

Together we are delivering your

New Somerset Council

LGR Implementation Board Tuesday 20 December 2022 in the Luttrell Room County Hall, Taunton at 2.00 pm

To: The Members of the LGR Implementation Board

Cllr D Fothergill, Cllr V Keitch, Cllr L Leyshon, Cllr D McGinty, Cllr F Purbrick, Cllr B Revans, Cllr F Smith-Roberts and Cllr R Wyke

All Somerset County Council and District Council Members are invited to attend meetings of the Somerset Local Government Reorganisation Implementation Board Meeting.

Issued By Scott Wooldridge, Strategic Manager - Monitoring Officer, Somerset County Council – 12th December 2022

For further information about the meeting, please contact Andrew Melhuish on Andrew.melhuish@somerset.gov.uk or Laura Woon on Laura.woon@somerset.gov.uk

Guidance about procedures at the meeting follows the printed agenda.

This meeting will be open to the public and press, subject to the passing of any resolution under Regulation 4 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

This agenda and the attached reports and background papers are available via the council's website on www.somerset.gov.uk/agendasandpapers



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AGENDA

Item LGR Implementation Board - 2.00 pm Tuesday 20 December 2022

1 **Apologies for Absence**

To receive Board Member's apologies.

2 **Declarations of Interest**

Details of all Members' interests in District, Town and Parish Councils can be viewed on the Council Website at County Councillors membership of Town, City, Parish or District Councils and this will be displayed in the meeting room (Where relevant). The Statutory Register of Member's Interests can be inspected via request to the Democratic Service Team.

3 **Minutes from the last meeting held on 14 November 2022- to follow**

The Board is asked to confirm that the draft minutes of the previous meeting are accurate or to agree any amendments that are necessary.

4 **Public Question Time**

The Chair will allow members of the public to present a petition on any matter within the Board's remit. Questions or statements about any matter on the agenda for this meeting may be taken at the time when each matter is considered (see guidance notes).

5 **LGR Programme Update** (Pages 5 - 22)

To receive a presentation.

Day 1 Readiness

To receive a presentation.

PWC Update

To receive a presentation.

6 **New Council Plan** (Pages 31 - 50)

Item LGR Implementation Board - 2.00 pm Tuesday 20 December 2022

To consider the report and receive a presentation.

7 **LCN Development** (Pages 51 - 70)

To consider the report and receive a presentation.

8 **Risk Register** (Pages 71 - 90)

To receive a presentation.

9 **Young People Strategy** (Pages 91 - 102)

To receive the draft strategy.

10 **Any Other Urgent Items of Business**

The Chair may raise any items of urgent business.

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Programme Update
Programme Scorecard for October
PwC Report for October

Programme Progress Update

Programme Scorecard for month of October and PwC Monthly Report

Presenters:

Alyn Jones/Alastair Higton

Key points for discussion:

- Overall programme status: Amber
- The programme is part of the overall approach to MTFP
- Resourcing remains a challenge particularly in the Service Alignment workstream, however work continues to understand where these pressures are greatest and solutions being put in place now.
- Verbal update of changes / highlights in November scorecard

Ask of Implementation Board:

- Do the scorecard and verbal update demonstrate that the programme is delivering as intended?
- Where do Board have concerns?

Board are asked to note:

- **The report for November was not due to be finalised at the time of publication of papers.**
- **A verbal update on changes since the October Scorecard will therefore be provided at the Implementation Board meeting**

LGR in Somerset - Top Level Programme Scorecard - Position as of End of Oct 2022 [USING AVAILABLE DATA]

	Overall RAG		Resources		Schedule	
	Last Period	This Period	Last Period	This Period	Last Period	This Period
Overall Prog. RAG	A	A	A	A	A	A
Assets Optimisation: Property	A	A	A	A	A	A
Assets Optimisation: Technical	A	A	G	G	G	G
Communities, Customers & Partnerships	G	G	G	G	G	G
Finance	A	A	A	R	A	A
Governance	G	G	A	A	G	G
People	A	A	A	A	A	A
Service Alignment	A	A	R	R	A	A

Resource

Resources by Sub-Workstream	Last Period	This Period
Total Sub-Workstream Scorecards:	101	100
Sub-Workstreams Sufficiently Resourced	73	68
Sub-Workstreams with Borderline Resources	20	24
Sub-Workstreams Inadequately Resourced	8	8
No. of Products within Inadequately Resourced Sub-WSs	39	117
No. of Tranche 1 Products within Inad. Resourced Sub-WSs	13	43

Time

Time used and remaining until Vesting Day (April 2023):	Last Period	This Period
	(As of) 30/09/2022	(As of) 31/10/2022
Time Used (Since Oct 2021)	364 Days (67%)	395 Days (72%)
Time Remaining	183 Days (33%)	152 Days (28%)

Product Delivery (Tranche 1 and 2)

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All Workstreams	All T1 & T2 Products	Tranche 1	Tranche 2
Total Number of Products	277	209	68
Delivered	40	40	0
On Track	207	152	55
At Risk	2	2	0
Off Track	6	5	1
On Hold/Not yet Started	22	10	12

Milestone Delivery (Tranche 1 and 2)

All Workstreams	All T1 & T2 Products	Tranche 1	Tranche 2
Total Number of Products	910	706	204
Delivered	271	239	32
On Track	530	392	138
At Risk	5	4	1
Off Track	46	33	13
On Hold/Not yet Started	20	0	20

Programme Overview

- The programme remains as an Amber RAG overall due to new areas of slippage to programme delivery and no change to the ongoing resourcing pressures in key areas of the programme, leaving limited or no resilience in the event of unexpected absences. Where resource pressures are unlikely to improve, sub workstreams are reviewing day one delivery to ensure there is a clear understanding of the minimum viable product should prioritisation be required to maintain both stable BAU service delivery and minimum LGR requirements, e.g. Revenues and Benefits; Health & Safety).
- Consultation on the new top structure (Tier 1-3) and TUPE consultation with all staff started in early November. Messages to staff on timing and sequencing of restructuring and TUPE have been communicated and will continue throughout the process. Administrative resource is required to ensure that the appointments process for Tiers 2 and 3 is managed efficiently and effectively. The People Workstream are exploring options and will escalate to Board if required. There are still some uncertainties around TUPE of Capita staff, and the team working on Capita contract are working hard to get the required information from Capita.
- ^{Page 5} The PMO/Business Readiness group continues to co-ordinate the programme's approach to readiness for Day 1. A framework for success has been developed based on Programme Steering Group and stakeholder feedback so that we have a clear and shared understanding of capabilities and desired outcomes for day one from a customer, staff and organisational perspective. An engagement timetable and readiness action plan are now being co-produced with stakeholders. Work to develop the interim day one structure beneath the new tiers 1-3 is ongoing and will progress at pace to inform service level workforce/resource planning and staff engagement for day one. The programme is also looking at how we ensure day 1 problems are identified and resolved swiftly: we are collaborating with Buckinghamshire Council on their approaches and experience.
- Work has started to confirm Tranche 2 scope and definition. A matrix is being developed to baseline the extent of each service in the new council on day 1 and the transition activity currently planned by each service in the first year of the Unitary. This will provide an overview of the extent and pace of transitional change to fully align services, e.g. structure, systems, processes, and to deliver the Business Case savings. It will also help ensure appropriate phasing of activity is planned within available resources.
- Change and adoption planning for the new finance system Dynamics 365 is progressing, with change champions meeting for the first time to review the detailed thinking that has gone into the design phase of the system, gaining a better understanding of what it will look and feel like. Change and adoption activity will be made more visible in the programme plan e.g. training and development.

Scorecard for month of November

- **The scorecard for November was not due to be finalised at the time of publication of papers.**
- **A verbal update on changes since the October report will therefore be provided at the Implementation Board meeting**

Programme Progress Update

Peer Review

Presenter
Alastair Higton

Key points for discussion:

1. To give an update on the Peer Review now completed
2. Next steps regarding Peer Review report and required action plan
3. Implementation Board papers were published before the draft Peer Review report was shared, therefore a verbal update / supplemental information will be provided

Ask of Implementation Board:

- To note the update and programme commitment to respond to the Peer Review findings
- In response to the verbal update / any supplemental report (see point 3 above), offer views on how the programme should respond to Peer Review findings

Peer Review

- Carried out between 6-8 December, looking at
 - Day 1 readiness
 - Preparations for developing the Council after Vesting Day
 - Development of Local Community Networks
- Spoke with Members, Workstream Leads, Chief Executives, partners and a range of staff across all 5 councils: 75 individuals in total in 1.5 days
- A report will be produced by the LGA
 - Initial feedback afternoon 8 December
 - Draft report sent to the council by 15 December 2022
 - Comments shared back through Executive for final report completion
 - Report signed off by the council and published within 6 weeks of final report, alongside a programme action plan

Report will be shared with Joint Scrutiny Committee and Implementation Board

Programme Progress Update

PwC Monthly Assurance report

Presenter:
PwC

Key points for discussion:

This is the assurance report covering October which is intended to:

- Set out emerging themes, insights and reflections as part of the 'critical friend' role the core team have been commissioned to provide, informed by outputs from workshops, 1:1 meetings and smaller working sessions; and attendance at Programme Board and other meetings
- Provide an overview of some of the key activities that have taken place over the past month
- Propose solutions to issues identified and suggested next steps. This monthly report contains reflections from a particular point in time and recognises the progress that has been made against issues or risks highlighted in previous reports.

Ask of Implementation Board:

- To review the report and challenge / offer views on alternatives or amendments to respond to PwC's analysis.

Board are asked to note:

- **The report for November was not due to be finalised at the time of publication of papers.**
- **A verbal update on changes since the October report will therefore be provided at the Implementation Board meeting**

PwC Monthly report for October

- Appended to papers as an appendix
- **The report for November was not due to be finalised at the time of publication of papers.**
- **A verbal update on changes since the October report will therefore be provided at the Implementation Board meeting**

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Business and Vesting Day Readiness

Alyn Jones and Alastair Higton

Programme Progress Update

Business and Vesting Day Readiness

Presenter:

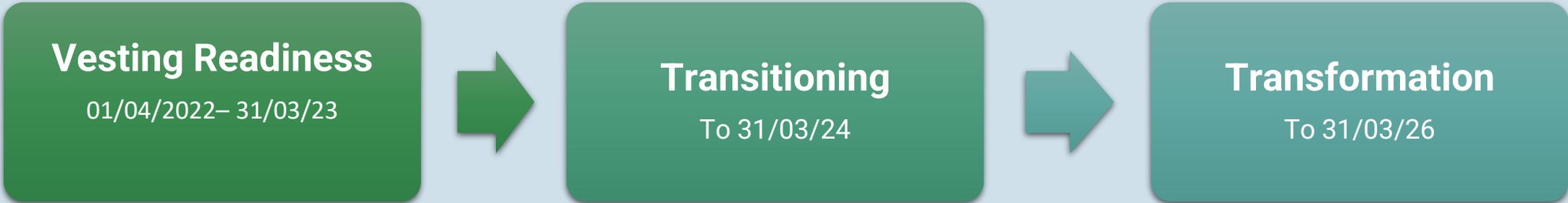
Alyn Jones / Alastair Higton

Ask of Implementation Board:

- Note the approach being taken to readiness and culture of the new Council
- Take a view on whether this approach will deliver the outcomes desired, in particular:
 - For the public
 - For Elected Members
 - With reference to the unitary council Business Case

Programme Timeline

Our strategic environment



Tranche 1

Tranche 2

Tranche 3

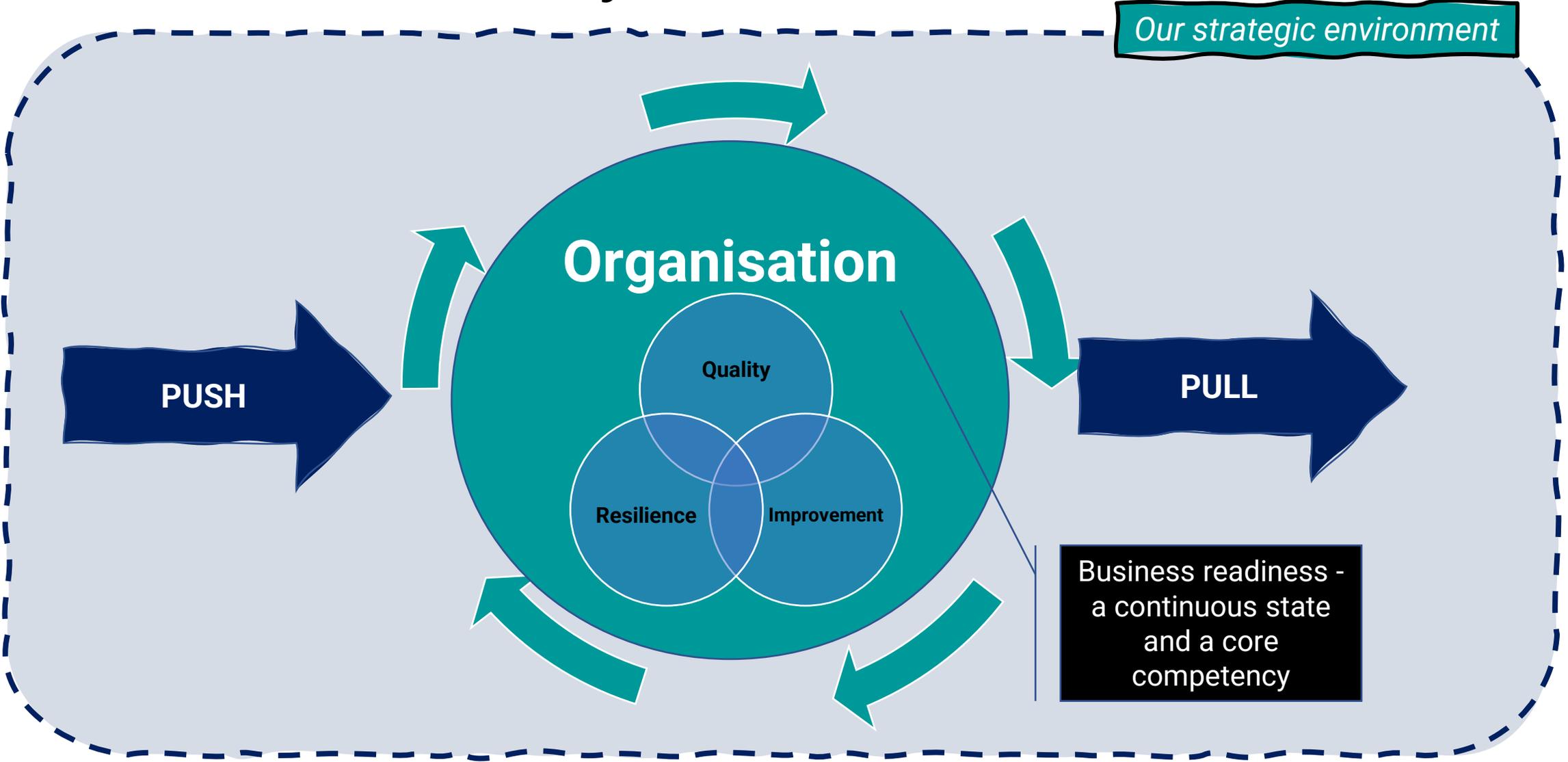
PMO Gateway

Business Readiness

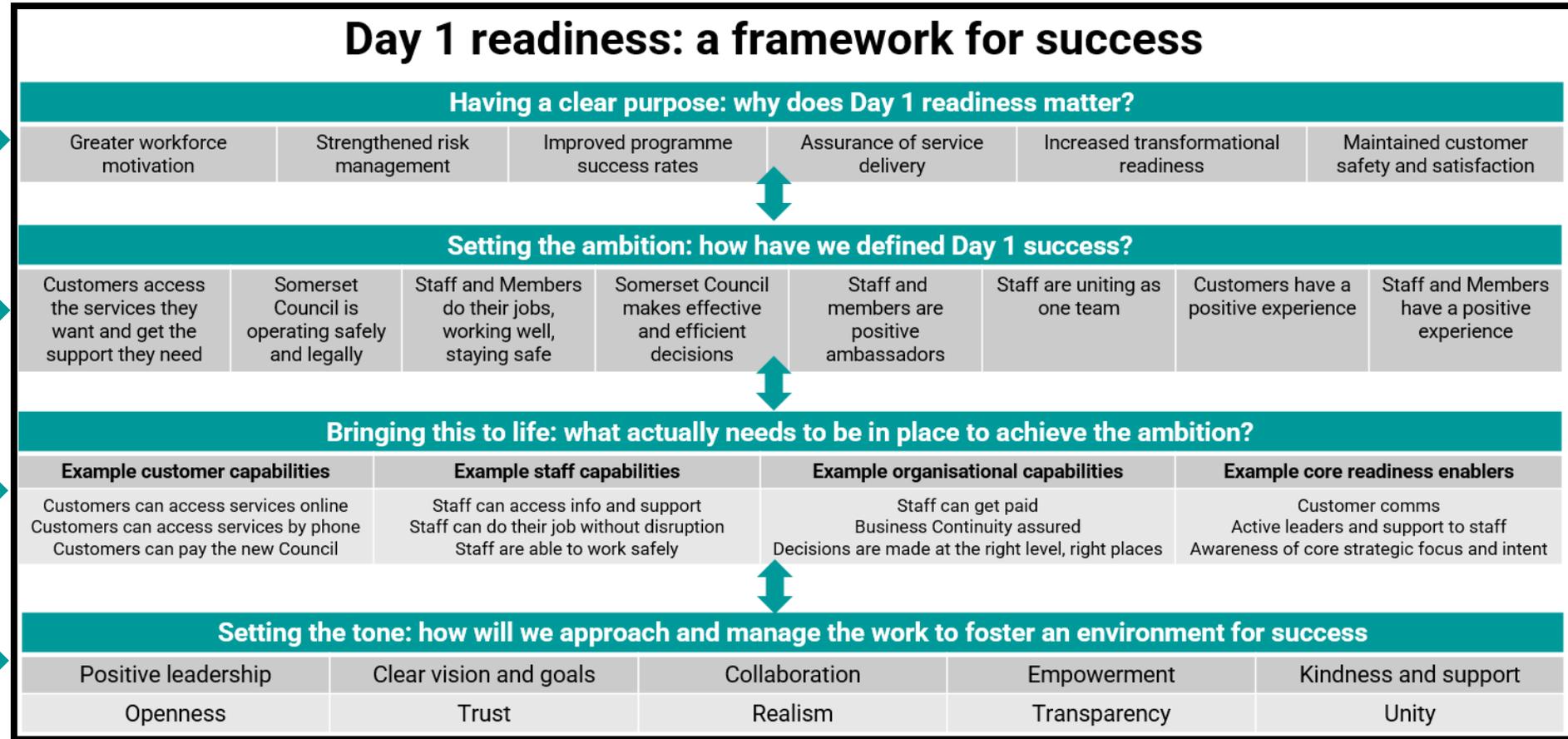
Stage	Tranche	The Purpose
1 Vesting Readiness	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Centralised focus on preparing staff, members, customers, partners and services to adopt critical new ways of working from Day 1 – those things that assure service delivery and achieve T1 outcomes/benefits during the
2 Transition	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparing staff, members, customers, partners and services to adopt the defined new ways of working driven from the LGR programme
3. Transformation	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> working with staff, members, customers, partners and services to strengthen the factors that enable organisational agility, whether through service improvement, ongoing transition activity, the new transformation programme or business continuity/performance

What do we mean by Business Readiness?

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What good looks like for vesting readiness



Why (Vision): key messages for strengthening buy in



What (Outcomes): clear vision to unite efforts on what matters most



How (Capabilities): set goals to achieve that will measure success



How (Principles): principles to adopt to shape the work and promote success



Vesting Readiness - what good looks like

Customer	Staff /Members	Organisation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customers can continue to interact with, use services and do business with the council • Customers can access services online • Customers can access services by phone • Customers keep their case worker • Customers can continue to access services locally / face to face • Customers can pay the new Council • Customer records are accessible to service staff • Customers can make complaints and compliments • Customers can invoice the new Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff/members can do their job without disruption to business • Staff/members understand new ways of working and what this means for them • Staff/members can access information & support as required • Staff continue to signpost customers to the right place for services & information • Staff are supported by their leaders • Staff understand the journey we've been on including the benefits and opportunities of a single unitary • Transition to Somerset Council is visible to staff and opportunities are understood • Staff are motivated and contribute to Day 1 success • Leaders and managers present a united front 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff are able to work safely • New Senior Leadership Team is in place and visible • There is a clear vision and intent for the culture of the new organisation to unite us • Business Continuity assured • Decisions can be made at the right level and in the right places in line with corporate strategies • Staff can get paid • There are the right systems and processes in place to manage staff • Members know and can fulfil their roles • We have standard operating procedures, policies, frameworks, and licenses for staff to use / follow • There are systems and processes in place to recruit, retain and manage resources • There is a mechanism in place for us to escalate and respond quickly to day 1 problems & issues • The Unitary meets its statutory and legal obligations

Current readiness objective: **Continuity of service delivery to the communities of Somerset under a new Brand 'Somerset Council'**

Next steps

Setting the scene for the culture and behaviours we need for the new council to thrive:

- Input into recruitment processes for Tier 2 and 3 leaders
- Develop tools for role modelling, experience sharing, peer learning & challenge
- A group of officers across the 5 councils will begin engaging with staff and others to create and deliver a work plan
 - This will include specific design of additional “core products” such as digital collaboration, and involvement of the Chief Executive and Tier 2 Executive Directors once they are designated

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October 2022



Contents

This is the ninth monthly report which is intended to:

- set out insights and reflections as part of the 'critical friend' role the core team have been commissioned to provide.
- review the previous assurance reports from September, the programme BI dashboards, and incorporates an updated view on progress over the course of September and October based on our attendance of Programme Board, and regular meetings with the core PMO team.

This monthly report (October 2022) contains reflections from a particular point in time.

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October Review: Summary

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- The programme still needs to bring together the key products of the MTFP, Activity Analysis and LGR workstreams with the development of the TOM through a series of interim states to provide the programme with a clear steer and direction in the coming months and years. This is essential to retaining some focus on future transformation beyond Vesting Day.
- The Change Readiness workstream is a critical component of understanding what Vesting Day - and the immediate days and weeks beyond that - will look and feel like and provide the context for any contingency plans that will be required.
- There is a continuing need to be mindful of the risk of insufficient capacity and the impact this will have on the programme, particularly in terms of key deliverables expected for Day 1. The focus is now on delivery and problem-solving - especially in relation to vesting day - but there needs to be sufficient capacity and capabilities in place to be able to also focus on the longer-term financial demands and transformation in years 1-3.
- Communications capacity needs to be considered as Vesting Day is now four and a half months away and the impact on workforce - and the wider attention in the public domain - becomes more acute.

LGR Programme - governance considerations

Overview of insights

Changes to the governance arrangements have been made and the workstream leads are now focussing the time they have together through working sessions on key issues and the programme steering group has been disbanded.

The devolved model of delivery still contributes to a somewhat inconsistent understanding of what impact the change of milestones might mean elsewhere - and therefore the impact on what will be ready to go live on vesting day and what will be required to be delivered through longer-term transformation.

This is evidenced in the nature of some of the discussions taking place at Programme Board e.g. the impact of the delay of some products and milestones and the potential to compound the pressure on capacity in November and December.

A range of products have been identified in previous monthly reports that warrant more central ownership and / or oversight of product delivery - some of which have begun to be addressed. These include:

- Change management including communications and the interaction with the People workstream
- Target Operating model
- MTFP and benefits identification and tracking
- Service standards
- Technology-related products

Proposed next steps/issues to consider

- There is greater clarity now about the leadership and delivery of tranche 1 products and anything else that is required by vesting day. This is being led through the change readiness workstream. Being clear about the 1st April 2023 requirement vs longer term transformation will make it simpler to focus on the urgent whilst not losing sight of the important. It will also provide greater clarity and purpose for change management and communications activity. Continuing to consolidate aspects of the programme into a change management approach will be required as vesting day gets closer.
- The governance of key issues that cut across the existing councils, the continuing authority and LGR programme responsibilities has become a particularly pertinent issues in recent weeks. Whilst steps were rapidly taken to address these issues,, the somewhat reactive nature of that action meant that the timeframes were very challenging and the risk level much higher.
- Maintain a focus on longer term transformation and how to connect the key products holistically across the programme; this will enable the TOM to steer the design of the new Council. The close interdependence between the operating model, MTFP, activity analysis, and scoping of tranche 2 and 3 ('the wider transformation') also reinforces the importance of stronger central steer. In addition, there may be a core set of 'central' products where responsibility for delivery should sit centrally within the workstream, not the sub workstream (e.g. service standards by SAI). It is important that the TOM, MTFP and corporate framework work in combination to guide the design and function of services and products across the programme.

LGR Programme - leadership considerations

Overview of insights

- Leadership steer on and ownership of key issues: There are some issues which are simply a matter for the CEXs and these should be owned at a board level. There is a question as to whether the 8 week forward plan provides a sufficient level of insight in terms of the scale and sensitivity of the issues in order to ensure they are considered in an appropriate way.
- The Change Readiness workstream is due to report to the Programme Board mid-November which will provide a more detailed level of insight into the preparations for 1 April 2023.
- The role of Implementation Board needs to mature and consider which issues should the Board be considering/having input into, mindful that decision making is held at an Executive level.

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Proposed next steps/issues to consider

- A number of time sensitive issues have been discussed at the Programme Board in recent weeks. One consideration needs to be as to whether the terms of reference for that group need to be re-visited given the emerging tensions - and different responsibilities - of the respective existing local authorities and the continuing authority.
- Consideration needs to be given as to whether there is enough space for the 'so what' conversations to take place around Vesting day and risk in particular and where accountability lies.
- A close review of the initial outputs from the Change Readiness workstream will be required to ensure that there is clarity about the critical path from identification of product to execution and that there are sufficient capabilities and capacity in place to deliver. This will also drive the ongoing Programme Board forward plan.
- Support to Members - consideration needs to be given to whether Members have the right level of support in the context of this significant level of change.

LGR Programme - tranche 1/vesting day delivery

Overview of insights

The Change Readiness update to Programme Board which is due mid-November will be an important point in understanding what vesting day (and the following weeks and months) will look and feel like.

Previous reports have reflected a number of recommendations and suggestions around areas for improvement in the run up to vesting day delivery. They note:

- The Programme is at a stage where it must balance the delivery of a safe and legal functioning authority in the context of a widening MTFP savings gap, and define and set the foundations for the improvements and transformation that will occur post-vesting day. This requires a clear vision of the new council, which the operating model design will deliver. The Programme should bring together the operating model design, identification of savings, and tranche 2 and 3 planning as a combined piece of work.
- Priority Focus Areas for the programme:
 - (1) ensuring critical products are on track and there is agreement around what they will and will not deliver (as well as what will need to happen if planned activities and products are not delivered in time),
 - (2) strengthening the assumptions and clarifying the timeframes around the realisation of LGR savings and non-cashable benefits,
 - (3) key programme-level risks,
 - (4) ensuring the Programme has the right capacity, skills, and experience.

Proposed next steps/issues to consider

- Monthly QA sessions have helped to examine progress against milestones for Tranche 1 and 2 products.
- Overall the LGR Programme scorecard is RAG rated as Amber with the Finance, Asset Optimisation and Service Alignment workstreams highlighting the most risks.
- Whilst there is an 8 week forward plan in place, further consideration needs to be given to the issues that are raised at Programme Board so they are dealt with in a timely and appropriate way.
- While the focus on the MVP has helped with prioritisation, there remains room for interpretation around what constitutes the MVP and what will be delivered by vesting day. It is likely that without clear direction from the TOM there will remain a lack of clarity in this area. The Change Readiness workstream will need to address this and sufficient space needs to be given at Programme Board and in briefing Members.
- The cumulative effect of changes to milestones needs to be taken account of at a programme wide level, potentially through the forum of Programme Board. It is important to develop a holistic view so that any impacts and interdependencies for Vesting Day are visible. This should link with the activity of the Change Readiness workstream.

LGR Programme - year 1-3 transformation considerations

Overview of insights

While focusing on the delivery of a safe and legal authority on Vesting day, there is also the simultaneous task of progressing the longer term 1-3 year considerations. Given the focus now on Vesting Day and immediate issues, there needs to be a continuing focus on transformation. This is becoming critical given the growing MTFP gap and associated need for robust and associated transformation.

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- Whilst the programme is focused on delivering tranche 1 products it is also essential that the foundations continue to be laid down for the transformation and financial sustainability in the new council. This includes continuing to develop the target operating model and develop plans to transform and improve services across tranches 2 and 3. This will be required to realise the benefits that underpinned the original decision to proceed with LGR, and to address the emerging MTFP savings gap.
 - Bringing together the activity analysis, operating model design, and MTFP to inform tranche 2 and 3 planning is now critical:
 - (1) A range of core products that will inform the wider transformation of the new council post vesting day should tie in closely with the identification of LGR savings.
 - (2) The activity analysis will identify areas for investigation to realise further savings.
 - (3) In addition, operating model choices will be evaluated against indicative costs, so it is important that these parameters are set and consistent with the savings allocated to each service.
 - (4) Finally, technology as a key enabler in driving service improvements and efficiencies should be reflected in the technology strategy and applications roadmap.

Proposed next steps/issues to consider

- Gain leadership approval to proceed urgently with development of the TOM to act as the link between the manifesto, Council Plan, MTFP, LGR Plan and any future Transformation Plans and to give the new council the best chance of being sustainable in the years ahead..
- Secure the capacity and capability required to develop the TOM further drawing on the TOM work done to date, input and engagement from key officers and politicians, the activity analysis, the current MTFP thinking and harnessing the expertise and experience available from your advisors.
- Use the TOM development work in conjunction with the activity analysis to inform the further development of the MTFP and the development of robust transformation plans
- Consider the extent to which these transformation plans should be delivered through Tranches 2 and 3 of the programme and whether or not other vehicles may be useful
- Bring plans to deliver MTFP savings into an overarching transformation programme to deliver the TOM. The initial budgetary plans for the unitarisation were made prior to growing economic challenges. Budget expectations may need to be adjusted accordingly.
- Insufficient focus and investment on transformation in the pre-vesting day period is a common failing of LGR programmes. Many LGR programmes end up focusing closely on vesting day and this creates a significant challenge in getting quickly into transformation post-vesting day. This could be a significant risk in Somerset given the challenges being faced around the MTFP and increasing demand.

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Proposed Council Plan for Somerset Council

Executive Member(s): Cllr Bill Revans -
Leader of the Council

Local Member(s) and Division: All

Lead Officer: Duncan Sharkey – Chief Executive

Authors: Tony Johnson – Strategic Manager Business Intelligence

Contact Details: tony.johnson@somerset.gov.uk

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1. Summary / Background

- 1.1** This report summarises the proposed Council Plan for Somerset Council (See appendix A) which details the strategic ambitions and direction of the authority for the term of the administration. This plan aims to give residents, businesses, and communities a transparent view of the strategic direction of the organisation and provides a focal point from which all further strategic planning and decision making can grow.
- 1.2** The plan details four overarching themes and the key focus of priorities that will deliver those themes. The plan also details a number of principles and values which will guide how the plan is to be delivered.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1.** Implementation Board is asked to review the draft Council Plan as set out in appendix A and to provide feedback where the draft plan does not meet the objectives of the business case.

3. Reasons for recommendations

- 3.1** This plan will provide a key focal point for strategic direction of the new authority and provide a transparent document for residents, businesses and communities to see the key priorities of the Council.

4. Other options considered

- 4.1.** A number of alternative themes were considered during the early development of this plan. However, these were all based on the priorities set out in the manifesto of the administration and adapted to take account of the current environment in which the council will need to operate.

5. Links to County Vision, Business Plan and Medium-Term Financial Strategy

- 5.1.** This plan provides the new vision and strategic direction for the Council. Whilst this plan does not include detailed costings it does set out that the delivery of this plan will need to be funded within the Medium-Term Financial Plan.

5.2. The Business Plan for Somerset Council will be developed following adoption of the Council Plan and this will set out in detail how the priorities within the Council plan will be delivered.

6. Consultations and co-production

6.1. Consultation on developing the draft plan has been undertaken with:

- Executive [collectively and individually]
- Directors and strategic leads of existing Somerset Councils
- Senior Management Teams
- LGR Corporate Planning Sub-workstream
- LGR Programme Board and LGR Programme Steering Group

6.2. Additional engagement will be undertaken with Members, key stakeholders, and partner agencies in the New Year

7. Financial and Risk Implications

7.1. There are no direct financial implications to this document, as the plan itself does not deliver projects, programmes or activities. However, the ambitions within are subject to any changes to budget and funding which might affect the level of impact that can be achieved.

7.2. There are no specific risks to be linked to the Plan however failure to deliver the plan could cause reputational harm. This will be managed through consistent performance reporting and corrective management actions as set out in the Council’s Performance Management Framework.

Likelihood	1	Impact	3	Risk Score	3
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8. Legal and HR Implications

8.1. There are no legal implications to this recommendation being accepted, as this plan provides strategic direction only, however there may be future decisions in the delivery of this plan that themselves have legal implications and will need to follow the relevant processes.

8.2. The plan itself does not create any staff implications, however a key role in the delivery of this plan is that staff should be able to see how their service plans link through the Business plan to the Council plan.

9. Other Implications

9.1. Equalities Implications

The projects, programmes and activities undertaken to deliver the plan will be subject to appropriate impact assessments on an individual basis.

9.2. Community Safety Implications

Whilst this plan provides strategic direction to services within the authority, it does not have any direct implications on community safety.

9.3. Sustainability Implications

This plan details A Greener, More Sustainable Somerset as one of the key themes for the organisation and provides strategic direction for services within the authority.

9.4. Health and Safety Implications

There are no implications to Health and Safety

9.5. Health and Wellbeing Implications

This plan gives strategic direction for the authority around improved health and wellbeing, a focus on prevention and the reduction of inequalities.

9.6. Social Value

The Council Plan continues to promote building social value into the strategic direction of the authority.

Once the associated Business Plan is adopted there will be a review of the Council's Social Value priorities to ensure alignment.

10. Scrutiny comments / recommendations:

- 10.1.** The Joint Scrutiny Committee meeting scheduled for 8 December 2022 was unfortunately cancelled owing to it not being quorate. Therefore, comments and recommendations from the Committee have not been received.

11. Background

- 11.1.** The Council Plan sets out the overarching aims of the Council for the coming years. The plan will sit at the top of the Strategic Planning Framework for the council and its themes and priorities will flow through the Business Plan. The Business Plan will set out in more detail how priorities will be delivered, and down in to Service Plans and Individual Plans, hence enabling staff to identify how their work contributes to the Council's overall objectives.

11.2. The plan will provide a clear view on the priorities of the Council to residents, businesses, and partners.

How the organisation will work towards delivering the outcomes of the plan will be described in the Council's Business Plan and Service Plans. The performance reporting arrangements detailed in the plan will provide the mechanism to track progress and manage delivery of the Plan Priorities.

12. Background Papers

12.1. Appendix A – DRAFT Somerset Council Plan

Appendix A - Council Plan Draft for LGR Implementation Board

Introduction from the Leader of the Council

We launch our plan for the new Somerset Council with huge ambition - love for our beautiful county, faith in its amazing people and excitement that as one council we can achieve so much more for our residents, working closely with our partners and communities.

However, we know that this plan has been prepared in challenging times – tougher than anyone currently working in local government can recall. Fourteen years of austerity has reduced the flexibility of councils to respond to residents' needs. And current economic and political trends suggest that central Government may not have the capacity to tackle our crucial long term strategic challenges, such as effective financial support for our care services or reform of our planning system.

But these circumstances make this plan even more important. It would be far too easy to let this national context define our local outcomes and descend into the blame game. This plan sets a foundation for our council and our ambition for our future.

It sets out clear priorities against which we will measure all of our policies and actions over the coming years. Woven through all our plans are four threads: a determination to tackle the impact of the climate and ecological emergencies; a commitment to developing a fairer Somerset; the compassion to make Somerset a healthier and more caring place to live; and the ambition to create a flourishing and resilient county.

Our beautiful county is at the front line of climate change and the ecological emergency. Our coastline is vulnerable, and the Somerset levels and moors are at imminent risk. We must play our role in the global solutions to our local challenges.

Developing a fairer Somerset will mean reducing inequality. Too many of our families will struggle to put food in the table and heat their homes over the coming years. We need to increase aspiration and opportunity in our schools and ensure good local jobs when young people move into adulthood.

The wellbeing of our residents is key to our ambition of a healthier Somerset. This is why our leisure and cultural services are so important to us. We also need to provide effective care for Somerset residents when they need it and alongside effective support to the family carers who play such a part in providing care.

A properly flourishing Somerset requires an enterprising and resilient economy. We understand that the only real long-term growth will be sustainable growth and we plan to become a leader in low carbon technology and energy.

We are councillors because we love Somerset. I can think of no better place to live but we want to make it better still, and better for all the people of Somerset.

SUMORSAETE EALLE!

The Opportunities of a new Council

Bringing together the experience, expertise, assets and networks from the five predecessor councils into the new Somerset Council has created an organisation that is in a stronger position to advocate for Somerset on regional, national and international platforms, as well as meeting the needs of our local communities.

We will work closely with partners to get Somerset's voice heard. We will demonstrate that this is a county that is aspirational, dynamic and will deliver on our promises.

Our single decision-making system creates a more streamlined council and will make it easier and more efficient for us to deliver services. It will be easier for members, officers and public alike to understand the full range of work that is going on across the council, avoiding duplication and gaps.

We will be more joined up in the way we work with partners. Having a single council to work with will make it easier for partners to understand our priorities and issues, they will have fewer points of contact and will hear one voice.

All of this will take time. It won't happen on day one but over the course of this Plan the new Council will focus closely on developing more unified ways of providing services to residents.

Our Vision

Our vision for Somerset Council will be our guiding beacon through the next four years.

The new Somerset Council will build a fairer, greener, more flourishing, Somerset that cares for the most vulnerable and listens to you.

This dynamic vision puts all the people of Somerset at the heart of everything we do; we will be a council that is there whenever our residents need us. The way in which we deliver our services may change, but we are committed to making all your interactions with the council easier and build trust over the coming years.

Priorities

We have developed four priorities to make our vision clearer and more meaningful. These priorities are our way of explaining what is important for us to focus on while we are transforming our new Council, while we are delivering our services and while we are planning how to improve those services. In the next section we have also set out the cross-cutting themes which are the threads that will run through everything we do.

Insert priorities diagram

A Greener, More Sustainable Somerset

An environmentally sustainable and more resilient Somerset

The Somerset Climate Emergency strategy was developed in partnership and adopted by all councils in 2020. The Somerset Council will build on the work carried out by Districts and County councils and will now address ecological issues alongside the climate emergency.

We will ensure that addressing both climate and ecological emergencies are integrated into all areas of our work, including housing and planning policies, transport, economic development and access.

Somerset is a largely rural county with invaluable diverse landscapes which include Exmoor National Park, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, woodlands, the Somerset levels and moors and the West Somerset coast. These should be celebrated and accessible to everyone, as well as recognised for their economic benefits from tourism, but where we can these will be managed to protect habitats and restore biodiversity. The Council will also use its policies and voice to support and encourage others to do the same.

Working with partners and residents, the Council is one of a number of custodians of the environment. However, it is also our duty to enable provision of homes, economic development and services for current and future residents. There is frequently tension around what is appropriate development on green spaces and there is no one-size-fits-all answer to this. Each proposal will be considered on the evidence provided.

Transport is one of the key drivers of our carbon footprint. Active travel options, including walking and cycling, for local journeys and an effective public transport system that meets the needs of more of our residents will be an integral part of our climate change strategy.

Somerset is also home to a range of nationally and regionally significant historic buildings and artefacts. These will also be treated sensitively to preserve our cultural heritage for present and future generations, with an integrated approach to achieving our climate change goals.

A Healthy and Caring Somerset

We want all our residents to stay as healthy as possible, for as long as possible. Promoting wellbeing is a crucial part of our prevention strategy to help people live full and healthy lives for as long as they are able. Those that need help will look to Somerset Council and its partners to support them.

A preventative strategy underlies our commitment to the wellbeing of Somerset residents. We know that when people have good information about their health care, can access leisure facilities, open spaces, cultural experiences and social opportunities, our residents mental and physical health will thrive.

Whenever Somerset residents need support, we will make sure that they can access what they need. That might be directly from the council or in partnership with local communities or the private sector. Often the help that is provided by people from the local community is most effective, so in many cases the role of the Council is to influence the type of services that are available in each community so that they best match local needs.

We recognise and **value our unpaid carers and are committed to supporting them to maintain their health and wellbeing** so that they can continue to care for those who need them.

Somerset is a county of fantastic communities. Through the covid pandemic we saw hundreds of volunteers eager to help people in their local community. Our role is to assist those people who want to help their community and to encourage those who struggle with time or commitments to do what they can.

The **development of Local Community Networks** is key to making sure that we understand local needs and truly represent communities to give them the ability to influence the work of the council and make sure the right services are in the right places.

A Fairer Somerset

Somerset is a county of diversity. Somerset Council wants to make this a county of opportunity for all. There are massive differences in the quality of our residents' lives depending on their backgrounds. Those on the lowest incomes are more likely to struggle to pay their energy and food bills, more likely to have housing that is harder to heat and have less access to essential services. Life in these circumstances is harder and more challenging.

A priority for this Council is to do whatever we can to reduce the inequalities that cause these disparities, so that everyone in Somerset can live their lives as they choose.

To change this, we will have to make a greater effort in the parts of Somerset which are struggling the most. We'll work with communities and through the Somerset Integrated Care Partnership to get a detailed understanding of what the issues that cause such disparities are and how we will work together to make a difference.

The current cost of living crisis means that more of Somerset's children will grow up in homes that struggle to feed, clothe, and keep them warm. The differences between the lowest and average income homes are stark. We know that those who don't have a good start are more likely to continue to face difficulties throughout their lives and we are committed to working to help significantly **reduce number of children who experience poverty.**

We need our children to get an excellent education and to aspire to achieve their goals in life. Education outcomes in Somerset are not good enough, especially for children from lower income homes. All children need **access to good schools, colleges, further education, and higher education.** We want our young people to stay in, or return to, Somerset because they have the option of a well-paid, rewarding job.

The lack of affordable housing contributes to the challenges of keeping younger people within Somerset. We will continue to demonstrate leadership around the whole range of housing issues and use the skills and knowledge from a wide range of partners to be **innovative in our approach to housing** and supporting people who are struggling. The provision of decent quality, low-carbon social housing will be integral to us in delivering a fairer county.

The rural nature of our county exacerbates the difficulties of getting access to services and jobs. Where access is possible it can take a lot longer, particularly if travelling on foot, by bike or by bus. Our aim is to find ways which **improve access to local jobs and services, and to the beautiful Somerset countryside.** This will require us to think differently and work with partners to consider the access implications of our plans.

We know that many people want to access the council using their smartphone or computer but for others this is not an option. We will increasingly provide 24 hour digital access to interact with us, but we will still be here if you need to have a

conversation with someone. We will work hard to make sure that all contacts with the council are user friendly, promoting a culture of trust and reliability.

Somerset residents who are LGBT+, live with disabilities or come from BAME backgrounds often feel they are not included in our society. Somerset Council will strive to develop an inclusive culture for all our residents.

A Flourishing and Resilient Somerset

Now, more than ever, we need to promote Somerset at a regional, national and international level, promoting the wealth of opportunities to bring investment and highly skilled, well-paid jobs for Somerset people. We will need to be strategic and dynamic to ensure the skilled workforce is available to support the innovative industries that call Somerset their home.

The need for a thriving education sector will be paramount to making sure that Somerset flourishes economically. Somerset Council will be a strategic leader in improving the education offer at all levels working closely with partners to raise aspiration and boost local opportunities. We are acutely aware that, without a university, the higher education offer in Somerset holds us back economically. We will work with the sector and industry to bring innovation and investment into Somerset.

A stable and flourishing economy in Somerset will have a unique range of opportunities as a result of our environment. Tourism and culture will play a prominent role. We already offer so much - from Glastonbury Festival, the largest outdoor music festival in the world, Bridgwater Carnival's spectacular procession to the tranquillity of the Exmoor Dark Skies festival. **Promoting Somerset as a destination on the national and global stage** will support the diverse existing economy and encourage development of new, creative attractions. This will help us to deal with any future challenges and be resilient to sudden changes.

Businesses need excellent transport and digital connections to access markets, distribute their goods and services and have access to their workforce. We will **influence and drive support for improving connectivity** to those parts of our county that need it the most.

Remote working and learning are providing more opportunities for people to live in different parts of the country to where they work or attend education, but this doesn't remove the need to strive for better physical connections. We will work to **improve the equity of access to opportunities, both physically and digitally**, across the county.

Values

The priorities are underpinned by a set of core values that guide all our work and daily interactions. We will be:

- A responsible council
- A listening, empowering council
- A council with evidence based and open decision making
- A collaborative council; and
- An enterprising council.

Somerset Today - In Numbers

Page of graphical representations of Somerset in numbers and statistics

Current Context

The new council comes into existence at the most challenging time for local government in a generation. Fourteen years of austerity and growing demand has reduced the spending power and financial flexibility of all councils. The national cost-of-living crisis is hitting the council and partner organisations just as it is residents. The cost of delivering our services has dramatically increased due to rising energy costs, rising interest rates and increasing numbers of people who need our support.

The council is legally required to balance the budget: there is no overdraft facility that we can use. In recent years Somerset's councils have built up financial reserves but we cannot spend these monies all at once and risk leaving the savings account empty when there will undoubtedly be new challenges ahead.

This means that we are going to have to be incredibly careful with taxpayers' money. We will have less to spend as our challenges grow and at the same time the challenges our residents face daily also grow. This means we face a period of difficult decisions to ensure we can keep supporting the Somerset people in greatest need.

This will require us to be more creative about the way we support people. We will need to work with partners in a wide range of organisations with similar goals to look broadly at the ways we currently use our expertise and money to see if, in collaboration with our communities, we can do something better. We will challenge the ways that we have historically delivered services and listen carefully in order to understand what works for those that use our services and what doesn't.

Cross Cutting Themes

Bringing together potentially disparate services such as public health and housing into a single council will let the new council better co-ordinate the services residents receive. Several of our priorities, such as responding to the climate and ecological crises or reducing health inequalities, will require action from a range of services. There are other cross-cutting themes which will be less visible, but equally important to the way we will work.

In July 2022 the new Health and Care Bill brought Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) into law. This formalised the arrangements for NHS organisations, local councils and other partners in a geographical area to work together to deliver better joined up services, to tackle inequalities and to improve the health of the population.

Somerset Council is a partner organisation within this system because we have a key role to play in Public Health, Adults' and Children's Social Care and Housing. We can also influence the broader factors which contribute to an individual's health and well-being, such as parks or transport or planning. The more we work together with other public services to tackle the complex problems that are facing our communities, the better the services our residents receive will be.

No one wants to be ill and most people don't want to have to rely on the NHS, the Council or community organisation for support. But often they are in this position because of something that could have been prevented if they'd had the knowledge and the help to do something differently. We believe that prevention is the key to a healthier, happier life. That is why this theme will run through everything that we do.

A key aim for this council is to bring together the needs for society to thrive and the needs for the planet to continue to sustain us into one place so that we might understand and manage our impacts on all aspects at the same time. This means that we are able to make decisions with holistic understanding of the implications and adjust our approach, where needed, to ensure we have minimised the impact on the environment and maximised the benefits to society. To make this meaningful for the Council the approach needs to be embedded in all the work that we do. This will take time as the New Council evolves, but we will start to lay the foundation for this work from day one.

The Context of the Council Plan

The Council Plan is one of a suite of documents which guide the way Somerset Council functions; it's part of our Corporate Planning Framework. Together, these documents are a resource to help everyone - customers, officers, councillors, partner organisations - understand our ambitions for the new council, how we will fulfil those ambitions, and how we can be held accountable.

Insert corporate planning framework diagram

Somerset Council will continually change, whether it be in response to the changing needs of our residents, such as our work on the Cost-of-Living Emergency, or because of developments in Government policy, the Levelling Up agenda for example, or prevailing social, economic and environmental conditions, like the climate and ecological emergency.

The Council Plan sets out the priorities that will steer these changes, when required. The priorities are high level to support flexibility; The Council has a clear vision of how we anticipate our services developing over the next four years but, as we have seen with the Covid-19 pandemic, there are likely to be events and factors beyond our control which will require us to be flexible. Emerging technology may also enable us to be more creative in the way we deliver services, with greater flexibility allowing us to adopt innovative new models of service.

The Business Plan will provide the detail of how the Council Plan will be delivered. It will set out the priorities for service change and improvement; what is achievable and how we will ensure that we understand whether we are achieving our planned outcomes. Annually updated service plans will flow from the Business Plan. These are working documents where services set out their planned activity and are used as a reference to guide service development and delivery. They are flexible and agile to enable services to react to changing situations.

The **Target Operating Model (TOM)** will provide the aspiration for our methods of working to ensure we deliver good value, high quality services. This will include our approach to Commissioning – how we address the needs of residents and develop the services to support the best possible outcome for them. The Target Operating Model will evolve over time as we transform the Council.

The Corporate Governance Framework sets out how the decision-making process works and who is empowered to make which decisions.

A number of strategies for Somerset exist and will continue to guide the work of services until they are replaced. These strategies have been developed in partnership with partner organisations with whom we will continue to work alongside.

The new Council is required to have a new Local Plan in place by 2028, however this Local Plan is one of a suite of strategic documents that we will need to produce. These documents need to support and complement each other which means that a clear and agreed set of goals and ambitions will need to be set out early, in partnership and with the community at the centre.

Insert Strategies Diagram – how does this plan fit with the range of strategies. Somerset Growth Plan, Fit for my Future (Health and Care Plan), Improving Lives (Health and Wellbeing Strategy), Children and Young People’s Plan, Local Plans and new Local Plan, Housing Strategy.

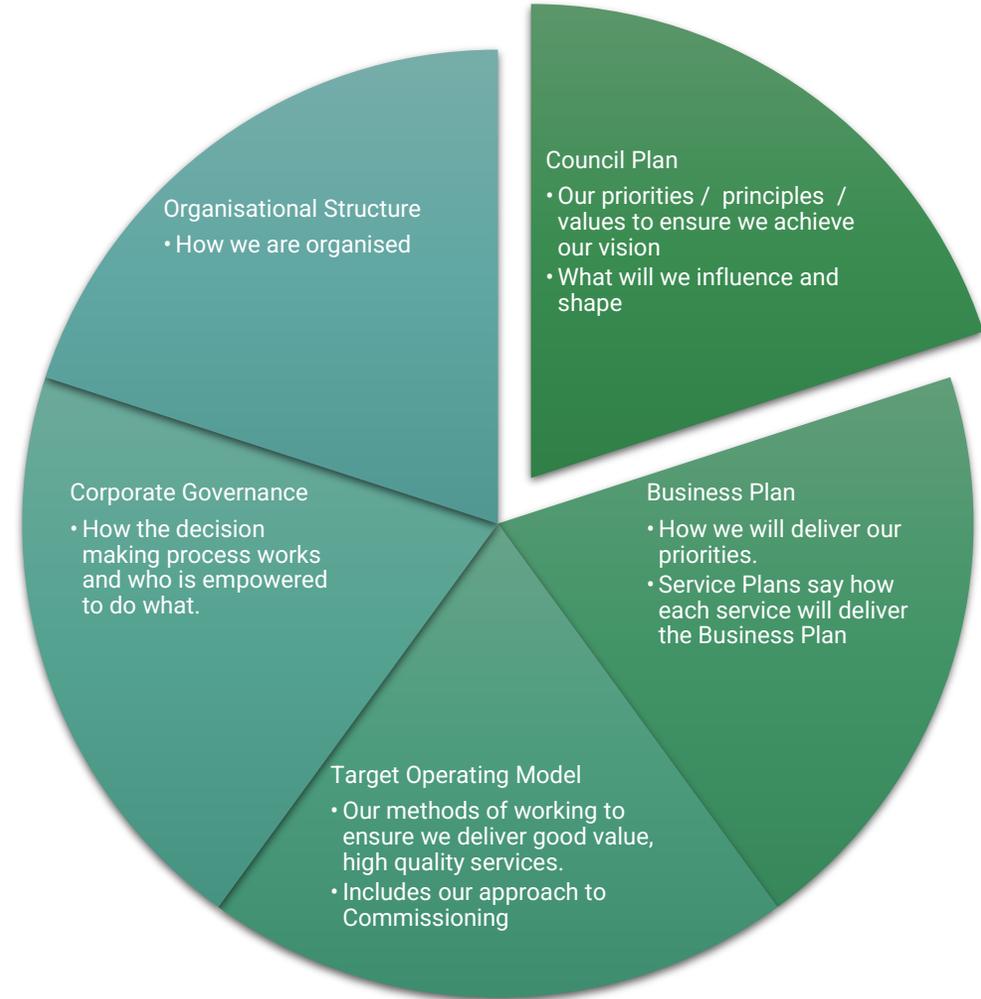
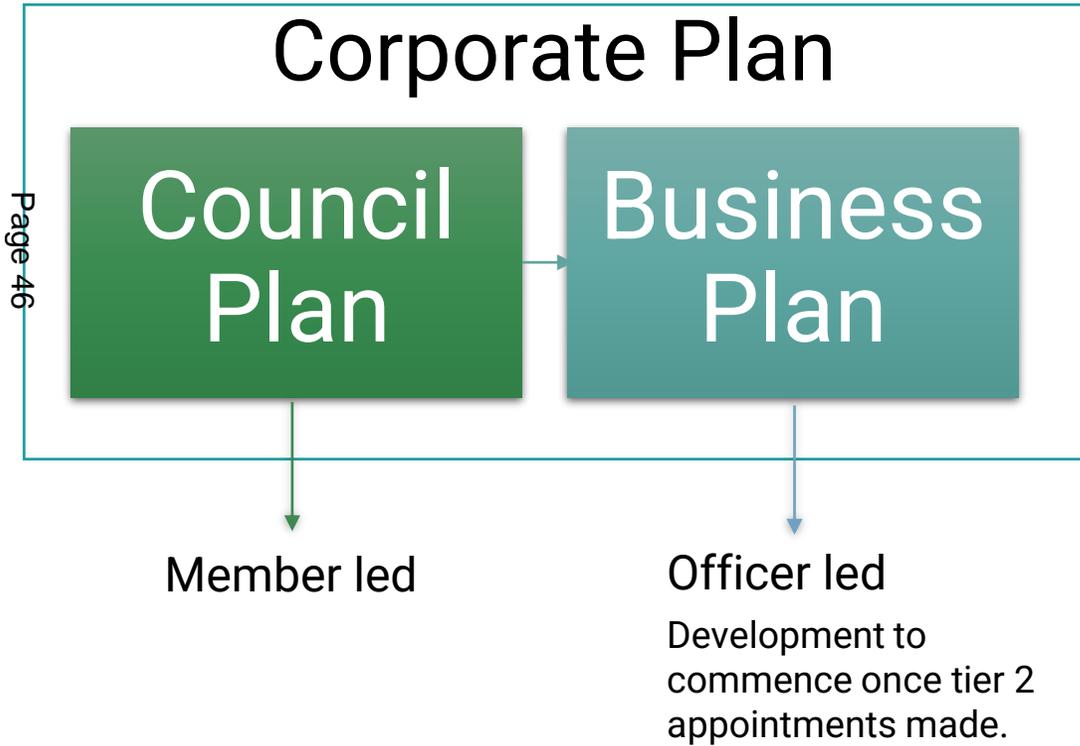
Together we are delivering your

New Somerset Council

Draft Council Plan

Tony Johnson & Sunita Mills

Council Plan Context

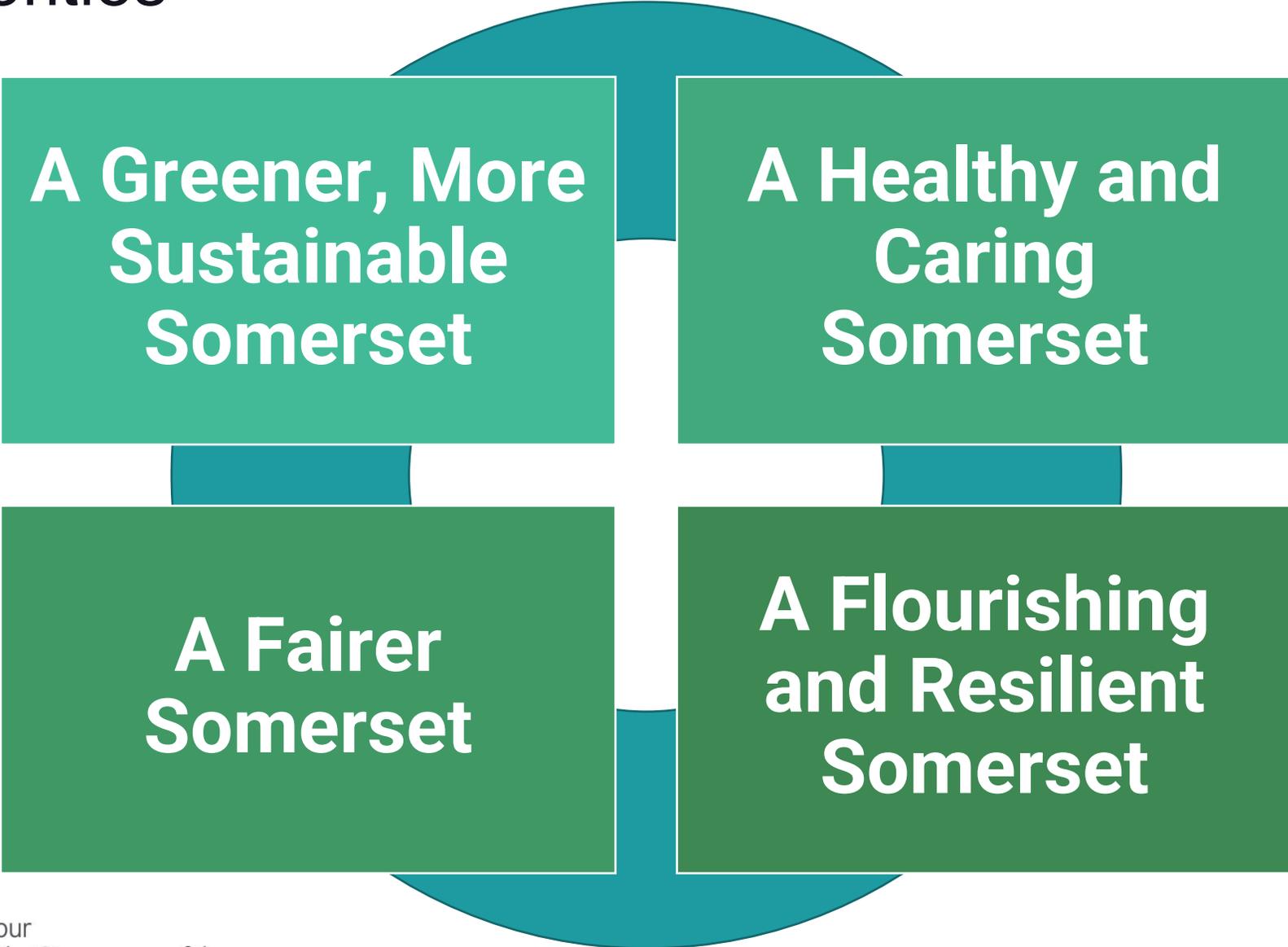


Development steps and Milestones

- ✓ Initial meetings with Leader and Deputy re shape and content of plan
- ✓ Engagement with District Council Senior leads group
- ✓ Individual meetings with Lead Members and Senior officers
- ✓ PSG workshop 20th October
- ✓ Workshop with Exec / SLT - 24th October
- ✓ Working draft developed – Comms team engaged
- ✓ Lib Dem all member meeting 6th November
- ✓ LGR Programme Board – 8th November
- ✓ Lead and Deputy Leader Feedback 9th November
- Draft “Peer review ready” early December
- Draft to Joint Scrutiny 8th December
- Final draft to Executive for sign off to start engagement 14th December
- Engagement with key stakeholders –January
- Final sign off Executive / SLT 6th February
- Council 22nd February

Draft Priorities

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Draft Priorities

A Greener, More Sustainable Somerset

- Ensure that addressing both climate and ecological emergencies are integrated into all areas of work, including housing and planning policies, transport, economic development and access
- Protect habitats and restore biodiversity, using policies and voice to support and encourage others to do the same.
- Active travel options, including walking and cycling, for local journeys and an effective public transport system that meets the needs of more of our residents
- Preserve our cultural heritage for present and future generations, with an integrated approach to achieving our climate change goals.

A Healthy and Caring Somerset

- Promoting wellbeing as a part of our prevention strategy to help people live full and healthy lives for as long as they are able
- Influence the type of services that are available in each community so that they best match local needs
- Recognise the value of carers who are family members and are committed to supporting them to maintain their own health and wellbeing
- Assist those people who want to help their community and to encourage those who struggle with time or commitments to do what they can
- Development of the Local Community Networks

A Fairer Somerset

- To do whatever we can to reduce the inequalities that cause these disparities, so that everyone in Somerset can live their lives as they choose.
- Help significantly reduce number of children who experience poverty.
- Access to good schools, colleges, further education, and higher education
- Be innovative in our approach to housing
- Improve access to local jobs and services, and to the beautiful Somerset countryside
- Contacts with the council are user friendly, promoting a culture of trust and reliability
- Develop an inclusive culture for all our residents

A Flourishing and Resilient Somerset

- Promote Somerset at a regional, national and international level, promoting the wealth of opportunities to bring investment and highly skilled, well-paid jobs for Somerset people
- Promote Somerset as a destination on the national and global stage
- Influence and drive support for improving connectivity to those parts of the county that need it the most
- Improve the equity of access to opportunities, both physically and digitally

Principles / Values

- A responsible council
- A listening, empowering council
- A council with evidence based and open decision making
- A collaborative council; and
- An enterprising council.

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**Local Community Network (LCN)
Development Next Steps**

Executive Member(s): Cllr Val Keitch - Lead

Member for Local Government Reorganisation & Prosperity

Local Member(s) and Division: N/A

Lead Officer: Jan Stafford and Sara Skirton

Author: Jan Stafford and Sara Skirton, LGR Customers, Communities and Partnerships
Workstream Joint Leads

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1. Summary / Background

- 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'*.

Fundamental to this vision is a commitment to give local residents a voice and more influence over decisions that impact them and their communities.

The Administration's Manifesto pledge *to 'Deliver Local Community Networks (LCNs) that genuinely listen to the views of local people'* consolidates this commitment.

On 16 November 2022 the Executive of Somerset County Council considered a report that reflected the work undertaken to date towards the establishment of LCNs. The report summarised 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. It drew out a number of themes and lines for further enquiry.

The Executive considered and agreed a number of recommendations and principles to inform further work on LCN development. These recommendations are listed in full in section 11.1 of this paper.

This report summarises the work that is being undertaken to deliver the recommendations and associated principles, to inform the paper that will be considered by Executive in January 2023.

Implementation Board members are invited to consider, comment and advise on the scope of this work in terms of its appropriateness and completeness.

Comments and recommendations from LGR Joint Scrutiny Committee and Implementation Board have been invaluable in informing the approach towards LCN development to date.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1.** LGR Implementation Board is asked to:

1. Note the recommendations agreed by Executive on 16 November 2022 in relation to the LCN Consultation Review paper, in particular the associated principles, to inform the ongoing development of LCNs
2. To consider, comment and advise on the current and proposed actions to deliver the recommendations.

3. Reasons for recommendations

To support the development and establishment of LCN arrangements across Somerset for Vesting Day, that will provide a firm foundation for convening partners and engaging communities to establish priorities and goals for the local areas and to give them a voice.

The aim is to create LCNs that will over time have the ability to join the strategic policies of the Unitary Council with local delivery, alongside community and partner priorities.

LCNs will be central to evolving how the councils currently deliver community development functions to ensure they are fit for purpose. Noting that the development and evolution of LCNs will happen in phases over a number of years.

4. Other options considered

- 4.1.** Implementation Board has received regular reports regarding LCN development and in particular the recent consultation and engagement exercises. On 16 November 2022 the Executive agreed to receive a further paper in January 2023 on the outcomes of further work, including reasoned recommendations for LCN roles and geographies. Ideally, Scrutiny would be asked to consider a draft of the report before it is considered by Executive on 18 January 2023. However, the work to prepare this report to the Executive will not be completed by the time of the meeting of LGR Joint Scrutiny Board on 8 December 2022, which was cancelled in any case. In addition, the next LGR Joint Scrutiny Board is not scheduled until after the January Executive meeting.

It is therefore considered important that the Implementation Board is able to consider and comment on the proposed actions that will take place over the coming weeks, to inform the decisions that the Executive will be asked to make on 18 January 2023. The Chair of LGR Joint Scrutiny Board will be consulted on the January Executive paper when it is drafted.

5. Links to County Vision, Business Plan and Medium-Term Financial Strategy

- 5.1.** The establishment of LCNs is a commitment in the 'One Somerset: Business case for a new single unitary council for Somerset' Version 1.3 December 2020, para 6.3 page 68.
- 5.2.** It is expected that LCNs will both influence and work within the policy framework of the new Council and therefore their development over the coming months will be influenced by the emerging corporate priorities for the Council. A growth bid has been submitted to establish LCNs and work has begun to seek alternative methods of funding, acknowledging that it is too soon to be able to depend on these for the first year at least of operation.

6. Consultations and co-production

- 6.1.** The engagement and consultation activity undertaken by the LGR Programme regarding LCN development has involved a wide range of internal and external stakeholders and elicited a diverse range of views and opinions, some of which potentially conflict or need detailed consideration to reconcile.
- 6.2.** This activity is considered as part of the ongoing dialogue and co-production of LCNs, rather than a one-off event.

7. Financial and Risk Implications

- 7.1.** The establishment and ongoing development of LCNs requires a level of financial investment in their 'infrastructure', primarily in terms of staffing budgets, to ensure that LCNs have the best chance of success. This requirement for appropriate resourcing, particularly in terms of a suitably skilled and experienced team of LCN support officers, reflects experience from other areas with similar working arrangements, and the emerging feedback from the Pilot LCNs. An additional funding request of up to £900,000 has been submitted as part of the MTFP process based on modelling community development and democratic services officer and operational support costs. Noting that there will also be a review of existing community development spend to see where there is potential to repurpose these budgets. It should be noted that fewer LCNs does not necessarily equate to a smaller budgetary requirement. However, currently the MTFP process has revealed a potential funding gap for the new Somerset Council of £38.2m and as a result, it is unlikely that new initiatives can be funded.

It is intended that the priorities of LCNs will, locally and strategically, influence the spend of the Council and it may be that over time existing funding streams aligned to particular priorities can be directed through these networks. There is also the potential for 'return on investment' with LCNs playing a role in preventing residents reaching crisis.

- 7.2.** 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.

8. Legal and HR Implications

- 8.1.** There are no legal implications arising directly from this report, although there are implications for Governance, in that the governance arrangements for LCNs will need to be reflected in the constitution. The LGR Customers, Communities and Partnerships (CCP) workstream is working with LGR Governance colleagues to ensure that the governance arrangements for LCNs will be appropriate and proportionate to their function.
- 8.2.** As referenced above in Financial Implications, LCNs will need to be supported by a team of officers with a wide range of knowledge, skills and experience, spanning community development, stakeholder and partnership relationship building, the ability to think locally and strategically, manage projects and negotiate solutions and resources. The LGR CCP workstream recognises the need to work with the LGR People workstream, to ensure that the community development team can be drawn together and established ready to support LCNs.

9. Other Implications

9.1. Equalities Implications

There will be consideration of equalities implications as a significant factor in the proposed work to shape a geographical proposal, which will also act as a steer regarding equality in the future development of LCNs: form and function.

The January Executive report will include full and robust consideration of the Equalities impact of recommendations.

9.2. Community Safety Implications

There are no community safety implications arising directly from this report. However, there is potential for LCNs, once established, to support community safety priorities.

9.3. Sustainability Implications

There are no sustainability implications arising directly from this report. However, there is potential for LCNs, once established, to support sustainability priorities of communities and the Council.

9.4. Health and Safety Implications

There are no health and safety implications arising directly from this report.

9.5. Health and Wellbeing Implications

There are no Health and Wellbeing implications arising directly from this report. However, there is potential for LCNs, once established, to support Health and Wellbeing priorities.

9.6. Social Value

There are no Social Value implications arising directly from this report. However, there is potential for LCNs, once established and over time, to contribute to Social Value priorities.

10. Scrutiny comments / recommendations:

10.1. N/A

11. Background

11.1. Report to Executive on 16 November 2022 and Resulting Resolutions

On 16 November 2022, the Executive of Somerset County Council considered a report – Local Community Network Consultation Review. The report summarised 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. It also included learning from the three LCN Pilots in Somerset, and from experiences of locality working in other Unitary areas. The report drew out a number of themes from the consultation, and lines for further enquiry. In summary:

- Feedback confirms support for LCNs as a means of ensuring that the new Unitary council is able to remain engaged with and responsive to local needs and support improved outcomes for local people.
- Recognition of the importance of LCNs having genuine voice and influence over what happens in the local area, that LCN priorities are evidence based, and that LCNs are a vehicle for convening partners and communities to work toward addressing those priorities.
- Whilst there was some support for LCNs having a relationship with planning and licensing functions, there was concern expressed that introducing regulatory roles could stifle collaboration and partnership working. Some responses do, however, recognise the place shaping potential of LCNs, which is something that could be developed over time.
- A strong argument is being put forward by partners and colleagues in the VCFSE and Health and Social Care sectors about maximising the potential of LCNs to support the bringing together and integration of multi-agency, multi-disciplinary approaches to create better community outcomes, more efficiently.
- The diverse range of views in relation to LCN geographies indicate that it would be premature to recommend a particular solution at this point.
- Barriers to participation that were identified during the consultation related to practical issues such as time, finance and access. For smaller parishes in particular, the main concern is capacity and lack of clarity about what will be expected from them.
- The consultation indicates that Local Community Network was the preferred name.

The Executive agreed the following:

1. Note the key findings from the recent LCN consultation and engagement activities, alongside the learning from the LCN Pilots and other Unitary areas ' locality arrangements.
2. Consider and comment on the conclusions, proposals and further lines of enquiry arising.
3. Endorse the establishment of LCNs as a vehicle for bringing together and focussing the community development and engagement activity in the new Council.
4. Note and support the rationale for further work and dialogue to be undertaken before a recommendation is made on LCN geographical

boundaries.

5. Agree a specific set of principles that will inform this work:
 - a. *Respect the rurality of Somerset and find ways to work with differences between rural / urban priorities within an LCN area, and across LCN boundaries*
 - b. *Respect the diversity of Somerset's landscape character*
 - c. *Work across Somerset to better align with the Integrated Care System and other partners, recognising the benefits of partnership working (amended from Ensure alignment with the Integrated Care System and establish the benefits that this could bring*
 - d. *Observe town and parish boundaries*
 - e. *Consider unitary division boundaries*
 - f. *Consider equalities implications.*

6. Agree to receive a further paper in January 2023 on the outcomes of the further work, including reasoned recommendations for LCN roles and geographies.

7. Note that an additional funding request of up to £900,000 has been submitted for consideration through the MTFP process, to enable the resourcing of LCN arrangements from Vesting Day.

12. Current Position and Next Steps

The resolutions made by the Executive provide a clear direction for the ongoing development work towards establishing LCNs.

The LGR Customers, Communities and Partnerships workstream team have taken the resolutions and agreed principles to create a framework for the activity that needs to take place over the next two months. This activity is summarised in the table below. The table represents a high level summary; there is a significant amount of detailed activity sitting behind each action, and little scope for slippage.

Executive Recommendation / Principle	Associated actions description	Complete by
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Respect the rurality of Somerset and find ways to work with differences between rural / urban priorities within an LCN area, and across LCN boundaries</i> • <i>Respect the diversity of</i> 	<p>Mapping exercise to overlay town, city and parish boundaries with unitary divisions, PCNs and areas where communities naturally align (according to feedback via consultation and T&PC meetings). Assess fit.</p> <p>Summarise in a map and narrative format to</p>	21/11

<p><i>Somerset's landscape character</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Observe town and parish boundaries</i> • <i>Consider unitary division boundaries</i> 	<p>inform discussions with colleagues and partners.</p> <p>Ensure governance arrangements enable rural and urban focussed sub-groups to be established within LCN areas, to support the development of specific local priorities for urban and rural areas.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Work across Somerset to better align with the Integrated Care System and other partners, recognising the benefits of partnership working</i> 	<p>Discuss outcomes of mapping exercise with Lead Members for LGR and Communities</p>	2/12
	<p>Discussion with colleagues in Adults' Services, Children's Services and Public Health to clarify benefits of alignment with ICS and what this could mean for geographical arrangements</p>	2/12
	<p>Meeting with Health colleagues, informed by discussions with SLT colleagues, to further refine LCN role scope and geographical proposal</p>	9/12
	<p>Meetings with other partners to check and challenge emerging proposals</p>	Ongoing and via December LGR Advisory Forum
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Consider equalities implications.</i> 	<p>Prepare full Equalities Impact Assessment for January Executive Paper</p>	9/12 (allow for revisions as final paper develops)
<p>Endorse the establishment of LCNs as a vehicle for bringing together and focussing the community development and engagement activity in the new Council.</p>	<p>Fully understand the scope of current community development and engagement activity across the five councils. Including areas of good practice that need to be supported through transition.</p>	2/12
<p>Note that an additional funding request of up to £900,000 has been submitted for consideration through the MTFP process, to enable the resourcing of LCN arrangements from Vesting Day.</p>	<p>Commence a review of existing community development and engagement spend across the five councils to understand what might be repurposed to support LCNs. Provide position statement as part of January Executive paper</p>	23/12
<p>Note and support the rationale for further work and dialogue to be undertaken before a recommendation is made on LCN geographical boundaries.</p>	<p>Prepare paper that is the culmination of all of the above activities.</p>	Initial working draft 16/12
<p>Agree to receive a further</p>		Draft to DS 4/1, final 9/1,

<p>paper in January 2023 on the outcomes of the further work, including reasoned recommendations for LCN roles and geographies.</p>		<p>publication 10/1</p>
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Running alongside the actions listed above will be development of a communications strategy to ensure ongoing engagement with partners and stakeholders. This will primarily be through our established networks and communications channels, including Member and Town and Parish Council briefings and meetings, statements and website updates.

13. Background Papers

- 13.1.** Local Community Network Consultation Review – Report to Somerset County Council’s Executive 16 November 2022, with the following appendices:
- Appendix A - LCN Consultation report
 - Appendix B - ‘Companion’ copy of LCN questionnaire
 - Appendix C - Comparison table of arrangements for locality working in Cornwall, Wiltshire and Buckinghamshire

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Together we are delivering your

New Somerset Council

LGR Implementation Board 20 December 2022



Local Community Networks (LCN) Development Next Steps

20th December 2022

**Authors:
Jan Stafford / Sara
Skirton**

Purpose of the report and key points for discussion:

- Note the recommendations agreed by Executive on 16 November 2022 in relation to the Local Community Network Consultation Review paper
- In particular to note the associated principles that were agreed by Executive, to inform the ongoing development of LCNs
- To consider, comment and advise on the current and proposed actions to deliver the recommendations

LCN Consultation Review Report

- LCN consultation and engagement exercise closed in late October
- Paper prepared for Executive Board 16 November 2022
- Paper comprised:
 - Summary of the consultation findings
 - Interim review of the LCN pilots
 - Comparison of locality working arrangements in other Unitary areas
 - Themes and lines of further enquiry drawn out from the above

Executive's Resolutions

1. Note the key findings from the recent LCN consultation and engagement activities, alongside the learning from the LCN Pilots and other Unitary areas ' locality arrangements.
2. Consider and comment on the conclusions, proposals and further lines of enquiry arising.
3. Endorse the establishment of LCNs as a vehicle for bringing together and focussing the community development and engagement activity in the new Council.
4. Note and support the rationale for further work and dialogue to be undertaken before a recommendation is made on LCN geographical boundaries.
5. Agree a specific set of principles that will inform this work (detailed on next slide)
6. Agree to receive a further paper in January 2023 on the outcomes of the further work, including reasoned recommendations for LCN roles and geographies.
7. Note that an additional funding request of up to £900,000 has been submitted for consideration through the MTFP process, to enable the resourcing of LCN arrangements from Vesting Day.

Principles agreed by Executive

- 1. Respect the rurality of Somerset and find ways to work with differences between rural / urban priorities within an LCN area, and across LCN boundaries*
- 2. Respect the diversity of Somerset's landscape character*
- 3. Work across Somerset to better align with the Integrated Care System and other partners recognising the benefits of partnership working*
- 4. Observe town and parish boundaries*
- 5. Consider unitary division boundaries*
- 6. Consider equalities implications.*

Next Steps in LCN Development – Function and Form

- Mapping exercise to overlay town, city and parish boundaries with unitary divisions, PCNs and areas where communities naturally align
- Discussions on relationship between function and geographies with:
 - Lead Members
 - Colleagues in Adults' and Children's Services
 - Partners including NHS and VCSE
- Desired outcomes:
 - Further clarity on how LCNs can support ICS and how we work with other partners on a locality basis
 - Recommended proposal for LCN geographies for 'day 1'

Next Steps in LCN Development – Governance

Work with colleagues to ensure governance arrangements that:

- enable rural and urban focussed sub-groups to be established within LCN areas, to support the development of specific local priorities for urban and rural areas
- are robust enough to ensure credibility and also minimise bureaucracy that could potentially hamper community involvement in LCNs
- Focus on consensus building
- Are consistent yet high level and flexible, to enable LCNs to evolve and to reflect differing local circumstances

Next Steps in LCN Development – Resourcing

- Fully understand the scope of current community development and engagement activity across the five councils. Including areas of good practice that need to be supported through transition.
- Commence a review of existing community development and engagement spend across the five councils to understand what might be repurposed to support LCNs. Provide position statement as part of January Executive paper

Next Steps in LCN Development

- Prepare a paper for Executive in January 2023 that is the culmination of all of the above activities.
- Prepare a detailed Equality Impact Assessment to support the paper
- Develop a communications plan to ensure ongoing engagement with partners and stakeholders throughout the coming months

Next Steps in LCN Development

Questions and Discussion

LGR Implementation Board

20th December 2022

Angela Farmer

Ask of LGR Implementation Board

1. To note the updates from the last meeting
2. To review narrative around risks 11 and 12 with People Representative
3. To review the risks on the current register
4. Determine what risks the Committee want to focus on at the next meeting

Key points for discussion:

1. Update since the last report, including review of risk 11 and 12
2. Dashboard review
3. Consideration of risk level and mitigations

For information: update from Joint Scrutiny Committee- 27th October 2022

Issues identified by Scrutiny Committee:

1. Risk 10
2. Programme level risks and strategic risks for the new Council
3. People representative – review of risk 11 and 12

Risk 10

Risk 10

Risk	Actions and controls	Links to products
<p>There is a risk of a significant budget gap for new Somerset Council in 2023/24 when districts and County budgets combine, significantly impacting the financial stability of the new Council</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance and asset protocol across 5 councils • S24 Notice from DHLUC effective May 2022 • Budget monitoring processes in the 5 councils • Establishment control processes (People) • Development of 22/23 baseline budget for new Council, to provide basis for the development of MTFP for new Somerset Council and 23/24 budget 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fin 152 - 23/24 revenues and capital budgets and MTFP approved by council – on track - 24/2/23 • Fin156 – Council Tax harmonisation • Fin 138 – Business case savings phasing estimate agreed • Fin 156 – Benchmarked costed service structures • Fin 237 – Single HRA

Moving forward with this risk – this risk falls to be a risk for the new Council so looking to create a Transitional Risk Register, monitored by the programme that will go on to form the new risk register for the new Council

Programme level risks and strategic risks for the new Council

Risk Theme	Context	Link to programme risks
Data/Information Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retaining data longer than needed Data breaches 	
Climate Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resources Not achieving net zero by 2030 	
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safety Homelessness – single people Supply – land 	
LGR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resilience of the Council Managing BAU work 	<p>Risk 21 - The risk that the LGR programme negatively impacts service provision and improvement activities of Children’s Services and Adult Social Care.</p> <p>Risk 22 - The risk that delivery of ICS implementation is not effectively joined-up with LGR implementation</p> <p>Risk 25 - The risk that BAU activity within the Councils is impacted by stretched staff resources balancing LGR and BAU work</p>
Business Continuity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failure to provide adequate local response Failure of supplier or contractor- implications for service delivery 	<p>Risk 13 - Unforeseen emergency or business continuity interruption or rising tide situation that requires staff to be directed from the day job into incident response.</p>

Programme level risks and strategic risks for the new Council

Risk Theme	Context	Links to PL risks
Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable MTFP Volatility of Government Funding (Business rates, new home bonus) Management of commercial property portfolio HRA – Financial sustainability 	<p>Risk 10 – Risk of significant budget gap for new Somerset Council</p> <p>Risk 15 - Failure of worksteams/projects to achieve their expected financial benefits as described in business case (£18.5m p.a. after 2 years)</p> <p>Risk 367 - The risk of the 5 councils overspending on the 22/23 budget and having to use reserves</p>
Staff/people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wellbeing Retention and recruitment Service failure due to single officer specialism Impact of the cost of living on staff 	<p>Risk 11 - The risk that there are insufficient people resources to implement LGR Programme and deliver the approved business case</p> <p>Risk 12 - Loss of staff from County and District Councils deemed essential to the programme delivery</p> <p>Risk 103 - Agreement not reached with Trade Unions on pay scales/terms and condition for new Council staff.</p> <p>Risk 309 - The risk that there is insufficient capacity to manage the people side of change</p> <p>Risk 358 - The risk that the process of appointments to T2/T3/T4 roles could result in an employment claim if process is not followed properly</p>
Customer/Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact of cost of living 	<p>Risk 19 - Design / products to create the new unitary council will not have the community as a central focus in the design of the new operating mode</p>
ICT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cyber security 	
Health and Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water borne risks Failure in statutory compliance and practice 	
Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safeguarding of children Member lose focus on strategic priorities at district level Impact of Ukraine Failure to meet requirements of Equality Act Phosphates 	

Risks for further review

Risks 11 and 12 – People workstream

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Ref	Risk Description	Impact on programme	Inherent score	Controls and actions	Residual score
11	The risk that there are insufficient people resources to implement LGR programme and deliver the approved business case	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme not delivered to quality, time and cost Non-cash and cash benefits not delivered Delays in the delivery of the Business Case objectives or compromised quality Unmanageable workloads on staff 	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early definition of resource requirements (capability and capacity) as part of gateway Validation of 1 with PwC as QA partner incorporating lessons learned from previous LGR programmes Resource shortfalls to be raised to five CEOs to address Interim labour arrangements to be defined as a fall back plan. Dedicated LGR Programme Manager (in post from Jan '22) PwC as quality assurance partner in place from Dec '21. 17 February 2022 agreement to fund additional PMO, project specific and subject matter expertise to the programme. Mutual aid process in place Monthly scorecard resource identification 	9
12	Loss of staff from County and District Councils deemed essential to the programme deliver	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delays in the delivery of the Programme implementation plan Additional cost of resourcing eg temporary labour Knock-in impacts to BAU service delivery Insufficient level of experience and expertise to deliver the new council operations 	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of interim staff Redeployment Recruitment Protocol Staff engagement to support development of culture (building on existing culture) throughout the lifetime of the programme Mutual Aid process agreed .Analysis of staff on fixed term contracts to 31/3/23 Explore mutual aid Appointment of Chief Executive for SCC and new Council agreed by Full Council end of July 2022 Working on T2/T3 appointments 	16

People risk 11 and 12 – narrative

Ref	Description	Narrative
11	The risk that there are insufficient people resources to implement LGR programme and deliver the approved business case	<p>Overall resourcing to the programme has remained stable with controls mitigating the risk, a small number of sub workstreams currently report inadequate resourcing that is being carefully monitored at programme level and escalated for action where required.</p> <p>Tier 2 & 3 appointments processes will secure staff to posts, with draft structures having now been shared with Programme Board for comment. The risk remains real, however, with pressure on resources due to demands on staff who are balancing priorities across the LGR with BAU responsibilities, alongside working through the MTFP.</p>

People risk 11 and 12 – narrative

Ref	Description	Narrative
12	Loss of staff from County and District Councils deemed essential to the programme delivery	<p>The Recruitment Protocol restricts recruitment outside of ‘exempt posts’ (those that require continued recruitment due to service demands and shortage professions e.g. planning, environmental health, social care, public health). Job evaluation requests will also be restricted from 1st November. Mutual aid is explored as part of recruitment protocol. The Recruitment protocol and list of exempt posts can be seen here (include link to Rec Protocol)</p> <p>The Chief Executive now being in post will enable more stability for staff, bringing clarity on strategic direction for key areas of the programme, including the high level organisational structure which has now been shared with Programme Board. TUPE consultation is intended to start in early November, messages to staff on timing and sequencing of restructuring will be communicated. This will lead to greater certainty for staff and mitigate the risk of staff being lost from key delivery roles. This is being enabled by strong, embedded programme communications, with communications leads assigned to all workstreams to ensure key messages are shared.</p> <p>The latest staff survey also shows positive improvement against the ADKAR methodology, which indicates that staff feel better prepared for moving through to the new authority than previously.</p> <p>Day 1 change readiness work is also underway to ensure that business and services readiness impacts are fully captured and understood.</p> <p>A Culture Navigator network has been established to strengthen ongoing staff engagement around the development of culture, and staff views captured through culture workshops are being used to shape strategies for the new organisation.</p>

LGR Implementation Board, 20th December

Number of programme level risks 20 - (Finance 4, People 6, SA1 3, CCP 2, PMO 5)

The following risks have a residual likelihood score of either certain, probable or possible

Ref	Risk description	Residual likelihood score
10	There is a risk of a significant budget gap for new Somerset Council in 2023/24 when districts and County budgets combine, significantly impacting the financial stability of the new Council	Certain
12	Loss of staff from County and District Councils deemed essential to programme delivery	Probable
13	Unforeseen emergency or business continuity interruption or rising tide situation that requires staff to be directed from day job into incident response	Probable
16	The risk of the 5 councils overspending on the 22/23 budget and having to use reserves	Probable
11	The risk that there are insufficient people resources to implement LGR programme and deliver the approved business case	Possible
14	Loss of opportunity to align public and VCSE services to new operating model and outcomes as defined in the business case	Possible
15	Failure of the workstreams/projects to achieve their expected financial benefits as described in business case	Possible
22	The risk that delivery of ICS implementation is not effectively joined-up with LGR implementation	Possible
23	The risk that non-delivery or late delivery of key LGR products that other workstreams are dependant on	Possible
25	The risk of BAU activity within the Councils is impacted by stretched staff resources balancing LGR and BAU work	Possible
27	Uncontrolled change to the scope of the LGR programme	Possible
111	The risk of overspend on the £16.5m LGR implementation budget	Possible
228	Lack of a decision around contracts that are reaching the end of their life between now and April 2024	Possible
309	The risk that there is insufficient capacity to manage the people side of change	Possible

LGR Implementation Board, 20th December 2022

1. Are there any specific risks that the Board would like to look at specifically at the next meeting?

Risk register as at November 2022

The following give the full detail of the current LGR programme risks
Please note this also includes Direction of Travel

Direction of Travel Indicator For month of October 2022

Descriptor	Meaning	Measurement
Red Arrow	Risk increasing	Changes made to score or residual score increased
Amber Arrow	No change	No actions being delivered or residual score remains the same
Green Arrow	Risk reducing	Actions being delivered or residual score reduced

Ref	Risk description	Impact on the programme (effect)	Inherent score	Controls/Actions	Residual score	Direction of Travel indicator
10	There is a risk of a significant budget gap for new Somerset Council in 2023/24 when districts and County budgets combine, significantly impacting the financial stability of the new Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inability to set a balanced budget Reductions in service budget and levels 	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finance and asset protocol across 5 councils S24 Notice from DHLUC effective May 2022 Budget monitoring processes in the 5 councils Establishment control processes (People) Development of 22/23 baseline budget for new Council, to provide basis for the development of MTFP for new Somerset Council and 23/24 budget (20	
15	Failure of workstreams/projects to achieve their expected financial benefits as described in business case	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of achievements of promised overall programme benefits Programme does not meet stakeholder expectations Inability to set a balanced budget 	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Robust benefits realisation plan in place Early modelling / forecasting of cash-benefits Monitoring through programme reporting framework including escalation and intervention Dedicated LGR Programme Manager in post Tranche 1 products agreed Work on Tranche 2 products started 	12	
26	The risk that the back-office ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) system not sufficiently implemented to support the new authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inability to pay invoices, raise invoices, and monitor spending during the year 	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation plan that delivers in excess of the minimum viable product Continued close management of implementation partner against published programme Clear governance and oversight Independent governance oversight role by SOCITM Reports to formal steering group 	8	
367	The risk of the 5 councils overspending on the 22/23 budget and having to use reserves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced reserves 	25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular budget monitoring 	16	New risk added October 2022

Programme Level Risks - workstream: Service Alignment

Date: October 2022

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Ref	Risk description	Impact on the programme (effect)	Inherent score	Controls/Actions	Residual score	Direction of Travel
228	Lack of a decision around contracts that are reaching the end of their life between now and April 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduction in service levels 	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with finance and procurement sub workstreams to ensure that decisions are made that allow sufficient time to put contracts/arrangements in place and to mobilise. 	9	
13	Unforeseen emergency or business continuity interruption or rising tide situation that requires staff to be directed from the day job into incident response.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate resources in project delivery Lack of management capacity Reallocation of programme or existing council resources to support response and recovery 	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create and maintain a Business Continuity Plan (BCP) for the LGR Programme (signed off by Programme Board) including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement with Workstreams to develop the BCP, Engagement with Somerset Local Authorities Civil Contingencies Unit to ensure alignment with wider BCP arrangements across the programme and 5 councils, Internal comms to ensure awareness and buy-in for BCP, Desktop test of BCP. (Resource constraints have delayed completion of this piece of work however more staff have been approved for PMO) 	12	
22	The risk that delivery of ICS implementation is not effectively joined-up with LGR implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failure to deliver programme to agreed time, cost and quality. Failure to deliver expected benefits. Missed transformation opportunities 	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding of interdependencies incorporated into LGR work plans and must have Adequate staff resource across both programmes with appropriate capabilities and capacity to address the work 	9	

Programme Level Risks - workstream: People

Date: October 2022

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Ref	Risk description	Impact on the programme (effect)	Inherent score	Controls/Actions	Residual score	Direction of Travel Indicator
12	Loss of staff from County and District Councils deemed essential to the programme delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delays in the delivery of the Programme implementation plan Additional cost of resourcing eg temporary labour Knock-in impacts to BAU service delivery Insufficient level of experience and expertise to deliver the new council operations 	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of interim staff Redeployment Recruitment Protocol Staff engagement to support development of culture (building on existing culture) throughout the lifetime of the programme Mutual Aid process agreed .Analysis of staff on fixed term contracts to 31/3/23 Explore mutual aid Appointment of Chief Executive for SCC and new Council agreed by Full Council end of July 2022 Working on T2/T3 appointments 	16	
11	The risk that there are insufficient people resources to implement LGR programme and deliver the approved business case	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme not delivered to quality, time and cost Non-cash and cash benefits not delivered Delays in the delivery of the Business Case objectives or compromised quality Unmanageable workloads on staff 	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early definition of resource requirements (capability and capacity) as part of gateway Validation of 1 with PwC as QA partner incorporating lessons learned from previous LGR programmes Resource shortfalls to be raised to five CEOs to address Interim labour arrangements to be defined as a fall back plan. Dedicated LGR Programme Manager (in post from Jan '22) PwC as quality assurance partner in place from Dec '21. 17 February 2022 agreement to fund additional PMO, project specific and subject matter expertise to the programme. Mutual aid process in place Monthly scorecard resource identification 	9	
25	The risk that BAU activity within the Councils is impacted by stretched staff resources balancing LGR and BAU work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced capacity to deliver non=LGR activity to required quality Reputational harm to existing and new councils Loss of staff owing to workload/disruption to services Staff wellbeing 	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment protocol Staff engagement at local level BAU process at local level to ensure any additional work is scrutinised before agreeing to continue Monitoring key performance indicators for any drop off in service provision/performance Mutual aid process in place Monthly scorecard resource identification 	9	

Ref	Risk description	Impact on the programme (effect)	Inherent score	Controls/Actions	Residual score	Comments
309	The risk that there is insufficient capacity to manage the people side of change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where programme outcomes and benefits results are dependent on collective, proficient adoption of new ways of working 	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change management approach, quality framework and tools established and in use Supplementary offer to strengthen change capabilities started and will continue to evolve, e.g. targeted interventions and coaching, high risk, high need products in T1 Validation of approach and priorities with PwC and our Unitary partners Working closely with comms and People workstream Plans in place to identify and collaborate with wider change assets across all organisations Mobilisation of tactical change management resource to work alongside and support existing network of change management across all organisations Engagement with programme and WS leads to unite thinking and drive profile of people side of change as core competence of programme Evidence based approach to defining extent and impact of T1 products to define level of need and target resource where needed most Application of data and insight from across WS to build programme change plan and EIA support Embedding change management within current assurance practice and reporting Nominated lead for People change 	12	
103	Agreement not reached with Trade Unions on pay scales/terms and condition for new Council staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employer and Trade Union cannot reach agreement 	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consideration of plan B if agreement cannot be reached, including utilising Somerset CC terms and conditions 	4	
358	The risk that the process of appointments to T2/T3/T4 roles could result in an employment claim if process is not followed properly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reputational damage Cost implications for the new council Confidence levels of other colleagues in the appointment process to the new council 	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incoming new Chief Executive taking ownership of the risk SSDC Chief Executive taking on sponsor role for People workstream Regular reporting back to PB by People workstream Consultation with PB Consultation with Trade Unions on the procedures External legal advice being taken Member engagement in T2 appointments and 	12	

Ref	Risk description	Impact on the programme (effect)	Inherent score	Controls/Actions	Residual score	Comments
14	Loss of opportunity to align public and VCSE services to new operating model and outcomes as defined in the Business Case	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced financial and non-financial benefits Poor relationship between partners and new authority Transformational opportunity lost, delayed or reduced Negative impact on cross-cutting outcomes for communities Reputational damage for new council 	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete partner and stakeholder mapping exercise (CCP) Targeted engagement with all strategic partners (CCP) Effective ongoing communications with all stakeholders about LGR programme and its objectives (Comms) Effective LCN's Services thinking about the relationship with the public and VCSE in design and delivery (SA) Ensure LGR Advisory Board remains inclusive, transparent and accessible (CCP) Stakeholder management plan(s) for critical products and across workplans (CCP) External communications on purpose and benefits of the LGR programme (Comms) Senior officer engagement with VCSE and partners (CCP) Use of customer panel to hear voice of the public and users (CCP) 	12	
19	Design/products to create new unitary council will not have the community as the central focus in the design of the new operating model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organisational culture is not community focused Insufficient partnership working Poor outcomes for communities Failure to deliver planned business case benefits 	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme and workstream checkpoint review criteria Ensure LGR Advisory Board remains effective, inclusive, transparent and accessible (PSG) Embodiment of community focus as a critical requirement of operating model development through workshops, research and engagement (CCP) Ensure TOM development reflects emerging customer strategy and principles (CCP) Engagement with all workstreams to secure agreement/recognition that communities focus goes beyond safe and legal (CCP) Ensure interdependencies are identified and managed through iterative discussion and collaboration (CCP) Specifically, engage with People workstream to support as ethos and culture of communities and customers first (CCP/People) Involve customers and communities in the design of products and services (CCP) Learn from customer experience and feedback (CCP) Develop sound business case to underpin 	8	

Ref	Risk description	Impact on the programme (effect)	Inherent score	Controls/Actions	Residual score	Comments
27	Uncontrolled change to the scope of the LGR programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failure to deliver the new council to agreed time, cost and quality. Failure to deliver agreed financial and non-financial benefits. Missed transformation opportunities for the new authority Impact on capacity of teams to manage and deliver the programme: rework, wasted effort and reduction in shared understanding of programme priorities and required activity 	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme Implementation Manual outlining decision-making tolerances and purpose of change control Current Programme governance arrangements: PMO, Programme Steering Group and Programme Board to identify Change control process in place Strong communication within the programme within the programme promoting adherence to guidance around change control, benefits realisation and risk Quality assurance of workstream reporting Robust scrutiny of programme through LGR Implement Board and LGR Scrutiny 	9	
28	Inter-dependencies between workstreams not managed effectively	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inability to deliver cross-cutting products successfully and therefore benefits not realised 	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme tranches developed A process/approach for management of dependencies to ensure impacts of change (time/cost/quality) are easily understood at both workstream and programme level. PMO providing assurance against delivery of programme capabilities Dependency management tool in central list (sharepoint) T1 products dependencies to be assessed are T1 sign off (Date: ongoing) Management of dependencies and interdependencies are part of monthly assurance meetings between PMO and workstream (Date: ongoing) 	6	
23	The risk that non-delivery or late delivery of key LGR products that other workstreams are dependant on	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Missed opportunities Siloed working Failure to deliver key products Delays in workstreams and ultimately the programme Re-engineering of solutions/rework required 	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reliable critical path is available, with regular opportunities to monitor and course-correct when necessary Regular opportunities for project managers to review with workstream an sub-workstream leads Review of scorecards Robust programme and project planning Modelling interdependencies incorporated into work plans and must haves Adequate resourcing of programme staff with appropriate capabilities and capacity to deliver workplan Utilise lessons learned from other programmes Dedicated LGR programme managers in post 	12	

Programme Level Risks - PMO

Date: October 2022

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Ref	Risk description	Impact on the programme (effect)	Inherent score	Controls/Actions	Residual score	Comments
21	The risk that the LGR programme negatively impacts service provision and improvement activities of Children's services and Adult Social care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance of service for vulnerable adults negatively impacted • Poor external perception of quality of services • Potential Government intervention 	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong communication within the programme • Adherence to project guidelines around Change Control, Benefits realisation and risk. • Horizon scanning • . Cross-cutting involvement of senior managers across workstreams in particular Service Alignment and Improvement • Quarterly reporting to Programme Board • PMO engagement and participation with Integrated Care System Governance • Modelling of interdependencies between programmes, reflected in respective plans • Active consideration within the emerging Target Operating Model • Consideration of a review of Governance of CSC and ASC • Ongoing comms with the service • Experience gained from other councils going through LGR taken into consideration in approach 	6	
111	The risk of overspend on the £16.5 m LGR implementation budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher than anticipated LGR programme costs and redundancy payments • Reduction to reserves and longer payback on the Business Case 	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The approved commitments are being challenged if the funding has not be fully committed to ensure the bid is still required, if it is not or can be reduced this will make more funds available for the programme. • Work is underway to revisit the redundancy figures 	12	

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Early Careers Strategy – Somerset Council

April 2023 – March 2027

Opening Remarks - To be completed.

Introduction

It is often hard for Young People to get a foot in the door, let alone two feet on the career ladder. At Somerset Council we are working hard to change that, we have ripped up the old Local Authority rule book and aim to build on our established initiatives such as: apprenticeships, graduate schemes, work placements and paid internships whilst also adopting new schemes available to support young people to enter and succeed in the workplace.

Our Vision

We believe everyone deserves the opportunity to begin their career. By encouraging and supporting young people into the workplace, we can help build their self-confidence, self-belief, skillsets, and application of knowledge regardless of their start in life. We will bridge the gap between young people of Somerset and potential employers by giving young people a voice and empowering them to be better prepared for the world of work.

Data shows us that, just like the demography of Somerset, our Council is aging. Addressing this is crucial to prevent critical skills and experience being lost from the organisation. If we focus much of our recruitment and training effort on the transfer of skills and knowledge between age groups (because it works both ways!), The Early Careers Strategy will support Somerset Council to build the workforce of tomorrow whilst also keeping talented young individuals within the county of Somerset.

It is important to remember the value that young people bring into our organisation too. We need to build and maintain a diverse workforce and understand the significance of bringing fresh ideas and new approaches into our working lives. As an organisation who promotes equality and inclusivity, we must practice what we preach and ensure that all sections of society are represented within our workforce. The young people of today are our leaders of tomorrow.

We acknowledge our role as a large employer within Somerset; where appropriate we will influence others to mirror such initiatives to ensure opportunities for our young residents are maximised.

Our Values

Once the new Somerset Council values have been identified and agreed, list them here so that we can show how the Early Careers Strategy will complement the values.

Our Aims

We aim to provide the communities of Somerset with a strong workforce and recognise that the best way of doing this is to build our own workforce from the ground up. To achieve this, we will focus on five main areas:

- 1. Improve our engagement with schools**
- 2. Use data to drive our decision making**
- 3. Maximise the full range of opportunities to support young people**
- 4. Invest in retention initiatives, creating more than just jobs**
- 5. Promote inclusivity and diversity whilst championing young people's work**

1. Improve our Engagement with Schools

We aim to work with local schools to ensure that our Young People across Somerset get the opportunity to take part in high quality work experience from the earliest possible time. We will build upon established programmes to offer varied and beneficial work experience programmes across the Authority.

Utilising the knowledge and expertise of our colleagues within the Somerset Education Business Partnership and Skill Up Somerset, we will endeavour to build meaningful partnerships with our local schools and ensure that Somerset Council is at the forefront of our Young Peoples' minds when considering their career options, through encouraging colleagues to support school careers activities such as assembly talks, mock interview events and careers fairs. We aim to inspire and raise the aspirations of our school pupils whilst showcasing roles across Somerset Council and our partner organisations within the County.

Strong relationships will be developed with local schools, colleges, and universities to ensure Somerset Council is an employer of choice and that we work in partnership to open doors for Young People at the start of their careers. We understand the importance of doing this both at Secondary school level for work experience and at university level. This will enable us to grow our graduate intake and ensure we have a stream of high-quality graduates who have roots within Somerset and share our vision to improve the lives of our communities.

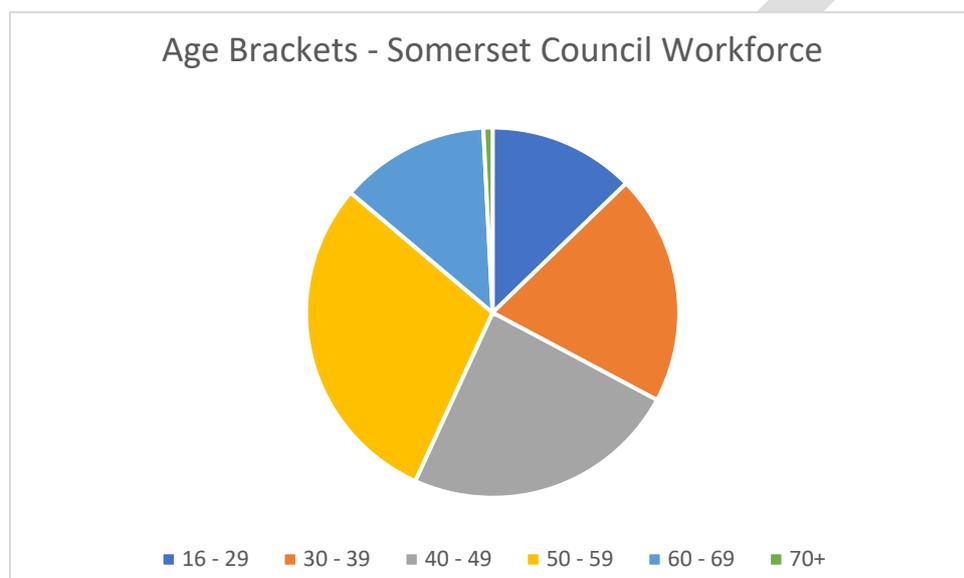
As one of Somerset's largest employers, we hope to be able to utilise the skills and experience of our workforce to collaborate with colleges, complementing their curriculums and giving our staff the chance to build upon their own personal and professional skills.

Internally we will continue to work with managers at all levels to share the benefits of these schemes and ensure that our culture reflects the aspiration to bring young people into the workforce and grow our leaders of tomorrow.

2. Use data to drive our decision making

Within many local authorities, an aging workforce continues to be a challenge. At Somerset Council we are at risk of losing key expertise and skills as staff near retirement. This is compounded by retention difficulties as the pandemic has given employees many more opportunities to work anywhere geographically so Somerset residents do not necessarily need to be employed within Somerset.

To demonstrate, the pie chart below shows the workforce of Somerset Council as at 27.07.22;



Within Somerset Council we intend to put workforce planning at the heart of our People agenda. In order to anticipate potential problematic service areas and pre-empt the loss of crucial knowledge, expertise and skills, our workforce planning needs to be evidence based and reflect the results of successful initiatives. A focus on internal demographics and consequential succession planning will be essential to maintain effective teams and, ultimately, the smooth running of services.

In order to support decision making about future young people initiatives, a variety of evidence based practices will be utilised. These will inform recommendations and actions that are based on the most accurate and up-to-date data. Examples of practices we intend to utilise are:

- Surveys
- Stakeholder feedback
- Organisational data eg. turnover, promotions
- Benchmarking externally with other local authorities
- External data statistics eg. Office for National Statistics

We plan to support service areas by providing a dedicated business manager who understands the importance of both hard and soft data and can advise service and strategic

managers on their succession plans. They will also advise on career pathways which will optimise opportunities for young people and the organisation as a whole.

The aspiration of our Early Careers Strategy is to bring young people into the organisation at the earliest possible stage and support, guide and develop them to reach their full potential be that at Somerset Council or within other local employers. This will be achieved by implementing various initiatives (see section 3 below). Our commitment to helping young people identify their career path and then developing them as Individuals, both professionally and personally, will result in a fitter, diverse and more effective organisation which is leading the way in youth employment.

3. Maximise the full range of opportunities

We appreciate the importance of a positive work culture and will work with managers at all levels to help them understand and promote the benefits that bringing young people into the organisation can have.

Fantastic progress has already been made within the previous County and District Councils focusing on the importance of 'growing our own' and bringing fresh skills and knowledge into our organisations, such as our Social Work apprenticeship programme. This enabled unqualified staff to develop their skills whilst continuing in their substantive posts to become qualified as Social Workers.

Equally this can be shown through developing our younger employees through Level 3 management training to give them strong foundations to move into more senior roles accompanied by higher level management qualifications – all through making use of the apprenticeship levy.

As an organisation we are committed to continue building on this approach to ensure that proposed initiatives are at the forefront of all recruitment opportunities.

With the vast array of apprenticeships now available at various levels, there are likely to be appropriate learning opportunities which could support job vacancies. Our intention is to promote a learning culture within Somerset Council which provide opportunities for individuals - internally and externally.

Building upon strong partnerships already developed with our colleagues across the Integrated Care System, we will maximise opportunities across the Health and Social Care sector, offering high quality work experience and further learning opportunities.

Early Careers Strategy - Initiatives

The following initiatives have been designed to deliver on our promise and encourage Young People to consider Somerset Council as a rewarding career.

3.1 Work Experience and T-Levels

Work experience can often be a Young Person's first experience of the workplace. At Somerset Council we aim to offer high quality and varied work experience placements to students of all ages, starting with those in Year 10 of secondary school.

We already work with local secondary schools to offer work experience weeks to students looking to gain insight into a variety of roles across the Council. These are offered at different points throughout the summer months.

We will continue to offer ad hoc, bespoke work experience placements for students for up to 2 months. These can be within specific teams or rotated around a service area.

T-Levels, introduced in 2020, are specific vocational courses that young people can complete allowing them to study and gain valuable work experience coherently.

The placement element, called an Industry Placement, is made up of 315 hours across the 12-18 month period – this usually equates to 1 or 2 days in the work environment each week.

Currently there are pathways in Digital and ICT, Business and Management, Finance and Accounting, Education and Childcare, Construction and Engineering and Health and Social Care.

David Goodman, completed a T-Level student placed in one of our Climate Teams, he reflected on his experience for us;

I have enjoyed the placement here and feel it has been a great opportunity to work in County Hall. I have learnt a great deal in my time here such as, learning how professional web developers will create webpages and websites. The most enjoyable aspect of this placement for me was being at the Somerset Business Climate Summit and pushing myself outside of my comfort zone by helping others at the summit with the presentation and the Mentimeter Questions. I will take the experience I have gained here and use it whilst I finish my course and use it in my future jobs.

Laura Jensen, David's mentor commented;

David has been an invaluable part of our team since joining us as a T-Level student. He has supported the planning and delivery of a county-wide climate change event for businesses including website design alongside the Digital Team and attending the event to help ensure the smooth running of the event in particular the IT. He has learnt new skills and embraced office life as part of this placement, a highlight being weekly hot chocolate at our favourite café!

3.2 Traineeships

Traineeships are often seen as the step before an apprenticeship and aim to seek out promising young talent who may not have thrived at school or college.

They are bespoke programmes that can be used to build up personal and professional skills and also to offer level 1 qualifications which will prepare young people for the academic side of an apprenticeship. Alongside this, GCSE's can also be offered to enable Young People to remove this as a barrier to them securing future permanent employment.

They are non-paid positions and offer 1 or 2 days of workplace experience each week for a period of between 6 weeks and 6 months aiming to boost a Young Person's employability. They are targeted opportunities aimed at those with 1-9 GCSE grades.

They can be a valuable way of trialling potential apprentices (and for them to trial us!) and supporting Somerset Council's aim of growing our workforce internally.

3.3 Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships can be a tool to help develop and motivate a workforce; ensuring staff have the right skills and targeted experience. Supporting workforce planning, apprenticeships are an integral way of bringing young people into the organisation. In addition, they are an extremely effective way of developing the organisation's workforce through upskilling, continued professional development and the provision of future opportunities for individuals.

[Link here to People Strategy & L&D Strategy](#)

Somerset Council pays into the Government run apprenticeship levy. This allows us to offer opportunities to staff and encourages them to develop themselves and gain nationally recognised qualifications to further develop themselves in their current role or identify further opportunities they may wish to pursue. This benefits their personal and professional development and brings new skills and fresh ideas into the organisation thus strengthening our ability to serve the communities of Somerset.

Apprenticeships are offered at different levels:

- Intermediate Apprenticeships – are equivalent to 5-9 GCSEs (Level 2)
- Advanced Apprenticeships – are equivalent to 2 A-Levels (Level 3)
- Higher Apprenticeships – award Level 4 & 5 qualifications. e.g. Foundation Degrees
- Degree Apprenticeships – award Bachelor (Level 6) and Masters (Level 7) qualification.

3.4 Paid Internships

Internships are an opportunity for Somerset Council to discover the most promising students, primarily post A-Level or via a university placement, and they support our aim of encouraging Young People to stay in (or come back to) Somerset after they complete their studies.

Internships could play a vital part in our workforce planning and allows teams to engage with local young people at an earlier stage – allowing for relationships to be built prior to students leaving the County for higher education.

Internships can run from 2 -12 months and are paid at national minimum wage. They are the next step up from work experience and offer Young People the chance to immerse themselves into their chosen career field in order to gain valuable work experience and insight that they can take back and apply to their studies.

3.5 Graduate Programmes

Graduates have talent and specific knowledge from their degrees. They are likely to be fantastic assets to Somerset Council but they can lack workplace skills and experience. Through planned graduate programmes, we can offer graduates from different fields the opportunity to work and learn within their chosen sector. They are provided with appropriate support, guidance and development opportunities allowing them to build upon their skills and gain valuable work experience from sector experts.

Within Somerset Council we aim to build upon successful previous schemes and offer a high quality cross organisational graduate scheme where peer to peer support and continuing professional development are at the heart. We will also consider the use of wider national programmes such as the NHS Graduate Programme and the National Graduate Development Programme (NGDP) which offer graduates a chance to experience various organisations both in the private and public sector.

These programmes can be a fantastic way to fill hard to recruit to roles and bring fresh ideas and up to date practices into the workplace.

3.6 Pathway to Employment (P2E)

P2E is a valuable addition to the Council's armoury in supporting Somerset's vulnerable and/or disadvantaged Young People and encouraging them to access education or work-related opportunities.

It is a standalone budget that can be used to support SEND individuals and care leavers into paid positions within Somerset Council but also to encourage and motivate them to engage with education and develop themselves personally and professionally.

Guaranteeing sustainability and building interest are keys to a successful P2E programme therefore we will work with various in-house teams such as Leaving Care, and SENse to promote opportunities to Young People alongside working with partner organisations to ensure that support is provided throughout education and early careers.

It is our aim to build upon the work already being carried out in relation to supported apprenticeships for SEND individuals and specific apprenticeships for Somerset Care Leavers.



Hi! I'm Kelsey, I'm Care Experienced and I'm now on a Level 4 Apprenticeship after the successful completion of my Level 3.

I have been working as an Apprentice in Leaving Care since May 2020 and I have learnt more in the last two years than I ever thought possible. I have had a wide range of opportunities, from being a case holder to developing a creative exhibition for Care Leavers Week 2022. The exhibition will showcase work from Care Leavers and will be open to the public, I have led on the project every step of the way, which has enabled me to manage the responsibilities of planning an event while also engaging with Young People to ensure that their talents, identities, and stories are celebrated.

I also supported the planning and delivery of Care Leavers Week 2021, which included taking a group of Care Leavers to Bristol for an MSHED street art exhibition. It was an amazing day and a brilliant opportunity to connect with our Care Leavers.

At the end of last year, I was invited to be involved in the Social Care Review. It was an emotional but empowering experience, and I really valued the ability to represent the views of Somerset Care Leavers on a national level. I was able to voice these again at a manager's event in Leeds, after becoming a Young Persons Benchmarking Forum Champion for 2022. It was my first time speaking in front of a large audience, and despite my nerves I loved every second of it.

I then spoke as a Champion at the National Leaving Care Benchmarking Forum's Personal Advisors event in Birmingham. I was on a panel of Care experienced young people discussing the importance of Leaving Care Worker support. I shared parts of my own story and explained how Leaving Care support has benefited me. It was great to meet Leaving Care Workers from different Local authorities, share positive stories and ideas for the future.

I have really enjoyed both of my apprenticeships and the experience, confidence and drive for the future that has come with it. The progression onto Level 4 has enabled me to continue learning and developing my own practice. Being in an environment which understands Care Leavers has helped me to feel supported on my best and worst days; and allowed me to grow as both a person and a professional.

Looking forward, I'm excited to continue to use my views and experiences to support positive changes within the service.

4. Invest in retention - offering development opportunities and support

At Somerset Council we aim to provide more than just a job to our Young People – we want them to feel fully embedded in the organisation and develop personally as well as professionally.

To achieve this, we will give our Young People a clear identity and opportunities to feed directly into organisational objectives, develop their employee voice and the chance to feedback to directors and councillors.

Building upon steps taken previously by County and District Councils, we will continue to support a Young People's Network which gives our Young People the chance to interact informally as peers through virtual and face-to-face support sessions, dedicated CPD and annual conferences. Alongside this internal network, we will also encourage our younger apprentices to join national networks, such as the Young Apprentice Ambassador Apprentice

network which allows them the chance to meet peers from across the South West and UK, and gives them valuable experience to run alongside their academic learning.

YEN Introduction – *insert on its own page.*

Our hope is that the newly formed Young Employees Network will allow young employees (ages 16-26) to build professional and personal relationships with other young individuals across the organisation. We hope to remove the feeling of isolation for



colleagues who can find themselves, often, the youngest in their teams, and provide opportunities to attend a range of events, so that they can network and make new friends.



Our vision is that it will provide a safe space for young employees to share their experiences, gain new skills and build relationships that can support them both personally and professionally.

We hope that by hosting a range of virtual and face to face meetings and activities, it will encourage young employees to get involved and benefit from the positive social impact of the network.

What will the network look like?

The network will deliver a range of activities including CPD Opportunities, informal sessions, annual conferences and teambuilding sessions to ensure that it is attractive to as many young employees as possible. The network wants to tackle social isolation at work, and to provide development opportunities so that young employees feel valued and that they are given opportunities to thrive in the workplace.

The network will also include various communication methods so that young employees can collaborate and connect, whilst all upcoming events and opportunities can be shared. We will be launching a YEN monthly bulletin, Teams channel and YEN inbox so that information and collaboration is easily accessible to all young employees.

We look forward to working with SLT and senior managers to ensure that young employee's needs are being met, and their voices are being heard.

Jess Davis and Jess Cullen

Co-Chairs Young Employee's Network, Somerset Council

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is imperative to all careers and we will ensure that CPD opportunities are shared with our Young People as soon as they join the organisation. Regular communication will be shared regarding internal learning & development and there will be invitations to attend national and regional events e.g. the

PPMA Apprentice of the Year Event, South West Council's South West Challenge. At these events they will get to meet and work alongside colleagues at all levels and learn from their experiences.

We understand the importance of 'growing our own' and will work to ensure progression into permanent roles for our apprentices and graduates is as seamless as possible.

Currently we have a 90% retention rate across the organisations for apprentices moving into permanent roles and we would like to see this increase as we move forward into Somerset Council.

Jessica Cullen, Business Administration Level 3 Apprentice



Attending the broadcast of the Top 100 Apprenticeship Employers 2022 was a brilliant experience. I love working within the Council and Support Services for Education (SSE), so was more than happy to talk about the benefits of being an apprentice – especially for such a fantastic organisation.

Speaking in front of a group of people in a situation such as this was definitely out of my comfort zone, but I have always been supported within work and my apprenticeship to pursue each new opportunity.

The other apprentices and I were welcomed by everyone within the studio and it was great to meet people who have shared a similar experience to myself. I hope that others who may have been watching the broadcast recognise that university isn't the only option to starting a career, and that an apprenticeship is a good opportunity to network, gain experience and build industry knowledge and skills, with a qualification secured at the end.

5. Promote Diversity and Inclusion and champion the work of young people

Somerset has a diverse and varying population both in terms of age and background. As one of the County's main employers, we recognise our responsibility to ensure our workforce represents the population that we serve. It is also imperative that employees actively engage with and represent our communities.

The pathway to employment budget ensures that opportunities are given to those Young People who come from vulnerable or disadvantaged backgrounds such as Care Leavers and those with SEND.

We aim to build upon the good foundations already in place to support managers in realising the benefits of supporting Young People from all backgrounds. Somerset Council recognises that the individual skills, knowledge and fresh outlook they can bring to the organisation will strengthen our workforce and ensure we can serve the communities of Somerset.

Closing remarks

Although our Early Careers Strategy covers a period of 5 years, it will be reviewed year on year to ensure that we are capitalising on all new government initiatives and changes to current schemes that may affect young people and their entry into the world of employment. Continual evaluation will take place and, where needed, adaptations will be made allowing us to respond in an agile and pro-active way to changing environments.

Our Early Careers Strategy, together with our People Strategy and Learning & Development Strategy, will ensure that we recruit and retain a workforce who represents the communities we serve, delivers our organisational goals and contributes positively to a healthy and inclusive culture.

APPENDICES

- 1) Action plan

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