

Somerset County Council  
LGR Implementation Board  
– 14<sup>th</sup> November 2022

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## **Local Community Network (LCN) Consultation Review**

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Executive Lead Member: Cllr Val Keitch

### **1. Summary**

- 1.1.** The Unitary business case sets out a vision for a '*new authority which will provide seamless and accessible local governance to the people of Somerset, with services redesigned to be delivered within communities at a local level*'. The establishment of Local Community Networks is a key commitment for the Council. Their creation presents an opportunity to put community influence and more local decision making at the heart of the new Council's operating model. The views of LGR Implementation Board are sought on the report to Executive which summarises reflects the work undertaken towards the establishment of LCNs by 1 April 2023.

### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1.** The recommendations to the LGR Implementation Board are –
- Note the findings described in the Executive Decision report - Local Community Network (LCN) Consultation Review.
  - To provide comments and views on the findings of the Executive Decision report and the proposed recommendations.

### **3. Background**

- 3.1.** The Executive Decision report - Local Community Network (LCN) Consultation Review report summarises the work undertaken towards the establishment of LCNs by 1 April 2023. In particular it reflects the research, consultation and engagement undertaken in recent months to consider in more detail the scope of the role of LCNs, and potential geographic boundaries. The report includes:
- Consultation feedback from public and stakeholder engagement about potential roles, responsibilities and boundaries for LCNs (considering the interrelated aspects of Function, Form and Name). It also reflects feedback from online briefings, pop up events and the City, Town and Parish conference on the 4<sup>th</sup> October 2022.
  - Comparison with other unitary councils who have been operating locality arrangements.
  - Reflection on learning to date from the three LCN pilot areas in

Somerset which have been carrying out work over the past year.

The report draws this information together into themes, draws out conclusions and identifies areas for further enquiry.

#### **4. Implications**

- 4.1.** The commitment to establishing LCNs has been the subject of much engagement and communication with communities, stakeholders and partners. A move to a single Unitary council introduces a risk of lack of local voice and community representation at a strategic level, resulting in a disconnect from localities. LCNs are key to mitigating this risk. Failure to define, support or adequately resource them will impact negatively on their chances of success, and potentially on the reputation of the new Council, and on trust between it and its communities. There is also an association with the LGR Programme risk: *Loss of opportunity to align public and VCSE services to new operating model and outcomes as defined in the business case.*

#### **5. Background papers**

Local Community Network Consultation Review paper for Executive Board 16 November 2022.