

Together we are delivering your

New Somerset Council

Board review of Programme Strategic Objectives
(Alyn Jones, Alastair Highton)



To review Strategic Objectives and recommend amendments to Executive

29th July 2022

**Author:
Alyn Jones, Alastair Higton**

Key points for discussion:

To review Strategic Objectives and recommend amendments to Executive

Ask of Implementation Board:

To endorse findings:

- Strategic Objectives appear to remain fit for purpose, clear and high level.
- Deliverables and Business Plan objectives have not changed however for objective 3, “Decarbonisation” requires firming up to reflect climate and ecological emergency declarations.

To endorse proposal to Executive to amend the Implementation Plan

- To add additional introductory context to the Strategic Objectives

To review Strategic Objectives and recommend amendments to Executive

- Why?
 - To keep programme fit for purpose in current political and financial climate, meet requirement to maintain the Implementation Plan
- What is the context of the review? What do we need to think about?
 - Against financial context – MTFP
 - Against political context – Administration objectives and policy
 - Against programme risk
 - Experience of the programme so far
- Proposed lines of inquiry / changes
 - Potential impacts on programme and products
 - What outcomes does the Implementation Board seek?

LGR Programme Strategic Objectives

Objective 1

Create a new unitary Council for Somerset that delivers the approved business case on 1 April 2023.

Business Case objectives

- Create a strategic and powerful voice to speak up for our county
- Give residents more say over decisions that impact them and their communities
- End confusion over which council does what for our residents
- Reduce duplication and waste

Key deliverables

- Structural Changes agreed by Parliament
- Safe and effective elections
- Governance agreed with new administration
- All council staff in post
- LCNs established and operating
- Asset and service devolution opportunities in place

LGR Programme Strategic Objectives

Objective 2

Enable performance capability – to deliver business case vision on 1 April 2023.

Business Case objectives

1. Establishing one council listening to the needs and concerns of residents, parishes and business, providing clear accountability to the public
2. Facilitating sustainable delivery of outstanding public services to improve the quality of life of all Somerset's residents and businesses
3. Empowering communities and embedding delivery at local level to increase community resilience and the ability to respond to local challenges
4. Giving a much stronger voice for Somerset on a national and international stage
5. Offering consistent leadership with key partners to better influence local service delivery
6. Reducing duplication and provide better value across the entire county

Key deliverables

- Statutory and Senior Officers appointed
- Budget set
- HR and Payroll Systems in place
- Council tax arrangements in place
- Finance management systems in place
- Customer access points in place

LGR Programme Strategic Objectives

Objective 3

Develop the new council to optimise benefits and opportunities from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2025.

Business Case Objectives

- Invest in Somerset
- Develop better services
- Deliver better value for money for our taxpayers (that's all of us)
- Cut red tape and bureaucracy

Key deliverables

- Customer Strategy
- Transformation Roadmap
- Define service delivery methodology
- Build staffing structure, values and culture
- Decarbonisation

Context of the review

- Against financial context:
 - In-year savings
 - MTFP for 2023-24 and beyond
 - LGR role in delivering savings
- Against political context – Administration objectives and policy
 - Consistent with programme however one key theme to consider:
 - Ecological emergency declaration – product design impact?
- Against programme risk
 - Reduced availability to staff to deliver
 - Alignment with other public services
 - Relationships with Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) and communities required to be strong, to drive development of the programme so it is effective
- Experience of the programme so far
 - Significant input of resource – people: loss/insufficient FTE, extreme difficulty recruiting.
 - Budget is on track however little scope for increased spend without increased budget
 - Tranche 1 products are critical for day one operations must be primary focus.
 - External challenges eg endemic Covid, economic pressures have an impact on LGR and BAU (in turn impacting on LGR)

Broad findings

- Strategic Objectives should therefore
 - Support financial planning (ie not create additional cost pressures in-year)
 - Retain focus on Tranche 1 products and delivering a function council
 - Understand the staffing / recruitment challenges esp. with winter pressures expected. Not trying to do everything or too much for day 1
- Business Case can be flexible to changing policy requirements
 - Ecological emergency
 - Decision-making / engagement preferences
 - Tranche 1 products that may change direction eg LCNs.

Proposal

- Strategic Objectives appear to remain fit for purpose, clear and high level.
- Deliverables and Business Plan objectives have not changed however for objective 3, “Decarbonisation” requires firming up to reflect declared climate and ecological emergencies.
- There is an opportunity to add some valuable context.
- Propose to add the following as an introduction to the Strategic Objectives (subject to Executive approval:

After review of the Strategic Objectives by the Implementation Board on 29th July 2022, additional context was approved by the Implementation Executive, to ensure that use of the Strategic Objectives remained appropriate:

- The programme operates in a context of financial pressure both in-year and future years, as well as recruitment and retention challenges. Therefore financial benefits and critical activity must be maximised and unnecessary work (business-as-usual and LGR) be reconsidered where appropriate in order to release financial or staff resources. LGR has a key role of play in delivering a financially sustainable council.
- The programme should consider its activity in the context of the Somerset Climate Emergency Declaration and more recently, ecological emergency declaration.
- There is a risk that if relationships with Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE), communities and other public sector partners are not strong, programme benefit (including reduced or redirected demand leading to savings) will not be fully achieved.
- Tranche 1 products remain the prime focus of programme delivery
- The emerging Council Plan will add additional context to the LGR programme.

Together we are delivering your

New Somerset Council
