

Minutes of a Meeting of the Executive held in the John Meikle Room, The Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton TA1 1HE, on Monday, 2 September 2024 at 10.00 am

**Present:**

Cllr Bill Revans (Chair)  
Cllr Liz Leyshon (Vice-Chair)

Cllr Theo Butt Philip  
Cllr Federica Smith-Roberts  
Cllr Richard Wilkins

Cllr Heather Shearer  
Cllr Sarah Wakefield

**In attendance:**

Cllr David Fothergill  
Cllr Frances Nicholson

Cllr Mark Healey  
Cllr Sue Osborne

**Other Members present remotely:**

Cllr Suria Aujla  
Cllr John Hunt  
Cllr Val Keitch  
Cllr Oliver Patrick  
Cllr Leigh Redman  
Cllr Martin Wale  
Cllr Rosemary Woods

Cllr Nicola Clark  
Cllr Dawn Johnson  
Cllr Andy Kendall  
Cllr Evie Potts-Jones  
Cllr Fran Smith  
Cllr David Woan

**14 Apologies for Absence - Agenda Item 1**

Apologies were received from Councillors Mike Rigby and Graham Oakes.

**15 Minutes from the Previous Meeting - Agenda Item 2**

Resolved that the minutes of the Executive held on 5<sup>th</sup> August 2024 be confirmed as a correct record.

**16 Declarations of Interest - Agenda Item 3**

The following declarations of interest were automatically recorded:

Cllr Theo Butt Philip - Wells City Council  
Cllr Heather Shearer -Street Parish Council

**17 Public Question Time - Agenda Item 4**

There were no public questions received by the submission deadline.

**18 Executive Forward Plan - Agenda Item 5**

The Executive noted the forward plan.

**19 Target Operating Model - Agenda Item 6**

The Leader of the Council, Cllr Bill Revans, invited the Lead Member for Transformation, Human Resources and Localities, Cllr Theo Butt Philip to introduce the report. Cllr Butt Philip explained how the Target Operating Model would support the council plan and the delivery of the transformation programme.

Rachael Dixon, Process Redesign Manager, added to these points: explaining the consultation process involved in developing the Target Operating Model, the different areas of the council that were involved, and the feedback gathered so far.

The Leader of the Council, Cllr Bill Revans, invited comments from Committee Members and other Members present. Questions and points raised included: the feedback from Scrutiny Committee – Corporate and Resources; the timeline for the final structure; what the performance and success measures are; that the Target Operating Model is not a final, fixed document.

The Leader of the Council concluded the discussion and proceeded to a vote on the recommendations, which were agreed unanimously.

**Following consideration of the officer report, appendices and discussion, the Executive resolved to:**

- **Agree the Target Operating Model for Somerset Council.**
- **Delegate authority to the Executive Director - Strategy Workforce and Localities to make any future minor amendments or improvements to the Target Operating Model in consultation with the Lead Member for HR and Transformation.**

**20 Q1 Corporate Performance Management Report - Agenda Item 7**

The Leader of the Council, Cllr Bill Revans, invited the Lead Member for Finance, Procurement and Performance, Cllr Liz Leyshon, to introduce the report.

Cllr Leyshon explained: that these were interim measures that went under each of the Council's four priorities; the ongoing work to align the measures with budget monitoring and strategic risk management; the potential to introduce 'wild card' measures; that members are encouraged to bring forward areas of particular interest; the improvements expected as information is transferred to the software Ideagen.

The Leader of the Council, Cllr Bill Revans, invited comments from Committee Members and other Members present. Questions and points raised included: consistency and variation in the tolerances for the RAG rating; what are the targets based on; the issue of Overdue Care Act Assessments and the progress on addressing this; whether all targets are categorised appropriately; why some areas are still awaiting targets and tolerances; the issue of lack of compliance with electrical safety standards and the action plan to address this; other possible performance measures that could be included such as school suspensions.

The Leader of the Council concluded the discussion and proceeded to a vote on the recommendations, which were agreed unanimously.

**Following consideration of the officer report, appendices and discussion, the Executive resolved to review the performance information provided within Appendix A, and in particular the narrative relating to performance this quarter.**

**21 2024/25 General Fund Capital Budget Monitoring Report - Outturn - Agenda Item 8**

The Leader of the Council, Cllr Bill Revans, invited the Lead Member for Finance, Procurement and Performance, Cllr Liz Leyshon, to introduce the report. Cllr Leyshon highlighted the hard work in bringing together five capital budgets and school capital budgets.

Nicola Hix, Service Director Finance and Procurement, then highlighted the significant work involved in ensuring the profiling of the capital programme, and the challenges due to losing legacy knowledge in the team.

The Leader of the Council, Cllr Bill Revans, invited comments from Committee Members and other Members present. Questions and points raised included: the impact of the new government on the capital programme; risks due to the capital underspend; planned improvements to capital budgeting; slippage in the Adults and Health budget relating to Learning Disability.

The Leader of the Council concluded the discussion and proceeded to a vote on the recommendations, which were agreed unanimously.

**Following consideration of the officer report, appendices and discussion, the Executive resolved to:**

- a) Note the capital outturn position for the financial year 2023/24 of £117.8m**
- b) Approve the slippage of £196.890m from 2023/24 into 2024/25 and beyond whilst a further review of the capital programme takes places during 2024/25**
- c) Approve the removal of the underspend**
- d) Approve the changes to the capital programme approvals, as detailed in Section 26 of this report**

## **22 2024/25 General Fund Capital Budget Monitoring Report - Qtr1 - Agenda Item 9**

The Leader of the Council, Cllr Bill Revans, invited the Lead Member for Finance, Procurement and Performance, Cllr Liz Leyshon, to introduce the report. Cllr Leyshon highlighted the need for resource and capacity to complete the programme and work with the new government to develop the future programme and projects.

Nicola Hix, Service Director Finance and Procurement, then highlighted the new additions to the programme and that items may be removed based on recommendations, how future reports will be presented, and the comments from Scrutiny regarding highways. It was noted that there was a drafting error in the report on p. 112 under the Firepool Development heading: the text included was information regarding the Glastonbury Town Deal and no information on the Firepool Development was included.

The Leader of the Council, Cllr Bill Revans, invited comments from Committee Members and other Members present. Questions and points raised included: the limited capacity in the team for reprofiling; the deliverability of items in the capital programme.

The Leader of the Council concluded the discussion and proceeded to a vote on the recommendations, which were agreed unanimously.

**Following consideration of the officer report, appendices and discussion, the Executive resolved to:**

- a) Note the contents of the report and appendices.**
- b) Approve the slippage of £73.963m from 2024/25 into 2025/26 and beyond whilst a further review of the capital programme takes places during 2024/25.**
- c) Approve £11.400m of changes to the capital programme approvals, as detailed in Section 25 of this report.**
- d) Approve a £0.528m virement to the capital programme, as detailed in Section 26 of this report.**

## **23 2024/25 Housing Revenue Account Revenue & Capital Budget Monitoring Report - Qtr1 - Agenda Item 10**

The Leader of the Council, Cllr Bill Revans, invited the Lead Member for Communities, Housing Revenue Account, Culture and, Equalities and Diversity, Cllr Federica Smith-Roberts, to introduce the item. Cllr Smith-Roberts explained the different models of the HRA and highlighted a significant overspend due to repairs and maintenance and concerns about staffing within the team to address that.

The Leader of the Council, Cllr Bill Revans, invited comments from Committee Members and other Members present. Questions and points raised included: the impact of the change in legislation regarding Right to Buy receipts; the impact of a Section 114 on HRA grants; the work needed when a property becomes void; the impact of delays on the housing in Minehead (Seaward Way) on the overall HRA budget.

The Leader of the Council concluded the discussion and proceeded to a vote on the recommendations, which were agreed unanimously.

**Following consideration of the officer report, appendices and discussion, the Executive resolved to:**

- 1. Note the HRA's forecast financial performance and projected reserves position for 2024/25 financial year as at 30 June 2024, including key risks and future issues and opportunities detailed in the report which will be closely monitored and updated throughout the year.**
- 2. Note the forecast outturn position of the Capital Programme.**

## **24 2023/24 General Fund Revenue Budget Monitoring Report - Outturn - Agenda Item 11**

Please note that some of the information in this report was incorrect at time of publication and has been corrected in a supplementary document.

The corrections are as follows:

- Gross expenditure budget and the gross income budgets have changed for Public Health (net budget is still the same).
- Transformation & Change and Digital Team gross budgets restated and net budgets (these net off between the two).
- Core Revenue Funding & main report – the table has been restated to change the headings around.

The Leader of the Council, Cllr Bill Revans, invited the Lead Member for Finance, Procurement and Performance, Cllr Liz Leyshon, to introduce the report. Cllr Leyshon highlighted that the situation had improved since the report in July and that this would have a positive impact on General Fund Reserves, the impact of the control boards around budget, the hard work involved for the new unitary authority to prepare the accounts, and the concerns about the Dedicated Schools Grant.

Nicola Hix, Service Director Finance and Procurement, then highlighted the changes from the Month 10 Outturn predictions, the approach to budget monitoring for 24/25, and the need to assess the areas with significant underspends.

The Leader of the Council, Cllr Bill Revans, invited comments from Committee Members and other Members present. Questions and points raised included: reflecting on the work with Adults on commissioning and the overall budget; appreciation for the hard work of everyone involved in delivering savings; the work with City/Town/Parish councils to secure alternative funding for CCTV services; the use of reserves; the impact of the underspend in the 'place' budget on residents; the need to recognise the difficult position of the council with regard to Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care funding.

The Leader of the Council concluded the discussion and proceeded to a vote on the recommendations, which were agreed unanimously.

**Following consideration of the officer report, appendices and discussion, the**

**Executive resolved to:**

- a) **Note the underspend of £1.8m (0.3%) for the 2023/24 financial year which will be added to the General Fund balance.**
- b) **Approve the draws and contributions to earmarked reserves set out in appendix 11.**
- c) **Approve to release £0.7m of available earmarked reserves funding to the General Fund balance.**
- d) **Agree to continue to receive monthly budget monitoring reports in 2024/25 which sets out the forecast outturn for the year with details of any mitigations and actions being taken to address any forecast variances.**
- e) **Note that the Collection Fund outturn position is still being finalised. Any over/underspend will be funded from/contributed to reserves. Any material changes to the reserve position will be noted in a future report.**
- f) **Approve the amendment to the Flexible Capital Receipts Strategy to include the Adult Social Care transformation programme, My Life, My Future (section 34/appendix 12).**

**25 2024/25 General Fund Revenue Budget Monitoring Report - Month 3 (Qtr1) - Agenda Item 12**

The Leader of the Council, Cllr Bill Revans, invited the Lead Member for Finance, Procurement and Performance, Cllr Liz Leyshon, to introduce the report. Cllr Leyshon highlighted that not every underspend is a positive, such as underspends in fostering and permanent placement, and the hard work of the CEO, the team and the previous Section 151 Officer.

Nicola Hix, Service Director Finance and Procurement, detailed the feedback from Scrutiny Committees, the inclusion of Spend Board information and the changes to spending thresholds, the improvement in the number of retrospective orders, and the variance shown in each appendix.

The Leader of the Council, Cllr Bill Revans, invited comments from Committee Members and other Members present. Questions and points raised included: the changes to the spending threshold between departments; how the Purchase Order requirement had impacted suppliers; the need for forecasting and modelling in demand-led services such as Children's Social Care; mitigations in place where there are forecast overspends; the importance of Homes and Horizons and 16+ supported accommodation; the potential for impact on the Council Tax collection fund following the recent Government decision on Winter Fuel Payments; interdependency between different budgets with Adult Social Care; debt recovery and enforcement; concerns around capital depletions within Adult Social Care; the status of the household support fund; the context of the Hurlestone Bothy Earmarked Reserve.

The Leader of the Council concluded the discussion and proceeded to a vote on the recommendations, which were agreed unanimously.

**Following consideration of the officer report, appendices and discussion, the Executive resolved to:**

- a) **Note the forecast underspend of £0.2m for the year.**
- b) **Agree to draw £0.025m from the Hurlestone Bothy Earmarked Reserve for the Coastal Revival Fund. (£0.017m to Property Services under Strategic Asset Management, and £0.008m to Communities Services under Regulatory & Operational Services.)**

## **26 Somerset Council Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act - Agenda Item 13**

The Leader of the Council, Cllr Bill Revans, introduced the report. Cllr Revans explained the legislative context and proceeded to invite Lesley Dolan, Principal Lawyer and Deputy Monitoring Officer, to speak.

Lesley Dolan explained that the five predecessor authorities have not used the powers granted by the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act in the previous five years, and the legal limitations the Act places on covert surveillance.

The Leader of the Council, Cllr Bill Revans, invited comments from Committee Members and other Members present. Questions and points raised included: whether there had been any unsuccessful applications to use covert surveillance; the reasoning behind the legislation; whether it applies to general town centre CCTV; the practical applications of covert surveillance; the need for annual review of the policy.

There was a drafting amendment to include that the policy would be reviewed by Scrutiny Committee – Corporate and Resources.

The Leader of the Council concluded the discussion and proceeded to a vote on the recommendations, which were agreed unanimously.

**Following consideration of the officer report, appendices and discussion, the Executive resolved to:**

- 1. Note the contents of this report.**
- 2. Note the outcome of the recent Inspection by the Investigatory Powers Commission.**
- 3. Note the use of the Authorities' powers under RIPA for the period of 3 years prior to the formation of the unitary Council, for the period 2023/24 and thereafter that the use of the powers be reported to the Executive on an annual basis.**
- 4. Recommend to Full Council that the former County Council's Covert Surveillance (RIPA) Policy attached to this Report be re-adopted as amended, as the RIPA Policy for Somerset Council.**
- 5. Agree and note that the Council's Policy at recommendation 4 above will be reviewed annually by the Scrutiny Committee – Corporate and Resources and Executive Committee.**

## **27 Somerset Strategic Alcohol and Drug Partnership Annual Report - Agenda Item 14**

The Leader of the Council, Cllr Bill Revans, introduced the report. Cllr Revans

highlighted the important work going on at Somerset Drug and Alcohol Service/Turning Point and the moving power of the peer-supported graduation he attended in his role as Lead Member for Public Health. Cllr Revans proceeded to invite Alison Bell, Consultant in Public Health, to speak.

Alison Bell explained the national context, the funding situation, and local statistics.

The Leader of the Council, Cllr Bill Revans, invited comments from Committee Members and other Members present. Questions and points raised included: what provision was available for under 18s in relation to alcohol; how can councillors support this work; the possibility for working with local businesses to support this work; data regarding protected characteristics such as people with care experience; incorporating family safeguarding and a prevention approach; placements for alcohol detoxification; the skills gap in NHS care for addiction; the importance of partnership working; data on opiate use; the work ongoing with people leaving prison.

The Leader of the Council concluded the discussion and proceeded to a vote on the recommendations, which were agreed unanimously.

**Following consideration of the officer report, appendices and discussion, the Executive resolved to endorse the content of the report and support the Somerset Drug & Alcohol Partnership focus areas for 2024-25:**

- 1. Targeting and supporting people who are using alcohol to problematic levels and not accessing treatment.**
- 2. Targeting people within the criminal justice system who have a treatment need but who are not engaged in treatment.**
- 3. Reaching the Continuity of Care target of 47% (people successfully transitioning from custody-based treatment to community treatment).**
- 4. Piloting a local detoxification initiative.**
- 5. Evolving lived experience initiatives.**
- 6. Raising awareness of Recovery support in all communities.**
- 7. Developing a multi-agency Drug and Alcohol Deaths review process.**
- 8. Implementing the Local Drug Intelligence System (LDIS) to facilitate a prompt response to any contaminated drugs in Somerset.**

**(The meeting ended at 1.15 pm)**

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**CHAIR**