

Together we are delivering your
New Somerset Council

Somerset Council Implementation Plan

Version 3

1 November 2022

Version History

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Owner:	LGR Programme Management Office

Version history	Summary of Changes	Description	Changes marked	Date
V1	Implementation Plan created	Version 1 for 30/5/22 SCC Executive Agenda run-through	N/A	26/5/22
V2	Proof-read, senior manager comments and sign-off	Final version for 15/6/22 SCC Executive meeting	No	30/5/22

V3	<p>Scheduled review and updating of paper to reflect progress made in the programme.</p> <p>General updates</p> <p>Proof-read and general updates to content and timescales to maintain accuracy</p> <p>Significantly updated</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic objective 1 updated in line with Implementation Board recommendation. Additional context added showing the environment in which LGR is being delivered has changed • Updated governance diagram to reflect stand-down of Programme Steering Group and move from LGR Advisory Board for Advisory Forum • Updated glossary <p>New</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sections added covering Council Plan, Day 1 Readiness and Change Readiness • References added regarding Ecological Emergency Declaration <p>Minor changes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • References to Joint Scrutiny Committee section, for clarity • Additions to communications 	Update Plan for sign-off by SCC Executive	No – summary of changes created separately for presentation purposes	1/11/22
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	<p>section (reference to website)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated budget information (link to Implementation Board papers) • Updated Programme Delivery Plan (Appendix E) • Replaced Scorecard and risk appendices with links to Implementation Board papers • Other cosmetic, readability and time-bound (eg from “will” to “is” taking place) 			
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Introduction

- The Somerset Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) programme is creating a new single unitary council for Somerset which will provide services currently the responsibility of Somerset's existing five councils.
- Delivery of the new council began in July 2021 when the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government consented to implement a single unitary council for Somerset. In approving implementation of the [Business case for a new single unitary council for Somerset](#) he set the high-level context and aim of the programme. The Business Case is flexible however, and the five councils are required to have "due regard" to it.
- On 17 March 2022 the Secretary of State made the Somerset (Structural Changes) Order 2022 (the SCO).
 - The SCO sets out the mechanism for the reorganisation of local government and the establishment of a single unitary council in Somerset on 1 April 2023.
 - The SCO confirmed that Somerset County Council will be a "continuing authority" and that the name of the new council would be Somerset Council.
 - The SCO requires creation of an Implementation Plan to deliver the unitary council.
- The LGR Implementation Board (the Implementation Board) monitor the reorganisation programme in Somerset including the Implementation Plan and provide advice and recommendations on its delivery to the Executive of Somerset County Council (the SCC Executive).
- The councils have formed a Joint Scrutiny Committee, the purpose of which is to scrutinise and aid development of the programme and make proposals to the SCC Executive in relation to delivery of the unitary council in Somerset.
- The Implementation Plan sets out the political and managerial governance of the overall programme including key responsibilities of officers and Members, shows how the programme is governed, and provides a detailed plan of delivery including critical milestones and activity required to meet them.

Creating Somerset Council

Mission, Vision, and Values

- The mission for the programme is to “create a new Unitary council for Somerset by 1 April 2023 that delivers the approved Business Case”.
- The vision for the programme is:
 - “A single council for Somerset that is ambitious for our county and is:
 - Collaborative and works in partnership
 - Accessible and places residents and communities and the centre of decision making
 - Dynamic, enabling high performing, quality services and effective and efficient use of public money”
- The Programme’s values are:
 - Somerset’s residents, communities, businesses, and visitors come first.
 - Our focus will be on delivery and outcomes, not process and governance (but with sufficient governance).
 - We strive for open, honest communication. No surprises.
 - All five councils are committed to working positively together to create an effective single authority that will support our residents
 - We value expertise and experience.
 - We learn lessons from previous LGR implementation programmes.
 - We will adopt a supportive, learning, coaching and mentoring culture and approach.
 - Let’s design and implement an organisation we’re proud of.
 - Let’s not lose what we do ‘best’ – let’s look at what all five councils do well and build on this.
- These relate only to the programme to design and deliver the new council. The vision and objectives for the new council will be defined and agreed by its elected Members.
- The SCC Executive is free to amend the mission, vision, and principles, and received recommendations from the Implementation Board to support them.

Strategic Objectives

The Programme's strategic objectives were approved by the transitional SCC Executive on 25 March 2022. They include relevant Business Case objectives and key deliverables. The Programme's Strategic Objectives are:

Strategic Objective	Business Case Objectives	Key Deliverables
<p>1. Create a new unitary Council for Somerset in line with the approved programme delivery plan for 1 April 2023, and with due regard to the Business Case</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a strategic and powerful voice to speak up for our county • Create and county-wide framework to enable residents to have a greater say on issues that affect them • End confusion over which council does what for our residents • Reduce duplication and waste 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Framework in place for LCNs • Policies in place for service and asset devolution • Structural Changes Order agreed by Parliament • Safe and effective elections • Governance agreed with new administration • All council staff in post • LCNs established and operating
<p>2. Enable performance capability – to deliver Business Case vision from 1 April 2023.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing one council listening to the needs and concerns of residents, parishes and business, providing clear accountability to the public • Facilitating sustainable delivery of outstanding public services to improve the quality of life of all Somerset's residents and businesses • Empowering communities and embedding delivery at local level to increase community resilience and the ability to respond to local challenges • Giving a much stronger voice for Somerset on a national and international stage • Offering consistent leadership with key partners to better influence local service delivery • Reducing duplication and provide better value across the entire county 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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
<p>3. Develop the new council to optimise benefits and opportunities from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2025.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest in Somerset • Develop better services • Deliver better value for money • Cut red tape and bureaucracy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Strategy • Transformation Roadmap • Define service delivery methodology • Build staffing structure, values and culture • Responses to Climate and Ecological Emergency Declarations

The Strategic Objectives reflect the distinct phases of development of the new Council:

- First, a new Council that functions on Vesting Day
- Second, a new Council that can perform strongly from the start
- Third, a new Council that can improve and transform its services in the following months and years.

After review of the Strategic Objectives by the Implementation Board and SCC Executive, additional context was considered useful to ensure that the Strategic Objectives remain fit for purpose:

- 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. Relationships with VCSE and other stakeholders are critical to success of the programme and the new council
- Tranche 1 products remain the prime focus of programme delivery up to Vesting Day
- The emerging Council Plan will add additional context to the LGR programme.

Council Plan

A Council Plan is under development, and will detail the ambitions, aspirations and priorities of the new Council. From that, a Business Plan will be developed showing the detailed activity that is required to achieve the Council Plan.

Target Operating Model

A Target Operating Model should clearly state how an organisation will deliver its vision and Council Plan and Business Plan. It is not an organisational structure. It is required to guide key decisions around service design and delivery across each workstream, including considerations around resourcing and potential trade-offs. Examples of how a Target Operating Model will guide the behaviour of the new council may include:

- Its approach to digital working, digital services, customer access, commissioning, relationships with key stakeholders, and prevention/promoting independence
- How the new council interacts with its customers in order to best advise and help them
- How the council will work with other partners, such as health, the business community or the VCSE sector

Whilst a detailed Target Operating Model is being developed, an outline version is required to aid early design of critical deliverables. This will be delivered before Vesting Day.

Organisational Structure

- The organisational structure for the new Council is a critical product for delivery by Vesting Day of the new Council, and is being developed in line with:
 - Requirements laid down by the County Council Executive, supported by recommendations by the Implementation Board, Joint Scrutiny Committee and Programme Board
 - Requirements laid down by the Chief Executive.
 - The agreed Target Operating Model for the new Council
 - The design of products for the new Council, in particular their financial and non-financial benefits
 - Medium Term Financial Plan considerations
- The senior management team will be critical to the successful transition to the new council, with Tier 1 (Chief Executive) in post from 3 October 2002 and Tier 2 (Senior Leadership Team) to be appointed and in-post before Vesting Day.

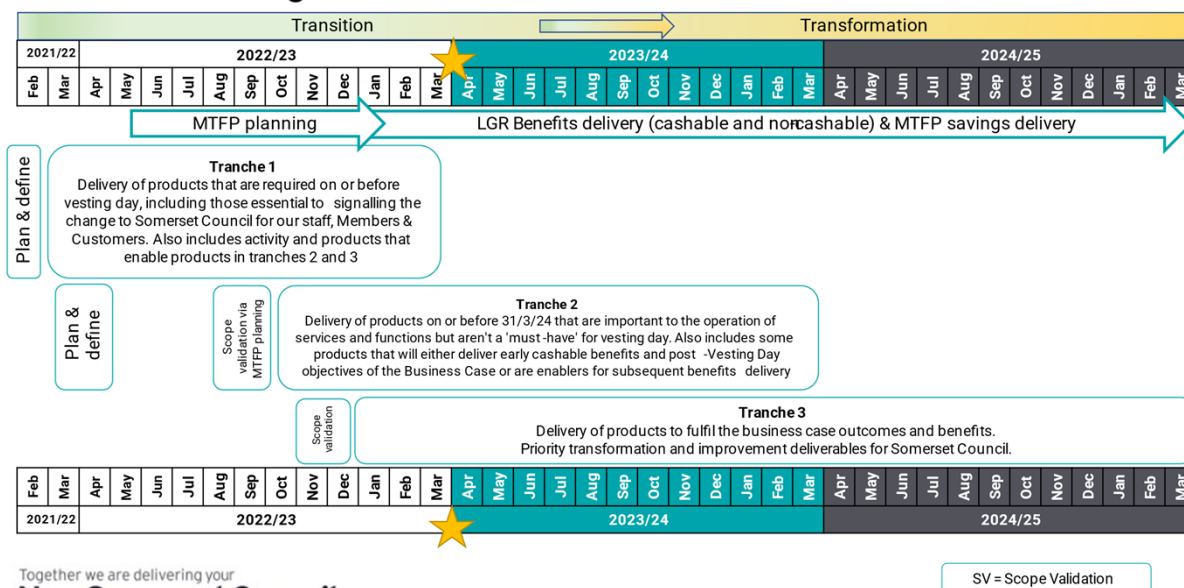
Medium Term Financial Plan – setting a budget for the new Council

This is a critical Tranche 1 product for the programme. The LGR programme is closely linked to work to identify where efficiencies can be delivered, as identified in the business case. By ensuring that MTFP and LGR work are aligned, we will avoid double-counting of financial benefits or duplication of activity, and support the MTFP programme to set a balanced budget alongside identifying what, how and when post-LGR transformation will be delivered (as defined in the Council Plan and Target Operating Model).

Transition, Transformation and Tranche Delivery

The Programme is being delivered in three specific phases, or “tranches”, each of which relates to a specific requirement of the programme to deliver a new authority that delivers and can capitalise on the aims of the Business Case.

Tranche Planning



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SV = Scope Validation

The programme has identified approximately 700 products to be delivered. These products have been organised into:

- **Tranche 1:** Delivery of products that are required on or before vesting day, including those essential to signalling the change to Somerset Council for our staff, Members and customers. Also includes activity and products that enable products in tranches 2 and 3.
- **Tranche 2:** Delivery of products that are important to the operation of services and functions but that aren't a 'must-have' for Vesting Day but will be delivered on or before 31 March 2024. Includes some products that will either deliver early cashable benefits and post-Vesting Day objectives of the Business Case or are enablers for subsequent benefits delivery
- **Tranche 3:** Delivery of products to fulfil the Business Case outcomes and benefits. This will incorporate priority transformation and improvement deliverables for Somerset Council.

The list of Tranche 1 products and their dependent products (whether enabling or enabled by the Tranche 1 product) can be found in Appendix B. Tranche 2 and Tranche 3 products will be validated in late 2022.

Products and their associated milestones are monitored through the programme governance outlined later in this document.

To ensure delivery of products and outcomes are kept on track, the Programme Management Office (PMO) maintains a detailed Programme Plan which combines all workstream plans. It is imperative that the programme maintains robust oversight of all project plans including their milestones during the programme to ensure that the programme delivers as planned and expected. Workplans including milestones and decision-points are imperative to managing dependencies, change and the overall configuration and deliverability of the programme.

The PMO also produce a plan detailing products / milestones due within the next 8 weeks which is presented to Programme Board each week.

A robust and transparent system is in place for the reporting of delivery of the programme. Programme reporting is accessible to all programme, workstream and sub-workstream leads with appropriate resource in place to help maintain this.

Change to the programme or the Business Case is managed through a robust Change Control process – understanding change and its impact on the overall delivery of the programme. This ensures that changes are clearly understood and any impacts mitigated. This includes embracing new opportunities as well as tackling risks.

Tranche 1 products are described as those that are critical to efficient and effective operation of the new council and are required before or on Vesting Day. A complete list of Tranche 1 products can be found in Appendix B.

Member engagement and arrangements

Before the SCO was approved a Joint Committee acted as the transitional decision-making body. For the period between the SCC being approved and the first elections to the unitary council an SCC Executive has become the transitional decision-making body with a membership of nine members (County Leader, four County members and the four District Council Leaders).

Members across the five councils are involved in the transition in several different ways. A comprehensive Members induction programme was established for new Councillors elected in 2022, to ensure they had a good understanding of all the functions of the new organisation and can help shape the new Council.

Regular briefings for all Members are in place for duration of the Implementation period of the Programme.

Somerset Council will have 110 elected Members, and they were elected in May 2022. The Constitution will set out the formal democratic governance of the new authority including committee and scrutiny arrangements, Codes of Conduct and other information such as Schemes of Delegation.

Officer support is essential so that strong working relationships between officers and Members are developed and maintained, both in terms of general programme information and Members inquiries, but also in developing products and services that are fit for purpose and meet the expectations of the SCC Executive and Council. A list of workstream and sub-workstream leads, as well as members of the Programme Management Office, is available in Appendix D and direct contact with the programme can be made via ProgrammeManagementO@Somerset.gov.uk

Transition Arrangements

Structural Changes Order (SCO) and governance requirements

The SCO puts in place the formal legal structures to create the new council. It also set the timings of elections, specifies divisions, numbers of councillors and imposed legal duties on the county and district councils.

The SCO defines two “transitional periods”

- The first transitional period ran from 18 March 2022 when the SCO came into effect, and ended on the fourth day after the 5 May 2022 elections.
- Implementation is now in the second transitional period, which runs until Vesting Day on 1 April 2023.
- During both transitional periods, the SCO requires the SCC Executive (in this case, SCC’s Executive) supported by the Implementation Board to:
 - Ensure delivery of “effective, efficient and timely transfer of the district councils’ functions, property, rights and liabilities.” In other words, to ensure delivery of a new council.
 - Hold and keep under review an Implementation Plan including plans, timetables and budgets that support delivery of the new unitary council’s functions on (or after) 1 April 2023.
 - Have regard to the Business Case approved by the Secretary of State: this means there is scope within it for flexibility to reflect changed in emphasis.

The Councillors elected on 5 May 2022 will serve for five years. They will govern the County Council to 31 March 2023 and the Unitary Council from 1 April 2023 to May 2027 when the next scheduled elections take place.

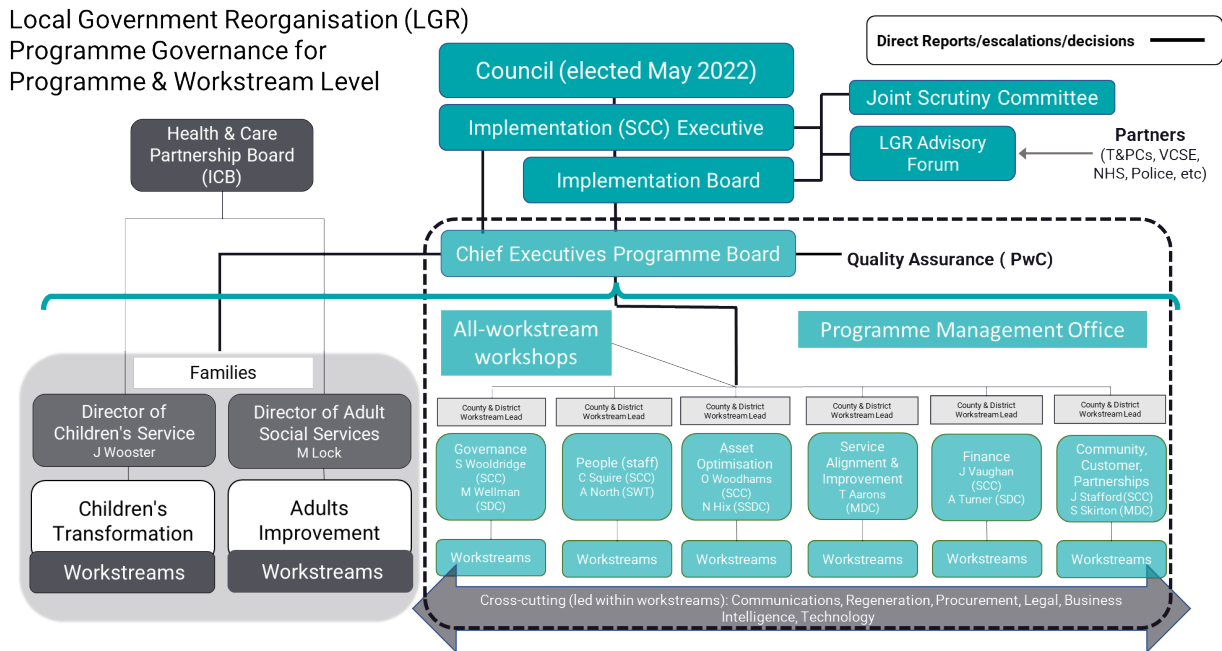
All County Councillors will have a role in delivering the new council, for example defining and approving its policies and plans and approving the new council’s budget in February 2023.

Governance Arrangements and Programme Structure

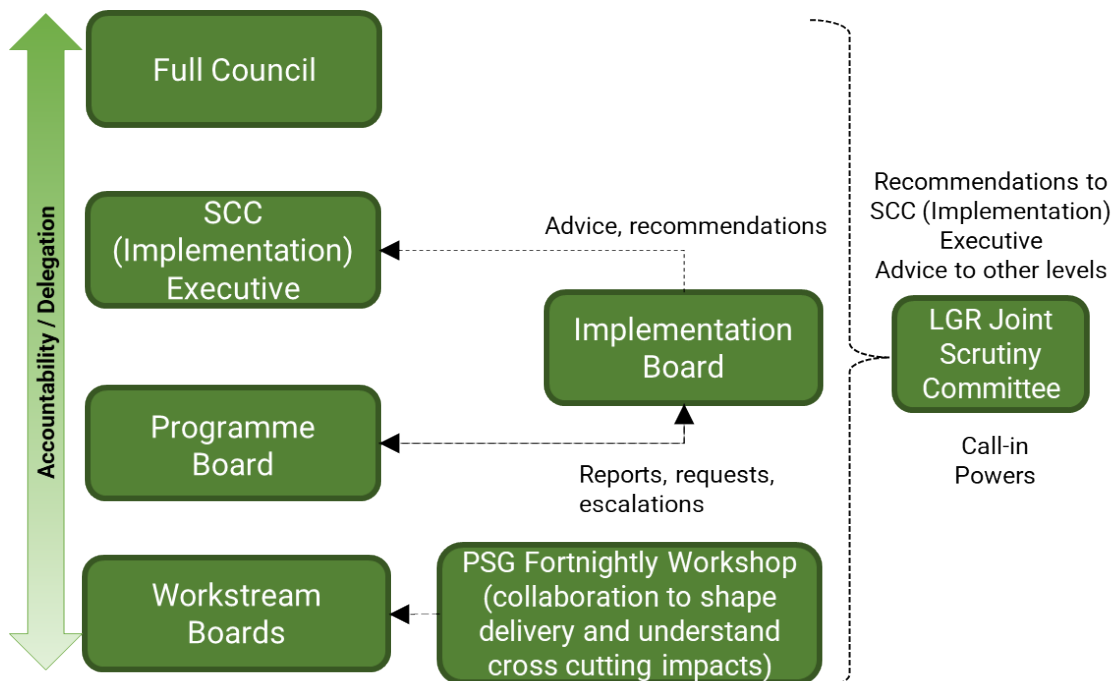
The governance arrangements for the programme are set out in the below diagram and can be viewed in full in Appendix C.

Programme Governance

Decision-making and accountabilities governance structure



Decision-making and formal engagement structure



SCC Full Council

The Full County Council's main purpose is to agree a budget and policy framework within which the Leader of Council and the Executive operate, and council services are provided. It will have a role in determining the shape of the new Council, for example budget setting for 2023-24. Its functions include but are not limited to:

- Determining the policy framework for the Council
- Approval of the Council's budget and Council Tax requirement
- Appointing the Leader of Council and Committees/Sub-Committees of the Council and appointing members with special responsibilities
- Approving the Council's Constitution and meetings calendar
- The appointment of the Chief Executive
- A range of other functions, which by law, cannot be the responsibility of the Executive, e.g., regulatory.

More information regarding Full Council meetings, membership and role can be viewed here - [SCC Full Council \(democracy.somerset.gov.uk\)](https://democracy.somerset.gov.uk)

SCC Executive

The SCC Executive was established in accordance with the SCO. It is a role set by the SCO – SCC's Executive Committee is required to deliver the functions of an LGR SCC Executive.

More information regarding the SCC Executive's meetings, membership and role can be viewed here - [LGR SCC Executive \(democracy.somerset.gov.uk\)](https://democracy.somerset.gov.uk)

Implementation Board

The Implementation Board has responsibility to review implementation of the programme, offer advice and make recommendations to the SCC Executive in order to:

- Ensure delivery of “effective, efficient and timely transfer of the district councils’ functions, property, rights and liabilities.” In other words, to ensure delivery of the new council.
- Keep under review the Implementation Plan including plans, timetables and budgets that support delivery of the new unitary council’s functions on (or after) 1 April 2023.
- Have regard to the Business Case approved by the Secretary of State

Membership of the Implementation Board is made up of Members drawn from the 5 Councils as follows:

- 3 members of Somerset County Council nominated by its Leader
- 2 members of Somerset County Council nominated by the leader of that council’s largest Opposition political group
- 1 member of each of the 4 District Councils nominated by the leader of their respective council.

More information regarding the Implementation’s Board’s meetings, membership and role can be viewed here - [LGR Implementation Board \(democracy.somerset.gov.uk\)](https://democracy.somerset.gov.uk)

Joint Scrutiny Committee

A Joint Scrutiny Committee provides the joint overview and scrutiny function for LGR. The 5 Councils have delegated the overview and scrutiny of the LGR

Implementation Plan and LGR Implementation Budget to the Joint Scrutiny Committee.

Its responsibilities include:

- Informing and developing as well as scrutinising the work undertaken by the SCC Executive and the Implementation Board, in relation to delivering the new Council.
- Informing the programme and its development (e.g., role and function of LCNs and Asset and Service Devolution) rather than just scrutinise and provide challenge to the Implementation Board and programme delivery.
- Provide the sole scrutiny function to the LGR programme. It will not scrutinise activity outside the programme.

Membership will be made up of 16 members drawn from members of the Constituent Councils as follows:

- Somerset County Council (8 members)
- Somerset West and Taunton Council (2 members)
- South Somerset District Council (2 members)
- Sedgemoor District Council (2 members)
- Mendip District Council (2 members)

More information regarding the Joint Scrutiny Committee's meetings, membership and role can be viewed here - [Joint Scrutiny Committee \(democracy.somerset.gov.uk\)](http://democracy.somerset.gov.uk)

Chief Executive's Programme Board

The Chief Executive Officers Programme Board (CEOs Programme Board) leads and directs the delivery of the Programme Implementation Plan and considers critical "business as usual" decisions by each of the five councils that may have longer term implications for the new council.

Membership consists of the County and District Chief Executives, LGR Communications Lead, County S151 Finance Officer, County Monitoring Officer, Programme Director and PMO Programme Managers.

Programme Steering Group

The Programme Steering Group is made up of the Programme Director, Workstream Leads, District Council Leads, LGR Communication Lead and PMO Programme Managers. Its responsibilities include collaboration to develop key products, provide assurance to the Programme Board that the programme is progressing well, and deal with challenges or issues that may arise. It meets fortnightly in a workshop setting to collaborate on development of programme products.

LGR Advisory Forum

This group comprises of representatives of partner organisations and is chaired by the County Council's Executive Lead Member for LGR. The purpose of the Forum is to ensure that LGR in Somerset is delivered effectively with strong stakeholder engagement and involvement. The Forum will:

- Engage with, partners, stakeholders, and others to promote engagement with and understanding of the new authority as it develops.
- Hold public events as part of a broader public engagement plan.
- Advise on the design and delivery of the cash and non-cash benefits expected from the new authority.

The Forum has an advisory role only. It is intended that the membership include representatives from:

- SCC Executive
- Somerset Association of Local Councils
- Society of Local Council Clerks
- SPARK Somerset
- Local NHS
- Education
- Avon and Somerset Constabulary
- Federation of Small Business
- Environment representative (organisation to be confirmed)
- The Arts Council
- Historic England

Workstreams

There are 6 workstreams across the programme, each workstream is led by two senior managers (one each from County Council and District Council). Underneath these workstreams are several sub-workstreams which deliver groups of related products. The workstreams are: -

- Governance
- People
- Assets Optimisation (in 2 parts – Technology and Property)
- Service Alignment & Improvement
- Finance
- Community, Customer & Partnerships

Within each workstream are a range of focussed sub-Workstreams delivering related products. There are approximately 700 distinct products in the programme. A complete list of sub-workstreams can be found in Appendix D.

There are several cross-cutting themes that are led by sub-workstreams including communications, regeneration, procurement, legal, business intelligence, technology, and equalities.

Programme Management Office (PMO)

PMO provides a lead role in delivering the new Council and is responsible for reporting and driving the overall programme as defined. Its responsibilities are:

- Holding a single, strategic view of the programme and working with workstreams and other programmes to manage dependencies.
- Setting and maintaining the programme methodology and ensuring it is embedded across the programme, for example by providing specific tools, operating procedures and documents, and ensuring governance is fit for purpose.
- Improve programme and project management capability across the workstreams by developing and championing a consistent, best practice-based approach to programme and project management
- Co-ordination, advice, and support to workstreams to ensure they deliver outputs as defined to assist the delivery of expected financial and non-financial benefits.
- Creating and maintaining robust performance management arrangements to provide assurance to programme stakeholders and external partners including with central government. Transparency is a central principle of the programme therefore Members and the public must also be confident that the programme is delivering as intended and that problems are identified and resolved, and opportunities capitalised upon.

The outputs of the PMO function include:

- Standardised approaches for workstreams to plan and manage their work.
- Centralised, open, and simple to use registers for the recording of Risks, Issues, Lessons Learned, Products and Milestones – all feeding into an automated scorecard reporting process as well as programme timelines: a “say once, report many times” approach.
- A copy of the latest Scorecard (end-August 2022) can be found in [papers for the 27 September 2022 Implementation Board \(pages 15-19\)](#)
- Mobilisation and signposting programme staff to learning sessions and guidance – ensuring staff have the tools and knowledge to their jobs well. Induction process to onboard new staff into the programme.
- Regular checkpoint reviews
- Programme briefings and support for programme communications
- Maintaining the Integrated Assurance
- Change and configuration control, re-baselining the programme and critical path
- Quality assurance
- Benefits tracking
- Risk and issues management
- Financial/budget management
- Resource and capacity management

- A single SharePoint site, accessible by all members of the programme, with built in areas for each workstream to store and collaborate on files and a landing page designed to signpost users to tools and resources.

They will maintain the LGR delivery plan, which can be viewed in appendix E (dated 10 October 2022).

Embedded Project and programme management support will provide resource directly to workstreams to:

- Identify and allocate project and administrative resource to workstreams
- Support delivery of the projects and activity of that workstream, including reporting and management of information
- Ensure that the PMO tools and methodologies referenced in this manual are used and embedded in all workstreams

The PMO will also:

- Provide meeting support to the Chief Executive Programme Board
- Operate from multiple locations across Somerset including hybrid working. It will pursue a digital-first approach to ensure a single, live version of programme and workstream information is visible across workstreams and by stakeholders.
- Maintain the high level and detailed Programme Plan on behalf of the Implementation Board
- Work with workstreams to map and understand dependencies

Quality Assurance and Delivery Partner

PwC has been procured as an external quality assurance and programme delivery partner, acting as a critical friend to the programme as a whole and supporting the 6 workstreams and programme team

PwC operates within and across the programme to promote a coherent approach and effective working arrangements.

Work provided By PwC covers:

- Quality Assurance support for the programme, including monthly reporting, workstream liaison, supporting the PMO and regular reports to Programme Board and Members.
- Deep dives into parts of the programme requiring additional support or troubleshooting
- Specific support for the People and Service Alignment Sub-Workstreams
- Support to develop a Target Operating Model for Vesting Day

Day 1 Readiness

The programme is increasingly focussed on ensuring that the new Council operates as planned on Vesting Day. This includes individual as well as service readiness. A Day 1 Readiness Group provides assurance to the Programme Board and Members that the new Council will operate effectively. This includes identifying what needs to be done, when, by who, identify issues to be resolved, and resolving them.

The objectives of the Day 1 Readiness Group are:

- Provide a clear and shared vision for a successful day 1: for our customers, our staff, the organisation, governance.
- Identify enablers for building readiness amongst staff, members and with stakeholders
- Understand measures of readiness and analyse scenarios (opportunities as well as risks)
- Understand what's important to staff for day 1 in order to deal with concerns, promote plans and opportunities, and help develop a strong culture for the new Council

Change Readiness

Change readiness is about involving staff, partners, Members, the public and others in delivering the LGR programme so that they can play their part in achieving the aims of that part of the programme. If people are at the heart of any change, they are more likely to reap the benefits of the changes being made, and the new Council.

In the Somerset LGR Programme, change readiness is a core and critical element of programme delivery. Workstreams are supported to prepare change and adoption plans, assessments have been made to identify where change readiness is critical to success, and progress is reported as part of the monthly scorecard.

Risk / Issue Management

Risks and Issue management is recognised as an essential element of programme governance and management.

The programme provides an effective risk and issues management and escalation framework to support the transition to a single unitary authority for Somerset. There is a risk and issues manager for the programme has been identified and the framework supports teams to identify, log and escalate of risks and issues in the programme is in place.

Opportunities management is encouraged and a process to support teams in that is being developed alongside definition of Tranche 2 and 3 product lists.

The latest programme-level risk report (August 2022) can be found in [papers for the 27 September 2022 Implementation Board \(pages 32-41\)](#)

Climate Change and Ecological Emergency

The 5 Somerset Councils all declared a Climate Emergency in 2019 and worked together to develop a shared Somerset Climate Emergency Strategy which was adopted in 2022. This Strategy set three key goals;

- To decarbonise Local Authorities, the wider public sector estates and reduce our carbon footprint
- To work towards making Somerset a Carbon Neutral County by 2030
- To have a Somerset which is prepared for, and resilient to, the impacts of Climate Change

The Strategy details 63 objectives which will need to be met to deliver on the three key goals.

The single unitary council Business Case identifies a key advantage of a unitary council being a simpler structure and resource for responding to, and directing action against, the climate and ecological emergency.

Somerset County Council has also declared an Ecological Emergency, and this policy will be reflected in development of the programme and products.

An LGR Climate Emergency working group is working with LGR workstream leads to embed the goals and objectives of the Strategy into all workstream areas and fully support our response to the declared Climate Emergency. Officers will be tasked with designing services in line with Climate Emergency impacts and responses.

Equalities

As part of our Public Sector Duty, the impact of any proposed changes and decisions on inequalities within the context of the main protective characteristics should be considered. This consideration is ongoing and should inform all decisions taken regarding specific products or workstreams, where relevant, as part of the LGR process and beyond. This consideration should include constructive challenge of conclusions articulated within Equalities Impact Assessments for robustness.

Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion is a sub-workstream within the Service Alignment workstream and is also represented within the PMO.

Transition Budget

The transition budget for delivering the new council and stated benefits is £16.5m. The Programme Managers in liaison with the PMO Financial Section 151 Officer are responsible for managing the implementation budget. A budget structure has been set up based on the programme governance and cost centres allocated for each project and where appropriate workstream.

Budget is allocated by the Programme Director in liaison with the Section 151 Officer and it will be the responsibility of the workstream leads and other accountable officers to manage their agreed cost centre budget and report on spend.

Budget monitoring reports are provided to the Programme Board and Committees (eg Joint Scrutiny Committee) of forecast and actual spend against the allocated budgets including an explanation of significant variances and how those variances

will be mitigated. Budget requests must adhere to the budget protocols agreed by the Chief Executives Programme Board.

A copy of the latest programme budget report (end-August 2022) can be found in [papers for the 27 September 2022 Implementation Board \(pages 21-22\)](#)

Recruitment Protocol and Mutual Aid

Recruitment Protocol

It is estimated that most of the reduction in staff numbers because of becoming a unitary council will be realised through normal turnover: closing vacant posts, voluntary redundancies, and redeployment. Agreeing recruitment principles across the Councils provided an opportunity to promote a culture of collaboration, to protect employment and to reduce potential redundancy costs in support of creating the new authority in the strongest financial position. The purpose of the Recruitment Protocol is:

- Maximise opportunities and help retain our people across the authorities
- Safeguard ongoing employment of staff
- Aid transition to a new organisation
- Minimise the risk of future potential redundancies when bringing services together
- Better manage resources (employees and finance) in the transition phase
- Continue the delivery of high-quality services.

Mutual Aid

It is possible that individual councils may experience workforce shortages due to turnover of staff and recruitment difficulties. In these situations, it is agreed that resource may be requested from other councils, and this should be considered as the first question to ask when recruiting to any role (including those on the exempt list, for example statutory posts). This cover can be provided in different ways, including:

- Secondments
- Transfer of work
- Teams working together (although not formally merging) ahead of Vesting Day

Where required, HR teams will determine the most appropriate contractual basis for this to happen, working with managers, staff, and trade union representatives. Mutual aid requests are presented at Programme Board for approval on a weekly basis.

Communications

Branding

Branding will be critical to the tone and identity of new council for all stakeholders, representing a new, shared vision for a new organisation. Priority for “Somerset

Council” branding will be given to Tranche 1 services and statutory requirements and a branding strategy and process supports that.

To show where work on the transition to a new authority is taking place, and that the 5 Councils are working in partnership to deliver it, interim branding has been agreed.

Delivering a brand for the new council, and how that will be designed, is the responsibility of the Communications sub-workstream and will be agreed by the SCC Executive. It will be a critical sign for residents, staff, providers, and businesses that a change has taken place, support the development of the culture of the new organisation, and assist achieving aims of the new Council relating to accessibility and efficiency.

Public-facing website

As well as a communications plan for both internal and external communications, a public-facing website has been created as a single online point of access for information. Hosted on <https://newsomersetcouncil.org.uk/> the website provides news and updates, detail on LCNs, details of upcoming meetings, consultations and frequently asked questions.

Appendices

Appendix A – Glossary

(LGR) Advisory Forum – A group comprised of representative partner organisations and Chaired by the County Council’s Executive Lead Member for LGR. The purpose of the Forum is to ensure that LGR in Somerset is delivered effectively with strong stakeholder engagement and involvement. The Forum will:

- Engage with, partners, stakeholders, and others to promote engagement with and understanding of the new authority as it develops.
- Hold public events as part of a broader public engagement plan
- Advise on the design and delivery of the cash and non-cash benefits expected from the new authority.

The Forum will have an advisory role only and no decision-making or scrutiny role.

Behaviour - Actions, habits, and practices that shape a culture. This is important because of the different ways the new council may choose to work. New or different behaviours can be encouraged by applying principles, ideas, process, and systems.

Benefit - A benefit is what our customers, communities and colleagues can actually see and feel as a result of what we do. They should show measurable, quantifiable improvements from outcomes, capabilities, products.

Business Case – A Business Case provides justification for undertaking a project, programme or portfolio. In the context of LGR this refers to the [Business Case for a single unitary authority in Somerset](#).

Capability - Something (service, function, operation) that enables the new council and its workforce to deliver services or improve them.

Change Control - is the process through which all requests to change the approved baseline (what we have agreed to do) of a piece of work, usually a project or a programme of work. Request for change are captured, evaluated and then approved, rejected or deferred.

Change Impact – The results of something that has been done, on people, groups, organisations as the result of a change. Change impacts should be continually identified and assessed, as they could be negative as well as positive. Plans to reduce or remove negative impacts should be implemented and monitored.

Change Management - Change management is about understanding how people react to changes and helping them adapt and embrace new ways of working or different situations. This is important when delivering a large amount of change like a unitary council. Change management activity e.g communication, engagement, training, should be interwoven with technical work, e.g. project plans.

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) - The most senior corporate, executive, or administrative officer in charge of managing an organization. The County Council and four Districts all have a Chief Executive.

Communication - Communication is giving, receiving or exchanging ideas, information, signals or messages through appropriate media, so people or groups

can learn about something, understand it, share or ask for information or to express their views.

Consequential Orders – These are laws (legislation) passed by the Secretary of State to make, to tidy up a range of legislation relating to the five Somerset Councils, so the single unitary can work effectively. It is often known as a “tidying up exercise”.

Dependency – Tasks, activities or products that require other work or decisions in order to deliver their own tasks and activities: this could relate to time, quality, or cost.

Dependency management - an important aspect of programme control, to ensure that where a workstream/product has a dependency that the impact of any delays are understood. Likewise, it is important for a workstream/product to see where there is a dependency with another product or workstream.

Engagement - Opportunities and activities that open-up dialogue to listen, seek feedback and promote collaboration and sharing of learning

Equalities Impact - Any impacts on communities protected by equality legislation. Impacts should be continually identified and assessed. Plans to reduce or remove negative impacts should be implemented and results monitored as part of delivery.

Implementation Board – Responsible for monitoring of the programme and providing advice and recommendations on its implementation to the SCC Executive.

SCC Executive – Responsible for ensuring that the LGR Programme is delivered and making decisions to ensure the effective delivery of the new Council. The SCC Executive for the programme is the Somerset County Council Executive Committee, as defined in legislation.

Implementation Plan – A document required by legislation, it must contain detailed plans and timetables showing how the new unitary council will be delivered effectively.

Issue - When mitigating actions applied to a risk fail to prevent an event from occurring, resulting in an ‘issue’ that needs to be managed. Issues can also arise from unforeseen circumstances.

Local Community Network (LCN) - Local Community Networks (LCNs) will be part of the new Somerset Unitary Council and bring Somerset Unitary Councillors and Officers together with key partners such as Town, City and Parish Councils, Health, Police, the Voluntary Sector and local groups, as well as residents.

The elected leaders of the new Somerset Council have confirmed their commitment to LCNs, and an intention to develop the model further in consultation with residents.

Lessons learnt - Recorded experiences of what has worked well or not when undertaking pieces of work. Intended to be shared so learning is not lost either within the programme and beyond

Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) – A annual review of the Council budgetary position and production of a rolling 3-year plan. This plan considers the financial climate at both the local and national level together with available resources and budgetary pressures in arriving at a financial strategy and budget for the Council.

Minimal viable product (MVP) – a business term meaning a version of a product with the minimum number of features to be usable by customers. This can then allow them to provide feedback to develop and improve it over time.

Mutual Aid – An agreement between our five Councils to provide short term assistance to resolve an issue or help deliver an important activity. Most often this relates to sharing staff, but can involve office space or other things.

Objectives - Specific statements of what is intended to be achieved by a piece of work. It helps when creating vision, goals, desired states.

Outcome - The result of outputs / capabilities put into action that makes a real-world difference to people's lives.

People Side of Change - Understanding and implementing what it takes to ensure the people closest to any change are equipped, enabled, and motivated to adopt new ways of doing things. Can include council services or ways that council staff work.

Policy Framework - guides the development of policies and procedures to ensure they are both consistent and user friendly for employees.

Practice – How people apply an idea or way of doing things, in the real world.

Process - The actions or steps taken to achieve a planned result or outcome

Procurement – obtaining or purchasing goods or services, ensuring that the correct rules and procedures are followed

Product - Quantifiable goods or services (outputs) that workstreams and Project Managers will create to deliver the new council. The LGR programme uses this term.

Product list - List of the products that the programme will deliver.

Programme - defined as the coordinated delivery of multiple, inter-related activities and projects to achieve a specified outcome by a specific date.

Programme Board - The Chief Executive Officers Programme Board lead the delivery of the LGR Programme. The membership of the Board is made up of the County and District Council Chief Executive's, the LGR Communications Lead, County Council Chief Finance Officer, County Monitoring Officer, Programme Director and PMO Programme Manager.

Programme Management Office (PMO) - PMO coordinates delivery of LGR Programme and is responsible for reporting and driving the overall programme.

Programme Steering Group (PSG) – Group made up of the Programme Director, Workstream Leads, District Council Leads, LGR Communication Lead and PMO Programme Manager. Its responsibilities include collaboration to develop key products, provide assurance to the Programme Board that the programme is progressing well, and deal with challenges or issues that may arise.

Project - A project is defined as a single package of work with a fixed duration of time to deliver specified outputs on a given date. Each workstream is responsible for delivering a range of projects, which make up the programme.

Project Workbook - A single place where management and reporting information for a project. Intended to be easier to manage than a range of different documents, it is used to avoid unnecessary duplication or copying information to other documents .

Purpose – The reason why something is done or created or why something exists.

Risk - The effect of uncertainty on what we are trying to achieve. The purpose of risk management is to identify and manage the barriers to achieving our objectives. Managing risk well is critical to success of the LGR programme.

Safe and legal – The term safe and legal is used to categorise products which are deemed essential to the operation of Somerset Council on day 1. Refers to services that need to be delivered, meeting their statutory obligations. Often used interchangeably with the term “Minimum Viable Product”

Scorecard – A reporting tool used by workstream and sub- workstream leads to report on the delivery of their products which is reported up to the to the Programme Board, Joint Scrutiny Committee, Implementation Board and SCC Executive.

SharePoint - SharePoint is a web-based collaborative platform used by all 5 councils to store, report and manage all information and documents relating to the programme. Performance and other reports (including publicly available ones) use information stored on SharePoint

Structural Changes Order- the legislation passed by Parliament which provides the legal powers to create the new unitary council. This includes its name - Somerset Council – and the day it begins operations which is 1st April 2023, or “Vesting Day”

Target Operating Model (TOM) - A Target Operating Model clearly states how an organisation will deliver its vision and corporate plans. It explains how the council and staff will work with residents and partners to deliver what the Council has decided it wants to achieve.

Tranche – The way in which the programme is broken down into specific groups of products to be delivered. Below is an explanation of the 3 levels: -

- **Tranche 1** – Delivery of products that are required on or before Vesting Day, including those essential to signalling the change to Somerset Council for our staff, Members & Customers. Also includes activity and products that enable products in tranches 2 and 3
- **Tranche 2** - Delivery of products that are important to the operation of services but that aren't critical for Vesting Day.
- **Tranche 3** - Delivery of products to deliver the longer-term benefits of a single unitary council for Somerset.

Transformation - Activity which aims to change and develop authorities to create savings or improve performance.

Transition - The period during which the new council is created.

Unitary Authority – The name for areas that have a single local authority responsible for all local government services there. For Somerset, this means a single council instead of the County and District Councils

Vesting Day - The day when the new unitary council – Somerset Council - is established and starts work, superseding the County and District “two tier” system. In Somerset Vesting Day will be 1st April 2023.

Workplan - Project plan showing milestones, activities and owners of work required to deliver the products and new council.

Workstream - How we are dividing up the programme to deliver it – based on the Business Case and agreement on “what sits where.” Workstreams are responsible for delivering a wide range of related products. There are 6 workstreams in the LGR Programme:

- Asset Optimisation (Technical & Property)
- Communities, Customers & Partnerships (CCP)
- Governance
- Finance
- People
- Service Alignment & Improvement (SA&I)

Workstream Board - Responsible for delivery of a range of related activities. Each Workstream has a Workstream Board, jointly headed by a County and District senior manager, known as a Workstream Lead, reporting to the Programme Board

Workstream Lead - County and District senior managers tasked with leading a programme workstream.

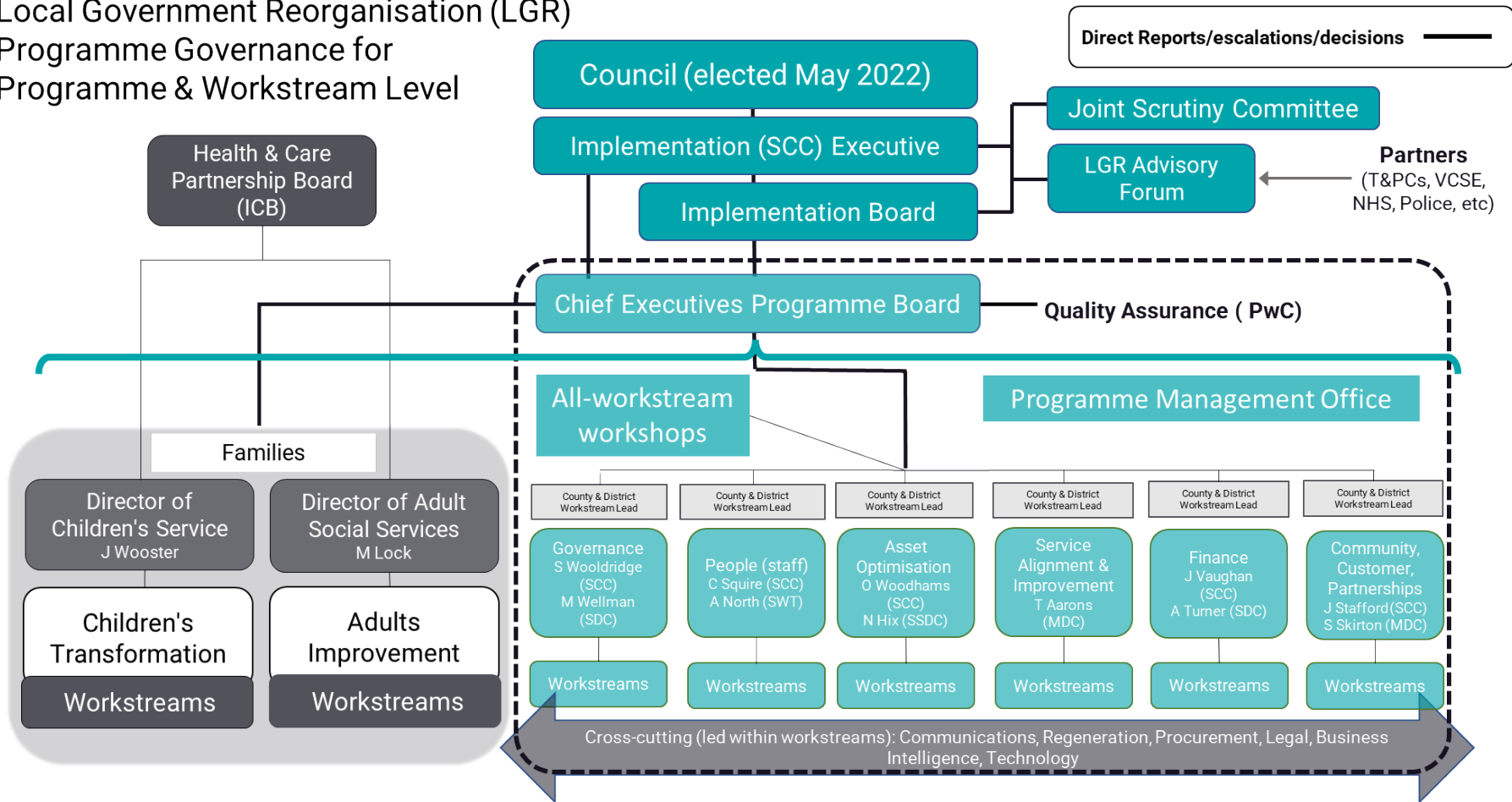
Appendix B – ‘Primary ‘ Tranche 1 Products

- 2023/24 Revenue & Capital Budgets and MTFP (Medium Term Financial Plan) approved by Council
- Adopt a new Digital Strategy
- Agreed set of organisational values, to flow from Workshops
- Appointment of Tier 1 Senior Management
- Appointment of Tier 2 Senior Management
- Asset devolution strategy & policy framework agreed
- Behavioural framework, to flow from Workshops
- Branding for new council
- Civic Arrangements
- Common approach to ways of working agreed
- Consequential Orders
- Continuing authority governance and democratic arrangements
- Corporate Planning Framework
- Council Key Contacts
- Council Tax & Business Rate bills & Benefit notifications correctly calculated & issued for the 2023/24 financial year
- Customer Strategy
- Disclosure and Barring Service processes
- Financial Regulations, Contract Standing orders, anti-fraud, money laundering and whistleblowing policies for new council
- Have in place agreed and aligned standards of service to ensure continued stable service delivery on Vesting Day
- Have in place business continuity management arrangements
- Have in place emergency plans reflecting Somerset Council
- Implementation Governance Meetings
- Information Governance framework and policies
- Internal Comms Strategy
- Internal People Staff Survey Strategy
- Key financial policies and strategies aligned
- Local Community Networks (LCNs)
- Members Induction and Development Programme
- New Target Operating Model
- New Organisation Structure

- New Single Website
- Onboarding processes finalised
- One Single Housing Revenue Account Finance Sheet
- P45 Registration to ICO (Information Commissioners Office)
- Partnership Strategy Framework
- Policy Framework for Service Devolution
- Records Management Strategy
- Role descriptions for Unitary Councillors
- Security Strategy & Management System: cyber security strategy and framework
- Security Strategy & Management System: integrated information security management system
- Single (ICT) platform and Identity management
- Single Finance System
- Single Learning Management System
- Single recruitment process and protocols
- Single set of HR policies and guidance for new Council
- Single set of HR policies and guidance for new Council
- Single Telephone number
- Soundly run election in May 2022
- Support to Parish and Town Councils
- Taunton Town Council Organisation
- Temporary Labour Contracts in place
- The transfer of all existing contracts (as at 31/03/2023) to the new Somerset Council in a seamless manner so that Goods, Services and Works are contractually compliant on 01/04/2023
- Toolkit for managers and teams, to help with integration and induction to the new organisation
- TUPE transfer of staff from District Councils to new Council
- Unitary Council governance arrangements/democratic structures
- Unitary Council New Constitution.
- Wellbeing programme

Appendix C – Programme Governance diagram

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)
 Programme Governance for
 Programme & Workstream Level



Appendix D – Sub-workstreams as of 10/10/2022

Workstream	Title
Assets Optimisation: Property	Asset Devolution Strategy and Policy Framework
	Asset Management Plan & Policy Framework
	Asset Management System
	Asset Rationalisation - Offices, Customer Service Points, Depots
	Consolidated Management of Commercial Investment Property
	Consolidated Management of Inflight Projects & Programmes
	Consolidated Management of surplus property and asset disposals
	Facilities, Printing and Staff Services
	Operating Model
	Valuations function established, policies and process
Assets Optimisation: Technical	Applications Roadmap and Contracts Review, Integration Strategy and Systems Architecture, Integrated Lines of Business
	CAPITA Contract Plan
	Consolidated ICT Asset Register & Asset Management
	Cyber Security strategy and Framework
	Disaster Recovery & Business Continuity
	End User Hardware and services, office productivity - Staff
	GIS Integration
	Hybrid Meetings & Committee Facilities
	ICT & Information Management Policy, technical governance & standards frameworks
	ICT Compliance and Assurance
	ICT Service Management Function - Other Products
	ICT Service Management Function - Priority Products
	ICT Traded Services
	Members ICT
	Mobile Telephony
	Network and Telephony (Network and Staff Comms Infrastructure)
	Operating Model for ICT Function
	Single Platform/Domain for new Unitary and Single Identity Management Solution
	Technology adoption and change plan
	Technology Strategy and Transition Planning
Communications	Brand Development
	Brand Roll-Out
	Corporate Communications Strategy
	Digital Communications Strategy

Workstream	Title
	External Communications Strategy
	Internal Comms Strategy
	Intranet
	Marketing Support for Income Generation
	Member Communications Plan
	Newsroom
	Public Engagement Plan
	Stakeholder Engagement Strategy
	Website Communications Functions
Communities, Customers and Partnerships	Customer Experience and Contact Centre
	Digital, Website and Accessibility
	Enhancing Partnerships
	Information and Data Management - Information Governance
	Local Community Networks (LCNs)
Finance	Accounts
	Budget planning & monitoring
	Compliance
	Exchequer
	Finance System
	Finance workstream architecture
	Non-Treasury Investments
	Procurement
	Revenues and Benefits
Treasury Management and Pensions	
Governance	Commercial Governance
	Corporate Performance
	Corporate Planning
	Electoral Arrangements and Elections
	Governance & Democratic Arrangements
	Member Development, Training and Induction
	New Operating Model
	Programme Governance Resources - Democratic
	Programme Governance Resources - Legal
	Programme Legal Advice and Support
	Records Management
	Taunton Town Council
Unitary Constitution and Structural Change Orders	
People	Cultures & Behaviours
	Diversity and Inclusion
	Health and Safety
	Organisational Design
	Organisational Development
	Payroll, Terms & Conditions and Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) (TUPE)
	Recruitment Services

Workstream	Title
	Wellbeing and Ways of Working
Programme Management Office	Target Operating Model
Service Alignment & Improvement	Building Control
	Business Change & PMO
	Business Intelligence
	Business Support
	Civil Contingencies and Emergency Planning
	Climate Change & Water
	Commissioning
	Communications
	Community and Family Safety
	Culture and Universal Community Services
	Environmental Health, Licensing and Coastal Services
	Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion
	Growth 1 - Prosperity & Economic Dev
	Growth 2 - Planning & Enabling
	Highways
	Housing 1 - Housing Landlord Functions
	Housing 2 - Operational Housing Services
	Housing 3 - Private Sector/Universal Provision
	Infrastructure Delivery & Active Travel
	Sports, Leisure and Countryside
Traffic Management	
Waste & Neighbourhood Services	

Appendix E – Critical Product Programme Delivery Plan at 1 November 2022

Nov 2022		Dec 2022	Jan 2023		Feb 2023						Feb 2023					Mar 2023		Apr 2023	
30/11/22		14/12/22	01/01/23		01/02/23	13/02/23	22/02/23				28/02/23					01/03/23	31/03/23	01/04/23	
Product 1061	Product 95	Product 509	Product 24	Product 90	Product 638	Product 1201	Product 237	Product 424	Product 70	Product 82	Product 10	Product 1178	Product 401	Product 423	Product 450	Product 6	Product 83	Product 1018	Product 1205
Define governance arrangements associated with LCNs	Common approach to ways of working agreed	Branding for new council agreed at executive	Taunton Town Council Organisation and democratic arrangements for new council agreed	Single set of HR policies and guidance for new Council	Fleet operations day 1 operational delivery (ensure safe and legal services on day 1)	Service Readiness across the programme for vesting day	Single Housing Revenue Account	Asset rationalisation - office accomodation strategy	Approval of the New Organisation Structure for Tiers 1, 2 & 3	Appointment of Senior Management in Tier 2 confirmed at Full Council	Unitary Council New Constitution.	Council Plan outlining strategic/political objectives for new council	2023/24 Capital Programme for Somerset Council	Asset & Service devolution strategy & policy framework agreed	ICT Disaster Recovery & Business Continuity	Consequential Orders	Appointment of Senior Management in Tier 3 confirmed at Full Council	Single telephone Number for new Council	Taunton Town Council Operational