

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

### **County Council Meeting – Wednesday 23 February 2022 (10.00am) Canalside Conference Hall, Huntworth, Somerset TA6 6LQ**

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

- **Explain his role today as Chair and that of Cllr Clayton as Vice Chair of the meeting.**
- **Remind everyone that in line with legal requirements this meeting is being held face to face and that Canalside Conference Hall 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 you must wear a face mask when walking around the hall, 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 and role before speaking for the first time.**

**1.**

#### **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

**Guide Time:10.02am**

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

Cllr Keating, Cllr Parham and Cllr Revans

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**Guide Time:10.04am**

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.

**3. MINUTES**

**Guide Time: 10.06am**

To confirm the accuracy of the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 24 November 2021 and 19 January 2022, and if agreed, the Chair will sign the Minutes as a correct record.

**4. CHAIR OF COUNCIL'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Guide Time: 10.10am**

Chair to provide a summary of key visits undertaken and other civic matters since the last Council meeting in November 2021.

**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.**

Vice 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.

Vice 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**

## **FOR DECISION**

### **6. Report of the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel - Members Allowances 2022/23 Guide Time: 10.30am**

Vice Chair to remind all members present that the Monitoring Officer has granted a dispensation to enable all elected members to participate and vote on the Members Allowance Scheme 2022/23.

The Vice Chair will ask the Monitoring Officer and John Thompson, the Chair of the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel (JIRP), to introduce the report of the Panel and to take subsequent questions. Chair of Council to thank the Chair of the Panel for the Panel's report and its recommendations for the Council to consider.

Members to debate the recommendations set out in Appendix 1 and paragraph 3.5 of this report with reference to the options set out in paragraph 3.6 before resolving to agree a Scheme of Members' Allowances 2022/23.

Following debate, Cllr Fothergill to propose recommendations for the council to consider and to set out any reasons if seeking to reject any of the Panel's recommendations. Cllr Leyshon to second the proposed recommendation for the Council to vote upon.

Vice Chair to establish if any other proposals from County Councillors before asking the Council to vote on the proposals for the Scheme of Members Allowances 2022-23 as proposed by Cllr Fothergill and Cllr Leyshon.

Monitoring Officer to confirm the recommendations for the Council to vote upon.

**The recommendations from the Panel relate to the Scheme of Members Allowances 2022 -23 (Page 14) are:**

- (a) Consider the Panel's recommendations set out in the Panel's report attached as Appendix 1 and paragraph 3.5 of this report with reference to the options set out in paragraph 3.6 before resolving to agree a Scheme of Members' Allowances 2022/23.**
- (b) Authorise the Monitoring Officer to make any amendments to the existing Scheme of Members' Allowances in order to publish the Scheme of Members' Allowances 2022/23 as a result of the Council's decisions in (a) above.**

**AT THIS POINT IN THE MEETING THERE WILL BE A 10 MINUTE COMFORT BREAK**

**7. Report of the Leader and Cabinet – Medium Term Financial Plan 2022/23 (Paper A) and Treasury Management Budget report 2022/23 (Paper B).**

**Guide Time: 11.15am**

Vice Chair to remind all members present that:

- 1) The Monitoring Officer has granted a dispensation to enable all elected members to participate and vote on setting the budget, council tax levels and the Members Allowance Scheme.
- 2) Any member who has an amount of Council Tax due to be paid which has been unpaid for at least two months needs to declare that as they cannot take part in the vote relating to the Revenue Budget.

The Vice Chair to invite the Leader of Council to make an introductory speech and to take subsequent questions.

Council are then asked to consider a report with recommendations from the Leader of the Council, arising from the Cabinet meetings held on 15 December 2021, 19 January and 14 February 2022. The recommendations for voting upon include the MTFP 2022/23 (set out in Paper A) and the Treasury Management Strategy 2022/23 (set out in Paper B). Chair to propose that each paper is presented, debated and voted upon separately.

**The Medium-Term Financial Plan 2022/23 (PAPER A)**

Vice Chair to invite Cllr Chilcott to refer to the report (set out in Paper A - Pages 85 to 186) considered at the three Scrutiny Committees and the Cabinet meeting in January and February setting out The Medium Term Financial Plan 2022/23 Revenue and Capital Budgets and Council Tax Setting. **Cllr Chilcott to highlight that members will need to have due regards to the equalities impact assessments within these papers.**

Vice Chair to invite Jason Vaughan (Section 151 Officer) to set out any additional points.

Vice Chair to then invite questions from members about the MTFP report with answers to be provided by Cllr Chilcott or other Cabinet Members (if regarding specific proposals in their areas of responsibility) or the Section 151 officer.

The recommendations set out in Paper A on pages 80-81 to be proposed by **Cllr Fothergill**, seconded by **Cllr Chilcott**, debated and voted upon as detailed below.

Vice Chair to remind members that the recommendations for the budget are intended to be taken en-bloc and remind all members that there will be a named vote on the Revenue Budget as required by legislation. **Recommendations are set out on pages 80 and 81.**

Vice Chair to invite the Monitoring Officer to read out the names for members to then advise of their vote. Following the vote, the Monitoring Officer will inform the Council as to the voting figures and whether the recommendations were carried or rejected.

**The Council is recommended to approve:**

**The General Fund net revenue budget for 2022/23 of £378,646,000 and the individual service budgets for 2022/23 as outlined in Appendix 1 including:**

- a) The transformation, savings and income generation plans outlined in Appendix 2, noting the savings did not require detailed Equalities Impact Assessments.**
- b) The additional funding requirements set out in Appendix 3.**
- c) The Finance and Assets Protocol as part of Local Government Reorganisation implementation as attached at Appendix 11.**
- d) An increase in Council Tax of 1.99% in 2022/23 (an increase of £26.94 per Band D property).**
- e) An increase of 1.00% to Council Tax for the Adult Social Care Precept is approved in recognition of the current demands and financial pressures on this service. This is equivalent to an increase of £13.54 on a Band D property.**
- f) 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 £2,577,594. Page 80**
- g) Agree the precept requirement of £279,841,541 and set the County Council precept for Band D council tax charge at £1,394.00 for 2022/23.**
- h) The use of reserves for once-off spend and the overall estimated position of Earmarked Reserves outlined in Appendix 4.**
- i) Note the adequacy of General Reserves at £23.0m within a risk assessed range requirement of £20m - £30m.**
- j) The Capital & Investment Strategy attached at Appendix 6.**
- k) The Efficiency Strategy attached at Appendix 7.**
- l) The Capital Programme for 2022/23 of £110.2m including new capital bids of £48.4m outlined in Appendix 8, planned sources of funding, and notes the overall programme of £180.3m for 2023/24 to 2024/25 as outlined in Appendix 9.**
- m) The MRP Policy attached at Appendix 10.**
- n) The Capital Prudential Indicators outlined in tables 16-22.**
- o) To opt into the national procurement scheme for External Auditor Appointments administered through Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited (PSAA).**
- p) Delegate any final Business Rates amendments to the Director of Finance and Governance in consultation with the Leader of the Council.**

**Delegate any amendments within the final Government Financial Settlement and the final Business Rates amendments to the Director of Finance and Governance in consultation with the Leader of the Council.**

**TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT 2022-23 (Paper B)**

Vice Chair to invite Cllr Chilcott to refer to the report (set out in Paper B – Page 187 to 225) considered at the Audit Committee and the Cabinet meetings in January and February.

Vice Chair to invite Jason Vaughan (Section 151 Officer) to set out any additional points for members to consider.

Vice Chair to then invite questions from members about the Treasury Management Strategy with answers to be provided by Cllr Chilcott or the Section 151 officer.

The recommendations set out on page 82 to be proposed by **Cllr Chilcott**, seconded by **Cllr Lewis**, debated and voted upon as detailed below.

Following debate, the Council will be asked by the Vice Chair to vote upon:

**Recommendations:**

**The Council is recommended to:**

- 1. adopt the Treasury Borrowing 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 the report).**
- 3. adopt the Prudential Treasury Indicators in section 4.**
- 4. note Appendix A, that is adopted as part of the Councils Financial regulations.**
- 5. note the current Treasury Management Practices (TMPs) attached at Appendix D to the report.**

**8. REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER**

**Guide Time: 12.00pm**

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

Following the debate, the Vice Chair to highlight the recommendations on pages 21 and 22 which are proposed by **Councillor Wallace** and seconded by **Councillor Munt**.

## **Recommendations:**

### **Preparing for the May 2022 elections:**

- (1) Approve the scale of fees and charges for the elections on 5 May 2022 as set out in Appendix 1 and to delegate authority to the Returning Officer to agree any subsequent variations.**

### **Proposed revised Contract Procedure Rules and Standing Order:**

- (2) Approve the revised Contract Procedure Rules and Standing Orders as set out in Appendix 2; including the updated approach to assessing the Most Economically Advantageous Tender of 60% price, 30% quality and 10% social value.**

### **Proposed revised Members Code of Conduct**

- (3) Agree the adoption of the revised Members Code of Conduct as set out in Appendix 3 for implementation from 6 May 2022 following the elections;**
- (4) Agree that the revised Code of Conduct is incorporated into the Council's Constitution from 6 May 2022;**
- (5) Authorise the Monitoring Officer to develop and promote a Member Development programme to support the implementation of the revised Code of Conduct;**
- (6) Agree that the revised Code of Conduct is promoted with Somerset Association of Local Councils (SALC) for adoption by City, Town and Parish Councils for implementation from 6 May 2022;**
- (7) Endorse the Monitoring Officer to review and make any appropriate amendments to the Council's complaints procedures for handling allegations about potential breaches of the Members Code of Conduct with reference to the LGA Guidance.**

### **Proposed additional meeting of the County Council**

- (8) Agree to hold a meeting of the County Council on Wednesday 27 April 2022 to approve the minutes of Committee meetings and other procedural matters before the elections are held in May 2022.**

**9. REPORT OF THE HR POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**Guide Time: 12.45pm**

To receive a report from the Chief Executive and Director of HR and Organisational Development.

Vice Chair to invite any questions from members. If necessary Chris Squire the HR & OD Director may also be invited to answer any points raised.

Following any questions the Vice Chair to highlight the recommendations which are to be proposed by **Cllr Chilcott**, seconded by **Cllr Leyshon**. Chair to then invite the Council to vote upon:

**Recommendations**

<p><b>That the County Council approve the Pay Policy Statement (PPS) for the Council for 2022-23.</b></p>
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**10. REQUISITIONED ITEM**

**Guide Time: 1.00pm**

To consider a report setting out a requisitioned item submitted for the Councils' consideration

**AT THIS POINT IN THE MEETING THERE WILL BE A 30 MINUTE LUNCH BREAK**

**FOR INFORMATION**

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

**Guide Time: 1.45pm**

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 Children and Families, Education and Public Health and Transformation and Local Government Reform.

Chair to invite any Member Questions (set out in Annex A) to the Leader and Cabinet Members which will be taken under in the following order:

- **Cllr David Fothergill**
- **Cllr Mandy Chilcott**
- **Cllr John Woodman**
- **Cllr Frances Nicholson (who will present her annual report – Item 12)**



- **Cllr Clare Paul (who will present her annual report – Item 13)**
- **Cllr Christine Lawrence**
- **Cllr David Hall**
- **Cllr David Huxtable**
- **Cllr Faye Purbrick (who will present her annual report – Item 14)**

Vice Chair to ask the Council to note the annual reports from the Cabinet Member for Children and Families (Item 12), the Cabinet Member for Education and Public Health (Item 13) and the Cabinet Member for Transformation and Local Government Reform (Item 14).

**12. REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

Vice Chair to highlight that this report was received as part of agenda item 11.

**13. REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION AND PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE**

Vice Chair to highlight that this report was received as part of agenda item 11.

**14. REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSFORMATION AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM**

Vice Chair to highlight that this report was received as part of agenda item 11.

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

**Guide Time: 2.30pm**

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

**16. REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY FOR POLICIES AND PLACE COMMITTEE**

**Guide Time: 2:40pm**

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

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

**Guide Time: 2:50pm**

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

**Estimated end time 3:00pm**

**Public Questions**

<b>PQ</b>	<b>From</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Question/statement</b>
<b>PQ1</b>	Sigurd Reimers	Climate Change Policy	<p>Last week it was three years since the five Councils in Somerset declared a climate emergency, and it is good to note that the climate strategy of both Somerset County and Somerset West and Taunton Councils featured at the top of the ranking of over 300 Councils by <i>Climate Change UK</i> (<a href="http://www.councilclimatescorecards.uk">www.councilclimatescorecards.uk</a>).</p> <p>In the County Council document "What we are already doing" there are examples of a number of climate change initiatives that have already been carried out. With the annual budget being debated today, I wonder when the County Council will be publishing a detailed timeline for all its climate change policies leading up to its Net Zero commitment in 2030.</p>

**Response – Cllr David Hall**

PQ/	From	Topic	Question/Statement
PQ2	Nigel Behan	Contract Tender Procedure	<p>In <a href="#">Contract Procedure Rules and Standing Orders</a> (Item 8 Report of the Monitoring Officer Appendix 2) it is stated:</p> <p>“27. Most Economically Advantageous Tender</p> <p>27.1. In selecting a preferred supplier, the Council must comply with the general principles of proportionality, mutual recognition, transparency, non-discrimination and equal treatment. In doing so all contract awards must be based on the Most Economically Advantageous Tender (the "MEAT").</p> <p>27.2. The MEAT may be identified by using a price-quality ratio and the default position for such evaluations is a ratio of 60:30:10, 60% price, 30% quality and 10% social value.</p> <p>27.3. However, in discussion with Commercial and Procurement, Officers must ensure the approach used to achieve MEAT is by the best means, using a methodology which is relevant and proportionate to the particular procurement being undertaken.”</p> <p><i>The ratios don't include environmental and climate change factors explicitly – should this be revisited – perhaps 50:30:10:10 - the remaining 10% to include climate change and the environment?</i></p>

**Response – Cllr Mandy Chilcott**

PQ	From	Topic	Question/statement																																
<b>PQ3</b>	Nigel Behan	District Council Reserves	<p>Given that the budget shortfalls (from Agenda Item 7 Report of the Leader and Cabinet) in <a href="#">Paper A</a> for the respective councils forming the unitary are:</p> <p>Table 5 – Projected Budget Gaps of the five authorities in Somerset Authority 2022/23</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Estimated Net Budget £'m</th> <th>2023/24</th> <th>Estimated Budget Gap £'m</th> <th>% of Net Budget</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Somerset</td> <td>376.3</td> <td>14.2</td> <td>3.8%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mendip</td> <td>16.7</td> <td>1.9</td> <td>11.4%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sedgemoor</td> <td>17.4</td> <td>2.8</td> <td>16.1%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>South Somerset</td> <td>19.6</td> <td>4.1</td> <td>20.1%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Somerset West &amp; Taunton</td> <td>16.7</td> <td>5.5</td> <td>32.9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4">=====</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>£446.7m</td> <td>£28.5m</td> <td>6.4%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><i>Can you provide the combined "reserves" position as well for the respective Local Authorities (general and earmarked)? And as percentages of the respective revenue budgets?</i></p>	Estimated Net Budget £'m	2023/24	Estimated Budget Gap £'m	% of Net Budget	Somerset	376.3	14.2	3.8%	Mendip	16.7	1.9	11.4%	Sedgemoor	17.4	2.8	16.1%	South Somerset	19.6	4.1	20.1%	Somerset West & Taunton	16.7	5.5	32.9%	=====				Total	£446.7m	£28.5m	6.4%
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**Response Cllr Mandy Chilcott**

<b>PQ</b>	<b>From</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Question/Statement</b>
<b>PQ4</b>	Nigel Behan	Local Government Pay	<p>Many commissioned contract(s) annual uplifts are based on the Retail Price Index (RPI) – will the proposed budget calculations take account of the current inflation rates and the fact that in real terms Local Government Pay has reduced over the last 10 years (by over 20%).</p> <p><i>Therefore will SCC (and the new Unitary Councillors) propose at the Local Government Association (LGA) a pay offer for 2022/23 that, at least, exceeds (RPI?) inflation (noting the NI increase, energy, food price increases etc etc) – since staff are valued?</i></p>

**Response Cllr Mandy Chilcott**

PQ	From	Topic	Question/Statement
<u>PQ5</u>	Alan Debenham	Cost of Debt	<p>In the Leader's latest election address to Somerset residents, he lambasts the Liberal Democrats when last in power in 2008 for running -up a debt of £324 million costing £42,000 a day to repay., further arrogantly saying that other parties cannot be trusted to run our public services and it is his party which can deliver what Somerset needs.</p> <p>How can any of this stand-up to any sort of honest scrutiny when the history of Tory government since 2010 has seen nothing but severe austerity and cuts imposed on County Council's by complete decimation of central government revenue support funding, loss of hundreds of Council jobs, and loss of so many much needed services a list of which would fill the rest of this paper ?</p> <p>If Conservatives are so good at delivering services and espousing the virtues of the new Somerset Unitary (which over 60% of Somerset residents voted against) when are we likely to see the restoration of all the services lost through this period of mindless ideological austerity against local government services, especially when we see the estimated cost of this latest badly timed and unessential re-organisation at tens of millions?</p> <p>What is the total debt for the council as it stands today and what is the daily cost to service it?</p>

**Response Cllr David Fothergill**

PQ	From	Topic	Question/statement
<b>PQ6</b>	David Redgewell	Levelling up	<p>With the government 12 priorities for levelling up what case is Somerset county council and Somerset west and Taunton council making to improve public transport in the economic growth area and corridor of Wellington ,Taunton Bridgwater Highbridge and Burnham on sea.</p> <p>With improvements in bus and coach services in these town and corridor. not just opening Wellington Railway station or link up Taunton to Minehead via watchet.</p> <p>But to provide a new bus and coach station on the Tower street bus and coach station. joint with First group plc National Express coach ltd and other operators.</p> <p>with Somerset west and Taunton council in view of the scrutiny commission meeting at Somerset west and Taunton council is their clear commitment to the regeneration of the bus and coach station.</p> <p>Which is required with urgently by passengers waiting for bus and coaches with very very poor waiting facilities in Taunton.</p> <p>In Bath Somerset a temporary bus and coach station was set up with Porta cabins whilst a new transport interchanges was building built this could be the case in Taunton with a temporary provision.</p>

<b><u>Response Cllr John Woodman</u></b>			
PQ	From	Topic	Question/statement
<b>PQ7</b>	David Redgewell	Bus Services	<p>With covid 19 bus operators recovery grant due to end on the 4th April 2022 with bus operators planning to cut services by 30 % 40 % if further covid 19 bus service recovery grant is not paid beyond April 2022 as bus service are only carrying 60 % of pre covid 19 levels.</p> <p>What progress is being made? with the Department for transport and Baroness Vere of Norberton the bus minister to protect Somerset bus Network and services in to Weston super Mare Bristol and Bath. Will Somerset county council follow the West of England mayoral combined Authority and North Somerset council and put some money to one side to protect the county bus network.</p> <p>With bus service improvements plan funding allocation with the enhanced quality partnership not coming into being to later in the year by the Department for transport it is very important that bus service improvements move forward in the county and including new bus and coach stations at Bridgwater, Taunton new facility Wells, Yeovil, Wincanton and Shepton Mallet interchange.</p>



			<p>Improvements to interchanges in Minehead town centre and Railway station and coach facilities for intercity coaches at Gateway park and ride.</p> <p>or improvements to waiting facilities at riverside.</p> <p>What progress is being made to invest in the county bus station and Transport interchange?</p>
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**Response Cllr John Woodman**

PQ	From	Topic	Question/statement
<b>PQ8</b>	David Redgewell	Public Transport	<p>It is very important that provision is made to budget to maintain public transport bus service and lobby MP's members of the House of Lords and South West and Western Gateway Transport Board. and minister for an allocation of bus back better bus service improvements plan grant to Somerset and South west England.</p> <p>What progress is being made with the Region MP's on bus services?</p>

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**Response Cllr John Woodman**

**MEMBER QUESTIONS**

<b>MQ</b>	<b>From</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Question/Statement</b>
<b>MQ1</b>	Cllr		

**Response Cllr**

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