

## **Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in Somerset: Implementation Plan and proposed LGR workplan for the Committee**

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Cabinet Member: Councillor Val Keitch, Executive Lead Member for Local Government Reorganisation and Prosperity

Division and Local Member: N/A

### **1. Summary and background**

- 1.1.** Following LGR Programme Team attendance at an information meeting of the Constitution and Governance Committee on 27 June 2022, the purpose of this report is to introduce the Committee to the Implementation Plan for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in Somerset, and to propose a workplan for the Committee regarding its role in delivering a successful LGR programme.
- 1.2.** On 21 July 2021 the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government announced his decision to implement a single unitary council covering the whole of the administrative county of Somerset.

The implementation period for the unitary council is from September 2021 to 1 April 2023 (known as Vesting Day) when the new authority legally comes into existence.

On 17 March 2022 the Secretary of State made the Somerset (Structural Changes) Order 2022 (the SCO). The SCO sets out the mechanism for the reorganisation of local government and the establishment of a single unitary council in Somerset on 1 April 2023. Within the SCO, there is a requirement to:

“Hold and keep under review an Implementation Plan including plans, timetables and budgets that support delivery of the new unitary council’s functions on (or after) 1 April 2023.”

On 15 June 2022 the Somerset County Council Executive approved the LGR Implementation Plan, which is attached in appendix A. It also approved the creation of an Implementation Board whose role is to review the LGR Implementation Plan and recommend to the Executive how to ensure they remain appropriate.

- 1.3.** The Implementation Plan provides a list of critical activity required to ensure that the new council can operate in a “safe and legal” manner from Vesting Day.

This report proposes that the following critical activity be added to the forward plan of the Constitution and Governance Committee, to ensure proper oversight and development of those deliverables:

- Corporate Plan
- Corporate Performance Framework
- Target Operating Model
- Civic arrangements
- Somerset Council governance framework
- Somerset Council democratic arrangements including how planning and licensing functions will be delivered
- Somerset Council Constitution
- Somerset Council Scheme of Delegation
- Somerset Council Contract Standing Orders
- Somerset Council Financial Regulations
- Taunton Town Council Community Governance Order

A schedule of when each topic will come to the Committee is proposed to be developed in discussion between lead officers, the Democratic Services Team and the Chair of the Committee.

## **2. Issues for consideration / Recommendations**

**2.1.** This paper recommends that the Committee:

- 2.1.1 Notes the LGR Implementation Plan and any comments or questions it wishes to make.
- 2.1.2 Approve the addition of the agenda items listed in section 1.3 of this report, to the Committee's forward plan, dates subject to confirmation with lead officers in discussion with the Chair of the Committee and Democratic Services Team.

## **3. Background papers**

**3.1.** [Somerset LGR Implementation Plan](#)

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