

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Local Government Reorganisation  
Implementation Board held 2.00 pm, Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> January 2023  
The John Mielke Room, Deane House, Taunton**

**PRESENT:**

Cllr V Keitch – Lead Member for LGR and Prosperity, Somerset County Council  
(Chair)

Cllr Faye Purbrick– Somerset County Council

Cllr Liz Leyshon – Deputy Leader, Lead Member for Finance and Human Resources –  
Somerset County Council

Cllr Bill Revans- Leader of Somerset County Council

Cllr Roz Wyke – Lead Member for Development and Assets, Somerset County  
Council

Cllr France Nicholson (substitute) – Somerset County Council

Cllr John Clarke- South Somerset District Council

Cllr Federica Smith- Roberts- Leader, Somerset West and Taunton and Somerset  
County Council

**Other Members Present in person:**

Cllr Tom Deakin - Somerset County Council

Cllr Sarah Wakefield- Somerset County Council

**Other Members present – Virtual**

Cllr Marcus Kravis – Somerset County Council

Cllr Heather Shearer- Somerset County Council

Cllr Bob Filmer- Somerset County Council and Sedgemoor District Council

Cllr Rosemary Woods- Somerset County Council

Cllr Leigh Redman- Somerset County Council

Cllr Tony Lock- Somerset County Council

Cllr John Hunt- Somerset County Council

Cllr Gill Slocombe Sedgemoor District Council

**1 Apologies**

Cllr David Fothergill – Somerset County Council- Cllr Frances Nicholson  
substituting.

Cllr Duncan McGinty- Sedgemoor District Council

**2 Declarations of Interest – Agenda item 2**

Declarations of interest – none.

**3 Minutes from the last meeting – Agenda item 3**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> December 2022 were not approved as a correct record due to an error in the system.

Laura to circulate the minutes via email to members of the board.

#### **4 Public Question Time (PQT) – Agenda item 4**

The Chair informed the LGR Implementation Board that no public representations had been received by the submission deadline.

#### **5 Draft Asset Management Plan and Strategy- Agenda item 5**

The Chair of the LGR Implementation Board, Cllr Val Keitch, invited the Head of Corporate Property to present the report.

The Head of Corporate Property, with the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, proceeded to present the report, highlighting the draft asset management plan and strategy for the New Somerset Council and confirming that further revisions could be made after this meeting.

- Corporate Estates sites that are occupied by the council for operational use.
- Leased estates- sites that are leased out but where the original purpose for holding sites related to a service or strategic objective other than for commercial yield.
- The Property Asset Management Strategy and Plan also excludes assets acquired and held for investment yield, and assets held within the Housing Revenue Account – these asset groups are subject to separate policies and plans.
- The strategy timeline reporting arrangement and will go to Full Council on 22<sup>nd</sup> of February for approval.
- The proposed strategic objectives the Council's estate is financially sustainable, efficient and effective, the assets that are fit for purpose, safe & compliant, assets that address the Climate Emergency. The Council's estate is used to meet housing and care needs, with an emphasis on social housing and estate supports prosperity and economic growth. Address the growing challenges in the Council's school buildings estate.

The LGR Implementation Board proceeded to debate the report and invited comments from members and other members present, points raised included; The non-maintained school and benefits of joining the County and Districts

assets and properties in the new school builds from a planning and school place planning view will this be a separate strategy and it would be useful for that to be included. The relationship with local maintained schools, concerns around maintained schools and have an interest that the children flourish within our schools and supported through this process. The responsibility for schools and the funding provided to help schools and a recognition from Local Government to support. The property team are mindful of the risks, and this is continually monitored.

Cllr Liz Leyshon informed the board in the Strategy under the Strategic Objective 6 Address the growing challenges in the Council's school buildings estate. The Policy Commitments and implementation plan have been covered well. Accessibility issues have previously been raised and under Strategic objective 2: Assets that are fit for purpose, safe and compliant however to add into the policy commitment and implementation plan around accessibility to be more visible.

The Head of Corporate Property Ollie Woodhams informed the Board the assets are owned and operating by and in continuing use by the authority, all new schools built will be transferred to academy trusts and new school builds will not be included in this strategy as it is not a core part of this strategy. The draft that will go to executive and the point raised about accessibility will be added.

**that the LGR implementation Board RESOLVED:**

- **The Local Government Reorganisation Implementation Board is asked to consider and comment on the proposed strategy and plan**

**6 LGR Programme Update-** Agenda item 5

The Chair of the LGR Implementation Board, Cllr Val Keitch, invited the LGR Programme Director, Alyn Jones, to present the presentation.

The LGR Programme Director invited the Programme Manager on LGR programme Roshan Robati and the Programme Lead and Strategic Manager for Business Change Sarah Hawkins with the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, proceeded to present the report highlighting the following:

- The programme remains as an Amber RAG due to the known risk in the programme and that are managed closely.

- The workstreams individually report the RAG the same except assets optimisation technical reported green as a clear plan to mitigate and may go amber due to contracts and exit plans.
- Provided an update on individual programme RAG rating, highlighting the resources and schedule through the LGR work programme and the day 1 readiness.
- The programme Delivery and vesting readiness highlighting the milestones. Day 1 readiness and workstreams with the outcomes and the products delivery status.
- The work continuing on Transition Matrix which will outline the extent of each service's alignment on vesting day and help inform the sequencing and pace of transitional change remaining (tranche 2 of the programme) to deliver the business case outcomes including the current plan deliverables.
- The timeline of the programme update and the reporting arrangements, the milestones of the Project Beacon events.
- Somerset West and Taunton Council had completed its switch over to the single platform and Mendip would carry out theirs at the end of February.
- Completions of payroll and all four Districts Council being on SAP.
- Interviews for Tier 2 have been concluded and successful candidates have been confirmed.
- Staff readiness: all information, support and guidance being developed and due to go live on the 23<sup>rd</sup> January and training that will be delivered pre and post vesting day.
- The following was highlighted on the workstream update including people, asset optimisation (property and technical), Customers Communities and partnerships (CCP). The governance, Finance and service alignment and improvement with the programme priorities between now and the 14<sup>th</sup> March.

The LGR Implementation Board proceeded to debate the report and invited comments from members and other members present, points raised included; The Local Community Network reported the governance and geographical arrangements had been approved and that the decisions published, the concerns that it affects everyone around the County and as part of the future priorities and has been already agreed. The RAG rating asset optimisation property there are two green for schedule and resources however amber overall. The CCP workstream missing some information please can it be circulated to members and do we have a Full Council on the 31<sup>st</sup> of March. The day one readiness and the work that needs to happen.

Cllr Liz Leyshon informed the board the Finance workstream update on the Action to identify and address short term funding needs agreed with Programme Board and has come forward on the MTFP and will be clearly seen.

The LGR Programme Director informed the board that engagement with Parish and Town councils and the wider community will be taking place. Members were advised that a Full Council meeting would take place by 31 March 2023 due to the programme reporting arrangements. There will not be much change post vesting day and everyone involved will be kept up to date on all areas and understanding the transition.

The Programme Lead and Strategic Manager for Business Change Sarah Hawkins advised the board that the Member development and training programme in place and detailed function for example housing, Licensing and planning.

The Director of PwC Public Practice Erica Ballmann highlighted the following:

- The focus on tranche two and three in the programme from vesting day onwards.
- The critical pathway post vesting day.
- The insights and reflections as part of the 'critical friend' role the core team have been commissioned to provide.
- There is a need to ensure that programme governance continues to be fit for purpose and as well as dealing with the urgency of Vesting Day readiness, that there is also a focus on future transformation and change. Governance arrangements will need to evolve as senior officer appointments are confirmed and new ways of working start to embed.
- Some of the recommendations from the LGA peer review make similar points, specifically the following: ***Stop, think and create space as the council 'top team' – when key senior positions have been filled ensuring we create organisational time and space to consider ways in which the new council will thrive into the future;***

The LGR Implementation Board proceeded to debate the report and invited comments from members and other members present, points raised included; Would the LGA report will be submitted to the next Executive meeting. A full calendar of council meeting and training with an increase of dates.

The LGR Programme Director informed the board that the LGA report would be presented to Executive in March, including an action plan to support it.

The LGR Programme Director informed the board that the programme update will be the final one at the next meeting to ensure everything is ready and in place for vesting day.

**that the LGR implementation Board RESOLVED:**

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

## **5 Risk update-** Agenda item 6

The Chair of the LGR Implementation Board, Cllr Val Keitch, welcomed the LGR Risk Manager Angela Farmer to introduce the presentation highlighting;

- The revised register recognised the following changes, review of the risks that remain relevant to the programme 2 and the risks that are considered to be transitional, one that was currently being mitigated by products but will be a risk into the new Council. A review of the risks against business readiness and the 8 outcomes for day one success.
- Highlighted the overview of the risk programme and day 1 success will look like for Somerset Council.

The LGR Implementation Board proceeded to debate the report and invited comments from members and other members present, points raised included: the risk repeated throughout tier 3 and if these are appointed by the end of March how will these be addressed the risk for reporting. The risk to Public Health and Adult, Social care for the vulnerable people.

The LGR Risk Manager Angela Farmer informed the board removal of the Public Health and Adult, Social Care they already have a risk register and fully engaged with the programme.

The Executive Director of Somerset County Council Duncan Sharkey informed the board the Executive Directors will be in post and a number of colleagues that were already in a similar post and would like to use them for a temporary basis, options for agencies and will have partners ready to go with us post vesting day if we have not recruited.

### **that the LGR implementation Board RESOLVED:**

- **To note the amendments to the programme level risks including.**
- **The revised programme level risks.**
- **The new risks.**
- **Transitional risks.**
- **Risk that has been closed.**
- **To give an update on the proposed approach to the Implementation Board meeting in March.**

## **7 Digital, Data and Technology Strategy for Somerset Council – Agenda item 8**

The Chair of the LGR Implementation Board, Val Keitch invited Paul Davidson, Kevin Chorley and Toffee Beattie to present the presentation.

The following was highlighted:

- What is digital and the culture processes and the expectation with all the digital that is around.
- Why digital with culture improvements highlighting the growth and opportunity.
- The scope of and reach and the five themes based around the digital strategy.
- The Digital principles around the strategy and highlighting the protecting and Exploiting Data to help deliver the digital ambitions.
- The Technology Strategy and how to use the technology to help deliver the ambitions.

The LGR Implementation Board proceeded to debate the report and invited comments from members and other members present, points raised included: welcomed the report and software as a service, the Equality impact assessments seem to differentiate between data and digital but very much the same would impact on both around accessibility. The access to broadband in Somerset to share information for those families on universal credit about savings on broadband, Training opportunities for all staff for supporting and guiding through. The quantitative and qualitative of data, the language around procurement and help local business to develop economically. The connectivity across the County and productivity for the future and where the challenges are across the authority. From the 1<sup>st</sup> of April will the Data sharing become easier. The Strategy around ambitious and the strategy could be more ambitious, having the culture and doing for the digital strategy and having a digital team. Made a comment the digital team in the digital innovation centre.

Kevin Chorley informed the board the LGR Joint Scrutiny Committee raised similar point about the Equality impact assessment and training and take on board the comments and are already working on this. Toffee Beattie advised the board that challenges across the County Council and District Council were similar and the economic development team will need to work together more closely. An information sheet would be issued to all members with an update.

Paul Davidson advised the board that the best data sharing is based on the data standards and free flowing data sharing agreements and as from the 1 April 2023 behind the scenes the council will be operating different systems whilst work continued on delivering one system for the new Council.

The LGR Programme Director Alyn Jones informed the board that the key output of the programme about the matrix for the transition programme and the strategy and direction of travel to Executive and wider leadership team of the direction of travel and delivery plans.

**that the LGR implementation Board RESOLVED:**

- **To consider and comment on the proposed Data Strategy for the new Somerset Council and review the proposed deliverables to ensure compliance and give confidence that the Strategy can be practicably achieved.**

## **8 Customer Strategy and Service Standards**

The Chair of the LGR Implementation Board, Cllr Val Keitch, welcomed the Head of Customer Services Gareth Denslow and LGR Programme Advisor Karyn Punched to introduce and present the presentation.

The following was highlighted.

- The customer strategy and standards through to vesting day.
- The customer strategy visions including customer insights and feedback.
- The customer service excellence for Government commissioned framework which replaced the 'Charter Mark' scheme in 2006. A practical tool for driving customer-focussed change and emphasis on understanding customers, their needs and preferences. Enables continuous improvement through external assessment and opportunities for greater benchmarking.
- Customer promise and standards highlighting the Somerset Council commitment to customers.
- Highlighting the tranche 1 products by vesting day and have in place agreed and aligned standards of service to ensure continued stable service delivery on Vesting Day"
- The Tranche 1 Product has been broken down into 3 stages:

Planning for stable BAU service delivery on Vesting Day

Interim service standards are delivered on Vesting Day in line with MTFP resource levels.

Have in place an agreed programme of post vesting day further alignment of standards of service.



- The Service Alignment and Improvement workstreams.

The LGR Implementation Board proceeded to debate the report and invite comments from other members present, points raised included: the recommendation to delegate authority to publish and communicate as Interim Service Standards for vesting day, to the Lead Director for Economic and Community Infrastructure and Director of Commissioning is there no member of executive member input, customer insight collecting data, track data on the websites and the social media managing expectation you can get a faster response on Facebook rather than email or letters. When will service delivery settle and managing expectations. Can the work on the Customer Service standards works closely with council plan and corporate performance reporting.

The Head of Customer Services Gareth Denslow responded to points raised the customer standards and comments around social media we will liaise with the communication workstream in regard to email we need to establish in dealing with complaint depending on the nature of the complaint. The service delivery is about getting all the information together to make decision and prioritise the work in terms of the services and will need to be a programme of transition and alignment. The continuing of open and transparent will continue.

**that the LGR implementation Board RESOLVED:**

- Approve the draft Customer Strategy, Customer Promise and Customer Standards.
- Approve the baseline Service Standards in Appendix D.
- Delegate authority to make any consequential amendments to these service standards following approval of the 2023/24 Budget for Somerset Council, to the Lead Director for Economic and Community Infrastructure and Director of Commissioning.
- Delegate authority to publish and communicate and as Interim Service Standards for vesting day, to the Lead Director for Economic and Community Infrastructure and Director of Commissioning.

**11 AOB** – agenda item 12

(The meeting ended at 4.05pm)

Chair