

SCRUTINY FOR POLICIES AND PLACE COMMITTEE

Minutes of a Meeting of the Scrutiny for Policies and Place Committee held in the Taunton Library Meeting Room, on Thursday 7 November 2019 at 2.00 pm

Present: Cllr A Groskop (Chair), Cllr A Bown (Vice-Chair), Cllr P Ham, Cllr B Filmer, Cllr John Hunt, Cllr L Leyshon, Cllr M Keating and Cllr T Munt

Other Members present: Cllr M Chilcott, Cllr H Davies and Cllr L Redman

Apologies for absence: N/A

221. Declarations of Interest - Agenda Item 2

There were no new declarations of Interest.

222. Minutes from the previous meeting held on 9 October 2019. (attached). – Agenda Item 3

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 October were accepted as being accurate by the Committee.

223. Public Question Time - Agenda Item 4

There were no public questions.

224. Corporate Property Asset Management Plan 2019 - 2024 - Item deferred due to pre-election notice period - Agenda Item 6

This item was deferred due to the pre-election notice period.

225. 2019/20 Revenue Budget Monitoring Report - Month 5. - Agenda Item 7

This report set out the Month 5 forecast outturn position for 2019/20 for the net Revenue Budget of £327.967m. It highlighted variances to service budgets, as well as emerging issues, risks, areas of concern and proposed actions to resolve them. The Council's Medium-Term Financial Plan (2019-22) set out proposals to further develop its financial resilience over the long-term whilst supporting the delivery of the Council's key priorities.

The report continued to show an overall projected balanced position for the Council, with the main adverse variances being within Children's Services and Trading Units (Dillington House). Management action continued to be developed and implemented in these areas to mitigate pressures with an aim to end the year within the approved budget. Until these management actions were fully developed and implemented, these variances were included in the detail of the report and a proportion of the corporate contingency 'notionally' allocated to off-set them. This left £5.748m of the Corporate

Contingency budget currently unallocated and therefore potentially available to further improve the Council's financial resilience in the medium term. A decision regarding use of the contingency would be considered later in the year once the end of year position was firmer.

The budget for 2019/20 included a savings target of £21.547m and the report confirmed current forecast delivery of £21.365m.

This report was the fourth revenue budget monitoring for 2019/20 and remained a relatively early forecast of the potential end of year position.

It was encouraging that the forecast continued to show confidence that the more robust approach to budget planning for 2019/20 onwards ensured that the budget assumptions were realistic, and deliverable with a relatively small adverse variance seen in Service forecasts of £0.805m. This was a slightly worsened position from the previous month's forecast mainly as a result of changes in the Children's services area and the increased deficit in the trading forecast for Dillington which was detailed in the report. At this stage in the year, this adverse variance was being off-set by a 'notional' allocation from Corporate Contingency while firm management actions to correct variances were being developed.

The Council would sustain tighter financial grip going forwards. This would include the continuation of formal monthly monitoring reports to Cabinet and to Scrutiny for Policies and Place and continual improvements to the format, content and layout of the reports to aid effective review and scrutiny. Alongside this internal tracking and budget monitoring processes continued to be given close attention by the Senior Leadership Team.

Forecasts for the use of reserves and the year-end balance had not significantly changed from the previous month with the current estimated balance of approximately £33m remaining in earmarked reserves at the end of the year. As part of the fuller quarterly budget monitoring reports, reserves would be reported in more detail including explanations and would include a forecast of the value of reserves that would be held at the end of the year.

The MTFP (2019-22) process included a review of business cases supporting the transformation activity that planned to utilise capital receipts flexibilities during 2019/20 in compliance with Government Guidelines. This was originally planned at £2.795m in the MTFP. The Month 5 forecast position indicated a small reduction of £0.370m to £2.425m against the original planned amount and was in-line with the month 4 report. A full summary of the forecasts would be included in the quarterly budget monitoring reports.

The Councils Summary forecast set out a projected balanced position when compared to the net revenue budget of £327.967m. There was a forecast adverse variance in Key Service Spend with most of the adverse variance being within Children's Services and Trading Units (Dillington House). Most other areas of the Council were within reasonable tolerance.

The Adults budget was projected to be overspent by £0.174m against the net budget of £126.533m. This was a small increase of £0.042m from the figure reported in Month 4.

The increased projection of £0.042m was as a result of moving 4 clients from a care home with quality and performance concerns which had been closed. The new placements had been made at a higher rate than previously but would ensure the assessed outcomes of those involved were met appropriately.

There had been an increase in Residential and Nursing placements over the past month, particularly Nursing placements for people with Dementia which saw a net increase of 7 placements. This was the continuation of growth that was reported in month 4 and an area that the service knows is likely to increase in the future. As a result, the Mental Health transformation plan and new models of care being commissioned were a big focus over the coming months and years.

Offsetting the increase was a decrease in the projected cost of Domiciliary Care. There was a reduction in hours delivered across the County throughout period 4, in the Sedgemoor and South Somerset areas. There were particular sourcing issues in South Somerset throughout July although these had now subsided following work done with providers in that area.

The Learning Disabilities Pooled Budget was projecting a favourable variance of £0.062m. There were increased costs for Supported Living following an increase in assessed needs for a number of clients both within the Discovery contract and those that were purchased outside of the contract. These additional costs had been offset by 3 new and 1 increased Continuing Health Care awards.

The council had recently reached a financial settlement with Unison on behalf of its members in relation to an employment tribunal claim. This had enabled the claim to be resolved in a way that was satisfactory for all parties. Costs were being finalised and would be reported as part of the next budget monitoring report.

It was likely that as forecasts became clearer a favourable variance of one-off funding would arise and will be requested at year end to be transferred to the Adult Social Care Resilience earmarked reserve. As part of the fuller quarterly budget monitoring reports a forecast would be included of the likely value of the favourable variance next month.

There were MTFP savings of £5.157m to be achieved during 2019/20. Of these £3.468m had already been fully achieved with the remaining £1.689m on track to be delivered throughout the year.

A breakdown of achievement of savings was set out for 2019/20 as at 31st August 2019 and confirmed that 99% of the proposals for change had been classified as having a green or blue status, meaning service directors were confident that these savings would be delivered or in the case of the blue savings, they have already been delivered. 1% of savings proposals were been classified as red meaning the savings are currently at risk or replacement savings had not been agreed through the change control process. The monitoring of the delivery of the savings across the three decision processes were set out in Appendix B.

Debate

- Concerns were expressed around Schools changing to academy status, resulting in a budget deficit to the authority. It was recognised that this was not a new financial risk and acknowledged that there were pressures on Schools funding.
- Work continued to monitor the operating costs and the effects to ensure mitigation steps can be made.
- Monthly monitoring reports would be maintained with this area to ensure it could be reviewed.
- The committee requested the numbers of academy schools be provided as a comparison with the number of maintained schools. A renewed emphasis was placed to ensure maintained schools were kept on track; with high risk schools managed closely.
- The Committee commended the Strategic Manager – Chief Accountant and wished her luck in her new role outside the authority.

The Committee noted the report.

226. Review of Scrutiny function Report. - Agenda Item 8

Effective scrutiny helped secure the efficient delivery of public services to drive improvements within the Council and, if done well, amongst other public service providers too. While scrutiny had matured in Somerset over the years, it still faced challenges.

As part of organisational transformation and taking forward Peer Challenge recommendations, the Council had undertaken a thorough review of its scrutiny function. The review considered best practice from other councils and the latest Government statutory guidance in May 2019. The review had also involved working with the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS). Their covering report along with final review report (set out as Appendix A) provided the Committee with an opportunity to consider a series of recommendations and suggested any further developments they consider appropriate.

The majority of the recommendations in the report combined both the short term improvements that could be taken forward from the CfPS report along with recognising that necessary cultural improvements were required to develop and embed better scrutiny form part of a longer term programme of work commencing before the end of 2019 through until March 2021.

The Council undertakes an annual review of its democratic arrangements and its Constitution to ensure they remained fit for purpose for the organisation to meet its legal duties.

The Communities and Local Government Select Committee undertook an inquiry into the effectiveness of scrutiny in local government in 2017. The select committee's report

identified a number of areas for improvement. This work has led to the development of the new statutory Scrutiny Guidance which was published in May 2019.

While Scrutiny had matured in Somerset over the last decade, it still faced challenges. This included officer driven agendas, Scrutiny Committees being used as a 'tick box' for agreeing new policy and not providing the Committees the opportunity to add value, limited member engagement, overcrowded agendas and work programmes.

The Peer Challenge in 2018 identified, as one of the key recommendations, that 'Somerset County Council should review its scrutiny arrangements as part of making it more effective, ensuring all councillors were equipped to play an active role and contribute to the policy making and key decisions affecting the future of Somerset's residents and the council, and that its governance arrangements are reflective of this.'

In parallel, as part of the organisational transformation work it was recognised there was a need to improve the Council's scrutiny arrangements. As a result the Council commissioned the nationally renowned Centre for Public Scrutiny to carry out an independent review of the scrutiny function at SCC between March and May 2019. This involved attending all 3 Scrutiny Committees (Place, Adults and Health and Children and Families) during April and conducting a Member survey, before producing an initial draft report in late May. This was subsequently reviewed with the Leader, Deputy Leader and Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs in June.

Following receipt of the draft Scrutiny Review report the Leader and the 3 Scrutiny Chairs agreed that the next step should involve an all member workshop to discuss the report, the recommendations within and consider these alongside the recently issued national guidance and the council's transformation work. The workshop was held in September, where members received an introductory briefing on the recently published statutory Scrutiny guidance for councils, an appraisal of the scrutiny arrangements and scrutiny resources at Devon County Council, provided a valuable opportunity for members to discuss the ideas and opportunities to make scrutiny more effective. The workshop provided the opportunity for members to discuss the Centre for Public Scrutiny's report and other ideas that members had for improving scrutiny prior to the report formally considered at all 3 Scrutiny Committees in November, as well as Cabinet, ahead of the recommendations being presented to Full Council in November. The workshop was facilitated by Ian Parry, from the Centre for Public Scrutiny who wrote the CFPS's report.

One of the main areas of focus discussed by the Members present, was that the report was focusing on an ideal scenario for 'pure scrutiny' and did not necessarily completely reflect the reality of day to day Local Authority and Committee working styles and politics. There was also concern raised that the report was in parts generic and Members felt that what the Council adopts should be more Somerset specific. This is reflected in the amended recommendation relating to the number of agenda items and a consensus that Cabinet Members and the relevant Director should co-present agenda items, rather than a select Committee style approach, which Members agreed didn't consider appropriate for Somerset County Council.

The report of the Centre for Public Scrutiny, set out in Appendix A, provided a comprehensive analysis of the current arrangements and contained 11 specific

recommendations for how scrutiny could be improved at the Council. Several of these recommendations could be defined as logistical or practical changes and therefore were relatively easy and straightforward to implement. Other recommendations were more cultural and these would take longer to embed and required a change of approach throughout the Council by Members and officers.

The easier to implement changes included reducing the number of formal committee meetings in order to provide each scrutiny committee with the opportunity to focus its available resources on areas such as the development of commissioning plans, undertaking more partnership scrutiny, review opportunities for services improvements and doing more scrutiny outside of formal committee meetings e.g carrying out visits to frontline services and greater use of task and finish groups. Improvements to work planning (including quarterly joint work planning meetings across the committees), more focused agenda setting, improved meeting layouts, as well as a strict adherence to no 'for information' report as part of any formal agenda, would be relatively straightforward to implement during 2020.

The cultural work that had been identified would require a more gradual introduction, as members assumed more ownership with the work programme, actively suggest and pursue items they wished to be considered, as well as Cabinet and officers making greater use of utilising Scrutiny as a sounding board early in policy development and consider their recommendations when shaping decisions and focusing on outcomes. There would also be an emphasis of greater ownership and engagement by all Scrutiny Committee Members, as well as a depoliticising of Scrutiny where possible, for example removing the need for political group pre-meetings and replacing with pre-meetings for all Committee members, to agree themes of questioning and specific areas of interest.

These types of changes would take time to embed and as result the intention would be to have implemented and fully embed all of the recommendations by March 2021, to align with the new quadrennium. It is anticipated that all Members would begin to notice changes to the way scrutiny is working and conducted with an immediate effect.

Although the CfPS's report is comprehensive and suggested improvements and amendments in a number of areas, the Committee are invited to suggest other areas or issues that could be addressed at this time and can be incorporated in the overall review. Officers are especially keen to seek the Committee's views on the relationships with Cabinet members, senior officers and also how they would like to be consulted and incorporated within policy development.

Page 11 of the Centre for Public Scrutiny's final report detailed the Members and officers who were met with on an individual basis.

All Members were invited to take part in an online Scrutiny survey. Over 40% of Members completed the survey, the results of which formed part of the Centre for Public Scrutiny's final report. 20 County Councillors attended the Scrutiny review Member workshop in September.

While there were no direct budget implications within the CfPS recommendations, the review of other councils and the new statutory guidance identified the need for more

scrutiny training and development for members, the possibility of conducting scrutiny in different ways, including increased use of visits and travel around the County. These recommendations would result in increased Member expenses and training budget requirements. However this should be considered alongside a reduction in officer demand, especially at a senior level, to prepare reports, briefings and attend a reduced number of formal Committee meetings from 2020.

The cultural transformation required, improved work planning and policy advice support would require dedicated officer resources in addition to what the council provided through the Democratic Services Team. The Strategic Manager, Democratic Services has reviewed other councils and the CfPS recommendations and has identified, as a minimum, the need for an additional scrutiny support officer within the Democratic Services team. This additional officer resource and training resources for members were an integral part of the recommendations as they will be essential to support successful implementation by March 2021 and will have specific responsibility for policy research, liaison with members and officers throughout the Authority and scrutiny training and development.

Background papers included:-

Supporting governance, scrutiny and member support in Somerset County Council – Centre for Public Scrutiny - May 2019

Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities – Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government – May 2019.

Debate

- Site visits were encouraged to provide greater knowledge of projects and areas around the county
- Training and support through flexible sessions such as masterclasses, seminars and task and finish groups in specific areas were supported to increase member awareness and considered a positive way forward.
- Where required, the use of pre-meetings to plan the running of business on the agenda alongside Informal Scrutiny meetings could be explored.
- Questioning of Cabinet members by the committee with delegation to the relevant officer for specific details or technical guidance was the preferred model and followed good practice by the centre of public scrutiny.
- The forward plan would be on an ongoing review basis by the Committee to ensure there was an adequate time to Scrutinise, the number of agenda items per committee would be limited to roughly four per agenda.
- The committee requested greater accessibility for members of the public and changing the way Scrutiny is approached to achieve this.
- It was acknowledged that there were resource implications around changing and improving Scrutiny practices. The Committee were reassured that there was dedicated Scrutiny resource allocated in the new Democratic Services Structure due to be implemented from the start of 2020.
- Member briefings and working groups were considered along with ensuring positive attendance for these.

- Concerns were expressed with the number of meetings and the travel across the County for some of the Councillors, a reduction in meetings as a result of increased activity of briefings and masterclasses could ensure Councillor availability and input.
- Greater value would be achieved if the committee were provided greater information with a summary of items set out in the forward plan.
- The committee agreed that there should be no future reports with recommendations for the report to be noted.
- The Scrutiny Manager thanked the committee for their views and ensured their opinions would be taken into account in implementing the recommendations.

The Committee:

1. Endorsed and recommended to Full Council that the Council implements a programme of cultural transformation and improvements to its scrutiny arrangements by March 2021, including the provision of additional resources in the Democratic Services Team and members training budgets to deliver the enhanced scrutiny arrangements;
2. Endorsed 10 of the 11 recommendations within the Centre for Public Scrutiny's 'Supporting governance, scrutiny and member support in Somerset County Council' report as detailed on pages 9 and 10 of Appendix A; The Committee is asked to agree to an alteration to Recommendation 6 within the CfPS report and limit the number of agenda items to an absolute maximum of 4, rather than two as currently recommended, as this more accurately reflect the current position of the Authority and the size of the workload.
3. to consider and make any further recommendations it considers appropriate to include as part of the Scrutiny Review with reference to the Government's new statutory guidance, best practice from other councils and the members workshop held in September 2019;
4. to support all recommendations relating to the Scrutiny Review being recommended by Full Council on 27th November 2019 and for the improvements to be taken forward from January 2020 to March 2021;
5. The Scrutiny for Policies and Place Committee to receive a quarterly progress report on the improvements and review of scrutiny arrangements.

227. West Somerset Opportunity Area (For Information Report). - Agenda Item 9

The Opportunity Area Programme is a key part of the Education Secretary's priority of tackling social mobility, and improving opportunities for young people across the country. Twelve areas with both poor social mobility and schools that face challenges, were to receive a share of £72 million to boost opportunities for young people in these communities.

The areas chosen were amongst the weakest in both the 2016 Social Mobility Commission's index, and the Department for Education's data on school

standards and capacity to improve. West Somerset was 324th out of 324 Council areas in the social mobility index in both 2016 and 2017.

The original plan was published in October 2017 by the DFE working across business, education and community to create and maintain more opportunity for our young people. It was important that this would be a community wide initiative, supported by Early Years providers, Schools, Colleges, Businesses, The Voluntary Sector, Health, Council services, and most importantly young people and their families. The programme ran to March 2020, with a detailed delivery plan for 2018/20. The initial work identified the key challenges as:

- The geography – rurality and connectivity.
- Ageing population – an older demographic (av. age 54 years) and comparatively fewer opportunities for young people.
- Low aspirations among young people and disadvantaged families.
- Low wages and a high incidence of seasonal, part-time and low-skilled employment.
- The need to accelerate early years development.
- Access to Child care
- Narrowing the gap in educational attainment between FSM children and the rest of their peer group.
- Complex Accountabilities for Education provision across Trusts and Local Authority Schools.
- Access and Transport
- Lack of access to post 16 training and apprenticeships
- Sparsity of population – unviable service provision despite the need.

The paper outlined what constituted Social mobility and considered the lessons learnt from the two years of the opportunity area, and the legacy planning once the Opportunity area came to an end in March 2020.

As part of the Opportunity Area (OA) Programme, West Somerset would receive up to £5.4m over three years as part of the Department for Education (DFE) flagship policy to drive up social mobility. One of twelve Opportunity Areas, located across England, to benefit from local initiatives that brought together local stakeholders to deliver tailored solutions to the area's problems. Each OA had a published plan written in collaboration with the DfE, local authorities, charities, businesses and other delivery partners setting out the key priority areas. The West Somerset plan had four priorities with a fifth added after year one. This was the final year of expenditure however the DFE had agreed to activities continuing till the end of August 2020.

The priority of Early years in West Somerset was 324th out of 324 for the Early Years indicators. In 2014 in West Somerset only 30% of disadvantaged five-year-olds reached a good level of development. Appendix 1 Detailed the Early years settings and schools in West Somerset. The programme was devised by local stakeholders, including settings, The Voluntary Sector, Public Health Somerset County Council Advisers, and Sector leads. It concentrated on improving maternal health, speech language, special educational needs and the overall quality of the provision within West Somerset. The programme developed the established cluster model where settings worked together, this was now being rolled out across the county.

The targets were:

- Increasing the proportion of children achieving a good level of development at the end of the early years foundation stage to at least 70%, so that it is above the national average.
- Increasing the proportion of fsm children achieving a good level of development at the end of the early years foundation stage, so it stood above the current national average.
- Increase take up, so that at least 80% of disadvantaged two year olds accessed early education, which was well above the current national rate of take up

There were 18 schools across a three-tier system and the upper school has sixth form. There were 3000 pupils and all but two schools were good or outstanding. Key stage 2 results were low, particularly for disadvantaged boys.

Appendix 1 Detailed the Early years settings and schools in West Somerset. West Somerset was predominantly a three-tier system, with transfers halfway through key stage 2 from the first to the middle schools where the key stage 2 tests were taken, and with a second transfer partway through key stage 3.

There was substantial research about the benefits or not of the three-tier system, and the program agreed from the outset to focus on improving teaching and learning regardless of the school system. It was noted that due to the number of academies the school system is the responsibility of the Academies.

The key concern was the low level of key stage 2 results especially for pupil premium children. The improvement programme was designed by local head teachers with support from the Regional Schools Commissioner, Somerset County Council advisers, and the West Somerset Research school who supported evidence-based approaches promoted by the Education Endowment Fund. The programme focused on improving literacy predominantly with Read Write Inc, maths with Boolean maths, Leadership training, SEND with Inclusion expert and support for pupil's mental health. The plan had focused on improving teaching and learning for all pupils with the expectation that this would also increase standards for pupil premium children. The programme was also planning to support improving transitions with an increased knowledge of the curriculum across phases and plans for vulnerable children. West Somerset schools had experienced significant change during the first two years of the Opportunity Area with a reduction in the number of head teachers and the majority schools having new head teachers. The challenge for some West Somerset schools was the low population numbers in the villages meant that it was not possible to have the optimum number of pupils in each school. The programme was also focused on improving life opportunities for Vulnerable pupils.

The Targets were:

- At least 85% of children would meet the expected standards in phonics in all schools in West Somerset. Based on current numbers this would mean up to 30 more children reaching the standard
- The proportion of children reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and maths outcomes at key stage 1 will put West Somerset in the top half of the country, and the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and all pupils will be half what it was in September 2017
- expected standard in reading outcomes at key stage 1 reading outcomes at KS1 attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and all pupils
- expected standard in writing outcomes at key stage 1 writing outcomes at KS1 attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and all pupils.
- expected standard in maths outcomes at key stage 1
- Outcomes at key stage 2 will be in the top half of the country and we will close the gap in West Somerset between disadvantaged pupils and all pupils for key stage 2

Priority three set out the Transition to adulthood that Disadvantaged young people find themselves trapped as they have limited access to education employment opportunities and lack the means to move home or travel to access them. Nationally those who face the biggest barriers to success are disadvantaged youngsters and very hard to reach the sparsely populated areas. Indeed, nine of the 10 worst performing local authority areas are poorly connected (often coastal) and sparsely populated. In such areas, disadvantaged youngsters not only have fewer local services, but also received less support from universities and other third sector organisations. The problem is not just travel time. Remote schools often have too few low-income pupils to be eligible for outreach from employers or universities – meaning that people slip through the net. Isolated rural areas also suffer from weaker partnerships between local organisations – due to the distance between them local authorities and other stakeholders in rural or isolated areas need to make more consistent action to improve access to opportunities stop this can involve better transport links, better systems to ensure rural schools receive outreach and service providers, and better connection between school’s charities universities and businesses. Local enterprise partnerships, or universities are well positioned to leave such efforts.

The targets were:

- Increasing the percentage of young people achieving level three qualifications such as A levels, at age nineteen and close the gap between West Somerset and Somerset in both academic and vocational qualifications. By 2020/21 we want achievement in West Somerset to equal the strong results already being achieved in the best performing parts of Somerset
- Level 3 by age 19 through Academic qualifications
- Level 3 by age 19 through Vocational qualifications

- All young people leaving West Somerset College will go onto further education, employment or training Saved in Physical, Vulnerable Learners,
- The proportion of young people progressing to higher education will put West Somerset in the top half of the country
- We will increase apprenticeship starts so start rates are as high, or better than, the rest of Somerset and so completion rates are as high, or better than, the rest of Somerset.

Priority five set out areas in Business and enterprise In West Somerset, there were limited business networking opportunities as Minehead and the wider West Somerset area did not have a strong local Chamber of Commerce but as part of the OA we are developing an employer forum, led by Jim Whittaker of Channel Training.

The Education Business Partnership has to date engaged 21 businesses with a presence in West Somerset in careers inspiration activity. We have also engaged businesses from Bridgwater and Taunton with activity in West Somerset. It is recognised in West Somerset that the majority of businesses were small and therefore difficult for them to engage in a similar level of joint working with schools. The Programme created by local stakeholders, including West Somerset council now Somerset West and Taunton, businesses, training providers, in the current development had four key priorities. In areas of depopulation, strategies that build businesses and encourage young people that there are options locally to earn a living seem to be most effective. The depopulation is most keenly felt on Exmoor particularly around the hinterland of Dulverton.

It was noted that within the community, capital investment funding had previously been awarded to support buildings to meet the needs of local people. However due to low population numbers the revenue streams have not been in place to sustain them. In a number of assets across West Somerset that require different business models to ensure their effective use. Where this is the case the project is exploring different business models utilise them to their full potential. Holiday Clubs There is a lack of child care and holiday clubs in West Somerset which makes it harder for parents in West Somerset to work. However there was a strong voluntary sector organising events across the community. The programme has funded a coordinator to market and promote the activities within the community so that they are well supported. Where there is no provision the project has explored a number of new models. One model has been busing young people from communities without child care to Kilve Court for activities which has been successful. Food Within the project we have been approached by Fare share, a national Bristolbased charity to provide food to community groups. During the last two years we have provided food at Christmas and during the summer holidays where families who benefit from free school meals during term time struggle with the additional costs of feeding their children.

West Somerset Opportunity area had enabled key strategic leads to consider the data and needs of West Somerset focused on one place rather than looking

at data for a wider area. It has facilitated a wide variety of organisations working together across the priorities. The opportunity area has identified within West Somerset.

- The power and energy of the community with capacity to help children and young people
- Partnership working including improved joint working between agencies.
- Joint identification the issues facing community - lack of post-18 training opportunities, transport, data and services
- Significant community resources which are underused due to revenue funding challenges.
- Joint problem-solving beyond schools
- Willingness the community to offer its resources to work with young people
- National Collaboration Outreach project working with Careers and Enterprise Company to develop aspirations and help young people plan their post-16 and post-19 progression routes
- Small businesses with limited capacity to support Apprenticeships but a keenness to help develop skills. The Opportunity Area is benefitting from interventions which include:
 - Voluntary groups working with parents
 - Focusing on early years development
 - Locally-based training and Training Teaching Assistants
 - Review of SEND and SEND provision
 - Professional training opportunities for teachers
 - The national programmes supporting early years and local schools.
 - Local Employment engagement
 - Improved partnership working. Following the first two years of interventions by the OA there are still areas for improvement including:
 - learners experience to be consistent, transition to be effective and not the cause of delayed progress.
 - Academies collaborating across their communities.
 - Capacity issues in small schools and making the programme offer work for them
 - Improved joint working between community services for adults and those for young people
 - Access to opportunities locally, transport and data
 - Support for business Legacy planning.

The ambition for the legacy was that the benefits realised in the OA were inherited by local partners and stakeholders to be shared more widely to improve outcomes of young people in rural and coastal districts. It was important that the OA delivered a degree of sustainability with the effects.

Debate

- The committee requested an update of how residents in the West Somerset area had benefited. The report author would be consulted and an update would be provided to the committee before the next meeting.

The Committee noted the report.

228. Scrutiny for Policies and Place Committee Work Programme - Agenda Item 10

The following areas of future consideration by the committee were raised:-

- Consideration of the implementation of 5G technology would be picked up with the relevant Director.
- Finance were happy to provide an update at a future informal session in relation to the Dillington Trading position.
- An update was in relation to Connecting Devon and Somerset was requested.
- The committee requested if a webpage could be created for Councillors and members of the public to comment on agenda item when they could not attend a meeting.
- The Committee were made aware of the future likelihood of meeting cancellations due to the Pre-Election period.

The Committee noted the Work Programme.

229. Any other urgent items of business - Agenda Item 11

There were no other items of business.

(The meeting ended at 3.22 pm)

CHAIRMAN