

**County Council**  
**Wednesday 24 November 2021**  
**10.00 am The McMillan Theatre,**  
**Bridgwater, TA6 4PZ**



**SUPPLEMENT TO THE AGENDA**

To: The Members of the County Council

We are now able to enclose the following information which was unavailable when the agenda was published:

Item 1a	Chairs Schedule (Pages 3 - 20)
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Democratic Services, B3, County Hall, Taunton, TA1 4DY

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**CHAIR'S SCHEDULE AND MEETING BUSINESS PLAN**

**County Council Meeting – Wednesday 24 November 2021 (10.00am)  
McMillan Theatre, Bridgwater**

The Acting Chair of Council, Cllr Keating, to welcome everyone to the meeting of the County Council. Cllr Keating to:

- **Explain his role today as Acting Chair of the meeting and provide an update on the Chair of Council.**
- **Remind everyone that in line with legal requirements this meeting is being held face to face and that the McMillan Theatre was the only suitable venue available. Audience to be advised that planning for the meeting layout, attendance today and use of microphones has been based on adherence to reducing the risks of infection.**
- **Remind all present that there you must wear a face mask when walking around the theatre, but it can be removed once you are sat down.**
- **Explain that it is only the County Councillors present that are taking the decisions at the meeting - officers in attendance are there to provide advice to the Council**
- **Due to today's meeting location, we have reverted to printed agendas and reports. The agenda and papers have been published on the council's website in advance of the meeting and the Council will be making an audio recording of the meeting and this will be published on the Council's website in due course.**
- **Explain that there are no planned fire drills today and in the event of a fire alarm please follow the fire exit signs and congregate in the car park. If anybody present might need assistance in exiting the building, then please let one of the Democratic Services team know.**
- **If Members wish to speak, please raise your hand, the Monitoring Officer and County Solicitor will note your name and when it comes to your turn a Democratic Services colleague will bring you a roaming microphone. Microphones will be cleaned between each use.**
- **Please only speak when invited to address the Council.**
- **Please say your name before speaking.**

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

**Guide Time:10.02am**

The Acting Chair will invite the Monitoring Officer will announce any apologies for absence:

**1.**

Cllr Nigel Taylor and Cllr Linda Vjeh.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**Guide Time:10.04am**

2. The County Solicitor will read out any prejudicial interests that have been declared by Members in relation to the business on the agenda.

Members are reminded that if any business of the Council relates to or affects a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest which you have declared you should disclose it at the meeting not later than the start of that consideration of the business in which you have an interest or (if later) the item at which the interest becomes apparent to you, you should leave the room whilst the business is being considered.

## **MINUTES**

**Guide Time: 10.06am**

3. To confirm the accuracy of the Minutes together with the Appendix attached of the Council meeting held on 21 July 2021, and if agreed, the Chair will sign the Minutes as a correct record.

4. **Chair of Council's announcements  
In Memorial**

**Guide Time: 10.10am**

Since the last meeting of Full Council, we have been advised of the sad death of former County Councillor and Mendip district councillor Ralph Clark on Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> September.

Ralph was elected to Somerset County Council in 1985 and represented the Street Division for 16 years. Having served as the Vice Chair of Council for two years, he then completed the first of two stints as Council Chair, between 1987 and 1989. He was re-elected as Chair of Council in 1993 and remained in position until 2000, as well as serving as Chair of various committees, including Finance, Economic Development, Capital Programme Board and the Organisation, Support and Resources Review between 2000-01.

In addition to his service at SCC, Ralph served on Mendip District Council for many years and served as the Council's first ever Chair of Council between 1974-76.

In November 2017 Ralph was one of four former County Councillors appointed to the new position of Honorary Aldermen of the County Council.

## **Valediction**

Acting Chair to acknowledge the contribution of Councillor Linda Vjeh to the County of Somerset at both County and District level. Linda has served as the County representative for Ilminster since May 2013.

## **Welcome new Councillor, Dawn Johnson the representative for Comeytrowe and Trull.**

Chair to refer to any public events undertaken since the last meeting.

## 5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

### Public Questions / Statements

Guide time 10:20am

**Note:** The questions / statements / public petitions submitted by each member of the public are detailed in **Annex A to this Schedule**.

Chair to then invite all public speakers registered to address the Council and highlight that there will be a slight delay before speakers address the meeting. Each speaker reminded that they have up to 3 minutes to make any key points and to try and not repeat points made by other speakers on the same matter.

Chair to highlight that every member has access to the statements and questions that have been submitted and therefore speakers may wish to summarise their key points and focus their available time to put their question(s) to the Council.

### **Members are reminded that there will be no debate on Public Questions**

Invite Public Speakers in the following order:

Eva Bryczkowski – Response to be given by Cllr Chilcott

David Redgewell – Response to be given by Cllr Woodman

Peter Travis – Response to be given by Cllr Woodman

Alan Debenham – Responses to be given by Cllrs Fothergill, Chilcott and Hall

Nigel Behan – Responses to be given by Cllrs Woodman and Hall

## FOR DECISION

### 6. **Report of the Leader and Cabinet – Treasury Management Mid-year report 2021/22.** Guide Time: 10.55am

The Acting Chair will ask the Deputy Leader of Council to introduce the report and to take subsequent questions. Following the debate, the Acting Chair to highlight the recommendations on page 19 which are proposed by **Councillor Mandy Chilcott** and Seconded by **Councillor Liz Leyshon**.

#### **Recommendations:**

- **The Council is recommended to endorse the Treasury Management Mid-Year Report for 2021-22.**

## 7. REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

Guide Time: 11.10am

The Acting Chair will ask the Monitoring Officer to introduce the report and take subsequent questions.

Following the debate, the Acting Chair to highlight the recommendations on pages 21 and 22 which are proposed by **Councillor Anna Groskop** and Seconded by **Councillor Hazel Prior-Sankey**.

**Recommendations:**

- **That the Council approves the establishment of a LGR Joint Scrutiny Committee together with the four District Councils in Somerset constituted in accordance with and having the roles and responsibilities set out in the Terms of Reference attached at Appendix 1 (“Terms of Reference”).**
- **That the Council nominates eight Members from its overview and scrutiny committees onto the Joint Scrutiny Committee, such nominations to be politically proportionate and based upon the political makeup of this council.**
- **That the Council nominates one of its nominated eight Members to the Joint Scrutiny Committee as the proposed Vice Chair.**

**The Acting Chair will now adjourn the meeting for a short comfort break.**

**FOR INFORMATION**

**8. REPORT OF THE LEADER AND CABINET –**

**Guide Time: 11.50am**

To receive a report by the Leader of Council summarising key decisions taken by him and the Cabinet since the last Council meeting and for elected members to ask questions of the Leader and Cabinet Members and to consider the Annual Reports of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport and one from Economic Development, Planning and Community Infrastructure.

Member Questions (set out in Annex A) to the Leader and Cabinet Members will be taken under this item in the following order:

- **Cllr David Fothergill**
- **Cllr Mandy Chilcott**
- **Cllr John Woodman (Acting Chair to ask Cllr Woodman to present his annual report)**
- **Cllr Frances Nicholson (to respond to Cllr Redman’s question)**
- **Cllr Christine Lawrence**
- **Cllr David Hall (Acting Chair to ask Cllr Hall to present his annual report)**
- **Cllr David Huxtable**
- **Cllr Faye Purbrick**
- **Cllr Clare Paul**

Acting Chair to ask the Council to note the annual reports from the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport and the Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Planning and Community Infrastructure.

**9. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT**

Acting Chair to highlight that this report was received as part of agenda item 8.

**10. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, PLANNING AND COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE**

Acting Chair to highlight that this report was received as part of agenda item 8.

**11. REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY FOR ADULTS AND HEALTH COMMITTEE**

**Guide Time: 12.30pm**

Acting Chair to invite Cllr Hazel Prior-Sankey to introduce the Committee's report. The Council is asked to note the report.

**12. REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY FOR CHILDRENS AND FAMILIES COMMITTEE**

**Guide Time: 12.40pm**

Acting Chair to invite Cllr Leigh Redman to introduce the Committee's report. The Council is asked to note the report.

**13. REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY FOR POLICIES AND PLACE COMMITTEE-**

**Guide Time: 12.50pm**

Acting Chair to invite Cllr Anna Groskop to introduce the Committee's report. The Council is asked to note the report.

**14. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SOMERSET ARMED FORCES COVENANT PARTNERSHIP**

**Guide Time: 1.00pm**

Acting Chair to invite Cllr Rod Williams to introduce the report. The Council is asked to note the report.

**Finish 1.10pm**

<b>Public Questions</b>			
<b>PQ</b>	<b>From</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Question/statement</b>
<b>PQ1</b>	Eva Bryczkowska	What Affects Local Government Affects Us All	<p>The 18 months of the covid19 pandemic have been tough on local authorities, including Somerset County Council, who have been caught in a financial vice.</p> <p>On the one hand, they have lost what would normally be assured income, for example from business rates, car parking charges or tourism.</p> <p>On the other, managing the pandemic, giving both financial and practical help to local people, adapting services so they can function under lockdown conditions, providing additional support, has added enormously to their costs.</p> <p>It is not surprising that the majority of councils are reporting massive funding gaps for last year, this current year, and years into the future.</p> <p>Thus, the consequences for services, jobs and the communities councillors serve are unthinkable.</p> <p>Recently the BBC reported that local authorities have a £3 billion shortfall in their budgets as they come out of the pandemic.</p> <p>Analysis of councils in the UK, (by the Shared Data Unit), found that:</p> <p>**LAs plan to make at least £1.7 billion worth of savings in the current financial year, (2021 to 2022), while also using more than £500 million worth of reserves to balance the books</p> <p>**A quarter of those savings will be made in adult social care</p> <p>**Despite making the cuts, these councils predict a £3 billion shortfall in their budgets by 2023/2024.</p> <p>**Nearly 60% of councils in England have raised council tax by the new statutory maximum of 4.99% to compensate for losses.</p>



\*\*In October last year the LGA said that an extra £10 billion was needed every year from central government to plug their funding gaps.

Over a decade of austerity policies, (where ordinary people had to pay for the mistakes the banks actually made), has taken away £16 billion in government funding for local authorities.

Covid made things far worse leading to the situation we are facing now.

QUESTION ONE:

What is the financial position of Somerset County Council in relation to all the figures and research highlighted above, and how does it compare with the rest of the county councils in the UK?

Somerset County Council, along with other LAs and local government workers, have really stepped up to the plate, showing the wider public that the services they provide are indispensable. Local government workers in particular ensured that our communities were safe, educated our children and looked after the most vulnerable.

QUESTION TWO:

Prior to the onset of covid19, what was the anticipated gap between income and expenditure for SCC 20/21 & 21/22 and what are those same figures now - in full knowledge of additional costs shouldered by SCC during this public health crisis?

The current situation for LAs is totally unsustainable. Councils need emergency funding to make sure that local services can be maintained.

The funding gap needs to be closed right now. And more than that it is necessary.

A long-term financial settlement for LAs is necessary giving them the funding they need

to provide local services; the stability they need to plan for the future; the knowledge and certainty that they will be able to provide services in line with local needs.

Year on year central government has failed to adequately invest in local government, it is not just services that are suffering.

Dedicated public servants working in councils and schools, who put themselves in harm's way throughout the pandemic, are now paying the price.

Nationally, 16% of them don't earn £10 an hour, despite costs of living and housing rising exponentially.

Two years ago, the government announced a 2% pay raise for local government staff, but without giving LAs any extra funding for it, so that councils such as SCC are more squeezed, while the government gets a pat on the back.

The bare minimum should be a pay rise in line with inflation. If SCC did this it would improve the local economy, prevent shortage of labour and help with recruitment and retention.

Yes, SCC have a massive debt and huge costs. But there will be more debt if there's a shortage of labour and having to depend on agency staff.

Also a rise in line with inflation will attract more skilled workers to keep vulnerable people safe.

#### QUESTION THREE:

This is regarding the current financial situation being unsustainable, the funding gap needing to be closed right now, and a long-term financial settlement so that there is stability for the future:

What is SCC doing to close that gap? To clarify, I don't mean cuts, reorganisation or privatisation dressed up as 'modernising' or 'improving' services.

I mean what steps will SCC take to close the gap regarding a dire lack of government spending and actually get the required extra funding from the government, either solely or together with other local authorities?

**Response – Cllr Mandy Chilcott**

	From	Topic	Question/Statement
<b>PQ2</b>	David Redgewell	Bus Services	<p>Somerset catch the bus campaign Railfuture Severnside south west transport network and Dorset catch the bus campaign.</p> <p>Passengers would like to know in view</p> <p>Of the poor waiting facilities in Taunton the county town of Somerset and a principal Town in the south west Regional what progress is being made</p> <p>With Somerset west and Taunton council First group plc South west buses National Express Coaches and other bus operators on plans to reopen and regenerate Taunton bus and coach station.</p> <p>With waiting room information point public toilets and cafe</p> <p>When will public consultation be carried out with passengers and stakeholders?</p> <p>Taunton is losing bus passengers to the private car journeys because of poor waiting facilities.</p> <p>When we need to encourage people to use public transport services in to Taunton and remove through traffic for the Town centre.</p> <p>None of the present waiting shelter are designed for long distance Coaches or regional bus services</p>

		<p>We also need inter city coach facilities.          In Gateway park and ride for megabus and Falcon Express Coaches services          To Bristol, Exeter and Plymouth.          Is the country council looking at all bidding opportunities for a new bus and coach station in Taunton?          The passengers and voters see this issue as just as important as Wellington railway station reopening.</p>
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**Response – Cllr John Woodman**

	From	Topic	Question/statement
<b>PQ3</b>	Peter Travis	Somerset Bus Partnership	<p>I am writing on behalf of the Somerset Bus Partnership.</p> <p>Somerset has declared a Climate Emergency and so urgently needs to take action to reduce its carbon emissions.</p> <p>In Somerset, 44.1% of our carbon emissions come from transport. That means we need to persuade people to stop making so many journeys in single occupancy cars. How? A move to electric vehicles will help but transitioning the car fleet to EVs across Somerset is going to be a very slow process. Active travel certainly can help too but it is primarily best suited for shorter journeys and our climate and topography further limit its appeal.</p> <p>Persuading people to switch from single occupancy car use to going by bus potentially offers the most substantial and quickest modal shift.</p>

That's why we welcome the Somerset Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) and its programme of initiatives to improve the bus services across the County, initiatives to get them to a standard as deemed necessary by Cllr John Woodman, his Highways and Transport team plus their transport consultants, WSP. To achieve the standards set by Cllr Woodman and his team, Somerset is bidding for £165 million of funding from the Government to improve bus services across the County.

It is undoubtedly a remarkably ambitious bid.

We support it wholeheartedly.

And we congratulate the team on their well-researched proposal.

The SCC team with WSP have identified serious deficiencies in Somerset's current bus services in terms of their lack of frequency, too often no (or very few) evening bus services and very limited weekend bus services, that's if there are any at all.

As has been reported at recent Cabinet and Scrutiny meetings, these deficiencies have severely impacted on job and educational opportunities for many residents across the county as well as worsening the rural isolation experienced in many parts of the County.

Somerset in its BSIP has asked for £165 million grant from the Government.

The size of the Somerset bid indicates just how substandard are our County's bus services. This can be evidenced by Somerset having the second lowest bus usage in the country, the lowest in the South West and Somerset has the very lowest satisfaction score for its bus services in the entire country.

			<p>Why are Somerset's bus services so substandard? Why do we need £165 million from the Government to upgrade them?</p> <p>To need such a large cash injection from Government, indicates the scale of underfunding by SCC in its bus services ... over many years.</p> <p>The extent of this underfunding can best be illustrated by looking at rural Local Transport Authorities in the South West and how much each is spending on buses per capita.</p> <p>Somerset would need to spend 40% more per capita to bring it up to just the average level of the other rural counties in the South West.</p> <p>Given the long history of underfunding of buses in Somerset, the adverse impact this has had on many of its residents plus the imperative for Somerset to reduce its transport emissions because of the Climate Emergency, we would request that substantially increased council funding should be given to buses in the Somerset 2022/2023 budget alongside any central government Bus Service Improvement Plan money, so that overall funding for buses in Somerset can be made both sustainable and effective going forward into the future.</p>
<b><u>Response Cllr John Woodman</u></b>			
	From	Topic	Question/Statement

PQ4	Alan Debenham	Joint Scrutiny and representation, Budget and ASC, Climate Emergency	<p><b>Question 1 :</b> In the setting-up of the new Joint Scrutiny Committee please could special consideration be given to the inclusion of just one Green Party representative ( of which I am a member ) bearing in mind the crucial need for inclusivity and diversity in this new venture and the facts that the 15 Green Party Councillors overall for Somerset ( Labour have 17 and get a seat) are part of a relatively new public surge in this party's direction, very much in line with all Councils declaring a Climate Emergency and recent new found climate and environmental awareness through Glasgow's COP26 ??</p> <p><b>Question 2 :</b> Bearing in mind the Chancellor's Autumn Budget and Prime Minister Johnson's recent announcements of fantastic world-beating billions of pounds of new money being found for 'build back better' Local Government to combat Covid detrimental leftovers and make further provision for our coming Councils big re-organisation and climate emergency upheavals, what actual new funds do the County Council see coming its way for 2022/23 and will this be underpinned once again with a permitted and enacted uplift of 5% in harshly regressive Council Tax, including a dedicated allocation to Adult Social Care ? AND is the coming year likely financially to be one of expansion in services, or retraction, or just-about-managing, including expected increased staff wages and cost-of-living surge?</p> <p><b>Question 3 :</b> As we all know life threatening greenhouse gas emissions, including CO2, for the world and the UK are still rising at 'sixth extinction' rates, what is the known situation for Somerset especially re meeting the target of net zero by 2050, or better, and including aviation and shipping, plus goods manufactured abroad ? AND in what way are plans being laid now to deal with emergency mass sea-level rise global migration and likely</p>
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food scarcity and other serious resource depletions?

**Response**

**Question 1 – Councillor Fothergill.**

**Question 2 – Councillor Chilcott**

**Question 3 – Councillor Hall**

	From	Topic	Question/Statement
PQ5	Nigel Behan		<p>Q1 &amp; Q2 Concerns the Somerset’s Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) and Somersets Climate Emergency Strategy According to the latest published information on greenhouse gas emissions : “The transport sector consists of emissions from road transport, railways, domestic aviation, shipping, fishing and aircraft support vehicles. It is estimated to have been responsible for around 27% of greenhouse gas emissions in the UK in 2019, almost entirely through carbon dioxide emissions. The main source of emissions from this sector is the use of petrol and diesel in road transport.”2019 UK Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Final Figures (publishing.service.gov.uk)How much will the “aspirational” Somerset BISP proposals help to reduce the figures mentioned above and correspondingly increase access and use of buses (“transform bus services”) etc– are there any meaningful and measurable targets ( as “This plan is so important for when it comes to tackling climate change – it has the potential to make a massive difference” and “Somerset’s Climate Emergency Strategy by getting more people out of cars and onto public transport.</p> <p>The bid is for £163 million from Government – potentially a huge contribution to tackling climate change in the county..” (Somerset Newsroom)?</p> <p>It (the papers on BISP) state: “Long Term (2 years plus) · Introduce infrastructure to aid the move to electrification · Reinstate a bus station/mobility hub facility in Taunton · Introduce bus priority measures where required - need input from</p>



operators · Set standards for vehicles over a period of time – Euro 6 and beyond.”  
 Why is reinstating a bus station hub in Taunton (there already is a bus station in Taunton recently closed and presumably Somerset Council -the Local Transport Authority - will inherit it during the Unitary process) considered long term – and is it conditional on getting government money via the bid?

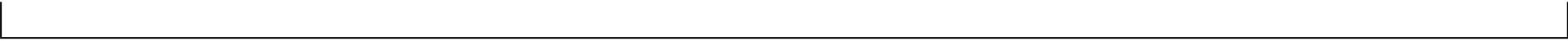
Q2 “Councils must battle inaction after announcing a climate emergency” according to LocalGov News (15-11-2021) and that “Research from the Local Government Association has shown that [eight in ten councils](#) have suffered climate-related incidents in the last five years. Despite the stark data, a [third of English councils](#) are still supporting policies that could increase carbon emissions.” Also “There are clear initial steps that councils can take and they must act now to address these issues and tackle the climate emergency head-on before local communities and infrastructure are put at any greater risk.” Additionally “A first, critical step is to build climate change into decision making – so that councils no longer unnecessarily make decisions that have an adverse environmental impact”.

What (measurable) contributions will the Climate Emergency Strategy (including the carbon neutral goal) help to deliver towards the (less than) 1.5 degrees Celsius increase (global warming) by say 2030?

**Response: Councillors John Woodman and David Hall**

MQ	From	Topic	Question/Statement
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<b>MQ1</b>	Cllr Leigh Redman	Trauma Informed Somerset	<p>I was lucky enough to attend a workshop presented to Scrutiny on this topic, I had also seen the Movie Resilience (an opportunity that was shared again to allow members to watch this online film) and previously attended a session looking at 'Adverse Childhood Experiences'.</p> <p>All of these have taken place over the past couple of years, Scrutiny and individual members have expressed a wish to embed learning around ACEs into our County.</p> <p>Adverse childhood experiences, or ACEs, are potentially traumatic events that occur in childhood (0-17 years). For example: experiencing violence, abuse, or neglect, witnessing violence in the home or community, having a family member attempt or die by suicide.</p> <p>Also included are aspects of the child's environment that can undermine their sense of safety, stability, and bonding, such as growing up in a household with: substance use problems, mental health problems, instability due to parental separation or household members being in jail or prison ACEs are linked to chronic health problems, mental illness, and substance use problems in adulthood. ACEs can also negatively impact education, job opportunities, and earning potential.</p> <p>However, ACEs can be prevented, and the future life of our children can be improved, this improvement will reduce future demand on services provided by Council &amp; other bodies that include Health and Police.</p> <p>Can I ask the cabinet member what Somerset is doing to bring a Trauma informed approach to our County?</p>
<b>Response Cllr Frances Nicholson</b>			



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