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New Somerset Council

Somerset LGR Joint Scrutiny Committee

Meeting date – 07 March 2022

Lead Officer: Scott Wooldridge, Monitoring Officer, Somerset County Council

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1. Summary / Background

- 1.1.** On 21 July 2021 the Secretary of State announced his decision to implement, subject to parliamentary approval, a proposal submitted by the Somerset County Council for a single unitary council (Somerset Council) covering the whole of the administrative county of Somerset, to come into being on 1st April 2023 (Vesting Day).

Part of that process will be the Government's Structural Change Order (SCO) coming into effect, which is estimated to be on or around 15th March 2022.

- 1.2.** The terms of reference for the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) Joint Scrutiny Committee specify that the Committee will only exist as long as the LGR Joint Committee does. One of the significances of the implementation of the SCO is that the Joint Committee will no longer exist (in line with its terms of reference and the provisions of the SCO) and therefore neither will the Joint Scrutiny Committee.
- 1.3.** Subject to the SCO coming into effect, the Committee's meeting on 7th March will be its' last in the current form and it will be for the newly elected County Council in May 2022 to determine any future scrutiny or joint scrutiny arrangements for the implementation of the unitary council and the related delivery programme. Clearly, following the elections, the newly elected council will want to discuss any proposals for scrutiny of the LGR Programme with the four district councils.

2. Issues for consideration / recommendations

- 2.1** **The LGR Joint Scrutiny Committee are asked to note that subject to the SCO coming into effect :**

- **that the 7th March Committee meeting will be the last meeting of this Committee under its terms of reference.**
- **that the newly elected Council is required to set its proposed future scrutiny or joint scrutiny arrangements following the May 2022 election.**