

Report of the Scrutiny Committee for Policies and Place

Cabinet Member: N/A

Division and Local Member: All

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1. Summary

- 1.1.** The Scrutiny Committee for Policies and Place 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 regular report covers the work of our meeting held from 7th September 2021 to 15th March 2022.
- 1.2.** The Committee agreed their work programme would comprise 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 Scrutiny Committee and to contribute freely on any agenda item;
 - any Member could propose a topic for inclusion on the Committee’s Work Programme;
 - any Member could 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 and we have meetings scheduled approximately for every month. Our next meeting will be held in person at 10.00am on 14 June 2022.

2. Background

2.1. Scrutiny Work Programme

At each meeting the Committee considers and updates its work programme, having regard to the Cabinet’s forward plan of proposed key decisions. The Committee also agreed to hold themed meetings and Members are looking forward to this approach, in particular the attendance of representatives and/or stakeholders from partner agencies.

2.2. 7 September 2021

Corporate Property Asset Management Plan and Strategy

The first item the Committee considered the report of the Corporate Property Asset Management Plan and Strategy.

The Chair welcomed the Cabinet Member for Resources, Councillor Mandy Chilcott and the Council's Head of Property, Oliver Woodhams, to the meeting for this agenda item.

Mr Woodhams gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Corporate Property Asset Management Plan & Asset Strategy and provided background information about the Council's property estate and about the disposal of assets; outlined proposed principles and objectives for the County Council's Corporate Property Asset Management Plan; the proposed approach to asset strategy and policy review during the transition to new Unitary arrangements.

The Committee asked detailed questions and commented on the following – (a) the proposed objectives and principles for the Corporate Property Asset Management Plan refresh which will be brought to the November 2021 Council meeting for adoption and will cover the period 2021 – 2023 for SCC; (b) the proposed pausing of further County Council policy updates; (c) what future property items the Committee would like to see brought forward.

The Committee noted the update on the refresh of the Corporate Property Asset Management Plan and Asset Strategy.

2021/22 Budget Monitoring Report – Month 3 – End of June

The second item considered was the 2021/22 Budget Monitoring Report – Month 3.

The Chair invited the Cabinet Member for Resources, Councillor Mandy Chilcott and the Council's Strategic Manager, Finance, Christian Evans to introduce and present the report. The report provided an overview of the Council's financial position from the Director of Finance as the Council's S151 Officer with detail from each service and commentary from the responsible Director set out in the body of the report.

The forecast outturn for service expenditure as at the end of June 2021 (month 3) was £354m against a budget of £349.7m which represented an overspend of £4.4m for the year if no further actions were taken. The significant variances were set out with further detail and actions being taken by the responsible Director outlined in the report

The Scrutiny for Policies and Place Committee then discussed the report and a number of points and questions were raised covering – Cabinet would consider the month four position at its next meeting; the funding of the pay award; the Park and Ride service in Taunton and clarification would be provided on 'paid seats'; the monitoring of savings and risks.

The Scrutiny Committee for Policy and Place Committee noted:-

a) The forecast underspend of £3.8m. Made up of service overspends of £4.4m,

offset by £6m of unallocated Corporate Contingency and £2m of unallocated Covid-19 Emergency Fund (section 12).

b) The current estimated position and funding of the Capital Programme (section 27)

c) The allocation of £0.2m of the Covid-19 Emergency Fund to support free travel from the Park and Ride sites for the remainder of 2021/22, the remaining costs will come from ECI budgets and reserves (section 24).

d) The allocation of £0.08m from the Workforce Reserve to support the implementation of hybrid home/office working (section 17).

e) The estimated reserves position, key risks, future issues and opportunities detailed in the report, which will be closely monitored throughout the year with forecasts updated as appropriate.

30 September 2021

Review of Cabinet Decision regarding disposal of Land in Ash

An extraordinary meeting was convened to consider Call-in submissions following the Call-in of a Cabinet Member Decision. Statements were presented to the Committee by Councillor Bloomfield and Councillors Munt and Rigby who also provided 37 questions for response by the Cabinet Member and Head of Property.

During the discussion the committee discussed, the criteria and terms of asset transfer for land owned by the Council and how land is valued. The option of progressing planning applications in advance of an asset disposal to increase the opportunities of the sale of a site. The details and background of the land disposal at Ash were given full consideration by the committee along with alternative options for the site and proposals discussed.

The Scrutiny for Policies and Place Committee unanimously agreed, proposed by Cllr Groskop and seconded by Cllr Filmer that in future reports, information is drafted in a more open and clear manner in the future to include information relating to policy, law, risks and opportunity. A further request was made that Councillors elected to the New Authority receive extensive training in how land and property is purchased and sold by the Council.

12 October 2021

Somerset's Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP)

The first item considered was the Somerset Bus Service Improvement Plan. The Chair welcomed the Cabinet Member for Public Transport and Highways, Councillor John Woodman and the Council's Strategic Manager for Highways and Transport, Mike O'Dowd-Jones to the meeting.

In March 2021, the government launched the new National Bus Strategy – 'Bus Back Better' with the overall aim of transforming local bus services and increasing bus patronage. Under this new strategy the expectation was that Local

Transport Authority's (LTA's) would enter Enhanced Partnership (EP) Agreements with local bus operators across the LTA to develop and deliver improvements across local bus services and enhance the experience for passengers.

LTAs had to publish a statutory Notice of Intent by the end of June 2021, committing to forming an EP with local bus operators. The EP will come into effect from April 2022. The BSIP would be instrumental in informing the government's future allocation of the £3 billion transformation fund for public transport.

The Committee then discussed, the opportunity for free bus passes for the over 60 age group and encouraging a pass for the under 25 age group, increased real time information at bus stops, the success of the free park and ride service in reducing traffic in Taunton and the potential for a similar service in Glastonbury, rural bus routes and maximising use in rural areas. Reliability of services and issues encountered with the shortage of drivers and the impact of the pandemic. Provision of electric buses as part of the future service and safety of passengers using the evening services to access the night-time economy.

The Scrutiny for Policies and Place Committee:-

1. Considered the emerging principles of the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) as set out in the initial draft (Appendix A) and outlined in the accompanying presentation (Appendix B), which will inform the final BSIP due to be considered at Cabinet on 20th October 2021.
2. Considered on the outline Terms of Reference for a Bus Advisory Board (Appendix C).

Trading Standards Update

The second item considered was the Trading Standards Update. The Chair invited the Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Planning and Community Infrastructure, Councillor David Hall to introduce the item, praising the work of the staff in the service throughout the pandemic, the Council's Strategic Manager for the Economy and Planning Paul Hickson and the Trading Standards Service Manager Paul Thomas to introduce and provide a Powerpoint presentation setting out the service update and its achievements.

The Committee discussed monitoring social media, action fraud reporting, and work alongside the Citizens Advice in reporting fraudulent activity.

The Scrutiny for Policies and Place Committee noted the Trading Standards Update.

2021/22 Revenue Budget Monitoring Report – Month 4 – End of July

The third item considered was the 2021/22 Revenue Budget Monitoring Report – Month 4. The Chair invited the Cabinet Member for Resources, Councillor Mandy Chilcott and the Council's Strategic Manager for Finance, Christian Evans to introduce and present the report. The report provided an overview of the

Council's financial position from the Director of Finance as the Council's S151 Officer with detail from each service and commentary from the responsible Director set out in the body of the report. The forecast outturn for service expenditure as at the end of July set out an underspend of £0.7m for the year if no further actions were taken.

The significant variances were set out with further detail and actions being taken by the responsible Director outlined in the report. There remained £1.9m of the Covid-19 Emergency budget unallocated but this would be fully utilised in the financial year to cover Covid-19 costs. When setting the 2021/22 budget it was clear that there were a significant number of uncertainties and to mitigate against this £6m was set aside in the Corporate Contingency. The significant variances and expectations in relation to the National pay award were set out.

The committee discussed the staff pay award, assurance was provided that the budget would be adjusted accordingly following any announcement. Costs incurred due to flooding in Chard were being claimed through the Bellwin scheme, the claim was currently being progressed with an update to be provided in due course. Further pressure and requests were expected from the ECI budget. Further details were requested in relation to costs incurred from Ash dieback treatment.

The Scrutiny for Policies and Place Committee:-

1. Noted the overall forecast underspend of £0.7m (section 12) and the key risks, future issues and opportunities detailed in the report which will be closely monitored and updated throughout the year.
2. Noted the request to use £1.167m from Funding Volatility Reserve to support additional maintenance activities on the County Highways network in 2021/22 as set in the Executive Summary of this report.

Asset Transfer Policy Update

The fourth item considered was the Asset Transfer Policy Update. The Chair welcomed the Cabinet Member for Resources and the Head of Property to introduce and provide an update in relation to the Asset Transfer Policy Update

The Head of Property provided a PowerPoint presentation relating to the Corporate Property Asset Management Plan & Asset Strategy and provided background to the asset transfer policy, setting out the purpose, qualifying criteria, and underpinning principles of Community Asset Transfers. The process of Community Asset Transfers was outlined with recent CAT Applications.

The committee discussed openness and transparency as part of future asset transactions. A full list of transactions at less than consideration since 2014 was requested. The effectiveness of the asset transfer policy was considered, which set a high bar but also allowed for the various circumstances encountered in respect of its assets.

The Scrutiny for Policies and Place Committee noted the Asset Transfer Policy Update.

2 November 2021

Phosphates Update

The first item considered was a Phosphates Update.

The Chair welcomed the Service Manager for Development and Planning who provided a PowerPoint presentation updating the Committee on work undertaken by Somerset County Council and partners in mitigating phosphate levels in watercourses across the County.

The committee discussed mitigation measures and working alongside partners such as District Councils, DEFRA and the Environment Agency. The impact on housing and land supply was considered alongside how mitigation measures compared with other Counties. Phosphate mitigation measures would be considered in the same sense as any other mitigation measures alongside developments to ensure that water quality would be improved across the Ramsar site.

The Scrutiny for Policies and Place Committee recommended that:-

1. Somerset County Council wait for the Somerset Wide Phosphate Strategy, before taking action, so that efforts are focused where they will have maximum impact.
2. Once the strategy work is concluded, it was recommended that SCC look at land holdings and assess land that could be used to assist with the offsetting of Phosphorous, possibly through the creation of credits that can be sold.

Rights of Way Update

The second item considered was a Rights of Way Update

The Chair welcomed the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport and the Rights of Way Service Manager introduced the item and provided a Powerpoint presentation on the Service. There had been an increase in appetite in applications and service requests over the pandemic. The officer resource had been increased to help enable consideration of a greater number of applications. The service had received a record number of volunteers which were welcomed due to an increase in pressures felt in the maintenance team due to elevated levels of usage and reporting of issues. There had been a 200% increase in paths being adopted by volunteers in the last two years. Two meetings had been conducted with the bridleway association which had been useful.

The Committee discussed the applicants opportunity for appeal, the average time to consider applications, the growth in the numbers of people using rights of way and walking during the pandemic and the increase in volunteers, the

resourcing of the team and backlog in applications which was expected to decrease after 2026. Rights of Way officers were commended for their hard work and swift responses to Councillors queries. Further and continued work was welcomed with the Parish and Town Councils alongside a contribution from the health and wellbeing budget to recognise the benefits from rights of way access to the community.

The Scrutiny for Policies and Place Committee noted the Rights of Way Update.

2021/22 Budget Monitoring Report – Month 5

The third item considered was a 2022/22 Budget Monitoring Report – Month 5.

The Cabinet Member for Resources and Strategic Manager for Finance and Business partnering introduced the item.

The forecast outturn for the year was a reported overspend of £0.4m after taking into account the Corporate Contingency and unallocated Covid-19 funding. Although the overall position set out was broadly on budget, there were service overspends which were highlighted to the committee.

It was further reported that £2m of the Covid-19 Emergency budget remained unallocated, this would be fully utilised in the financial year to cover Covid-19 costs. When setting the 2021/22 budget it was clear that there were a significant number of uncertainties and to mitigate against this £6m was set aside in the Corporate Contingency. It would be prudent to assume use of this contingency stood at £3m given the potential need highlighted in the month four report, in relation to pay award negotiations and the Chard flooding event.

The Committee discussed pressures around Adult and Children's services and how these services could be sustained. Further information was requested from the committee in relation to attracting business investment to Somerset. The impact of the pandemic would be felt in the budget for many years to come, adults services had been compounded by the pressures from the NHS, and mental health impacts from the pandemic continued to be experienced. It was recognised that these were unprecedented pressures and complex picture with little control over pressures from these areas.

The Scrutiny for Policies and Place Committee noted the overall forecast overspend of £0.4m (section 12) and the key risks, future issues and opportunities detailed in the report which will be closely monitored and updated throughout the year.

7 December 2021

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in Somerset Update

The Programme Director presented the report. The first item the Committee considered the Local Government Reorganisation in Somerset Update

The report set out the Local Government Reorganisation update and reported that the government had confirmed that the Council would be a Continuing Authority, 110 members would be elected in May 2022. The estimated savings of the new Council were in the region of £18,000,000.

The Programme Director provided a presentation with details of the key points which included that there would be a joint local, County and Town/Parish election in May 2022 for a 5-year term, to oversee the start of the Unitary Council in April 2023, running for 4 years to May 2027. Withing the LGR programme there were 6 workstreams led by two senior officers (one County and One District) looking at how services would be managed and these had over 40 sub-groups supporting them.

The committee discussed council tax and budget setting in advance of April 2023 in the first full year of the New Council. Communication with Town and Parish Councils was a concern in relation to LGR and their continuing roles. Parish and Town Councils were encouraged to be part of the twice monthly consultation meetings. Reassurance was provided that communications would be made once the Act of Parliament for the election had been approved for all Councils.

The committee considered and noted the update.

2021/22 Budget Monitoring Report – Month 6 – End of September.

The second item the committee considered was the 2021/22 Budget Monitoring Report.

The report set out a comprehensive view of the Council's Financial position. At the end of September 2021 the outturn revenue forecast expenditure position was reported at £354.4 million, which represented a £3 million underspend against the budget of £357.4 million and was an improved picture from month 5. Overspends were predicted in some services, especially with the continuing COVID impact and placement issues, as encountered in other Councils.

There remained £5million reserves unallocated, and £3million Corporate Contingencies, however Winter Pressures could require some of this funding. Details of the Capital Programme was detailed in the report and set out a year end estimated budget of £171.3 million against a budget of £217.1 million, reporting an estimated underspend of £7.6 million over the life of the programme.

The committee discussed delays and shortages in supplies impacting on the Council in 2022. This was a recognised risk alongside a shortage in recruitment in the workforce in some services.

The committee noted the forecast underspend of £3million.

12 January 2022

Climate Change Update

The first item considered was the Climate Change Update.

The Climate Change Programme Manager introduced the update which set out Climate Change activities at the Council. The key Actions of the County Council included the Climate Emergency Community Fund which had funded 44 projects, Carbon Literacy Training, Energy Assessor and Community Engagement Officer. The Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme had provided improvements to 12 Buildings including County Hall and Taunton and Yeovil Libraries which had led to a carbon reduction of up to 27% across the non-schools estate.

The committee discussed EV charging provision, housing retrofitting, Climate Change funding, building standards for new council buildings and schools, reductions in car travel alongside better provision in low carbon public transport and the Saltlands Energy Park and a similar project in Glastonbury. Funding for projects across the county set out that 9 had been completed and 35 underway through the Community Fund.

The committee noted the update.

Current Section 19 Flood Investigations

The second item considered Current Section 19 Flood Investigations

The role of the lead local flood authority was set out, and the role of the flood and water management team, and the instance where it was necessary to investigate a flood water event.

Risk Management authorities exercising functions in these events. Publish results of the investigations and notify the risk management authorities. The flooding was a surface water event, the Environment Agency wasn't involved in the flood event. Chard was already a known area of concern within Somerset and there was also an integrated catchment study underway before the flooding event.

A timeline of the incident response was set out. SCC was not a category 1 responder, so role was around emergency planning, recover and investigation.

The Committee discussed lessons learnt from recent flooding events as part of future procedure. Policy when formal investigation work once a section 19 investigation was instigated was considered. Reassurance was provided to the committee that partnership working and integrated studies included partners including Wessex Water, the Environment Agency and Wessex Water.

The committee noted the update

2021/22 Revenue Budget Monitoring Report – Month 7 – End of October 2021

The third item considered was the 2021/22 Revenue Budget Monitoring Report – Month 7.

The overall forecast outturn position was a £1.3m favourable variance after taking into account all service expenditure and contingencies against a net budget of £357.4m which represented a variance of 0.36%. A summary of the budget was provided, with projections and variances on a service by service basis with further detail and mitigations being taken by the responsible director outlined in the body of the report.

Significant variances were set out in the report and included Adults and Children's Services and Economic and Community Infrastructure. Favourable variances were reported in Corporate Costs and Contingencies.

The Committee discussed the funding that remained in the Outbreak Management Fund. Current figures as part of the homecare hours were requested to consider what could be done to prevent NHS bed blocking.

The Committee:-

- a) Noted the overall forecast underspend of £1.3m (section 12) and the key risks, future issues and opportunities detailed in the report which will be closely monitored and updated throughout the year.
- b) To note that all of the £10.8m Covid- 19 Emergency Fund is expected to be fully spent within the year
- c) A receive a verbal update on the MTFP and Finance Settlement.

Selection of Preferred Partner in relation to the future Business Support System

The fourth item considered the preferred partner in relation to the future Business Support System.

The proposal and decision related to the first discovery phase. This would be looked at with the new councils IT requirements, working closely with the LGR team and district colleagues, progressing to the next decision gateway in March 2022. SAP end of life planning had been recognised for some time. A further decision in March would reflect the needs and ambitions for the new council.

The committee discussed what involvement the District Councils had in respect of the consideration of the future business support system. The existing SAP system and the option of further extending this until after the vesting day of the new Council. Concerns were expressed by the committee in respect of the risks around the implementation of the new system due to the short timeframe before implementation alongside the number of partners involved in

transferring the existing systems across the County and District Councils.

The Scrutiny for Policies and Place Committee:-

1. The Scrutiny for Policies and Place Committee recommends that Cabinet ensure that full integration with the District Councils occurs on this most critical of decisions, in consultation with the Senior Leadership and Political Leadership Teams.
2. The Committee requested that a full exploration of a fall-back position of SAP takes place, led by the finance team.
3. The risks of this decision be fully considered as part of Somerset County Council's risk register and as part of the Local Government Reorganisation risks.

1 February 2022

2021/22 Revenue Budget Monitoring Report – Month 8 – End of November 2021

The first item considered was the 2021/22 Revenue Budget Monitoring Report – Month 8.

The projected outturn position was reported at £356.2m against a net budget of £357.3m. This provided a £1.1m favourable variance which represented a variance of 0.3%. This was a small adverse movement of £0.2m since month seven.

A summary of the budget was provided with projections and variances on a service-by service basis with further detail and mitigations being taken by the responsible director outlined in the body of the report. The significant adverse variances were reported in Adults and Children's Services and Economic and Community Infrastructure. Favourable variances were reported in Corporate Costs and contingencies.

The committee discussed and requested increased funding for highways to enable service and highways improvements.

The Advisory Board:-

- Noted the overall forecast underspend of £1.1m (section 12) and the key risks, future issues and opportunities detailed in the report which will be closely monitored and updated throughout the year.
- Noted the use of £1.4m Covid-19 Emergency Fund for use against additional pressures in Children's Services relating to the pandemic (sections 14 and 22)

Medium Term Financial Plan 2022/23 Budget Update

The second item considered was the Medium Term Financial Plan 2022/23 Budget Update.

The report introduced the key areas of specific interest within the Medium-Term

Financial Plan to the Scrutiny Advisory Board for Policies and Place Services as well as an overview of the overall budget for 2022/23. The report was considered by Cabinet on the 20th January and set out proposals that produce a balanced budget for 2022/23. The appropriate Directors would attend the Committee to provide assurances around the changes made to budgets and funding for 2022/23.

The Board discussed finance risk in relation to Local Government Reorganisation. Further information was requested in relation to carbon capture, tree canopy and funding for walking and cycling initiatives. Funding for Voluntary sector organisations and LGR IT projects was requested to be provided following the meeting

The Advisory Board reviewed and noted specific proposals for changes from previous years, so that they can comment on them and the overall robustness of the proposed budget for 2022/23 as part of the overall assurance framework to Cabinet. As part of that assurance the Committee is requested to identify any matters for consideration that they would like to highlight to the Cabinet on the 14th February 2022.

Somerset's Enhanced Partnership (EP) Plan and Scheme

Following the launch of the government's National Bus Strategy: Bus Back Better in March 2021, in June 2021, Somerset County Council (SCC) committed to creating an Enhanced Partnership (EP) with local bus operators and published a Statutory Notice of Intent confirming this intention. This was followed by the publication of the initial Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) in October 2021, which following engagement with local bus operators, other key stakeholders and members of the public, sets out Somerset's high-level ambition for public transport across the County and bids for a share of the governments' bus transformation fund.

The Board discussed the prioritisation of the elements of the plan depending the level of funding received by central government, disabled access to public transport and future provision of more environmentally friendly busses across the county.

The Advisory Board considered and noted the draft Enhanced Partnership (EP) Plan and Scheme (Appendix A) in advance of the final EP Plan and Scheme being considered at Cabinet on 16th March 2022.

15 March 2022 (Scrutiny for Policies and Place Advisory Board)

One Somerset Programme Update and Proposed Reorganisation Board

The Committee received a presentation from the Programme Director who updated the committee in relation to work undertaken since the previous update

and set out a timeline alongside proposals to create a Member & Partner Local Government Reorganisation Board.

During the debate the discussion centred around the timeline for a decision from Central Government which was anticipated in July 2021. The recent outcomes of the consultation and poll conducted by the District Councils.

In conclusion the Committee recommended:-

1. The Committee noted the work that has been undertaken on the programme between March 2021 and June 2021.
2. The Committee scrutinised the programme implementation plan shown in Appendix A (summary plan) and Appendix B (detail plan), noting that detailed project plans for each workstream and item will be developed as part (Scrutiny for Policies and Place Committee July 6, 2021) 2 of 7 of the programme design and planning phase between September and November 2021.
3. The Committee considered and scrutinised the LCN design principles, values and expectations proposed in section 4 of this report, which are based on Council's One Somerset business case, including the adopted seven recommendations from the 2020 Somerset Association of Local Councils (SALC) and Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) report (page 74 of the One Somerset business case).
4. The Committee recommended a Member & Partner Local Government Reorganisation Board be established, and requested Cabinet carefully consider membership to ensure cross party consideration across Somerset County Council and District Council's to include 'twin hatter' membership alongside ensuring Planning, Housing and Licensing expertise is represented.

Somerset County Council Business Plan 2021-23

The Committee received a presentation from the Corporate Affairs Director setting out the 2021-23 Business Plan.

During the debate the discussion centred around the ambitions of the Business Plan with achieving the majority of the aims would be a success for all involved, the committee thanked officers for the time spent briefing Councillors on the Business Plan.

The Scrutiny Committee considered and noted the 2021-23 Draft Business Plan set out in Appendix A.

2021-22 Revenue Budget Monitoring Report – Month 2

The Committee received a presentation from the Finance Service Manager.

The forecast outturn for service expenditure as at the end of May 2021 is £345.6m against a budget of £343.6m which would represent an overspend of £2m for the year if no further action were taken. The significant variances are set out below with further detail and actions being taken by the responsible Director outlined in the body of the report. Covid-19 has had and is continuing to have a significant adverse impact upon our resources and to date £13.6m of Covid-19 Emergency Funding from the £5m carry forward and the current year's budget of £10.8m has been allocated to services to mitigate against this. At this stage there is £2.2m of the Covid-19 Emergency budget unallocated but this will be fully utilised in the financial year to cover future Covid-19 costs. When setting the 2021/22 budget it was clear that there were significant uncertainties caused by Covid-19 and to ensure that the budget was robust, the budget proposals included a Corporate Contingency of £6m. When taking these into account the overall position is a forecast underspend of £6.2m.

During the debate the discussion centred around Covid-19 funding, and the resulting pressures around, Adults and Children's, along with mental health services across the Council. The Committee commended the new reporting format.

In conclusion the Committee:

- a) Noted the forecast underspend of £6.2m. Made up of a £2m service overspend, offset by £6m of unallocated Corporate Contingency and £2.2m of unallocated Covid-19 Emergency Fund.
- b) Note the key risks, future issues and opportunities detailed in report, which will be closely monitored throughout the year with forecasts updated as appropriate.
- c) Noted the intention to draw from the Climate change reserve of £0.041m to fund the Climate Investment Manager.

Somerset County Council Road Adoptions Process

The Committee received a presentation from the Strategic Manager for Highways and Transport setting out the process of road adoptions alongside the relationships with the developers and planning processes with new developments across Somerset

During the discussion the debate centred around the process of developers completing roads to enable the local authority to sign them off for adoption. Concerns were expressed in relation to the instances where a developer went out of business leaving a cost to the Council in completing road infrastructure commitments. Everything was done to ensure relationships with developers remained professional and there bonds were arranged to account for instances where a developer did not meet its obligations before a road was adopted,

The Scrutiny Committee noted the report

3. Consultations undertaken

- 3.1.** The Committee invites all County Councillors to attend and contribute to every one of 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 future meetings, and agendas & 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.