To: The Members of Somerset County Council

You are requested to attend the Meeting of Somerset County Council on Wednesday 15 May 2019 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 Julia Jones on 01823 359027 or jjones@somerset.gov.uk

Issued By Scott Wooldridge, Strategic Manager - Governance and Risk - 7 May 2019

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

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 15 May 2019

Full Council Guidance notes

1  Election of Chair

2  Appointment of Vice Chair

3  Apologies for Absence

4  Declarations of Interest

Details of 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 Democratic Services team.

5  Minutes from the meeting held on 20 February 2019 (Pages 7 - 46)

Council is asked to confirm the minutes are accurate.

6  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 Chair’s Schedule which will be made available to the members and to the public at the meeting.

For Information

7  Annual Report of the Constitution and Standards Committee (Pages 47 - 48)

To consider the report of the Constitution and Standards Committee.

For Decision

8  Report of the Monitoring Officer (Pages 49 - 60)

To consider a report by the Monitoring Officer regarding the review of the Council’s constitution and democratic arrangements, proposed appointments to committees and the proposed appointment of the Deputy S151 Officer.

9  Report of the Leader and Cabinet - for decision (Pages 61 - 62)

To consider a report with recommendations from the Leader of the Council, arising from the Cabinet meetings held on 11 March and 13 May 2019.

The recommendations relate to the Children and Young People's Plan.

10  Requisitioned items

No requisitioned items have been submitted for the Council’s consideration.
For Information

11 Chair's announcements (Pages 63 - 64)

To receive the Chair’s information sheet detailing events attended in February, March, April and May 2019.

12 Report of the Leader and Cabinet - Items for Information (Pages 65 - 74)

To receive reports by the Leader of Council summarising key decisions taken by him and the Cabinet, including at the Cabinet meetings held on 11 March and 13 May attached

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

13 Leader of the Council annual report (Pages 75 - 82)

To consider a report by the Leader of the Council

14 Annual report of the Cabinet Member for Customer and Communities (Pages 83 - 88)

To consider a report by the Leader of the Council regarding his responsibilities for Customers and Communities.

15 Annual report of the Cabinet Member for Resources (Pages 89 - 100)

To consider a report by the Cabinet for Resources and Deputy Leader of the Council

16 Annual report of the Scrutiny Committee for Policies, Adults and Health (Pages 101 - 106)

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

17 Annual report of the Scrutiny Committee for Policies, Children and Families (Pages 107 - 112)

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

18 Annual report of the Scrutiny Committee for Policies and Place (Pages 113 - 124)

To receive a report by the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee for Policies and Place.
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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 Julia Jones, Democratic Services Team Leader, County Hall, Taunton, Somerset, TA1 4DY 01823 359027 jjones@somerset.gov.uk so that the Chair 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 – Scott Wooldridge (email: swooldridge@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 Chair 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/statements/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 Chair’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 Chair 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 20 February 2019 at 10.00 am


112 Apologies for Absence - Agenda Item 1

Apologies for absence were received from: Cllr Hazel Prior-Sankey, Cllr Mike Pullin, Cllr Dean Ruddle.

113 Declarations of Interest - Agenda Item 2

(1) Members' written notifications of interests were affixed to the Notice Board at the back of the Council Chamber for the duration of the meeting.

(2) Members were reminded that the Monitoring Officer had granted a dispensation to enable all elected members to participate and vote on setting the budget, council tax levels and the Members Allowance Scheme. Any member who had an amount of Council Tax due to be paid which had been unpaid for at least two months needed to declare they could not take part in the vote relating to the Revenue Budget.

114 Minutes from the Council meeting held on 28 November and the Extraordinary meeting on 28 November 2018 - Agenda Item 3

(1) The Minutes of the meeting held on 28 November 2018 and the Extraordinary Meeting held on 28 November were accepted as a true and accurate record and were signed by the Chair of the meeting.

115 Chair's Announcements - Agenda Item 4

(1) The Chair informed members of the visits he had made in December, January and February and thanked the Vice-Chair for attending those events he was unable to.

(2) Members were also informed of the sad passing of Lord Paddy Ashdown, who was MP for Yeovil from 1983 to 2001 and Alan Dimmick, who was the County Councillor for Yeovil Central from 2013 to 2017.

(3) Councillor Jane Lock, who knew Lord Ashdown personally paid tribute to him outlining his career, achievements and personality.

(4) The Leader of the Council paid tribute to former County Councillor Alan Dimmick and commented on his commitment to his division, his desire for answers, contribution to the council, and his character.

(5) Members stood for a minute’s silence in remembrance.
Public Question Time - Agenda Item 5

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

1. Outsourcing Oversight/ Revenue Budget
From Nigel Behan

Responses from Cllr Faye Purbrick, Cabinet Member for Education and Transformation and Cllr Mandy Chilcott, Cabinet Member for Resources

2. S151 Remuneration
From Kevin Greenwood

Responses from Cllr Mandy Chilcott, Cabinet Member for Resources

3. Get Set
From Elvira Elliot

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

4. Young Carers
From Marianne and Gracie Evans

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

5. Young Carers
From Holly Baker

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

6. Discovery
From Eva Bryczkowski

Response from Cllr David Huxtable, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care

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

Report of the Leader and Cabinet – for decision - Agenda Item 6

(1) The Council considered a report by the Leader and Cabinet which set out the recommendations to Council regarding the Capital Programme following consideration at Cabinet on 23 January, the expansion of the Capital Strategy, the Revenue Budget, and the Treasury Management Strategy Statement following consideration at Cabinet on 11 February.

(2) The Leader, Cllr Fothergill, reminded members that difficult budget decisions had been taken in September 2018. It had been vital these
decisions were taken and as a result the current circumstances the Council was in now was much changed from 5 months ago.

(3) The budget being put before councillors for their consideration was sound and met financial challenges and put the council back on sound financial footing.

(4) There was some discussion about the repercussions of decisions on local residents, borrowing debts and the cost of servicing them, and costs of waste vehicles. There would be further challenges ahead with Brexit and the local government funding model. He proposed the recommendations in the reports to the Council.

(5) The Cabinet Member for Resources, Cllr Chilcott introduced the reports and explained that the Capital Strategy proposals were still being fully formulated and therefore agreement was being sought to key officers and members to design the arrangements for approval by Council before the end of July 2019.

(6) The Council would continue to invest in Somerset providing new school places, transport infrastructure and improve facilities to meet the needs of the community and support continued economic growth.

(7) There would be continued commitment to driving value from all the treasury management activities, keeping the council’s money safe and working it hard. She seconded the recommendations with the reports.

(8) The budget proposals had been presented to the scrutiny committees, Audit Committee, and Cabinet. The proposals had been given a lot of thought and it was proposed to raise council tax by 2.99%. The Director of Finance’s comment at 6.12 was in particularly highlighted.

(9) Members were informed that Somerset Waste Board had already agreed to make the savings recommended at recommendation 8 of the Revenue Budget at Paper C so the wording needed to be changed to endorsed.

(10) The Director of Finance and his team were commended for their hard work and members were urged to heed their advice.

(11) Cllr Liz Leyshon proposed an amendment to the budget recommendations in Paper C for the addition of a further one-off £500,000 to the ring-fenced Prevention reserve with a view to scoping and commissioning work in the following areas:
• Pilot with partners into impacts of universal credit and possible SCC approaches to increase families’ resilience, thereby reducing future pressures on the council up to £200,000 as a one-off figure
• Increasing ability of Council to develop seed-grants to communities to lead to a redesign of young carers support – an additional £100,000
• County ticket review, looking to encourage young people to use bus rather than cars – an amount up to £170,000
• Access to specialist finance advice relating to the investment strategy – up to £30,000
(12) Cllr Tessa Munt seconded this and the Section 151 Officer offered assurance that Somerset County Council will be able to allocate sufficient additional funding on a one-off basis.

(13) The Leader and the Deputy Leader agreed there were some good ideas in the amendment but were concerned that this had not been fully costed or worked out.

(14) Cllr Chilcott proposed and was seconded by Cllr Faye Purbrick that a further amendment be made that: The Council approves the addition of a further one-off £500,000 to the ring-fenced Prevention reserve with a view to considering additional projects aimed at increasing residents’ resilience and reducing demand on services.

(15) There was further discussion about the amount of detail needed in the amendment and concern at the lack of it in the further amendment proposed and also about being too proscriptive.

(16) Cllr Leyshon then proposed an amendment to her proposal to take out any reference to specific sums allocated to specific projects within the prevention reserve and to take out the words scoping and commissioning work and replace with the word ‘exploring’. The amendment asked for Council to approve the addition of a further one-off £500,000 to the ring-fenced Prevention reserve with a view to exploring work in the following areas:

- Pilot with partners into impacts of universal credit and possible SCC approaches to increase families’ resilience, thereby reducing future pressures on the council
- Increasing ability of Council to develop seed-grants to communities to lead to a redesign of young carers support
- County ticket review, looking to encourage young people to use bus rather than cars
- Access to specialist finance advice relating to the investment strategy

(17) Cllr Munt seconded this amendment. All members had been emailed with a copy of the proposal.

(18) A named vote was requested and was supported by more than 10 members. Votes cast as follows:

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(19) The Monitoring Officer declared that the votes were 20 in favour with 31 against and no abstentions and so that amendment was not carried.

(20) Members were then asked to vote on the second amendment put forward by Cllr Chilcott and seconded by Cllr Purbrick: ‘The Council approves the addition of a further one-off £500,000 to the ring-fenced Prevention reserve with a view to considering additional projects aimed at increasing residents’ resilience and reducing demand on services.’

(21) Votes cast as follows:

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(22) The Monitoring Officer declared that the votes were 50 in favour with 1 against and no abstentions and so that amendment was carried and would be added to the Paper C motions that members would vote on later.

(23) There was some discussion regarding the need for transparency on how the money will be spent and reassurance was given that it would be.

(24) Cllr Fothergill proposed the recommendations for Papers A to D and was seconded by Cllr Chilcott.

(25) Members were then asked to vote on Paper A Capital Strategy 2019/20 – 2021/22. The Council RESOLVED unanimously to agree:

1. the Capital Strategy 2019/20-2021/22, and the prudential indicators contained within Paper A (as set out in Appendix 1);
2. to delegate authority to the Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Leader, Deputy Leader, Opposition Spokesperson for Resources, Monitoring Officer and County Solicitor, to design the governance arrangements and remit of the non-treasury investments for recommendation to, and approval by, the Cabinet and the Council before the end of July 2019.

| Cllr Healey  |  
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| Cllr James Hunt  |  
| Cllr John Hunt  |  
| Cllr Huxtable  |  
| Cllr Keating  |  
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| Cllr Nicholson  |  
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| Cllr Redman  |  
| Cllr Revans  |  
| Cllr Rigby  |  
| Cllr Taylor  |  
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| Cllr Vijeh  |  
| Cllr Wallace  |  
| Cllr Wedderkopp  |  
| Cllr J Williams  |  
| Cllr R Williams  |  
| Cllr Woodman  |  


Members were then asked to vote on Paper B Capital Programme 2019/20 – 2021/2. The Council RESOLVED unanimously to agree:

1. Approval of the proposed capital programme for the period 2019/20 to 2022/23 of £224.121m, shown in Appendix A. Full details of individual schemes are available online as background papers. It is to be noted there is an existing programme approved in 2018/19 that overlaps with this one;
2. That the Chief Executive and the relevant Senior Leadership Team Officer, following appropriate consultation and after giving due regard to the information contained within any associated impact assessments, are given delegated authority to decide on the individual projects to be delivered within block allocations;
3. That the Section 151 Officer is given delegated authority to accept any additional grants or funding that is made available to the County Council together with authority to consequently expand the approved capital programme, providing there are no negative revenue budget implications as a result of that action.

The Revenue Budget and the Medium-Term Financial Plan 2019/20-2021/22 Paper C was put to the vote with addition of the amendment agreed earlier and the change in wording regarding the savings target for waste disposal costs.

Votes were cast as follows:

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(29) The Monitoring Officer declared that the votes were 31 in favour with 9 against and 11 abstentions and so the recommendations including the amendment were carried.

(30) The Council RESOLVED to:

1. Agree a gross revenue budget of £780.181m and a net revenue budget in 2019/20 of £327.967m

2. Agree the application of up to £2.791m in 2019/20 of capital receipts to fund the revenue costs associated with reforming services, subject to further development and review of business cases.

3. Delegate authority to the S151 Officer, in consultation with the Chief Executive and the Director for Customers & Communities – Corporate Affairs to review all business cases before agreeing to the use of capital receipts or the Invest to Save reserve.

4. Agree the replenishment of depleted reserves as follows:

   a. Create Invest to Save earmarked reserve of £2.852m to ensure resources are available to support further service reform;
   b. Addition of £2.000m to the General Fund, from the base budget provision, to bring the balance up towards a reasonable level for a Council of this size, and;
   c. Contribute an additional £3.389m to repay the Buildings Maintenance Insurance Scheme (BMIS) deficit reserve as the scheme has now ended;
   d. Addition of £0.540m to the Insurance Fund to partially replenish the fund to enable it to support likely claims against the Council.

5. Agree the actions required to manage the gap to be reduced to £15.112m in 2019/20:
• the reversal of previously identified savings and technical adjustments totalling £18.154m as set out in paragraph 4.5 and Appendix A
• approve the revised Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) statement and policy (Appendix B), which delivers a saving in 2019/20 of £3.714m;
• the reduction of the corporate contingency by £0.575m to £7.226m for 2019/20;
• the use of the additional one-off Adult Social Care grant of £2.498m to meet the requirements set out by Government for this grant;
• the use of the additional one-off Social Care grant of £4.267m for social care pressures, and;
• approve the removal of the staff unpaid leave saving of £0.454m following rejection of the proposal by the Unions.

6. Agree the proposals for change (as set out in Appendices D and E1-E5) necessary to set a balanced budget for 2019/20, totalling £8.162m, and delegate the implementation to the relevant director(s) following due process.

7. Agree that due regards have been taken to any equalities implications identified and risk implications prior to any decision being taken in relation to the recommendations in this report, noting the initial equalities impacts as set out in Appendix C.

8. Agree that the savings target relating to Waste Disposal costs (£225k) is endorsed to the Somerset Waste Board to consider agreeing to make savings to this value as part of setting its 2019/20 budget.


10. Agree to keep the Scheme of Members’ Allowances unchanged for 2019/20.

11. Note that the Leader of the Council, Cabinet Member for Resources, Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer will oversee and monitor the delivery of the proposals for change and report on progress as part of the budget monitoring reports.

12. Delegate authority for the development of any additional alternative proposals for change that may be necessary to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Section 151 Officer and relevant Director(s).

13. Agree that the Cabinet and the Council have reviewed and confirmed that account has been taken of the Section 151 Officer’s assessment of the robustness of estimates and adequacy of reserves as set out in section 6 of this report.

14. Agree the Reserves and Balances Policy Statement in Appendix K

15. Agree to increase the level of the general Council Tax by 2.99%, which will provide a further £7.073m to support the Councils expenditure.
16. Agree to increase Council Tax by a further 1% for the adult social care precept, which will provide a further £2.365m to support the growth in demand for services.

17. Agree to continue the Council Tax precept of £12.84 within the base budget for the shadow Somerset Rivers Authority (representing no increase). This results in a Council Tax Requirement of £2.547m.

18. Agree to set the County Council precept for band D Council Tax at £1,239.73 which represents a 3.99% uplift. This is a rise of £0.91 per week for a Band D property, as set out in Appendix H.

19. Note that the amount of council tax payable for dwellings listed by valuation band, calculated in accordance with the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Local Government Act 1992, shall be as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valuation Band</th>
<th>Amount (£)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>826.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>964.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>1,101.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>1,239.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>1,515.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>1,790.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>2,066.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>2,479.46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

20. Agree that the district councils are requested to make payments totalling £245.955m to Somerset County Council of sums due under precepts calculated in proportion to their council tax Band D equivalents as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Total Precept (£)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mendip District Council</td>
<td>50,204,179.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sedgemoor District Council</td>
<td>50,839,974.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Somerset District Council</td>
<td>74,713,671.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somerset West &amp; Taunton</td>
<td>70,196,974.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>245,954,800.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

21. Note that the district councils are required to make payments of precept by equal instalments of the above sums on the following dates:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>18 April 2019</th>
<th>18 October 2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22 May 2019</td>
<td>18 November 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 June 2019</td>
<td>17 December 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 July 2019</td>
<td>20 January 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 August 2019</td>
<td>18 February 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 September 2019</td>
<td>18 March 2020</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
22. Additionally, note that payments be made by the district councils (or to them) in respect of the estimated surplus/(deficit) on their collection funds by the 31 March 2019 as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>CT Surplus / (Deficit) (£m)</th>
<th>NNDR Surplus / (Deficit) (£m)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mendip</td>
<td>1,057,895.00</td>
<td>(203,931.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sedgemoor</td>
<td>1,167,384.67</td>
<td>13,504.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Somerset</td>
<td>(169,962.55)</td>
<td>133,579.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somerset West and Taunton Council</td>
<td>746,092.00</td>
<td>299,679.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2,801,409.12</td>
<td>242,831.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

23. The Council approves the addition of a further one-off £500,000 to the ring-fenced Prevention reserve with a view to considering additional projects aimed at increasing residents resilience and reducing demand on services.

(31) Members were asked to consider the recommendations within Paper D Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2019-20.

(32) The Council **RESOLVED** unanimously to:

1. Adopt the Treasury Management Strategy (as shown in Section 2 of the report);
2. Approve the Treasury Investment Strategy (as shown in Section 3 of the report) and proposed Lending Counterparty Criteria (attached at Appendix B to Paper D)
3. Adopt the Prudential Treasury Indicators in section 4 of the report.

(33) The Chair announced there would be a short break in proceedings here at 11.55am. The meeting reconvened at 12.08pm.

118 **Report of the HR Policy Committee – for decision** – Agenda Item 7

(1) The Council considered a report from the HR Policy Committee which covered two items of business considered at its meeting on 21 January 2019. These were the Pay Policy Statement 2019-20 and the Pension Discretions Policy.

(2) Members were informed it was a statutory requirement for the Council’s Pay Policy Statement to be reviewed annually.

(3) The HR team were thanked for their work and the recommendations were proposed by Cllr Chilcott and seconded by Cllr Leyshon.

(4) The Council **RESOLVED** unanimously to approve the Pay Policy Statement (PPS) for the Council for 2019-20 (attached as Appendix A to this report).

119 **Report of the Monitoring Officer – for decision** – Agenda Item 8

(1) The Council considered a report from the Monitoring Officer which set out decisions on proposed changes to appointments to committees on outside
bodies, the appointment of a Section 151 Officer and the appointment of a Data Protection Officer.

(2) The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the changes to Committee and Outside Bodies appointments – see section 3.1 and Appendix 1 to this report.

**Appointment of a Section 151 Officer (Chief Finance Officer)**
The Council **RESOLVED** to appoint Sheila Collins, Interim Director of Finance, as the Council’s Section 151 Officer with effect from 1 March 2019, pending the recruitment of a permanent appointment to the Section 151 Officer role.

**Appointment of Data Protection Officer**
The Council **RESOLVED** to appoint the post of Service Manager-Customer Experience & Information Governance, held by Rebecca Martin, as the Council’s Data Protection Officer.

(3) Tribute was paid to Peter Lewis, the current Interim Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer for his hard work over the past year and his help and advice to members.

120 **Annual Report of the Corporate Parenting Board** - Agenda Item 9

(1) The Chair invited the Chair of Corporate Parenting Board, Jill Johnson OBE, to present the Board’s annual report.

(2) Members were reminded of the role of the Board to ensure that the County and Districts Councils fulfil their duties towards children looked after and care leavers corporately and in partnership with other statutory agencies.


(4) The Board met bi-monthly throughout the year, receiving regular updates from officers, partners, and the Somerset In Care Council and Somerset Leaving Care Council.

(5) The Chair of the Board highlighted the many positive outcomes from the work of the Board and sub-groups shown at 4.3 of the report. There would also be further training and awareness raising of corporate parenting activity within SCC, district council and partners.

(6) The seven principles of Corporate Parenting were also highlighted and there was a plea to promote the need for more foster parents. Members were encouraged to attend meetings and workgroups.

(7) Cllr Nicholson proposed the recommendations and was seconded by Cllr Redman. The Council **RESOLVED** to:

- Recommend Corporate Parenting Board training to be mandatory for all Councillors who are members of the Board.
• Recommend that councillors appointed to the Corporate Parenting Board who do not attend Board meetings for three consecutive meetings are reported to Group Leads.
• Invite District Councillor representation on the Corporate Parenting Board to provide support on housing and leisure issues.
• Acknowledge and thank the young people for the work that they undertake.

(8) The Cabinet Member for Children and Families and the Leader thanked Ms Johnson for her work and support.

102 Requisitioned Items – Climate Change Emergency - Agenda Item 10

(1) The Chair invited Cllr Tessa Munt to present and propose the requisitioned item about the Climate Change Emergency.

(2) Cllr Munt informed members of the protest last week by young people regarding this and said low carbon had to become the new norm and people had to be enabled to use the green options.

(3) It was important that the Council take action and groups who had helped contribute to the report were thanked for assistance.

(4) Cllr Hall seconded the recommendations and hoped this would receive cross-party support. He reinforced the importance of making sure the goals were achievable and said this had the backing from a number of the Somerset MPs.

(5) The Chair then invited members of the public who had submitted questions about climate change to speak.

(6) The following people spoke at the meeting: Timothy Eggins, Melanie Smith, Christopher Maunder, Sigurd Reimers, Bill Butcher, Ian Gauntlett, Callie Gauntlett, and Michael Dunk.

(7) Cllr Hall responded to the questions. A full list of the questions and statements are shown in Appendix A to the minutes.

(8) There was a debate among members who raised the following points: environmental concerns needed consideration when planning housing developments, important for the Council to lead on this, better public transport was needed and better cycle paths, this was an opportunity to invest in a green future, it was hoped this could be more than tokenism, green initiatives can also yield positive financial effects.

(9) The Council RESOLVED by majority to:
  a) affirm the Council’s recognition of the scale and urgency of the global challenge from climate change, as documented by the latest Special Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, and declares a climate emergency; and
  b) mandate the Policy and Place Scrutiny Committee to review and recommend what further corporate approaches can be taken through a
SCC Climate Change Strategy and to facilitate stronger Somerset-wide action through collaboration at a strategic, community and individual level; and
c) pledge to work with partners, including the Heart of the South West LEP, individuals and community action groups across the county to identify ways to make Somerset carbon neutral by 2030, taking into account both production and consumption emissions (scope 1, 2 and 3); and
d) write to the Secretaries of State for Business Energy & Industrial Strategy, Transport, Environment, Food & Rural Affairs and Housing, Communities & Local Government calling for the creation, provision or devolution of powers and resources to make achievement of the 2030 target possible here in Somerset; and
e) report to Full Council before the end of 2019 with the actions the Council has and will take to address this emergency; and
f) allocate £25,000 from the Council’s 2018/19 contingency budget and authorise the Lead Director for Economic and Community Infrastructure to utilise this funding to resource the work necessary to support Scrutiny Committee for Policies and Place and to assess any specific recommendations and financial implications. Any unspent allocation will be carried forward into 2019/20 to continue the work.

The meeting was adjourned here at 1.30pm.

103 Report of the Leader and Cabinet – Items for information – Agenda Item 11

The meeting reconvened at 1.45pm.

(1) The Council considered a report that summarised the key decisions taken by the Leader and Cabinet Members and officers between 20 November 2018 and 9 February 2019, together with items of business discussed at Cabinet meetings on 19 December 2018, 23 January 2019, and 11 February 2019.

(2) Cllr Fothergill presented his report as read.

(3) Cllr John Woodman responded to a written question from Cllr Broom regarding Chard Junction.

(4) Cllr Hall responded to a written question from Cllr Broom regarding Cresta Pool.

(5) Cllr Fothergill responded to a written question from Cllr Verdon about Numatic International.

(6) Cllr Fothergill responded to a written question from Cllr Jane Lock regarding Brexit.

(7) Cllr Nicholson responded to a written question from Cllr Redman regarding young carers.

(8) Cllr Nicholson responded to a written question from Cllr Clarke regarding young carers.
(9) Cllr Munt asked about the funding of the young carers service and consultation about the future of the service and assessments for carers.

(10) Cllr Nicholson responded by saying this was a matter for the Cabinet members to consider in the future and was not appropriate to discuss in a public arena and that a written response would be provided.

(11) Cllr Nicholson presented the Annual Report of the Cabinet Member for Children and Families. This was an open and upward looking report and tribute was paid to the early help work and external support the council had given other organisations.

(12) Cllr Purbrick presented the Annual Report of the Cabinet Member for Education and Transformation. The work of the School Build Programme team was particularly highlighted and members were informed that progress was continuing with ICT services and there was a renegotiating ICT contracts to support countywide. The transformation focus for the next year was on a refresh of the digital strategy and investment in Digital Customer capabilities.

(13) There was some discussion regarding technology and the ability for staff to work at home which was more efficient and productive and making better use of it such as using Skype for meetings. It was hoped that this could be used for more meetings.

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

105 Report of the Scrutiny for Policies, and Place Committee - Agenda Item 12

(1) The Council received and noted the report from the Chair of the Scrutiny for Polices and Place Committee Cllr Anna Groskop. She informed members that the committee had brought a number of suggestions regarding recommendations through to decision makers and she looked forward to seeing the business plan when it came to the committee.

(2) Cllr Fothergill thanked Cllr Groskop for her work.

106 Report of the Scrutiny Committee for Policies, Adults and Health – Agenda item 13

(1) The Council received and noted the report from the Vice Chair of the Scrutiny for Policies, Adults and Health Committee Cllr Mark Healey. The Committee had discussed a number of issues including the Somerset Health and Care Strategy, Healthy Weston Programme, Community Hospitals update and the Medium-Term Financial Plan.

(2) Cllr Thorne updated members about the current position of Wellington Community Hospital remaining closed.

(3) Cllr Fothergill thanked the Chair of the Committee for her work.
(1) The Council received and noted the report from the Chair of the Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee Cllr Leigh Redman. The main focus of the work was ensuring the continuous improvement and delivery of the 7 priorities within the Children and Young People’s Plan (CYPP). He also highlighted the governor vacancies currently on the committee.

(2) Cllr Fothergill thanked Cllr Redman for his work on the committee.

This was taken under agenda item 11.

This was taken under agenda item 11.

(The meeting ended at 3.30pm)

CHAIR of the Council
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>From</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Question/statement</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Revenue Budget</td>
<td>Here is the link to the report: <a href="https://ico.org.uk/media/about-the-ico/documents/2614204/outsourcing-oversight-ico-report-to-parliament.pdf">https://ico.org.uk/media/about-the-ico/documents/2614204/outsourcing-oversight-ico-report-to-parliament.pdf</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Elizabeth Denham (The Commissioner) stated in her message that:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“Information is an asset. Information is knowledge. Information is power. That’s why having access to it goes to the heart of a healthy, functioning democracy.”</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>She further stated that (referring to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR)):</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“These laws equip citizens, the media, advocacy groups and others with information through which they can scrutinize the myriad of decisions and actions taken by public authorities at all levels.”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Services that are both accountable and transparent are better public services. The principles of access to information laws promote better decision-making, which in turn improves services. Strong laws are an essential part of the bigger picture for effective open government that is democratically accountable to the people it serves.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>And then went onto comment that:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“When I was appointed Commissioner in 2016, I raised the prospect of extending FOIA to contractors delivering public services.2 Following the collapse of Carillion last year, I submitted evidence to the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee (PACAC) and was clear that FOIA should be extended.3 After the Grenfell Tower tragedy in 2017, I also highlighted my concerns about access to information about fire safety and the fact that housing associations are not always covered by information access law.4 These events have sharpened my resolve to improve transparency and accountability.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I want the evidence-based case made in this report to promote an urgent and constructive dialogue that will result in the strengthening of our access to information laws. This reflects one of the key priorities of our draft information rights strategy ‘Openness by Design’. (The references can be found in the report).

Somerset County Council has outsourced some high profile services e.g. the In House Learning Disability Provider Service in 2017 to the Social Enterprise known as Discovery (part of Dimensions UK Ltd https://www.dimensions-uk.org/about/discovery/).

Does this Council believe “Access to information legislation is essential to democratic accountability and helps to create what we all want to see – better public services,” and (will it) ask Somerset MP’s to support (and campaign for) these proposals in Parliament?

And will this Council promote the FOIA (within the Local Government Association for instance) to apply to organisations that have public service contracts (e.g. Discovery/Dimensions UK Ltd contract with SCC)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q2</th>
<th>Relates to Agenda Item 6 Paper C Revenue Budget - Medium Term Financial Plan 2019-22 (of the 20 February 2019 County Council Papers)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agenda Item 6 Revenue Budget Monitoring Update – Quarter 3 2018/19 (of the 11 February 2019 Cabinet Papers)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is noted that there is now an approximate underspend of £1m compared to the forecast overspend of £20m+ last summer. It is also noted that the Children’s Services budget was reset (increased by approximately £20m) during the financial year 2018/19. (The Adult Services base budget is forecast to reduce.)

The forecast underspend was based on a number of one-off adjustments (e.g. capital flexibilities for transformation etc. and savings on the revenue set
aside for debt payments) plus one offs for highways and winter pressures etc from the Governments Autumn finance position.

SCC will be part of the Business Rates pilot as well.

The general reserves are forecast to improve as are the earmarked (including negative) reserves for 2019/20. (With the Discovery Equalisation negative reserve forecast to disappear in the next financial year.)

The budget requirement (about £328 for 2019/20) appears to be approximately £10m higher than last year (about £318m) whilst there is still a shortfall to address with a Council Tax Increase of 3.99% (SCC’s part that is).

What would SCC need to do next year in the financial modelling once the one off adjustments, debt repayment adjustments, capital flexibilities, Council Tax collection surpluses are discounted and is there any expectation of further overspends in Children’s Services (did SCC contribute to the recent National Audit Office report on Children’s Services)?

Answer:

Thanks Nigel for the question. Somerset County Council has a strong record of fulfilling its statutory duties in regard to data sharing, data protection and data access. You will note an item on the agenda about a new statutory appointment in this area. We are happy to comply with all government regulation in terms of data access and will of course continue to do so should the government change its approach to public service contracts. As an example, I would hope you may have noted this transparency over the past year or so, in how little information is contained in confidential papers within our reports.

In relation to your questions on the Council’s finance and budget, I’m pleased that you have picked up on the very positive improvements in our overall financial sustainability – and in particular that you have noted the very significant improvement in our general fund level. That, combined with the increased reserves position, gives assurance that this Council will have improved its resilience and be able to weather any surprises that the end of 2019 may present. Furthermore, we will continue to work over the coming months to refine our estimates. This council, as do all councils, continuously models and reviews its finances throughout the year. Numerous monitoring reports will be presented to various committees of this council and I am sure you will agree with me that this years reporting of the financial position has been more in depth, transparent and frequent that this council has probably ever seen. This means Members and the public will continue to be kept informed about the financial position throughout 2019/20, whilst work continues to model and refine the projections for future years.

As to the specifics of your question about financial modelling, I would point out the report contains a lot of information about the financial years 2020/21 and 2021/22 already. While we do not have sound information about the funding arrangements that the Government is planning for the years
after 2019/20 – nobody does – we have taken account of the all the one-off funding and savings that you highlight. Even with that in mind the report highlights that there are outline plans to reduce the estimated gap to about £5m. That, combined with the increased resilience through reserves, gives assurance that the Council can weather any surprises that the end of 2019 may present. Furthermore, we will be undertaking more work over the coming months to refine our estimates. This council, as do all councils, continuously models finances throughout the year bringing monitoring reports through our governance processes on a fixed routine. Members and the public will be kept informed about the position in 2018/19 and the prospects for future years, as they have been to date.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kevin Greenwood</th>
<th>S151 Remuneration</th>
<th>How can the council justify paying the new S151 approximately £211,000 p/a?</th>
<th>Response from Cllr Mandy Chilcott – Cabinet Member for Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Answer:

The rate being paid for the Director of Finance & section 151 Officer is £900 per day. This price has been influenced by the market for these skills, which are in short supply, and we have tested this with recruitment exercises over the past 12-months. We had similar questions asked when the current interim 151 officer was appointed; I believe that the current financial position of Somerset County Council demonstrates that this has been a successful engagement. We have worked with the proposed new s151 officer now for a number of months and are confident that this will be a similarly successful appointment. I would remind Kevin that the day rate does NOT include holidays, sickness or pension payments.

| Elvira Elliot | Get Set | Since the recent cabinet meeting we have been struggling to make sense of what we are being told. The council bandies about statistics about closing children’s centres, use the line “it’s about people not buildings” and then tells us they are not in fact closing. They tell us initially that difficult decisions have had to be made for financial reasons, then 2 weeks ago they tell us that no saving is being made in this area and they are in fact improving the system. GETSET is to continue another year during which time the staff will train volunteers to do their jobs for free, but the staff are all leaving and there is no plan to recruit. What then, becomes of the children’s centres? I have found out that should the council close them they could become liable for having to pay back the original sure start grant from the DoE. In Norfolk where similar cuts are on the table a figure of 16 million was mooted. “Local authorities that “dispose of or change the use of buildings or assets funded wholly or partly through sure start capital grants” risk being told to pay the money back.” So, the centres stay open in name only, but the staff go. Already, though, in Yeovil the centre has been taken over by a private nursery, Shepton, by a school | Response from Cllr Frances Nicholson |
and so on. Technically they are still being used for early years settings but they are now not an open community resource for all families. These must be the “partners” so euphemistically referred to in CAF 14B and these centres are now not providing a universal service. Parents will get their mandated 5 visits from an overstretched health visitor, then nothing until nursery funding kicks in unless they can afford to pay privately. I can tell you that this age from 0-2 is a time of intense financial difficulty for many families, and I would say the time when you need the most community support. I would like to suggest that the council tells these partners that the price of taking on one of these centres must be the provision of at least 2 affordable, universal stay and play groups per week and supports them to provide this. At least then the universal groups could be run by trained staff. Parents and staff are very worried that if universal groups are run by volunteer parents that cliques could form leading to bullying, gossip and social exclusion. There needs to be some level of professional oversight.

It seems that there is currently poor oversight nationally about what constitutes a children’s centre. If ours are to become children’s centres in name only. I will be raising this issue with MPs and the DofE.

Regarding community and voluntary organisations. Time and again the only example the council has given is home start in west Somerset. They have said there is no level 2 demand there. As Minehead was recently shown to be the borough with the lowest social mobility in the entire UK. Could it be that most families in need in such a troubled area have higher needs due to the compounding factors of deprivation.

1. I would like to know what is the level 3 demand in West Somerset like compared to the rest of Somerset?
2. West Somerset is a small area with the vast majority of its population concentrated in Minehead and Watchet. I ask the council, have they considered the logistical implications and the travel they will be expecting of their volunteers in areas where the population is not centralised in this way?
3. Can the council guarantee that there will be any early help available for families whose needs present over the coming 12 months?
Thank you Elvira for your question. In terms of Q1...The current open cases within level 3 services are 836; 29 of those are in the West Somerset area.

As you will be aware, all public bodies face significant financial challenges, and all of us must make the most effective use of the resources that we have. Early Help is the responsibility of and must have input from all partners in the Children’s Trust. This is something that we must all do together.

We will continue to support services at Level 2 where there are external sources of funding. Schools, for example, continue to contribute significantly to early help services for children of school age, investing £1.8 million per annum in the Parent and Family Support Advisers and the Team Around the School model – all level 2 services. Children’s Services continue to bid for national programmes and we have secured £38k for the DWP Reducing Parental Conflict Programme and a £70k grant in the coming year (following £40k this year) for parenting work with youth offenders.

The third sector is a very important partner in early help. There are some outstanding models of support provided by highly skilled and supported volunteers. In Somerset we have our own examples of good practice including HomeStart in West Somerset and Yeovil Churches’ work in South Somerset. We will continue to support them.

Learning from adult services’ community connects developments, we will establish a £200k (annually) fund that can be used to start groups and activities, but we will also have staff that can work with these groups to find other sources of funding.

National funding bodies have reported that Somerset’s take up of third sector funding is low, and often local authorities are unable to access these sources of funding. We want to work actively with the voluntary and community sector and secure more external funding into the county. We know this can take time so would ensure seed funding is provided over a period of time to allow bidding application processes to happen.

For the next year the getset level 2 team will continue to support families providing parenting programmes and group work.

We will strengthen the first point of contact with a family including website information and advice that is available on Somerset Choices and the local offer for children with SEND. For clarity, Somerset Direct is the council’s call centre and have highly trained staff who can provide advice, guidance and signposting via email and on the phone, and we are considering how this can be improved even further.

It is also important to emphasise that we are committed to continuing to provide services at Level 3 of the early help continuum, which directly reduce the need for statutory children’s services.

Marrianne Evans / Gracie Young Carers

Young Carers gives me a much-needed break from helping my mum care for Brother who has learning disabilities and Epilepsy.

This vital group ensures that I have someone to talk to who understands.

Socialise with other young carers who understand.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Holly Baker</th>
<th>Young Carers</th>
<th>Young Carers</th>
<th>Response from Cllr Frances Nicholson</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• If we lost them it would be like losing one big family</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Always there when there needed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Helps you with any school problems</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Helps u achieve things that u thought your not able to do and achieve things that u want to achieve</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Easy to talk to and listen well</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Struggle to get time on your own when ur not at yc and get your own space</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• They help u feel safe</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Pushes ur confidence to become who u really are</td>
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<td>• Supporting u at home</td>
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<td>• When a young carer leaves it’s been very emotional having to say bye to them because they like family</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• When they take us to events it helps bring our communication up</td>
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<td>• Become housebound due to medical need for the person u care for</td>
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<td>• My School is one of a few that have worked in partnership with the service but there is no appointed person to talk to when yc aren’t there</td>
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<td>Why will you not tell us who will be there for us?</td>
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<td>Why will you not tell us when we can meet with our extended yc family who understand us?</td>
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<td>We are supposed to trust the adults who say they are here for us.</td>
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<td>Why do you not hear us?</td>
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Thank you, Marianne and Holly for your questions. Let me start by saying that you and all young carers ARE appreciated by me and by the whole Council. We are committed to supporting more young carers and providing a greater range of support, we can do this best by getting funding which is not open to the Council and using our limited resources to support this.

We recognise how important the regular social support groups are to our young carers and have already made the commitment that these groups will continue to run regularly, although staffing may well change. As well as the groups, many of our young carers have identified safe and trusted adults to who they can go when they feel the need. These links will continue to be promoted when any assessment of a child or young person identified as a young carer is completed.

The calendar of respite events and trips will be completed asap and shared with young carers and their families.

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<tr>
<th>Eva Bryczkowski</th>
<th>Discovery</th>
<th>Response from Cllr David Huxtable</th>
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| Service users are central to what we are all about here. They are not customers. It's not a sausage making factory. They use our services - that's why I still call them service users. When I worked at Learning Disabilities for 16 years, the staff put the service users first, second and last. They cared more about them than their own salaries and working conditions. Obviously, the latter were important, but it was the service users they were most concerned about. Since the outsourcing of Learning Disabilities, when Discovery began to run the service in 2017, I come across former colleagues and service users, and the latter, especially, are upset about the way they think it is going. Councillor Fothergill asked me to give him names of these people, but I feel that their privacy needs to be protected. It has been reported, in the public domain, that redundancies and early retirement have cost upwards of £475,000, (is this figure correct?), so far. Unfilled vacancies; shifts; not fully covered, agency staff, (who don't always know the full extent of the needs of service users), have, according to staff, parents and service users, led to a deterioration of the quality and standards of care. Discovery say that a lot of buildings need to be updated - maybe, but this shouldn't be done at the expense of the service users. They are paramount, above everything else. From my research and what I can see, Discovery has not had proper monitoring from the Local Authority and other independent checks into its quality of care. This leads me to wonder whether they are, in fact, marking their own homework.
| Frankly, if a private outsourced service does not meet... |
independent criteria, [Discovery might be one example], I think that the Local Authority should have the courage and confidence to say, 'This is the contract, this is what you are supposed to be doing, you are not, therefore, we will bring it back in-house with no compensation.'

Q1. Since Discovery took over the running of Learning Disabilities, how closely have the Council been monitoring their progress and performance according to external indicators of quality of care and standards required by service users, parents and staff?

I absolutely do NOT want vague abstract phrases, (that we can all agree on).

Q2 Please give specific examples and hard evidence of about how the Local Authority is doing this and provide a report on how Discovery is performing, including whether they are succeeding, failing, or otherwise?

Q3. In the Proposed Capital Investment Programme 2019/20, in the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on January 23rd, it is written that:

"Learning Disabilities is now forecasting a positive variance due to a reduction of £0.500m of costs associated with previously assumed contractual transformation costs. It is planned to use both positive variances, (£1,500m in total), to reduce the balance on the Learning Disabilities equalisation reserve, hence improving the Council's resilience as shown on its balance sheet".

Can somebody please make this crystal clear, in plain language, as to what this exactly means? Again, no vague abstract phrases. Can the Council be specific in their explanation.

(Otherwise, and this may seem to some rather controversial, people may think that the words in the statement are being used in such a way as to almost hide the true meaning of what is actually being expressed). But I have no idea whether this is in fact the case, because I don't understand what it all means.
Thank you for your statement and questions clearly the themes contained within both have been covered many times before and indeed in the main answered. This council takes the transformation of the learning disability services very seriously, and that is not just the learning disability services provided by Discovery but all of the other learning disability services commissioned and delivered across this County. I reject your view that we do not monitor this contract indeed we monitor it very closely.

The council monitors this contract in a number of ways, there are formal contract review meetings are held each month (including from this council, senior commissioning officers, contract officers, finance officers and the junior cabinet member). In addition there are scheduled teleconferences fortnightly monitoring both delivery and transformation. The council also responds in a reactive manner when we get referrals such as safeguarding etc. In addition the adults and health scrutiny committee regularly has an update report on the contract performance, the next report will be at the March scrutiny meeting. We are absolutely committed to the success of this contract and will ensure it delivers the transformation needed.

Quite simply this means that we have underspends in both the budget for our Discovery transformation costs (linked to reduced anticipated costs being incurred) and underspends in the broader non-learning disability services. We are intending to use both these underspends to pay off an element of the LD Equalisation reserve. This is effectively paying off a debt in one-go and has the added benefit of freeing up revenue to spend on our day-to-day services going forward.

In addition the adults and health scrutiny regularly has an update on the contract and finally I have myself been out with my junior cabinet member been out to visit services recently and got some good feedback from the people we met both those who were being supported and those staff working in the services (Staff who had both transferred and staff who are new to discovery).

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<tr>
<th>From</th>
<th>CLIMATE CHANGE QUESTIONS</th>
<th>Question/statement</th>
<th>Response</th>
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<tr>
<td>Timothy Eggins</td>
<td>Climate Change</td>
<td>Will Somerset County Council declare a Climate Emergency and set a target to become carbon zero within 10 years?</td>
<td>Response from Cllr David Hall</td>
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<tr>
<td>Melanie Smith – Taunton Green Parents</td>
<td>Climate Change</td>
<td>Declaration of a Climate Emergency 20th Feb 19. My name is Mel Smith, I am a Taunton resident with 2 young children and I helped to set up a local environmental group, Taunton Green Parents. Just a year ago I would never had imagined myself</td>
<td>Response from Cllr David Hall</td>
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standing here. I cannot claim to be a lifelong environmentalist. I am just a Mum who loves her children and I am worried about their future.

The IPCC report estimates that we have just 12 years to limit catastrophic climate catastrophe. This was a huge wake up call for me. I read the report whilst breastfeeding my daughter during the night and I cried. As a Mother all I want to do is to protect my children. My inability to guarantee their future safety is heart-breaking.

My hopes and dreams for my children are somewhat different to those that I had imagined just a short time ago.

I want my children, and others around the world and future generations to grow up on a habitable planet, with a stable climate, access to water and food and clean air. A world free from conflict brought about by a scarcity of resources and the chance to enjoy the natural world, our oceans, the woodlands, forests and the incredible biodiversity that our planet currently offers.

Sadly right now these basic foundations for life are at risk unless we commit and deliver urgent and dramatic decarbonisation.

On our current trajectory we are heading for at least a 3-4 degree rise in temperature which would result in a potentially largely uninhabitable planet within my children’s lifetime.

At the current 1 degree rise, the level of suffering at both a human and natural level is already immeasurable. Many people, often the most vulnerable who have contributed least to emissions have already lost lives, loved ones, livelihoods and homes. Many people are already experiencing extreme temperatures and drought. We are also witnessing a devastating mass extinction of species and a disruption to valuable eco-systems which we are both part of and dependent upon for our survival.

So, I ask for your support in supporting the declaration of a climate emergency. This is our opportunity to lead the way and join the growing global movement in the fight against climate change. Change is never easy and there are challenges
Public and Member Questions and Answers

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<tr>
<th>Christopher Maunder</th>
<th>Climate change</th>
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<td>ahead but the evidence is clear; We have no choice and we have limited time. I am not alone, we all have loved ones- children, grandchildren, nephew, nieces and friends that we must protect. This is our chance to do our bit.</td>
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A month after 9-11, in October 2001, I attended my first protest, organised by a group of people that became the Stop the War Coalition.

I attended because I felt that a new war would hinder our global society from uniting in order to tackle the threat of climate breakdown.

In 2001 climate breakdown was still just about a threat. Now, it has become an emergency. Sadly, of course, the world is also now a much more divided and broken place. Stop the War didn’t manage to stop any wars!

This is why, I believe, the Extinction Rebellion movement is so profound. It has risen at a time when the world is on its knees because it has at its core 3 simple demands; 1, for the truth to be told. 2, for action to be taken to reduce carbon emissions to net zero and reduce consumption by half by 2025 and 3, for the formation of a national citizens assembly and smaller, local citizens assemblies to determine the path we take as a society to achieve demand number 2.

It is a movement that has spread to well over 100 countries in a third of a year, precisely because its aims are based on the empowerment of the people.

We here in Somerset have shown ourselves to be more than ready to stand together and begin to force the necessary changes. We are here today for that reason. We want to see action on climate change. We want to prevent further breakdown of the environment where we can. We want the people to be able to take the lead on delivering that change. We want you to declare a climate emergency and begin that process of change.

We are the Extinction Rebellion and we demand you declare a climate emergency and act to make the changes we, as living beings, naturally desire.

We are the Extinction Rebellion.

Response from Cllr David Hall
We are rebels for life.
We will not be going away until our extinction is averted and the ecology of our planet and the society of our species are united and working together for the protection and benefit of each other.

Life does face an emergency so we demand that you declare it so that we can all begin to work together to change it.

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<tr>
<th>Sigurd Reimers</th>
<th>Climate Change</th>
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<td>There are in the region of 100 000 dependent grandchildren in Somerset. As a grandparent, I am concerned at the bleak future they and others of their generation face because of climate change. Scientific report after scientific report (most recently UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, World Wildlife Fund, UK Met Office) are showing that, on present efforts (many of them good but insufficient) global warming will put this generation at risk of harm, much of it irreversible. I beg members to take the bold step of declaring a climate emergency, and so show that it is committed to the long-term wellbeing and survival of its youngest citizens. Sigurd Reimers, Grandparents for a Safe Earth.</td>
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<th>Bill Butcher</th>
<th>Climate Change</th>
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<td>Forum 21 supports the motion that calls on the County Council to declare a Climate Emergency as tabled by Councillor Tessa Munt under item 10(1). Forum 21 volunteers support several projects that contribute to mitigating climate change. For example it helps people with energy saving, renewable energies and low carbon fuels so that they can enjoy warm homes. It initiated the Steam Coast Trail and is now helping local communities install public charge points for electric vehicles, at community shops and village halls. Forum 21 produced a Climate Change Strategy for West Somerset Council in 2008 and worked with the Exmoor National Park Authority to write a plan to enable the National Park to become carbon neutral by 2025. The County Council is already taking some useful action, especially in the area of adaptation to climate change impacts and getting renewable energy installed on some of its own buildings. This is welcome, but a much greater effort on mitigation, in particular the reduction in carbon emissions, is</td>
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Response from Cllr David Hall
needed.

Some of you may be thinking that the Council, with all of its challenges in maintaining services on a shrinking budget, can do without taking on more. If you are thinking that, we urge you to think again, for two reasons.

First, timing. The time to act must be now. The motion has set out why climate change must be addressed now, for ourselves, our children and grandchildren. Another five years of business as usual and it will be too late.

Secondly, the good news. Actions that this Council can take on climate change will be good for Somerset people, Somerset business and Somerset’s reputation as a green and healthy county. For example, action to accelerate the move towards electric vehicles will improve health through reducing air pollution and noise, while boosting tourism. Action to help insulate buildings will reduce poverty and create local jobs. Action to accelerate renewable energy production will keep money in the local economy.

We are not asking the County Council to do it alone. You can rely on the support of local organisations and people around the county. Some of the most effective things you can do involve drawing down central government funds or removing barriers to actions that others can take. The County Council has the power to make it possible for the people of Somerset to make the choices that we need. You have the power to work with partners and local communities to enable the changes needed, and these changes will help to make Somerset a healthy, resilient and attractive place to work, visit and live.

Sir David Attenborough, reputed to be the most trusted person in Britain, says “it must be now”. Please, act now, support this climate emergency motion.

Ian Gauntlett  
Climate Change  
I would like to ask council whether they accept the motion put to them by Tessa Munt calling on the council to declare a climate emergency?  
http://www.tessamunt.co.uk/call_to_declare_a_climate_emergency

Response from Cllr David Hall
Somerset is uniquely vulnerable to climate change, in particular to raised sea levels and excessive rainfall leading to flooding. Our recent history has been clear to all, and has already caused severe damage to property and livestock. We are custodians of our children and grandchildren’s futures, and if we do not act urgently, the consequences will be disastrous … literally.

We have signally been failed by our national government, in fact by most if not all world governments, so the responsibility to act now devolves to local government; districts, Counties and Cities. Many areas of this country, and internationally, have already declared climate emergencies, and we see this as the probable solution to getting action urgently, now. There is no time to waste. The October 2018 IPCC report, supported by the United Nations Secretary General, gives us, at best 12 years, to get our carbon emissions to zero. This may seem a difficult task, but it will be nothing compared to managing our communities in the wake of climate catastrophe.

Declaring a climate emergency, and implementing it, need not be hideously expensive, which I suspect may be the thought uppermost in your minds. Encouraging new green technologies, reducing fossil fuel dependency, building carbon-neutral housing (and retro-fitting old stock), reducing traffic and encouraging walking and cycling by building cycle paths instead of roads, can all help to reduce both Council’s and citizens’ costs.

I guess ultimately my question to you would be; “can you afford not to declare a climate emergency”?

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<tr>
<th>Callie Gauntlett</th>
<th>Climate Change</th>
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<td>Extinction Rebellion raised a petition on 25th January calling on Somerset County Council to declare a climate emergency. 1157 people have signed supporting zero carbon emissions by 2025. What is the Councillors’ response to their constituents’ concerned voices:</td>
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<td>From Taunton:</td>
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<td>‘This is so important- we need to lead the way and put our children, future generations and the planets biodiversity above all else.’</td>
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<td>From Minehead</td>
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Response from Cllr David Hall
Public and Member Questions and Answers

'We all know that we may only have 12 years we must all turn things around to save our planet, not enough is being done at government level, we need to have incentives'

From Yeovil

'We are the Earth the Earth is us and all the following generations of every living thing need to be able to live on the earth in balance with nature'

From Milverton

'Not enough forward thinking is being done to address global warming. There are measures that local government can implement from turning off street lights to building cycle paths.'

From Chard

'I am signing because I am concerned about climate change and it's effects on all of us'

From Wellington

'This is a genuine emergency enfolding. It may seem slow but it is the biggest emergency ever.'

Glastonbury

'The signs of climate change and its impact on this area can be blatantly seen.'

Wiveliscombe

'I know we must all make a change if we are to save the world from extinction. We can all make a difference but we need the governments of the world to lead us'

Frome

'For our children sake.... Somerset council should announce the climate emergency.'

Shepton Mallet

'I believe the government should be more active and acknowledge the climate crisis!'

Langport

'I believe there is nothing more urgent and I want to know that my county council are making this cli-
| Michael Dunk | Climate Change | Dear Council,  
I am writing in support of the above motion. I have been a resident of Frome for about 35 years and to say that I have fears for the future would be an understatement. I refer to the increase in CO2 in the atmosphere caused by human activity and its effects on the stability and temperature of the climate.  
Council are in the unenviable position of having to acknowledge this fact and assess the risks to the environment, ecology and population of Somerset. Reducing Council’s carbon footprint is an obvious starting point and this should be something that government can help to facilitate.  
However there is already degradation to the ecology and wildlife of the region caused by the way we use the land and as a county that relies heavily on farming and tourism, I would like to see the Council mitigate against this in whatever way they can; not just because of the jobs and livelihoods that will be lost but because I want my Grandchildren and their children to be able to enjoy this beautiful county with | Response from Cllr David Hall |
all the flora and fauna that should naturally coexist alongside us.

With this in mind will the council commit to?

1. Set a date by which it will stop using Glyphosate herbicide throughout Somerset. The use of Glyphosate is already banned by Frome Town Council and a temporary ban has been put in place by Nth Somerset Council.

2. Commission yearly reports about the condition of wildlife, insect populations and plantlife in Somerset to monitor progress and flag up any concerns that are raised.

3. Set up regular (suggest 6 monthly) reports to Council on the progress towards the 2030 target to be carbon neutral.

I would like the Council to read the following supporting information taken from an email from David Warburton to a friend.

On Mon, 4 Feb 2019 at 14:55, WARBURTON, David <david.warburton.mp@parliament.uk> wrote:

Whatever other issues continue to occupy Parliament, you are absolutely right that we neglect the environment at our peril. This matters to us particularly here in Somerset. We are surrounded by an astonishing environmental legacy, and it’s our duty to preserve and maintain this heritage.

And this requires something of a strategic plan. A joined up approach with a keen eye to the future: looking at our biodiversity and biosecurity, minimising waste, safeguarding the beauty of – and accessibility to – the natural spaces around us, ensuring we’re using resources more sustainably and efficiently, reducing the risks of environmental hazards, protecting our wildlife-rich habitats, working to secure clean air and water - and all this while mitigating and adapting to the threat of climate change.

As I am sure you know, the recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report makes the case for nothing less than global carbon neutrality within the next 12 years if we are to prevent something of an ecological catastrophe.
including widespread crop and water failure. Frome has officially declared a climate emergency and set ambitious aims to be entirely carbon neutral within just eleven years. To achieve this, a multitude of new plans will be rolled out in the coming months, including increased insulation of local homes, ramping up the number of electric cars on the road and using more solar, hydro and wind energy.

Similar initiatives are being explored across Somerset, with councils and groups working with businesses, land agents and schools to minimise dependence on fossil fuels, and focus on our collective future. As a member of the Conservative Environmental Network, I must say I’m keen to support such ambitious thinking and I’ve been pleased with many of the measures introduced by the Government’s 25 year environment plan last year. I certainly hope that we will see similar initiatives elsewhere in Somerset, and I can assure you that I will wholeheartedly support any such action by local authorities and offer whatever assistance I can.

David Warburton MP
Member of Parliament for Somerton and Frome
Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Department for International Development
01373 580500 | House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA

Lastly I can think of no better person to sum up the situation that now confronts us all, Sir David Attenborough speaking at the recent Davos summit, the following youtube clip is an edited version of his address.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xuudPum21nE

I look forward to your response to the questions raised.

Yours faithfully,

Answer:

Thank you all for coming along today to share your views on this important issue. I am sure you are pleased to see the climate change motion on the agenda today. This motion has been put together as a cross-party initiative and brought forward with cross-party support and does indeed recognise the serious nature of the climate change challenge. The motion would commit the council to
address the issue and makes budget provision for this. Mr Dunk asks some specific questions and these can and will be picked up in the proposed development of a climate change strategy.

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<th>From</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Member Question/Statement</th>
<th>Response</th>
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| Cllr A Broom | Chard       | **Cllr A Broom**
|              | Junction    | Year 3 children, from Manor Court Primary School in Chard, have recently been learning about the history of Chard Railway stations. They concluded “We are certain that if Chard Junction Railway Station was to be reopened it would mean more job opportunities for people in the local area. We are sure that reopening the railway would encourage more people to visit Chard which would help boost the local economy. Without a doubt, Chard is growing with more houses being built. Our roads are getting busier, therefore more toxic gases are being used by cars. Did you know it would be more environmentally friendly to use the train? Currently, there are not many bus services in our area. Consequently, we need other transport options. People in the local area would like to be able to visit other local towns more easily. For these reasons Chard Junction Railway Station should be reopened”.

Considering this conclusion, made by Year 3 Primary School children, what guarantees can SCC make that the dire transport situation in Chard will be a priority for resolution? What incentives/encouragement can SCC directly make to Manor Court School to ensure these children remain interested in local improvements and have an opportunity to engage fully with SCC about future opportunities?

Answer:

We support the principle of reopening stations where there is proven sufficient demand to make the service viable and where the necessary rail timetable changes can be accommodated. We are supportive of the proposal to open a new rail station at Chard Junction subject to the necessary demand and feasibility studies being undertaken and are happy to assist communities in commissioning such studies once funding has been secured. Unfortunately the Council does not currently have sufficient available funding of a project of this scope.

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| Cllr A Broom | Cresta      | **Cllr A Broom**
|              | Cresta Pool | What is the current status of the Chard Cresta Pool in comparison to SCC’s initial planned dates; if there is a discrepancy between the two, can this be explained.                                                                                                                                  | Response from Cllr David Hall                                             |

Answer:
The pool has been decommissioned as planned. Property Services are currently exploring the options for disposal and/or demolition of the site. Officers had been working closely with Holyrood Academy to look at whether the premises could be converted, but the school have now informed SCC that the premises are not suitable for any educational re-use without major financial investment.

| Cllr G Verdon | Numatic International | Given the positive economic news for South Somerset, that in the same week Dyson announced a move to Singapore, Numatic International in Chard are investing in the local area. Will the Leader join me in welcoming the announcement by Numatic; the UK manufacturer of the Henry vacuum cleaner, that they will be creating 300 new jobs in Chard. And would he accept an invitation to visit Numatic’s Headquarters if one is forthcoming, to see for himself how, when it comes to economic growth, Chard is very much open for business | Response from Cllr David Fothergill |

Answer:

This is tremendous news for Chard and the surrounding area and I’m delighted to hear a local company are confident and successful. It is a tremendous statement of confidence in Somerset as a place to do business. New jobs will bring new prosperity to a significant number of households and further stimulate the local economy. SCC has a good and constructive relationship with Numatic and the growth of the business fits well with the emerging priority for the Heart of the South West local industrial strategy of developing the advanced manufacturing strengths of our area. As well as the direct employment benefits this is great news for supply chain businesses and consumer confidence in this part of Somerset. I would be delighted to visit Numatic should an invitation come forward.

| Cllr J Lock | Brexit | What plans are SCC making for Brexit? What challenges have been identified? How will the £87000 Government grant be spent and is it sufficient? | Response from Cllr David Hall |

Answer:

We have looked closely at our operations and activated our Corporate Business Continuity Plan and are refreshing our service business continuity plans in response to the approaching deadline for Brexit. Although we believe the impact of Brexit – either with or without a deal – has a limited implication for our staff, services and operations, we continue to be vigilant and to learn from other councils as to likely challenges. And we continue to be mindful of the advice and guidance from central Government. We believe the Council is in a solid place to response to Brexit. Some of the areas identified include such diverse teams as recruitment, IT, and data hosting. We have not identified any “show-stoppers”. We have also liaised closely with the wider Somerset public sector and stand ready to assist in any appropriate areas. The £87,000 has been useful in supporting our civil contingency team carry out this important preparatory work and we will continue to liaise with our District colleagues and other partner agencies to make sure our plans and preparations are joined up.

| Cllr L Young | The DCS when questioned, confirmed at Cabinet that | Response |
the children service element as outlined in the budget allows the current level of service to be continued for the coming year, at the same meeting a number of service cuts were reversed (gritting and gully cleaning included) as there was an unexpected cash surplus, in fact I recall Cllr Chilcott when introducing the changes due to the surplus ”that it was being used to avoid some of the items that impact our residents.”

I want to make reference to the young carers service, that was highlighted at Cabinet when the Leader accepted a petition instigated by the young people.

When cabinet withdrew the proposal CAF-20, that was put forward towards the end of 2018 the result of which was that our work in that service (young carers) continued unchanged, there was an indication that a revised proposal may come forward in Feb 2019, the result of this change was that staff, due to the uncertainty of the service sought other roles within the council, I understand that staff who were able to gain other roles, were able to delay take up of the new roles, to allow a revised proposal to come forward, if it did.

I now understand that the uncertainty is continuing, a members briefing indicated that a proposal may now come forward in early summer, I understand that the long serving and dedicated staff, staff that have built up relationships with young carers over time, staff that are experienced in operating our very successful young carers service, have been told that they need to decide if they want to move jobs, ‘as they may not be available later’.

We will all agree that this is not a good position to be in, a proposal is still not a guarantee and we are treating young carers and staff in a poor way.

With no proposal in sight and a fully funded service for 2019-20, I want to ask the Cabinet member for children to remove any doubt in this vital service, a service that everyone agrees saves the council and stakeholders money, remove the axe that is hanging over this service so that we can get on with supporting these young people without fear of cuts?

Answer:

Thank you, Leigh. I note, and am very pleased to do so, that earlier this morning in the budget debate you endorsed the direction of travel for the redesign of young carers’ support.
The DCS has made it clear that he is confident that he has adequate resources to meet the statutory functions of children’s services. He has also said on a number of occasions, including at children’s Scrutiny that there is no statutory requirement to have a Council run Young Carers service.

I and the DCS have made it clear that young carers in Somerset are missing out, as in most Council areas the support needs of young carers is met by the voluntary sector, which are able to access funding not open to Councils. It is this work which is due to report to Cabinet after the local election period.

I and the DCS is concerned that the Chair of Scrutiny is commenting in paragraph 4 on Operational Performance, he should know from the statutory guidance that this is not a matter that elected members should comment on without objective evidence provided by either through the DCS or Ofsted, neither has been requested.

He also questions the Council’s HR processes and policies, no evidence has been offered that the Council’s processes are at fault.

Given the improved financial position there is no intention to reduce the Council’s funding to support young carers, indeed we remain committed to changing the service to support substantially more carers.

We do recognise that change is unsettling however it is important that all of us support vulnerable families and children during this period of change.

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<tr>
<th>Cllr J Clarke</th>
<th>Young Carers</th>
<th>Please can Councillor Nicholson provide assurance in terms of the Young Carers service where I understand that the majority of staff have chosen to leave or accept re-deployment: Why were team members offered re-deployment when no proposals had been made as to the future of the service? Is it not the case that the Council only offers re-deployment where posts are clearly identified as being at risk? Can the Cabinet Member tell us how the service and &quot;activities will be maintained&quot; and what arrangements have been put in place to ensure the service continues in its present form until proposals are presented about the future of this vital service?</th>
<th>Response from Cllr Frances Nicholson</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Answer:

I refer to my previous answers to both member and public questions.
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Draft Annual Report of the Constitution and Standards Committee 2018/19
Lead Member: Cllr William Wallace, Chair of the Committee
Lead Officer: Scott Wooldridge, Strategic Manager - Governance and Democratic Services
Contact Details: tel (01823) 357628 or e-mail: swooldridge@somerset.gov.uk

1. Summary

1.1. The Constitution and Standards Committee is required by the Constitution to make an annual report to the County Council regarding its work since May 2018.

1.2. The Constitution and Standards Committee was formed following the May 2017 elections and its functions include responsibility to maintain an effective, up to date and legally compliant Constitution; considering proposals from Council committees for changes to the constitutional arrangements of the Council; take all required decisions in respect of the County Council elections; promoting high standards of conduct by Members, Co-opted Members and Officers; monitoring the operation of the Members’ Code of Conduct and the Council’s Whistleblowing Policy.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That the Committee considers and comments upon this draft Annual Report to the County Council meeting on 15 May 2019 and delegate authority to the Monitoring Officer to finalise it following consultation with the Chair of the Committee.

3. Background

3.1. The Council at its meeting on 24th May 2017 agreed to amalgamate the Constitution Committee and the Standards Committee to form a new Constitution and Standards Committee. In making this decision the Council considered the recommendations from both committees supporting an amalgamation.

3.2. Political proportionality was waived in relation to the elected membership of the Committee with one member per political group appointed. The co-opted members of the former Standards Committee were appointed to the new Committee as non-voting members and with a renewed term of office. In line with other committees, the County Council appoints the Chair of the Committee.

3.3. The Committee’s operating arrangements are well-established and it is working well within its terms of reference.

3.4. The Committee has met a total of 4 times since May 2018.

3.5. Support to the Committee comes principally from the Monitoring Officer and County Solicitor.
4. **Work Programme**

4.1. The Committee’s work programme over the last year has been varied and has included:

- Disclosure and Barring Service checks for elected members (July and October 2018)
- Empowerment of the Interim Director of Finance (July 2018)
- Meeting procedure rules, Scrutiny call-in procedure and Public Question Time rules (July 2018)
- Access to Information – Audio Recordings of Council meetings (July 2018)
- Changing the names of Electoral Divisions (July 2018 and October 2018)
- Review of the Whistleblowing Policy (October 2018)
- Review of the Council’s scrutiny arrangements (October 2018)
- Annual review of Contract Standing Orders (February 2019)
- Annual review of Financial Regulations (February 2019)
- Review of ethical standards in local government (Government consultation)
- Annual review of the Constitution (May 2019)
- Annual report of the Committee to Council (May 2019)

5. **Conclusions**

5.1. The Committee remains committed to promoting high standards of conduct by Members, Co-opted Members and Officers and for the policies and processes which support this aim, together with ensuring that the Council maintains an effective, up to date and legally compliant Constitution.

7. **Consultations undertaken**

7.1. The Committee meetings are open to all County Councillors to attend and contribute to its meetings.

8. **Implications**

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

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

9. **Background papers**

9.1. Further information about the Committee including dates of meetings, agendas and reports from previous meetings are available via the Council’s website and 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
Report of the Monitoring Officer – Appointments / Procedural Matters / Review of the Constitution
Cabinet Member: N/A
Division and Local Member: N/A
Lead Officer and author: Scott Wooldridge - Monitoring Officer and Strategic Manager-Governance and Democratic Services
Contact Details: 01823 357628

1. Summary

1.1 This report sets out decisions on procedural matters and appointments required by the Constitution to be made by the County Council at its annual meeting.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Appointments Schedule – Appendix 1 refers

To approve the Appointments Schedule – see section 3.2 and Appendix 1 to this report – to follow.

2.2 Appointment of Deputy Section 151 Officer

To appoint Elizabeth Watkin, Strategic Finance Manager – Chief Accountant, as the Council’s Deputy Section 151 Officer with effect from 15 May 2019.

2.3 Meeting dates

To approve the programme of ordinary meetings of the Full Council for the year as set out in section 3.4 of this report and to delegate to the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Group Leaders and committee chairmen, agreement of the detailed calendar of meetings of the committees of the Council for 2019 and 2020.

2.4 Review of democratic arrangements

Note the reviews currently being undertaken (see section 3.5).

2.5 Review of the Constitution

i) Approve the revisions to the Council’s Constitution set out at section 3.6.5 as endorsed by the Constitution and Standards Committee at its meeting on 8 February 2019.

ii) Consider and approve the proposed revisions to the Council's Constitution set out in 3.6.6, subject to any further recommendations that may arise from the Constitution and Standards Committee meeting on 10 May 2019.
3. Background

3.1. Appointments and Procedural Matters: Decisions required at the Council's Annual Meeting:

3.1.1 The Council is required at its annual meeting to:

1. Agree which committees (and any sub-committees) should be appointed, their size (in accordance with the statutory political balance on committee requirements) and terms of reference and appoint members to serve on each;

2. Elect chairmen and appoint vice-chairmen of committees (where appropriate);

3. Approve a programme of ordinary meetings of the Full Council for the year;

4. Approve a calendar of meetings for committees of the Council or put in place a delegation to enable a calendar to be agreed.

3.2 Appointments Schedule: see Appendix 1 to follow

3.2.1 Following the 2017 elections, the Council in May 2017 appointed committees and made all related appointments in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

3.2.2 The Act sets out the principles to be used in agreeing the size of and allocation of places to committees (and sub-committees) of the Council and also requires this process to be repeated annually at the Council's AGM. The principles must be followed so far as is reasonably practicable.

3.2.3 The following principles from the 1989 Act, together with a commentary where appropriate, must be applied to the allocation of seats on committees.

1. All the seats should not be allocated to the same political group.

2. A majority group is required to have a majority on all committees unless the Council agrees otherwise. The proposal in the table in 3.2.4 below satisfies this principle. Local arrangements apply to the Constitution and Standards Committee membership where all political groups are represented and the Scrutiny Committee for Children & Families where the membership includes 5 co-opted members with a vote on education matters only.

3. Subject to principles (1) and (2), the total number of seats on all the committees of the Council allocated to each political group should reflect the number of seats held by that group on the Council. The table below reflects this calculation.

4. Subject to principles (1), (2) and (3), the number of seats on each committee of the Council allocated to each political group should reflect the number of seats held by that group on the Council. This calculation is also reflected in the table below.

3.2.4 Following the elections in May 2017 the Council agreed member appointments to its committees and outside bodies in accordance with the principles set out
above. In addition to the entitlements to each political group, individual political
groups have previously chosen to allocate a place to another political group as
a local arrangement e.g. Liberal Democrat group chose to allocate one of their
places on Scrutiny Committee for Children and Families to the Green group.

3.2.5 During 2018 and early 2019 there were some changes to the size of some of
the political groups which resulted in a recalculation of committee places and
appointments to outside bodies. This was considered and agreed at the Council
meeting in February 2019 where the entitlement for places was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seats held on the Council</th>
<th>34</th>
<th>14</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>55</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Committee</td>
<td>Con</td>
<td>Lib Dem</td>
<td>Lab</td>
<td>Ind</td>
<td>Green</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regulation</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P&amp;P (Place)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P&amp;P (Adults &amp; H)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P&amp;P (Child’s S)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR Policy</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audit</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Officer App</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pensions</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire Authority</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exmoor NPA</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Con &amp; Standards</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual ctee totals</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall calculation - total places</td>
<td>45.13</td>
<td>18.58</td>
<td>3.98</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes
- The overall calculation takes priority over individual committee allocations
- As stated above, the Conservative Group must have a majority on each committee unless a ‘local arrangement’ is agreed. They chose to exercise this right in all cases other than the Constitution & Standards Committee
- On the larger committees (8 members) 1 seat was left on each to be filled either by the Independent or Labour Groups by agreement
- The Green group was not entitled to any places on individual committees but had a place on the Constitution and Standards Committee as of right under a proposed ‘local arrangement’.

3.2.6 As set out in 3.2.4, some of the political groups decided to allocate one of their entitled places instead to another political group to bring the allocation of seats closer in line with the overall allocation in the table above:
- Labour group allocated their place on Regulation Committee to the Green group
- Labour group allocated their places on the Scrutiny Committee for Policies and Place to the Independent group
- Labour group allocated their place on Audit Committee to the Independent group
- Liberal Democrat group allocated one of their places on Scrutiny Committee for Children and Families to the Green group.
3.2.7 Since the Council’s meeting in November there has been further changes to the size of the political groups:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political Group</th>
<th>Feb 2019</th>
<th>Current</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Democrat</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual member</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>55</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These changes to the membership of some of the political groups require the Council to make changes to the allocation of seats held by the Council in accordance with the principles set out in 3.2.3 above.

3.2.8 A revised calculation of committee places and outside bodies has been undertaken and this is set out below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seats held on the Council</th>
<th>33</th>
<th>14</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>55</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Committee</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regulation</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P&amp;P (Place)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P&amp;P (Adults &amp; H)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P&amp;P (Child’s S)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR Policy</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audit</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Officer App</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pensions</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire Authority</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exmoor NPA</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Con &amp; Standards</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual ctee totals</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall calculation</td>
<td>43.80</td>
<td>18.58</td>
<td>3.98</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2.9 Explanation of the table in 3.2.8 above and summary of current appointments:

- There are 73 committee places in total to be allocated. These do not divide neatly across the 5 political groups and the single Independent member within the overall calculation hence the inclusion of decimal points. This is the second most important calculation after ensuring that the Conservative Group has a majority on each committee where it wants it.
- Both the Liberal Democrat and Labour groups are over-provided for in terms of places on individual committees and need to consider giving up places of their choice under a ‘local arrangement’ to the Independent group and Green Party group to achieve a closer match with the overall calculation (see 3.2.6 above).

Specific actions for each of the groups are:
- **Conservative Group**: to allocate one of their places to Cllr Dean Ruddle.
- **Lib Dem Group**: As the second largest Group, the aim must be to get the Group’s entitlement on individual committees as close as possible to its entitlement under the overall calculation. Nevertheless, there is a need for the Lib Dem group to allocate one of their places to either the Independent group or Green group.
- **Labour Group**: As the largest of the smaller groups, this Group is entitled to 1 seat on each of the 4, 5, 6 and 8 member committees. However, the group is overprovided for in terms of seats on individual committees and therefore needs to give up seats to the Independent Group and Green Group in order to ensure their allocated places are as close as possible to the overall calculation.
- **Independent Group**: To negotiate with the Liberal Democrat and Labour group on the allocation of two additional committee places.
- **Green Group**: To negotiate with the Liberal Democrat and Labour group on the allocation of two additional committee places.
- **Cllr Dean Ruddle** as an Independent member is entitled to a place as part of the overall calculation.

3.2.10 All political group leaders have been advised of the revised calculations and any proposed changes to committee places and outside bodies will be set out in a revised Appointments Schedule (Appendix A) which is expected to be tabled on the day of the Council meeting for approval. This appendix will set out:

- Confirmation of the Council’s committees, their size, the allocation of places and appointments to those places
- Any potential changes to Chairs and Vice-Chairs, where appointed by the Council

Any changes to Cabinet and Junior Cabinet appointments will be the subject of a separate decision, as required, by the Leader of Council.

3.2.11 No changes are proposed within this report to the terms of reference of Committees of the Council as agreed by Council and set out within the Constitution.

3.3 **Appointment of Deputy Section 151 Officer**

3.3.1 Both the Interim Director of Finance and the Chief Executive recommend that Council appoint Elizabeth Watkin, Strategic Finance Manager – Chief Accountant as the Deputy Section 151 Officer in order to provide resilience to the Chief Finance Officer role.

3.3.2 The Officer Scheme of Delegation refers to officers authorised to substitute for a Director and key statutory posts. Subject to the Council’s approval to the proposed appointment, the Monitoring Officer will need to be amend the Scheme of Delegation to reflect this change.

3.4 **Programme of ordinary meetings of the Full Council**

3.4.1 The dates proposed below for Full Council meetings in 2019/20 are set out below.

- 17th July 2019 (already scheduled)
27th November 2019
Wednesday 26th February 2020 (Budget meeting)
Friday 28th February 2020 (Reserve Budget meeting)
20th May 2019 (Council AGM)
15th July 2020

Most dates are Wednesdays and the meetings will start at 10am in the Council Chamber at Shire Hall unless otherwise notified.

3.4.2 The recommendations include a delegation to the Monitoring Officer to agree the calendar of meetings for committees of the Council in consultation with the Chairs of the committees. The Leader will approve the calendar of meeting dates for the Cabinet.

3.5 Review of the Council’s Democratic Arrangements

3.5.1 Ahead of the Annual General Meeting, the Monitoring Officer will undertake a review of the Council’s Democratic Arrangements to identify if there are any proposed revisions needed to meet statutory requirements. This review also involves considering any proposals that may have been made by the Leader of the Council or any of the Chairs of the Council’s committees.

3.5.2 The review has not identified any specific recommendations for the Annual General Meeting of Full Council to consider. However, it should be highlighted that there are two reviews that are currently being undertaken for which specific recommendations may come forward to Full Council during 2019/20:

Scrutiny arrangements

A Peer Challenge review of Somerset County Council was undertaken with the Local Government Association and this was reported to the County Council meeting in May 2018. One of its recommendations to the Council was:

“Somerset County Council should review its overall approach to scrutiny, ensuring all councillors are 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.”

The Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive committed officer support to work with the Chairs of the three scrutiny committees to undertake a review of the council’s scrutiny arrangements with the aim of reporting the review to the Scrutiny Committees and Full Council by summer 2019.

Undertaking a review of this nature can be resource intensive and the Council commissioned the Centre for Public Scrutiny to work with its officers to complete this review.

Currently the investigative and research work is being undertaken. The review is scheduled to be reported to Scrutiny Committees during June.

Pensions Board

A periodic review of the governance of the Somerset County Council Pension Fund to make sure it is fit for purpose has been undertaken. The Governance of the Fund
The Pension Board was formed in 2015 following a change in Local Government Pensions Scheme (LGPS) regulations which required each Administering Authority to set up and operate a Pension Board to assist the Administering Authority (the Pensions Committee) in discharging the requirements of the regulations, the Board has no decision-making powers.

The Pension Board has 6 positions although 3 of these are currently unfilled. Filling positions was a challenge when the Board was set up with the number of applicants from the original process matching but not exceeding the number of vacancies.

Largely due to the vacancies on the Board there has been a constant struggle to ensure meetings are quorate and a significant number of meetings have been cancelled over the last 2 years. Work will be undertaken by Democratic Services and Finance officers in order to try and improve recruitment to vacancies.

In addition to the above, the LGPS Scheme Advisory Board, a national Board charged with assisting MHCLG with the smooth running of the LGPS, has instigated a review into the Governance of the LGPS which is currently underway. The focus of the review is broadly the management of conflicts of interest within the Council between its roles as both the Administering Authority and an employer, however it is possible that the review will have implications for the current set up of a Committee and a Board and their respective roles in governance. This review is expected to take place throughout 2019 and reach conclusions in 2020.

3.6 Review of the Council’s Constitution

3.6.1 The Council’s Constitution requires the Council to review its Constitution on an annual basis. This is typically done at the Council’s Annual General Meeting in May of each year although the last revision was considered at the Council meeting in May 2018.

3.6.2 In May 2017, Council revised its committee arrangements by establishing the Constitution and Standards Committee and including within its responsibilities the requirement to recommend an amended Constitution to the Council for approval.

3.6.4 The proposed changes made to the Constitution since the Council’s approval of an updated version in May 2018 relate to:
- Part 2, Appendix B - Amendments to the Contract Standing Orders (approved by the Constitution and Standards Committee on 8 February 2019)
- Part 2, Appendix A – Financial Regulations (approved by the Constitution and Standards Committee on 8 February 2019)
- Part 1, Section 8 – minor revisions to Access to Information Rules (being considered by Committee on 10 May 2019)

3.6.5 A summary of the proposed changes endorsed by the Constitution and Standards Committee on 8 February are as follows:

1) **Part 2, Appendix A – Financial Regulations**

The amendments agreed by the Committee were in response to assurance regarding the adequacy of the Financial Regulations following a review by the Chief Finance Officer and Chief Internal Auditor, which proposed very minor
amendments for clarity.

Financial Regulations are of critical importance to the County Council as they govern which officers and members can take actions and decisions that could impact significantly on the financial standing and resources of the local authority. They bind officers, members and anyone acting on behalf of the Council and are mandatory.

Small technical amendments have been made to update details, such as job titles and those of committees. Throughout the document, the term Chief Financial Officer has now been used, as this is a specific meaning that refers to the statutory role, regardless of what the actual Job Title of the postholder becomes in the future.

Small changes to the text have been made for clarity only, and there was no changes to who is entitled to make financial decisions, or to the financial thresholds that apply.

Amendments made included:-

- A.21 To state explicitly the role of the Somerset Waste Board alongside other Committees.
- A.25 To update Financial Regulations with regard to the newly agreed Deputy section 151 officer.
- B.7 / B.12 / B18 To clarify the role of Scrutiny as part of the budget preparation processes and budget reporting.
- B.20 / B.22 To clarify that the Chief Finance Officer remains responsible for determining the prudent level of general reserves required, based on his or her professional judgement, and also has to approve the establishment of any new earmarked reserves.
- C. 2 To acknowledge the role of the Audit Committee in the day-to-day monitoring of risk management activities.
- C.10 To acknowledge the previous Council decision to “opt in” to the national PSAA scheme for the appointment of our external auditors.
- C.22 To emphasise on the need for SLT to maintain staffing levels in strict accordance with both the approved establishment and their delegated budgets
- D.2 / D. 4 To strengthen the right of the Chief Finance Officer to require the use of corporate finance systems and to approve (or not) any alternative systems proposed.
- D. 13-15 To emphasise the need for trading units to recover all their costs and breakeven on their activities and the need for strong business cases for their establishment and continuation.

The report from the S151 Officer and the amended financial regulations can be viewed on the Council’s website at: http://democracy.somerset.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=244&MId=824&Ver=4

2) Part 2, Appendix B - Contract Standing Orders

The amendments agreed by the Committee followed an annual review of the Contract Procedure Rules and Standing Orders by the Head of Commercial and Procurement.

One of the key areas for amendment was to Section 43 Approval to Award, in response to the introduction of Somerset County Council’s 10 Point Plan in June
2018.

The review of the CSOs also highlighted the need for a number of minor amendments, as follows:

- to amend references throughout The Rules to the Director of Commercial and Business Services and replace them with the Director of Corporate Affairs to reflect organisation change;
- to update The Rules in line with the General Data Protection Regulations;
- to extend the requirement for publishing Tenders and Contracts to Grants in line with the Local Government Transparency Code 2015;
- to require all breaches of The Rules to be reported to Governance Board to provide oversight and transparency of associated risks that the Council may be exposed to prior and during a procurement procedure and in to contract delivery.

The report from the Head of Commercial and Procurement and the amended CSOs can be viewed on the website at:

http://democracy.somerset.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=244&MId=824&Ver=4

3.6.6  Part 1, Section 8 - Access to Information Rules

The following amendments have been recommended and are being considered by the Constitution and Standards Committee at its meeting on 10 May. Any proposed amendments to what is set out below will be reported to the Council meeting on 15 May.

Recommended amendments:

1) Audio recordings of Council meetings: Since July 2018, audio-recordings of key public committee meetings have been published on the council’s website.

The Council revised its policy to clarify its procedures and reasons for making the recordings and which meetings it would record. The intention of the council’s audio recordings has always been to assist with the production of the minutes of a meeting which are the legal record. This is consistent with what other councils do.

The policy is not explicit for how long the audio recordings are retained on the council’s servers. Some councils retain the audio recordings for up to six months after a meeting has been held and some councils delete the audio recording immediately when the minutes have been agreed. In order to protect the status of the minutes as the legal record it is recommended that the audio recording is deleted when the minutes have been agreed and it is recommended that 8.6.8 of the Constitution is amended as follows:

8.6.38 The Council makes audio recordings of its main decision making meetings – Full Council, Cabinet and Regulation Committee – available to access on the website immediately following meetings and until the minutes of the meeting have been signed as a correct record at the next meeting. Following approval of the minutes the audio recording will be deleted from the council’s systems. Audio recordings are also made separately available to members via private access arrangements for the same period. Other formal meetings may be recorded on an ad-hoc basis depending on the circumstances and those attending will be informed where this is the case advance of the start of the meeting.
2) Receiving public questions or statements from people not attending a meeting:

As part of the changes to public question time rules agreed in July 2018, one of the provisions included the ability for a member of the public to submit a question and if they were unable to attend then for this to be read out by either the Chair or Democratic Services Manager.

In parallel with this provision, details of public questions and statements received are being published on the council’s website prior to the meeting and elected members have been using laptops at committee meetings as part of supporting paperless working to be more efficient and save money.

There have been a number of occasions when this provision has been used and in some cases there have been several instances at the same meetings when people have submitted and not attended. The intention of the provision was for the rare occasions when people cannot attend rather than as a mechanism for remote submission of questions.

It is proposed that where a member of the public submits a question or statement and does not attend the meeting then that question is taken as published to the members of the committee and not read out. The relevant Cabinet Member or Officer will still provide a response at the meeting for the benefit of those present and a response will be provided to the person who submitted the question.

It is therefore recommended that 4.10.5 of the Constitution is amended as follows:

4.10.5 Members of the public have up to 3 minutes to introduce and present their representations. If a member of the public is unable to attend a meeting in person, then the Democratic Services Manager will ensure that the relevant committee members are aware of the representation ahead of / at the meeting. Officers will make every effort to ensure that a response will be provided to the Committee at the meeting and subsequently to the member of the public.

3.6.7 Technical amendments

In addition to the above there are some technical amendments that have been made as a result of changes in post holder titles and responsibilities of Senior Leadership Team Directors require consequential amendments to the Constitution where specific posts are referred to.

4. Implications

4.1 Legal & Risk: This report complies with all legal requirements. The only risk to the Council would result from the Council failing to fulfil its legal obligations as set out in the report through any decisions taken or not taken at this meeting.

4.2 The Council’s Constitution sets out the legal framework within which the Council takes decisions and fulfils it functions and responsibilities. It needs to be kept up to date and legally compliant. All of the proposed amendments to the Constitution are in accord with the legislative requirements which give considerable scope for the Council to agree its own constitutional arrangements.
4.2 **Financial, equalities, sustainability and community safety implications:** There are no direct equalities implications arising from any of the proposals in this report. There are also no direct financial, sustainability or community safety implications.

5. **Background papers**

5.1 Council’s Constitution dated May 2018
1. **Summary**

1.1 This report sets out the Leader of the Council’s and the Cabinet’s recommendations to Council. The Leader of Council is recommending the approval of ‘Our Plan’ – the Somerset Plan for Children, Young People and Families 2019 – 2022, subject to its consideration and endorsement by Cabinet on 13 May 2019 (see Appendix A).

1.2 The Scrutiny Committee for Children and Families has been regularly updated on the Plan during its design in 2018/2019; their recommendations are incorporated into the Plan. The Committee will receive quarterly updates on progress and are looking forward to working with partners on its successful implementation.

2. **Recommendations**

2.1 The Council is recommended to approve ‘Our Plan’ – Somerset’s Plan for Children, Young People & Families 2019 – 2022

3. **Options considered and consultation undertaken**

3.1 Options considered and details of consultation undertaken in respect of the recommendations set out above are set out in Appendix A (appended).

4. **Implications**

4.1 Financial, legal, Human Resources, equalities, human rights and risk implications in respect of the recommendations set out in this report are detailed within Appendix A.

It is essential that consideration is given to the legal obligations and in particular to the need to exercise the equality duty under the Equality Act 2010 to have due regard to the impacts based on sufficient evidence appropriately analysed.

The duties placed on public bodies do not prevent difficult decisions being made such as, reorganisations and service reductions, nor does it stop decisions which may affect one group more than another. What the duties do is require consideration of all of the information, including the potential impacts and
mitigations, to ensure a fully informed decision is made.

5. **Background Papers**

5.1 These are set out within Appendix A.
Information for County Councillors

From: Nigel Taylor, Chair of Somerset County Council

Date: 20/02/2019 – 14/05/2019

To: All County Councillors

Chairman’s Report – 20/02/2019- 14/05/2019

February 2019

22 February The Chair and Mrs Taylor attended the Celebrating Somerset Concert at Wells Cathedral.

24 February The Vice Chair and his consort attended the Mayor of Ilminster’s Charity Concert held at The Warehouse Theatre, Ilminster.

March 2019

3 March The Chair and Mrs Taylor attended as guests of the Mayor of Axbridge the Civic Service held at St John the Baptist Church, Axbridge.

The Vice Chair and his consort attended as guests of the Mayor of Bridgwater the Thanksgiving Service held at Holy Trinity Church, Bridgwater.

4 March The Chair attended the AONB Board meeting held at Charter House.

8 March The Chair and Mrs Taylor attended as guests of the Mayor of Bridgwater the Youth Awards and Civic Service held at Bridgwater Town Hall.

10 March The Chair and Mrs Taylor attended as guests of the North Somerset Chairman to the Civic Service held at St Martins Church, Worle.

19 March The Vice Chair and his consort attended the Due of Edinburgh Awards held at Westlands Entertainment Centre, Yeovil.
23 March  The Vice Chair and his consort attended the Bumble Bee Ball held by the Mayor of Chard at the Town Hall.

24 March  The Chair and Mrs Taylor attended the Legal Service at Wells Cathedral.

28 March  The Chair attended the Royal Visit of the Queen at Castle Cary Station.

29 March  The Chair held a discussion with the Girl Guides Commissioner to arrange a debate session in October.

April 2019

1 April   The Chair attended the Firmin Sword of Peace Parade of 40 Commando at Norton Manor Camp.

2 April   The Chair went to lunch with the Mayor of Taunton.

7 April   The Chair and Mrs Taylor attended as guests of Devon County Council’s Chairman to the Civic Service and lunch held at St Brannocks Church, Braunton.

9 April   The Chair attended the GWR Train Naming Ceremony at Castle Cary Station.

25 April  The Chair and Mrs Taylor attended the Royal Visit of The Princess Royal at the UK Hydrographic Office, Taunton.

May 2019

8 May     The Chair attended a networking meeting with Paul Conibear at West Somerset Railway Station, Bishops Lydeard.

10 May    The Chair and Mrs Taylor attended as the Lord Lieutenant’s guest at the BEM Ceremony at Castle House Taunton. The Chair and Mrs Taylor attended the Pride of Somerset Youth Awards at Taunton College.

13 May    The Chair and Mrs Taylor attended the Axbridge Mayor Making Ceremony held in Axbridge Town Hall.
1. Summary

1.1. This report covers key decisions taken by the Leader, Cabinet Members and officers between 10 February 2019 and 3 May 2019, together with the items of business discussed at the Cabinet meeting on 11 March 2019. 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 meeting held on 11 March 2019 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.

Please note that an addendum to this report will be published giving a summary of the matters considered at the 13th May Cabinet following the meeting.
### LEADER OF COUNCIL (Customers and Communities) – Cllr David Fothergill

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Date of Meeting</th>
<th>Summary of Decision</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Value Policy Statement Refresh</td>
<td>11&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; March 2019 by Cabinet</td>
<td>SUMMARY OF DECISION: This decision sought approval for the refreshed Social Value Policy Statement. The statement outlines how the Council will embed social value and demonstrates Somerset County Council’s commitment to delivering social value benefits through our commissioning and procurement arrangement. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report. REASONS FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report.</td>
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### RESOURCES – Cllr Mandy Chilcott

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<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Date of Meeting</th>
<th>Summary of Decision</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disposal of the Six Acres Day Centre, Taunton</td>
<td>10&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; April 2019 by the Cabinet Member for Resources</td>
<td>SUMMARY OF DECISION: This decision authorised officers to dispose of part of the site at the Six Acres Training Centre in Taunton to generate receipts to meet council priorities. This decision followed the declaration of the Six Acres Day Centre site being surplus to Adult Social Care operational requirements. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report. REASONS FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report.</td>
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### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AND COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE – Cllr David Hall

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Date of Meeting</th>
<th>Summary of Decision</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance of European Regional Development Funding for the Heart of the South West</td>
<td>9&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; April 2019 by the Interim Finance Director</td>
<td>SUMMARY OF DECISION: This decision authorised the acceptance of £1,181,310 of European Regional Development Funding (ERDF) for the Heart of the South West Inward Investment Support Project. This project seeks to increase foreign direct investment into the Heart of the South West LEP area of Somerset, Devon, Plymouth and Torbay through delivery of an enhanced three-year programme of activity both to</td>
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Appendix A
### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AND COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE – Cllr David Hall

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Date of Meeting</th>
<th>Summary of Decision</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inward Investment Project</td>
<td>Facilitate the landing of new foreign direct investment into the area and to support the growth of the area’s existing foreign-owned companies.</td>
<td>Alternative options considered: As set out in the officer report. Reasons for decision: As set out in the officer report.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA) 2019/20 Enhanced Programme of Flood Risk Management Works, the SRA Memorandum of Understanding and Constitution</td>
<td>11th March 2019 by Cabinet</td>
<td>Summary of decision: As Somerset County Council is the accountable body for the Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA) the Cabinet was asked to approve the allocation of funds, raised through an alternative notional amount on Council Tax and contributions from Somerset Internal Drainage Boards, for use by the SRA in 2019/20. The Cabinet was also asked to agree to forward funding of SRA projects in advance of recouping costs from a Heart of the SW Local Enterprise Partnership Growth Deal allocation, and the to review the 2019-20 SRA Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and approve the signing of the MoU by the Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Planning and Community Infrastructure. Alternative options considered: As set out in the officer report. Reasons for decision: As set out in the officer report.</td>
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### ADULT SOCIAL CARE – Cllr David Huxtable

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<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Date of Meeting</th>
<th>Summary of Decision</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adult Social Care Fees and Charges 2019-20</td>
<td>20th February 2019 by the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care</td>
<td>Summary of decision: Adult Social Care (ASC) services 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 set out the proposed annual update to fees paid to providers of ASC services in Somerset as well as updating SCC charges for its customers and service users. Alternative options considered: As set out in the officer report.</td>
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</table>
### PUBLIC HEALTH AND WELLBEING – Cllr Christine Lawrence

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<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Date of Meeting</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agreement of Equality Objectives 2019 - 2023</td>
<td>11th March 2019 by Cabinet</td>
<td>SUMMARY OF DECISION: Somerset County Council is required by statute to review and establish organisational equality objectives. This decision proposed a set of objectives for approval and endorsement. The objectives aim to improve the lives for the residents of Somerset and support the Council’s legal requirements identified through the Equality Act 2010. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report. REASONS FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report.</td>
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### CHILDREN AND FAMILIES – Cllr Frances Nicholson

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<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Date of Meeting</th>
<th>Summary of Decision</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early Years Block – Early Years Single Funding Formula (EYSFF) 2019/20</td>
<td>21st March 2019 by the Cabinet Member for Children and Families</td>
<td>SUMMARY OF DECISION: This decision ensured the Council has set a locally determined formula to fund all types of early years provision (the Early Years Single Funding Formula) and ensured all providers were supplied with an indicative budget at the beginning of the financial year. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report. REASONS FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposals to implement the new</td>
<td>11th March 2019 by Cabinet</td>
<td>SUMMARY OF DECISION: This decision agreed the use of measures within the new Children and Social Work Act 2017 and the existing flexibility of the Children’s Trust</td>
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**CHILDREN AND FAMILIES – Cllr Frances Nicholson**

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<tr>
<th>Item</th>
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<th>Summary of Decision</th>
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<tr>
<td>Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership arrangements</td>
<td></td>
<td>requirements to integrate the Somerset Children’s Trust with the new Safeguarding Partnership arrangements.</td>
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<td>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report.</td>
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<td>REASONS FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision to extend contracts contract for Pathway to independence P2i service for young people in Somerset</td>
<td>25th February 2019 by the Cabinet Member for Children and Families</td>
<td>SUMMARY OF DECISION: The Pathways to Independence Service (P2i) allows young people with housing related support needs to access person centred support, until they are able to sustain independent living without the need for support. This decision authorised the extension of current contracts until 31 August 2021.</td>
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<td>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report.</td>
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<td>REASONS FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report.</td>
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**EDUCATION AND COUNCIL TRANSFORMATION – Cllr Faye Purbrick**

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<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Date of Meeting</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use of the DfE Special Provision Capital Fund Allocation</td>
<td>29th April 2019 by the Cabinet Member for Education and Council Transformation</td>
<td>SUMMARY OF DECISION: This decision confirmed how Somerset will utilise the remainder of its revised DfE Special Provision Capital Fund Allocation to make capital investments in provision for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities.</td>
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<td>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report.</td>
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<td>REASONS FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creation of a New Academy in Somerset – Chilton Trinity</td>
<td>3rd April 2019 by the Cabinet Member for Education and Council Transformation, Director of</td>
<td>SUMMARY OF DECISION: This was a technical decision to facilitate a decision taken by the Secretary of State for Education. Conversion date 1st June 2019.</td>
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<td>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report.</td>
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<td>REASONS FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report.</td>
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<td>Item</td>
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<td>Summary of Decision</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creation of a New Academy in Somerset - Critchill</td>
<td>3rd April 2019 by the Cabinet Member for Education and Council Transformation, Director of Commissioning and Lead Commissioner for Economic Community Infrastructure</td>
<td>SUMMARY OF DECISION: This was a technical decision to facilitate a decision taken by the Secretary of State for Education. Conversion date 1st June 2019.</td>
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<td>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report.</td>
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<td>REASONS FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposed Expansion of Willowdown Primary Academy, Bridgwater from 201 to 420 places</td>
<td>27th March 2019 by the Cabinet Member for Education and Council Transformation</td>
<td>SUMMARY OF DECISION: This decision authorised the expansion of the current school to ensure that the Council can fulfil its statutory duty to supply sufficient good quality places within statutory walking distance of a pupil's home address. This is necessary due to development in the local area.</td>
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<td>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report.</td>
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<td>REASONS FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report.</td>
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<tr>
<td>A change to the protocol for schools converting to a sponsored academy retaining any surplus revenue balances, and charging for academy conversions by the</td>
<td>14th March 2019 by the Cabinet Member for Education and Council Transformation</td>
<td>SUMMARY OF DECISION: This decision sought approval to charge full cost recovery for officer time and legal costs in respect of academy conversions, and to amend the local authority protocol to allow for retention of a proportion of surplus balances in respect of sponsored academy conversions.</td>
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<td>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report.</td>
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<td>REASONS FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report.</td>
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### EDUCATION AND COUNCIL TRANSFORMATION – Cllr Faye Purbrick

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creation of New Academies – Brent Knoll, Charlton Horethorne, North</td>
<td>13th March 2019 by the Cabinet Member for Education and Council Transformation,</td>
<td>SUMMARY OF DECISION: This was a technical decision to facilitate a decision taken by the Secretary of State for Education. All conversion dates 1st April 2019.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cadbury and Pawlett Primary Schools</td>
<td>Director of Commissioning and Lead Commissioner for Economic Community Infrastructure</td>
<td>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report.</td>
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<td>REASONS FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report.</td>
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### HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT – Cllr John Woodman

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<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Date of Meeting</th>
<th>Summary of Decision</th>
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<tr>
<td>No individual decisions</td>
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### CROSS CUTTING – All

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<tr>
<th>Item</th>
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<th>Summary of Decision</th>
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<tr>
<td>The School Building Condition Programme</td>
<td>26th March 2019 by the Cabinet Member for Children and Families and the Cabinet</td>
<td>SUMMARY OF DECISION: This decision confirmed the delivery of the capital investment programme for school building condition to ensure the delivery of sufficient school places in safe and well-maintained buildings for children in Somerset to meet the Local Authority’s statutory duty.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Member for Education and Council Transformation</td>
<td>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report.</td>
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<td>REASONS FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Item</td>
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<td>Summary of Decision</td>
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| Appointment of Main Contractor – Bridgwater Special School | 11\(^{th}\) March 2019 by Cabinet | SUMMARY OF DECISION: The Local Authority has a legal duty to provide children with good quality school places in their local area. As there are not enough special school places in the Sedgemoor area, the aim is to replace and expand the two current schools with a new school building for up to 160 children aged 4-16. This paper sought authority to appoint a contractor at a gross maximum expenditure to deliver the new school building on Bower Lane, Bridgwater and gave approval to cover the purchase of furniture and IT as required for the new school.  

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report.  

REASONS FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report. |

| Month 10 Revenue Budget Monitoring | 11\(^{th}\) March 2019 by Cabinet | SUMMARY OF DECISION: This report outlined a projected revenue outturn underspend for 2018/19; of £1.385m. This projection is based upon actual spending to the end of January 2019 (month 10) and compares to the available budget of £317.882m. The last reported projection, based on spend to the end of December 2018, was an underspend of £1.067m. The contingency has a residual sum of £1.788m uncommitted at this stage and is very likely to contribute to further underspending at the year end.  

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report. |
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<td><strong>REASONS FOR DECISION</strong>: As set out in the officer report.</td>
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Cabinet Member(s): Cllr David Fothergill, Leader of the Council
Division and Local Member(s): All
Lead Officer: Pat Flaherty - Chief Executive
Author: Cllr David Fothergill, Leader of the Council
Contact Details: (01823) 359018

1. Summary

1.1 I would like to take this opportunity to begin by expressing my heartfelt thanks to Cabinet, Scrutiny, council members, officers and the Council’s partners for the great work done over the past twelve months. I particularly want to thank the voluntary and community sector for their fantastic contribution to Somerset and of course to our residents, businesses and communities, everyone working together to improve lives for Somerset.

During my time as Leader, one thing that has become increasingly clear is the need to continue to work more closely with each other - other councils, health colleagues and with our many other partners.

We have many shared interests, complementary services and an overriding commitment to improving lives.

Improving lives is what this Council, and those we work with, is all about. Somerset is at its best when working in partnership and that is something I want to build on.

1.2 Our Vision - Improving Lives

Somerset County Council has set out a collaborative and high-level Vision providing strategic direction in order to deliver a county where the public, private and voluntary sectors all work together to raise expectations and to improve the lives of our residents; where we invest in prevention; we build resilience to improve our communities; and we raise business confidence to boost job prospects throughout our county. Officers and politicians together have worked to try to create a council that is seen as an exemplar to others both regionally and nationally with robust financial, commissioning and decision-making processes, good quality data, good governance, strong performance management, effective technology and a willingness to do things differently.

Our Vision sets ambitions for the Council and our partners. It sets priorities and principles that will underpin our own decisions and seek to influence the decisions of our partners.

This year we have introduced our new ‘Improving Lives in Somerset Strategy’
that sets out how Somerset County Council and its key partners will work together to improve the lives of our residents by making a difference to individuals and communities. This strategy explains how, over the next ten years, we will work together to improve people’s lives by creating a thriving and productive council that is ambitious and confident. A council that provides the people of Somerset with the right information, advice and guidance to help them help themselves and targets support to those that need it most. This strategy is about setting a common direction and galvanising local organisations, groups and individuals towards that common goal.

If we are to truly make a difference to the lives of our population, we need to move from an approach where we help people who are in crisis, towards one that prioritises prevention and early intervention, working to stop families and individuals getting into crisis in the first place.

This can only be achieved by close working with our partners, from Police, Fire and Health, through the Voluntary and Community sectors, and finally with our residents, businesses and communities. We have a clear ambition and with everyone working together we can make it happen.

1.3 Our Business Plan – Delivering Outcomes That Support Our Vision

Our Council Business Plan explains how Somerset County Council will play its part towards the Vision over the next three years by highlighting four strategic outcomes. Beneath each strategic outcome sit four key priorities and a range of service activities. By lining up these activities, priorities and strategic outcomes with the Vision we can plan ahead, monitor progress, prioritise investment and above all ensure that we are working within our financial means.

Underpinning the four strategic outcomes the plan sets out our strong ambitions for the future of the Council, alongside our new approach to financial management, that will steer our organisational reshaping to ensure that SCC remains a sustainable, confident, innovative and value for money organisation that continues to improve lives for the people of Somerset.

1.4 Our Finances - Living Within Our Means, Investing in Our Future

The Council’s 2018/19 revenue budget was set in February 2018 predicting a shortfall of £15m. Within a few short weeks, a culmination of failing to deliver anticipated savings and increasing service demand and pressures meant we faced a £24m challenge, along with reserves down to less than half the level we would regard as appropriate.

In response to this was the formation of a new team – the Financial Imperative Team. They worked alongside the CEO and SLT to instil a new belief, culture and narrative for the Authority underpinned by a tighter control on finance management, putting in place spending panels to challenge and halt spend.

The results are that we are on-track to deliver an in-year underspend; deliver a high percentage of our September budget proposals; paying off some of our negative reserves and replenishing our reserves. We are putting prevention “front and centre” within our services and have robust plans in place allowing our
services to look forward with confidence and plan for a successful and innovative future. We are clearly in a more robust financial position than early projections last year forecast.

2. Key achievements in delivering our Business Plan throughout the year

2.1 Improved health and wellbeing and more people living healthy and independent lives for longer

Our award-winning customer contact centre, Somerset Direct, continues to improve and impress many including Ofsted who said the service offers a quick and efficient response to children and families when they are first in need of help or protection. The contact and referral officers are skilled and confident and record concise but appropriate details that assist in timely decision-making.

In addition, our continued focus on managing demand, improving outcomes and having positive conversations with those seeking assistance within Somerset Direct (our customer contact centre) has enabled the adult services team to routinely meet, maintain and often exceed our target of 60% resolution at first point of contact since July 2018. Training, empowerment and investment in call advisers has been crucial in achieving this and has also had the knock-on benefit of fewer repeat calls, fewer abandoned calls, and enhanced customer satisfaction levels – remarkably our customer satisfaction in this area is in the high 90% - tribute to the skills of the staff and management.

Our work in the communities is both innovative and achieving national recognition for our adult community provision. Not just enabling 250 micro-providers to start up in our localities, but most importantly the way we have produced better outcomes for our residents.

Across the country, rising demand means pressure on adult social care – but Somerset is bucking the trend and our new community-based model is gaining outside interest, including having a BBC Panorama crew shadowing us and recording a documentary on the challenges facing social care nationally, and how Somerset is rising to the challenge.

Our ‘common-sense’ Home First programme is achieving national recognition in working with NHS Trusts, partners and communities to get people home faster and to live more independently.

Our Delayed Transfers of Care (DTOC) figures show us on a remarkable journey. An increased understanding and scrutiny of long stay patients, coupled with a more robust oversight of data and multidisciplinary decision-making has seen the DTOC performance in Somerset significantly improve over the last year, from a poor performing authority we are now in the top half of the table and in December we were one of the best three in the country.

Our Public Health team have had great results with our infant feeding and nutrition strategy, resulting in a statistically significant increase in breastfeeding rates in our 20% most deprived communities at 6-8 weeks, from 27% in 2013/14 to 37% in 2017/18. This was aided by the health visiting service fully adopting
and implementing digital record keeping, enabling a far greater insight into the needs of the population around child development and breastfeeding rates, as well as providing superior audit trail for performance monitoring. This work, set against a declining rate nationally, has been submitted for publication at LGA and PHE conferences.

Good progress has been made in improving Children’s Social Care services across the board, and this improvement was recognised when Ofsted undertook a Focused Inspection in Somerset in January 2019. This visit looked at the Front Door and Early Help services and found that we were making good progress. The inspectors reported a highly motivated and professional workforce focused on the needs of the children, with evidence of continuous improvement since the 2017 Inspection. Managers know their service well in terms of both areas of strengths and areas for further improvement.

Children’s Social Worker caseloads (statutory interventions) have reduced consistently over the last year with increasing amounts of work undertaken in Early Help services. This, alongside our drive to increase the number of permanent social workers and reduced numbers of locums, is seeing a rise in our capacity to deliver improved outcomes for children in Somerset.

We are also looking to the future and we have realised that in key towns, in particular Yeovil, we have had a particular problem in recruiting social care workers. We found that young people who had low paid jobs or family caring responsibilities couldn’t afford either the time or the money to travel significant distances to take up graduate social care courses. So, a deal was struck with the local Yeovil College University Centre and the University of Gloucestershire to run them and the first freshers have now started their course in their home town, so they can continue to care for family members where appropriate. Alongside this we have been successful in applying to lead the third regional consortium of Step up to Social work increasing our student numbers from 8 to 12 for the 19/20 cohort and also successfully joined Frontline (an additional graduate based social work degree programme) and will take 4 students for the first south west cohort in 2020.

Our new Local Offer website (Somerset Choices for ages 0 to 25) has launched and is showing good levels of weekly site users. With 359 SEND providers, 81 support groups and 582 childcare providers the site provides information for children, young people and families including our Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Local Offer.

A SEND Joint Commissioning Strategy Action Plan has been developed that includes plans to develop a shared understanding and pathway for children with additional needs (Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) presentations) by bringing together existing workstreams and ensuring a graduated response for those with SEMH needs at risk of exclusion.

In Business Intelligence we have worked with the Behavioural Insights Team (formerly part of the Cabinet Office) who have developed data algorithms that may help children’s social workers identify potential recurring cases at the point of assessment. Initial work indicates the algorithm to have a success rate of 95% and we are now looking at how this learning can be deployed in a tool to help
The Somerset Children and Young People Survey took place for the third time in the Spring and Summer terms of 2018 and saw almost 9,000 children and young people across Somerset participating in a Health and Wellbeing survey. Containing age-appropriate questions, the survey was designed to gather information about children and young people’s health-related behaviours, perceptions and understanding. Allowing our Public Health service to use the results to influence commissioning decisions targeting support particularly for our most vulnerable children and families. The experience of schools and colleges participating in the health and wellbeing survey confirms that the data generated proves highly useful to school/college development and planning.

2.2 **A County Infrastructure that drives productivity, supports economic prosperity and sustainable public services**

A multi-million pound scheme to upgrade the busy M5 Junction 25 roundabout at Taunton was formally approved 19 December 2018. Junction 25 currently experiences congestion in peak hours, with queues frequently extending along the A358 in both directions and occasionally backed up onto the M5. Somerset County Council has developed a scheme to increase the capacity of this vital link to improve traffic flow, ease peak hour congestion and unlock land for employment.

Businesses in Somerset now have even more help to grow with the help of the County Council’s network of Enterprise Centres. The Highbridge Enterprise Centre, which is already home to 15 businesses and 35 jobs, has had a £470,000 expansion. Three more light industrial units have been opened, providing an extra 234 square metres of space aimed at making life easier for three new and growing businesses and creating more valuable jobs.

The £18.4m Colley Lane Southern Access Road scheme will help ease congestion along Taunton Road and Broadway by connecting Parrett Way to Marsh Lane and providing access to the Colley Lane Industrial Estate from the south. The project will use innovative engineering solutions to overcome some of the challenges on site, such as poor ground conditions between the canal and river. The Somerset Bridge will carry the new Colley Lane Southern Access Road over the River Parrett and will be the longest single-span bridge in Somerset – and one of the longest in the south west. As part of its tender bid the principal contractor made a commitment to improving the community, including participating in various fundraising events and taking the ‘Big Build Scheme’ into local schools which gives children insight into the construction industry and encourage them to think about the structures around them. This partnership is indicative of the Council’s ongoing commitment to seek out not just financial value but also social value in our contracts for our communities.

2.3 **Safe, vibrant and well-balanced communities able to enjoy and benefit from the natural environment**

The quality of local regulated care provision in Somerset has seen steady and
continuous improvement over recent years, evidenced by the growing proportion of providers judged by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) to be ‘Good’ or ‘Outstanding’. We work closely with the CQC and our health commissioning partners to monitor struggling providers and take robust action to support their improvement. In November 2016, 83% of providers were ‘Good’ or better. This figure rose to 87% in November 2017, and latest statistics for February 2019 reveal that Somerset had over 92.9% of providers achieving a ‘Good’ or better rating, with no inadequate provision. Somerset’s performance in this area exceeds regional and national averages and is testament to hard work and a rigorous focus on ensuring quality across our system.

Substantial progress is being made to boost Somerset waste services by 2020 to help us all waste less, recycle more and save money. Residents have already more than tripled recycling rates in a decade to recycle over half their waste, with over 90% recycled in the UK. This has put Somerset in the top 20% of English councils, hit national targets years early, cut carbon emissions by tens of thousands of tonnes, and saved millions for vital local services. Recycle More will see weekly kerbside collections from 2020 expanded to include taking much more (plastic pots, tubs and trays, cartons, small electrical items, batteries) on top of the many things you can already recycle at the kerbside and the cessation of landfilling most household rubbish in Somerset. Instead, it will be used to generate electricity from 2020 at a new Resource Recovery Centre being built in Avonmouth.

The Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA) continues to fund an extensive programme of works across the County to deliver an extra level of flood protection. This year, projects across Somerset will reduce the severity and impact of all types of flooding. Prioritising extra maintenance to rivers, roads and structures, such as culverts, giving Somerset the extra flood protection and resilience that long experience shows it needs. There are approximately 80 schemes in progress and at the March SRA Board meeting 28 further schemes were approved for 2019-20.

In declaring a climate emergency, the Council has recognised the scale and urgency of the global challenge posed by climate change as defined by the latest Special Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Understanding the strength of feeling in the county, and the fact that all governments have a duty to limit the negative impacts of climate change, the Council has resolved to act now as local government cannot wait for national government to act. Councillors agreed carbon emissions must be cut in Somerset and the Council has resolved to work with District Councils, business partners, communities and individuals towards carbon neutrality by 2030.

Nationally and globally there is a need to take action on single-use plastics as it is a growing concern due to the negative impacts on our environment. The Council’s new strategy sets out how the Council will continue to work with partners, suppliers and customers to move Somerset County Council towards becoming a ‘single-use-plastic-free’ authority. We will achieve this alongside lobbying Somerset MPs for national legislation, actively encouraging institutions, businesses and residents of Somerset to adopt similar measures to reduce/cut out their use of single use plastics including actively encouraging additional plastics recycling through the Somerset Waste Partnership.
Our work with contractor Skanska has won a prestigious gold environment award for the innovative and sustainable approach taken on a scheme to build a new 1.2km cycleway alongside the A39 between Cannington and Sandford Hill providing a safer route for pedestrians and cyclists and connecting to other off-road facilities between Cannington and Combwich and in Wembdon. During construction, alternative surfacing products were used to reduce the amount of material required and halve the time on site. Materials were also recycled to further speed up the process and radically improve the carbon footprint by reducing the number of lorry movements.

2.4 Fairer life chances and opportunity for all

The Council has had to modernise and redesign our Library Service so that we can strike the right balance between delivering a thriving, dynamic and comprehensive library service, which meets our statutory obligations, while living within our financial means. We are pleased to say that in the majority of cases communities have come forward and expressed an interest in running their local library building in partnership with the Council. The community partners have positive ambitions for their libraries, with many seeking to make improvements to the current offer – whether by increasing opening hours, seeking improved premises, or developing the range of events and activities.

We remain committed to improving and enhancing the lives of all children in Somerset, whatever their abilities and challenges. Our ongoing school building and improvement programme is about ensuring our children have new or expanded school buildings that meet their needs and the needs of our communities for generations to come. Thirteen projects were completed in 2018 and a further twelve projects were commissioned or commenced, at a total estimated cost of £64.738m. The programme currently has an additional thirteen projects in progress for delivery and ten projects that will be delivered for occupation September 2019 and September 2020.

2.5 Our Council - Rising to the Challenges

A team of senior staff from other local authorities visited in March 2018 as part of a ‘Peer Challenge’ which is designed to complement and add value to a council’s own performance and improvement focus and sees the peers use their experience and knowledge of local government to reflect on the information presented to them by people they meet, things they observe and material that they read. The team provide feedback as critical friends, not as assessors, consultants or inspectors and the feedback report previously published identifies ‘many good and some outstanding elements to what SCC does and the role and influence it has’. It highlights ‘impressive’ developments in approaches to Adult Social Care and the ‘turnaround’ in Children’s Social Care which ‘should not be underestimated’ and, the report says, is ‘reflective of a revitalised and ambitious council’. There was a strong emphasis on the council’s financial sustainability and the group called for a tight financial grip to be put in place. The political and managerial leadership is described as being instrumental in creating a culture for more effective partnership working and a resolute attention on leading for, within and across Somerset. We have really moved the Council forward in the last four
years and now have a strong vision for the future that we will continue to work with our partners to take forward.

In April we welcomed back the peers, as part of a follow-up, to speak to people including a range of council staff and councillors, gather information and views across nineteen different meetings and collate additional research. The initial feedback has been positive, with peers commenting that ‘SCC has purposefully faced its immediate challenging financial issues’ and ‘politicians have taken some very difficult decisions with a more open and transparent approach to generating savings and good communications with workforce.’ It commends us on ‘understanding the financial position’ and that ‘SCC is clearly starting to put in place a longer-term vision of how the council will operate - focus on “Improving Lives”.’

Our new workforce strategy has been written to support staff at Somerset County Council in achieving their own ambitions and those of the authority. It follows a series of workshops in 2017 with over 700 employees, that looked at what it’s like to work here and our Culture as an organisation. Our People Strategy sets out how we will work with one another, how we will work collaboratively with our partners and how we will ensure that we have the right skills, tools, values and behaviours to improve lives across our County. Linked to the overarching County Vision, three themes are at the heart of our People Strategy. We want our organisation to be Ambitious, Confident and Improving. These three themes are supported by six programmes, covering Leadership, Communities & Partnerships, Innovation, Talent, Health & Happiness and Culture. A healthy organisational culture is critical to the success of an organisation. The culture and sub-cultures at Somerset County Council have a direct impact on the services that we both deliver and commission and therefore on outcomes for our residents. Alongside this strategy we have brought a new approach to establishment control, validating data, budgets and vacancies to gain a better understanding of the real position of the organisation. We have changed our recruitment competencies and now routinely interview potential recruits based on their leadership potential. This is an in-house approach that has seen us turn away “technically” qualified recruits and take on those we believe are the leaders of the future. This was a big call but one that all of the senior leadership team and Cabinet wanted to take – we were not interested in the short-term fix but focussed at all times on the long-term sustainability of the council.

3. Background Papers

3.1 Background papers are available upon request from the Corporate Planning and Performance Team via 01823359895 or Performance@somerset.gov.uk
1. Summary

1.1 Customers & Communities are proud of their many achievements and delivery in 18/19 against a backdrop of securing a £1million MTFP saving. Winning South West Contact Centre of the Year in 2018 and recently being shortlisted for the same award in 2019 is something to shout about along with the Operational Lead being nominated for the Contact Centre Manager of the Year.

1.2 Other notable successes include Adult Social Care Advisors in the Contact Centre continuing to resolve 60% of all calls at the first point of contact and for some individual advisors’ performance has been as high as 80%. In terms of managing the demand going into Adult Social Care this has been a significant achievement and fantastic transformation. In terms of customer satisfaction, the service regularly exceeds levels of 90%+ positive feedback.

2. Key achievements

2.1 Contact Centre

The Customer Contact Centre scooped the South West Medium Sized Contact Centre of the year award in 2018/19, which is quite an achievement as it was up against tough competition including many other Local Authorities, Public Sector and private companies.

The Service has successfully maintained high performance including customer satisfaction with 91% of customers rating the overall service as good or very good which is an increase from 89% in the previous year. We are also very proud that Adults Social Care (ASC) Customer Satisfaction rating has been exceptional at 95%, with 2 months achieving over 97%. This is an impressive percentage when you consider the service receives over 200,000 contacts per year.

Other impressive indicators of success include:

- 62% (target 60%) of calls were successfully signposted to community options (avoiding cost to ASC). Individual days as high
as 75% and individual advisors 80%. The previous year was 53% and the baseline figure was 30% in 2016.

- Average wait times for safeguarding calls (our most vulnerable customers) is 16 seconds.

The service’s commitment to driving efficiency, channel shift and demand management work continues with a rise in Blue badge online applications. Prior to April 2018 when the service transferred into the Contact Centre the highest number of monthly online applications received was 36% and since then the highest in February 2019 was 77%, alongside this increase the team also delivered an MTFP efficiency saving of one post.

The Highways Team in the Contact Centre has also seen a call reduction of 24% and an increase of 31% in online form submissions as a result of improving digital offers. The team has also focussed on reducing the number of calls coming into the authority by using the automated telephony system functionality to signpost callers requiring District Council help and not County Council services. This has secured a reduction of 550 calls per month.

The Contact Centre has been the recipient of positive feedback from our customers:

**A Customer View – ‘Joan’**

Thank you ........help me socialise and relieve my loneliness.

........I am a new woman

........I followed through with your suggestions and advice ........From the people I have met this week, I have had loads of suggestions........ so I am prioritising ............

........At the moment ‘Kerry’, I think I can cope with life and my needs without any further help from Social Services..........Thank you for all your efforts they have paid off.

........ I am learning how to enjoy life once again. That’s all I really needed.

And from key external figures, Directors, Auditors and key partners across the year:

- John Bolton, consultant and advisor to the LGA’s Adult Social Care Efficiency Programme commented – ‘most Councils would bite SCC’s hand off for this type of ‘front door’
OFSTED described the team as a ‘well-resourced professional service’. The Inspector was especially impressed with the feedback to referrers’ arrangements and the wide-ranging training which they haven’t seen in many inspections.

BBC Panorama researcher – ‘I am surprised at the depth of conversation our advisors have with customers’

Director of Adults Social Care Stephen Chandler – ‘Excellent response, 100% compliance and positive feedback from SWAP’.

2.2 Business Intelligence [BI]

The team has been key in delivering the successful Troubled Families work by implementing a recovery plan in July which has seen an additional 1400 successful claims being identified securing £1.1m of reward grant to the Authority. This work has received significant praise from the Government which acknowledges robustness of the systems and processes put in place to support the claims.

OFSTED Children’s Inspection Monitoring Visit again highlighted the quality of the data and information that is provided to the service. In particular there was praise of the “deep dive” thematic reviews undertaken by BI.

The team continued with its exemplary record of completing all statutory returns and mandatory user surveys accurately and within timescales set by Government. As well as supporting Adults in the procurement of the new Adults case management system, work continues to ensure a smooth implementation of the new system.

The team’s contribution to the working of the authority continues with extensive data and support given to corporate teams and other financial/savings work. This included working with external consultants such as Peopletoo reviewing the use of high cost placements for Children Looked After as well as providing extensive demographic and service delivery data as part of the review and restructuring of the Council’s getset service. A refresh of the Council’s Business Plan and preparations and organisation of the Council’s Corporate Peer Review and return visit including the development of the position statement and microsite have also been key highlights.

Driving the use of data, customer insight and intelligence across the authority continues with the Somerset Intelligence website being heralded by a national researcher for its access and ease of use. Preparing updated Community Profiles in advance of the Local Elections which include Ward changes, supporting evidence-based commissioning through analysis used for the Library Review and getset as well as introducing significant improvements to reporting on Drug & Alcohol service data.

Engaging and listening to our residents and communities has also been high on our agenda having completed 58 consultations in 2018-19, which received close to 8,000 responses. The key consultations carried out include:
2.3 Customer Experience & Information Governance

We undertook the successful joining of the Information Governance Team [Data protection, Data Subject Access Rights and Records Management] with the Customer Experience and Freedom of Information teams to enable MTFP saving of one Service Manager post whilst continuing to provide statutory services.

The service continues to seek efficiency and drive effective working practice through the digitalisation of the Data Subject Access Rights process to improve response times and modernise our approach and reduce costs. Overall the services saw a slight increase in the percentage for in-target responses on FOI requests for 2018/19 compared with 2017/18.

Currently the Annual Reports for Customer Feedback including complaints and compliments are being compiled for publication late Summer which will continue to show our commitment to listening and learning to our customers and seeking to respond and tackle complaints early before they escalate.

The service has also successful challenged a draft Ombudsman decision regarding a complaint which saved the council in excess of £2000 and increased the Customer Experience Team involvement in managing customers who display unacceptable or unreasonably persistent behaviour which has resulted in capacity benefits for the team and services.

2.4 Communications

Some excellent work this year continuing to support services in key areas such as fostering and adoption campaigns, to improve our social media presence and impact and to work with partners such as health to support their own campaigns. Some key achieves include:

- Increasing social media presence in March alone saw:
  - Twitter followers = 10,684 Facebook likes = 5,751
  - World Social Work Day:
    - Twitter – 2k video views, 350 engagements, 200 likes & 62 retweets
    - Facebook – 3.5k video views and 1,100 engagement
  - Weather events drives customers to our output and for instance highways saw the Travel Somerset page visited 31,000 in 36 hours during snow this year.

It is important to emphasis the work the communication team produces to
support key priorities for the council, such as adults and children’s social work recruitment.

This year the team has promoted a variety of campaign and objectives including:

- A new Yeovil College/University of Gloucestershire social worker degree course, Step Up to Social Work and other general recruitment activity. Pulled together ‘awards’ to mark World Social Work Day, then used it to successfully create social media output – celebrating success and good practice for the services (children and adults) and tying it all into recruitment push and getting really positive engagement.
- Another area of support has seen the promotion online and in media and Your Somerset of the Talking Café/Promoting Independence agenda.

A highlight of the support offered to boost fostering recruitment saw more than 50 staff take part in the Yeovil Half Marathon raising sponsorship and awareness in branded team vests.

The team has supported the Clinical Commissioning Group with its transformation “Health and Care Strategy” and promoted the Fit for My Future engagement campaign.

2.5 Digital & Digital Customer

Our focus this year has been on designing and developing a new set of websites inhouse that have been well received and well used. Some of the more notable sites are:

Volunteering [https://volunteering.somerset.gov.uk/](https://volunteering.somerset.gov.uk/)
Local Offer [https://choices.somerset.gov.uk/025/](https://choices.somerset.gov.uk/025/)
Leaving Care [https://www.somersetcareleavers.org.uk/](https://www.somersetcareleavers.org.uk/)

Digital interactions with the Council continue to rise with an impressive 1.6 million visits and 4.3 million page views to the main site this year. To ensure that we continue with digital and self-serve interactions the team has also built the foundations and worked with our services and customers to co-produce, redesign and refresh the main SCC website which is set to be launched in May 2019.

The Digital Team has also turned its attention to promoting the Digital Offer in the authority with signing of the Government Digital Declaration Fund which provides digital training and shared resources and learning across Local Authorities as well exploring new joint digital commissioning projects for the benefit of us and others. The team is also taking a lead role in the new and exciting Digital Customer Initiative being launched under the SCC Transforming Lives Programme.

3. Background Papers
3.1

- http://www.somersetintelligence.org.uk
- http://www.somersetintelligence.org.uk/sinepost.html

**Note:** For sight of individual background papers please contact the report author.
1. Summary/link to the County Plan

1.1. This report highlights the key activities and achievements of the past year within my areas of responsibility.

1.2. In the main, these services underpin much of the work of the Council, providing advice to and assisting our front line services and in doing so we help make things happen to deliver council services effectively.

1.3. The first section is devoted to our biggest priority throughout the year, our battle to achieve financial sustainability. I’m delighted to show the change in our financial fortunes over the course of the past year but would also caution that this is a volatile area susceptible to fluctuations in demand – for instance through an ageing population needing social care support, or for pressures within children’s social care – two areas that are very much part of the national picture and need resolution at a national level. Two significant areas are worthy of note. First the approach from our senior leaders and staff to achieve 98% of current spending targets. This is a huge step towards living within our means. Secondly the way we have rebuilt our general fund from a very low level to a level that is appropriate. These two changes have contributed much to a new positive financial outlook.

1.4. Aside from our improved financial position, I would highlight our major projects team which is on course to complete 14 new or improved schools with more in the pipeline. And I would also highlight our democratic services team who work so hard on behalf of all council members.

1.5. This report should be read alongside the comprehensive budget and finance documentation that has been provided to council members and the public over the past months in a bid to improve our own transparency and to enable new ideas to come forward.
Key Achievements and Activities

2. Finance Services

2.1. The 2018/19 financial year has been extraordinarily challenging for the Council and the Finance Team. In addition to managing a significant early forecast overspend, an adverse value for money assessment at the closure of the accounts for 2017/18, a critical Peer Challenge Review, the Finance Team has also had to navigate a significant turnover in its senior officers. Following the appointment of an Interim Director of Finance in summer 2018, the team then focused on supporting and coordinating the council’s response to its financial challenges. A major focus was to support immediate action put in place to reduce the in-year forecast overspend, increase transparency and frequency of financial reporting to senior officers and members, and to ensure a robust approach to developing a balanced budget for 2019/20 and the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP 2019-22).

2.2. Key achievements specific to the council’s financial context include:

2.2.1. Increased frequency and improved quality of budget monitoring to members, now regularly reporting to Cabinet and Place Scrutiny Committee.

2.2.2. Turnaround of significant forecast in-year overspend to a small underspend from month 8 (end of August 2018) through a more intense focus on tracking of savings delivery, monitoring of volatile spend areas alongside a re-basing of the Children’s Services budget to reflect the reality of the spend levels.

2.2.3. Improved financial resilience through replenishment of depleted reserves wherever the opportunity arose leading to improved financial resilience.

2.2.4. Improved financial awareness across budget holders and managers through delivery of a financial training programme.

2.2.5. Reporting of progress against a value-for-money “agreed action tracker” to every Audit Committee since July 2018 alongside monthly progress liaison meetings with the External Auditor.

2.2.6. A more robust approach to developing the MTFP (2019-22) that ensured plans were evidence-based to gain high confidence in achievability and that plans were strengthening the council’s overall financial resilience.

2.2.7. A refreshed format for reporting the MTFP, capital programme and capital strategy to Cabinet and Full Council that improved transparency as well as provision of more details specific to each Scrutiny Committee ahead of the budget setting Full Council in February 2019.

2.2.8. Successfully secured a Business Rate Retention (BRR) Pilot for Somerset for 2019/20 and further pro-active responses to Government consultations on the future funding of Local Government (Fair Funding Review (FFR) and BRR).
2.3. As administering authority for the Somerset Local Government Pension Fund, the Finance Team have overseen the successful start of the pooling arrangements with effect from July 2018.

Currently 44% of the Funds assets have transferred to being managed by the Brunel pool.

2.4. The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) budget was set for 2018/19 (£367m) with unanimous support from Somerset Schools Forum (SSF). The DSG budget has also been set for 2019/20 (£382m). The overall DSG deficit from 2017/18 was £3.967m and we have seen continued pressures particularly within the High Needs block of the DSG.

2.5. **Treasury Management**

As usual the detailed full year treasury management outturn report will be produced and provided to full council at the July meeting. The treasury team continues to work within the prudential code which emphasises Security and Liquidity, and then when these are achieved, delivers yield. Gross investment income for the year was £2.1m, which was an average return of 0.99% from an average balance of £214m.

2.6. **Internal Audit**

Following the retirement of the former Chief Internal Auditor (CIA), during 2018/19 the role is now held by the South West Audit Partnership (SWAP) on behalf of the Council. The Interim Director of Finance and the Chief Internal Auditor liaise frequently to review progress against audit plans, previous audit action plans and to consider any fraud or irregularity instances. The CIA retains authority to act independently and has access to relevant officers and members to carry out audit duties as appropriate: including reporting independently to the Audit Committee and attending the Senior Leadership Team.

2.7. **Audit Committee**

Throughout 2018/19 the Finance Team have ensured a robust work programme has been in place and supported to enable effective governance reporting. A particular focus in 2018/19 has been to ensure every meeting receives a progress report on the value-for-money action tracker and that audit reports with partial findings are scrutinised by the Audit Committee as follow ups. From January 2018 to March 2019 12 partial audits were reviewed by the Committee. There are currently 18 SWAP partial audits recorded in our systems.

2.8. **Risk Management**

During 2018/19, in my role as both Cabinet Member and the Council’s Risk
Champion, we continue to work to raise the understanding that risk management is a vital management discipline and is a key part of our governance framework. I continue to oversee, with the help of the Audit Committee through their constructive challenge and ideas, the assurance and compliance with the Council’s risk management business procedures.

3. Corporate Property

3.1. Team Structure and Remit

During 2018/19 the Corporate Property Group ("CPG") transferred from Commercial and Business Services to Economic and Community Infrastructure, helping to improve links between the group and services such as Highways, Planning, Economic Development and Libraries, with which they work closely. The group has also consolidated its structure to ensure greater integration and improved cross team working between the original property teams and their Facilities Management ("FM") and Health and Safety colleagues who joined the group in 2017/18.

In addition, a key objective for the year, which was achieved in October 2018, was the insourcing of the Property Maintenance Team from Skanska, following the end of our repairs and maintenance contract. This has proved highly successful, with excellent feedback having been received from those using the service and considerable savings having been seen already.

3.2. Compliance, Systems and Record Keeping

Great strides have been made this year in the use of IT systems to improve transparency, efficiency and assurance. In particular, a new Health and Safety monitoring and reporting system has been procured and put in place, which provides improved functionality as well as cost savings.

The FM team has also been working closely with colleagues in IT, making use of the Assyst system to introduce self-help and online services for staff. This is helping to streamline the service and provide statistical information, which has aided resource planning.

The insourcing of the Property Maintenance Team has enabled us to gain control of all our servicing and maintenance data to improve visibility of the condition of our asset base and to ensure that the asset register itself can be maintained more easily and therefore relied upon in decision-making. This has also given greater assurance regarding compliance, as all servicing paperwork is held in one place and can be tracked and accessed more easily.
3.3. Corporate Landlord

Preparations for the new Corporate Landlord Model were a major focus for 2018/19 and this was implemented as planned on 1st April 2019, subject to final budget transfers being made by Finance following year end closing.

This new approach to managing our assets is already producing opportunities to make savings, as oversight of the whole estate now rests with the CPG and consistency and appropriate consolidation can be ensured. The team has taken on the additional processing of invoices and payments with a view to relieving staff in other services of this activity as a side benefit of gaining complete visibility of all financial costs and benefits associated with the SCC estate. This has been a highly complex and time-consuming task and the considerable effort put in by the Systems and Performance team (part of CPG) in achieving this is recognised.

The next phase of this project, which began in the Autumn/Winter of 2018, is to gradually increase the FM team’s involvement in the running of all operational buildings. The intention here is to provide a consistent level of support for all, reduced reliance on operational staff to carry out compliance activity (such as Health and Safety inspections and room bookings) and increased knowledge of our buildings, their utilisation and condition, within the CPG.

3.4. Major Projects

2018/19 saw the Major Projects team and Estates colleagues successfully delivering the following completed construction projects with many more currently in train:

| Taunton Heathfield School - Expansion Phase 1 |
| Kingfisher School, Yeovil |
| Taunton Heathfield Community School, New ASD Base |
| Yeovil Milford Infants ORLIT Repairs |
| Yeovil Milford Juniors ORLIT Repairs |
| Yeovil Milford SEN Adaptations |
| Cossington PRU, Oil Leak |
| Wellington Court Fields Community School - Provision of 3 General Classrooms |
| Watchet Little Vikings Pre School Alterations |
| Yeovil, Westfield Academy Little Discoveries Pre School Extension |
| Wellington Beech Grove Bouncy Bears Childrens Centre |
| Taunton Broughton House Alterations |
| Yeovil Milford Early Years Provision |
| Holway Park Primary School - 14-place ASD Resource Base |
2018 also witnessed the culmination of an ongoing project to update our approach to procurement of new school builds with a view to reducing costs and delivery timescales while maintaining quality and acceptability for planning purposes. The team has now procured construction partners for three new schools based on a “model school” approach through the Southern Construction Framework, giving access to all major contractors in this marketplace under a single competitive and streamlined framework procurement process. Indications so far are that this approach will deliver considerable cost savings for SCC.

The ambitious programme of new school builds has been progressing alongside further ambitious plans for Economic Development and the Major Projects team continues to work closely with colleagues in Commissioning, Highways, Planning and Procurement to improve our processes and keep pressure on costs.

3.5. Asset Rationalisation, One Public Estate and County Hall Works

The CPG’s vision of a self-sustaining property estate within 10 years is being furthered by various rationalisation projects, seeking to reduce costs and improve income generation.

The programme of Place Based Reviews (which involve an in depth look at all property assets in a given location, including other public sector assets) has highlighted various opportunities to use existing buildings more effectively and to dispose of, or generate income from, under-utilised assets. It is also enabling the group to create forward plans for all assets, taking into consideration their fitness for purpose, state and consideration and investment potential. This reflects a move on the part of the CPG to become more pro-active in property management and to take advantage of the Corporate Landlord Model to put in place a more strategic Asset Management Plan during 2019/20.

The group has been successful in securing further funding from the One Public Estate programme, championed by the Local Government Association and the Cabinet Office in conjunction with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. This scheme provides revenue funding to get joint Local and Central Government property projects off the ground and the Somerset Partnership (consisting of all District Councils, Police, Fire and Ambulance services and the NHS), led by SCC has been successful in securing funding for 8 projects so far. The latest round has provided sponsorship for projects in Burnham-on-Sea and Wells as well as support for a wider programme of work including Frome.

Substantial backlog maintenance issues in A Block were addressed during 2018/19 and the project team secured final approval for the next phase of
improvement works in February 2019, which have now commenced. This was enabled by a complex FM project to relocate teams out of A Block and this work is continuing with a view to clearing C Block once A Block can be re-occupied in early 2020/21. In an effort to accelerate the approximately £700,000 savings which flow from the A Block works, various temporary moves have also been completed and just under £200,000 of the £700,000 has been secured already.

3.6. Finance – Capital and Revenue

The Estates team within the CPG was responsible for the delivery of almost £11m of capital receipts during 2018/19. This assisted SCC in minimising borrowing requirements and supporting the use of Capital Receipts Flexibility where appropriate.

On the revenue side, the CPG has delivered £518,500 of MTFP savings in 2018/19 and finished the year with an underspend of £695,000. This compares with a closing position in 2017/18 of £530,000 overspend.

4. Procurement

4.1. The Commercial and Procurement team has been subject to significant change during 2018/19. The Service has been restructured to align resources to focus on the priority needs of the organisation going forward, continuing to provide professional procurement advice and support to colleagues. We have greatly improved our understanding of the longer-term commissioning intentions, with a more structured, integrated approach to future procurement workload planning. In this way we have improved the capacity to meet all our future commissioning needs through the most appropriate routes to market, continuing to deliver the best outcomes for Somerset County Council.

4.2. Significant procurements for 2018/19 included securing the new household waste Recycle More contract on behalf of Somerset Waste Partnership and delivering a new Specialist All Age Drug and Alcohol Treatment Service with Public Health.

4.3. The priorities of the commercial team have also been reviewed to identify efficiency savings in existing contracts and manage key commercial negotiations where existing service providers are not best meeting our needs. In 2018/19 significant savings were made through contract review and renegotiations, predominantly in ICT/telecoms, from a range of activities including de-scoping of services and renegotiation of contract terms.
4.4. As well as making changes to how we resource commercial and procurement, a review of the supporting process has been carried out to update these and check that they are sufficiently robust. This reassures that we are always acting in line with our Contract Standing Orders, whilst retaining the capacity to introduce innovation and flexibility in procurement, when needed.

5. **HR and Workforce Development**

5.1. The HR and Organisational Development team has delivered and, in many cases, led change programmes that are not only linked to our financial programme but are also improving organisational performance and service outcomes.

HR programmes have led directly to cost being removed from the council through effective use of technology, policy and innovation, whilst also leading to year-on-year improvements in staff surveys. The HR-OD team continues to demonstrate exceptionally high levels of skill and engagement, compassion and innovation, championing the employee and focusing on improving lives.

5.2. There are five areas within the team: HR Advisory, HR Policy & Projects, Organisational Development, Resourcing and HR Administration & Payroll. HR-OD has been set its own ambitious savings targets since 2015 and has not only reduced its budget by £2m, but overdelivered in each year.

5.3. Team achievements include:

- The launch of the new People Strategy in June 2018 which directly supports the authority’s vision of Improving Lives in Somerset
- Continued improvement through staff surveys
- Working in partnership with managers across the organisation to deliver financial sustainability in areas such as Establishment Control; Team and Service Restructuring; Financial Management Training for all Managers; Application of Policy and Practice
- Development of the Management and Leadership Development programme to support aspiring and current managers with a framework setting out what SCC needs from its staff and to support career development, appraisal and performance.

5.4. The Director of HR-OD, working with the Chief Executive, presented to over 800 staff during September and October. Effective use of our networking tool ‘Yammer’ was made, with questions and comments answered directly by the Director. Weekly strategic meetings were organised with staff representatives, in addition to service area consultation meetings.
5.5. We constantly review our approach to recruiting in key areas, such as Children’s & Adults Social Care. 2018 has seen the Resourcing team continue to make improvements to how SCC attracts and engages with candidates including a social media presence used to advertise across a number of platforms.

5.6. Our OD team leads on apprenticeship recruitment & development, which again has made great progress in 2018. We now have over 200 people working under the apprenticeship framework, including new hires and those developing skills. SCC has also just launched an accredited management programme (ILM 3), enabling the levy to be spent in-house.

5.7. The HR & Organisational Development team has led on programmes to improve performance & culture across the organisation and the county. These programmes are working, as demonstrated by feedback from staff and partner organisations and for these reasons, the team has been shortlisted as the Team of the Year for a national award.

6. Legal Services

6.1. The work of our Adult Social Care team continues to develop and grow. Case law is constantly affecting workloads, specifically relating to deprivation of liberty. The team are very proud of the fact that they undertake most of their own advocacy. We also have a strong track record in our favour when decisions are escalated to the Secretary of State.

6.2. Between 1st January 2018 and 31st December 2018, 127 sets of child care proceedings were issued, a 19% decrease on the previous calendar year. Essex County Council, the Ofsted appointed Children’s Improvement partner has commended this reduction as a result of robust processes.

Increasing use of technology is having a significant impact on the complexity of cases. In a growing number of cases we are being required to interrogate mobile devices and computers to obtain evidence in support of the case.

6.3. The Contracts and Procurement solicitors have worked with teams across the full range of the Council’s services, from ad-hoc advice to significant undertakings. Just a few highlights from the last year include:

- Advising the Library Service on their redesign project and community library partnerships
- Ongoing support to the Libraries West Partnership to deliver service improvements affecting users across Somerset, Dorset, Gloucestershire, Bristol, North Somerset and Bath and North East Somerset
- Advising the Financial Imperative Team on funding decisions
- Advising on the Recycle More project
Daily support to the Commercial and Procurement teams on both routine and complex matters, including the resolution of procurement challenges.

6.4. The Litigation team has successfully prosecuted several utility companies for offences under the New Roads and Street Works Act. These offences put the safety and convenience of the highway users of Somerset at risk.

6.5. The Conveyancing and Property team has handled the sale of several Council properties realising £11.5m in capital funds.

6.6. Recruitment and retention remains a challenge for Legal Services. A ‘grow our own’ system continues, with 2 Solicitors qualifying in the Autumn of 2018. Another member of staff is also undertaking the 6-year apprenticeship to qualify as a Solicitor, she is currently taking her second-year examinations. Further opportunities for apprenticeship training are being explored.

6.7. I would like to thank all members of staff for their hard work over the past year, especially in the absence of a full-time solicitor on maternity leave.

7. Democratic Services

7.1. Supporting the Council’s democratic arrangements

The Democratic Services team continues to deliver a range of good quality services direct to the public together with internal governance, member development and support to the Council, Members and officers. The team also supports strategic partnership activity and provides direct support to lead Members, the Cabinet, the Council’s committees, the Chief Executive, Senior Leadership Team and key partnership arrangements.

The team also supports the annual review of the Members Scheme of Allowances which includes the work of the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel.

The team is managed by the Council’s Monitoring Officer who is also responsible for the Council’s governance framework and for promoting and ensuring compliance with the Council’s standards of conduct.

7.2. Civic Office

The team provide direct support for organising civic and ceremonial functions and ceremonies (including royal visits) for the Lord Lieutenant of Somerset (covering the historic county of Somerset), the High Sheriff and the Chair of Council. I’m grateful for the work the team contributed to the recent successful visit of the Queen to Castle Car and Bruton.
7.3. **School Admissions, Exclusion and Transport Appeal Hearings**

The team has managed the council’s requirements for convening and administering over 400 hearings per annum.

7.4. **Governance**

We continue to ensure that the Council’s governance framework, Constitution and Schemes of Delegation remain fit for purpose and a Governance Board and the Constitution & Standards Committee meet to ensure key governance policies and processes meet business needs. A Members Portal is in place whereby members can access all relevant information to their role online. There is also governance guidance on the Council’s intranet and training available for officers relating to decision making, risk management, impact assessments and member development.

7.5. **Strategic Partnerships**

The Democratic Services Team is involved in providing governance support to:

7.5.1. **Heart of the South West Joint Committee** - the partnership of the 19 Devon and Somerset Councils, working alongside the LEP, to take forward the work of the Heart of the South West Joint Committee. This work, aims to maximise the ability of the partnership to lever in further responsibilities and funds from Government to improve productivity across the HotSW area.

7.5.2. **Peninsula sub-national transport body** – a partnership of the five transport authorities covering the south west peninsula, working to develop a regional transport strategy for the area to access funding and improvements for strategic transport priorities e.g. road and rail.

7.5.3. **Somerset Waste Board** – the partnership of the County Council and all Somerset district councils to manage the contracts for the delivery of an integrated waste management and recycling service and support strategic policy development. Governance support also includes a joint waste scrutiny panel.

7.5.4. **Somerset Rivers Authority** – the partnership of the County Council, district councils and Internal Drainage Boards

7.5.5. **Somerset Health & Well-Being Board** – this partnership board brings together partners who plan and commission services for health and social care and develops the Health and Well-Being Strategy.

7.5.6. **Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Panel** – this is part of the national arrangements for police governance. It scrutinises and keeps a regular check and balance on the performance and activities of the Police & Crime Commissioner.
Annual Report of the Scrutiny for Policies, Adults and Health Committee
Chair: Cllr Hazel Prior-Sankey
Division and Local Member: All
Lead Officer: Lindsey Tawse – Democratic Services Team Leader
Author: Jenny Murphy – Senior Democratic Services Officer
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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. This is the annual report and covers in more depth the meetings on 20 March 2019 and 3 April 2019.

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 8 elected Members.

2. Background

2.1 Scrutiny Work Programme

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 also frequently review how we 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.

Scrutiny Members have endeavoured through the Committee’s meetings to make suggestions and express opinions to Directors and Cabinet Members after discussion and debate. We have constructive relationships with our sister Scrutiny Committees, particularly the Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee.
Somerset CCG Quality Performance Report -

We considered an update on the Somerset CCG Integrated Quality, Safety and Performance. The CCG had established performance monitoring meeting with all providers of healthcare services, we considered the summary of the escalation issues for quality, safety and performance against the constitutional and other standards.

In 2018/19 the demand for both elective and emergency services in Somerset continued to increase compared to the previous year. This led to increased waiting times particularly for diagnostics and elective treatment. The CCG and Health providers have identified areas of pressure and these are monitored with support from the Somerset Referral Management centre. The increase in people who have long waits continues to be a concern.

We considered the report and were keen to celebrate the achievements over the past year. Worth noting was the NHS Staff survey that resulted in Taunton and Somerset NHS Foundation Trust being in the highest 20% nationally for positive staff response, the CCG Safeguarding Children Strategy and Dashboard now complete and Home First quality metrics and contract specification in place with the Trusts.

In terms of the performance of South Western Ambulance Service Trust (SWAST) we were interested to know how the CCG assesses the resource requirement for ambulances. There are daily updates on performance while targets are not being met. The CCG has commissioned some emergency response vehicles based in Somerset to ‘hear and treat’ or ‘see and treat’ to reduce the number of patients who are simply transported to A&E for treatment. The pressure on the service is not lack of vehicles but the challenge of retaining trained and qualified staff.

We were interested to learn of any impact the major incident in Salisbury had on the ambulance service. We asked for a more detailed report on the South West Ambulance Service Trust. This will be presented at the June 2019 meeting.

Performance Report Adults and Social Care -

We considered a report on the performance of Adult Social Care. Key achievements were the focus on managing demand, improving outcomes and improving the number of calls to Somerset Direct that are resolved at the first point of contact. The target for this is 60% and has been over that for the first part of 2019 at 62.5% for February. Somerset County Council’s Customer Service team was awarded the best customer service contact centre award in a South West Forum. The Home First initiative has supported independence and reduced the need for longer term stay in hospital. As this service has developed over the past year it has grown and now more people are being discharged earlier from hospital onto a Home First pathway to be supported at home.

We were pleased to hear that there is an upward trend in the CQC rating for Somerset Care Homes with 92% of providers being Good or Outstanding in February 2019. We were interested in the challenges for the coming year included staffing. It was acknowledged that there continues to be a desire to ‘grown our own talent’.
Discovery - Scrutiny Update -

We considered the update on the performance of the Discovery contract. The report contained performance measured against the Key Performance Indicators (KPI’s). We discussed the current performance of the Discovery Contract, welcomed the wider engagement with stakeholders. The CGC continue to carry out unannounced inspections of Discovery locations in line with their planned inspection regime. The last service to receive such an inspection was Amberleigh. This was rated as Good and some the CQC observed some areas of good practice in supporting people to have choice and control over their lives.

We were interested in an update on Crisis Support as this had been identified as one for concern prior to transfer to Discovery, especially Oak House. SCC is supporting Discovery to transform this service and to support the delivery of a new service model the current service will end on 16th March 2019.

Employment Services now has the new management structure needed to deliver this key part of the programme. We were pleased to see in the report details of some of the early successes of this programme. They noted the positive outcomes of the working relationship with Hinkley C in supporting Traineeships leading to employment.

We asked about the replacement services available once Six Acres closed and wanted reassurance that there would not be too long a gap between one closing and the other being ready and able to offer the necessary services. We were informed that the new service in Taunton would not replicate that of Six Acres; the rationale for closing Six Acres was to provide better and more support across a wider base.

2.3 03 April 2019

Somerset Safeguarding Adults Board (SSAB) –

We considered a report from the Somerset Safeguarding Adults Board (SSAB). The report outlined the strong synergies exist between the work of the Somerset Safeguarding Adults Board (SSAB) and the Scrutiny for Policies, Adults and Health Committee, which has a valuable role in the assurance and accountability of the SSAB. The purpose of the report is to consult with Scrutiny for Policies, Adults and Health Committee in relation to the Strategic Plan for 2019/2022.

We welcomed the comprehensive report the following areas were discussed: -

- We were interested to hear how dynamic the plan was and how quickly it could respond to changes and new challenges. The events at Mendip House was an example of how events can arise unexpectedly. The Committee were assured that the Safeguarding Board were quick to learn from this and it resulted in more robust understanding of the risks.
- Another challenge has been the County Lines activities. This has in the main involved young people in the movement of illegal drugs, but vulnerable young adults have been targeted. By raising this there has been a concerted multi-agency response which has heightened awareness of the risk. We sought reassurance that Somerset was
striving to be a difficult area for County Lines to operate and not a soft
target.

- We wanted to make sure that the wider aspects of exploitation were
covered. These included community based, social media and coercive
control were all considered and included in the safeguarding plans.
- We were pleased to hear that there was a proactive approach to
safeguarding but wanted to know which other agencies were included.
We were informed that all agencies with a statutory responsibility were
involved and many had Board members in common; including the Fire
Service.
- We asked if it was clear to Somerset residents where they should go if
there were concerns about safeguarding. They were informed that
Somerset is a ground-breaking council in this area and the model used
here has been shared at a national level. Somerset Direct is the single
point of contact and access to the services and through a system of case
file audits and routine assessments the service can be confident that no-
one should be missed.

**Mental Health Services including Deprivation of Liberty update**

We considered a report into Adult Social Care (ASC) – Mental Health. The
report set out the current position following the transition of services back to the
local authority from Somerset Partnership Trust. The ASC service supports
people with Mental Health it is continuing to develop in line with promoting
independence strategy. As in all ASC services the vision is to ‘Promote
Independence in Mental Health this is often translated into the Recovery Model.
A strengths-based approach that focuses on the strengths of individuals,
families, social networks and communities. Also, central to the approach, is
what matters to individuals and their families.

The transition of services back to the Local Authority has enabled the ASC
Mental Health teams to focus on its vision of Promoting Independence and
Recover. We discussed the report and welcomed the detailed presentation
which conveyed a passionate commitment to delivering the best mental health
support for Somerset residents. We were keen to recognise the pressures on
those working in the mental health field.

**Scrutiny Adults and Health Report Learning Disabilities**

We received a report on Adult Social Care’s continuing development of the
Promoting Independence model of delivery for people with a Learning Disability.
The Committee heard that the strategy was being realigned to support its
continued development. As in all Adult Social Care services the vision is to
‘Promote Independence in Learning Disability services this is often translated
into the Progression Model. A strengths-based approach that focuses on the
strengths of individuals, families, social networks and communities. Also, central
to the approach, is what matters to individuals and their families. Adult Social
Care continues to empower people to take control of their lives and their care
and support, work with people and their communities to identify and provide
sustainable local solutions to help them stay as well as possible and as
independent as possible, for as long as possible. The Learning Disability Plan
aims to maximise independence and raises ambition to ensure people are
supported in the most effective and appropriate way.

We welcomed this approach but were interested to note that Somerset has the highest number of people learning difficulties recorded compared to national figures and appears to spend 2% more than other similar local authorities. A different way of supporting people will enable the County to support more people with the same money. We were interested to know if the increase in individual cost could be attributed to the awarding of the contract to Discovery. It was confirmed that this was not the case.

**Scrutiny Adults and Health Report Dementia Strategy -**

We were informed that the current Somerset Dementia Strategy is under review as the previous strategy expired. A rewrite of the current strategy is planned which will be presented to the September Older People’s Mental Health and Dementia Collaborative Service Development Group. A small working group is currently being set up to identify the immediate priorities to improve the support and diagnosis of patients in Somerset suffering from Dementia. Somerset has older than average population and so the incidence of dementia is likely to be higher. In the county there appears to be increasing demand on many services in relation to dementia, including primary care, A&E, acute wards and nursing and residential care homes admissions. Earlier intervention with higher quality community-based support will help reduce some of these pressures on services – and improve the quality of life for those who have dementia and their carers.

We welcomed the report but were concerned that it was being presented as a strategy yet there was not a strategy attached. It was agreed that the Committee would be presented with a strategic document once the alternative model was fully worked though.

**Meetings Overview for 2018-19**

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

- Fit for My Future
- Somerset wide integrated sexual health service
- Regular clinical quality review reports from Somerset Clinical Commission Group (CCG)
- Reports regarding the performance and transformation at Weston Hospital
- Regular updates regarding Adult Social Care Performance
- Somerset Safeguarding Annual Report and strategic plan
- Somerset CCG finance and performance issues
- Improved access to GP services
- NHS 111 and Out of Hours Service Performance
- Community Hospitals
- South Western Ambulance Service
- Council performance reports
- Learning Disability Service Contract
2.4 Suggestions for the Future

We look forward to an interesting and informative year ahead; items scheduled for scrutiny including dementia strategy, autism services update, mental health service update, sexual health services update as well as a presentation on the challenges facing the South Western Ambulance Service.

Many of the reports we have considered have been information reports where our ability to make constructive input or provide feedback has therefore been limited.

We 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 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.

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.
Report of the Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee

Committee Chair: Cllr Leigh Redman
Division and Local Member: All
Lead Officer: Scott Wooldridge – Strategic Manager – Democratic Services
Author: Jamie Jackson – Deputy Strategic Manager – Scrutiny Manager
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 and also to provide each other meeting of the Council with a summary progress report and outcomes of scrutiny. This is the fourth 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 and cover the work of the Committee’s first meetings of 2019.

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 since that time 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 continue to ask detailed questions of the Director of Children’s Services (DCS) 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. This was recognised during the last Ofsted Inspection visit, which also commented favourably on the work of the Committee.

1.4. The Committee has 8 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 Schools Compact 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 remain committed to retaining a 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, suggested in our last Annual report, to help improve Scrutiny in the remainder of this quadrennium:

- Enhanced support for Scrutiny Members such as a Scrutiny Officer role;
- More Scrutiny Committee and Member involvement and input before Cabinet decisions;
- 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;
- We are pleased that the outcome tracker we developed has been adopted by the other 2 Scrutiny Committee’s to ensure all Scrutiny recommendations are actioned/followed up.

#### 2.2. Work Programme

The Committee Chair and Vice Chair 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 have also reviewed and updated how we track and monitor our suggested outcomes and/or recommended actions, so we can understand the impact of our work and learn how to better focus our scrutiny work to ensure we have made a difference. In addition to our monthly Committee meetings, officer support/resources allowing, we would like to establish task and finish groups as previously we have found this more focused approached very worthwhile.

Scrutiny Members have endeavoured over time to make suggestions and express opinions to Commissioning/Service Directors and Cabinet Members after discussion and debate. The majority of these have been 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 in recent 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 were pleased to be to hold a joint meeting with the Adults and Health Committee and would wish to do so again to consider improving outcomes for children and young people through better joint working between various agencies and partners.

We continue to be frustrated on occasions 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 continued to be either removed from our agenda or been produced after our agenda has been published and tabled at the meeting.

The late production of reports has affected our ability to consider and digest their contents and subsequently provide constructive challenge and or 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. We continue to feel that the Committee’s involvement in ‘pre-decision’ Scrutiny is very limited and or recent efforts to offer help and support in the review of the Young Carers service for example were not utilised.

2.3. Meetings overview

The Committee Chair and Vice-Chair have outlined the importance for the Committee to focus on all aspects of the four new priorities of the revised Children and Young Peoples Plan (CYPP) and we agreed that our work programme should be developed through discussions with the Committee Chair, Vice-Chair, DCS and Cabinet Member for Children and Families.

We agreed to have an update on progress made against improvement programme 6 of the former CYPP at each meeting and this proved to be very useful. The Committee Chair requested that each member of the Committee volunteer to act as a champion for each programme of the CYPP and those programmes benefitted from having a member champion and we will look to do something similar with the new CYPP.

We continue to focus, on the outcomes arising from the Ofsted Inspection, and on ensuring the delivery of the new Children and Young Peoples Plan (CYPP). The Vice-Chair worked closely with Officers on the 4 priority themes of the CYPP:

- Supported families;
- Healthy Lives;
A Great Education;
Positive Activities.

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;
- 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;
- Early Years and School Place Planning Infrastructure Growth Plan;
- Children’s Services – Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) Action Plan Update;
- Updates on Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children;
- Annual Children’s Social Care Statutory Customer Feedback report;
- Somerset’s Early Help Strategy 2016-2019;
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) updates;
- School Performance & Public examination results;
- The Council’s Medium Term Financial Plan (Budget setting process);
- Family Support Services;
- Changes to the Physical Impairment and Medical Support (PIMS) Team.

2.4. Reflections on the last year

As a Committee we recognise we are still relatively new and 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. We do however continue to feel that the Committee’s involvement in ‘pre-decision’ Scrutiny is very limited and or recent efforts to offer help and support in the review of the Young Carers service for example were not utilised.

2.5. Regular meeting updates

22 March 2019

We considered 2 reports on the Children and Young People’s Plan (CYPP), a quarterly update and a look at the new (CYPP) which our Vice-Chair had worked closely with Officers on producing in its final stages before going live. An update on the progress to deliver a new Family Support Service (FSS) for the parents, children and families of Somerset, was considered. We requested an update report be provided for or June meeting to monitor transition of the Public Health nurses in to the service.
Our meeting concluded with updates on the changes to **Higher Needs Funding Provision** and the work to support children with Special Education Needs in all Somerset settings, and **School Performance 2018 - National Curriculum Test and Public Examination Results**.

26 April 2019
At this meeting we were pleased to hear about improvements made in fostering and adoption since the introduction of the **Regional Adoption Agency**. We also benefitted from hearing first hand from a young person who spoke very eloquently about experiences of using the **Pathways to Independence (P2i)** service.

A **Young Carers Future Service provision update** report was broadly welcomed and we supported the proposals whilst making some additional recommendations. We were however frustrated by both a lack of detail in the report, to provide further explanation about the proposals, and the answers to questions we asked at our meeting. We felt this limited information did not fully outline the proposals that would be presented to the Cabinet and therefore this had limited our ability to be able to provide constructive comment on this important topic that would impact on vulnerable children, young people and their families.

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](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/agendasandpapers)

**Note:** For sight of individual background papers please contact the report author.
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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 and has contributed to the Medium Term Financial Plan process.

1.3. The Committee has taken a keen interest in the Council’s financial sustainability and has considered Revenue Budget Monitoring Reports on a monthly basis. We have indicated that we wish to continue to receive such reports.

1.4. We use 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. The Committee recently agreed to establish a Joint Task & Finish Group to develop a Somerset-wide Climate Change Strategy.

2. Issues for consideration

2.1. This report is for information.

3. Background

3.1. The Scrutiny for Polices and Place Committee has 8 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 & Revenue Budget Monitoring;
- Capital Investment Programme;
- Corporate Performance & Core Council Programme update reports;
- Connecting Devon and Somerset updates;
- Highways projects updates;
- Traded Services update reports;
- Asset rationalisation & County Farms;
- Library Service Review Consultation;
- Flood and Water Management updates;
- Hinkley Point C updates;
- SCC Vision & Business Plan

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 the two other Scrutiny Committees as all Committees have taken care in establishing our respective work programmes 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 two meetings on 06 March and 05 April.

**06 March 2019**

First the Committee considered Revenue Budget Monitoring report which outlined the projected revenue outturn based upon the Month 9 position. In a verbal update, the Committee were informed that the Month 10 report has now been published and will be considered at Cabinet next week.

The Committee heard that the underspend projected in previous reports is sustained and has increased marginally.

In addition to this projected underspend, opportunity has been taken to make a further contribution to reserves and to release some pressure on the need to use Capital Receipts Flexibilities to support the revenue budget. Both of these adjustments will further improve the resilience of the Council and the robustness of the accounts. £1.5m has been moved to reduce the pressure on capital receipt flexibilities.

In addition to the strong grip on the revenue budget and the consistent delivery of
planned savings, the most significant improvements to the revenue account between month 8 and month 9 are the introduction to the monitoring projection of the refund of the Government levy money (£1.031m mentioned in the month 8 report), a range of favourable service forecasts totalling £1.646m (as detailed later in the report) and the release of nearly £0.800m from the contingency. With regard to the latter, it is judged that only £2.000m needs to remain in the contingency for the rest of the financial year to underwrite unexpected financial challenges.

It was highlighted to Members that the £2m contingency fund will remain should there be no call upon it but this could be affected by unpredictable events such as severe weather events and service demands.

Members asked for further explanation of capital receipt flexibilities and it was clarified that this was introduced by the Government in 2016/17 in recognition of the financial challenges faced by local authorities. In order to be eligible for flexibility, a robust business case is required to demonstrate how the flexibility will deliver long-term savings. The Interim Finance Director explained that there was some nervousness about the robustness of some of these business cases, therefore, they are all being reviewed this month. The movement of £1.5m means that we don’t have to rely on capital receipts if a business case is found insufficient.

Members questioned what would happen if a business case was found inadequate and it was explained that this would be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

It was confirmed that this flexibility will not impact at all on the sale of County Farms. Going forward we hope to have less reliance on capital sales so whilst the asset management policy has not changed, the asset team will be able to take more time to ensure the best sale possible.

Members commented that reserve levels are relatively low and questioned what the normal expectation should be. It was explained that there are two elements to reserves: general reserves which are for emergencies and unexpected events; and earmarked reserves which are set aside for anticipated spend. No level is specified for general reserves, but usual levels are 3-5% of the net budget. However, when the level of financial uncertainty is high, it is prudent to increase the levels of reserves to ensure and sustain financial integrity. £15m of reserves would represent around 5% of Somerset’s net budget and we would consider this a safe position. We are looking to add to our reserves year upon year until we reach this level.

A Member raised that significant parts of the budget fall within Adults and Children’s services and questioned how it would be ensured that they are able to maintain services at the same time as making significant savings. It is anticipated that this will be monitored through the two other scrutiny committees. The Children’s Board has also been set up to report through. A lot of work is taking place in this area and this committee will continue to receive regular updates on the financial implications. Looking forward, only a small number of savings will impact on services.

A Member expressed that savings proposals seem more realistic and achievable
now.

Members welcomed the inclusion of graphics within the report and asked for this to be continued in future reports.

The Committee noted the report.

Next the Committee considered a Leisure Services update. The Item began with an introduction from the Director of ECI Commissioning. Members were informed that 1610 Ltd were formed in 2009 following the externalisation of Somerset County Council's in-house leisure services provider.

At this time the County Council entered into a 10-year contract with Somerset Leisure Ltd (1610's original name) to deliver leisure services on its behalf. The contract, referred to as the Funding and Service Level Agreement, was signed to deliver community leisure services from dual-use sites at a number of school settings. This contract is now due to expire on 31st March 2019.

During the 10-year period of the contract 1610 have diversified their operations effectively and have grown as a business into becoming one of the largest and most respected leisure operators in the South West. They have secured contracts with other Local Authorities to run community leisure facilities in Devon and Dorset, have secured a contract via the Building Schools for the Future contract to deliver services from Chilton Trinity and East Bridgwater sites as well of opening a number of other private facilities.

1610 Ltd currently employs over 400 staff and since their formation have provided employment opportunities to thousands of people across the region, some of whom have gone onto have highly successful careers within the leisure sector nationwide. The services delivered by 1610 have given countless groups and individuals, including, through targeted initiatives, those who are traditionally difficult to engage, the opportunity to get and stay active. These actions have played a key part in helping the county attain its Health and Wellbeing outcomes.

The Director of ECI Commissioning then invited the Chief Executive of 1610, Tim Nightingale, who has been at the helm since before 1610’s inception, to present a summary of the key achievements of 1610 over the last 10 years to the Committee.

The Chief Executive formally thanked the Council for enabling 1610 to form a company that has been able to be widely appreciated across the county. Lottery funding was used to build leisure facilities but the creation of the Trust model enabled the long-term strategy needed to secure its future use.

At the beginning of the contract, 32% of funding came directly from the Council so this was quickly identified as a risk. The Trust began to invest money into facilities in anticipation of losing funding from the Council with the aim of making facilities self-sufficient. During the first three years, the company focussed on growth, tripling its business and engaged commercially with a range of global partners.

During the middle years, huge financial pressures were faced by the Council and consequently the company was asked to make savings. This situation was tough
but manageable. There were some tensions, but these were worked through as a partnership. The Chief Executive highlighted that pension liabilities were a particularly serious consideration when moving through such a transformation and he urged the Council to consider this in future commercial contracts.

1610 has seen significant membership growth and increased activity at schools although the academy status of schools complicates the contract. The company is now focusing on incorporating technological advances. In partnership, the Council has created a very successful commercial entity which will now continue to operate without subsidy.

A Member questioned the security of jobs within the 1610 community. It was confirmed that 7 of the 12 sites will continue to operate and talks are ongoing with Castle School. All staff at Castle School have moved to other roles. Redundancies were kept to a bare minimum and those affected were offered support and other roles wherever possible.

A Member commented that St Dunstan’s School will have to pay more to sustain the service with no subsidy and that community groups are having to travel to other facilities which is more expensive. The service is continuing to talk to St Dunstan’s about the opportunities. It is more complicated at this site because of safeguarding challenges but there is a small amount of funding available to help with any transformation. There are a lot more leisure operators in Somerset now, so people do have more choices. Where sites are not continuing to operate it is because they are not financially viable. It would need a huge investment in St Dunstan’s to make the site viable and solve the challenges around access.

Members queried whether 1610 will continue to liaise with GP’s for health referrals. This partnership is still ongoing and will continue under a new and focussed model. 1610 is now able to support people with much wider needs than previously.

A Member raised concerns that, although schools are taking over facilities, they cannot use school funding to continue community provision. In Minehead there is no alternative provision within an hour. Are there other areas with similar access difficulties? Access points are growing exponentially, and we are launching a fitness centre in Minehead. There are operators in virtually every town, but West Somerset is the most rurally deprived area. The member highlighted that the gap in provision in less for fitness facilities and more for specific facilities such as all-weather football pitches and netball courts. It is important to remember that the Council is not statutorily required to provide access to community leisure facilities and where possible schools will continue to lease facilities for community use.

Members suggested that, after the end of the contract, 1610 could publicise where their facilities are and any alternative community arrangements in place.

The Chair formally thanked the Chief Executive and all of the staff at 1610 Ltd for their contribution and congratulated them on the successful delivery of services.

The Committee noted the report.

Finally the Committee considered a refreshed version of the Council’s Social
Value Policy Statement.

The Social Value Policy Statement outlines how the Council will embed social value and demonstrates Somerset County Council’s commitment to delivering social value benefits through our commissioning and procurement arrangements.

It is a legal requirement (The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012) for Somerset County Council to have regard to economic, social and environmental well-being in connection with public services contracts; and for connected purposes. The Act requires Local Authorities to consider how the services they commission and procure which are expected to cost more than the thresholds provided for in the Public Contracts Regulations might improve the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the area.

SCC goes further than the legal minimum and expects social value to be considered as part of the commissioning process every time we buy something (procurement) because we see one of our key roles as helping to ensure value for money (including social value) across whole systems. The Social Value Policy Statement is our public commitment to this and was last updated in 2016. Whilst no major changes are required, and only a few additions are recommended, it is important that we regularly review this document and our commitment. The Committee were asked to consider and endorse the revised Social Value Policy Statement.

Members questioned whether the Council is working with the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and it was confirmed that the Council will continue to ensure that a joined-up approach continues. Members were reassured that social value is high on the LEP agenda too.

Members asked for a plain English version to be made available on the web.

The Committee was reassured that social value is included on decision reports to ensure that it is considered.

Members queried how outcomes are assessed and were informed that work is in place to monitor and measure this. This could be reported back to the Committee once the assessment has been completed. It was noted that some elements are difficult to quantify and demonstrate numerically. Social value already sits very firmly behind the County Vision and is included in contracts but the challenge is how to demonstrate this.

A Member commented that they were not aware of the policy before the meeting and suggested that more could be done to raise awareness with Members and the public. It was recognised that a lot is achieved already but that we need to be better at sharing and celebrating this.

A Member suggested that there is a lot within the paper that could address the Climate Change Emergency and that this should be included in the policy.

A Member questioned whether the weighting attached to social value should be revisited at a higher level.
The Committee recommended the following amendments be made to the policy:

- Work with the LEP to ensure a joined-up approach is taken to social value
- Develop a plain English version for public use/web publication
- Consider how outcomes will be assessed and monitored and fed back to the Committee. Suggestion that this could be included in the quarterly performance monitoring reports received by the Committee
- Consider how to raise Member and public awareness of the policy and demonstrate successes explicitly
- Consider including case studies to demonstrate success
- Consider whether the weighting of social value for procurement should be reviewed
- Add Climate Change Emergency

The Committee noted the report but requested a further update before the November 2019 Full Council meeting to include an update on the amendments suggested and an assessment of outcomes.

05 April 2019

The Committee began by considered a report which provided an update on the Connecting Devon & Somerset Broadband programme.

Since the last scrutiny meeting delivery has continued across the region. Progress is being made in Devon working with Airband in Lot 4. The area is also participating in the national Better Broadband Voucher programme which is due to start next month. Plans are also advancing for the first reinvestment of ‘Gainshare’ funding working with BT which is expected to deliver additional superfast coverage to a further 2,000 homes and businesses in the hardest to reach areas of Devon and Somerset.

The debate then focussed on the Phase 2 Gigaclear contracts which remains in an uncertain position. Gigaclear are continuing to work on providing a robust and credible proposal to take these contracts forward. This is a time-consuming exercise and exact details have not yet been finalised.

CDS, working closely with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS), with support from local authority partners, LEPs and MPs has been seeking a funding extension which is supported as a priority by DCMS. CDS has had a positive response from HM Treasury and is finalising an agreement for an extension with DCMS as part of their spending review process. CDS is agreeing similar support from other funders. Whilst every effort to resolve the situation with Gigaclear is being made, the programme is also working with DCMS and the LEP to consider alternative options and develop a Digital Strategy for the area.

Gigaclear is continuing to develop acceptable plans for each contract area backed by fully costed analysis of the network delivery options. CDS and BDUK require key reassurances particularly regarding capacity and acceleration of deployment. In response, Gigaclear is investigating further options to improve its operations in Devon and Somerset in light of the significant delays the company has incurred. One of the consequences of the delays is that exact details about which communities will be in the next phase of the roll-out have yet to be confirmed. Gigaclear states it will provide updated information for the public and
stakeholders about its roll-out timetable on its website.

In the meantime, Gigaclear is continuing to build full fibre networks to 31 community areas in Devon, Somerset and BaNES/ North Somerset for CDS providing ultrafast broadband speeds to 6,000 homes and businesses. In addition, the company is also continuing its commercial build which will serve a further 6,000 premises.

It was clarified that Gigaclear is a private limited company. Members questioned how the Gigaclear situation compares with other rural areas and it was confirmed that a number of other areas across the country are struggling to provide broadband infrastructure. This includes Gigaclear and other providers. Nonetheless, the CDS Board have made it clear to Gigaclear that the current situation is unacceptable and more certainty is required in the very near future.

It was confirmed that the voucher scheme has previously been well-received and reasonably successful.

Members questioned how Somerset residents can be clearly informed of what broadband they are going to get, the coverage they can expect and their alternative options. Residents can use the CDS website to locate their property, find their current provision and the alternatives available. It was acknowledged that this is difficult for residents who cannot access the internet but the ability of local government to control the operational choices of a private business is limited.

Members are still concerned that communications is a problem. People need to be kept updated and whilst there has been some improvement with communicating with parishes, this is often sporadic. More details about roadworks and roll-out is needed. It was agreed to feed these comments back to Gigaclear.

Members asked what lessons have been learnt and how we will prevent this situation from happening in the future. It was agreed to provide a written response to this.

Members queried whether Gainshare funding will be targeted at new areas as having multiple companies operating in the same area would be duplicative and a waste of funding. It was confirmed that it is a state aid requirement to undertake an open market review and only areas where there are not already credible commercial plans in place can be targeted. The difficulty is that commercial providers can change their minds. Members were reassured that Gainshare is targeted at areas with no provision.

Member questioned how long a notice period has been given to Gigaclear and it was clarified that a period of time has been afforded in expectation of sufficient progress. Some assumptions that proposals have been based upon have been incorrect which is why it is taking so long and we can’t be precise about dates. All options are being considered.

Member questioned the role of the Cabinet Member in providing challenge and raised the importance of his presence at scrutiny meetings. Members were offered assurance that The CDS Board and the Cabinet Member, as a member
of the CDS Board, has been providing robust challenge.

Members queried the number of Somerset residents without connection and that the CDS Board should be reporting this to Scrutiny. The Board is aware of this but the figures will always fluctuate as new premises are built. A link to the most up-to-date information will be sent to Committee Members. Members asked whether the Board works with developers to ensure new properties already have superfast broadband. It was explained that this falls under a planning remit but that there have been conversations about this on a national level.

Members asked whether the CDS Board provides information about other service providers. It was clarified that the Board has to consult with all providers as part of undertaking an open market review and BDUK has to be satisfied of full analysis. However, it is not part of the Board’s function to introduce the public to other providers.

It was confirmed that a stakeholder briefing was circulated at the end of March.

The Committee requested the following:
- A summary of the learning which has arisen from the current contract processes.
- Feedback to Gigaclear that better communication is required with communities to explain what is happening and that it may be necessary to go back to communities several times.
- A link to details of the number of premises in Somerset which remained without service and reassurance that the CDS Board also has this information available to them.
- That the Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Planning & Community Infrastructure attends future Scrutiny meetings when CDS is being considered. The Committee were made aware that the Cabinet Member will shortly be attending the next CDS Board meeting. The Committee hoped that more information would be available following this and they invited the Cabinet Member to attend the next Scrutiny meeting to outline the next steps for the CDS programme.

The committee noted the report.

Next the Committee considered the Revenue Budget Monitoring report which outlined the projected revenue outturn for 2019/19 based on actual spending to the end of January 2019 (month 10).

The Committee heard that there has been a continuation of the projected underspend forecast at £1.385m. There has been a small reduction in the uncommitted contingency fund.

Controlling the 2018/19 budget has been a priority of the Council since a projected overspend became apparent in early 2018. The robust control is now producing a more optimistic landscape for the Council, with this projected underspend laying the foundations for a resilient budget and improved reserves.
for 2019/20. In light of this, opportunity has been taken to review the strategic
risk, ORG0043, to reduce both the likelihood and impact ratings. It has been
judged that the risk can be reduced marginally as although the scores remain red
(high risk) it is moving in the right direction.

Members thanked officers for the clarity of the report and offered their assistance
with regard to Dillington House. Dillington House has a negative reserve
attached to it and the Cabinet Member is very focussed on this issue.

Members queried whether the underspend was real and this was confirmed.
Multiple things have contributed to this but there may be some requests to carry
forward some sums and this will be visible in the report in June. Members
questioned whether Councillors could request that some of the underspend be
spent on services that have been cut and it was clarified that any carry forward
will not be for new projects but for existing projects where there may have been a
service delay across financial years.

It was highlighted that the underspend is small in comparison with the overall
budget and that the Councils is still in a relatively fragile financial position.

There was consensus between committee Members and officers that regular
revenue budget monitoring should continue as the Council will need to keep a
tight grip on finances for the foreseeable future.

The Committee acknowledged that not all Members understand the finances of
the council and a mechanism is needed to improve this. There is a need for
additional member training and face-to-face delivery. All-Member briefings have
been held previously. Officers will shortly be planning for the next MTFP and, as
part of this, will consider how best to engage with Scrutiny and elected Members.

The Committee noted the report.

Following this, the Committee considered the draft Task & Finish Group Protocol
and after debate agreed the following amendments:

- Standardise language for ‘members’ and ‘councillors’.
- Clarify that deciding whether an item has merit for establishing a T&F
  Group lies ultimately with Committee members as T&F Groups are
  member-led.
- P38 – pluralise ‘committee’ and ‘organisation’.

With these amendments, the Committee approved the protocol and
recommended it to the Constitution & Standards Committee.

Next the Committee considered a report which provided an update on the
Committee’s recommendation to form a Task & Finish Group to oversee the
development of an SCC Climate Change Strategy.

That report recommended the formation of a Joint Task and Finish Group
between Somerset County Council, Sedgemoor District Council, Mendip District
Council, South Somerset District Council and Somerset West and Taunton
Council. It was proposed that the group be comprised of two members nominated by relevant Scrutiny committees from each of the respective Local Authorities.

Conversations have already been held between Somerset County Council Somerset District Councils. Through these conversations, it has been agreed by all parties that it would be most efficient, effective and economic for SCC and all District Councils to collectively develop a single Somerset-wide Climate change strategy. Nominations have been received from each respective Local Authorities for officers to join an Officer Working Group to develop the strategy.

It was proposed that the Member Task & finish group commences in September 2019 with aim to present its final report in Spring 2020. This commencement date allows the officer working group and for any member arrangements following the District elections to be put in place first.

It was highlighted that SCC has a budget of £25k for development of a strategy only and that there is no agreement for any implementation. This shouldn’t, however, define or confine the strategy and it needs to be based on outcomes that we wish to achieve. We want to achieve something that can have a big impact and ensure that climate change is considered in everything the council does. A more stable financial base will also enable us to invest more in climate change initiatives.

Following debate, the Committee recommended two amendments to the scope of work:

- Remove lobbying from scope
- Consider a public-facing name for the Group which does not include the word ‘finish’ as the Strategy will always be on-going in its nature.

Following a closed, named vote, the Committee elected Cllr Tessa Munt and Cllr Bob Filmer as its nominated representatives on the Joint Task & Finish Group.

The Committee noted the report.

Finally the Committee considered a refreshed version of the SCC Business Plan approved in 2018.

The Business Plan is a corporate plan, owned by the Chief Executive Officer and translates the County Vision into strategic outcomes.

Two additional priorities have been added to the section of the Business Plan entitled: Meeting the Council’s challenges: sustainability, quality and focus:

- Organisational Re-Design
- Reduce demand for high cost services

A Member commented that pages with a portrait orientation were easier to read and it was explained that, once approved, the Plan will be shown through a website making it more accessible and searchable.

Members queried why there was no reference to earned income. It was clarified that this will be included within financial reporting but officers agreed to consider
whether this could be made more apparent.

Members questioned how high cost services will be defined. This will link into service plans; high cost services tend to fall within adults and children services. We need to move to be a more preventative council. More information about transformation will be available soon and will include themes such as prevention, digital transformation and helping people to help themselves.

Members discussed the benefits of working in partnership with independent schools in Somerset.

Members questioned how best to scrutinise the Plan when there were no timelines attached to it. It was explained that the Plan is a framework and that every decision taken by the Council must reflect the Vision and Business Plan and contribute to it.

The Committee noted the report.

5. **Background papers**

5.1. Scrutiny Committee reports, agendas and minutes. 
[http://democracy.somerset.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=184&Year=0](http://democracy.somerset.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=184&Year=0)