park and Ride site, which also includes the provision of updated equipment at Silk Mills. This will support the legal measures we have already taken to reduce the threat of illegal traveller encampments on these sites and provide increased security for customers.

7. Stroke Services

From Cllr Jill Shortland

Could Cllr Wallace please present the impact statements and reports that led to the decision to remove funding to the Stroke Association and explain why this service is no longer required across Somerset? Could he further explain how Carers and stroke survivors are to get access to the same service and prevent them being a burden on other health services.

Response from Cllr William Wallace – Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care

First my profound apologies for the length of time this response has taken before being sent to you, the service have taken steps to ensure this does not happen again.

As we have since discussed, I am happy to make the Impact Assessments produced by both SCC and the CCG available and indeed we shared these with the Stroke Association in early January.

As you were aware, a member of the public asked a very similar question to yours and I have taken the liberty of copying you in to that response as it deals with the second half of your question. – as follows:

You will be aware that since this service began, a range of other services that provide similar support to wider groups have become available via investment in community support options. These include health coaches, health connectors, village agents, community hubs, carers services and Carers Voice groups. In addition there are numerous Stroke Clubs which will continue and the Early Supported Discharge approach with Stroke is changing the way stroke sufferers are supported. Existing stroke support groups and volunteers will still be supported and the Clinical Commissioning Group are working with the Stroke Association to ensure a smooth transition for any people currently receiving individual services.

I hope this fully answers your question and again I do apologise for the delay in sending this response.

8. Learning Disability Provider Service

From Cllr Mike Rigby

The administration, in a fit of ideological zeal, is determined to outsource as many of the council's functions as possible. Here, with the Dimensions UK Ltd contract, we now find that instead of the cuddly-sounding social enterprise, we have the same old private contractor types, looking to carve a tasty profit out of the public purse. All those promises to service users, families and staff now lie in tatters. Having failed to heed the warning that finding only one bidder suggested that there is no functioning market in this service, the administration finds itself firmly over a barrel. You are being told "Accept the redundancies and pay cuts that we propose or we walk leaving you with egg on your faces." Is it not time to accept that your ideological desire to outsource, outstrips your ability to manage contracts of this type? Is it not time to accept the original verdict of the service users and their families that they want the service to remain in-house?

Response from Cllr William Wallace – Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care

First my profound apologies for the length of time this response has taken before being sent to you, the service have taken steps to ensure this does not happen again.

Having said that, my formal written response to your questions is largely that I gave in the Council Chamber in February.

Your question claimed that the decision we have taken in relation to our learning disability provider service was driven by profit, dogma and that our staff could not manage the contract. You concluded that in your view the service should remain in-house.

As I made clear in Council, Dimensions is not a private company and are therefore not driven by making a profit. They are a social enterprise and I repeat my invitation to you to meet you and our Director of Adult Social Services to explain in detail the contract and its implications.

I do not believe this is a matter of ideology and has been stated in public on a number of occasions, I firmly believe this contract offers the best outcomes for our residents and service users.

Our learning disability service users are voting with their feet and using their personal budgets in other areas. This is a good thing but it does make our services look extremely expensive when compared to national, regional and even local benchmark – in some cases 28% more expensive and in my and others' judgements this is unsustainable.

The contract is now in place so we are unable to defer the decision. However, I am sure that residents wish us to make the right decisions even if these are at times difficult. I am confident that the staff involved throughout this process are adequately-skilled in this area and I would defend them from unfair attacks such as yours in relation to their abilities.

Finally, the contract is in place and I hope you will continue to work with staff and politicians of all colours to ensure we have the best possible provision in place for our service users.

Again, my sincere apologies for the delay in this response being sent out to you.

9. Learning Disability Provider Service

From Cllr Jane Lock

1 The intention of Dimensions UK Ltd in restructuring before transfer is clearly to ensure the taxpayer pays for that restructure and that the risk also remain in the taxpayers liability and expense, protecting the profit of the private company. Was this expected and does Councillor Wallace think it is fair and when did he become aware of Dimensions UK Ltd intention to change the working conditions of the 1200 Somerset County Council employees transferring?

2. As the "hand holding" (officers comment) of Dimensions UK Ltd progressed some months past the original date for signing the contract, and as the date for the County Council Elections came closer, surely that was the time to reconsider signing a contract with a single bidder as I consistently requested. Staff, service users, their

carers and families and councillors were at best misled over the TUPE arrangements. Will Councillor Wallace now accept that the transfer must be deferred until after May 5th to give any new Administration the opportunity to consider options available to them?

3 Will Councillor Wallace confirm that the 8 Day Centres for LD services will remain open after any transfer to Dimensions UK Ltd?

4. After the embarrassing reversal of the decision to award the REablement contract due to further "due diligence" checks and the current unsatisfactory position with Dimensions UK Ltd would Councillor Wallace assure Council that this Authority and in particular Adult Social Care has the robustness and skills to negotiate contracts on the taxpayers behalf?

Response from Cllr William Wallace – Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care

First my profound apologies for the length of time this response has taken before being sent to you, the service have taken steps to ensure this does not happen again.

Having said that, my formal written response to your questions is largely that I gave in the Council Chamber in February.

You asked a number of questions in relation to Dimensions.

- 1) About an impending restructure and profit-taking.*
- 2) Deferral of the contract*
- 3) Day Centres*
- 4) Robustness of Dimensions in light of recent reablement decision.*

As I made clear in Council, Dimensions is not a private company and are therefore not driven by making a profit. They are a social enterprise and I repeat my invitation to you to meet you and our Director of Adult Social Services to explain in detail the contract and its implications.

I do not believe this is a matter of ideology and has been stated in public on a number of occasions, I firmly believe this contract offers the best outcomes for our residents and service users. This includes a full review of existing of day centre provision.

Our learning disability service users are voting with their feet and using their personal budgets in other areas. This is a good thing but it does make our services look extremely expensive when compared to national, regional and even local benchmark – in some cases 28% more expensive and in my and others' judgements this is unsustainable.

The contract is now in place so we are unable to defer the decision. When looking at reablement, let me be clear the decision to abandon the award of the contract relates to the application of both a robust procurement process as well as new and unavailable information coming to the attention of the various council teams. I am sure that residents wish us to make the right decisions even if these are at times difficult. I am confident that the staff involved have been robust and adequately-skilled in this area.

Again, my sincere apologies for the delay in this response being sent out to you.

Questions asked at Full Council:

1. Cllr David Fothergill to provide Cllr Ross Henley with details of the planning application for the M5 Junction 25 improvements

Response from Cllr David Fothergill – Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport

Officers provided a written response on behalf of Cllr Fothergill.

2. Cllr Frances Nicholson to provide Cllr John Parham with an update on the current situation regarding the creation of multi-academy trusts

Response from Cllr Frances Nicholson – Cabinet Member for Children and Families

There is no moratorium on schools becoming academies or being part of a MAT. This remains a key strand of the Government's policy. However schools who are good or better can choose whether they become an academy or not or whether they join a MAT. Whitstone is under no pressure at all to do anything other than remaining a good school as recently determined in their Ofsted inspection.

The Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) approves those schools who wish to become an academy having been advised by the Headteacher Board who support her role. The RSC also approves the formation of MATs.

3. Cllr John Osman to provide Cllr Terry Napper with an update on the progress of the Village Green application for Tor Leisure, Glastonbury

Response from Cllr John Osman – Leader of the Council

At the last full Council meeting you requested an update on the progress of the Town and Village Green application for Tor Leisure in Glastonbury. The Rights of Way Service aim to determine one Town or Village Green application per year alongside modification applications for the Definitive Map. There are currently four applications ahead of this one in the queue, one of which is currently the subject of a non-statutory public inquiry and should be determined later this year. On this basis It is likely to be at least three years before the Glastonbury application makes it to the top of the queue.

Report of the Monitoring Officer – Constitutional issues and appointments

Committee Chairman: Cllr Nigel Woolcombe-Adams - Chairman of Constitution
Constitution Committee: Cllr Alan Gloak - Chairman of the Standards Committee; Cllr
Harvey Siggs - Cabinet Member for Resources (in relation to the Scheme of Members'
Allowances

Division and Local Member: N/A

Lead Officer & Author: Julian Gale - Strategic Manager – Governance & Risk and
Monitoring Officer

Contact Details: 01823 359047

1. Summary

1.1 This composite report brings forward recommendations :

- (a) From the Standards and Constitution Committees for a proposed amalgamation of these Committees into a single Constitution and Standards Committee. These recommendations are for the Council to note and refer for consideration and decision by the new Council in May 2017;
- (b) From the Standards Committee in relation to code of conduct training for members of the new Council;
- (c) For amendments to the appointment of a Deputy Section 151 Officer following changes with the Finance and Property service,

The report also brings forward a brief report on progress with the review of the Members' Allowances Scheme being undertaken by the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel.

2. Recommendations

2.1 **Council is RECOMMENDED to:**

- (1) Note the recommendations from the Standards and Constitution Committees for the proposed amalgamation of the two Committees to form a single Constitution and Standards Committee and to refer them to the new Council for consideration in May 2017 – paragraphs 3.1.4(2) and 3.1.5 refer.**
- (2) Agree that all members are requested to undertake the Code of Conduct training being provided as part of the induction of the new Council and that all Group Leaders are asked to encourage their members to do so – section 3.2 refers.**
- (3) Appoint Martin Gerrish and Martin Young, Strategic Managers in Finance as Deputy Section 151 Officers in accordance with section 3.3 of this report.**

- (4) Note the progress with the review of the Scheme of Members' Allowances which will lead to the recommendation of the adoption of a revised Scheme to Council in July 2017 – section 3.4 of the report and Appendix A refers.**

3. Background

3.1 Proposed amalgamation of the Constitution and Standards Committees

3.1.1 As part of the current review of the Constitution, the Standards Committee has reviewed the Council's standards arrangements and in particular the continuing need for a stand-alone Standards Committee. Since 2011 and the change in the relevant legislation, the Council has retained a separate Standards Committee even though it is no longer required to do so. The Committee has continued to include co-opted non-voting members and its role has remained unchanged advising the Monitoring Officer on process matters in relation to member conduct and complaints. The elected members of the Committee also comprise the membership of Hearing Panels held on an 'as and when' required basis to consider possible breaches of the Code of Conduct. The Council has long had reservations about the current legislation applied to member conduct but there is no sign of any national review of the provisions.

3.1.2 The legal position can be summarised as follows:

- As stated above there is now no legal requirement for the Council to have a Standards Committee. However, all councils retain the ability to continue to appoint a Standards Committee as an 'ordinary' committee of the council. Any such committee must now be chaired by an elected member and co-opted members cannot have a vote if it is a decision-making Committee of the Council. Also the elected membership of the Committee is required to represent the political balance of the Council unless all councillors agree otherwise. The Council decided following the legislation to retain a Standards Committee, to include co-opted members (non-voting) as part of the Committee's membership, to waive the requirement for political balance of the elected membership, and to allow the Committee to appoint its own Chairman.
- The Council is required to appoint at least one Independent Person to advise the Monitoring Officer on complaints made against members. The Council has appointed an Independent Person and Deputy Independent Person to cover this requirement.

3.1.3 The Committee considered a commentary on our arrangements:

- Members agreed that retaining the Committee after the change in the legislation had been valuable to help the Monitoring Officer put in place appropriate processes and procedures in relation to standards of conduct and member complaints. Retaining co-opted members was considered appropriate to bring a degree of balance to the political membership of the

Committee even though legally their role is now restricted to a non-voting capacity.

- Now that well established processes and procedures for dealing with complaints are in place, the Committee's formal business has reduced significantly leading to infrequent meetings and the self-examination of whether retaining a stand-alone Standards Committee can continue to be justified. In the event that the Council decides not to retain a separate Standards Committee, the Monitoring Officer will need to have access to a group of members to review processes and procedures as and when required on behalf of the Council.
- The Committee accepted that irrespective of whether the Council retains a Standards Committee, the Monitoring Officer will continue to have access a group of elected members to form a Hearing Panel as and when required.
- The Committee agreed that the Independent Person and Deputy Independent Person appointed by the Council have been valuable to the Monitoring Officer when handling complaints against members and during the Hearing Panel processes. In addition they have regularly attended meetings of the Standards Committee. Given the legal status of these appointments, these must be retained irrespective of whether the Council retains a separate Standards Committee.
- The Committee were aware that meetings incur costs and therefore value for money is a key consideration when reviewing and changing structures. The aim must be to streamline our arrangements as far as is possible so as to achieve the best possible value for money but without compromising business need.

3.1.4 Options for the future:

(1) Leave the current arrangements unchanged:

The Committee concluded that maintaining a separate Standards Committee is not a viable option into the future as there is and will be insufficient business to be dealt with. However, for the reasons outlined above, the Monitoring Officer needs to continue to have access to a group of elected members for the reasons outlined.

(2) Amalgamate the Standards Committee with another Committee

This has been a common approach in other County Councils whose arrangements have been researched. In many cases member conduct and standards have been amalgamated with the Audit Committee function since the changes imposed in 2012. Less common has been amalgamation with another governance or constitution committee.

Having considered the options the Standards Committee's preferred option is still for the new Council to establish a single Governance & Standards Committee. This could have responsibility for:

- Standards of conduct by members – both the policy **and** to provide the membership of a Hearing Panel if required
- The Council's Constitutional arrangements in relation to governance and standards and to include including decision making, scrutiny, member and officer conduct, public meeting arrangements and various supporting protocols setting out procedures and expected / required behaviours.

The Committee considered that:

- Political proportionality requirements should not be applied to the elected membership of the new Committee so enabling all political groups to have equal representation as per the current Standards Committee
- The current non-voting co-opted members of the Standards Committee should be included within the membership of the new Committee;
- That the Chairman should be appointed by the Committee rather than the Council as is the case with the existing Standards Committee.

This option would:

- Ensure sufficient business for a single committee meeting 3 to 4 times a year and with the ability to be supported effectively by the Monitoring Officer, the County Solicitor and the Community Governance Team. In support of bringing the two committees together into one, the Committee noted that the Constitution Committee has also been subject to cancelled meetings over a period of time as a result of limited business.
- Bring together all key governance arrangements and conduct provisions within a single committee.
- Gives scope to involve co-opted members in a wider role offering independent advice on all relevant aspects of the Council's constitutional arrangements. This would bring an independent voice to support the aim to maximise the transparency of the Council's arrangements and support the wider public understanding of how the Council works.
- Provide consistency of membership between the Committee and hearing panels.
- Be cost effective – with a reduction in costs.

The above is the basis for the Committee's recommendations to the new Council for consideration in May 2017.

This was felt to be a preferred option to adding the functions of the standards committee and potentially the Constitution Committee to the functions of the Audit Committee. The latter is one of the Council's main committees and already has an expansive remit and busy meetings schedule ensuring that the Council operates within a framework of robust governance, risk management and control. The fear is that adding additional functions would potentially compromise the work of that Committee and the new functions would be lost

within the wide remit. It would also be difficult to include the Standards Committee's wishes in respect of the Committee membership and arrangements.

3.1.5 The Constitution Committee has also considered this issue on the back of the recommendation from the Standards Committee for a merger of the two Committees. By way of background we face a similar business situation with the Constitution Committee. Thanks to the work of this Committee, the Council has well-established constitutional arrangements in place and this has meant a significant reduction in the business of the Committee over the last 18 months. The Committee endorsed the proposed amalgamation of the two committees to create a single Governance and Standards Committee and in accord with the recommendations of the Standards Committee. The Committee was prepared to support the proposal for political proportionality to be applied to the elected membership of the single Committee on the basis that where a decision fails to achieve unanimous agreement at a meeting of the Committee then it should be a requirement for that decision to be referred to Full Council for consideration and approval.

3.2 **Code of Conduct training for members**

3.2.1 The Standards Committee reviewed the Code of Conduct training plans being prepared for the new Council. The Committee is strongly of the view that all members should attend this training early in the quadrennium reflecting the continuing importance of maintaining high standards of conduct by elected members. The recommendation to Council set out in para 2.1(2) reflects the fact that attending such training is not a legal requirement.

3.3 **Appointment of Deputy Section 151 Officers**

3.3.1 The Director of Finance and Performance has restructured his finance teams, reducing the number of strategic managers by two, and has taken steps to meet MTFP savings in his service areas. As a result he needs the flexibility to have two deputies to cover various regular meetings and to cover in his absence. The Director also holds the statutory role of Section 151 Officer and Council needs to formally approve the appointment of deputies who will undertake the statutory role in his absence. His deputies will be Martin Gerrish and Martin Young. Appendix E of the current Officer Scheme of Delegation refers to officers authorised to substitute for a Director. This section needs to be amended as below to reflect the change in officers as a result of the restructure.

3.3.2 Extract from the Officer Scheme of Delegation

Finance and Performance Director

In the event that the post-holder is unavailable or unable for any reason to exercise any and all powers given to this post, then the following officer(s) are authorised to exercise any and all such powers on behalf of the post-holder relating to any relevant legislation, Council policy framework and business needs:

Martin Gerrish – Strategic Manager, Governance, ECI and Corporate Services
Martin Young – Strategic Manager, Adults and Children's Services

Together with the following managers in respect of their areas of service responsibility:

Strategic Manager - County Solicitor (Honor Clarke)

Strategic Manager – Pensions Management (Stephen Morton)

Strategic Manager - Governance and Risk (Julian Gale)

Strategic Manager – Performance (Emma Plummer)

Section 151 Officer (of the local Government Act 1972) (Kevin Nacey)

Council appointed the Finance and Performance Director (Kevin Nacey) as the Council's Section 151 Officer. In the event that he is unavailable or unable for any reason to exercise any and all powers given to him as Section 151 Officer (Chief Finance Officer) pursuant to any legal provision or authority or under the Constitution of Somerset County Council, the Strategic Managers in Finance (Martin Gerrish and Martin Young) are authorised to exercise any and all such powers on his behalf.

3.4 **Review of the Scheme of Members Allowances**

- 3.4.1 Members will be aware of the review of the Scheme of Members' Allowances being undertaken by the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel. Attached as Appendix A is a progress report of the review to be noted by the Council.

4. **Implications**

4.1 **Legal & Risk:**

As set out in the report.

- 4.2 **Financial, equalities, sustainability and community safety implications:** If the recommendation to amalgamate the Constitution and Standards Committees is agreed by the new Council it will be likely that there will be some cost savings as a result of reduced Special Responsibility Allowance payments. There are no direct equalities implications arising from any of the proposals in this report. There are also no sustainability or community safety implications.

5. **Background papers**

- 5.1 None

Note: For sight of individual background papers please contact the report author

County Council

- 26 April 2017

Report of the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel

Cabinet Member: Cllr H Siggs - Cabinet Member for Resources (in relation to Members' Allowances)

Lead Officer and Author: Julian Gale - Strategic Manager - Governance & Risk and Monitoring Officer

Contact Details: 01823 359047

1. Summary

- 1.1. This report updates the Council on progress with the fundamental review of the Scheme of Members' Allowances which will lead to a new Scheme being recommended to Council for approval following the 2017 elections. The principles and guidelines for a fundamental review have been introduced to the Council in previous reports including to the November 2016 Full Council meeting.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. Council is recommended to note this report.

3. Background**3.1 Report of the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel (JIRP)**

- 3.1 The fundamental review of the Members' Allowances Scheme previously reported to the Council is progressing well, and the Panel is on target to bring a revised Scheme of Members' Allowances to Council for approval in July 2017.
- 3.2 The Panel's approach is to provide reports or recommendations that are 'evidence-based' and to that end it has been gathering evidence in support of its work on the Schemes. It is vital that any recommendations that it makes take into account a range of evidence including views gathered from members of the Council as well as benchmarking information and best practice in the sector.
- 3.3 Members will be aware of the survey issued to all members in December gathering some general views on the Members' Allowances Scheme. This resulted in an unprecedented level of response with 44 responses from the 55 members. This level of response provides a statistically acceptable level of interpretation and a level of confidence for the conclusions that can be drawn from the information gathered.
- 3.4 The questionnaire has been followed by a series of informal Panel interviews with 16 members covering all Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) bandings and including some members who do not receive a SRA. These short sessions allowed the Panel to reach a level of detail not achievable through a general questionnaire. The Panel has asked me to

pass on its sincere thanks and gratitude to all members who have participated in the questionnaire and the interviews which combined have resulted in a level of response (and evidence) which is unprecedented locally and possibly even nationally. This information will be very useful in informing the Panel's recommendations to the new Council.

- 3.5 At this stage in its work the Panel is not in a position to bring forward any recommendations but it is confident that it will be able to bring forward a revised Scheme for consideration at the July 2017 Council meeting as planned. This target date gives the Panel time to consider any changes made by the new Council to the democratic arrangements in May 2017.

4. Implications

- 4.1. Legal: It is a legal requirement for the Council to appoint a Remuneration Panel and to consider its advice before agreeing a Members' Allowances Scheme or amendments to a Scheme.
- 4.2. Impact Assessment: The Council's duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 is to have "due regard" to the matters set out in relation to equalities when considering and making decisions on the provision of services. There are no such decisions proposed in this report. There are no direct impacts on sustainability, health and safety, or community safety as a result of this report.
- 4.3. Financial: No impact
- 4.4. HR: No impact.

5. Background papers

- 5.1. None.

Somerset County Council

County Council

- 26 April 2017

Report of the HR Policy Committee

Chairman: Cllr Anna Groskop - Cabinet Member for HR, Health and Transformation

Division and Local Member: All

Lead Officer: Chris Squire - HR Director

Author: Jamie Jackson - Governance Manager, Scrutiny

Contact Details: 01823 355032 jajackson@somerset.gov.uk

1. Summary

- 1.1. This report covers the meeting of the Committee on 13 March 2017 which considered one item of business – the draft Pay Policy Statement for 2017/18.
- 1.2. Section 38(1) of the Localism Act 2011 requires English and Welsh local authorities to produce a PPS for each financial year which must be approved formally by Full Council. If the Council fails to comply with the requirements of the PPS in respect of the appointment / dismissal of officers then it could be subject to legal challenge.
- 1.3. The HR Policy Committee forms a key part of the Council's constitutional arrangements which underpin the aims and delivery of the Somerset County Plan. The Committee exercises delegated authority from the Council in respect of the approval of the Council's HR policies.

2. Items Discussed and Decisions/Recommendations made:

- 2.1. Council is recommended to approve the revised Pay Policy Statement for 2017/18 as recommended by the HR Policy Committee – see Appendix A.

3. Background

- 3.1. Section 38(1) of the Localism Act 2011 requires English and Welsh local authorities to produce a PPS for each financial year which must be approved formally by Full Council. The HR Policy Committee considered amendments to the PPS at its March meeting and this report sets out the recommendations of the Committee for the PPS to apply for the 2017/18 financial year.
- 3.2. There are no substantive changes recommended to the PPS for 2017/18. The only changes considered necessary are minor and bring the PPS up to date in terms of dates and pay figures. These reflect the second year of a pay award to staff other than Chief Officers agreed in June 2016 and backdated to 1 April 2016. The two-year agreement provided a one per cent increase in each of 2016 and 2017 in addition to increasing the bottom pay points to take account of the National Living Wage increase.

- 3.3 The PPS also reflects the second year of the complementary Chief Officers Pay Award, agreed by HR Policy Committee in June 2016, which provided a 2 year deal of 1% per year for 2016/17 and 2017/18.
- 3.4 The PPS recommended is intended to ensure that the Statement maintains an appropriate balance between rigorous governance of pay and reasonable flexibility for managers to manage.

4. Implications

- 4.1 **Legal:** See paragraph 1.2 above
- 4.2 **Financial:** There are no direct financial implications associated with agreeing the PPS for 2017/18 as the decisions reflected in its content have already been actioned.
- 4.3 **Equalities, sustainability, community safety and privacy implications:** There are no direct equalities implications arising from any of the proposals in this report. There are also no sustainability, community safety or privacy implications.

5. Background papers

- 5.1 None

APPENDIX A

SOMERSET COUNTY COUNCIL PAY POLICY STATEMENT -2017/18

This document sets out Somerset County Council's Pay Policy Statement (PPS) for 2017/18 which is revised and published at least annually following approval at Full Council. This version was approved on 26th April 2017.

1. Background

Section 38 (1) of the Localism Act 2011 requires English and Welsh local authorities to produce a PPS for each financial year.

The Act:

1. Requires the PPS to include the Council's policy on the following:
 - The remuneration of its chief officers
 - The remuneration of its lowest paid employees.
 - The relationship between the remuneration of its chief officers and other officers.
 - Other specific aspects of chief officer remuneration such as levels and elements of such remuneration, remuneration on recruitment, increases and additions to remuneration, termination payments and transparency.
2. Requires that the PPS:
 - Must be approved formally by Full Council.
 - Must be approved by the end of March every year for the following financial year.
 - Must be published on the local Council's website as soon as it is approved by the Council.
 - Must be complied with for all decisions on pay and reward for Chief Officers.
3. Makes provision for Full Council to make in year amendments to the PPS at any time and this function cannot be delegated.

2. Definitions

The Act (Section 43) defines remuneration widely as:

- Pay.
- Charges.
- Fees.
- Allowances.
- Benefits in kind.
- Increases/enhancement of pension entitlement.
- Termination payments.

The Act (Section 43) defines Chief Officers as:

- The head of the paid service designated under section 4(1) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989;
- The monitoring officer designated under section 5(1) of that Act;
- A statutory chief officer mentioned in section 2(6) of that Act;
- A non-statutory chief officer mentioned in section 2(7) of that Act;
- A deputy chief officer mentioned in section 2(8) of that Act.

For the purposes of this statement all of the Council's senior officers on Grades 1 to 3 fit the above definition. In addition the post of Monitoring Officer at Grade 5 is included as it is within the above definition.

3. Pay Data

The Council complies with Data Protection Act obligations and will only publish information about an individual officer's pay where it is required to do so by law.

In accordance with the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011 and the Local Government Transparency Code 2015, the Council publishes pay information about individual posts for the Chief Executive and the Senior Leadership Team on its website and in the Annual Statement of Accounts. The current list of posts and salaries is accessible via the following link.

<http://www.somerset.gov.uk/organisation/senior-salaries-and-pay-policy>

In relation to other senior officers of the Council, including the Monitoring Officer, pay information is published on the Council's website relating to:

- Salaries of £50,000 or more by reference to total numbers within bands (grouped in bands of £5,000);
- Details of remuneration and job titles of certain senior employees whose salary is at least £50,000 and a list of responsibilities (for example, the services and functions they are responsible for, budget held and number of staff) and details of bonuses and 'benefits in kind', for all employees whose salary exceeds £50,000.

4. Principles

The key principles underpinning this pay policy statement are:

Affordability – ensuring remuneration policies represent value-for-money for the taxpayer

Fairness – ensuring remuneration policies are fair to all staff, ranging from the most senior post to the most junior post

Meet legislative requirements – ensuring remuneration policies comply with all legal obligations, such as the Equal Pay Act

Market facing – ensuring due regard is taken of the market, both nationally and locally in the South West, and that this policy is in-line with councils of a similar size and / or in a similar labour market.

Tax Avoidance – ensuring that all remuneration arrangements comply fully with HMRC regulations.

5. Determination of Grade

The Council's Grading structure accords with the National Single Status and Green Book agreements. The Grading structure reflects the need to continue to modernise, facilitate new ways of working and ensure equal pay for work of equal value in a large and diverse organisation.

The grading structure treats all groups of staff the same. It uses two schemes to evaluate jobs, covering virtually all employees, except teachers and Soulbury staff, which are subject to national grading schemes.

The Hay Scheme is used for the more senior posts, including the Chief Executive, SLT officers, and Strategic and Service Managers.

The New Somerset Scheme, based on the Greater London Provincial Council scheme (formerly GLEA), is used for all other posts. Some posts cross between the borders of both schemes.

The lowest paid posts in the Council which include posts of Cleaner, Domestic Assistant, Distribution Assistant and General Kitchen Assistant, are paid on Grade 17 (national spinal point 6: £15014 as at 1st April 2017).

The relationship between pay at the lowest and highest levels is therefore controlled by job evaluation.

6. Pay and Grading Structure

The Pay and Grading structure incorporates National Pay Points up to spinal column point 44 and locally determined pay points above. The current pay and grading structure can be accessed via the following link.

<http://extranet.somerset.gov.uk/EasysiteWeb/getresource.axd?AssetID=95547&type=full&servicetype=Attachment>

The Council operates a 17 grade pay structure. Each grade from 17 up to 9 contains a number of pay increments. On Grades 8 and upwards, there is a single pay point per grade.

The Council does not operate a performance-related pay scheme for any staff, but does have a performance related appraisal scheme, including behaviours and competency assessment. The Council does not pay a bonus to any Council employee and no additional payments are made for election duties.

NJC for Local Government Services (Green Book) pay, terms and conditions apply to posts on Grades 17 to 4 inclusive. Annual pay awards are determined by national agreement.

With the exception of the Monitoring Officer, posts on grades 17 to 4 are officer appointments.

Post holders on Grades 17 – 9 are, subject to satisfactory performance, eligible for annual incremental increases up the pay scale until they reach the top of their grade.

Post holders on Grades 4 – 8 (Strategic and Service Managers) have some localised terms and conditions. Each Grade (4 – 8) has a fixed, spot salary and there is no incremental progression.

7. Chief Officer Pay

The Chief Executive and Chief Officers as defined in Section 43 of the Localism Act are paid on Grades 1 – 3 with the exception of the Monitoring Officer who is paid at Grade 5. These posts constitute the Council's Senior Leadership Team (with the exception of the Monitoring Officer). All Chief Officers are appointed by the Appointments Committee of the Council with the exception of the Chief Executive whose appointment has to be agreed by the Council.

Each of the Grades 1 – 3 has a spot salary and no incremental progression.

Annual Salaries for Chief Executive and Chief Officer posts (with the exception of the Monitoring Officer) range between £88,443 and £166,485, as follows:

Grade 1 Post:
Chief Executive

The salary for Grade 1 Post is within the range £156,075 to £166,485.

Grade 2 Posts:
Lead Commissioner Children & Learning (DCS)

Finance and Performance Director
Commercial and Business Services Director
Lead Commissioner Adults and Health (DASS)
Public Health Director
Lead Commissioner Economic and Community Infrastructure

The salaries for Grade 2 Posts are within the range £ 104,049 to £135,264.

Grade 3 Posts:

Customers and Communities Director
Economic and Community Infrastructure Operations Director
Adults and Health Operations Director
Deputy Director Children and Families
Deputy Director Education
Human Resources & Organisational Development Director

The salaries for Grade 3 posts are within the range £88,443 to £103,998.

The default position in the event of a vacancy in any of the above posts is that the salary paid to the person appointed to fill the vacancy will be at the lowest point in the range (which represents the 'spot' to be applied within the grade) unless otherwise agreed by the Chief Executive (or Full Council in the case of the post of Chief Executive) in accordance with the requirements of the PPS.

8. Governance Arrangements (as detailed in the Constitution)

All actions, responsibilities and delegations outlined below must be exercised in accordance with the requirements of the PPS.

Appointments Panel

An Appointments Panel of the Council reviews the terms and conditions of any Chief Officer post that becomes vacant and where appropriate makes recommendations to the Chief Executive for any changes; decides the appointments process or other course of action; and appoints the Appointments Committee to undertake the appointments process.

The Panel comprises of 3 elected members appointed in accordance with the Constitution and can convene virtually or meet as required. If a Panel decides that no changes to terms and conditions are necessary when it reviews a vacant Chief Officer post (and that the salary will be advertised at the bottom of the range [the 'spot' for the grade] for posts on grades 1 to 3) then the Panel has authority to progress the recruitment without the need to seek further approvals. If a Panel wishes to make changes to the terms and conditions of a vacant post (other than the post of Chief Executive) then these are subject to the approval of the Chief Executive having obtained the agreement of the Leader of the Council. This includes where a Panel wishes to advertise a salary for a Chief Officer post (other than the post of Chief Executive) above the 'spot' at the bottom of the range. This must be the subject of a Panel recommendation to the Chief Executive for decision. If the

Panel's recommendations for changes to terms and conditions relate to the post of Chief Executive then Full Council must agree these changes.

Note: The effect of the provisions of the PPS is that all Chief Officer posts where the total remuneration package is in excess of £100,000 pa are appointed to in accordance with the Pay Policy Statement and therefore with elected member approval through the Full Council's decision to agree the PPS. This is in accord with the statutory guidance that guides such appointments.

Appointments Committee

The Appointments Committee of the Council is responsible for all Chief Officer appointments with the exception of the appointment of a Chief Executive which is subject to the approval of Full Council on the recommendation of the Committee. The Committee comprises up to 5 elected members for each individual appointment process and the membership is politically proportioned according to the political membership of the Council. The detailed provisions for the Committee's membership are detailed in the Constitution. If the Committee during the course of an appointment process wishes to vary the terms and conditions or the salary already agreed for a specific post, then such a proposal is subject to the approval of the Chief Executive having obtained the agreement of the Leader of the Council. The exception to this is where the Committee's recommendations relate to the appointment of the

HR Policy Committee

The Committee comprises 6 elected members and the membership is politically proportioned according to the political membership of the Council. This Committee has responsibility for:

- deciding and implementing annual pay awards for the Chief Executive and Chief Officers and, where it is agreed that an award is made, the revised scales will be included for information in the next annual review of the Pay Policy Statement
- reviewing on at least an annual basis the pay and grading structure of the Council (including Chief Officer grades and salaries) and making recommendations for any changes considered necessary to Full Council by way of a revised Pay Policy Statement .

In bringing forward recommendations on these issues, the Committee will take into account:

- the outcome of job evaluation,
- any data/advice/evidence or views collected from appropriate sources, including: the Council's HR function; National and/or Regional Employers' Organisations; independent external pay data
- the needs of the business to recruit and retain chief officers
- the requirements of the PPS and
- fluctuations in the local and national job market.

Chief Officer Special Members' Panel / Committee

The Constitution includes provision for the appointment of a Special Members' Panel to consider (and determine where appropriate) the following issues:

- (a) Where the dismissal of a Chief Officer (other than the Chief Executive or the Section 151 Officer) is proposed, Council will determine the dismissal on the recommendation of the Panel;
- (b) The Panel has authority from the Council to meet as a Committee of the Council to deal with any question of dismissal of a Chief Officer on the grounds of redundancy (including voluntary), permanent ill-health or infirmity of mind or body. The exception to this is where a proposed financial settlement for an officer leaving the Council exceeds £100,000. In these circumstances Full Council must agree the settlement.
- (c) Where a proposal is made to dismiss an officer holding a statutory post of Chief Executive, Chief Finance Officer or Monitoring Officer, the Panel shall decide whether there is any justification to the proposed dismissal and therefore whether it needs to be investigated. If the decision is that an investigation is necessary the Panel will appoint an investigator. If the investigation confirms a potential dismissal, the Panel will refer the matter to the Independent Persons' Panel for consideration and report to Council. If the investigation recommends disciplinary action then the Special Members' Panel shall consider and decide whether disciplinary action is justified and if so agree any action to be taken.
- (d) The Panel has authority to meet as a Committee of the Council to determine any question of disciplinary action in relation to a Chief Officer or the Monitoring Officer.

The Special Members' Panel shall comprise of 6 Members appointed by the Leader of the Council (or his/her nominated representative) and comprising:-

- (a) The Leader of the Council (or his/her nominated representative)
- (b) The Leader of the largest opposition group (or his/her nominated representative)
- (c) 4 other Members of the Council selected by the Leader of the Council in consultation with the other Group Leaders and in accordance with the rules of political proportionality.

Note: The membership of the Panel will not include any Member previously involved in an individual Officer's case.

Independent Persons' Panel

Any proposal for a dismissal of a statutory post-holder holding the position of Chief Executive, the Chief Finance Officer or the Monitoring Officer is determined by the Council on the recommendation of the Independent Persons' (IPs) Panel comprising a minimum of 3 IPs selected to participate by

the Chief Executive in accordance with the Local Authority (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2015. The IPs are selected from a joint Somerset Councils' Panel of IPs. The Panel is appointed by the Chief Executive (or the Head of HR where the Chief Executive is the subject of the proposed dismissal). The Panel shall be appointed a minimum of 20 days before the Council is due to meet to consider the dismissal.

Note

This section summarises the detailed arrangements set out in Section 7 of Part 1 of the Constitution.

Chief Executive : Delegated Powers

The Chief Executive has been designated by the Council as the Head of the Paid Service and is therefore responsible for the Council's Senior Leadership Team and supporting officer structures of the Council. Any changes proposed by the Chief Executive to the staffing structure shall be subject to consultation with the Cabinet before the changes are agreed by way of an Officer Decision taken by the Chief Executive. Full Council will be informed of changes agreed at the next available opportunity.

The Chief Executive has authority:

- to appoint and dismiss all employees except where this function is specifically delegated to Members.
- to approve changes to the terms and conditions of all Chief Officer posts on the recommendation of the Appointments Panel or the Appointments Committee or on his / her own initiative and having obtained the agreement of the Leader of the Council . All decisions taken by the Chief Executive on such matters will be the subject of a formal Officer Decision which will be published on the Council's website as soon as it is confirmed
- after having sought the agreement of the Leader, and after appropriate consultations, to agree:
 - (a) acting up arrangements into Chief Officer positions (other than that of Chief Executive) to cover periods of temporary absence either planned or unplanned
 - (b) emergency cover arrangements for the statutory Chief Officer roles (other than that of Chief Executive) where these positions become vacant between Full Council meetings. Any such agreement will be subject to review and confirmation at the next available Full Council meeting
 - (c) the recruitment of interims at Chief Officer level in accordance with the requirements of section 11 of this Statement.

Before making decisions in relation to the staffing structure or individual Chief Officer posts, the Chief Executive is required to consider:-

- the views of the relevant Cabinet Member, the Chairman of the HR Policy Committee and the Opposition Spokesperson, and, as

appropriate:-

- the outcome of job evaluation,
- any data/advice/evidence or views collected from appropriate sources, including: the Council's HR function; National and/or Regional Employers' Organisations; independent external pay data
- the needs of the business to recruit and retain chief officers;
- the performance of individual Chief Officers
- the requirements of the PPS and
- fluctuations in the local and national job market.

The Chief Executive has authorised other officers to appoint and dismiss staff Grades 4 and below, in line with normal Council appointments processes.

Chief Officers are subject to the same terms and conditions as employees who are not Chief Officers in respect of termination of employment. The only exception is that the Chief Executive and Chief Officers are subject to modified disciplinary procedures which are outlined in the Council's Constitution.

9. Chief Officer Remuneration relative to other Council employees

The recommendation of the Hutton Report into "Fair Pay in the Public Sector", as recognised by the Government in the Local Government Transparency Code 2015, , was that the Council should publish the pay ratio of the salary of the Chief Executive compared to the median average salary in the organisation.

As at 1st December 2016, the ratio of the pay of the Council's median earner (£20,455) to that of its Chief Executive (£154,530) was 1: 7.6.

10. Pay Policy upon Appointment to posts below Chief Officer

Internally Appointed Candidates

On promotion an officer must be appointed to the spot pay point or the minimum point on the scale, whichever is applicable. If there are special circumstances where it is considered that an increase in excess of the minimum is merited then it will be necessary to consult the Director of HR and OD (or their nominated representative) and this must be done before any formal offer is made to the candidate by the relevant Chief Officer.

Externally Appointed Candidates

The starting salary of an externally appointed candidate would normally be the spot pay point or the minimum point on the scale, whichever is applicable. However, the Council could pay a point within the incremental scale if the candidate is already paid on a higher salary or where their experience is beneficial to the Council. Should there be any doubt about repercussions elsewhere, the Director of HR and OD (or their nominated representative) should be consulted.

Transferred Officers

Where employees move between operational areas on the same grade with an incremental scale, no increment is payable at the time of transfer. The service is regarded as continuous for the purpose of annual incremental advancement. Therefore, where an officer's salary on 1 April following appointment, promotion or re-grading would be less than one spinal column point of their old salary the officer shall be entitled to their first increment on 1 April.

Promotion or Re-grading

On promotion within the Council to a post on a grade with an incremental scale, and which carries a higher maximum salary than their previous grade, or on the re-grading of their existing post based on increased duties and responsibilities, the officer shall be paid a salary in accordance with the new grade which is at least one spinal column point in excess of the salary they would have received on the old grade on the day of appointment, promotion or re-grading.

11. Appointment of Agency Interims at Chief Officer level

Where the Council is unable to permanently recruit officers, there could be a requirement for that substantive post to be covered by an interim appointment. Interims will be supplied to the Council through a supplier to deliver the required cover.

The Council has various supplier options to supply interims in adherence with Procurement and Financial Regulations.

An interim's term of employment and contract is direct with the supplier and not the Council. The interim shall be solely responsible for complying with

legal requirements including the payment and accounting of taxes. In addition, the supplier should make the relevant declaration and checks in order to satisfy themselves that the interim abides by the relevant UK tax law.

Having obtained the agreement of the Leader of Council, the Chief Executive will approve the recruitment of interims at Chief Officer level on a case by case basis and based on a business case presented by the Appointments Panel which takes into account:

- value-for-money for the taxpayer
- the evaluated grade of the post to be covered
- the public profile of the post
- risks to the Council
- the labour market, both nationally and locally in the South West, for interims providing cover for similar posts in councils of a similar size

Interims will be supplied to the Council in accordance with its Contract Standing Orders, relevant Procurement, Legal and Financial Regulations.

The Appointments Committee will interview candidates for interim appointments at Chief Officer level to assess their suitability for the role and will confirm appointments.

Chief Officer level interim appointments will be subject to formal review by the Chief Executive at the end of six months and at six monthly intervals thereafter to assess whether there is a requirement to retain their services. The original Appointments Committee will be consulted where the Chief Executive proposes to extend the engagement of an interim. The final decision on the extension of an interim rests with the Chief Executive.

Appointment of Agency Interims below Chief Officer level

All interim appointments below Chief Officer level will be sourced by the relevant Chief Officer or the Chief Executive where a Chief Officer is unable to act.

If this interim is to be employed at a rate of over £500 per day:

- The appointment will be subject to a formal review process at the end of the first six months and six monthly thereafter; and
- Any decision to extend the engagement of such an interim will require the approval of the Chief Executive.

All other interim appointments will be subject to a formal review process at the end of the first six months and six monthly thereafter and the decision to extend the engagement of such appointments rests with the relevant Chief Officer.

12. Recruitment and Retention Allowances

External recruitment and internal retention problems are tackled by temporarily increasing the total pay awarded to a post, when it can be shown

that the pay on the evaluated grade is significantly lower than competitors' rates of pay.

The payment of an allowance is temporary and will not be renewed if a review finds evidence that demonstrates the payment of the allowance is no longer justified.

An allowance forms part of an employee's pay (all the salary, wages, fees and other payments paid to them for their own use in respect of their employment) and as such is pensionable. An allowance is expressed as a cash lump sum, pro-rata to the contracted hours, and is not subject to annual cost of living/inflation pay awards.

Approval of recruitment and retention allowances in respect of:

- Chief Officer posts (with the exception of the post of Chief Executive) shall be determined by the Chief Executive following consultation with the Leader of Council and on the recommendation of the appropriate Appointments Panel in relation to new appointments
- The post of Chief Executive will be agreed by Full Council
- All other posts shall be determined by the Director of HR and OD, following a business case presented by the manager and having consulted with a group of senior managers.

13. Travel and Subsistence

The Council's intention is that employees should not be financially disadvantaged in going about its business and that they are fairly compensated for expenditure incurred. However, managers and employees are expected to organise journeys in the most efficient and effective manner possible and, in submitting claims, to adopt a reasonable approach.

Chief Officers are subject to the same policies as all other staff. Expenses paid to Chief Officers are published in the Annual Statement of Accounts.

14. Reimbursement of Fees

The Council will meet the cost of:-

- Practising Certificate required by Solicitors employed by the Council.
- Annual cost of membership of ARCUK required by practising Architects employed by the Council.

The Council will not pay fees and subscriptions payable by the Chief Executive and other Officers, to professional qualification bodies and local government based societies and associations.

Fees and subscriptions payable by the Chief Executive and Chief Officers to associations that are inter-Council networking organisations (as distinct from

subscriptions to professional bodies) should be reimbursed subject to individual cases being approved by the Chief Executive and Director of HR and OD in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member.

Where Committees consider that the Council may derive benefit by such officers attending meetings/working parties of local government based societies/associations travelling and subsistence expenses incurred may be reimbursed subject to prior approval.

15. Additional Payments

Allowances are paid in line with NJC terms and conditions (Green Book), or by local agreements where relevant.

Any allowances paid to Chief Officers are disclosed in the Annual Statement of Accounts.

The Council has no policy for making benefits in kind.

16. Salary Protection for Redeployed Employees at Risk of Redundancy

This applies to all staff (excluding Officers on Grade 8 and above - please see below).

Protection will not apply to redeployed employees with less than two years local government service.

Salary protection arrangements will be for a period of three years during which annual cost of living pay increases and incremental progression will be awarded.

At the end of this period the substantive grade of the new post will be applicable.

It should be noted that salary protection is in place to ease the financial implications on those being redeployed and does not extend beyond salary.

As from 1st April 2014, Officers on Grades 8 and above receive one year's frozen pay protection.

17. Pension

All employees are eligible to join the Local Government Pension Scheme (“LGPS”). The Redundancy & Efficiency Compensation Policies and Flexible Retirement Policy apply to all staff including Chief Officers. The Council has determined and published policies around the discretions available under the LGPS. The Council makes no enhancements or increases to individual pension benefits.

The Council applies its discretion under the regulations of the LGPS to allow employees aged 55 and over who are members of the LGPS to request payment of early retirement benefits whilst remaining in the Council's employment on reduced hours/lower grade. This does not apply to employees who are receiving a redundancy payment and early pension benefits or who are taking early retirement in the interests of the efficiency of the service.

Re-engagement of employees who are in receipt of a Local Government Pension should be through Somerset Staffing or Reed Recruitment.

The Council may re-employ employees who have been made redundant whether through voluntary, compulsory or early retirement.

Managers who are employing an employee in this category should ensure that the usual selection processes are applied.

Employees should be advised that they should not earn in excess of the combined pension and salary of their new post. Otherwise their pension will be abated.

A number of employees have transferred to the Council under a specific staff transfer arrangement which allowed them to continue membership of the NHS pension scheme. The Council makes contributions on their behalf and complies with Pension Legislation in respect of the NHS scheme.

18. Settlement Agreements

In exceptional circumstances to avoid or settle a claim or potential dispute, the Council may agree payment of a settlement sum on termination.

All cases must be supported by a business case and take account of all legal, financial, contractual and other responsibilities.

Settlement payments on termination of the contract of a post below Grade 3 require approval from the relevant Chief Officer.

The arrangements for settlement payments on termination of the contract of a Chief Officer are set out in section 8 above.

Somerset County Council

County Council

– 26 April 2017

Report of the Leader and Cabinet – Items for Information

Cabinet Member: Cllr John Osman - Leader of Council

Division and Local Member: All

Lead Officer: Scott Wooldridge - Service Manager, Community Governance

Author: Scott Wooldridge - Service Manager, Community Governance

Contact Details: 01823 356748

1. Summary

- 1.1. This report covers key decisions taken by the Leader, Cabinet Members and officers between 4 February 2017 and 13 April 2017, together with the items of business discussed at the Cabinet meetings on 20 February 2017, 15 March 2017 and 12 April 2017 (attached as Appendix A to this report). The Leader and Cabinet Members may also wish to raise other issues at the County Council meeting.

2. Details of decisions

- 2.1. Agenda and papers for the Cabinet meetings on 20 February 2017, 15 March 2017 and 12 April 2017 are published within the Cabinet webpages on the Council's website. Individual Leader, Cabinet Member and Officer key decision records and related reports are also published within the Cabinet webpages on the Council's website.

LEADER OF COUNCIL (Customers and Communities) – John Osman		
Item	Date of Meeting	Summary of Decision
Demand Management and Predictive Analytics	Cabinet Meeting on 20 February 2017	<p>SUMMARY OF DECISION: The Cabinet welcomed the update from the Avon and Somerset Police on their use of new technology systems to assist demand management and predictive analytics to support the prevention and prosecution of crime. The Cabinet also thanked the Chief Constable and the Police & Crime Commissioner for their update on policing priorities and partnership working.</p> <p>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: Information item</p> <p>REASON FOR DECISION: To outline the work being done by the Avon and Somerset Police for the prevention and prosecution of crime.</p>
Potential new 'Somerset Board' Joint Committee	Cabinet Meeting on 15 March 2017	<p>SUMMARY OF DECISION: This paper was 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> <p>The Cabinet endorsed the Leader of the Council to take forward discussions with wider partners to gauge the degree of support for the approach in the county.</p> <p>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report.</p> <p>REASONS FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report.</p>
Wells City of Culture bid	Cabinet Meeting on 15 March 2017	<p>SUMMARY OF DECISION: The Cabinet supported Visit Somerset's proposed submission of a Wells City of Culture bid and undertook to provide a letter of support along with a supportive press release.</p> <p>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: The only other alternative was not to support the bid and this was discounted.</p> <p>REASON FOR DECISION: To support the submission of a City of Culture bid by the deadline</p>

LEADER OF COUNCIL (Customers and Communities) – John Osman

Item	Date of Meeting	Summary of Decision
Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA) Enhanced Programme of Flood Risk Management Works and the SRA Memorandum of Understanding and Constitution	Leader of the County Council decision on 27 March 2017	<p>SUMMARY OF DECISION: The report provided an overview of the funding committed in 2017/18 for the purposes of the SRA’s Enhanced Programme of Works, sets out the 2017/18 budget proposals and the revised Memorandum of Agreement and Constitution, all of which were endorsed by the SRA Board at its meeting on 13th March 2017.</p> <p>The Leader of the County Council agreed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. To approve the SRA Budget for 2017/18, (Appendix A) in accordance with the recommendations of the SRA Board from its meeting on the 13th March 20172. To the release of funding committed from all sources in 2017/18n for the purposes of the SRA, subject to receipt of funds, in accordance with the budget for 2017/18 approved at 1 above;3. The case (set out in paragraph 1.2) for exempt information for Appendix C to be treated in confidence, as the case for the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing that information.4. To provide forward funding in advance of receiving Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Growth Deal funding to support the delivery of the Enhanced Programme (Appendix B and C (confidential)).5. That the detailed management of the 2017/18 Budget and Enhanced Programme within the control total allocated to the SRA is undertaken in accordance with the constitutional, financial regulations and decision making arrangements of SCC as accountable body;6. To approve the revised Local Memorandum of Understanding (including the Constitution of the SRA) attached as Appendix D; 7. To note the outstanding issue regarding risk sharing across the partnership and that a report will be going to the SRA Board in July to resolve this. <p>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report.</p> <p>REASONS FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report.</p>

BUSINESS, INWARD INVESTMENT AND POLICY – David Hall		
Item	Date of Meeting	Summary of Decision
Somerset Growth Plan 2017-2030	Cabinet Member for Business Inward Investment and Policy on 17 March 2017	<p>SUMMARY OF DECISION: It is a refresh of the initial plan that was published in February 2014 and takes into account various influencers such as the Somerset County Plan and the vision projects; the Heart of the South West Productivity Plan consultation and the Government Industrial Strategy consultation.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member for Business, Inward Investment and Policy endorsed the Somerset Growth Plan for 2017 – 2030 (see Appendices A and B) and delegated authority to the Director of Commissioning (the Lead Commissioner for Economic and Community Infrastructure) to approve the final changes needed, prior to publication, following Growth Board comments.</p> <p>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report.</p> <p>REASONS FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report.</p>
Growth Deal 3	Cabinet Meeting on 12 April 2017	<p>SUMMARY OF DECISION: The Cabinet was given a presentation about Growth Deal 3 within the context of the £76m of funding that the Council had secured for Somerset priorities through the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership under Growth Deals 1, 2 and 3. The Cabinet noted the presentation.</p>

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES – Frances Nicholson		
Item	Date of Meeting	Summary of Decision
Children's Services update	Cabinet meeting on 20 February 2017	<p>SUMMARY OF DECISION: The Cabinet welcomed the update regarding Children's Services from the Director of Children's Services and noted the improvements that had been achieved.</p> <p>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: Information item</p> <p>REASON FOR DECISION: To outline the latest position and the progress that has been achieved</p>

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES – Frances Nicholson

Item	Date of Meeting	Summary of Decision
Capital Investment Programme: Schools Basic Need, Schools Condition & Schools Access Initiative – 2017/18	Cabinet Member for Children and Families decision on 15 March 2017	<p>SUMMARY OF DECISION: Approval was sought for the necessary delegation to appropriate officers to deliver the capital projects for schools basic need, schools condition and schools access initiative within the allocation of capital funds for 2017/18 as approved by Full Council on the 30th November 2016.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member for Children and Families approved the capital allocations for 2017/18.</p> <p>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report.</p> <p>REASONS FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report.</p>
Prescribed Alterations to Special Schools - Implementation	Cabinet Member for Children and Families decision on 20 March 2017	<p>SUMMARY OF DECISION: Following a 4-week period of statutory consultation and consideration of the responses, Officers required a decision to implement a number of proposed 'Prescribed Alterations' at seven of Somerset's special schools.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member for Children & Families authorised officers to implement the proposed Prescribed Alterations (listed below) at the following special schools:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Avalon School, Street – As stated in the Proposal Document2. Critchill School, Frome – As stated in the Proposal Document3. Elmwood School, Bridgwater – As stated in the Proposal Document4. Fairmead School, Yeovil – As stated in the Proposal Document5. Fiveways School, Yeovil – As stated in the Proposal Document6. Penrose School, Bridgwater – As stated in the Proposal Document7. Sky College, Taunton – As stated in Proposal Document, with a single

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES – Frances Nicholson

Item	Date of Meeting	Summary of Decision
		<p style="text-align: center;">modification; Sky College will retain its designation for Boarding Provision</p> <p>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report.</p> <p>REASONS FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report.</p>

HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT – David Fothergill

Item	Date of Meeting	Summary of Decision
Use of National Productivity Investment Fund Grant	Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport decision on 16 March 2017	<p>SUMMARY OF DECISION: The Government has provided a new capital grant to local authorities for 17/18 financial year to spend on local highway and transport networks with a view to improving productivity and local economic growth. This is called the productivity investment fund and a condition of the grant is to publish its intended use by 31 March 2017. This report considers options for use of the fund and proposes an allocation of grant funds to specific projects.</p> <p>Following consideration of the officer report and impact assessment the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport:</p> <p>Agreed that the £3.859m productivity investment fund grant for 17/18 financial year is allocated towards providing additional spend on highway structural maintenance, additional spend on the major transport schemes programme, and spend on a public transport smart ticketing project, with the precise value of the allocation to each programme or project determined by the Director and Lead Commissioner for Economic and Community Infrastructure.</p> <p>Agreed that traffic signals replacement is a reserve programme which grant funding may be spent on if appropriate in the event that other funding bids are unsuccessful.</p> <p>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report.</p> <p>REASONS FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report.</p>

HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT – David Fothergill		
Item	Date of Meeting	Summary of Decision
Approval to accept DfT C-ITS Challenge Fund Award and implement the Energy Efficient Intersections project	Director of Commissioning and Lead Commissioner for Economic and Community Infrastructure and Director of Finance & Performance on 21 March 2017	<p>SUMMARY OF DECISION: In September 2016, a Non Key Decision was taken by the Strategic manager – Highways & Transport to approve two submissions to the Department for Transport (DfT) CoOperative ITS Challenge Fund. Out of two bids, the Energy Efficient Intersections (EEI) project was successful and a total capital grant of £289,275 has been awarded. In addition to this a local contribution of £15,000 has been allocated by the Service Manager, Traffic Management. Project implementation will be carried out by traffic technology experts at WSP PB. This Key Decision now needs to be taken to accept the award and implement the project. This will be signed off by the Director of Commissioning and Lead Commissioner for Economic and 2 Community Infrastructure. The agreement letter between Somerset County Council and Department for Transport will need to be signed off by the Director of Finance & Performance.</p> <p>The Director of Commissioning and Lead Commissioner for Economic and Community Infrastructure and Director of Finance & Performance agreed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To accept the DfT C-ITS Challenge Fund Award by signing the agreement with DfT. 2. To continue to implement the project. <p>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report.</p> <p>REASONS FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report.</p>
Contract award for the provision of highway improvements at Yeovil Western Corridor	Cabinet meeting on 12 April 2017	<p>SUMMARY OF DECISION: The Yeovil Western Corridor transport scheme has been developed over a number of years to accommodate planned growth in the surrounding area of Yeovil. It was selected to be funded as part of the Heart of the South West Local Transport Board Scheme Prioritisation Process subject to the submission of a successful business case. In October 2014, a Non Key Decision was taken by the Lead Commissioner: Economic and Community Infrastructure to enable the procurement process to commence. This has now been completed and this Key Decision needed to be taken to award the contract.</p>

HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT – David Fothergill

Item	Date of Meeting	Summary of Decision
		<p>Following consideration of the officer report, presentation and discussion, the Cabinet agreed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To award a contract for highway junction improvements and associated works at Yeovil Western Corridor to the supplier identified in Appendix A, following a competitive process. 2. The case for exempt information for Appendix A to be treated in confidence, as public disclosure of the commercially sensitive data contained within would prejudice the Council’s position in ensuring competitiveness of future tender processes. <p>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report.</p> <p>REASON FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report.</p>

ADULT SOCIAL CARE – William Wallace

Item	Date of Meeting	Summary of Decision
Report of the Scrutiny for Policies, Adults and Health and People Committee – Learning Disability Provider Service	Cabinet Meeting on 15 March 2017	<p>SUMMARY OF DECISION: This report contained recommendations from the Scrutiny for Policies, Adults and Health Committee on the implementation of the proposed transfer of the Council’s Learning Disability Provider Service following its meeting on 1 March 2017.</p> <p>Following consideration of the officer report, presentation and discussion, the Cabinet agreed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That it did not accept the Scrutiny Committee for Policies for Adults and Health recommendations and that officers would continue to implement the decision agreed by Cabinet in July 2016. 2. Subject to confirmation from the Section 151 Officer, to increase the Equal Pay Buy-Out fund through appropriate discussions <p>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer’s presentation, taking into account the debate at the meeting and the amendment proposed by the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care.</p>

ADULT SOCIAL CARE – William Wallace		
Item	Date of Meeting	Summary of Decision
		REASON FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer's presentation, taking into account the debate at the meeting and the amendment proposed by the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care.
Award contract for Carers Support Service	Cabinet Meeting on 15 March 2017	<p>SUMMARY OF DECISION: The report requested approval to award a contract for the new Carers Support Service from 1st October 2017 which had been tendered in accordance with contract standing orders and the Public Contract Regulations 2015. The contract award was recommended for 3 years with the option for the Council to agree two further periods of up to 12 months</p> <p>Following consideration of the officer's report, the Equalities Impact Assessment, Appendix A and the debate, the Cabinet RESOLVED to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Endorse the procurement process and approve the selection of the service provider (Bidder A in Appendix A) to deliver the Carers Support Service from 1st October 2017 for three years with the option for the Council to agree two further periods of up to 12 months 2. Agree that Appendix A be treated as exempt information, and treated in confidence, as the case for the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing that information. <p>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report.</p> <p>REASONS FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report.</p>
Adult Social Care Fees and Charges 2017/18	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care decision on 27 March 2017	<p>SUMMARY OF DECISION: Adult Social Care fees and charges are updated annually and adjusted to take account of cost of living and annual benefit increases, market factors, legislation, national guidance, demand and local policy requirements. This paper proposed the annual update to rates. The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care agreed the charges, fees and allowances as set out in Appendix A for Care services.</p> <p>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report.</p>

ADULT SOCIAL CARE – William Wallace

Item	Date of Meeting	Summary of Decision
		REASONS FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report

HR, HEALTH AND TRANSFORMATION – Anna Groskop

Item	Date of Meeting	Summary of Decision
No decisions		

RESOURCES – Harvey Siggs

Item	Date of Meeting	Summary of Decision
Disposal of Surplus Property to support the delivery of the Council's Capital Strategy	Commercial and Business Services Director decision on 17 March 2017	<p>SUMMARY OF DECISION: The Head of Property recommended to the Commercial and Business Services Director that approval is given to dispose of the properties and land listed in Appendix A under the terms of sale indicated. All of the properties and land are surplus to the County Council's requirements and comply with the Asset Management Plan.</p> <p>The Commercial and Business Services Director agreed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To authorise the Head of Property and the County Solicitor to negotiate and finalise the sale terms to enable the disposal of the surplus assets listed in Appendix A in accordance with the terms specified and within the following parameters: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sale to tenants/private sale – not less than 85% of the value in Appendix A; • auction – not less than the reserve price 2. that Appendix B be treated as exempt information, and treated in confidence, as the case for the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing that information. <p>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report.</p> <p>REASONS FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report.</p>

RESOURCES – Harvey Siggs		
Item	Date of Meeting	Summary of Decision
Capital Investment Programme 2017/18: Corporate Property Planned Capital Maintenance Programme	Cabinet Member for Resources decision on 27 March 2017	<p>SUMMARY OF DECISION: To delegate authority to appropriate officers to procure and deliver capital projects under the corporate planned capital maintenance programme.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member for Resources delegated authority to appropriate officers to deliver the corporate planned capital maintenance programme, specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To prioritise projects for delivery within the available budget according to the highest level of need (based on current condition and/or risk to service delivery); • To decide upon the most appropriate procurement route for each project; • To engage consultants and/or frameworks where applicable and; • To seek tenders/quotations <p>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report.</p> <p>REASONS FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report.</p>

CORPORATE IMPROVEMENT – Christopher Le-Hardy		
Item	Date of Meeting	Summary of Decision
No decisions		

CROSS CUTTING – As specified		
Item	Date of Meeting	Summary of Decision
Creation of two New Academies in Somerset	Cabinet Member for Children and Families and the Commercial and Business Services Director decision on 15 March 2017.	<p>SUMMARY OF DECISION: The Secretary of State for Education has directed via an Academy Order, the conversion to Academy Status for the following two schools Westover Green Community School and Puriton Primary.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member for Children and Families and the Commercial and Business Services Director:</p> <p>a) Subject to the Secretary of State approving an Academy Order, approved the asset transfer for Westover Green Community School Puriton Primary School</p> <p>b) Approved the transfer of the leasehold interest in the land at Westover Green</p>

CROSS CUTTING – As specified

Item	Date of Meeting	Summary of Decision
		<p>Community School and Puriton Primary School via a 125 year lease with Clevedon Learning Trust (as set out in the attached officer report)</p> <p>c) Indemnified the Academy Trust established to operate these academies in respect of all costs and liabilities which transfer to the Academy Trust under TUPE and which relate to the period prior to the date when the academies are open.</p> <p>d) Authorised the appropriate officers under delegation to undertake all necessary actions to give effect to the above.</p> <p>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report.</p> <p>REASONS FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report.</p>

Somerset County Council

County Council

– 26 April 2017

Annual Report of the Scrutiny for Policies, Adults and Health Committee

Chairman: Cllr Hazel Prior-Sankey

Division and Local Member: All

Lead Officer: Julian Gale – Strategic Manager – Governance and Risk

Author: Jamie Jackson – Governance Manager - Scrutiny

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1. Summary

- 1.1 The Scrutiny for Policies, Adults and Health Committee is required by the Constitution to make an annual report to the Council each year and also to provide each other meeting of the Council with a summary progress report and outcomes of scrutiny.
- 1.2 The Committee agreed their work programme would comprise of items considered directly at meetings plus other items considered or 'commissioned', using flexible arrangements outside of the formal committee structure.
- 1.3 Members of the Council are reminded that:
 - all Members have been invited to attend meetings of the three Scrutiny Committees and to contribute freely on any agenda item;
 - any Member could propose a topic for inclusion on the Scrutiny Work Programmes;
 - any Member can be asked by the Committee to contribute information and evidence and to participate in specific scrutiny reviews.
- 1.4 The Committee has 9 elected Members.
- 1.5 The meeting on 01 March 2017 focused on: Learning Disability Provider Service Update; Mental Health Services Update; Patient Safety & Quality Report – Q3 2016/17; Corporate Performance Monitoring Report – Q3 2016/17; Adult Social Care Performance Update; Reable Somerset Contract Update.

The 29 March 2017 meeting focused on: Somerset Sustainability and Transformation Plan; Winter Pressures Update; Update on the Somerset Autism Strategy; Improved Access to GP Services; Maternity Services Update.

2. Background

2.1 Scrutiny Work Programme

At each meeting, the Committee considers and updates its work programme, having regard to the Cabinet's forward plan of proposed key decisions. Members

appreciate the attendance of representatives and stakeholders from partner agencies

2.2 **01 March 2017**

The Committee received a verbal update from the Director of Adult Social Services regarding the transfer of the Learning Disability Provider Service (LDPS) to a Social Enterprise – Dimensions. The Director began by thanking members of the public for their questions and confirming that formal written responses will be sent for all Public Questions.

We heard that the decision to transfer the LDPS was part of a very long process emerging from the need to make significant changes to the way that the service is delivered. The current, in-house, service has become increasingly less competitive, has poor physical environments with limited opportunity for community integration and has struggled with sustainability. The service needs to modernise and in order to be sustainable; the service needs to address its major cost element which is staff costs.

The Director stated that the LDPS staff are highly valued and have been critical to providing services. He empathised with staff and understood their anxiety over potential changes to their terms and conditions but stated that there has been no discussion of this to date with Dimensions. This will instead take place after the transfer.

It is important that people with learning difficulties are supported with a modern service that is affordable. The service will transfer on 1st April 2017 and there is a transition team in place to manage this. The Director felt strongly that any delay to this transfer would be detrimental.

The Committee discussed: whether the original business case had changed; whether Cabinet & SLT were aware that changes would be made to staff terms and conditions; capital receipts and the use of surplus funds.

A Committee Member made a proposal that 'following information which has come to light since the original decision was made, in terms of potential closures of day centres and changes to staff's pay and conditions and following the total non-assurance from the Cabinet Member that we cannot guarantee that these will not take place, then the Adults and Health Scrutiny Committee wish to refer this back to the Cabinet to ask for a delay of the implementation of this transfer (the Council's Learning Disability Provider Service) until after the May election and to urgently review the original decision.'

The proposal was seconded and the Committee moved to a vote. There were three votes in favour and three votes against. I used my Chairman's casting vote and the vote was carried.

The Committee made an urgent recommendation to Cabinet to consider its original decision made in July 2016 and to consider a delay of the transfer of the LDPS until after the May elections.

The Committee then received a report from the Head of Mental Health Services with an update on Mental Health Services for adults and their development in Somerset.

We heard that significant progress has been made since the last report. The performance and quality of the services commissioned by Somerset CCG is monitored via monthly and quarterly contract review meetings. SCC also has monitoring arrangements in place for the Mental Health Social Work Service as well as for their other commissioned services.

In implementing the Five Year Forward View for Mental Health, a number of bids have been submitted to NHS England to invest in and further develop services. These include a bid for a specialist Mental Health Liaison Service within the Acute hospitals and a bid to extend Improving access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) services to individuals with a broader range of conditions. As opportunities present, the CCG will work with partners to develop and submit further bids to meet the ambitions set out within the Five Year Forward View.

During 2017, the new SCC commissioning intentions for adults' mental health and dementia care and support services will be implemented, which will see a refocus on the importance of community and outcome-based support options that promote independence and enable individuals to work towards recovery.

The Committee was informed that, while services have developed, there is always more to do in assuring that outcomes are being met and that people have ease of access to the highest quality of service to meet their needs.

The Committee discussed: waiting times from GP referral to treatment; and the impact that MTFP cuts and service re-design may have on these services.

The Committee noted the report.

Following this, the Committee considered a report from the Deputy Director of Quality, Safety & Governance, Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). The report provided an overarching update to the Committee on quality, safety and patient experience of health services in Somerset.

The Committee were advised to consider the following key areas: Serious Incident (SI) investigations (section 5); NHS England CCG Quality assurance (section 7); and Mortality Rates (section 9).

The Committee discussed: the increase in SI's in Q3 particularly from Somerset Partnership; and concerns at Weston Hospital over SI and mortality figures;

The Committee noted the report. It requested a performance update from Weston Hospital and an update regarding gynaecology waiting times and the programme of recovery at Taunton & Somerset NHS Trust.

Next the Committee considered a report that provided an update on performance across the organisation. There are four "Council" segments which seek to measure how well the council manages its relationships with partners, staff and the public and how good its 'internal management' processes are. There is one

segment that seeks to reflect the performance of the Vision Projects being undertaken by the Vision Volunteers.

The report summarised that there are three red segments: P1 which is red but improving; P3 which is red but improving and C4 which is red but improving. P1 falls under the Committee's remit and the Committee agreed to discuss this in more detail during Item 9.

The Committee noted the report.

We then moved on to consider a report from the Adults and Health Operations Director. The report summarised the current performance of Adult Social Care in Somerset and provided benchmarking data showing how Somerset's data compares to other Councils in Somerset's 'family group'.

We heard that analysis of the data presents a mixed picture of performance. The data shows that year on year there have been improvements across almost all measures including: a decrease in permanent admissions to residential/nursing homes, particularly for older people (aged 65+); and an increase in overall satisfaction of people who use services. Somerset's performance against the two measures concerned with clients with learning disabilities is good. The Director stated that where performance is improving, it is often in relation to changes that have been made within the service.

However, the data also highlighted areas for improvement including personalisation, a key measure of which is the proportion of eligible users who receive personal budgets. Whilst Somerset does offer an average number of direct payments, these are often being used to fund traditional services and not being used creatively. Another area for improvement is the number of younger adults (aged 18-64) being placed in residential/nursing homes.

The Director of Adult Social Services added that he was disappointed with the report and that it reflected the paternalistic approach taken by the service in the past. It is hoped that some improvement will be seen in the 2016/17 data and certainly the 2017/18 data as the service can and should do better. The Director recommended that the Committee receive a regular update on performance.

The Committee discussed the need to reform the service and make improvements to performance.

The committee noted the report and requested regular updates in future.

For the final item of this meeting the committee received a report from the Strategic Commissioning Manager, Adults and Health which provided an update on the decision to abandon the Reable Somerset procurement.

On 14 December 2016, the Cabinet decided to award contracts (by two geographical lots) to Provider A for the provision of Reablement Services.

Officers carried out the appropriate due diligence checks prior to the decision to award. However, due diligence is a continuing obligation with further significant

checks carried out following the award decision but prior to the signing of the contract(s).

During the standstill period, Officers received information which merited careful consideration and the standstill period was formally extended for Lot 2. As Provider A was the successful bidder for both lots, the contract for Lot 1 has not been progressed to signature either.

Provider A has informed the Council that it would need to make material changes to their delivery model. The changes were not part of the tender that was evaluated by the Council. Information has also been obtained from Provider A's referees and from Provider A in order to ensure the Council makes an informed and proportionate decision which respects EU procurement principles and complies with the Public Contracts Regulations 2016.

As a direct consequence of the information received at various stages since the decision on 14 December 2016, including that information voluntarily provided by Provider A, Officers do not consider that it is in the best interests of the Council or the vulnerable users of the Reablement Service to proceed with concluding the award to Provider A. Furthermore, Officers recommend that the entire procurement (both lots) is abandoned in order to take time to consider carefully the issues raised by the current procurement process and whether they might need to be reflected in a revised procurement.

This decision was taken by the Leader of the Council on 02 February 2017.

The Committee discussed: the procurement process and lack of competitive dialogue; the quality of the evaluation questions used; the costs of abandonment and whether the Council planned to re-tender.

The Committee noted the report.

2.3 29 March 2017

Firstly, the Committee considered a report and presentation from the Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP) Programme Director and the Strategic Lead – Communication and Engagement which provided Members with an update on the Somerset Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP).

The presentation set out the shared vision for reforming health and social care to address the challenges of the rising needs of our population, changing demographics and increasingly stretched resources. The presentation highlighted the strategic priorities identified by the Programme Executive Group and the proposals for engagement with stakeholders and the public. This included: the STP vision and case for change; the priorities for closing the Health & Wellbeing, Quality and Financial gaps; the 'One Plan' approach for integrating care and pathways; identifying 'quick win' projects; establishing Design Groups to develop and implement solutions; addressing issues of sustainability and improving efficiency; and the three phases of the engagement and communication process.

The Committee discussed: the huge scale of the challenge; concerns about adequate funding; the perception that the STP is a cost-saving exercise; workforce challenges; the importance of prevention and Public Health; the need to communicate in plain English; the importance of working with other emergency services.

The Committee agreed with the priorities identified and was content with the direction of travel for consultation and engagement. We noted the report and requested an update at the next Committee meeting.

The Committee then moved on to consider a joint report from the Head of Urgent Care Programme Management (CCG) and Adults and Health Operations Director (SCC) regarding winter pressures planning across all health and social care services during the winter period for 2016/17.

The report explained that there has been increased demand across the urgent care system within health and social care services during the winter period for 2016/17 and this remains a persistent challenge for all organisations concerned within the urgent care system. During the winter period the Somerset system has been predominantly in Operational Pressures Escalation Level (OPEL) 2 and 3. The system has not declared the highest level of alert which is OPEL 4. Health and Social Care services have worked more collaboratively together than in previous years and are comprehensively planning for winter together.

We heard that a debrief event was held last month to consider the learning from this winter. Successes identified included: effective use of planning; working well together as a system and becoming more efficient at treating people as they present. It also highlighted the need to communicate more effectively and to increase performance with regard to discharge to access.

Services are still not performing well when compared nationally so there is much more work to do but performance is improving on previous years. Planning for next winter is beginning now and will also incorporate planning for the Easter period which is another time of challenge.

The Committee discussed: the extra government funding for adult social care; the culture of providers of reablement services; and the purchasing of additional beds.

The Committee noted the report.

The Committee then considered an update on the Somerset Autism Strategy from the Head of Joint Commissioning (Mental Health & Learning Disabilities) which provided a progress update on the implementation of the Somerset Autism Strategy, launched in November 2015.

The Strategy is aligned to the national strategy and the Autism Strategy Group brings together, Somerset CCG and SCC commissioners from adults, children's and public health teams, along with a range of agencies. The group meets on a quarterly basis to oversee the implementation of the Strategy and the action plan and has four priority areas of work: Living with Autism; Workforce Development; Identification and Diagnosis; and Children and Young people. The report highlighted the areas of progress and next steps for each priority area.

The report concluded that while services have developed there is always more to do in assuring that outcomes are being met for individuals with autism and their families. Work will continue within each of the priority areas.

The Committee discussed: the difference between autism and Asperger's Syndrome; and the significant delays in diagnosis.

The committee noted the report but expressed concern over the delay in diagnosis. They would welcome actions to improve the delays.

Next the Committee received a report from the Director of Clinical and Collaborative Commissioning which outlined the commissioning process of the improved access service for the population of Somerset.

In October 2016 it was announced that Somerset CCG was identified as a transformation area for improved access to GP services. In January 2017 Somerset CCG Governing Body approved a proposed commissioning, financial and service framework for the delivery of Improved Access to the Somerset population.

The foundation of the Somerset CCG improved access service is based on four primary objectives that are coherent with the Somerset Primary Care Plan and supported by key enablers;

- Commission a sustainable and effective model of care that enhances the availability of primary medical services across the county whilst maintaining high quality services, increasing patient satisfaction, managing demand and reducing duplication
- To deliver joined up, collaborative and responsive out of hospital care for patients across 7 days, meeting population needs and reducing unnecessary demand through the use of patient education and awareness
- Increase the capacity of primary medical services through the delivery of at scale services, sharing of resources and utilisation of IT innovations
- Deliver an integrated and responsive primary medical service that is clinically led and supported by a multi-disciplinary team, providing care to population groups in collaboration with multiple provider organisations

It is the ambition of the CCG to deliver the national requirements from April 2017, with the model for delivery being developed over the course of the contractual period. The intention is to learn from potentially different delivery models across Somerset and allow for the collaboration and integration between providers to take place.

A phased model has been developed to allow movement towards an integrated same day service across seven days, joining up service provision to deliver better care for patients and enhance the sustainability of services. Some federations were already considering or moving towards different ways of managing demand for primary care services. Having a phased approach prevents the CCG from unintentionally restricting any local innovations.

The Committee discussed: the huge variation of access currently available and the need for parity; skill-mix models; and whether GP surgeries can opt out of the extended service. We noted the report and requested an update early in the new quadrennium.

Finally the Committee considered a report from the Deputy Director of Quality and Safety which provided an update on Somerset Maternity Services and the local Maternity Transformation programme.

The report focused on how maternity services are responding to the Better Births report published in Feb 2016 and the quality measures put in place to ensure monitoring of the key priorities. Somerset has been chosen as one of eight national early adopter sites for Better Births, to support this transformational change in maternity services. The core Somerset bid is for the implementation of IT and Post-natal support for Somerset.

It is expected that the Local Maternity Services (LMS) will align with Sustainability and Transformation Plans (STP) footprints in Somerset. The challenge we have in Somerset is that the RUH, Weston and Dorset are outside our STP footprint and Local Maternity Systems will be expected to develop and implement a local vision for improved services.

- commissioners and providers are asked to work together across areas as local maternity systems (LMS)¹, with the aim of ensuring women, their babies and their families have equitable access to the services they choose and need, as close to home as possible. In particular, the role of the LMS is to:
 - bring together all providers involved in the delivery of maternity and neonatal care, including, for example, the ambulance service and midwifery practices providing NHS care locally
 - develop a local vision for improved maternity services based on the principles of Better Births
 - co-design services with service users and local communities
 - put in place the infrastructure needed to support services working together

In addition, the Committee received an update with regard to potential changes to maternity services at Dorchester Hospital which may impact on Yeovil District Hospital.

In September 2015, as part of its overall Clinical Service Review, Dorset CCG asked the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH) to conduct an Invited Review of the current service provision for maternity, neonatal and paediatric services. This review focussed on the services provided at Poole, Bournemouth, Dorchester and Yeovil Hospitals. The resulting report raised questions about the long-term sustainability of the current model of provision and proposed some high level future service options. The RCPCH report is publically available via the Dorset CCG website.

Following the publication of this report, the Boards of Yeovil District Hospital and Dorset County Hospital have agreed to work together to explore in more detail the options for the future model of maternity and paediatric services across the two sites. It was acknowledged that key to this work will be ensuring that the broader access implications for the populations of West Dorset and East Somerset are

fully considered, recognising the responsibility of Yeovil District Hospital to work as part of the Somerset NHS. A data modelling exercise is underway to inform this. The work is on-going and an options appraisal will be developed for consideration in the summer 2017. Any future service change will be subject to the NHS England requirements which would involve a full public consultation.

The Committee discussed: the high level of induced births in Somerset; and the impact on Yeovil Hospital if Dorchester maternity services are moved.

The Committee noted the report and asked for an update when more information was known regarding Dorchester Hospital.

3. Consultations Undertaken

The Committee invites all County councillors to attend and contribute to its meetings.

4. Implications

The Committee considers carefully and often asks for further information about the implications as outlined in the reports considered at its meetings.

For further details of the reports considered by the Committee, please contact the author of this report.

5. Background Papers

Further information about the Committee including dates of meetings and agendas and reports from previous meetings, are available via the Council's website:

www.somerset.gov.uk/agendasandpapers

Note: For sight of individual background papers please contact the report author.

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Somerset County Council

County Council

– 26 April 2017

Report of the Scrutiny Committee for Policies, Children and Families

Chairman: Cllr Leigh Redman

Division and Local Member: All

Lead Officer: Julian Gale – Strategic Manager – Governance and Risk

Author: Jamie Jackson – Governance Manager - Scrutiny

Contact Details: 01823 359040 jajackson@somerset.gov.uk

1. Summary

- 1.1. The Scrutiny for Policies Children and Families Committee is required by the Constitution to make an annual report to the Council each year and also to provide each other meeting of the Council with a summary progress report and outcomes of scrutiny. This is the second annual report of the Committee since our first meeting in May 2015, following the Council's enhanced focus on scrutiny of Children's Services. This report will summarise the regular update reports to Council since May 2016 and also cover the work of the Committee's final meetings of 2017.
- 1.2. The main part of our work programme fully supported by the committee during our first 12 months was based on the nine cross cutting Somerset priorities that had been agreed by the Somerset Children's Improvement Board. Our focus over the previous 12 months has been based on the seven cross cutting Somerset priorities that are the key themes in the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP). We have received an update on progress of the seven improvement programmes at our meetings and asked detailed questions of the Director of Children's Services and his team.
- 1.3. Over this time we have been pleased to see significant progress in many areas of the improvement programme, including the reduction in average caseloads and increased senior management capacity in the service. We requested and received detailed breakdowns of the number of remaining vacancies for social workers and team managers and the use interim staff.
- 1.4. The Committee has 9 elected Members. We also have 7 co-opted members. There is currently 1 Church representative and 2 vacancies; we have a Parent Governor representative and one vacancy; we have a CHYPPS representative and a representative from the Schools Forum. All of these co-opted members have voting rights on education matters only.
- 1.5. Members of the Council are reminded that:
 - all Members have been invited to attend meetings of all Scrutiny Committees and to contribute freely on any agenda item;
 - any Member could propose a topic for inclusion on the Scrutiny Work Programmes;
 - any Member can be asked by the Committee to contribute information and evidence, and to participate in specific scrutiny reviews.

- 1.6. Since our first meeting in May 2015 we have been pleased to see continuing progress in many areas of the Council's improvement agenda for children and young people and our central focus has remained to constantly ask and seek reassurance about - **What impact does that have on children in Somerset?** We would urge our successor Committee and its Members to retain focus on working towards ensuring the best outcomes for Children, Young People and Families in Somerset. We wish to place on record our thanks to those Officers, whom we have tried to support, for their on-going endeavour and hard work for the benefit of children and young people in Somerset.

2. Recommendations/Items for consideration

- 2.1. We recognise that our report is for information but we would ask Council to consider these measures, agreed at our last meeting, to help improve Scrutiny in the next quadrennium:
- Enhanced support for Scrutiny Members such as a Scrutiny Officer role;
 - More Scrutiny Committee and Member involvement and input before Cabinet decisions;
 - Scrutiny training be provided for the new Council after the May elections;
 - Encourage greater Member commitment and involvement as this is crucial to ensuring Scrutiny remains effective;
 - Lead Officer and Cabinet Member attendance at Scrutiny should continue as this is helpful;
 - That the outcome tracker we developed be adopted by the other 2 Scrutiny Committee's to ensure all recommendations are actioned/followed up

2.2. Work Programme

The work programme has focussed on the nine improvement priorities and practical work to support and challenge service improvement. The committee fully support this and the nine priorities, the chairman & vice chairman have been working with the Director of Children's Services (DCS) to ensure topics dealt with during scrutiny support the improvement process. When considering reports and policy changes we are constantly assessing what impact does that have on the children of Somerset? We would encourage all Councillors to become more actively involved and aware of their corporate parent responsibilities.

Each of our meetings had specific agenda items to consider the work programme and allow members and officers to suggest items we should scrutinise in more depth. We are also reviewing and updating how we track and monitor our suggested outcomes and/or recommended actions so we can understand the impact of our work so we can learn how to better focus our scrutiny work to ensure we have made a difference. In addition to our monthly Committee meetings we have established task and finish group to consider aspects related to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and also Young Carers in Somerset and have found this more focused approach very worthwhile.

Scrutiny Members have endeavoured through the first two years of the Committee's meetings to make suggestions and express opinions to Commissioning/Service Directors and Cabinet Members after discussion and debate. The majority of these were accepted and incorporated either into the operations of the Council or the decisions of the Cabinet. The Committee wishes to formally place on record its appreciation to those Cabinet Members that have

attended our meetings. This has often proved to be helpful both for the Committee and also the Cabinet Member and Lead Officer. We have also been grateful for the benefit of first hand testimony having invited front line staff to attend and participate at our meetings. We are also grateful to those professionals that participated in our task and finish reviews (often at short notice) and we have greatly valued them sharing their frontline knowledge and experience.

We have also been mindful during the last two years to reflect the Council's overall corporate focus on improving outcomes for young people across Somerset and ensuring improvement is real and deliverable. In this regard we have purposely sought to create constructive relationships with our sister Scrutiny Committees (Policies and Place) and (Adults and Health) as we have endeavoured to take care in establishing our respective work programmes of future items to avoid duplication and therefore hopefully complement their work. We are still hoping to arrange a joint meeting with the Adults and Health Committee to consider the improving outcomes from children and young people through better joint working between various agencies and partners.

We have felt occasional frustration over the last few years regarding our work programme and the production of reports. We agreed to consider our work programme and when we decide future reports and agenda items at the beginning of each meeting. We have welcomed and sought Officer participation in this process of helping us to shape our on-going work programme. However having agreed our work programme and reports for our future meetings we have been disappointed as reports have either subsequently been removed from our agenda or been produced after our agenda has been published and tabled at the meeting.

The late production of reports has on occasion affected our ability to consider and digest their contents and subsequently provide constructive challenge and comment. We accept that as Officers seek to improve outcomes for Children and Young People that their main focus, quite rightly, will be on operational matters however they also need to be able to evidence the progress they are making to our Committee, and recognise we are keen to offer them support in their endeavours but that we are currently reliant on them to explain to us how things are going.

2.3. Meetings overview

During our first 2 years the Chairman and 2 Vice-Chairmen have outlined the importance for the Committee to focus on aspects of the seven priorities of Children and Young Peoples Plan (CYPP) and we agreed that our work programme should be developed through discussions with the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, DCS and Cabinet Member for Children and Families.

We subsequently agreed to have an update on progress made against improvement programme 6 of the CYPP at each meeting and this has proved to be very useful. The Chairman requested that each member of the Committee volunteer to act as a champion for each programme and 5 of the 7 programmes have benefitted from having a member champion.

We would urge our successor Committee to focus on the delivery of the Children and Young Peoples Plan (CYPP). The 7 priority themes of the CYPP are:

- Supporting children, families and communities to become more resilient
- Promoting healthy outcomes and giving children the best start in life
- Improving emotional health and wellbeing
- Building skills for life
- Providing help early and effectively
- Achieving effective multi-agency support for more vulnerable children and young people and developing an excellent children's social work service
- Embedding a think family approach across the workforce

We have considered a number of reports on a range of topics and these have included:

- Regular updates on the implementation of the Children and Young People's Plan, particularly programme 6;
- Children's Safeguarding;
- Children Leaving Care;
- Data Handling and IT;
- Sedgemoor Together Team;
- Addressing Drug and Alcohol Concerns in Families;
- Annual report of Somerset Local Children's Safeguarding Board;
- Care Quality Commission's Review of Healthcare for Children Looked After and Safeguarding in Somerset;
- Updates on of local Youth Justice services;
- Strategic Vision for Education;
- Early Years and School Place Planning Infrastructure Growth Plan;
- Children's Services – Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) Action Plan Update;
- Somerset: Our County – Somerset's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA);
- Halcon One Team in Taunton and Sedgemoor Together team update;
- Updates on Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children;
- District Council's work with Vulnerable Families and Housing provision;
- Annual Children's Social Care Statutory Customer Feedback report;
- Somerset's Early Help Strategy 2016-2019;
- Children's Services Workforce Strategy;
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) updates;
- Elective Home Education (EHE);
- The Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (Budget setting process).

2.4. Suggestions for the Future

Despite the occasional problem with late or deferred reports, we have noted that over the last few months the timeliness of reports has improved. However this has been perhaps largely due to us receiving a series of update reports, therefore monitoring the implementation of a Cabinet decision. Scrutiny typically can occur at 3 stages: before the Cabinet has made a decision; after the Cabinet has made a decision but before it has been implemented or lastly after the Cabinet decision and after the decision has been implemented. We feel the Council would benefit from Scrutiny being asked to undertake more pre Cabinet decision work to help the transition from policy development to implementation.

Many of the reports we have considered have been what might be described as information reports where our ability to make constructive input or provide feedback has therefore been limited. As we look towards the next quadrennium we suggest that Scrutiny Committees are asked to consider policy/plans prior to Cabinet decision and implementation. Over the last few years we have formed several time limited Task and Finish Groups and these fact based and outcome focused reviews have been very constructive and allowed us over the course of 5/6 meetings to gather more facts and information and make recommendations.

As a Committee we recognise we are still relatively new and also that we were created specifically to help improve Children's Services as it was requiring urgent improvement and to some degree support. We therefore have always endeavoured to approach our task as a 'critical friend' by trying to be supportive to Officers and encouraging them to highlight areas of concern to us, whilst hopefully providing a suitably robust challenge to question poor performance and seek reassurance that appropriate action is taken to achieve improvement. We have on occasion been able to lend our support to requests for additional resources and to offer approval to new ways of working, particularly when the Council collaborates with other agencies to bring about improvement.

3. Consultations undertaken

- 3.1. The Committee invites all County Councillors to attend and contribute to its meetings.

4. Implications

- 4.1. The Committee considers carefully, and often asks for further information about the implications as outlined in, the reports considered at its meetings.
- 4.2. For further details of the reports considered by the Committee please contact the author of this report.

5. Background papers

- 5.1. Further information about the Committee including dates of meetings in the new quadrennium, and agendas & reports from previous meetings are available via the Council's website.
www.somerset.gov.uk/agendasandpapers

Note: For sight of individual background papers please contact the report author.

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Somerset County Council

County Council

– 26 April 2017

Annual Report of the Scrutiny for Policies and Place Committee

Lead Member: Cllr Tony Lock - Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee

Lead Officer: Julian Gale – Strategic Manager – Governance and Risk

Author: Jamie Jackson – Governance Manager – Scrutiny

Contact Details: jajackson@somerset.gov.uk or 01823 359040

1. Summary

- 1.1. The Scrutiny for Policies and Place Committee is required by the Constitution to make an annual report to the Council, and this report builds on the regular Scrutiny reports to Council meetings. A selection of the topics covered by Scrutiny Members during the year is shown in Section 4 of this report.
- 1.2. The Scrutiny for Policies and Place Committee has discussed a number of strategic and operational issues through the year. The Committee contributed to the Medium Term Financial Plan process and as in previous years held themed meetings on community safety as well as workshop/training sessions.
- 1.3. The Committee has taken a keen interest in the Core Council Performance which monitors the Council's Change Programme and we have considered update and progress reports that covered a wide variety of the Council's business. We have indicated that we wish to continue to receive such reports and have offered to continue to hold afternoon sessions on our scheduled meeting dates to consider relevant reports.
- 1.4. We have used task and finish groups to further explore in depth topics outside of our scheduled Committee meetings and we have found this flexible approach to be productive and interesting.

2. Issues for consideration

- 2.1. This report is for information.

3. Background

- 3.1. The Scrutiny for Policies and Place Committee has 9 elected Members, appointed by Full Council in accordance with party political representation.
- 3.2. Members agreed their work programme would comprise items considered directly at Scrutiny for Policies and Place Committee meetings plus other items considered or "commissioned" using flexible arrangements outside of the formal Committee structure.
- 3.3. Our Committee reviews its work programme at each meeting and Members have tried to select a broad range of topics that cover all aspects of the Council's work. During the year Members were reminded that:

- All Council Members are invited to attend meetings of the Scrutiny for Polices and Place Committee and to contribute freely on any agenda item;
- Any Member can propose a topic for inclusion on the Scrutiny Work Programme;
- Members may be asked by the Scrutiny for Polices and Place Committee to contribute information and evidence from their own division and from their own experience, and to participate in specific Scrutiny reviews.

4. Work Programme

- 4.1. During the year and already reported to Council, topics considered included:
- Medium Term Financial Plan;
 - Capital Investment Programme;
 - Core Council Programme update reports;
 - Connecting Devon and Somerset updates;
 - Highways projects updates;
 - Smart Office Programme and County Hall campus update reports;
 - Local Enterprise Partnership update;
 - CASA updates and Council ICT planning;
 - Regular Flood and Water Management updates.
- 4.2. Scrutiny Members have endeavoured through the last year of the Committee's meetings to make suggestions and express opinions to Commissioning/Service Directors and Cabinet Members after discussion and debate. The majority of these were accepted and incorporated either into the operations of the Council or the decisions of the Cabinet. The Committee wishes to formally place on record its appreciation to those Cabinet Members that have attended our meetings. This has often proved to be helpful both for the Committee and also the Cabinet Member and Lead Officer.
- 4.3. This Committee has also enjoyed a constructive relationship with our sister Scrutiny Committee (Policies and People) as both Committees have taken care in establishing our respective work programme of future items to avoid duplication and compliment each others work. All Scrutiny Committees considered the same reports on the Council's budget proposals but each Committee focuses its discussion to the proposals relevant to its own specific remit. To avoid duplication and ensure all Committee Members could contribute to the debates, we encourage all our Scrutiny colleagues to attend our meetings.
- 4.4. Since our last regular report to Council, we have held one meeting on 21 March. At our March meeting we considered a report on the achievements of the Heart of the Southwest Local Enterprise Partnership. We learnt that the Growth Deal agreements had enabled a significant number of Somerset priority infrastructure schemes, as identified in the Somerset Growth Plan, to be funded. This included local transport improvements in Bridgwater, Taunton and Yeovil, Further Education infrastructure at Bridgwater, Taunton and Yeovil and enterprise and innovation space at Bridgwater, Yeovil, Highbridge and Wiveliscombe to be funded. In addition investment covering a wider area through superfast broadband and mobile infrastructure and in the Somerset flood action plan had also been secured.

Our final report provided us with details and a further update on the progress made by the South West Heritage Trust since its formation in November 2014.

We heard that the collections care and acquisitions team had enjoyed notable achievements including having: the Frome Hoard being the centrepiece of an exhibition at the British Museum; and a review of the fine art collection had been completed, enabling a programme of conservation works to be agreed. It was also noted that a strong volunteer cohort remained central to the success of the SWHT and gave the equivalent of 3,147 working days over the last year.

We were heartened to hear of the progress made and the Committee accepted the report and congratulated Officers for providing a resilient future for the heritage service and so ensuring the economy and cultural life of Somerset's rich heritage was protected and made available for future generations.

5. Background papers

5.1. Scrutiny Committee and Panel reports, outcomes and minutes.

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Annual Report of the Audit Committee 2016/17

Lead Member: Cllr Dawn Hill - Chair of the Audit Committee

Lead Officer: Martin Gerrish - Finance Governance Manager

Author: Cllr Dawn Hill - Chair of the Audit Committee and Martin Gerrish, Strategic Manager - Financial Governance

Contact Details: tel (01823) 355303 or e-mail: mgerrish@somerset.gov.uk

1. Summary

- 1.1. The Audit Committee is required by the Constitution to make an annual report to Full Council.
- 1.2. The Audit Committee forms a part of the County Council's corporate governance arrangements. Its purpose is to "provide independent assurance of risk management and the control environment", "independent scrutiny of the authority's financial and non-financial performance" and "oversee the financial reporting process" (CIPFA).
- 1.3. This report is to inform members of the work of the Audit Committee in the previous financial year, and to note the Committee's opinion on the standard of governance, risk management and internal audit in place within the County Council.

2. Background

- 2.1. The Audit Committee met a total of 8 times during the 2016/2017 financial year. Every meeting has had a very full and wide-ranging agenda, reflecting the role of the Committee.

The additional meetings during the last year have been on the direct instructions of committee members in order to gain the necessary assurance around internal audit reports that only achieved Partial Assurance, and therefore indicated that controls were lacking. A total of 21 separate Partial Assurance audits have been formally reviewed by the Audit Committee during 2016/2017, with the responsible manager(s) presenting their actions and plans to meet the auditor's recommendations.

- 2.2. In addition to what might be considered its "core" reports around corporate risk, internal audit and the Statement of Accounts, the Audit Committee has regularly requested attendance by officers to explain other matters. This is to provide assurance on key topics to satisfy members that the appropriate governance measures are in place to meet the organisation's aims, to meet statutory requirements, and to mitigate risks and prevent losses.

Presentations have been received on issues such as the new Contract Management processes, Business Continuity, the future direction of IT for the authority and the National Audit Office work on financial sustainability of local authorities through capital expenditure and resourcing.

2.3. Technical support to the Audit Committee comes from a number of sources, including:-

- Grant Thornton as External Auditor for the Statement of Accounts and Value for Money conclusion.
- South West Audit Partnership (SWAP) as Internal Auditor to deliver our Internal Audit Plan
- The Director of Finance and Performance, or his deputy, in the capacity of the s151 officer.
- Strategic Manager – Financial Governance, acting as the Chief Internal Auditor and also Lead Officer for the Committee.
- Chief Accountant providing training to members and presenting the Statement of Accounts.
- Governance Manager and Principal Officer – Risk Management.

The Audit Committee wishes to place on record its gratitude for the continued quality of the support that it receives.

3. Work Programme

3.1. The Audit Committee's work programme over the last year has been varied, but key responsibilities and themes have always included:

- formal approval of the Annual Statement of Accounts and Value For Money Conclusion;
- continued review of the management of risks across the County Council, with particular emphasis on the corporate risks;
- review of the corporate governance arrangements across the County Council to ensure that they remain sound and fit for the changing authority, e.g. the Annual Governance Statement and system of internal control, anti-fraud and corruption measures; the Internal Audit plan;
- review of Internal and External Audit reports looking at the Audit Plan delivery and findings, and ensuring that individual managers follow-up audit recommendations;
- review of the debtor management processes and its performance in collecting money due to the County Council.
- how the County Council is delivering on commissioning of services ,learning lessons from Audit findings and previously commissioned contracts

3.2. The Audit Committee can report that the majority of governance functions and processes remain well-controlled and delivered.

For the accounting period 2017/18 the statutory deadlines for publishing draft accounts and final audited accounts changes from 30 June and 30 September respectively, to 31 May and 31 July respectively. To ensure we deliver successfully to the new statutory deadlines, we have implemented the new deadlines already, ahead of schedule, in order to determine how this can best be achieved. Audit Committee can report that not only were the statutory deadlines achieved for the 2015/2016 accounts (i.e. 2 years ahead of the legislation), but that the Statement of Accounts preparation resulted in an unqualified opinion for both the County Council and the Pensions Fund. This is the most positive conclusion that is possible from external audit, and the auditor was most complimentary in his report to Audit Committee in July 2016. Members

were delighted with the performance, and congratulated the officers involved in this achievement.

The Value For Money Statement again received a highly positive external audit, with only the widely-reported OFSTED issue outstanding.

- 3.3. The Anti-Fraud and Corruption Review report that came to the January 2017 Audit Committee brought details of 6 potential fraud cases involving the County Council or the Pension Fund. Although some have now been closed without fraud involved, some cases are still “live” and under investigation. A significant Anti-Fraud and Corruption effort continues to be undertaken in conjunction with the National Fraud Initiative and with specialist officers from SWAP and the Police. This should serve as a reminder to all to be vigilant in relation to fraudulent activities. The Audit Committee fully re-endorsed the “zero tolerance” policy in operation in the County Council.
- 3.4. The Audit Committee has just received a piece of work entitled Healthy Organisation from SWAP. This was commissioned as part of the 2016/2017 internal audit plan and looks at the governance framework across a number of key themes (SWAP are carrying out this piece of work for a number of partner authorities). The Healthy Organisation report shows that the overall governance framework for the authority is generally sound, but that there are a number of improvements that could be made. These will be picked up as part of the 2017/2018 internal audit plan.
- 3.5. One recurrent theme throughout the Audit Committee’s work in the past financial year has been in relation to IT. A number of the Partial assurance audits were wholly or partially related to poorly performing IT systems that are simply not fit for purpose and have led to workarounds and inefficiencies. The Audit Committee very much welcomed the positive presentation on the future of IT at its November 2016 meeting, but is acutely aware that there are a multitude of tasks to improve our IT across a wide variety of services.

4. Training

- 4.1. The Audit Committee has continued to hold training and workshop sessions in addition to its public meetings when necessary. During the previous financial year, this included training in relation to the Statement of Accounts ahead of their approval. The training programme will be reviewed once the new Committee is formed.

5. Conclusions

- 5.1. The Audit Committee feels that a strong governance framework remains in place. However, there have been some specific audit findings reported during the previous year that have revealed local weaknesses that still need to be addressed. The Audit Committee will continue to review progress in these areas, and call in the relevant officers to provide the necessary assurance.
- 5.2. The Audit Committee remains committed to ensuring that high governance standards are maintained.

6. Background papers

6.1. Audit Committee papers can be found at:

<http://www1.somerset.gov.uk/council/boards.asp?boardnum=9>

Note: For sight of individual background papers please contact the report author

Somerset County Council

County Council

– 26 April 2017

Annual Report of the Leader of the Council

Cabinet Member: Cllr John Osman - Leader of the Council

Division and Local Member: All

Lead Officer: Pat Flaherty - Chief Executive

Author: Cllr John Osman - Leader of the Council

Contact Details: 01823 355104

1. Summary

- 1.1. This is my final Leader's Annual Report to Council of this quadrennium. Before discussing the work and achievements of the Council over the last year I would like to take this opportunity to thank Cabinet, council Members, officers and the Council's partners for the all work they have done over the last 12 months.
- 1.2. There are many highlights and achievements to be celebrated:
- **Improving adult social care** so it helps people to stay independent for longer;
 - The improvement of **our children's services over the last 3 years** so our young people get the support they need;
 - 91% of our **schools at Ofsted 'good' or 'outstanding'** level, and **excellent achievement by pupils and students**;
 - More and more premises being able to access **superfast broadband**;
 - **More enterprise and incubation space** for businesses and entrepreneurs;
 - **Solid partnership working** across Somerset and the Heart of the South West, including on health, economic growth and flood resilience;
 - The crucial announcement last year giving the green light to construct **Hinkley Point C**; and most recently
 - Somerset winning a disproportionately high share of the Government's **Growth Deal 3 award** - over £27m of the £43.57m allocated to the Heart of the South West.
 - **Somerset Rivers Authority**
 - **Heath of the South West Devolution**
- 1.3. All this has been accomplished despite having to keep pace with continuing national austerity. We have set a net revenue budget requirement of £311.772m for 2017-18, alongside capital investment of £107.599m. This includes using new freedoms to raise additional Council Tax to support the essential work of Adult Social Care.

The council continues to modernise and reform its services in the face of demographic and financial pressures. The Core Council Programme continues to drive transformation: economic growth, adult services modernisation, children's improvement and delivering a modern council through the '2020 vision.'

The new Somerset County Plan has been in place for slightly over a year and outlines the priorities for the council. My report will mirror its broad themes.

2. Our Council

Listening Learning Changing

In this year's Listening Learning Changing roadshows more than 6,000 people were asked about which council priorities they valued most as well as other key issues. For the fourth year running, 'helping vulnerable and elderly people' was voted the highest of the Council's priorities followed by 'investing in Somerset's economy and infrastructure' and 'attracting jobs and apprenticeships.'

We have heard/will hear shortly the report from Customers and communities so I will move on to other issues.

Vision projects

The new County Plan included a commitment to four major new projects for the council: a new university, a new Garden Town, energy initiatives and more business parks. This work is being carried out using an innovative 'vision volunteer' method where staff are encouraged to join and lead the projects from inception through to completion, with support from senior managers.

Collocating public services in the community

In order to provide services where they are needed and take advantage of new technology, a project to develop new 'hubs' has been under way to collocate a wide range of public services where communities need them. The new hub at Orchard Court in Glastonbury brings together the Library, Registration Services, Getset Children's Centre, health visitors and midwives, Mendip District Council's Access Point, Citizen's Advice, Health Connections Mendip and a children's nursery. Work on further hubs continues and this initiative will also help the council rationalise its property holdings and save money.

Our staff

It is important to me that everyone who works for the council knows that what they do is appreciated, and that without their dedication neither quality services nor necessary improvements could be delivered.

At the beginning of February the Council held its annual staff awards ceremony which recognised the continuing excellence and hard work of staff across the council. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate and thank those who were nominated and who won: it is clear that all staff are working hard to deliver the best services they possibly can.

Our Human Resources and Organisational Development team is also working on how to harness the potential of all members of staff and develop the culture of the organisation.

We are also committed to employing apprentices at Somerset County Council. We employ 37 apprentices across a number of services and aim to increase that number to approximately 150 apprentices and trainees per year.

Somerset County Council was awarded runner up in the 'Employer of People with Disability' category at the 2016 National Learning Disabilities and Autism Awards. This award recognised the employment support the Council provides to people with learning disabilities.

Information and Communications Technology

In November the council's contract with SouthWest One came to an end. After a smooth transfer of services and systems back into the council a new programme of ICT transformation is focussing on productivity, resilience and compliance.

The Smart Programme of changes to the way that the council uses its buildings has now been completed and has delivered savings as well as improved working practices. Building on that work is the new Technology and People Programme which will roll-out the next generation of digital technology, further modernise ways of working and improve productivity.

Performance management

It is essential that the Council monitors and manages its activity and to this end we have refreshed our performance reporting to ensure that it continues to reflect the Council's plans. We have continued to embed and develop this as part of our Performance Management Framework.

2.1. Improving Adult Social Care

The demographic realities of Somerset – an aging population meaning increased demand – coupled with long-term reductions in Government funding have made it imperative to look at the way that adult social care works.

The maxim that 'most people would rather be able to look after themselves than rely on Council or other help providers' is central to the council's approach: promoting independence, early intervention, and prevention. For example the Innovation Site in West Somerset has been operational for ten months and instead of a traditional 'paternalistic' approach to care it is based on promoting independence and staying healthier for longer.

There is still a lot of work to do however over the last year a huge amount has been done to prepare the ground, challenge culture and practices, and work more effectively with partners in health, housing and elsewhere.

It is important to note that whilst the 2017 Spring Budget announcement of £12m of additional funding for Adult Social Care is very welcome, reforming our service is still essential in order to make it sustainable in the long term. This is a step forward but still a huge way to go to establish the fair funding for Somerset that our residents deserve and I know that all sides will support the new Leader in the next Administration to fight the good fight for this cause.

2.2. Health and Wellbeing

Sustainability and Transformation Plans

Many financial and service challenges across health and social care require a radical and joined up response. Launched in November 2016 the Somerset Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP) has been developed jointly by Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group, Somerset County Council, Somerset Partnership and the county's two large hospitals.

It sets out a shared vision for reforming health and social care to address the changing demographics of our county, tackle increasing demand and modernise

the service through integration and cooperation. The STP is the key document that will drive our partnership with the NHS in the coming years and will focus on prevention, early intervention, reducing bed-blocking, moving services away from hospital and closer to people's homes, mental health and making the system more transparent and financially sustainable. I am delighted that our own Chief Executive is leading the STP and looking to deliver for Somerset.

Mental health

Since October 2016 Somerset County Council has been responsible for delivering mental health social care. A new Mental Health Social Care offer launched at that time focuses on social needs rather than a purely medical approach and will help people to access the support and care they need.

As well as developing mental health services across the Somerset, the STP will also ensure parity of esteem between physical and mental health.

Public health

The 2016 Joint Strategic Need Assessment was published last year and focused on informing the new Children and Young People's Plan. More widely the Public Health team and Health and Wellbeing Board continue to promote and support initiatives to prevent illness and promote healthier lifestyles, including programmes to tackle smoking, reduce falls amongst older people, promote healthy eating, and encourage physical activity and good health in people of all ages.

2.3. Children's Services

Children's Improvement

The hard work being carried out by our children's services is bearing fruit and is being recognised both by the Department of Education and Ofsted.

The Minister wrote to in December 2016 praising the commitment of the Council and recognising that there has been 'significant improvement'.

In addition Ofsted have carried out two monitoring visits in December 2016 and February 2017. Visiting teams in different parts of the County, inspectors found high morale amongst children's social workers, a commitment to Somerset, and evidence of continuous improvement..

We know that more needs to be done and the inspectors highlighted areas in need of additional attention so that good examples become the norm.

Having completed the 'nine priorities' action plan a new 2016-19 Children and Young People's Plan comprises seven Improvement Programmes:

1. Supporting children, families and communities to become more resilient;
 2. Promoting healthy outcomes and giving children the best start in life;
 3. Improving emotional health and wellbeing;
 4. Building skills for life;
 5. Providing help early and effectively;
 6. Achieving effective multi-agency support for more vulnerable children and young people and developing an excellent children's social work service;
- and

7. Embedding a think family approach across the workforce.

Importantly, the Plan is a multi-agency document that involved input from young people, children looked after, and care leavers.

Achievements across the service so far include:

- Reduced numbers of 'children looked after';
- Reducing caseloads to 14, one of the lowest in the country and an improving ratio of permanent to locum staff;
- Somerset is leading a partnership of South West local authorities to deliver the Step Up to Social work programme which encourages graduates to choose a career in social work;
- Last year saw a record 96% of newly qualified social workers choosing to stay with the County Council after finishing their first year in the role;
- Improved management practices including new permanent managers;
- West Somerset Opportunity Area plans for improving social mobility are under development; and
- A new Regional Adoption Agency in partnership with Devon, Plymouth and Torbay is progressing.

Corporate Parenting

The Corporate Parenting Strategy 2016-19 was approved by Cabinet in April 2016 and endorsed by Full Council the following month. The five priorities in the strategy and work under way focus on:

- The voice of the child;
- Care leavers;
- Health of children looked after and care leavers;
- Education; and
- Fostering and adoption.

Education

The new strategic vision for education in Somerset 'Achieving Excellence for All' went live in April 2016 and is an ambitious partnership programme of work to improve outcomes for all children. The focus for the first year was support for vulnerable children and young people including the most able - schools are active partners in this work.

Educational achievement of our children and young people is also encouraging

- 68.7% of Somerset children achieved a 'good level of development' in 2016, 2 percentage points higher than in 2015;
- 62% of children at Key Stage 4 achieved GCSE grades of A* to C in English and Maths, precisely in line with the national average; and
- 91% of schools are rated by Ofsted as 'good' or 'outstanding' – a tribute to the hard work of headteachers up and down the county.

Schools, whether academies or maintained schools have increasing autonomy from local authorities. The County Council therefore works with schools to maximise that autonomy and increase their effectiveness, and new initiatives include:

- Appointment of Somerset Education Partners to support every school to improve;
- A new Somerset Education Partnership Board to hold schools, the council and partners to account for the impact on pupil outcomes of the available funding; and
- New core standards for Special Education Needs.

2.4. Economy

Growth Deal 3

The Government's announcement of Growth Deal 3 on 23 February 2017 has been very positive for Somerset. The county received over £27m of the £43.57m allocated to the Heart of the South West, and supports a number of our priority schemes:

- Phase 3 of the Somerset Innovation Centre in Bridgwater;
- Expansion of the Connecting Devon and Somerset broadband and mobile project to target more unserved areas and increase 4G coverage;
- Construction of the iAero (South) Centre in Yeovil;
- Next generation ICT training project 'Blue Screen IT – PROJECT X', a LEP-wide hub and spoke training for cyber security, big data and social media;
- Improving the M5 Junction 25 and Toneyway in Taunton between the motorway and Creech Castle; and
- New road links to employment sites at Huntspill Energy Park.

Hinkley Point C

In September last year contracts to begin construction of Hinkley C were signed. After a period of uncertainty when the Government chose to review the project this is excellent news for the County and its economic future, and will deliver billions of Pounds of benefit to the regional economy over the lifetime of the project and help kickstart a national nuclear renaissance that Somerset will be part of.

Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS)

Access to the internet has significant public and economic benefit and Somerset's residents and businesses are very clear that superfast broadband is of crucial importance to them. It is therefore excellent news that Growth Deal 3 has expanded the CDS programme as well as increasing mobile coverage. I am also pleased that despite some delays by the in March 2017 the CDS partnership announced that the programme's £94 million contract has achieved, and is now expected to exceed, its major target of making superfast fibre broadband available to 278,000 households and businesses across the two counties. Approximately 104,000 of these are in Somerset and it is encouraging that one-in-three businesses and households with access to this technology have now taken it up – around double the figure of only 18 months ago.

As well as a new 'Airband' system for parts of Exmoor, the CDS partnership has also signed a contract to deliver parts of phase two of the programme outside the National Parks. Four of the six lots on offer have been awarded and will deliver a total investment of £54.3m, two thirds coming from the private sector, which far exceeds the levels seen in phase 1. When complete in December 2019, these contracts will have delivered an ultrafast broadband network, offering speeds of

1000mbps to 35,225 of the hardest to reach homes and businesses.

Enterprise and incubation space

As well as Growth Deal 3 funding for the Toneway and Junction 25, £4million funding from Highways England's Growth and Housing Fund was announced for further improvements at the motorway junction and to help unlock access to a new 35-hectare development site which could deliver up to 2,400 jobs. This is a partnership project, being delivered by Somerset County Council with additional funding from Taunton Deane Borough Council and the LEP.

More enterprise centres have been given the green light, been complete or expanded in the last year. These include:

- Expansion of the popular Minehead Enterprise Centre;
- Planning permission for Enterprise Centre in Wiveliscombe, a new mixed office/light industrial space;
- Planning permission for Wells Technology Enterprise Centre, a new business space designed to provide more office space and to support small to medium-size business growth in the area.

2.5. Partnerships

Partnership is becoming increasingly important for the public sector and Somerset County Council and many of the achievements I have discussed in this report would not have been possible without close working with our partners.

The County Council continued to be involved in a wide range of strategic conversations and relationships across Somerset and the Heart of the South West has, including:

- The Somerset Rivers Authority;
- The Somerset Growth Board;
- Connecting Devon and Somerset;
- The Heart of the South West Leader's Group, focussing on a new Productivity Plan, devolution, and the challenges and opportunities presented by Brexit; and
- Looking at the potential of a Strategic Board for Somerset to take advantage of growing levels of collaboration across the county.

I would like to finish my report by restating my gratitude to Cabinet, Members and officers who continue to work tirelessly to deliver such a wide variety of projects in what continue to be difficult financial times nationally. In a complex and uncertain world it is to be celebrated that the challenging issues for our County are not only being identified, but also addressed.

- 2.6. I would like to finish my report by restating my gratitude to Cabinet, Members and officers who continue to work tirelessly to deliver such a wide variety of projects in what continue to be difficult financial times nationally. In a complex and uncertain world it is to be celebrated that the challenging issues for our County are not only being identified, but also addressed.

3. Background papers

Budget

- County Council meeting 15 February 2017:
<http://democracy.somerset.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=137&MId=208&Ver=4>

Adult Social Care

- Annual Report of the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care 30 November 2016:
<http://democracy.somerset.gov.uk/documents/s1258/2016%20November%2030%20Item%2016%20Annual%20Report%20of%20the%20Cabinet%20Member%20for%20Adult%20Social%20Care.pdf>
- Adult Social Care Performance Update 1 March 2017:
<http://democracy.somerset.gov.uk/documents/s2455/2017%2001%20March%20-%20Item%209%20-%20Adult%20Social%20Care%20Performance%20Update.pdf>

Health and wellbeing

- Somerset Sustainability and Transformation Plan:
<http://www.somerset.gov.uk/stp/>
- Somerset Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2012-18:
<http://www.somerset.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing/somerset-health-and-wellbeing-board/>
- Mental Health Services Update: 1 March 2017:
<http://democracy.somerset.gov.uk/documents/s2411/2017%2001%20March%20-%20Item%206%20-%20Mental%20Health%20Services%20Update.pdf>

Children's Services

- Somerset Children's and Young People's Plan 2016-19:
<http://www.somerset.gov.uk/EasySiteWeb/GatewayLink.aspx?allId=42521>
- Somerset School Performance 2016:
<http://democracy.somerset.gov.uk/documents/s2687/School%20Performance.pdf>
- Children's Service update 20 February 2017:
<http://democracy.somerset.gov.uk/documents/s2427/Childrens%20Services%20Update%20v2.pdf>
- Annual Report of the Cabinet Member for Children and Families 15 February 2017; <http://democracy.somerset.gov.uk/documents/s1936/Item%2013%20-%20Annual%20Report%20of%20the%20Cabinet%20Member%20for%20Children%20and%20Families.pdf>
- Report on Corporate Parenting 6 September 2016:
<http://democracy.somerset.gov.uk/documents/q268/Public%20reports%20pack%2026th-Sep-2016%2010.00%20Cabinet.pdf?T=10>
- Strategy for Achieving Excellence for all 2016-20:
<http://www.somerset.gov.uk/policies-and-plans/strategies/somerset-strategic-vision-for-education/>

Economy

- Connecting Devon and Somerset update 20 January 2017:
<http://democracy.somerset.gov.uk/documents/s1733/2017%20Jan%2031%20-%20Item%206%20Connecting%20Devon%20and%20Somerset.pdf>

- Growth Deal 3 update 21 March 2017: <http://democracy.somerset.gov.uk/documents/s2823/LEP%20scrutiny.pdf>
- Somerset Growth Plan 2014-20: <http://www.somerset.gov.uk/policies-and-plans/plans/somerset-growth-plan/>

Note: For sight of individual background papers please contact the report author

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Somerset County Council

County Council

– 26 April 2017

Annual Report of the Cabinet Member for Customers and Communities

Cabinet Member: Cllr John Osman – Cabinet Member for Customers and Communities

Division and Local Member: All

Lead Officer: Simon Clifford - Director

Author: Jan Stafford - Strategic Manager

Contact Details: jastafford@somerset.gov.uk on 01823 355010**1. Summary**

- 1.1.** An important year for the services which has seen us move the contract centre and around 80 staff from the South West One contract into the Customers and Communities directorate. It was achieved seamlessly and is tribute to the hard work on all sides to achieve this.
- 1.2.** Other notable successes saw the opening of our first Library Hub in Glastonbury, our newly created Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise forum go from strength to strength and our roadshow events engaging more than 5000 residents throughout the year. Importantly the year has also seen the development and improvement of our business intelligence teams which has been recognised in various external inspections, most notably in support of our children's services.

2. Customers and Communities – the last 12 months**Customer access**

This year we were delighted to open our first Customer Library Hub in Orchard Court, Glastonbury. This new space incorporating SCC, NHS, Mendip District Council and Citizen's Advice with an integrated Customer Service 'front desk' has been well received and praised by the local community. Not only does it save cash for reinvestment in frontline services it also makes it easier for our customers to access a range of services in one place designed around them and not the providing organisation. As part of the CASA programme now known as One Public Estate [OPE] we are now focussed on delivering two more in Williton and Shepton Mallet as well as supporting feasibility work for future OPE hubs in Yeovil, Bridgwater and Taunton.

Contact Centre

We were pleased to welcome back the Contact Centre from the South West One contract into the Customers and Communities Directorate in December 2016. Our planning and preparation allowed for a seamless transition and delivery of business as usual from day one.

The Contact Centre has worked together with the Adults Social Care as part of their 'Community Connect' project. This targets help and support at a community level and has required a change in approach within the contact centre in which call handlers take a key role in running an effective triage to gain a clear understanding on a caller's needs and circumstances This has .seen a step-change in the way we deal with callers, with average call times increasing to 25

minutes giving trained operatives the time and space they need to appropriately deal with callers at the first point of contact. By effectively sign-posting to other support and community options, operatives are able to reduce the number of people who are referred through to formal the Adults Social Care Services. Customer satisfaction in this area runs in excess of 90%, and is far more efficient and effective for our own staff. Other services which have been taken on by the Contact Centre this year include some areas of Mental Health services as well as working with services to incorporate Parking Services, Learning Disability, SEN and Getset for 2017/18.

Transforming the way the Contact Centre works and achieving efficiencies by shifting a number of the 440,000 annual contacts to an 'on-line' offer is the focus for the coming year.

Community Development

The Community Development Team is responsible for shaping the Council's approach to building stronger communities.

Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sector (VCSE)

The VCSE Strategic Forum continues to go from strength to strength, with a State of the Sector Survey being undertaken for the first time and builds on the Vital Signs survey undertaken by the Somerset Community Foundation. The forum has helped improve communication and liaison between partners and the local authority; provided the basis for accountable representation of the VCSE sector to influence policy and commissioning; and helped the cascade of information from the public sector to the wider VCSE and vice versa. Membership of the forum continues to grow and now includes Chamber of Commerce to begin to provide an important link to businesses and also parish / town council representation. In March 2017 we held our first VCSE Leaders Conference focusing on collaboration and SCC have funded a new voluntary sector web platform to be formally launched to coincide with National Volunteers' Week (1-7 June 2017). This investment will assist the sector in leveraging in investment and winning funding bids.

Volunteering

The County Council has over 2,000 volunteers supporting service delivery. Through the Council's new Somerset Volunteer Service we are working with services to grow and explore new volunteer opportunities. In February 2017 we held a first Volunteer Workshop bringing together services to develop a more consistent and joined up approach. We continue to promote and celebrate volunteering in Somerset and are once again inviting nominations for the Somerset Star Volunteer Award.

Armed Forces Covenant

In 2016 over 60 delegates attend the first partnership conference with plans to run a similar event again in 2017 to coincide with Armed Forces Week. In 2016 we strengthened links with other south-west covenants which culminated in a south-west Covenant Fund bid and we are awaiting the outcome. Further information was reported through the annual report from the Cabinet member for Improvement.

Business Intelligence/Customer Insight:

The Somerset Intelligence Partnership continues to provide a strong forum for sharing information, insight and data across the public sector to the benefit of the Somerset community. Positive feedback on the monthly data and intelligence newsletter continues to demonstrate its worth to a range of audiences. The Somerset Intelligence website has again been a highly valued source of information, receiving well in excess of 80,000 page views during the year. The teams continue to ensure 100% compliance with statutory data returns to DoH, DfE and Ofsted and production of statutory documents such as the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment to inform the priorities of the Health and Wellbeing Board.

Significant improvements have been made in our ability to pull data together from disparate sources and IT systems into one place. Through the development of data warehouses and associated data dashboards, services such as Special Education Needs and Disabilities and the Virtual School for Children Looked After now have new report functionality which brings data from Education and Social Care services together.

Consultations

This year we have contributed to 66 consultations and external surveys with around 7,000 individuals engaged*. We have also assisted with three internal staff surveys to the entire workforce. *More detail of our Listening Learning changing consultation road-shows can be found within the Communications section. Some of the key consultation/engagement work carried out over the last year includes:

- Review of discretionary fares on local bus services;
- School Admission Arrangements
- Dulverton School - Change of age range
- Dunster Pavement Consultation
- People aged 5-18 who have experienced sexual abuse trauma
- Parents Childcare Entitlement consultation

This Autumn we saw the latest results from our public Tracker Survey. The headlines show:

- a small but steady improvement in the overall levels of satisfaction in the way the Council runs services;
- of those surveyed almost half believed that the council was making the right decisions in the current climate;
- more people have a positive view of the County Council;

Going forward the use of social media, online tools and the use of volunteers are currently being explored to gather customer views in the absence of the tracker. Supporting engagement and consultation of the newly emerged Sustainable Transformation Plan for Adult Social Care and Health is a priority this year.

Customer Experience

Listening to, and learning from, our customers remains our focus. The IT system called 'Icasework' was upgraded this year and is used throughout the authority to record complaints, compliments and information requests currently shows an improving picture from previous years. Stage 1 complaints increased from 790 in 2015/16 to 1014 in 2016/17. This is down to the new and robust measure to

record contacts through Icasework. With this continuing and significant rise it is worth noting that the number of complaints progressing to Stage 2 remains in single figures at 9 for the same period. This is an escalation rate of 0.9% improving from 1.1% in 2015/16. This suggests that the hard work put in by the Customer Experience Team and individual officers within services to mediate and resolve complaints at the earliest opportunity has paid off.

In 2014/15 there were 26 complaints sent to the Local Government Ombudsman for investigation with 17 being upheld. This year we anticipate a reduction to single figures.

For the first time ever we have been able to accurately gather 591 compliments and 114 comments for 16/17 which is welcome and provides positive service feedback. This is a significant increase on previous years. This wealth of customer insight provides valuable information to drive service improvement and commissioning.

Opportunities on our agenda for next year include exploring switching on the public view on Icasework enabling customers to self-serve and track progress for themselves as well as working with the Children Services to extend the use of Icasework in Schools.

Equalities & Diversity

SCC's focus on the equalities and diversity [E&D] agenda over the last year remain high with the completion of 72 Impact Assessments to shape and inform decision making and a number of promotional and engagement events such as the Holocaust Memorial.

The plan for delivering the Council's recently refreshed set of Equality Objectives in partnership with District Councils and other key stakeholders to ensure compliance with the Equalities Act is progressing well.. 80% of the Staff Equality Pledges to promote, embed and address E&D throughout the Council and wider Community have also been achieved.

Work with the Police on the Counties response to Hate Crime and those communities affected by it has seen success this year with funding for a programme of support being secured and delivered. Our focus on Community Cohesion continues working with race communities on integration and engagement with council services and District Councils on the potential impacts to community cohesion on the Hinkley Point power station.

Communications

This year has been notable in the way that the Communications Team's worked has moved notably further into digital provision along with other services. Importantly, this year saw the launch of the Travel Somerset website which uses a dedicated website and twitter presence to provide up to date traffic information on the county's roads to help manage traffic movements on the road network. Launched in August, in its first six months the site has averaged 34,000 visits per month and the Twitter account attracted 1,500 followers, both producing substantial positive feedback from the public. It has been particularly useful in providing information during significant events which impact on the network.

Developing the Council's social media offering is a growing priority, with a continuing shift of emphasis towards the authority's Facebook and Twitter accounts and video content in line with the changing picture of how residents are getting information. Since March 2016 the corporate Twitter account followers have increased by 1,500 and Facebook likes by more than 1,000. These channels play an increasingly important role in our work, speaking directly to the public and will be built on in the coming year.

Your Somerset - the Council's own newspaper continues to be a key tool for communicating with residents. As demonstrated by feedback from our public engagement (see below). Its content is tailored to reflect the authority's priorities and is a key tool for some of our campaigns – with demonstrable spikes in interest linked to prominent articles. Notable content this year has included a number of articles dedicated to raising awareness of Child Sexual Exploitation, the council's role in stimulating the small business economy and innovative work in social care. The newspaper is run efficiently and effectively and just about covers its costs through paid-for advertising.

Campaigns – we have had another strong year on our high-profile campaigns. Our fostering and adoption work has for the first targeted placements for older children and some of the more challenging fostering placement schemes. Despite this we have generated well in excess of 400 enquiries and contributed to nearly young people now living with loving foster carer or adoptive parents. A number of Public Health related campaigns have taken place during the year on issues such as autism, skin cancer prevention and domestic abuse. Efforts to increase in flu vaccination amongst frontline staff resulted in a more than 60 per cent increase in uptake.

Listening Learning Changing – the team again organised and delivered a large scale public engagement exercise, giving communities across the county the chance to feedback on the authority's priorities and budget challenges. This year we spoke to more than 6,000 residents through events in eleven towns across all five district areas, an online survey and survey in the Your Somerset newspaper. This brings the total engaged across four years to more than 19,000.

The media relations or press office function has continued, working with our traditional printing and broadcast media to keep residents informed about council services, changes and decisions. Since the beginning of April, approach more than 400 proactive press releases have been issued to media and posted on our online Newsroom and through social media accounts. Communications Team staff have also provided considerable support for key projects and programmes such as improvements in Children's Services, the My Staff Shop staff benefits scheme launched this year and the developing innovative ways of working in adult social care.

Digital

We have had a particular focus on supporting Adults and Children's transformation projects, delivering a new online tool to support the Adults Community Connect innovation work. We have developed and are currently implementing revisions to Somerset Choices to make it better meet the needs of customers. The Somerset Choices platform is now approaching the end of its contracted life. Much has changed in the four years since development started

and we are now working with services to develop solutions that better match the changing needs of the services and our customers.

We have had success in reducing the external spend on web development by undertaking as much as possible in house. We have invested £40K internally, that based on external quotes would have cost the authority between £80K-£100K Websites designed and developed include Travel Somerset, DAS Jobs, Somerset Prepared, Somerset Leaving Care Councils, these will be followed later in the year by new websites for Public Health and the Somerset Waste Partnership.

Over the past year website visitor numbers have remained steady, but the number of pages viewed has decreased, indicating people that people are finding it easier to locate the information they need. The number of customers submitting electronic forms has doubled, with the new highways online form now taking 25% of the total enquires after only a few months, meaning a significant reduction in calls and consequent savings in that area of operations. Work is underway to redevelop our websites to take advantage of the opportunities presented by the SW1 end of contract. Numerous and higher quality services will be made available online.

3. Background papers

- 3.1.
- <http://www.somersetintelligence.org.uk/>
 - <http://www.somersetintelligence.org.uk/sinepost.html>
 - Customer Experience: <http://www.somerset.gov.uk/have-your-say/complaints-comments-and-compliments/complaints-comments-compliments/>
 - Customer Access & Shared Assets: <http://change.somerset.gov.uk/home/dcs/casa/>
 - SCC Equalities & Diversity - <http://www.somerset.gov.uk/policies-and-plans/policies/equality/>
 - Partnership Equalities & Diversity <http://www.sedgemoor.gov.uk/workingwithpartners>
 - Community Development: www.somerset.gov.uk/communitydevelopment
 - Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Strategic Forum www.somerset.gov.uk/voluntarysector
 - Volunteering: www.somerset.gov.uk/volunteering
 - Community Right to Challenge: www.somerset.gov.uk/crtc
 - Council Buildings, including CAT and Assets of Community Value: <http://www.somerset.gov.uk/information-and-statistics/financial-information/council-buildings/>
 - Local Choices and Community Resources: www.somerset.gov.uk/localchoices
 - Community Funding Sources: www.somerset.gov.uk/communityfunding
 - Somerset Armed Forces Community Covenant: <http://www.somerset.gov.uk/forcescovenant>

Note: For sight of individual background papers please contact the report author