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New Somerset Council

Local Government Reorganisation Joint Scrutiny Committee

Thursday 19 January 2023

2.00 pm

To: The Members of the Local Government Reorganisation Joint Scrutiny Committee

Cllr B Filmer (Chair), Cllr B Hamilton (Vice-Chair), Cllr S Buller, Cllr T Butt Philip, Cllr M Chilcott, Cllr B Crow, Cllr T Deakin, Cllr P Ham, Cllr C Inchley, Cllr M Lithgow, Cllr D Mansell, Cllr P Maxwell, Cllr H Prior-Sankey, Cllr D Rodrigues, Cllr J Roundell Greene and Cllr B Smedley

All Somerset County Council and District Council Members are invited to attend meetings of the Somerset Local Government Reorganisation Joint Committee.

Issued By Scott Wooldridge, Strategic Manager - Monitoring Officer, Somerset County Council - 11 January 2023

For further information about the meeting, please contact Jamie Jackson jajackson@somerset.gov.uk or Clare Rendell clare.rendell@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 on request prior to the meeting in large print, Braille, audio tape & disc and can be translated into different languages. They can also be accessed via the council's website on

www.somerset.gov.uk/agendasandpapers



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AGENDA

Item Local Government Reorganisation Joint Scrutiny Committee - 2.00 pm Thursday
19 January 2023

****Public Guidance notes and LGR Glossary contained in agenda annexe****

1 **Apologies for Absence**

To receive Members' apologies.

2 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting of the LGR Joint Scrutiny Committee (Pages 15 - 20)**

To note the minutes of the previous meeting of the LGR Joint Scrutiny Committee, circulated within the agenda.

3 **Declarations of Interest**

Details of all Members' interests in District, Town and Parish Councils can be viewed on the [Council Website](#)

The Statutory Register of Member's Interests can be inspected via request to the Democratic Service Team. Any new or updated declarations of interest will be received.

4 **Public Question Time**

The Chair will allow members of the public to ask a question or make a statement about any matter on the agenda for this meeting. These questions may be taken during the meeting, when the relevant agenda item is considered, at the Chair's discretion.

5 **Digital Strategy for Somerset Council (Pages 21 - 48)**

6 **Data Strategy for Somerset Council (Pages 49 - 82)**

7 **Interim Technology Strategy for Somerset Council (Pages 83 - 108)**

8 **Customer Strategy and Service Standards (Pages 109 - 166)**

9 **Proposed Asset Management Strategy for Somerset Council (Pages 167 - 186)**

10 **LGR Programme Risks (Pages 187 - 200)**

11 **Any Other Urgent Items of Business**

Item Local Government Reorganisation Joint Scrutiny Committee - 2.00 pm Thursday
19 January 2023

The Chair may raise any items of urgent business.

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Guidance notes for the meeting

1. **Council Public Meetings**

The former regulations that enabled virtual committee meetings ended on 7 May 2021. Since then, all committee meetings need to return to face-to-face meetings. The requirement is for members of the committee and key supporting officers to attend in person, along with some provision for any public speakers. Provision will be made wherever possible for those who do not need to attend in person including the public and press who wish to view the meeting to be able to do so virtually.

2. **Inspection of Papers**

Any person wishing to inspect minutes, reports, or the background papers for any item on the agenda should contact Democratic Services at democraticserviceteam@somerset.gov.uk or telephone 01823 357628.

They can also be accessed via the council's website on www.somerset.gov.uk/agendasandpapers.

Printed agendas can also be viewed in reception at the Council offices at County Hall, Taunton TA1 4DY.

3. **Members' Code of Conduct requirements**

When considering the declaration of interests and their actions as a councillor, Members are reminded of the requirements of the Members' Code of Conduct and the underpinning Principles of Public Life: Honesty; Integrity; Selflessness; Objectivity; Accountability; Openness; Leadership. The Code of Conduct can be viewed at: [Code of Conduct](#)

4. **Minutes of the Meeting**

Details of the issues discussed, and recommendations made at the meeting will be set out in the minutes, which the Committee will be asked to approve as a correct record at its next meeting.

5. **Public Question Time**

If you wish to speak, please contact Democratic Services by 5pm 3 clear working days before the meeting. Email democraticserviceteam@somerset.gov.uk or telephone 01823 357628.

Members of public wishing to speak or ask a question will need to attend in person or if unable can submit their question or statement in writing for an officer to read out.

After entering the Council building you may be taken to a waiting room before being taken to the meeting for the relevant agenda item to ask your question. After the agenda item has finished you will be asked to leave the meeting for other members of the public to attend to speak on other items.

A slot for Public Question Time is set aside near the beginning of the meeting, after the minutes of the previous meeting have been agreed. However, questions or statements about any matter on the agenda for this meeting may be taken at the time when each matter is considered.

At the Chair's invitation you may ask questions and/or make statements or comments about any matter on the Committee's agenda – providing you have given the required notice. You may also present a petition on any matter within the Committee's remit. The length of public question time will be no more than 30 minutes in total (20 minutes for meetings other than County Council meetings).

You must direct your questions and comments through the Chair. You may not take a direct part in the debate. The Chair will decide when public participation is to finish.

If an item on the agenda is contentious, with many people wishing to attend the meeting, a representative should be nominated to present the views of a group.

An issue will not be deferred just because you cannot be present for the meeting. Remember that the amount of time you speak will be restricted, to three minutes only.

In line with the council's procedural rules, if any member of the public interrupts a meeting the Chair will warn them accordingly.

If that person continues to interrupt or disrupt proceedings the Chair can ask the Democratic Services Officer to remove them as a participant from the meeting.

Provision will be made for anybody who wishes to listen in on the meeting only to follow the meeting online.

6. **Meeting Etiquette for participants**

- Only speak when invited to do so by the Chair.
- Mute your microphone when you are not talking.
- Switch off video if you are not speaking.
- Speak clearly (if you are not using video then please state your name)

- If you're referring to a specific page, mention the page number.
- Switch off your video and microphone after you have spoken.
- There is a facility in Microsoft Teams under the ellipsis button called turn on live captions which provides subtitles on the screen.

7. **Exclusion of Press & Public**

If when considering an item on the agenda, the Committee may consider it appropriate to pass a resolution under Section 100A (4) Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 that the press and public be excluded from the meeting on the basis that if they were present during the business to be transacted there would be a likelihood of disclosure of exempt information, as defined under the terms of the Act.

If there are members of the public and press listening to the open part of the meeting, then the Democratic Services Officer will, at the appropriate time, ask Participants to leave the meeting when any exempt or confidential information is about to be discussed.

8. **Recording of meetings**

The Council supports the principles of openness and transparency. It allows filming, recording, and taking photographs at its meetings that are open to the public - providing this is done in a non-disruptive manner. Members of the public may use Facebook and Twitter or other forms of social media to report on proceedings. No filming or recording may take place when the press and public are excluded for that part of the meeting.

Please contact the Committee Administrator or Democratic Services on 01823 357628 or email democraticservicesteam@somerset.gov.uk if you have any questions or concerns.

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LGR Technical Glossary

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Change Impact – The results of something that has been done, on people, groups, organisations as the result of a change. Change impacts should be continually identified and assessed, as they could be

negative as well as positive. Plans to reduce or remove negative impacts should be implemented and monitored.

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

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

Communication – Communication is giving, receiving or exchanging ideas, information, signals or messages through appropriate media, so people or groups can learn about something, understand it, share or ask for information or to express their views.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Workstream – How we are dividing up the programme to deliver it – based on the Business Case and agreement on “what sits where.”

Workstreams are responsible for delivering a wide range of related products. There are 6 workstreams in the LGR Programme:

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

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

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

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION JOINT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a Meeting of the Local Government Reorganisation Joint Scrutiny Committee held in the Luttrell Room - County Hall, Taunton, on Thursday 27 October 2022 at 2.00 pm

Present: Cllr B Filmer (Chair) (SCC), Cllr B Hamilton (Vice-Chair) (SSDC), Cllr B Crow (SDC), Cllr P Ham (MDC), Cllr C Inchley (MDC), Cllr M Lithgow (SWT), Cllr D Mansell (SCC), Cllr P Maxwell (SSDC), Cllr H Prior-Sankey (SCC), Cllr J Roundell Greene (SCC), Cllr B Smedley (SCC), Cllr M Lovell (SCC), Cllr J Lloyd (SWT) and Cllr E Pearlstone (SCC)

Other Members present: Cllr A Bradford, Cllr J Hunt, Cllr V Keitch,

Other Members present on Microsoft Teams: Cllr N Cavill, Cllr S Coles, Cllr H Kay, Cllr C Lawrence, Cllr L Leyshon, Cllr F Purbrick, Cllr L Redman, Cllr H Shearer, Cllr S Wakefield and Cllr M Wales

Apologies for absence: Cllr S Buller, Cllr T Butt Philip, Cllr M Chilcott and Cllr T Deakin

24 **Apologies for Absence** - Agenda Item 1

Apologies were received from Councillor Mandy Chilcott, Councillor Sue Buller, who was substituted by Councillor Janet Lloyd, Councillor Theo Butt Philip, who was substituted by Councillor Emily Pearlstone and Councillor Tom Deakin, who was substituted by Councillor Martin Lovell.

25 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting** - Agenda Item 2

The minutes of the LGR Joint Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 30 September 2022 were approved.

26 **Declarations of Interest** - Agenda Item 3

The Committee noted the details of the personal interests of all Councillors present already declared in relation to their membership of County, District, Town and Parish Councils.

27 **Public Question Time** - Agenda Item 4

There had been no submissions for statements/questions received by the deadline of Friday 21 October 2022.

28 **Summary of LCN Consultation** - Agenda Item 5

The Local Community Network (LCN) Project Leads, Sara Skirton and Jan Stafford, gave a PowerPoint presentation which provided an update on the LCN consultation.

The Committee discussed the presentation, and the following was a summary of the areas raised:-

- Councillors queried how many of the responses were from non-parish council related organisations/individuals.
The LCN Project Lead advised that out of the 549 responses, 278 had been from Parish Councils.
- Councillors queried whether the proposal drawn up from the responses would go back for further consultation prior to the report being taken to the Executive.
The LCN Project Lead advised that it probably would not go back for any further consultation.
- Councillors queried how the reporting would work and how the Implementation Board would fit in the process.
The LCN Project Lead advised that they could take the report to the Implementation Board. The report would be taken to the Somerset County Council (SCC) Executive in November 2022, as they were the decision-making body, and would include feedback from the responses and where targeted discussions might be needed.
- Councillors queried whether the report would be taken to the SCC Full Council meeting for sign off.
The LGR Programme Director advised that the SCC Executive were the decision-making body which had been allocated by the Structural Change Order.
- Concern was raised that there would not be enough time or resources to set up the LCNs by vesting day.
The LCN Project Lead advised that was why they were keen to get the report to the November 2022 Executive meeting, to enable progress to be made. As they were aware that in other Unitary Authorities it had taken a couple of years to establish the networks and some had even carried out reviews and made changes in that time.
- Concern was raised that LCNs were reviewed because they did not work.
The LCN Project Lead advised that they were a valued necessity for a sub unitary level, to bring groups together to discuss local issues.
- Concern was raised on the delay in taking the report to Executive and that it could cause a delay in the work being carried out on the new Constitution.
- Concern was raised on the number, size and areas covered by the LCNs. Councillors believed that they should be split based on urban and rural areas, as they would have different types of issues.
- The Chair agreed that there was a lot of data to analyse, and he looked forward to future presentations with further information.

The LGR Joint Scrutiny Committee noted the presentation.

29 LGR Programme Update - Agenda Item 6

The LGR Programme Director, Alyn Jones gave a PowerPoint presentation updating the Committee on the LGR programme covering the PwC monthly feedback report for August 2022.

The Committee discussed the presentation, and the following was a summary of the areas raised:-

- Councillors queried what effort had been put in to understand the changes that would be made and impact officers.
The LGR Programme Director advised that work had started on being ready for vesting day but that they needed to understand what was important for officers and that a lot of the work was theoretical. He further advised that work was being carried out on ensuring the following was ready for vesting day: payroll, lanyards, branding, 'logging on', work locations and many more.

The LGR Joint Scrutiny Committee noted the presentation.

30 **Devolution of Assets** - Agenda Item 7

The Head of Law and Governance Services and Monitoring Officer from Mendip District Council, David Clark gave a PowerPoint presentation updating the Committee on the project carrying out work on the devolution of assets.

The Committee discussed the presentation, and the following was a summary of areas raised:-

- Councillors highlighted that it had been a frustrating process but they thanked the officers for all their work on the trial area.
- Councillors queried why officers had changed the process to be followed.
The Head of Law and Governance Services advised that the change was based on the work carried out in the trial area.
- Councillors agreed that a phased approach was the sensible way forward.
- Councillors queried how LCNs would fit in the process as they had been mentioned.
The Head of Law and Governance Services advised that nothing would be devolved to LCNs and that they would be used to promote the process within the local areas.
- Concern was raised that if too many assets were devolved to the parish councils, it could lead to a council tax rise, as the parish councils could increase their precepts to cover the cost of the services.
The Head of Law and Governance Services acknowledged the concern, however, in other areas it had shown that when a parish council had taken on the responsibility it had improved the quality of the service for little increase in the cost of council tax.
- Councillors queried if the devolution process was open to organisations/groups other than parish councils.
The Head of Law and Governance Services advised that they had not asked any other groups if they were interested in the devolution process yet.
- Councillors queried certain services and whether the parish councils would take on the whole service or could it lead to a fragmented service with different levels of responsibility.

The Head of Law and Governance Services advised that there were a lot of options for devolution within the business case, which were all available for the parish councils to choose from.

- Concern was raised on the loss of cost neutrality within the council tax precepts.

The Head of Law and Governance Services advised that they had looked into cost neutrality very closely and wanted to ensure that they had been open and transparent about the work.

- Concern was raised on the expectation on the parish councils to take on too much responsibility.
- Concern was raised that the parish councils were setting their budgets for the 2023/34 tax year now, so they needed to know more details as soon as they were available.

The Head of Law and Governance Services agreed that the timeline was important which was why they had suggested a phased approach for after vesting day.

- Councillors agreed that officers needed to be careful with the language used within the process and that it was not simply a 'cost shunting' exercise.
- Councillors advised that the report was due to go to the Implementation Board.

The LGR Joint Scrutiny Committee noted the presentation.

31 Risk Register - Agenda Item 8

The Risk Manager, Angela Farmer, gave a PowerPoint presentation on the LGR Risk Register.

The Committee discussed the presentation, and the following was a summary of the areas raised:-

- Concern was raised on the risk for officers going through the recruitment process.
- Concern was raised on the financial risk.
The Risk Manager advised that finance officers were in constant discussions with the programme board to try and keep the score level, the Medium-Term Financial Plan was for the LGR Programme not just for SCC.
- Councillors queried what was going to happen with the office buildings going past vesting day.
The Risk Manager advised that the asset management workstream group would be looking into the options available for the office buildings.
- Concern was raised on the amount of job vacancies across the five councils.
The Risk Manager advised that the programme board were constantly reviewing the vacancies across the five councils and wanted to stabilise the structure going forward.
- Concern was raised on the timing of the TUPE consultation, and they queried what would happen to those officers who were not due to be transferred across and when would they be told.

The Risk Manager advised that the intention was to take a phased approach for majority of officers, the only officers that would not be included in the main approach would be officers within tier two and three, who were management level. Those officers would be consulted with during November 2022, the rest of officers would be consulted after vesting day.

- Concern was raised on risk eleven and that it was marked as green, but councillors were aware of insufficient resources.
- Concern was raised that there was not an officer present at the meeting from Human Resources.
- Councillors queried whether there were any district risks that had not been included.
- Councillors highlighted that the committee were to scrutinise LGR risks only.

The LGR Joint Scrutiny Committee noted the presentation.

32 Work Programme - Agenda Item 9

The LGR Programme Manager, Alastair Higon gave an update on the Work Programme.

The Committee discussed the presentation, and the following was a summary of the areas raised:-

- Councillors requested an update from the Human Resources department.
The LGR Programme Manager advised that he would request that an officer attend the next meeting to give an update.
- Councillors suggested that the Medium-Term Financial Plan would need to be moved to another meeting.
The LGR Programme Manager advised that it would be moved to the January meeting.

The LGR Joint Scrutiny Committee noted the Work Programme.

33 Any Other Urgent Items of Business - Agenda Item 10

There were no other urgent items of business raised.

(The meeting ended at 4.30 pm)

CHAIRMAN

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Digital Strategy for Somerset Council

Executive Member(s): Cllr Federica Smith-Roberts -

Lead Member for Communities

Local Member(s) and Division: All

Lead Officer: Kevin Chorley

Author: Kevin Chorley – Digital Engagement Manager, Sedgemoor District Council

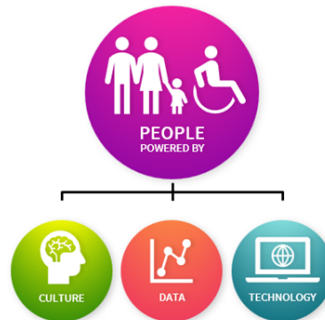
Contact Details: kevin.chorley@somerset.gov.uk

1. Summary / Background

1.1 Digital has been defined as:

'Applying the culture, processes, business models and technologies of the internet era to respond to people's raised expectations.'

Digital is at the heart of a culture of continuous improvement, taking incremental steps towards a bold future. 'Digital' is about People, empowered by Culture, right-quality Data, and re-useable Technologies; to meet the raised expectations of the Internet Age.



The Digital Strategy is at the core of enabling the strategic objectives of the organisation supported by Data and Technology.

1.2. A new Digital Strategy for Somerset Council is a product required under the Local Government Review Programme for vesting day.

2. Recommendations

2.1. LGR Joint Scrutiny Board is asked to:

2.1.1 **note** the key elements of the Digital Strategy,

2.1.2 **note** the high-level implications and risks,

2.1.3 **endorse** the strategy content.

3. Reasons for recommendations

3.1. Many of our customers have embedded digital into their lifestyles, with a raised expectation for convenient, real-time access to services, and control over their private data. Those customers who have not embraced digital themselves, have come to expect the quality of service that a modern workforce can provide when a digital culture is supported by the tools and skills for collaboration and innovation.

However, being a 'digital council' is no longer sufficient. Somerset is served by many organisations, from government agencies, through to the many community and voluntary groups that build strength and resilience. Digital for the 'place' of Somerset can create a trust framework in which the needs of individuals and of communities are understood and addressed via secure data sharing, shared casework, and through investments in smart solutions and connectivity. For the digitally excluded, we have a role to provide support and opportunity.

- 3.2.** Digital is fundamental to tackling Somerset Council's biggest challenges. It will be central to how we address the needs of health and social care, the climate emergency, achieving financial sustainability, improving public services, and supporting the most vulnerable. One of our biggest challenges and biggest demand on resources is around care. The use of digital technologies in health and social care is rising exponentially. Remote monitoring and diagnostics are allowing individuals to remain independent for longer – contributing enormously to their physical and mental wellbeing at the same time as reducing pressure on fixed health and care facilities.

4. Other options considered

- 4.1.** No alternatives were considered. There is no other viable option to a Digital Strategy.

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

- 5.1.** The Digital Strategy supports deliverability of the County Vision, Business Plan and Medium-Term Financial Plan through the provision of digital which will be used to support customers, innovate, drive transformation, and improve outcomes.
- 5.2.** The Digital Strategy sets out its own aims but also delivers against other corporate objectives including the Data Strategy, Customer Strategy, Business Intelligence Strategy, and the Technology Strategy.

6. Consultations and co-production

- 6.1.** The Digital Strategy was co-produced by a range of contributors who cover a range of professional disciplines and areas of expertise. Fortnightly sub-workstream meetings have been held since February 2022, which helped shape the strategy, its principles, and deliverables identified.
- 6.2.** The Digital Strategy has been considered by the LGR Communities, Customers

7. Financial and Risk Implications

- 7.1. No additional funding requirements are being sought for the approval of this strategy.
- 7.2. It has been established that well planned and well implemented digital solutions save money in the long term, whereas poorly planned, poorly implemented 'digital' results in poor value for money. This strategy aims to establish a future in which the deployment of digital is properly governed, and the digital marketplace is managed to ensure best return on investment.
- 7.3. At this current point in time the Digital Strategy is not costed. It sets out a high-level vision for the future. The implications of this vision will mean at times there will be a need for additional future investment, and the realisable cashable benefits may take time. Discrete programmes will fall out of the strategy, and these will be individually subject to investment appraisals.
- 7.4. The strategy gives the context for budget setting and MTFP and to that extent financial implications are bounded by existing controls.
- 7.5. Successful consolidation and modernisation of digital solutions will require business change, across a new council already pressurised by other organisational change demands. Digital changes must be introduced with careful change management strategies, always service/business led, and implemented by multidisciplinary teams – including, but not solely made up of, technical staff.
- 7.6. As systems are consolidated and modernised, on-going services must continue to be delivered. Methods such as user testing, parallel operation models, and agile delivery can help ensure service continuity, but they must be properly planned and resourced.
- 7.7. The scale and scope of change inherent in LGR, and proposed by this strategy, will be resource intensive. If organic capacity does not exist, resource may have to be bought in.

8. Legal and HR Implications

- 8.1. There are no legal implications arising as a direct result of this report.
- 8.2. The Digital Strategy promotes a Council with the ability to develop systems, integrate technologies, be innovative, as well as commissioning platforms; it

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highlights the need to actively manage a diverse and dynamic digital marketplace. Alongside the more traditional IT roles, these capabilities require specialised skills which may have an impact on how we recruit and retain staff.

9. Other Implications

9.1. Equalities Implications

See Equalities Impact Assessment in Appendix A.

9.2. Community Safety Implications

There are no Community Safety implications arising directly from this report.

9.3. Sustainability Implications

Individual digital solutions need to be judged separately in terms of their contribution to the sustainability agenda. However, through a reduction in commuting because of more remote working and a lower reliance on office consumables, digital has the potential to impact positively on the environment.

9.4. Health and Safety Implications

There are no Health and Safety Implications arising directly from this report.

9.5. Ethics implications

The use of technologies such as machine learning and artificial intelligence to support decision making, and greater exploitation of data raise important ethical questions. Digital ethics – how we should handle data and new technologies in a responsible manner – will need to be considered in future governance and oversight structures.

9.6. Health and Wellbeing Implications

Once again, this strategy is neutral on health and well-being. Technology is increasingly being used to enhance health and well-being, but conversely poorly planned and misused technologies can have a detrimental effect.

9.7. Social Value

The Digital Strategy will develop the Council workforce, provide skills and training opportunities.

There is an evident emphasis on delivering these opportunities for hard-to-

reach/disabled/target groups

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The Digital Strategy highlights care as an exemplar and where we can achieve improved outcomes for our customers through improving health and wellbeing and maintaining independence.

10. Scrutiny comments / recommendations:

- 10.1.** To date, the proposed Digital Strategy has not been considered by a Scrutiny Committee.

11. Background Papers

- 11.1.**
- Technology Strategy for the New Somerset council.
 - Data Strategy for the New Somerset council.
 - Customer Strategy for the New Somerset council.
 - One Somerset business case

Somerset Equality Impact Assessment

Before completing this EIA please ensure you have read the EIA guidance notes – available from your Equality Officer

Version	1	Date	22 nd December 2022
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Description of what is being impact assessed

Digital Strategy

Evidence

What data/information have you used to assess how this policy/service might impact on protected groups? Sources such as the [Office of National Statistics](#), [Somerset Intelligence Partnership](#), [Somerset's Joint Strategic Needs Analysis \(JSNA\)](#), Staff and/ or [area profiles](#),, should be detailed here

<http://www.somersetintelligence.org.uk/digital-inclusion/>

[Population Estimates - Somerset Intelligence - The home of information and insight on and for Somerset - Run by a partnership of public sector organisations](#)

[Government Digital Inclusion Strategy - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Internet Speeds - Somerset Intelligence - The home of information and insight on and for Somerset - Run by a partnership of public sector organisations](#)

Who have you consulted with to assess possible impact on protected groups? If you have not consulted other people,

please explain why?

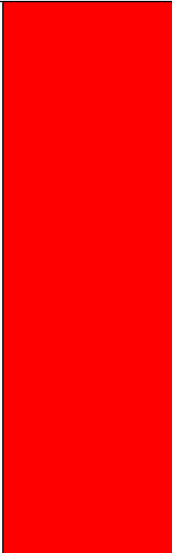
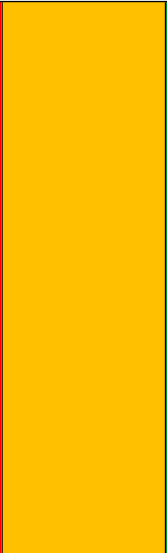

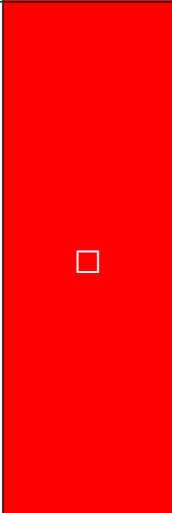
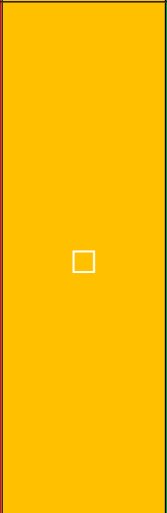
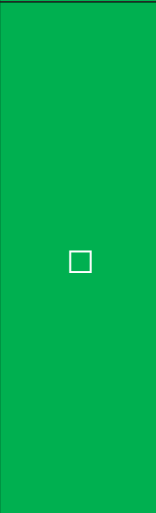
The existing 5 authorities and their current best practice arrangements.

Analysis of impact on protected groups

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires us to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations with protected groups. Consider how this policy/service will achieve these aims. In the table below, using the evidence outlined above and your own understanding, detail what considerations and potential impacts against each of the three aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty. Based on this information, make an assessment of the likely outcome, before you have implemented any mitigation.

Page 30

Protected group	Summary of impact	Negative outcome	Neutral outcome	Positive outcome
Age (young people – 25)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whilst 98% use the Internet constantly with high level of digital inclusion, this is more than likely to be around use of social media, email, streaming and downloading, shopping on-line. Understanding local government services and being able to access these on-line will determine how young people digitally engage 	□	□	□
Age (26-50)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This group is similar to the above have and high levels of digital inclusion Similar to the above age group they use a wide variety of applications to manage their lives and have probably seen a large shift to online usage over the last 10 years as lives become busier and more demanding 			

<p>Age (51+)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is the age that is more likely to be digitally excluded • All data suggests that the older age group of 70+ are not digitally engaged and thus as services go online are increasingly digitally excluded • They could well not fully appreciate the benefits of being online and as a result may lack interest and motivation to find out more • Fear and continual stories in the media about identify theft, cyber attacks which steal data, may well increase anxiety and lack of understanding of how data is safeguarded and protected only increases peoples fears • Cost of equipment could be a factor as is the increased costs of having broadband especially if on a fixed income • They are less likely to have the foundation skills 			
<p>Disability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People with an impairment are 25% less likely to have the skills to access devices and get online themselves and will find themselves digital excluded • They are less likely to have the foundation skills with 19% having no foundation digital skills, with 14% having 1-6 skills, • Language and terminology could be an issue • The cost of getting online could be prohibitive especially if additional software or hardware needed because of their impairment, especially if on a fixed income • Fear and lack of confidence could also be factor; the fear of doing something wrong and not being able to understand what to do to correct the situation. • Motivation could be barrier for older disabled people 			

Gender reassignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No impacts identified 	□	□	□
Marriage and civil partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No impacts identified 	□	□	□
Pregnancy and maternity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No impacts identified 	□	□	□
Race and ethnicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Language can be a determinant of digital exclusion as most websites are in English and although translation facilities are available such as Google translate, it can be difficult to translate some words or terms into the language required Jargon can also be a problem as their country of birth may not have the same local government set up Low income or limited income could also be an impact with a reliance on smart phone either on pay as you go or data limited contract 	□	□	□
Religion or belief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No impacts identified 	□	□	□

Sex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Men are more likely to have a motivational barrier to getting online – 42% of men in comparison to 29% of women 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No impacts identified 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other, e.g. carers, veterans, homeless, low income, rurality/isolation, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The rurality of the County is an issue as several areas within it have poor connectivity to broadband or lack a mobile phone signal Somerset has a number of deprived areas and this can mean that a number of households within the County may have mobile phones but won't have a broadband line to the property as they are on low income or fixed incomes from benefits and are unable to afford the cost of broadband (average price £31 to £35 per month) Cost of equipment such as a laptop can be unobtainable for some with them relying heavily on their mobile phone to keep in touch and transact on line. Fear could also be an issue if there are low skills in literacy or numeracy 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Negative outcomes action plan

Where you have ascertained that there will potentially be negative outcomes, you are required to mitigate the impact of these. Please detail below the actions that you intend to take.

Action taken/to be taken	Date	Person responsible	How will it be monitored?	Action complete
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>

If negative impacts remain, please provide an explanation below.

Completed by:

Kevin Chorley

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Date	22nd December
Signed off by:	
Date	
Equality Lead/Manager sign off date:	
To be reviewed by: (officer name)	
Review date:	



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Foreword

We face many challenges and opportunities as we build a new council for Somerset, and I want us to be ambitious in how we design our new organisation. There are many ambitious models of improvement that organisations struggle to implement because their existing culture does not allow them to change, we don't have that restriction. I want us to design into the culture of our new organisation huge ambition and a drive for rapid improvement.

Digital is leading the way in this. The smart application of the right technologies and information can revolutionise the experience for customers, and empower our staff and members, while driving down cost, and reducing carbon. The Somerset response to the pandemic has demonstrated the power of Digital to rapidly stand-up new services, harness the resilience in our communities, support the most vulnerable, and enable new ways of working.

This strategy sets out an ambitious scope for Digital, covering how we serve customers; how we support our own staff and members; and how we join up across partners to create a digital place for Somerset. We won't leave anyone behind, so the strategy also emphasises the need to tackle 'inclusion' so that everyone benefits.

Our ambition to be financially stable will be key, so we'll need to drive out savings and efficiencies, while continuing to support an aging population with complex needs, meeting our customers' expectations, protecting the environment, and inspiring growth and opportunity for the County.

Technology or data on their own won't deliver this. Digital is about the culture of the organisation and encouraging participation. As Chief Executive, I am a champion for Digital, and a keen advocate of the principles and ambitions set out in this strategy.

Introduction

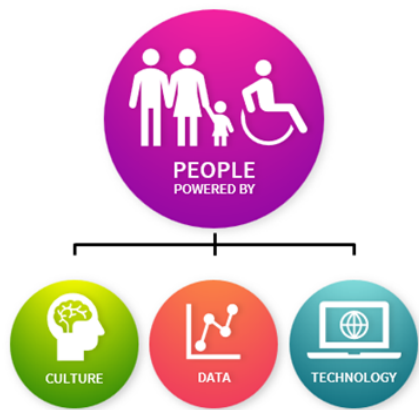
Digital has been defined as:

*'Applying the culture, processes, business models and technologies of the internet era to respond to people's raised expectations.'*¹

Many of us now use internet banking and online shopping; we drive using a sat-nav with traffic updates, and we connect with friends, family and those with shared-interests using social media. The pandemic has accelerated the use of video-conferencing for both business and pleasure, and for many, working from home is the new normal.

These services, which are now mainstream, are relatively recent; ten years ago, they would have seemed like science-fiction.

Digital is at the heart of a culture of continuous improvement, taking incremental steps towards a bold future. 'Digital' is about People, empowered by Culture, right-quality Data, and re-useable Technologies; to meet the raised expectations of the Internet Age.



Many of our customers have embedded digital into their lifestyles, with a raised expectation for convenient, real-time access to services, and control over their private data.

Those customers who have not embraced digital themselves, have come to expect the quality of service that a modern workforce can provide when a digital culture is supported by the tools and skills for collaboration and innovation.

There are already some great examples of Digital in Somerset such as

- freeing up hospital beds by keeping track of care providers with space to take in patients who are ready for discharge
- The Somerset Integrated Digital eRecord – a safe way for health and social care staff to access medical information.
- Report a Problem on the Road – send us a picture of a pothole and get regular updates about the repair
- Business Grants – rapid identification and application processes during the pandemic

However, being a 'digital council' is no longer sufficient. Somerset is served by many organisations; from government agencies, through to the many community and voluntary groups that build strength and resilience. Digital for the 'place' of Somerset can create a trust framework in which the needs of individuals and of communities are understood and addressed via secure data sharing, shared casework, and through investments in smart solutions and connectivity.

For the digitally excluded, we have a role to provide support and opportunity. Digital Inclusion is about reducing digital exclusion and ensuring that people and organisations have the right access, ability, motivation, and trust to use the internet and other digital channels to truly feel the benefits of Digital.

Digital is not standing still; the pace of innovation is ever increasing, for example

- we are starting to see an explosion in real-time-data from sensors, wearable devices, and drones.
- digital Identity will allow the public to take control of how their data is used and customise their relationship with support networks.
- 5G networks can improve access to real-time data in rural communities

Digital is fundamental to tackling Somerset Council's biggest challenges. It will be central to how we address the needs of health and social care, the climate emergency, achieving financial sustainability, improving public services, and supporting the most vulnerable. One of our biggest challenges and biggest demand on resources is around care. The use of digital technologies in health and social care is rising exponentially. Remote monitoring and diagnostics are allowing individuals to remain independent for longer – contributing enormously to their physical and mental wellbeing at the same time as reducing pressure on fixed health and care facilities.

This strategy defines a scope for Digital, and a set of Digital Principles so that we maximise impact and participation in a continuous drive that establishes Somerset at the forefront of innovation. The Digital Strategy, supported by Data and Technology, is at the core of enabling the strategic objectives of the organisation.

The Digital Scope

To deliver on our ambitions, we have developed 5 main themes:

Our Themes

1. Digital Customer – Providing a joined up digital experience for customers as they access council services.
2. Digital Council – Promoting a digital culture for collaboration and innovation.
3. Digital Place – Leading and inspiring the many agencies that serve Somerset to introduce smart solutions, infrastructure, and connectivity.
4. Digital Care – A focus on integrating health and social care to support collaboration, personalisation, and early intervention, to increase independence and wellbeing.
5. Digital Inclusion – A focus on reducing inequalities, supporting individuals and communities to access services online and increasing access to take full advantage of the benefits that being online and digitally confident can bring.

1. Digital Customer

Why does it matter?

Our customers' expectations of local Government delivered services are changing. Customers are demanding a faster, more joined-up, digital experience that puts them in control, at their convenience, and makes it easy to interact through their own devices and channel of choice in real-time.

Empowering our customers to self-serve and self-help, is key to becoming a sustainable Council, protecting resources for the most vulnerable, providing pro-active support across the system to connect people with the support they need as quickly as possible.

Customers benefit from of digitally designed services regardless of how they access them. Failing to embrace digital and deliver these new digital services and functions for our customers brings with it increased risk of dissatisfaction, higher costs, and damaged reputations.

Putting customers at the heart of designing digital services will ensure they are based on user need and are accessible to all. Continually seeking feedback from customers, shaped by the data collected on actual use, and responding to changing circumstances will keep digital services relevant and successful, as well as ensuring we maintain an excellent level of service.

What does it mean?

The Digital Customer theme, will:

- Offer our customers a contact choice, promoting a digital first approach.
- Allow the customer to access our services at their convenience and for some services, 24/7.
- Offer a consistent level of service no matter how our customers choose to access them.
- Give the customer greater efficiency, faster and simpler services, that represent value for money.
- Resolve our customers' queries at the first point of their chosen contact.
- Improve our communication between multiple channels, share data, and ensure it remains safe!
- Provide access to more online help, via signposting and tutorials.
- Join up our approach to customer services using intelligent services
- Empower our customers to act for themselves.
- Actively seek feedback from our users so we can continually improve our services and outcomes.
- Offer our customers an opportunity to influence and shape services, most notably via our Somerset Customer Panel.

2. Digital Council

Why does it matter?

A Digital Council is a workforce powered by a digital culture, data, and technology. Organisations with advanced digital cultures, use technology and data to collaborate, innovate to achieve strategic objectives and deliver business goals.

A digital council constantly reimagines how it operates. Collaboration across the organisation is valued above established hierarchies. Employees are encouraged and enabled to speak out, to make their own judgements, to break down siloes, and to make quicker and better decisions. Ultimately, empowered colleagues feel they work for the council, not just for a specific department.

A digital culture encourages innovation and participation. It enables organisations to foster a workplace that motivates employees to try new things whilst enhancing the learning of the workforce.

People increasingly want to be part of a digital culture that allows a collaborative and autonomous workplace, that encourages employee engagement and development. A digital council will attract new talent whilst retaining current employees.

To become a thriving digital council, we will connect and empower our workforce to extend across our Partnerships and voluntary sector. We will share data and processes to deliver the best outcomes, creating the digital infrastructure and network to enable joined up ways of working.

What does it mean?

The Digital Council theme, will:

- Provide opportunities for upskilling and professional development.
- Help the Council to attract new talent and improve retention.
- Provide us with Digital Leadership and strong Governance to drive a digital culture from top down.
- Support the building of strong networks and partnerships for integrated commissioning
 - VCSE
 - Partners
- Implement data led decision making (informed decision making)
- Help to identify what is appropriate for automation, against what human task(s) should be retained,
- Improve the sharing of data
- Improve outcomes for our customers

3. Digital Place

Why does it matter?

Improving our infrastructure, digital innovation opportunities and ability to gather deep insight from data will enable us to deliver economic growth and make Somerset a great place to both live and work.

By implementing the right infrastructure across the county to support our Digital Place ambitions, we can improve internet connectivity to deliver economic prosperity and improve the lives of residents. The right infrastructure will also allow us to focus on other agendas, such as energy/climate change, health, and transport.

What does it mean?

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4. Digital Care

Why does it matter?

Enabling our communities and colleagues to access connected digital tools and data, that drive excellent communication, support, and care, will empower people to look after their own health and wellbeing.

What does it mean?

The Digital Care vision includes:

- Enabling people to live healthy independent lives, to prevent the onset of avoidable illness and support active self-management.
- Ensuring safe, sustainable, effective, high quality, person-centred support in the most appropriate setting.
- Providing support in neighbourhood areas with an emphasis on self-management and prevention.
- Valuing all people alike, addressing inequalities and given equal priority to physical and mental health.
- Improving outcome for people through personalised, co-ordinated support.

5. Digital Inclusion

Why does it matter?

In today's post-pandemic world, the challenges of addressing digital inclusion are bigger than ever.

Many of our customers were thrust into a digital world during this time without any prior knowledge, skill, or confidence to do so, often aided by a close friend or family member taking on the role of a 'digital champion' and offering support as necessary, to stay in touch and manage everyday life, like shopping and banking.

This natural inclusion work gave us a foothold to build upon and we must continue the momentum, promoting empowerment and building skills, so that the benefits of being digitally enabled can be enjoyed by all.

By exploring the most effective ways to support all customer groups to become more digitally able, Somerset Council residents and businesses can benefit from improved digital skills and digital access channels.

What does it mean?

Being digitally included presents opportunities such as:

- Increased education opportunities via online activities and training

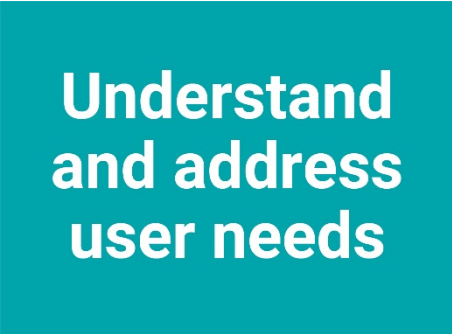
- Improved work/employment opportunities
- An extended job market into online work and digital jobs
- Advanced skill sets
- Increased pay/income
- Better work/life balance and infinite choice(s)

The Digital Principles

These high-level strategic Digital principles can be used to shape and assess ongoing work and can help to achieve better outcomes for our staff and customers.

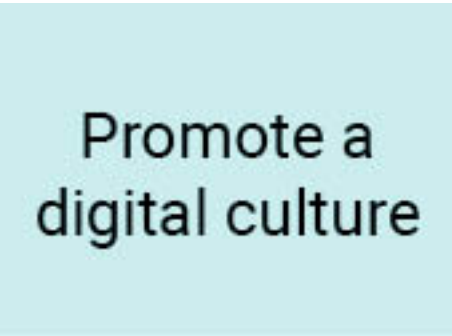
We will use these principles to assure that our work has properly considered and embraced Digital. These principles will become pillars of the new authority.

They are:



**Understand
and address
user needs**

Undertaking 'customer research' to learn the full context of what the user is trying to achieve, not just the part where they must interact with the Council, and continue to get feedback on designs, through to deployment, and beyond.



**Promote a
digital culture**

Leadership to champion and communicate a digital agenda.

Be data led

Using data to make better decisions. Prevention via early identification and smarter interventions.

Be Agile

Empowering teams to deliver requirements iteratively and incrementally.

Share, Reuse and Join Up

Sharing and reusing data, platforms, and processes to provide an efficient joined-up experience.

Focus on Value

Digital programmes and deliverables are founded on known goals and policies, and the impact can be measured.

Be Trusted

Encourage take up and adoption of Digital by building trust with stakeholders.

Include everyone

Ensuring that benefits of the internet and digital technologies are available and accessible to everyone.

Challenges/risks

A key challenge in realising this vision is people's understanding of the term 'digital'. Digital is not another word for IT; it is not about wires, boxes and computer code; it is not about doing everything on-line. Digital is about people - but people empowered with a digital culture, useable data, and the right technology.

The adage '*culture eats strategy for breakfast*' is never truer than in the digital sphere. It is not the purpose of this strategy to lay out Somerset Councils Digital Culture in detail, but collaboration, openness, teamwork, an appetite for risk and zero-blame, pragmatism and empowerment would feature prominently. Embedding such a culture impacts every part of an organisation and is invariably resisted by some, so strong leadership and management is required.

Delivering the Strategy

Theme	Action	Target
Digital Council	Collaborate more and work to break down traditional silo working, encouraging multi-disciplinary, cross-cutting teams, and exploring the deployment of connected technologies across the enterprise.	
	Support remote and home working	
	Use data to make informed strategic decisions using well	

	managed data for insight and business intelligence to guide decisions and strategy.	
	Improve our customer knowledge and understand their needs as we improve our customer research and use low-code configurable capabilities, moving away from single-use 'systems' to meet their needs.	
	Invest in our workforce to promote digital as the default, working towards efficiency, productivity, and sustainability.	
	Innovate, take risks, learn, and develop, implementing an agile approach to the digital vision.	
Digital Place	Improve connectivity across business and residential areas.	
	Seek innovation opportunities to maximise the investment made in our digital infrastructure.	
	Take advantage of the latest technologies available for economic growth, creating an environment that enables others to grow their business.	
	Implement digital technologies that are not only green and low carbon in themselves but also enable and support other green and low carbon initiatives, activities and working practices.	
	Share data between partner organisations where we are licensed to do so to increase process efficiency and make our data open and published where safe and legal to do so.	
	Implement a single directory of public and voluntary services to achieve better outcomes for complex-needs cases and to tackle vulnerability.	
	Empower local communities	
Digital Customer	Put our customers at the heart of our digital design work, understanding their journey when using our services and understanding their needs and preferences.	
	Keep our customer's personal data safe and respect their privacy, allowing customers to take control of how their own information is managed and shared.	
	Connect our technologies so information can be accessed across services in a single customer account.	
	Support and enable our customers to access our digital services, recognising that not everybody is ready to take advantage of our online services.	
	Ensure there is a role for social media to play a part as a customer contact channel	
Digital Care	Delivery of a shared health and care record for people in Somerset (Currently the Somerset Integrated Digital electronic Record (SIDeR) project)	
	Development of population health management approach.	
	Establishing a programme to support digitisation of social care (DISC).	
	Technology enabled care programme.	
	Simplifying access to online health and care support and advice, making it easier for people to find the help and support they need quickly	
	Workforce development.	

	Reducing health inequalities through targeted digital inclusion activity	
	Establishing a strategic function for digital to enable the ambition of the ICS.	
Digital Inclusion	Establish and develop a framework of support and delivery for the County	
	Explore innovative and assistive technologies to support our customer services approach and to help overcome digital inclusion barriers.	
	Have a provision for digital presence to increase accessibility in rural and remote areas of the county.	
	Explore broadband connectivity and infrastructure improvements throughout the County to support increased access and speeds in rural and remote areas.	
	Support and encourage staff to build upon existing digital skill levels	
	Work with local businesses to highlight digital benefits and support digital growth	

Roadmap

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The Future of Digital – What next?

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Data Strategy for Somerset Council

Executive Member(s): Cllr Federica Smith-Roberts -

Lead Member for Communities

Local Member(s) and Division: All

Lead Officer: Paul Davidson – Chief Digital Officer – Sedgemoor District Council

Author: Paul Davidson – Chief Digital Officer Sedgemoor District Council

Contact Details: Paul.Davidson@somerset.gov.uk

1. Summary / Background

- 1.1** Data powers every part of the council's business. We must both protect it and exploit it, to retain public trust, and improve our services. This Data Strategy sets out practical steps as we establish the new Somerset Council, and ambitions towards a bold vision for data.
- 1.2** Data includes the case information that we collect and generate as we provide services, through to policy documents and minutes of decisions, with all manner of facts and statistics in between. It covers all the information that we create ourselves or receive from others; stored in electronic or paper form.
- 1.3** A new Data Strategy for Somerset Council is a product required under the Local Government Review Programme for Vesting Day.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1** LGR Joint Scrutiny Committee is asked 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.

3. Reasons for recommendations

- 3.1** From the 1st April 2023, the five principle local authorities in the administrative county of Somerset will be replaced with a single Unitary Somerset Council. Data has been managed independently across the five councils, so there is now a need to ensure that, from the outset, the new council meets its statutory obligations, as well as expectations from customers and partners when handling data.
- 3.2** There is an opportunity to build on the best of the practices found across the five councils, and to that end, the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) programme has established a series of workstreams and projects, some of which touch the scope of the Data Strategy and include Business Intelligence, Information Governance, Records Management etc. This Strategy brings the relevant outputs of the LGR programme together so that we tell a cohesive story about data, from the point that it first enters the organisation, though to its final archiving or destruction. The strategy introduces data professions such as Process Improvement, Information Governance, Records Management, Business Intelligence, and so on.
- 3.3** Up till now, data has been seen as a tool for computer specialists; this strategy is about inviting participation from our staff, managers, members, partners, local businesses and the public as we serve the place of Somerset. We will continually reach-out and engage with this 'data audience' to understand their needs and set an expectation that:
- It is simple to find out what data is available, and on what terms it can be shared
 - If they have a right to data, they should be able to access it
 - If data already exists, it is re-used, rather than being collected again
 - They are supported to meet their data handling obligations
 - Statistics and analytics are presented in easy-to-understand formats
 - They can call on expertise to make sense of the data.

In this way, the new Somerset Council will be

- Be open and transparent
- Retain public trust
- Provide efficient services
- Make better decisions

4. Other options considered

- 4.1** A new Data Strategy for our Somerset Council will enable the authority to both protect and exploit data. Protecting by meeting our legal obligations and ensuring that our data is fit for purpose. To this end we will comply with legal and regulatory requirements and give confidence to our public to trust us to handle their data which is often sensitive. We also want to exploit data by

safely reusing and sharing, use data to derive insight and foresight and to effectively and in a timely way deliver services, to support prevention via early identification as well as develop the skills to engage with data.

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

- 5.1** The Data Strategy supports deliverability of the County Vision, Business Plan and Medium-Term Financial Plan through the provision of data which will be used to evidence, operationally manage, monitor, evaluate and improve outcomes.
- 5.2** The Data Strategy sets out its own aims but also delivers against other corporate objectives including the Digital Strategy, Customer Strategy, Business Intelligence Strategy, and the UK Government's Data Strategy.

6. Consultations and co-production

- 6.1** The Data Strategy was co-produced by a range of contributors which are listed in Appendix B and cover a range of professional disciplines and areas of expertise. Two workshops were held with the contributors in the Autumn which helped shape the principles, values and deliverables identified.
- 6.2** The Data Strategy has been considered by the LGR Communities, Customers and Partnership Workstream, Asset Optimisation Workstream as well as received support from LGR Programme Board.

7. Financial and Risk Implications

- 7.1** No additional funding requirements are being sought for the approval of this Strategy.
- 7.2** Three risks have been identified:
- Risk of non-compliance and loss of public trust and potentially fines levied from the Information Commissioners Office.
 - Risk that the authority does not use data collected, either effectively or in a joined up and strategic way.
 - Reduced data availability or quality can adversely impact service to customers.

The National Cyber Security Center (NCSC) provide guidance to assess data security and resilience focusing on assessing risks for confidentiality, integrity, and availability. These assessments are naturally carried out as a part of a Data Protection Impact Assessment, but mission critical data also need to be assessed even if it does not contain person-identifiable data. The assessment leads to requirements for controls and technology solutions to safeguard data

which are set out in our Cyber Security Strategy and Framework.

- 7.3** The three risks identified will be mitigated by the delivery of the Data Strategy and achievement of the key deliverables contained within. Review and monitoring of the data strategy on a regular basis will also provide assurance of mitigation along with an assessment as part of the annual governance review process.

Information Governance offer advice, guidance, and training for staff in this area and monitor noncompliance is reported through appropriate Governance Boards.

The establishment of the Council provides a new opportunity to focus on using data more effectively supported by Business Intelligence colleagues.

8. Legal and HR Implications

- 8.1** There are no legal or HR implications arising directly from this report. The adoption of a new Data Strategy sets out the approach for protecting and using data and therefore ensures compliance with legal requirements.

9. Other Implications

9.1 Equalities Implications

An Equalities Impact Assessment has completed and signed off. The Data Strategy is a key enabler in providing quality evidence to decision makers about protected groups.

9.2 Community Safety Implications

There are no Community Safety implications arising directly from this report.

9.3 Sustainability Implications

There are no Sustainability implications arising directly from this report.

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.

9.6 Social Value

There are no social value implications arising directly from this report.

10. Scrutiny comments / recommendations:

- 10.1** To date the proposed Strategy has not been considered by a Scrutiny

Committee.

11. Background

11.1. The attached Data Strategy sets out the new authority's approach to protecting and using Data. It considers legal and regulatory requirements, the importance of public trust and using it to deliver quality services with quality data. It also sets out our approach to using data from sharing with partners, our commitment to openness and transparency, turning data into insight and foresight, as well as covering the data lifecycle and data capabilities. The Strategy sets out key deliverables to ensure it can be practicably implemented.

12. Background Papers

12.1 Digital Strategy, Customer Strategy and Technology Strategy are tabled at the same meeting.

Somerset Equality Impact Assessment

Before completing this EIA please ensure you have read the EIA guidance notes – available from your Equality Officer

Version	V1	Date	20 th December 2022
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Description of what is being impact assessed

Data Strategy for the new Somerset Council

Evidence

What data/information have you used to assess how this policy/service might impact on protected groups? Sources such as the [Office of National Statistics](#), [Somerset Intelligence Partnership](#), [Somerset's Joint Strategic Needs Analysis \(JSNA\)](#), Staff and/ or [area profiles](#),, should be detailed here

- UK Government Data Strategy
- Range of internal data specialists across the County and District Councils, through workshops have contributed to this strategy. These are identified at Appendix B in the Data Strategy.
- The Data strategy provides the framework and controls to ensure the new authority complies with key legislation documented in the strategy including the Equalities Act.
- The Data Strategy enables us to have high quality evidence to demonstrate that we are considering and protecting these particular groups in our operations, commissioning, decision making and impact on outcomes.
- Data in its most basic level forms can be repurposed to ensure accessibility for protected groups.

Who have you consulted with to assess possible impact on protected groups? If you have not consulted other people, please explain why?

Builds on existing arrangements Data Strategy arrangements across the five authority's and builds on best practice. Range of internal data specialists have contributed to this strategy. These are identified in the Data Strategy at Appendix B

Analysis of impact on protected groups

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires us to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations with protected groups. Consider how this policy/service will achieve these aims. In the table below, using the evidence outlined above and your own understanding, detail what considerations and potential impacts against each of the three aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty. Based on this information, make an assessment of the likely outcome, before you have implemented any mitigation.

Protected group	Summary of impact	Negative outcome	Neutral outcome	Positive outcome
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collecting data about how customers use our services and analysing and using that data to drive positive outcomes. Data can be analysed across the range of all protected characteristics and enables our services to evidence effective decision making. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collecting data about how customers use our services and analysing and using that data to drive positive outcomes. Data can be repurposed and therefore is accessible to those with a range of disabilities. Data can be analysed across the range of all protected characteristics and enables our services to evidence 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

	effective decision making.			
Gender reassignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collecting data about how customers use our services and analysing and using that data to drive positive outcomes. Data can be analysed across the range of all protected characteristics and enables our services to evidence effective decision making. 	☐	☐	☒
Marriage and civil partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collecting data about how customers use our services and analysing and using that data to drive positive outcomes. Data can be analysed across the range of all protected characteristics and enables our services to evidence effective decision making. 	☐	☐	☒
Pregnancy and maternity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collecting data about how customers use our services and analysing and using that data to drive positive outcomes. Data can be analysed across the range of all protected characteristics and enables our services to evidence effective decision making. 	☐	☐	☒
Race and ethnicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collecting data about how customers use our services and analysing and using that data to drive positive outcomes. Data can be analysed across the range of all protected characteristics and enables our services to evidence effective decision making. 	☐	☐	☒

Religion or belief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collecting data about how customers use our services and analysing and using that data to drive positive outcomes. Data can be analysed across the range of all protected characteristics and enables our services to evidence effective decision making. 	□	□	☒
Sex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collecting data about how customers use our services and analysing and using that data to drive positive outcomes. Data can be analysed across the range of all protected characteristics and enables our services to evidence effective decision making. 	□	□	☒
Sexual orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collecting data about how customers use our services and analysing and using that data to drive positive outcomes. Data can be analysed across the range of all protected characteristics and enables our services to evidence effective decision making. 	□	□	☒
Other, e.g. carers, veterans, homeless, low income, rurality/isolation, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collecting data about how customers use our services and analysing and using that data to drive positive outcomes. Data can be analysed across the range of all protected characteristics and enables our services to evidence effective decision making. 	□	□	☒

Negative outcomes action plan

Where you have ascertained that there will potentially be negative outcomes, you are required to mitigate the impact of these. Please detail below the actions that you intend to take.

Action taken/to be taken	Date	Person responsible	How will it be monitored?	Action complete
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>

If negative impacts remain, please provide an explanation below.

Completed by:	Paul Davidson & Jan Stafford
Date	28 th December 2022
Signed off by:	
Date	
Equality	

Together we are delivering your
New Somerset Council

Lead/Manager sign off date:	
To be reviewed by: (officer name)	
Review date:	

Data Strategy for the New Somerset Council 2023

Change Control			
revision	on	by	Notes
1	01/12/2022	Paul Davidson, SDC	
2	06/12/2022	Paul Davidson	Taking on feedback.
3	07/12/2022	Paul Davidson	Updates from CCP Board
4	14/12/2022	Paul Davidson	Updates from LGR Programme Board Updated lifecycle diagram
5	28/12/2022	Paul Davidson	Updates from final workshop. Add 'gaps' section.
6	29/12/2022	Paul Davidson	Feedback from Signoffs for Joint Scrutiny

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About the Data Strategy

Data powers every part of the council's business. We must both protect it, and exploit it, to retain public trust, and improve our services. This strategy sets out practical steps as we establish the new council, and ambitions towards a bold vision for data.

Data includes the case information that we collect and generate as we provide services, through to policy documents and minutes of decisions, with all manner of facts and statistics in between. It covers all the information that we create ourselves or receive from others; stored in electronic or paper form.

If up till now, data has been seen as a tool for computer specialists; this strategy is about inviting participation from our staff, managers, members, partners, local businesses and the public as we serve the place of Somerset. We will continually reach-out and engage with this 'data audience' to understand their needs and set an expectation that:

- it is simple to find out what data is available, and on what terms it can be shared;
- if they have a right to data, they should be able to access it;
- If data already exists, it is re-used, rather than being collected again;
- they are supported to meet their data handling obligations;
- statistics and analytics are presented in easy-to-understand formats and dashboards;
- they can call on expertise to make sense of data.

In this way, we will

- be open and transparent
- retain public trust
- provide efficient services
- make better decisions

The strategy is aligned with our Digital, Technology, and Customer strategies in order to provide a comprehensive and integrated approach.

Background

From 1st April 2023, the five principle local authorities in the administrative county of Somerset will be replaced with a single Unitary Somerset Council. Data has been managed independently across the five councils, so there is now a need to ensure that, from the outset, the new council meets its obligations, and expectations from customers and partners when handling data.

There is an opportunity to build on the best of the practices found across the five councils, and to that end, the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) programme has established a series of workstreams and projects, some of which touch the scope of the Data Strategy. This strategy brings the relevant outputs of the LGR programme together so that we tell a cohesive story about data, from the point that it first enters the organisation, through to its final archiving or destruction. Along the way, we'll introduce the data professions such as Process Improvement, Information Governance, Records Management, Business Intelligence, and so on.

Key Themes

The Key Themes running through the strategy are to both Protect and Exploit Data.

Protecting Data

- Meeting legal obligations, and the expectations from our customers and partners when handling data.
- Right Quality data that is fit-for-purpose

Legal and Regulatory Requirements

The legal framework under which we must manage the information we are responsible for includes:

- General Data Protection Regulations 2016 (GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Digital Economy Act 2017
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Environmental Information Regulations 2005
- Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2015
- Public Records Acts 1958 and 1967
- Local Government Transparency Code 2015
- Equalities Act 2010

... as well as the powers and duties that apply to each of the services that we provide.

We must therefore ensure that we have consistent Information Governance and clarity on where ownership and responsibility for each information asset lies.

Public Trust

The public and local businesses trust us to handle their data, which is often sensitive. The digital agenda has brought a recognition that data about a person and their circumstances is owned by the citizen, not the council; they should be able to see their data, and, where applicable, manage their consent about who it is shared with, and for what purpose.

We are promoting online digital services, leading to improved customer experiences and savings. Trust in our digital services could be undermined if sensitive data were to leak, or was used for unauthorised purposes.

Delivering services with quality data

Our services depend on ready access to data that is fit for purpose and of sufficient quality.

The Customer Strategy is focused on improving the customer experience so that customers can serve themselves when asking for information, telling us about a change in their circumstances, or making an application. This can only work when our data is up-to-date and reliable.

Data veracity is the degree to which we believe that data is true. To offer self-service and automation, we will need to be able to assess the veracity of data that we collect from customers, or is shared with us from partner agencies.

Exploiting Data

- Re-using and Sharing data
- Deriving insight and foresight from Business Intelligence
- Prevention via early identification
- The skills to engage with Data

Sharing Data with Partners

Delivering services increasingly involves sharing data with partners or our agents; we remain responsible for the behaviour of those that we share with, and to safeguard data that is passed to us.

As our customers apply for our services, we can improve the experience, and reduce unnecessary bureaucracy by accessing trusted data from partners, rather than asking for information again, that has already been collected and verified.

Some customers have complex needs which requires a multi-agency response. No one organisation can see the whole picture. Initiatives such as Supported Families or Homelessness Prevention start by blending data from many sources to find multiple indicators at a single household; building into a cohort of the most vulnerable where an intervention would improve long-term outcomes.

From Data to Insight, from Insight to Foresight

Data about an individual case is used to serve a single customer; once the case is completed, the data is typically stored in a database. This data is valuable when aggregated with other cases, and analysed to find patterns and correlations, which can then be used as evidence when understanding the well-being of our communities, and tuning our policies and services.

Combining data from many sources can provide an up-to-date intelligence base from which

- the performance and equalities of our services can be monitored;
- cohorts of vulnerable people can be generated;
- the resilience of local services and 'community assets' can be monitored and supported;

Predictive Analytics, and emerging Artificial Intelligence can then be used to make assumptions of what the future might look like, and run simulations of how certain interventions and investments could lead to improved outcomes.

Openness and Transparency

Much of our data, when published, is of interest to our residents, businesses, partners, policy makers, and academics; supporting democratic accountability and making it easier for local people to take part in decision making and shaping public services.

The Government believes that in principle all data held and managed by local authorities should be made available to local people unless there are specific sensitivities (e.g. protecting vulnerable people or commercial and operational considerations) to doing so. It encourages local authorities to see data as a valuable resource not only to themselves, but also their partners and local people.

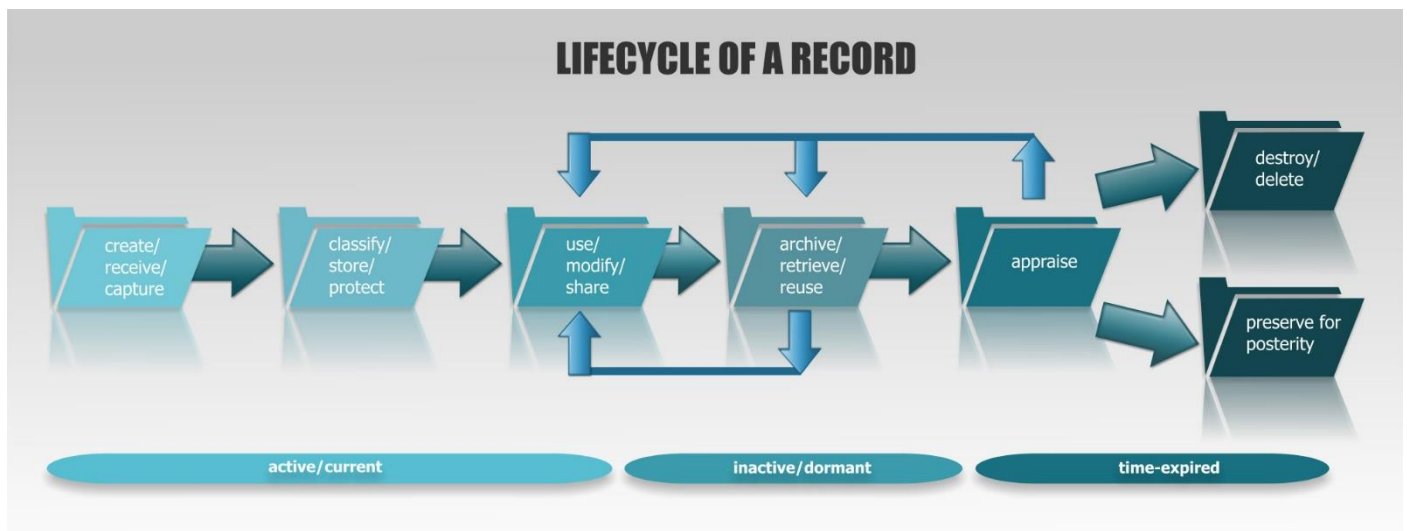
[Local Government Transparency Code 2015](#)

Where case data cannot be published, for example due to privacy or commercial considerations, an aggregated or anonymised version can still provide valuable insight.

Well-managed published data can encourage those with digital skills to develop solutions for the public.

The Data Lifecycle

Data is managed through a 'life-cycle'; at each phase, we can apply consistent policies and treatments to ensure that it is both protected and exploited.



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create • receive • capture 	Data, such as that from customers, devices, and partners, is created or enters the organisation. This might be new data, or perhaps acquiring information from elsewhere that already exists.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • classify • store • protect 	Data is classified; it may be of a known repeatable type, or it could be a one-off. Either way, we need to understand purpose, quality, sensitivities and privacy issues, and tag it so that it can be

	<p>discovered by an authorised audience, alongside other related information.</p> <p>Data is stored so that it is protected from inappropriate access, or loss.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use • modify • share 	<p>Data is accessed, processed, analysed, and shared, in accordance with approved purposes.</p> <p>New renditions can be generated that are appropriate for other audiences, such as aggregations and pseudonymisations.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • archive • retrieve • reuse 	<p>Data is removed from the operational environment into an archive where it can still be accessed and analysed but cannot be modified.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appraise • destroy • preserve 	<p>Once data reaches the end of its assigned retention period, it is appraised to see if it has historical value, in which case, it is permanently archived for preservation. Otherwise, it is destroyed to comply with legal requirements, and local policy, and to reduce the burden of storage.</p>

Data Capabilities

Information Governance

An Information Governance Board (IGB) will give assurance that information is being managed legally, securely, efficiently and effectively.

Some key roles will be established for

- Caldicott Guardian
- Senior Information Risk Owner
- Data Protection Officer
- Information Asset Owner

All local authorities which provide social services must have a Caldicott Guardian; a senior person responsible for protecting the confidentiality of people’s health and care information and making sure it is used properly.

As we introduce new services, or supporting data systems, we are required to carry out a Data Protection Impact Assessment, to ensure that data is handled appropriately, leading to a privacy statement so that customers are aware of the collection and use of their personal data.

The IGB monitors that each Information asset is identified and allocated to a business owner to act as the Information Asset Owner (IAO). IAOs are then supported to carry out regular impact assessments to ensure that

- data is adequately protected
- data is proportionate, and of the right quality for its purpose
- data follows a life-cycle from collection, use, storage, archive, to destruction
- we are transparent about the data that we hold, and why we hold it
- we learn from misuse or inappropriate sharing

Any incidents of breaches of personal data security are assessed by the Information Governance team, and reported to the IGB to monitor trends and take actions on high risks. Where a breach could have been prevented, the Information Governance team sees through improvement actions.

Data can exist in paper form, as well as computer files; the IGB applies its controls to these as well while encouraging improved processes that move away from paper records.

The IGB promotes a culture where data is a corporate asset, and at the heart of business continuity. Consequently, we avoid relying on information held by individuals, and provide tools and training to ensure that data is discoverable and attributable to our processes.

Deliverables by 1st April 2023

Deliverable	Features	LGR Workstream	LGR Product
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Information Governance Framework	Sets the IG scope. Defines the IG Board and Reporting. Sets out methods for Assessing and Cataloguing Data.	CCP - IG & Data Management	1041-Develop Information Governance framework and policies.
Defined IG Roles	Roles including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caldicott Guardian • Senior Information Risk Owner • Data Protection Officer • Information Asset Owner 	CCP - IG & Data Management	1045-Propose structure for delivery of IG services and Statutory Roles
Establish IG Training offer for the organisation	To ensure that IG is well understood across the organisation.	CCP - IG & Data Management	1049-Establish IG Training offer for the organisation
Record of Processing Activity (RoPA) and Information Asset Register (IAR)	As required by GDPR, this assures that we know what datasets we handle, who is responsible for them, why we need them, and where appropriate, the legal basis for processing.	CCP - IG & Data Management	1050-Establish a single Record of Processing Activity and Information Asset Register
Case Management system for IG	To track the IG processes such as Impact Assessments, Breaches, Risk Mitigations etc	CCP - IG & Data Management	1112-Integrated Case Management system for IG

Data Protection, Freedom of Information and Transparency

The public have rights to access information where it is not exempt from publication. We will make it easy for people to request information and have processes in place to respond to requests within defined service levels.

The council will take opportunities to keep the public updated on how we use their data, and their data rights, and run a continuous training programme for staff to explain their data protection responsibilities and good practice.

The [Local Government Transparency Code 2015](#) defines a minimum set of open data that Councils in England are expected to publish.

Where data is routinely published as open data, it will be listed in the Council's Publication Scheme.

Deliverables by 1st April 2023

Deliverable	Features	LGR Workstream	LGR Product
Access to Information Policy and Processes	Includes policy, processes, and systems for FoI Requests, Data Subject Access Requests (DSARs) and so on, and the various citizen rights over data such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The right to rectification • The right to erasure • ... and so on 	CCP - IG & Data Management	1040-Develop & deliver Access to Information Framework
Transparency Framework	Meeting Statutory requirements and public expectations for access to open data	CCP - IG & Data Management	1044-Establish data transparency principles & culture

Data Sharing and Partnerships

Where we share data, particularly personal data, with another organisation, both parties need clarity on roles/responsibilities; what data is being shared; what it can and can't be used for; how it will be kept safe; and expectations for retention and destruction.

Regular data sharing is covered by a series of Data Sharing Agreements. For some key stakeholders and partnerships, such as with Health and the Police, a 'Tier 1' agreement is in place setting out general principles, controls, and behaviours, to give a context for specific data shares.

Existing Data Sharing Agreements with Somerset County Council, as the 'continuing authority', will continue. Those with the Districts will be reviewed in the first year of the new Council so that, where necessary, they are properly re-established.

Prior to the new Council, various delivery partnerships have grown up between the five councils, as shared services, to deliver functions such as Waste, or Building Control. As a part of the move to a single council, these partnerships, and the data flows that support them, will be reviewed and refined.

Our aim is to encourage data sharing by providing guidance and tools so that agreements are transparent, consistent and monitored, with privacy designed-in, and the whole information lifecycle taken into account.

Deliverables by 1st April 2023

Deliverable	Features	LGR Workstream	LGR Product
Partnership Framework	Tools to map out partnerships and supporting data arrangements	CCP – Enhancing Partnerships	1081 - Partnership Strategy Framework

Data Sharing Toolkit	Templates and Processes for data sharing	CCP - IG & Data Management	1046 - Develop data sharing Framework
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Deliverables after 1st April 2023

Deliverable	Features	LGR Workstream	LGR Product
Data Sharing Agreements	To review and refresh Data Sharing Agreements within 12 months of the new Council as a natural part of an annual review cycle.	CCP - IG & Data Management	1046 - Develop data sharing Framework
Register of Data Shares	Transparency on the data that we share and why.		

Process Improvement

As our customer facing, or internal processes, are established or reviewed, a Business Analyst will draw out the necessary data, and who, how and when it will flow between the various actors.

The Digital Strategy has established general principles that encourage multi-disciplinary teams to use Agile techniques to iterate towards a successful solution. In addition, the data opportunity is to

- learn from user-research and business intelligence
- minimise data and data flows
- assure that data quality is fit-for purpose
- re-use data and look for joins across the user journey
- ensure that new data processes are put through the IG processes
- ensure that data is managed, protected, and valued as an asset

Deliverables by 1st April 2023

Deliverable	Features	LGR Workstream	LGR Product
The Local Digital Declaration	A government led initiative to facilitate the local sector towards good digital and data practices	CCP – Digital Strategy and Leadership	1196-Sign up to the Digital Declaration and assign digital leadership
Digital Playbook	A set of digital principles, methods and tools to apply business change.	CCP – Digital Strategy and Leadership	1028 - Adopt a new Digital and inclusion strategy

Records Management and Archiving

Documents and data can be 'Records' that have been used to take decisions or are outputs of processes. For example

- Applications for Benefits
- Planning Decisions Notices
- Responses to Consultations
- Correspondence
- Case Management files
- Minutes, Reports, Strategies, Policies, Financials

We are required to retain these Records as evidence of our actions and decisions, and to destroy them after a set time. Records Management will be delivered as a core corporate service, to coordinate and manage records and information assets in accordance with legal and business needs.

Where information is held as an 'unstructured' document, say an application form, or an email from a customer, a 'Records Management' solution can be used to manage the data, together with a metadata card to describe the contents. Consistent metadata can be defined for a classification of data so that queries can be run over a set of the same type of document. However, analysis is limited to the metadata on the card. The retention schedule can be programmed into the solution so that data is naturally purged once the conditions are met.

For structured data (i.e. information in computer systems or spreadsheets) an enterprise general purpose data archive solution, such as a data lake, can be used to store and manage data from many sources, while retaining much of the ability to search, and analyse on individual fields. Access rights can continue to be controlled, and reports can be generated using a consistent reporting tool. Auto-deletion can be added to match the purging needs of the data classification.

Paper records may be scanned to become digital documents; otherwise, dormant paper records with compliance needs are sent for storage within the Records Management service, and destroyed based on the retention schedule.

We will look to rationalise physical data storage through a combination of digitalisation (where a business case allows), destroying records, or, over time, consolidating storage from existing office bases through the rationalisation of the property estate.

Documents with Historical Value are sent for permanent Archiving and Preservation to the SW Heritage Trust.

Deliverables by 1st April 2023

Deliverable	Features	LGR Workstream	LGR Product
Records Management Strategy and Policies	To define the Records Management approach.	CCP - IG & Records Management	1041 - Develop Information Governance

			framework and policies.
Corporate File Plan / Retention Schedule	A classification of data that we manage, and the data life-cycle for each, particularly for retention, and destruction.	CCP - IG & Records Management	
Physical Archive Repository	For dormant paper records, where they are managed in accordance with legal and business need until expiry. Onboarding of District repositories to the Physical Archive Repository, to enable barcoding and management of withdrawals and retention.	CCP - IG & Records Management	

Deliverables after 1st April 2023

Deliverable	Features	LGR Workstream	LGR Product
Solution for Unstructured Electronic Documents	Continued use of the existing SharePoint system, and work towards migration from District legacy systems.	CCP - IG & Records Management	
Archiving solution for structured electronic data	To define and acquire a corporate solution to archiving structured data. This is an accelerator to rationalising the number of legacy computer systems that the new council will inherit from the 5 partner councils.	CCP - IG & Records Management Business Intelligence	Subject to business case
Scanning solution	For scanning of reactivated dormant paper records and records with long retention and high usage rates.	CCP - IG & Records Management	Subject to business case
Records Management Guidance	User Guides and Information on the Intranet. To revise existing SCC User Guides to incorporate	CCP - IG & Records Management	

	procedures across the New Somerset Council.		
Disposal and Appraisal Programme	Appraisal of dormant records held in systems and repositories previously unstructured and/or unmanaged, to reduce unnecessary storage costs, to ensure compliance to legal and business needs and to identify records with historical value.	CCP - IG & Records Management	
Retention and Compliance Tools	For SharePoint and other electronic systems, to enable records and information to be managed and retained, whilst creating full audit trails.	CCP - IG & Records Management	

Corporate Data and Master Data Management

Joining up our data will require that we establish 'golden records', particularly for People, Property and Place. These 'single version of the truth' datasets can then be used to coordinate service delivery and changes of circumstances; and to support the Business Intelligence capability to find patterns and correlations over operational data.

The emerging Customer Engagement Platform (CEP) is predicated on the aim to support a joined-up experience for customers as they access services from the council, and from other local agencies. That will require a common spine of customer data, that can be associated with a digital identity.

The [Land and Property Gazetteer](#) provides a unique identifier (UPRN) for each addressable property and land in the UK. The council is the custodian for applying updates for Somerset entries. The UPRN is then embedded in many of our back-office systems so that we can link data for properties and households. This became vital during the pandemic as we received data from the NHS about Clinically Vulnerable People. Initially that dataset did not contain the UPRN, and matching to our records simply on a text version of name and address was too imprecise. The NHS quickly added the UPRN to their data feed and matching became much more accurate.

Our spatial data is recorded, accessed, and shared, using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and tools. GIS is used to plot the point locations and geographic areas of assets, incidents and policies, and link to associated data that may be in other computer systems.

Deliverables by 1st April 2023

Deliverable	Features	LGR Workstream	LGR Product
GIS and Local Land and Property Gazetteer	Harmonisation of the existing arrangements into a single dataset	Asset Optimisation – Technical	1073 – GIS Mapping
Identity Assurance Approach	The means by which we are assured that data is received from, or communicated to, the right people.	CCP - IG & Data Management	1048-Develop an approach to Identity Assurance

Business Intelligence

Business Intelligence (BI) is the delivery of analysis and insight which enable organisations to make evidence-led decisions.

Effective BI gives us a deeper understanding of people and place, and provides performance information to monitor how local services are performing. This insight supports commissioning, helps to demonstrate whether services are delivering value for money, and is essential to benchmarking activities with others.

BI provides information to help target early intervention and prevention, and to respond to unplanned and emergency situations.

Business intelligence was essential to identifying vulnerable people during the initial response for the pandemic, and has been critical to facilitating Covid grants to local businesses. More recently, the urgent need to set up processes to make monthly payments to host families for Ukrainian refugees is dependent on reliable data and business intelligence.

Increasingly we will be looking to join up our data with information held by partners, in particular Health teams; this will enable us to gain a more holistic view of need, and a deeper understanding of people and place.

BI can report on current and historic data with real-time dashboards, and embrace new and emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and machine learning to deliver predictive and prescriptive analytics.

Business Intelligence will be delivered as

- a core specialist BI function with dedicated service support teams providing information, support and insight to services.
- BI activities within services, supported by the core team.

A Business Intelligence Strategy has been developed with themes of

- BI for People and Place – developing our understanding of the people in Somerset
- BI for Services – having the right information to manage services
- BI for Transformation – using data driven technology to transform our services
- BI Development – opportunities for data and analytics

Deliverables by 1st April 2023

Deliverable	Features	LGR Workstream	LGR Product
BI Strategy	Defining a scope and ambition for Business Intelligence. Acton Plan.	Service Alignment – BI	477-Business Intelligence Strategy
Business Intelligence Toolkit	Describing the systems and software through which BI will be delivered	Service Alignment – BI	479-BI toolkit
Business Intelligence Resource requirements	Identifies skill set and volume of resource needed to deliver BI strategy and service – This will include both tools eg data storage environment and capabilities eg Data Science and Data Engineering	Service Alignment – BI	480-Resource requirements

Deliverables after 1st April 2023

Deliverable	Features	LGR Workstream	LGR Product
Business Case	Business case for further investment in BI.		487-Develop case for investment in Unitary BI function

Security and Resilience

The National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) provide [guidance to assess data security and resilience](#) focusing on assessing risks for

• Confidentiality	Unauthorised access
• Integrity	Loss of data quality
• Availability	Data is not available when needed

... for data at rest (when stored), and for data in transit (as it is being communicated)

These assessments are naturally carried out as a part of a Data Protection Impact Assessment, but mission critical data also need to be assessed even if it does not contain person-identifiable data.

Similarly, data is given a protective marking

• Official Personal	person identifiable information
• Commercial	commercially sensitive information
• Internal	Information that should not be communicated beyond the organisation

These assessments lead to requirements for controls and technology solutions to safeguard data.

Deliverables by 1st April 2023

Deliverable	Features	LGR Workstream	LGR Product
Cyber Security Strategy & Framework	Assessing Information Risk and providing security solutions.	Assets Optimisation: Technical	435-Cyber Security Strategy & Framework

Filling the Gaps

This strategy has been developed by fitting the relevant existing deliverables of the LGR programme into a cohesive storey about how data is managed through its lifecycle. As we ran workshops, a handful of topics emerged that were not already picked up in the KGR programme for which the New Council will want to establish a strategy.

- Data Ethics – e.g. automated decision making, use of artificial intelligence, and so on
- Data Quality – a framework to assess requirements for accuracy, timeliness, availability, completeness etc, to meet processing needs, performance reporting, and reliability of intelligence

This strategy has been developed from a central viewpoint of the information professions; the Introduction to the strategy says that “We will continually reach-out and engage with this ‘data audience’ to understand their needs”. The New Council will therefore want to take the time to listen to the data needs and ambitions of each area of the business, and partners, to ensure that we get the best value from our data.

Appendix A - Drivers

The Data Strategy sets its own aims and ambitions, but also delivers against corporate objectives.

Responding to the Digital Strategy

The Digital Strategy sets out eight principles; this Data Strategy contributes to each of those ...

Digital Principle	... as a driver for the Data Strategy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand and Address User Needs 	Using Data to understand user needs. Listening to the data needs of various audience groups and provide data services that respond to those needs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote a Digital Culture 	Raising expectations for the power of data. Providing open data, and performance information, so that our residents are well informed to participate in local decision making.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be Data Led 	Using data to make better decisions, design better services, monitor our impact, and continually improve. Support prevention via early identification and smarter interventions.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be Agile 	Ready to rapidly respond to change. Working within multi-disciplinary teams to deliver projects.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share Reuse and Join Up 	Sharing and re-using Data. Making joins across data to build a single view. Collecting data once.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on Value 	Data as a mechanism to demonstrate value and performance such as Customer satisfaction, value for money, channel shift. Measure the impact of data in terms of business objectives such as social value, the quality of people's lives, regeneration, the environment.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be Trusted 	Be trusted by the public to handle their personal data. Be trusted by partners to share data.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include Everyone 	Access to skills and training. Making data available in formats that everyone can access and use.

Responding to the Customer Strategy

The Customer Strategy is organised over five themes, this Data Strategy contributes to each of those ...

Customer Theme	... as a driver for the Data Strategy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customer insights 	Listening and learning from customer feedback. Planning our services according to need and demand, and foresight.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customer Focus 	Ensuring that Information is clear, joined-up, and easy to understand by its intended audience.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information and Access 	Self-Service access to up-to-date information, assuring security and privacy.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivery 	Evaluating targets and standards.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timeliness and quality 	Rapid access to up-to-date information, that is fit for its intended purpose.

The UK Government Data Strategy

Finally, the Government Data Strategy focusses on four 'core pillars'

Government Data Theme	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Data Foundations	data that is fit-for purpose
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Data Skills	people can continue to develop the data skills they need
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Data Availability	access to, and sharing, of data
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Responsible Data	lawful, secure, fair, ethical, sustainable and accountable

Appendix B - Contributors

We are grateful to those that contributed to the Strategy.

who	Organisation	LGR Programme	Interest in data strategy
Paul Davidson	Sedgemoor D.C.	CCP Digital Strategy and Leadership Business Intelligence CCP Customer Engagement Platforms CCP Data Strategy	Governance, BI, Master Data
Rebecca Martin	Somerset CC	Information Governance and Data Management	Information Governance, data protection, records management, data transparency
Andrea Binding	Somerset CC	Records Management	Records Management, records lifecycle, paper records, electronic records, retention, Archives
Sarah Moore	Somerset CC	CCP Digital Leadership & Strategy CCP Customer Engagement platform AO Tech – In-flight projects AO Tech – technology gateway panel	ICS – links with wider system data strategy DDAT – connections MDM for CEP
Toffer Beattie	SSDC	AO Tech – Technology Strategy AO Tech – Applications roadmap CCP Digital Leadership & Strategy	DDaT dependencies Informs Technology Strategy
Kevin Chorley	SDC	CCP Digital Leadership & Strategy Facilities – Post/printing Ways of Working	DDaT Digital Strategy links
Tony Johnson	SCC	Corporate Planning and Performance, Business Intelligence, LCNs	Business Intelligence Archiving Data Storage etc
Dave Littlewood	SCC	Single Platform, Cyber, Staff Voice	Enterprise Architecture, Strategy for Somerset Council.
Nicola Miles	SCC	Corporate Planning, Corporate Performance, Enhancing Partnerships	Data Transparency, Performance Reporting
Lewis Walsh	SSDC	Apps Roadmap, Technical Strategy, Technical Gateway Panel	Understanding common goals and data problems; understanding current data position in LGR; how this relates to other strategic outcomes
Andy Kennell	SCC	D365 Technology Lead Apps Roadmap Budget	Data Archiving Finance and applications Business Intelligence Cost of implementing Data Strategy

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Interim Technology Strategy for Somerset Council

Executive Member(s): Cllr Mike Rigby - Lead Member for Transport and Digital

Local Member(s) and Division: All

LGR Workstream: Asset Optimisation Technical (Nicola Hix and Oliver Woodhams)

Lead Officer: Toffer Beattie

Contact Details: toffer.beattie@southsomerset.gov.uk

1. Summary/Background

- 1.1. The Interim Technology Strategy explains how Somerset Council plans to use technology, particularly Information Technology, to support the delivery of the Somerset Council Corporate Objectives. It closely linked to, and supports delivery of, both the Digital Strategy and the Data Strategy.
- 1.2. The paper is termed an *interim* strategy because there are important topics that, at this stage cannot be fully addressed. The developing Corporate Plan, Target Operating Model, Corporate Governance protocols, final organisational structure, and more detailed cost modelling will all affect how the strategy develops. This Interim Strategy is intended to give firm foundations upon which to build.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. LGR Joint Scrutiny Bord is asked to:
 - 2.1.1 **note** the key elements of the Interim Technology Strategy,
 - 2.1.2 **note** the high-level implications and risks,
 - 2.1.3 **endorse** the interim strategy.

3. Reasons for recommendations

- 3.1. Many new and emerging technologies have the potential to significantly improve the services we deliver to our customers and communities, and the efficiency of the council as an organisation. The One Somerset Business Case includes maximising the exploitation of digital technology¹ as one of the principles of the future operating model with specific refence to *IT systems enabling flexible working* and the *exploitation of proven robotics and artificial intelligence*. Our ability to access and integrate such technologies has been greatly enhanced by the development of the cloud and new the digital marketplace that has emerged as a result.
- 3.2. Though considerable advances have been made by joining councils, the technology estate on day one will include a significant number of legacy systems. Furthermore, as it will be, in large part, a simple amalgamation of IT from former councils, it will be relatively uncoordinated and will have inbuilt inefficiencies.

¹ Page 66, Table 16.

3.3. A piecemeal, uncoordinated, and reactive approach to developing the technology estate will not deliver the benefits envisaged by LGR, nor deliver the quality of services rightly demanded by the public. A strategic approach, which will over time demand investment and organisational change, is required and this strategy lays the foundations for such an approach.

4. Other options considered

4.1. There is no viable alternative to having a technology strategy. Without one, the new council would be institutionalising a mixed and incoherent suite of technologies that would be increasingly costly to maintain and would fail to meet user and customer expectations.

4.2. This strategy promotes the vision of actively managing technology. It describes an organisation that has the capability to develop and integrate, as well as commission, and challenges the new organisation to embrace new technologies. An alternative option would be to settle for an IT department focussed on running and supporting existing services with little or no capacity for service improvement or innovation, and a limited capacity to respond to changing user needs. This was not the vision laid out in the One Somerset Business Case.

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

5.1. The Corporate Plan, which incorporates the Council Plan and Business Plan, is in draft form. However, the proposed priorities and principles speak to the importance of a digital, data and technology for Somerset Council. The technology strategy is key to delivering the digital agenda, which in turn is key to delivering the county vision and business plan.

5.2. Rationalisation of Somerset Council's technology estate is fundamental to achieving MTFP savings and achieving longer term financial sustainability – without prejudicing service standards.

6. Consultations and co-production

6.1. This strategy has been developed under the aegis of the LGR Technical Assets Optimisation Workstream, and so has benefited from the continual involvement of officers from across all 5 joining authorities.

6.2. Gartner associates (Somerset Council strategic technical partner) have reviewed two earlier drafts of this strategy.

6.3. This strategy has been developed in close coordination with both the Digital Strategy and the Data Strategy and has been briefed to Customer Community and Partnership (CCP) and Service Alignment and Improvement (SAI) workstreams.

6.4. The draft strategy was endorsed by the LGR Programme Board on 13 December 2022.

7. Financial and Risk Implications

7.1. Implications for new unitary council

7.1.1. It has been established that well planned and well implemented technology saves money in the long term, whereas poorly planned, poorly

implemented technology results in poor value for money. This strategy aims to establish a future in which the deployment of technology is properly governed, and the digital marketplace is managed to ensure best return on investment.

7.1.2. At this current point in time this Interim Technology Strategy is not costed. It sets out a high-level vision for the future. The implications of this vision will mean at times there will be a need for additional future investment, and the realisable cashable benefits may take time. Discrete programmes will fall out of the strategy, and these will be individually subject to investment appraisals.

7.1.3. The strategy gives the context for budget setting and MTFP and to that extent financial implications are bounded by existing controls.

7.2. Risks

7.2.1. **Business Change.** Successful consolidation and modernisation of technologies will require business change, across a new council already pressurised by other organisational change demands. Technology changes must be introduced with careful change management strategies, always service/business led, and implemented by multidisciplinary teams – including, but not solely made up of, technical staff.

7.2.2. **Service Continuity.** As systems are consolidated and modernised, on-going services must continue to be delivered. Methods such as user testing, parallel operation models, and agile delivery exist that can help ensure service continuity, but they must be properly planned and resourced.

7.2.3. **Capacity.** The scale and scope of change inherent in LGR, and proposed by this strategy, will be resource intensive. If organic capacity does not exist, resource may have to be bought in.

8. Legal and HR Implications.

8.1. **Legal Implication.** There are no legal implications with noting this interim strategy.

8.2. **HR Implications.** The technology strategy promotes a council with the ability to develop systems and integrate technologies as well as commissioning platforms; it highlights the need to actively manage a diverse and dynamic digital marketplace; it recommends the formation of an emerging technologies/future horizon scanning team. Alongside the more traditional IT roles, these capabilities require specialised skills which may have an impact on how we recruit and retain staff.

8.3. **Ethics.** The use of technologies such as machine learning and artificial intelligence to support decision making, and greater exploitation of data raise important ethical questions. Digital ethics – how we should handle data and new technologies in a responsible manner – will need to be considered in future governance and oversight structures.

9. Other Implications

9.1. Equalities Implications.

9.1.1. Technology in and of itself has neither a positive nor negative equalities impact. If it is deployed without considering issues such as accessibility, it could have a detrimental impact. Conversely well implemented technology can have a very positive impact. This strategy is being produced in close coordination with the Digital Strategy which has inclusion as a core theme.

9.1.2. Individual technologies, systems and platforms will have an equalities impact assessment completed as part of their implementation.

9.2. **Community Safety Implications.** There are no community safety implications from this strategy.

9.3. **Sustainability Implications.** Individual technologies need to be judged separately in terms of their contribution to the sustainability agenda. However, through a reduction in commuting because of more remote working and a lower reliance on office consumables, technology has the potential to impact positively on the environment. Also cloud migration (a recommendation of the strategy) reduces the energy consumption and physical footprint of on-premise infrastructure

9.4. **Health and Safety Implications.** There are no health and safety implications from this strategy.

9.5. **Health and Wellbeing Implications.** Once again, this strategy is neutral on health and well-being. Technology is increasingly being used to enhance health and well-being, but conversely poorly planned and misused technologies can have a detrimental effect.

9.6. **Social Value.** A key element of the Technology Strategy is to use the cloud enabled digital marketplace to access more products and services from SMEs and start-ups, rather than using a limited number of large suppliers. As well as better value for money, this will deliver clear social value.

10. Scrutiny comments / recommendations:

10.1. This Strategy has not yet been considered by Scrutiny.

11. Background Papers

- Interim Technology Strategy for the New Somerset Council.
- Interim Digital Strategy for the New Somerset Council.
- Interim Data Strategy for the New Somerset Council.
- One Somerset Business Case



Somerset Equality Impact Assessment

Before completing this EIA please ensure you have read the EIA guidance notes – available from your Equality Officer

Organisation prepared for

Joint Scrutiny

Version

1

Date Completed

28/12/22

Description of what is being impact assessed

Somerset Council's Interim Technology Strategy

Evidence

What data/information have you used to assess how this policy/service might impact on protected groups? Sources such as the [Office of National Statistics](#), [Somerset Intelligence Partnership](#), [Somerset's Joint Strategic Needs Analysis \(JSNA\)](#), Staff and/ or [area profiles](#),, should be detailed here

Open-source information including: The Equality Trust (www.equalitytrust.org.uk), LGA Digital Inclusion Toolkit, Ofcom Connected Nations Report, LGR Digital Strategy.

Who have you consulted with to assess possible impact on protected groups? If you have not consulted other people, please explain why?

Dave Crisfield – Equalities Advisor SSDC

Analysis of impact on protected groups				
The Public Sector Equality Duty requires us to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations with protected groups. Consider how this policy/service will achieve these aims. In the table below, using the evidence outlined above and your own understanding, detail what considerations and potential impacts against each of the three aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty. Based on this information, make an assessment of the likely outcome, before you have implemented any mitigation.				
Protected group	Summary of impact	Negative outcome	Neutral outcome	Positive outcome
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anecdotally older people are less comfortable using technology. This is addressed by the digital inclusion policies outlined in the digital strategy. 	☒	☐	☐
Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Certain disabilities can be helped by technology. Assistive technologies are used to ensure that no one is disadvantaged due to disability. 	☐	☒	☐
Gender reassignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> n/a 	☐	☒	☐
Marriage and civil partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> n/a 	☐	☒	☐

Pregnancy and maternity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> n/a 	☐	☒	☐
Race and ethnicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> n/a 	☐	☒	☐
Religion or belief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> n/a 	☐	☒	☐
Sex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> n/a 	☐	☒	☐
Sexual orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> n/a 	☐	☒	☐
Other, e.g. carers, veterans, homeless, low income, rurality/isolation, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low income can affect an individual's ability to access devices which in turn might limit their ability to access technology enabled services. Poor connectivity due to rural isolation may limit the deployment of some technologies. 	☒	☐	☐

Negative outcomes action plan

Where you have ascertained that there will potentially be negative outcomes, you are required to mitigate the impact of these. Please detail below the actions that you intend to take.

Action taken/to be taken	Date	Person responsible	How will it be monitored?	Action complete
Age. Digital inclusion plans as part of Digital Strategy	15/12/2022			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Low income. Customer access portals, publicly available terminals in e.g. libraries and face to face services are available.	15/12/2022			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Rural Isolation. Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS) is a government sponsored programme to connect hard to reach communities. On-going.	15/12/2022			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>

If negative impacts remain, please provide an explanation below.

Completed by:	Toffer Beattie
Date	28 Dec 22
Signed off by:	
Date	
Equality Lead/Manager sign off date:	
To be reviewed by: (officer name)	
Review date:	

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Interim Technology Strategy for the New Somerset Council

Version History

Version	Date	Author	Notes
0.1	18/03/22	T Beattie	For discussion at Workstream Meeting 21/03/22
0.2	01/04/22	T Beattie	Following informal mentoring session
0.3	04/05/22	T Beattie	Following Gartner interaction
0.4	05/12/22	T Beattie	Ready for Programme Board 13/12/22

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About the Technology Strategy

Somerset Council's Digital Strategy sets out a case for making Digital central to how Local Government is delivered in Somerset. Though digital is not synonymous with 'IT', technology is a key enabler for a digital organisation. The Digital Strategy promotes DDaT – Digital Data and Technology – as a coherent discipline. Consistent with that DDaT approach, this Strategy is a partner document to the emerging Digital and Data strategies and sets out how information technology, as part of a digital business model, will help the new Somerset Council to achieve its strategic objectives.

Outcomes

Corporate Objectives

This version of the Technology Strategy is written before the final publication of Somerset Council's Corporate Plan. As the new authority becomes established, future iterations of DDaT strategies will show clear linkages to corporate objectives. In the meantime, this strategy supports, through a wider digital agenda, delivery of LGR, financial sustainability, and the emerging priorities and principles for Somerset Council.

User Expectations.

The technology we deploy should meet the following user expectations:

- for the user, it is simple and intuitive.
- it enables and improves business processes and working practices, rather than dictating them.
- it promotes efficiency and improves productivity.
- it delivers value for money.
- it is safe and secure.
- it is supported and available.

This strategy is in 2 parts:

Part 1 – **Vision** – high level, strategic guidance setting out our long-term ambition for Somerset Council.

Part 2 – **Implementation** - a road map for delivery; in detail up to Vesting Day, in outline beyond.

Part 1 -Vision

Until relatively recently poor technology has been holding back the public sector. Often applied piecemeal, built on poor infrastructure, procured from a marketplace monopolised by a few big players, and with IT departments viewed narrowly as a support service, IT has often under-delivered for local government. This need no longer be the case. Huge improvements in Government Digital Services and countless success stories from councils around the country and the globe show that modern technology is now able to support truly innovative, world class public services.

Many new and emerging technologies have the potential to vastly improve the way in which we serve our communities; in the quality of service we provide, the timeliness of interventions, the customer experience, and the efficiency with which we do business. Increased processing speed and computer power allows us to do more, faster; better connectivity through improved fixed infrastructure (e.g. fibre broadband) and 5G mobile coverage increases the reach of technology geographically and socially; AI, algorithms, and automation can be used to take on a huge amount of rules based, repetitive tasks, freeing up humans to do what humans do best (using empathy, judgement and emotional intelligence); the Internet of Things (IoT) and advanced data tools help us measure and then improve interactions.

The degree to which these and other technologies improve lives depends on how well we integrate them, how simple (or invisible) we make them to the users, and the extent to which we are able to personalise services. In setting up the new council structure, we must put ourselves in a position to understand emerging technology trends, and how we can rapidly exploit them.

Fixing the Plumbing

The Local Digital Declaration¹² ‘talks about ‘fixing our plumbing to break our dependence on inflexible and expensive technology’. Technological advances are creating new ways to improve the services we deliver, and the cloud has made even cutting-edge technologies comparatively cheap and readily available. SMEs and innovation start-ups now offer game changing products and services that can be incorporated with little or no reliance on on-premise infrastructure so allowing us to rethink technology, moving away from a *legacy* approach to a *new technology paradigm*.

Joining authorities have all started on this modernisation journey and have used technology to support genuinely innovative service and business improvements. But legacy still exists, and as the new unitary authority forms, we face both the challenge and opportunity of keeping maintaining momentum.

Legacy <i>...we must move from ...</i>	New Technology Paradigm <i>...we must move to ...</i>
Large, costly, inflexible contracts, supplied by a few big vendors.	Cloud services offering scalable, flexible, PAYG agreements. A digital marketplace open to start ups and SMEs, driving better value for money.
Proprietary software which limits our ability to integrate with other systems	Open standards and open APIs that will allow us to integrate easily and effectively; internally, with our partners and suppliers, and with other providers.

¹ Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities [Local Digital Declaration | Local Digital](#)

² All joining authorities are signatories to the Local Digital Declaration. It is expected that Somerset Council will sign up by vesting day.

Legacy <i>...we must move from ...</i>	New Technology Paradigm <i>...we must move to ...</i>
Legacy software which is difficult to manipulate making improvements and modifications difficult.	An open and modular architecture will allow us to develop and improve systems, in response to changing user needs and the availability of emerging technologies.
Legacy IT systems which too often shape and constrain the way a service is delivered, rather than being designed for the best user experience and outcome.	User centred design enabled by technology
Single use systems that reinforce organisational siloes	Modular components that can be re-used for many purposes allowing a more flexible organisation design.
Outdated technologies.	New and emerging technologies such as robotic process automation (RPA), machine learning (ML) and artificial intelligence (AI) are used to deliver customer outcomes and operational efficiencies.
Significant on-premise infrastructure, which is costly, environmentally damaging, and drives a major operational support overhead.	Migration to the cloud will deliver cashable benefits as well improved resilience and security.
Data held in proprietary databases making it difficult and costly to exploit, share and manipulate.	Managing our own data throughout its lifecycle.

Principles and Guidance

Somerset Council's Digital Principles are designed to guide Somerset Council's development as a digital authority and have direct relevance to how we use technology.

Digital Principle	Example Technology Implication
Understand and address user needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use web analytics and other available data to enhance understanding Design in data capture and feedback loops so that real usage can be measured
Promote a digital culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use common platforms where consistency will encourage participation (e.g. Microsoft) Keep technology simple and intuitive for the user Develop and adopt a new IT operating model
Be data driven	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use open standards and, where possible, open source
Be Agile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work off clear problem statements rather than detailed requirements Conduct discovery; Create alphas; Release Betas; Iterate live products Develop/source in multi-disciplinary teams
Share, Reuse and Join Up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use open interfaces Use standard integrations – e.g. Azure AD, Microsoft 365 Sweat existing solutions
Focus on Value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More ambitious use of AI, robotics and associated technologies to enable efficiencies and a better user experience. Cloud first to allow scalability/PAYG and to reduce on-premise overheads
Be Trusted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design in security – don't just add on. Product roadmaps must include security testing and enhancements where possible. Algorithms, automations and use of AI will be subject to ethical scrutiny. Consider where you need a human in the loop.

Digital Principle	Example Technology Implication
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain technical decisions plainly and clearer – and make them available to all users (unless security considerations prevents this).
Include Everyone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design for different channels – including analogue/face to face • Design for all devices • Design for limited bandwidth • Design for accessibility

Somerset Council will also follow gov.uk’s [Technology Code of Practice](#) and [Service Standard](#).

Operating Model

As well as conforming to the digital principles and other best practice, we must also develop an operating model that is future fit. Business as usual will not deliver the profound changes that are needed, and an unreformed IT operating model will see us stuck where we are - paying too much for poor and inflexible IT, delivering future legacy, and failing to fully exploit technology to drive improvements.

Rather than give structures and prescriptive processes, the model³ identifies nine components where a change can bring about positive business outcomes.

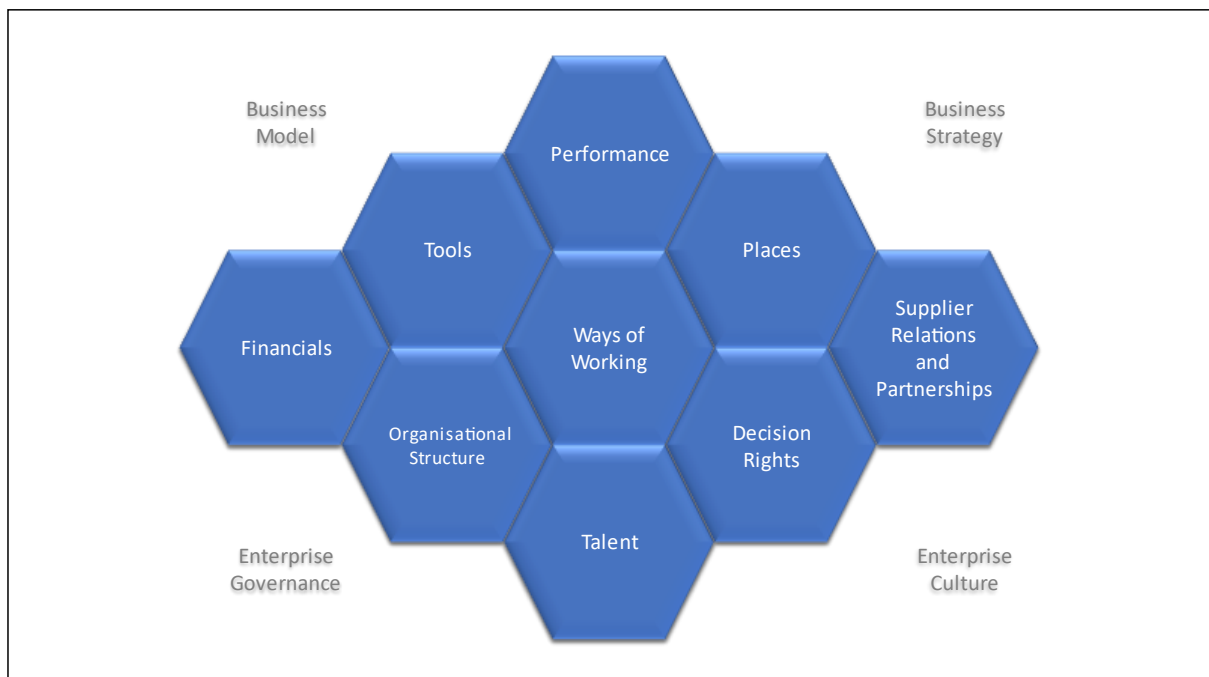


Figure 1- The nine components of the Gartner I&T⁴ Operating Model

³ Based on the Gartner I&T Operating Model

⁴ Gartner intentionally use the term ‘Information & Technology’ rather than IT, pointing out that ‘[an] operating model that centres only on the activities of the IT organisation...will be inadequate for executing a digital strategy’. In other words, information and technology is everybody’s business, not just IT’s.

Operating Model Component	Move from	Move To
<p>Ways of Working</p> <p><i>The methods, frameworks and processes that will be used to deliver the required I&T capabilities</i></p>	<p>Projects, not products — mostly waterfall, with manual handoffs; efficiency and predictability are the priorities</p>	<p>Products, not projects — mostly agile, DevOps and continuous delivery; speed and innovation are the prioritised.</p>
<p>Performance</p> <p><i>How the performance or contribution of IT will be measured and managed</i></p>	<p>Business and IT roles are measured differently (in terms of traditional IT metrics such as on time, on budget and 24/7 availability)</p>	<p>Business and IT are measured in terms of shared business outcomes and metrics</p>
<p>Places</p> <p><i>Where people and key assets are located, including whether these will be collocated with other functions</i></p>	<p>Business unit and IT teams work in separate offices/locations</p>	<p>Cross-functional business and IT teams are collocated</p>
<p>Decision Rights</p> <p><i>The rights of stakeholders with respect to decisions in key I&T domains such as architecture, investment, sourcing and applications</i></p>	<p>Unclear or not applied consistently</p>	<p>Clearly defined and applied; product decisions are likely to be owned by business units, platform decisions by IT; high levels of collaboration</p>
<p>Talent</p> <p><i>The people, competencies and skills needed and how they will be provided/acquired</i></p>	<p>Specialists lacking business skills focus on technical disciplines; they are permanent employees and are augmented with temporary contract staff</p>	<p>“Versatilists” have a broader skills base covering technology, business, etc.; flexible talent acquisition allows for permanent/contract employees, partners, freelancers, crowdsourcing, etc.</p>
<p>Organisational Structure</p> <p><i>How resources will be organized, including key roles and reporting relationships</i></p>	<p>A hierarchical organization is built around traditional IT functions and roles</p>	<p>Fewer layers comprise multidisciplinary, self-managed teams drawing on business and IT resources</p>
<p>Tools</p> <p><i>Tools and assets required to support or enable I&T capabilities</i></p>	<p>Primary tools cover service management, time recording, infrastructure management and monitoring</p>	<p>An expanded toolset covers activities such as automated testing and release, and continuous delivery/integration</p>

Operating Model Component	Move from	Move To
Supplier Relations and Partnerships <i>The approach and principles for working with external providers and partners</i>	Supplier management is a contract responsibility. Supplier agreements are long term and inflexible.	Different sourcing models reflects different products and goals. Relationships are actively managed by dedicated staff to get best value for money, maximum innovation and adaptability.
Financials <i>How I&T will be funded, and how budgets and costs will be allocated, planned, and monitored</i>	IT budgets are held and controlled centrally; funding is allocated to projects based on a business case; funding and allocations are determined annually.	Budgets match agile delivery, discovery, alpha and betas are funded and live product funding lines include provision for continuous improvement.

This generic model will not be adopted wholesale or overnight, but represents a start point. It will be tailored to suit the needs Somerset Council, the Digital and Data strategies and the wider Digital, Data and Technology (DDaT) operating model. Development of the model will be a key task in LGR Tranches 2 and 3.

Initial Implications

As we take advantage of the cloud to select the services we need, at the volume we need and when we need them, IT services will be more commoditised. Cloud utilities will more often be used on licence, integrated to form entire solutions. *This means that the IT costing model will move away from Capital (CAPEX) towards Revenue/Operational Budgets (OPEX).*

Greater commoditisation will also lead to a busier and more dynamic supplier landscape. To take full advantage of the opportunities of the digital marketplace, IT contracts, licences and agreements will have to be very actively managed. This is likely to be beyond the capability of a central procurement organisation or generalist procurement officers and points to the need for *dedicated IT Supplier Relationship Management function.*

Adopting open and modular architecture, using open source and open standards will allow us to develop and improve systems, in response to changing user needs and the availability of emerging technologies. But to do so will require the right skills and competences in the IT organisation. Consideration must be given to *product management and systems development roles.* Without these skills Somerset Council will only be able to deploy technology it can buy and so will be at the mercy of vendors.

To create the capacity to consider, demonstrate and trial new and emerging technologies, Somerset Council should consider having a dedicated *emerging technologies team* as part of the IT or digital establishment. Discretely funded, this team will be able to horizon scan and develop prototypes without the constraints of BAU or operational delivery.

Part 2 – Implementation

ICT Core Programme

Activities of all the joining authorities, both BAU and transformation/project, and Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) IT activity⁵, and the BAU/operational support timeline, has been collated to create a view of the consolidated ICT core programme. Detail can be found at the IT Core Programme [BI Dashboard](#). In outline the programme consists of:

Ongoing Strategic Transformation Programmes:

- Adult Social Care
- Children’s Social Care
- Cloud Migration
- Integrated Care System
- Sedgemoor Revs and Bens

LGR Sub-Workstreams:

Including Capita exit

BAU Pipeline:

Continuing support to ICT and digital output that falls below the threshold of a discrete project or LGR workstream

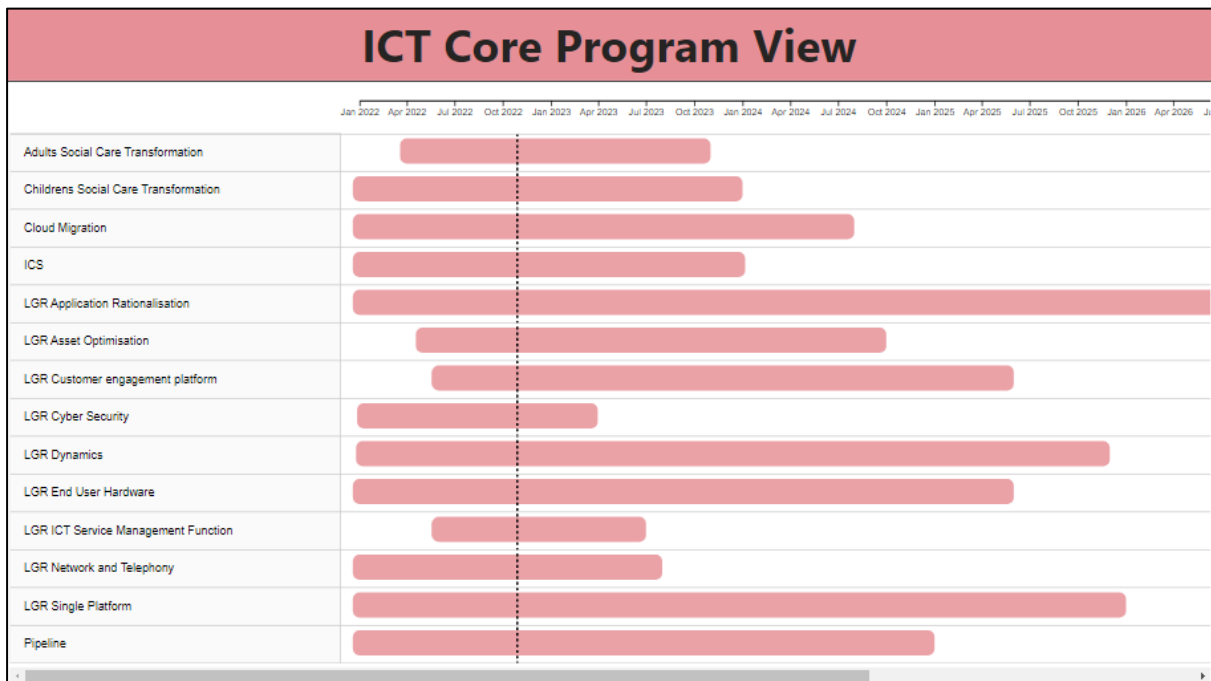


Figure 2- Snapshot of ICT Core Program View

This high-level view shows that the scale and scope of change, both within and without the LGR programme, will put considerable strain on ICT resources in the new organisation. When one considers that the IT department/team will also be reorganising itself and will take time to reach its

⁵ Sub workstreams of the Technical Asset Optimisation Workstream

full capability (forming, storming, norming, performing), it is clear that the programme will have to be carefully managed and properly resourced.

LGR Tranche 1

LGR Tranche 1 has focussed on:

- **Consolidation and Rationalisation** - identifying opportunities to rationalise the use of multiple technologies to reduce cost and complexity.
- **Early Implementation of New Capabilities** - a limited number of new corporate/back-office capabilities with low business change and adoption overheads
- **Strategy Development** - Development of foundational strategies, policies, and guidance to shape the new IT service.

Adoption of a Single identity model and migration to a single Microsoft platform has been the key consolidation during Tranche 1. This opens up a range of other opportunities to rationalise supporting and peripheral software and tools. District HR and Payroll are migrating to SCC SAP during Tranche 1 and there is a phased adoption of the Genesys Contact Centre Platform, so that by vesting day all customer contact will be delivered on the same technology.

The most significant new capability being implemented as part of Tranche 1 is Microsoft Dynamics which will provide the unitary finance system. It is planned to achieve an initial operating capability by Vesting Day. In addition, Tranche 1 will see the introduction of systems for:

- Property Asset Management
- Legal Case Management
- Learning Management
- Building Control
- FOI/Complaints
- eRecruitment
- Electoral Management
- Health and Safety Management
- Vehicle Fleet Management

Initial governance structures and procedures have been put in place to support Tranche 1 activity. Strategic governance has been provided by the LGR Programme organisation. A Technology Gateway has been established to scrutinise new technology proposals and the In-Flight Project sub-workstream has been used to rationalise and oversee products that are already in delivery. The Apps Road Map sub-workstream has is developing a view of the current technical architectures across the 5 joining authorities and will, in later tranches, develop a future plan for investment and rationalisation.

The budgets of joining authorities are being analysed to understand the financial position on day 1 and, for reasons of both LGR Benefit Realisation and MTFP savings, costs are being constantly examined.

Extant cyber security measures and Information Security Management Systems (ISMS) have been examined with the aim of achieving standardisation for Vesting Day.

Tranche 1 IT/Tech Deliverables

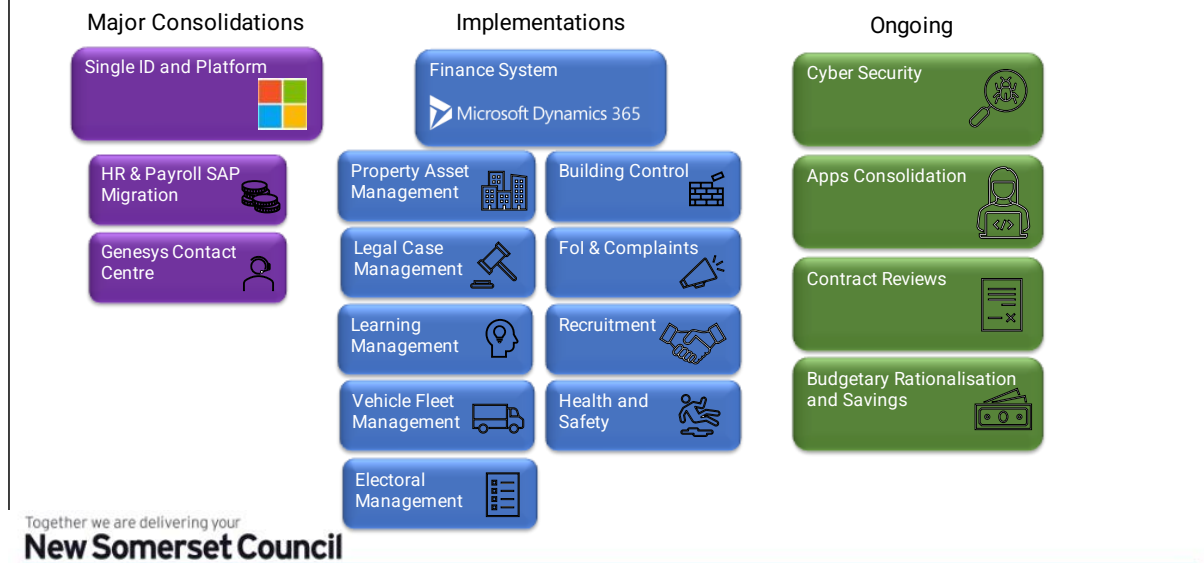


Figure 3- Tranche 1 Deliverables

LGR Tranche 2

For Tranche 2 the focus will shift towards *shared platforms and services* and development of the *IT Operating Model*.

Shared Platform and Services

With all former authorities on a single platform and Somerset Council stood up as a legal entity, Phase 2 will focus on increasingly ambitious merging of IT infrastructure and application services.

The implementation of a new Customer Engagement Platform (CEP) will commence in Tranche 2. Many of the technologies that support the delivery of customer services will have critical dependencies with the CEP, so its development and progress will impact of later and more ambitious service redesign.

As the unitary authority begins to function as a single entity, there will be more scope and a greater need to develop shared services and/or consolidate existing assets. These will include:

- A single IT Service Management Tool
- Consolidated network provision
- Unified mobile device policy and management
- Closer harmonisation of information security and disaster recover policies and tools.

Development of the IT Operating Model

As the Somerset Council Business Model becomes better understood, and as Digital and Data strategies mature, the IT operation model will be developed and implemented. From the overview in Part 1 of this document it can be seen that this is a major undertaking. It will take time will need close involvement and cooperation with all business areas. Some key questions will remain unanswered until the council's business model, business strategy, enterprise governance and enterprise culture are better developed and understood.

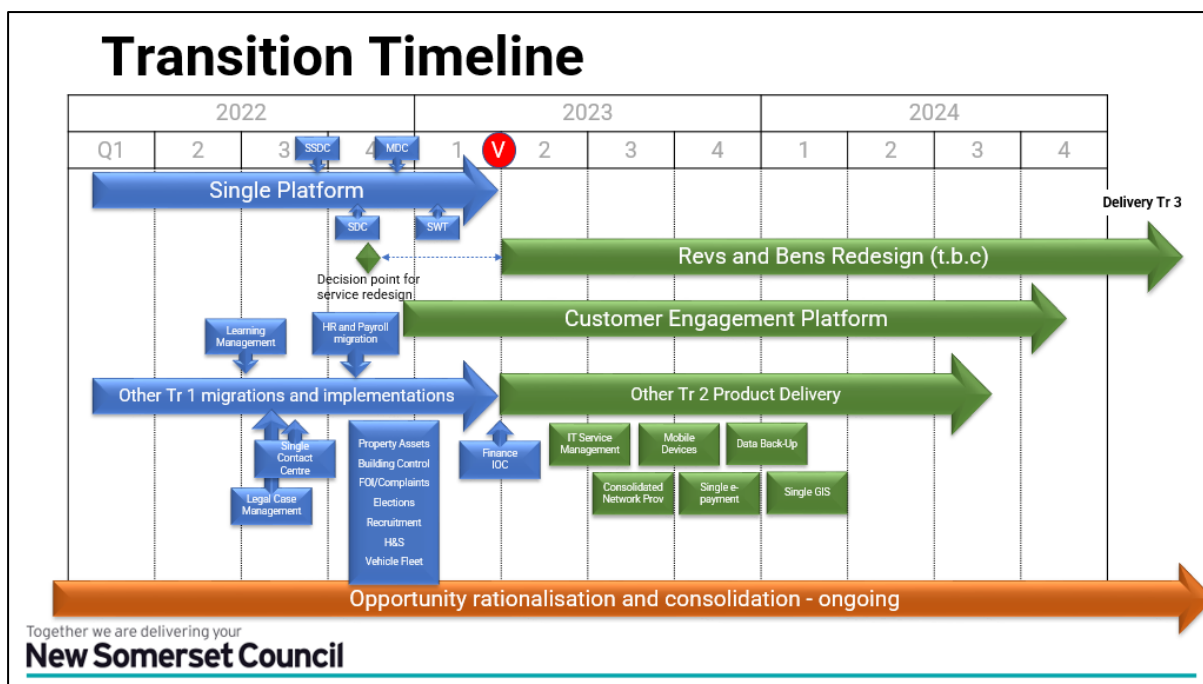


Figure 4- High Level Transition Timeline

LGR Tranche 3 and Transition

As the programme moves into Tranche 3 the future shape and direction of the council will have become much clearer allowing more ambitious *service redesign* and the full *implementation of Somerset Councils Digital Vision*.

The pace and scale of service redesign is likely to be limited by resource and capacity. The change capacity (business and technical) of the new organisation is not fully understood and both ongoing transformation projects and the addition demand of managing legacy systems will impact. To overcome this a portfolio management approach will be required.

Collaboration and Service Plans.

In making Service Improvements Plans services should collaborate closely with technology staff. In this way plans are made with a better understanding of the technological opportunities, and technology staff have a better understanding of services areas demands and expectations. Together these will lead to more realistic and deliverable plans proposals.

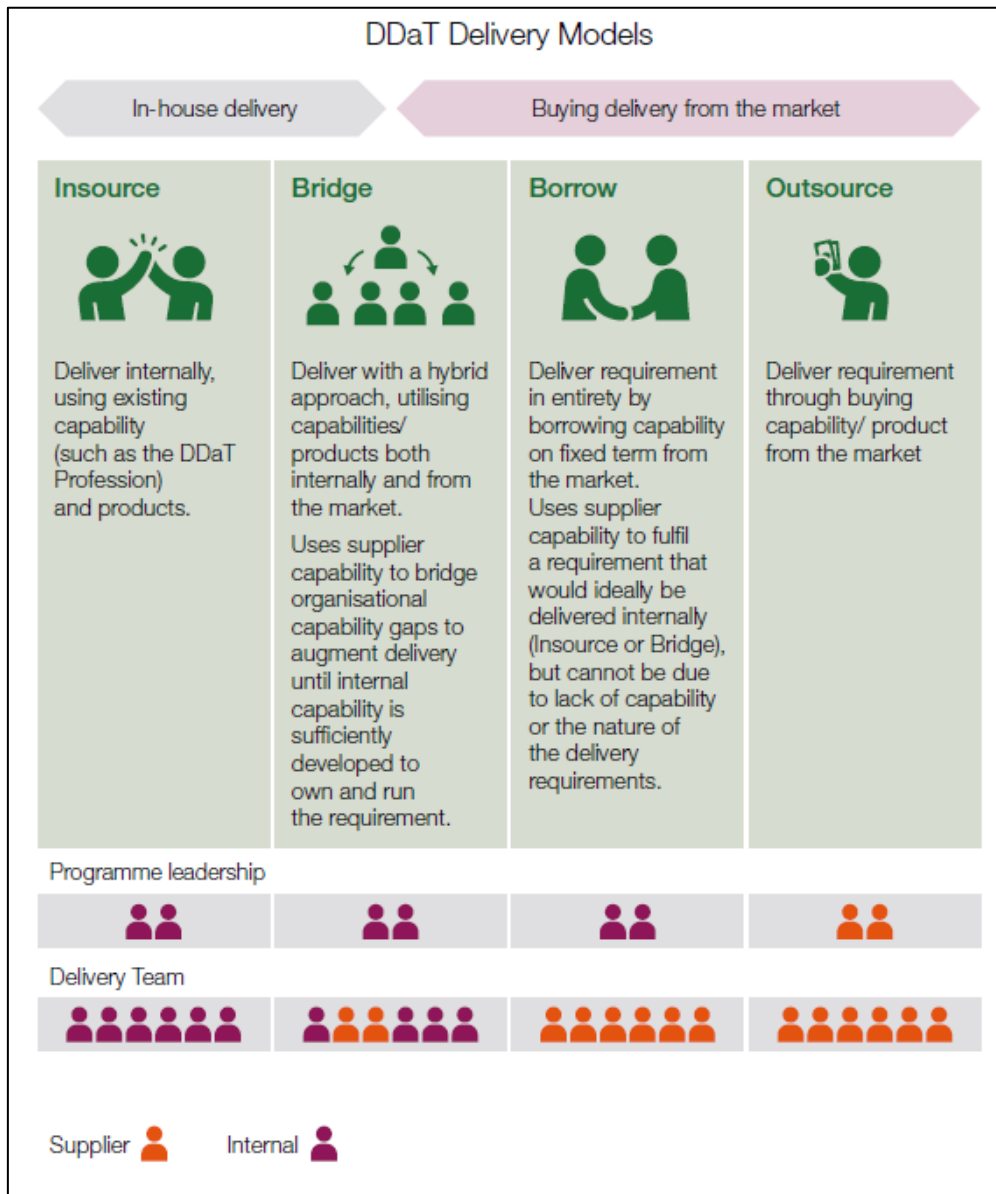
Strategic Prioritisation.

Service plans supported by realistic IT product delivery proposals will help senior leaders to prioritise. Other, non-technical factors will also be considered, resulting in a technology portfolio that delivers corporate value.

Resourcing and Delivery Models

By exploring different delivery models, resources can be better managed. The cabinet office DDaT Playbook identifies a scale along which are 4 categories of delivery model. A range of models can and should be considered – different models will suit different products and services better. However, the further towards *outsource* a delivery model is, the organisation has less flexibility, is less able to respond and adapt to user needs, and the more likely are unfavourable contract terms.

Conversely, the more in-house a deliver model, the greater is the reliance on internal resource and expertise.



Interim Solutions, Incremental Delivery and Continuous Improvement

Service improvement is not brought about only by full-service redesign. Even when full redesign is the long-term aspiration, smaller scale improvements are possible in the shorter term. In the context of LGR, rationalisation of business applications may be desirable both to bring about better business process consistency in a service area, and to reduce the cost and support overhead of having multiple applications delivering a similar or identical service.

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**Report for LGR Joint Scrutiny
Committee 19 January 2023 – Customer
Strategy and Service Standards**

Executive Member(s): Cllr Val Keitch - Lead Member for Local Government Reorganisation & Prosperity and Cllr Federica Smith-Roberts - Lead Member for Communities

Local Member(s) and Division: N/A

Lead Officer: Alyn Jones – LGR Programme Director

Authors:

Customer Strategy: Gareth Denslow, Head of Customer Service, Sedgemoor District Council.

Contact Details: gareth.denslow@sedgemoor.gov.uk – 01278 435433

Service Standards: Karyn Punchard – LGR Programme Advisor, Service Alignment and Improvement

Contact Details: karyn.punchard@somerset.gov.uk; Tel: 01823 355489

1. Summary / Background

- 1.1.** This report introduces four customer focussed products which have been developed in preparation for vesting day of the new Council.

Following consideration by the LGR Joint Scrutiny Committee, the Executive is being asked to approve these products.

- 1.2.** The Customer Strategy (see Appendix A) outlines the Council's strategic vision for customer access. Complimenting the Strategy are the corporate Customer Promise and Customer Standards (Appendices B and C) which have been developed to ensure customers are clear about what they should expect from the Council when they contact us through a variety of contact channels.

- 1.3.** In addition to Customer Standards (Appendix C), Service Standards have been developed, for specific operational services delivered to customers by the existing councils in Somerset, and are set out in Appendix D. Many of these standards will remain unchanged at vesting day for each council area, but in some areas some alignment has been possible to provide a Somerset-wide approach when the new Somerset Council comes into being. Links are provided in Appendix D to details for each service area. This report sets out how the standards have been developed by the various services and used to help consider options for the new Somerset council budget.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1.** It is recommended that the Executive:

- (i) Approve the draft Customer Strategy, Customer Promise and Customer Standards.
- (ii) Approve the baseline Service Standards in Appendix D.
- (iii) 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.
- (iv) Delegate authority to publish and communicate (ii) and (iii) as Interim Service Standards for vesting day, to the Lead Director for Economic and Community Infrastructure and Director of Commissioning.

3. Reasons for recommendations

- 3.1** Approaches to customer access have been managed independently across the five councils. We recognise that demand for our services is increasing along with the expectations of greater access, ease of use and quality of customer service. So, there is now a need to ensure that, from the outset, the new council sets a vision and plan to meet these demands and expectations.
- 3.2** Knowledge and understanding of operational service standards will help inform decisions on the Medium-Term Financial Plan and inform the public of the standard of service they can expect from vesting day.

4. Other options considered

- 4.1.** No further options have been considered. Each of the products have been prioritised as a 'must have' for vesting day, to help customers, communities and staff understand the Councils vision and day one operational standards.

Within each service area alternatives for alignment or differentiation of service have been considered and are summarised in the service standard templates (Appendix D).

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

- 5.1.** The Customer Strategy provides the vision and strategic direction for the design and delivery of customer service within the Council. Whilst the Strategy does not include detailed costings it will need to be funded within the Medium-Term Financial Plan.
- 5.2.** Service Standards have helped with evaluation of savings options for the Medium-Term Financial Plan.

6. Consultations and co-production

- 6.1.** Internal consultation on developing the draft Customer Strategy, Customer Promise and Customer Standards has been undertaken with:
- **Customer, Digital and Website Workstreams** – various engagement throughout product development.
 - **Service Alignment Workstream** - various engagement throughout product development.
 - **Customer, Communities and Partnerships Board** – approach endorsed 16/11/2022

Service Standards have been developed and co-produced by sub-workstreams comprising staff members from all councils, contractors, and other organisations. In addition, all customer documents above, including service standards, have been considered by the Fortnightly LGR workshops and LGR Programme Board.

- 6.2.** Five focus group sessions have been held with a total of 42 members of Somerset Councils Customer Panel to test and obtain feedback about the customer principles, with amendments incorporated into the documents.

7. Financial and Risk Implications

- 7.1.** There are no direct financial implications from these recommendations. Without the Service Standards however there is a risk of Medium-Term Financial Planning decisions being made in absence of understanding of impact on service delivery, and risk of lack of clarity on levels of service in different areas from day one.
- 7.2.** There are no specific risks arising from these recommendations however failure to deliver against these products 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	3	Impact	3	Risk Score	9
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8. Legal and HR Implications

- 8.1.** There are no direct legal or HR implications to the recommendations being accepted.

9. Other Implications

- 9.1.** There are no implications arising directly from this report relating to:

- Community Safety
- Sustainability
- Health and Safety
- Health and Wellbeing
- Social Value

As part of future service alignment, if service standards change, the full range of other implications will need to be considered on a service-by-service basis.

An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed and appended to this report, this details actions needed to ensure that protected groups are not negatively impacted by the endorsement and implementation of the products presented in this report.

10. Scrutiny comments / recommendations:

10.1. To date the proposed Strategy and Service Standards have not been considered by a Scrutiny Committee.

11. Background

11.1. The background to the Customer Strategy, Promise and Standards is set out in Appendix E.

11.2. The background to Service Standards is set out in Appendix D.

12. Background Papers

- 12.1.**
- Appendix A – Draft Customer Strategy
 - Appendix B – Draft Customer Promise
 - Appendix C – Draft Customer Standards
 - Appendix D – Baseline Service Standards
 - Appendix E – Background – Customer Strategy

Somerset Equality Impact Assessment

Before completing this EIA, please ensure you have read the EIA guidance notes – available from your Equality Officer

Version	2.0	Date	22 nd December 2022
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Description of what is being impact assessed

Customer Strategy – the vision and approach to customer service for the new Somerset Council.

Customer Charter and Standards – set out our approach to customer service and what our customers can expect.

Customer Excellence Model – reflect the principles in our charter and strategy.

Service Standards - developed for operational services delivered to customers by the existing councils in Somerset.

Implementation of a new Customer Strategy and Charter for the new Somerset Council, underpinned by an ambition to achieve the Customer Service Excellence standard. The development of the strategy has been informed by an analysis of existing Strategy’s across each authority and a series of workshops with Customer Service managers, customers (through the Customer Panel) and engagement with the wider Customers, Communities and Partnerships workstream and service alignment.

Service Standards have been developed by sub-workstream leads who have worked with their staff members from all councils, contractors, and other organisations.

Evidence

What data/information have you used to assess how this policy/service might impact on protected groups? Sources such as the

[Office of National Statistics](#), [Somerset Intelligence Partnership](#), [Somerset’s Joint Strategic Needs Analysis \(JSNA\)](#), Staff and/ or [area profiles](#), should be detailed here

A broad analysis of data from the Somerset Intelligence Partnership has informed our approach and understanding to ensure that the products consider impacts on protected groups. The 2021 Census data is yet to be released in its entirety, therefore the data obtained is mostly using 2011 data.

A summary of the data identifies:

The population of Somerset has increased by 7.8 % since 2011 – this is higher than the increase experienced within England and Wales of 6.3%.

Misc.	Total population	571,600	100.0%
	Live in rural area	269,868	48.0%

Analysis by Protected Groups

Race and Ethnicity - 94.6% of Somerset’s population are ‘White British’. This proportion is typical of that seen in Somerset’s neighbouring local authorities but much higher than the England and Wales average (80.5%). Somerset’s non- ‘White British’ residents tend to be concentrated in and around the county’s principal towns.

Age - There has been more than a 50% increase in the number of people aged 70-74 and there are a third more people aged 90 or over. The rise in the number of people in the mid-20s to mid-30s is also noticeable with a nearly 30% increase in the number of people aged 30-34. Three quarters of the population growth between 2011 and 2021 was in the 65+ age range.

Disability - 5.1% of the Somerset population (26,945 people) have described their health as bad or very bad. This is in line with the Southwest average and slightly below the figure for England and Wales (5.6%).

There are nearly 9,000 households (3.9% of all households in Somerset) containing at least one adult with a long-term disability or health condition

Who have you consulted with to assess possible impact on protected groups? If you have not consulted other people, please explain why?

- Customer, Website and Digital Workstreams – regular updates and more recently the draft strategy and customer promise and standards has been shared and feedback provided.
- Service Alignment/CCP working group – to ensure that core services within Service Alignment are aware of the Strategy, have an opportunity to feedback and influence the principles.
- Workshops – initially to develop ‘strawman strategy’ with Contact Centre managers.
- Customer Panel – October and December 2022 – follow up sessions with a particular emphasis on the Customer Promises and Customer Standards

Analysis of impact on protected groups

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires us to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations with protected groups. Consider how this policy/service will achieve these aims. In the table below, using the evidence outlined above and your own understanding, detail what considerations and potential impacts against each of the three aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty. Based on this information, assess the likely outcome, before you have implemented any mitigation.

Protected group	Summary of impact	Negative outcome	Neutral outcome	Positive outcome
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Older residents may lack technical literacy skills or be less able to make use of digital services. • Young people may feel unable to make their voice heard regarding the shaping of our services. 	☒	☐	☐
Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certain disabilities may impact the channels through which customers are able to contact us: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Difficulty using online services for those with visual impairments ○ Difficulty understanding aspects of our services for those with learning difficulties ○ Accessibility requirements for those with physical disabilities, particularly in our face-to-face hubs. • If not published in different formats, the Customer Strategy, Promises and Standards maybe less accessible to those with visual impairments or learning difficulties. 	☒	☐	☐

Gender reassignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have considered this Protected Characteristic and do foresee any disproportionate positive or negative impact on this group. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Marriage and civil partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have considered this Protected Characteristic and do foresee any disproportionate positive or negative impact on this group. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pregnancy and maternity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have considered this Protected Characteristic and do foresee any disproportionate positive or negative impact on this group. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Race and ethnicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals whose first language is not English may find it challenging to request/report a service with the council as they may not be confident writing in English or may struggle to accurately describe their concerns in a second language. If not published in different formats, the Customer Strategy, Promises and Standards maybe less accessible to those whose first language is not English. 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Religion or belief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have considered this Protected Characteristic and do foresee any disproportionate positive or negative impact on this group. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Sex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have considered this Protected Characteristic and do foresee any disproportionate positive or negative impact on this group. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have considered this Protected Characteristic and do foresee any disproportionate positive or negative impact on this group. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other, e.g., carers, veterans, homeless, low income, rurality/isolation, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People in rural areas experience relatively poor mobile signals or broadband speed 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Negative outcomes action plan

Where you have ascertained that there will potentially be negative outcomes, you are required to mitigate the impact of these. Please detail below the actions that you intend to take.

Action taken/to be taken	Date	Person responsible	How will it be monitored?	Action complete
Customers will continue to be provided with the same access routes into Council services. These will be consolidated channels which will offer one front door from April 2023. This includes online, telephony, face to face, email, and social media.	01/04/2023	CCP Customer Experience Workstream	Ongoing analysis of Contact Centre system data alongside measurements of customer satisfaction.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Customer Panel to ensure there is	31/08/2023	CCP	Ongoing basis through tracking of	<input type="checkbox"/>

representation from younger age groups, as well as engaging with stakeholder groups that provide services and/or function as a voice for younger people, to extend our reach.		Customer Experience Workstream	representation on Panel and will be incorporated into a review of the Panel (tranche 2 product)	
<p>Ensure that the Customer Strategy, Promises and Standards are published in formats that meet the needs of customers that may be visually impaired, experience learning difficulties or where English is not their first language.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quick reference formats of the documents to be accessible on the Somerset Council website, allowing for ease of access and the ability to access translation tools via the website. • Offer large print or braille versions of the documents. <p>Produce a video which can both visually and audibly share key messages.</p>	30/03/2023	Gareth Denslow	<p>Publication of documents in the formats detailed.</p> <p>Formal milestone to be added to Project plan/s.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Translation services which are in place across each of the authorities, to support non-English speaking customers, will continue to be in place from vesting day.	01/04/2023	CCP Customer Experience Workstream	Ongoing	<input type="checkbox"/>

New Somerset Council

Ensure that at all Customer Service Advisors are adequately trained and refreshed regarding equalities.	01/04/2023	CCP Customer Experience Workstream	Vesting Day audit and ongoing Line Management	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
If negative impacts remain, please provide an explanation below.				
Completed by:	Gareth Denslow			
Date	23/11/2022			
Signed off by:				
Date				
Equality Lead/Manager sign off date:				
To be reviewed by: (officer name)				

Together we are delivering your
New Somerset Council

Review date:



GUIDANCE NOTES FOR REPORT AUTHORS

*******USE THIS TEMPLATE FOR REPORTS TO EXECUTIVE, EXECUTIVE MEMBER KEY AND NON-KEY DECISIONS AND OFFICER KEY DECISIONS GREATER THAN £500K TOTAL COUNTY COUNCIL CAPITAL / REVENUE - SPEND / SAVE / GRANT FUNDING OR WHERE PROPOSALS SIGNIFICANTLY AFFECT COMMUNITIES LIVING IN TWO OR MORE COUNTY COUNCILLOR DIVISIONS*******

If your proposed decision relates to the commissioning or procurement of a contract, then you **MUST** consult Commercial & Procurement Team and Contract Solicitors in Legal Services at an early stage in drafting your report and ahead of sharing the report with senior managers or elected members.

Complete the report by replacing the light blue text in each section with your own and please use the default "normal" font which is Microsoft New Tai Lue size 12 in black (do **not** justify text).

Please ensure all sections of the template (particularly the sign-off boxes) have been completed in full – please do not amend the template. **Incomplete reports will not be accepted by Democratic Services, and this can result in your proposed decision being delayed.**

An Equalities Impact Assessment must be completed for all decisions – unless the Equalities Manager (Tom Rutland) has agreed otherwise (this should be done as early as possible before writing the decision report). EIAs need to be sent to the Equalities Manager at least 3 weeks before decision to ensure adequate consultation and to allow for advice to be provided to the author to finalise the impact assessment. **The Monitoring Officer will not sign-off reports unless the Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed and is included with the decision report.**

Decision-makers **must** have regard to officer advice before exercising delegated powers (which is why officer reports are completed), and report authors must follow the procedures for taking key decisions as set out in the guidance notes on the intranet.

For all key decisions there are legal requirements for advance publication of a proposed decision in the Forward Plan (published on the Council's web pages). Report authors need to ensure that they complete the key decision proforma and send this to Democratic Services. **Proposed key decisions should be published as far as possible in advance and not the minimum 28 days before the decision meeting is held.**

Please note that reports which contain **embedded documents will not be accepted**. Please reference them as appendices and include them separately.

Report authors need to circulate draft reports to the internal officer consultees on checklist below at least 3 weeks before the decision date. **The internal officer consultation must be completed before a draft report is circulated to councillors.** The sign off boxes must be completed prior to submission to Democratic Services (for

further advice contact Scott Wooldridge, Monitoring Officer, on 01823 357628). **The sign-off should not be completed unless you have had a response, no response from an internal consultee does not mean that you can assume their agreement – report authors are responsible for completing consultation and need to adequately plan for this ahead of decision meetings.**

Report authors need to ensure they plan for the preparation of reports, internal officer consultation, member consultation and for reports to be ready for any Executive pre-agenda meetings or publication deadlines. Late reports will not be considered and SLT have agreed these will be deferred to the next Executive meeting.

Any local county councillor for any electoral division significantly affected by this proposed decision should be consulted prior to any reports being published ahead of the decision meeting and they must be informed of any subsequent decision taken.

Decision reports and records are required in order to ensure decision makers have the relevant information to take a decision and to be able to demonstrate compliance with the council's governance requirements.

Key decisions are published on the council's website. However, Officers may need to consider whether a members information sheet or additional public communication should be done to ensure relevant stakeholders know the details of the decision taken.

What happens after the decision meeting?

All decisions taken by Executive, Executive Members and Officer key decisions are published on the council's website.

All key decisions can be subject to 'call-in' for consideration by the relevant Scrutiny Committee within 5 working days after the decision has been taken. If a call-in is agreed by the relevant Scrutiny Chair, then this will have the effect of putting the decision on hold until Scrutiny have considered any issues and made recommendations back to the decision maker (this could take several weeks). The only exception to this rule shall be 'urgent' decisions requiring immediate implementation. Urgency can only be applied where delay in implementing a decision would be to the detriment of the interests of the Council. The case for urgency must be agreed by the Chair of the relevant Scrutiny Committee prior to the decision being implemented and the reasons set out in the report. **Please liaise with Democratic Services at an early stage if your report requires the use of urgency so that the necessary procedures are followed.**

*****THE INSTRUCTIONS IN COLOUR SET OUT IN THIS TEMPLATE ARE FOR GUIDANCE ONLY – PLEASE ENSURE YOU REMOVE THEM FROM THE COMPLETED DOCUMENT*****



**Somerset
Council**

Customer Strategy Draft 2023 - 2026

Foreword



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Cllr Federica Smith-Roberts, Lead Member for Communities

Introduction

This Customer Strategy outlines the way the council will seek to enable customers to access the services we offer.

The creation of Somerset Council will deliver immediate benefits to our customers in how they access our services. From day one, we will deliver one single telephone enquiry number, website, and a range of customer access points across Somerset.

This document sets out the commitment, priorities, and roadmap to transforming your experience and developing a customer focussed culture within our new organisation.

Our approach is centred on placing you at the heart of shaping and delivering our services. We recognise that listening to customers and using customer data is the strongest foundation of great customer service.

We are committed to achieving the [Customer Service Excellence Standard](#). This is a quality mark that aims to make a difference to customers by encouraging organisations to focus on their needs and provides an opportunity for continuous improvement against a nationally recognised standard.

Our Customer Strategy is therefore based on the five key themes of the excellence standard and will be used by our services to shape their approach to customer service.

Whilst our ambition is to achieve customer service excellence, it is also about being responsible and delivering value for money services too. Services which can be delivered digitally will be, allowing resources to be focused on those services which cannot be delivered digitally and for our most vulnerable customers.

Success will mean that you will always know how to contact us and access our services you will experience the best possible service and have clear expectations. We will use a range of methods to measure our success, learn from feedback and continually improve.

Why do we need a Customer Strategy?

Providing a single enquiry number, website and a range of customer access points is the start of our journey in developing your customer experience as a new Council. We will then be working behind the scenes to combine the staff, systems, and processes of our previous councils. In doing so, we recognise that we need to take this unique opportunity to improve your experience and align and coordinate the necessary changes across the Council.

Such changes are needed as we recognise that demand for our public services is increasing along with the expectations of greater access, ease of use and quality of customer service. To meet these challenges, we must develop more cost-effective ways for us to engage with you. As such, we will also manage demand for our services by enabling you to self-serve wherever possible so that we can provide value added services to those that need it. This means increasing the number of ways in which you can contact us and striving to provide the best possible customer experience.

We recognise the need to be aspirational in our approach to customer experience and develop responsive, quality services that continually improve and are informed by your feedback.

Our County, Our Customers

Our customers are anyone who has an interaction with us. This includes residents, children, young people, adults, older people (65+), service users, clients, communities, businesses, and visitors.

We realise not all customers have the same needs and from speaking with some of you already, we are learning how best to serve you as a new Authority.

There is a lot of support out there but a lot of it doesn't take into account those who are digitally excluded

I want to go through customer service, calling them up and getting it sorted there and then. Not having to go through loopholes.

We need to look at the service through the eyes of our partners and service users

Information needs to be clear and easy to understand.

You don't want to tell your story over and over - access to information between partners would be great and ability for people to own their story and tell it once

People get overwhelmed when searching for help and support"

I need to speak to the right person to help sort the problem out

Our Vision

We will put you, our customers, at the heart of everything we do. We will provide accessible services that are designed around your needs and we will work towards customer service excellence.

Our Principles

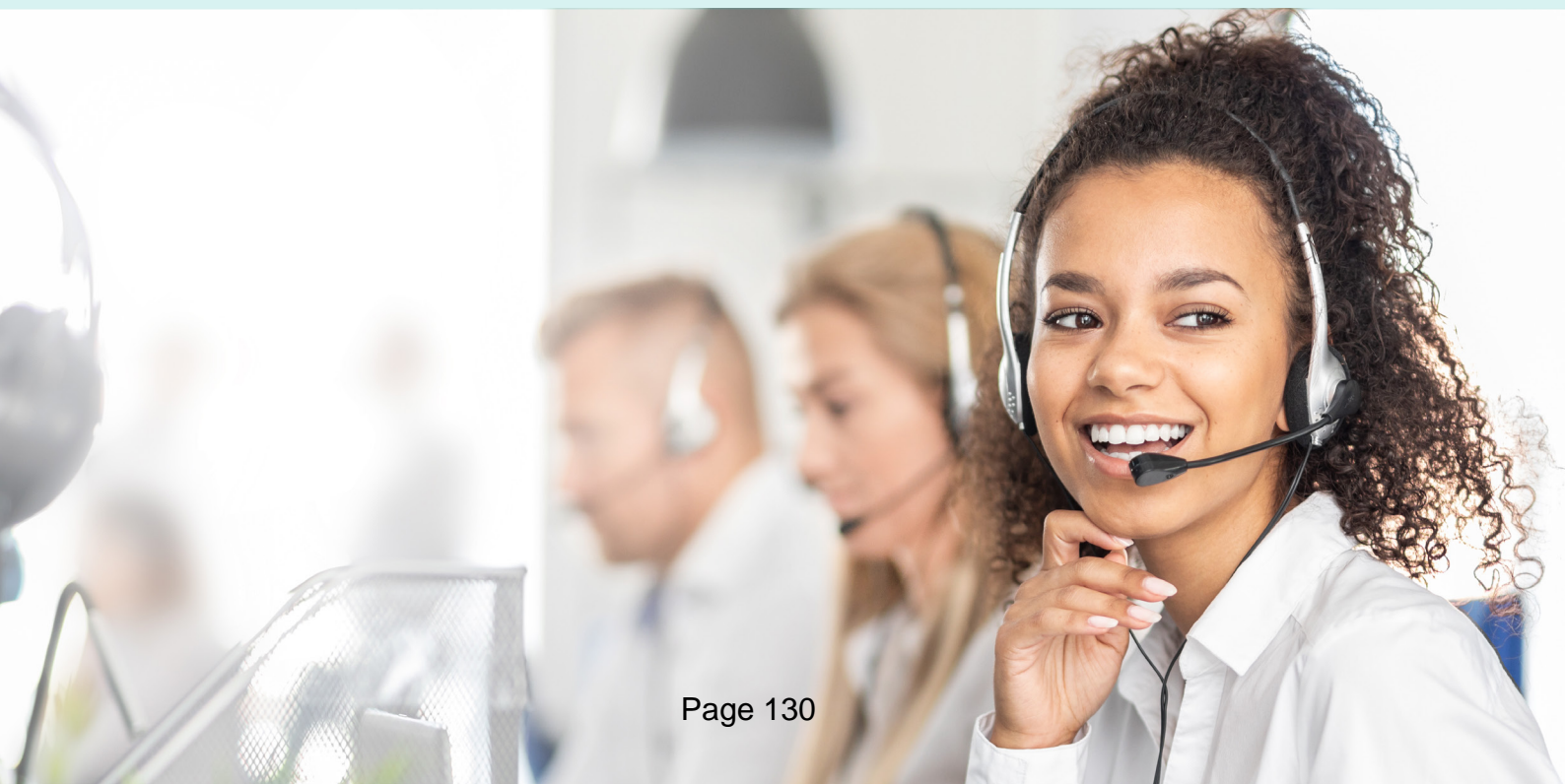
To achieve our vision for customer service we have developed five principles and have set out our ambitions and plans against each of these.

1. Customer insights

We understand what you need from us by listening and learning from your feedback.

To achieve this, we will

- Improve by listening to all feedback and using that information to adapt and change.
- Ensure learning is fed into service improvements and we will publish our results.
- Develop our Customer Panel which will be representative of Somerset and work with them, alongside other customers, and stakeholders to shape our services.
- Use a range of methods to engage with you.
- Regularly check your satisfaction with our services.
- Analyse and understand the data that we collect when you contact us.



2. Customer focussed culture

We put you, our customers, at the heart of everything we do.

To achieve this, we will

- Place you at the very centre of all that we do. Whatever we do, however, must be cost effective, to ensure good quality and good value.
- Develop a digital first culture throughout the Council. We will design online services with you and support you to access these.
- Provide training to all our staff regarding our approach to customer service and incorporate this into staff induction.
- Empower our staff by providing them with the right skills, tools, and technologies to best serve you.
- Ensure our staff demonstrate customer focused behaviours in the work that they do.
- Ensure our customer principles are used across the Council to shape improvements to our services.
- Share our performance and learning with you. We will tell you what action we have taken, or intend to take, to improve.
- Work to achieve external accreditation of excellence in Customer Service. This will help us identify the strengths and gaps in our customer service and understand what we need to do to improve.



3. Information and Access

We deliver our services in ways that meet your needs and ensure our services are accessible.

To achieve this, we will

- Develop quality and easy to understand information, in ways which meet your needs.
- Provide you with a variety of ways to access us.
- Ensure there are opportunities for you to speak with us face to face and review how and where we deliver our face to face services.
- Develop increased digital services to enable you to self-serve.
- Encourage and support you to access our digital services.
- We will use your feedback and the data we collect to improve access to our services and the information we provide.
- Have arrangements in place with all our services, partners, and providers to offer and supply co-ordinated services that benefit you.



4. Delivery

We work with you to deliver customer focussed services and learn from best practice.

To achieve this, we will

- Work with you to set challenging delivery standards and regularly review our corporate Customer Promises and Standards.
- Have an easy-to-use complaints procedure and we will have an effective process for the capturing, tracking, resolving, and learning from all your feedback.
- Support our staff to provide the best possible experience to you, invest in their training and understanding of good customer service.
- Learn from best practice from both within and outside of our Council to develop the delivery of our services.
- Compare our performance against national standards for other similar organisations to ensure we are constantly striving for better for you across all our service delivery.



5. Timeliness and quality of service

We provide services that meets your needs, to time and to the standards that we agree with you. When we get it wrong, we put it right quickly and learn from our mistakes.

To achieve this, we will

- Upskill our Customer Services team to provide increased first point of contact resolution.
- Provide reliable, flexible, and responsive services which are continuously improved and delivered cost effectively.
- Provide you with information and updates digitally to reduce the need for you to have to speak to someone to resolve your enquiry.

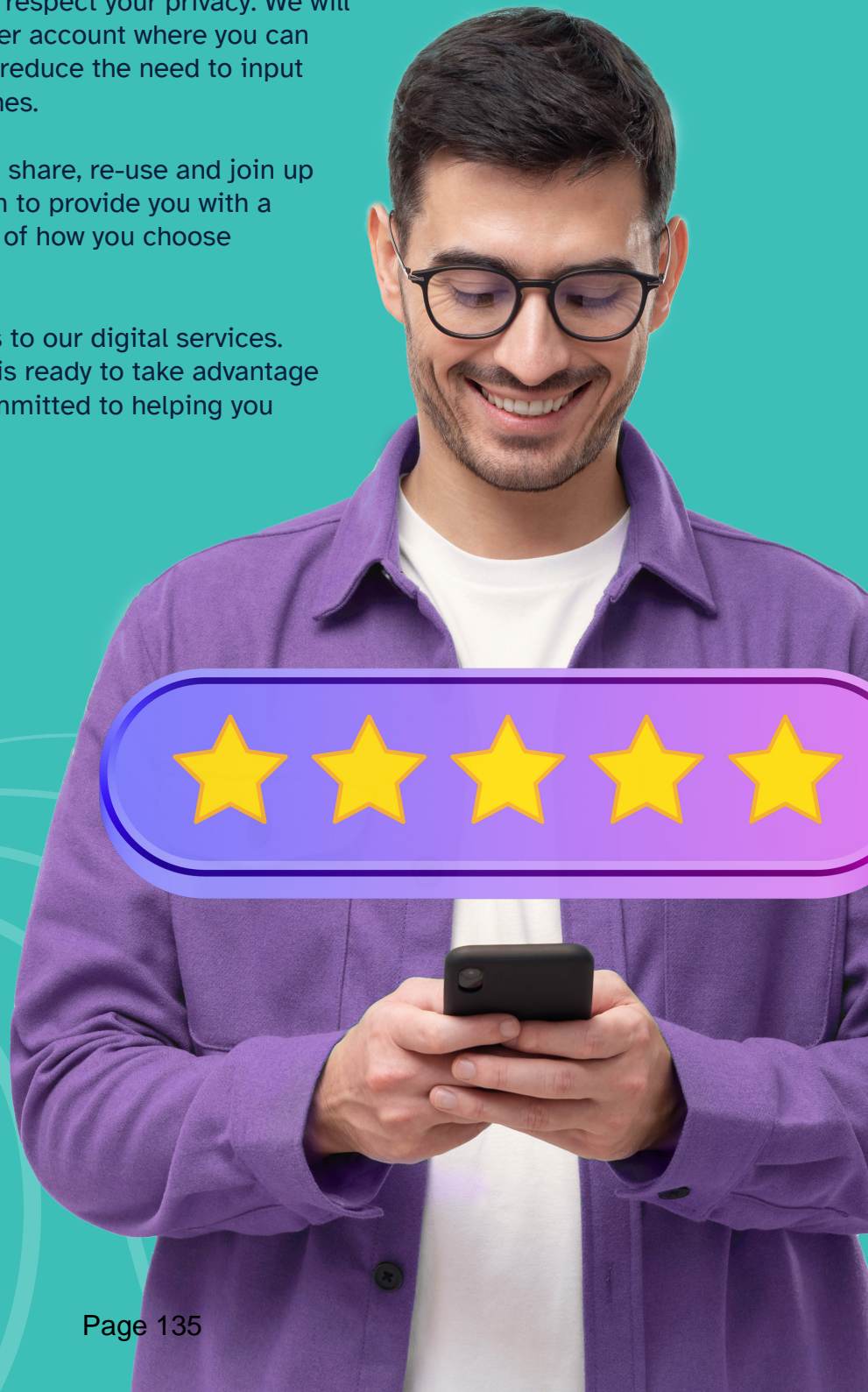


Digital Customer

We will deliver easy to use digital services, with the aim that you will choose to use these instead of the traditional methods of contact, such as telephone or face-to-face. We refer to this as making our services 'Digital First'.

Our Digital Strategy ([insert link](#)) sets out our ambitions and approach to providing you with a joined up digital experience when you access our online services. To improve your digital customer experience, we will:

- Work with you to design our digital services. We will understand your journey in using our services and understand your needs and preferences.
- Keep your personal data safe and respect your privacy. We will provide you with a secure customer account where you can access and control your data and reduce the need to input the same information multiple times.
- Connect our technologies. We will share, re-use and join up data and our systems with the aim to provide you with a more efficient service, regardless of how you choose to contact us.
- Support and enable you to access to our digital services. We recognise that not everybody is ready to take advantage of our online services and are committed to helping you access these.



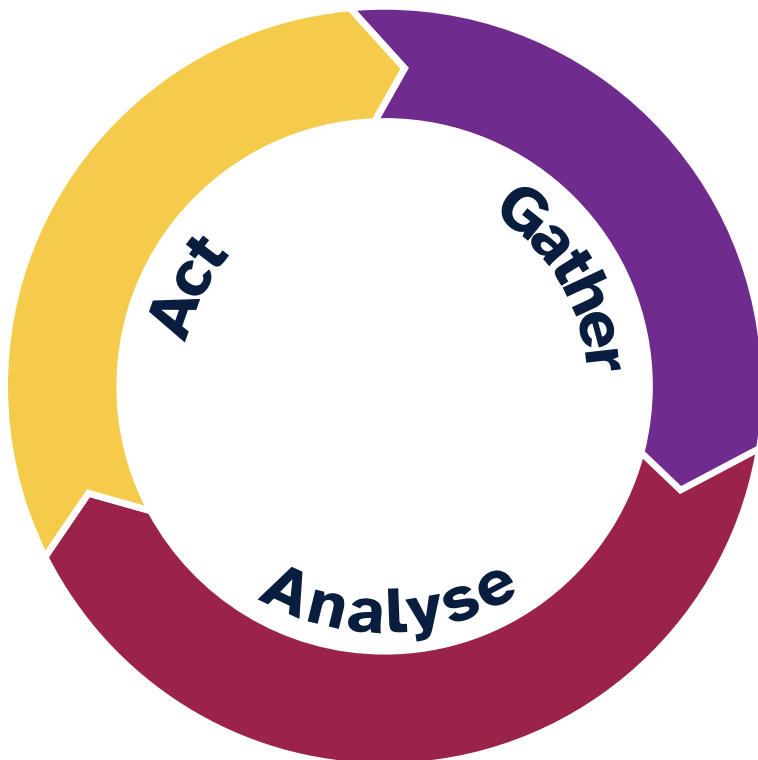
Our roadmap for delivery

	Day 1	Year 1	Years 2 – 3
	You will benefit from combined contact channels where you can access all Council services.	We will learn from your feedback, put things right when they go wrong and use our learning to plan and develop our future services.	You will be clear as to how your feedback is influencing our services and you will experience improved customer service.
Customer insights	<p>Our new Customer Panel will be in place and ready to provide valuable insights to help shape and design our services.</p> <p>Customer engagement has influenced our Customer Strategy, Promises and Standards.</p>	<p>Data from our Contact Centre system will continue to be analysed so we can learn from you and adapt our contact channels.</p> <p>We will undertake user research to help shape our website and our other channels.</p> <p>We will work with you to improve our approaches to obtaining customer feedback.</p>	<p>We will undertake a review of our Customer Panel to ensure it continues to capture your insights and shaping our services.</p> <p>We will develop customer journey maps for our services, to analyse and inform the design of our services</p>
Customer focussed culture	<p>Our Customer Strategy will be published and will be promoted across the organisation.</p> <p>Our staff will be aware of the new Customer Promise and Standards.</p> <p>A new complaints policy and procedure will be implemented across our organisation.</p>	<p>Training will be designed and delivered for all staff regarding our vision for customer service and their role in delivering this to you.</p> <p>We will undertake a baseline audit of our Customer Service team against the Customer Service Excellence framework to understand areas of development.</p>	<p>Our Customer Services team will achieve the Customer Service Excellence accreditation.</p> <p>We will review our Customer Strategy with our staff and stakeholders.</p>

		<p>Guidance will be developed for our services to ensure changes that are being made are shaped around our customer service themes and principles.</p>	
<p>Information and access</p>	<p>There will be one single telephone enquiry number to contact the Council.</p> <p>We will have a range of customer access points available across Somerset.</p> <p>There will be a new Somerset Council website, combining all existing services with no reduction in accessibility.</p>	<p>We will work with our partners to develop and integrate their services into appropriate face-to-face locations.</p> <p>We will continually review the effectiveness of our telephony service to ensure we manage demand and plan our resources.</p> <p>We will consolidate and simplify our e-payment systems.</p> <p>We will undertake market testing and procurement activity for a new Customer Engagement Platform.</p>	<p>A transformation programme will be developed to deliver one Customer Engagement Platform.</p> <p>We review the demand for services in our face-to-face locations and organise our resources to meet your needs.</p>
<p>Delivery</p>	<p>We will introduce new technology so customers can be routed to the most appropriate person as quickly as possible.</p> <p>Customer Service Advisors will be trained and supported to deliver services as one unified Contact Centre for our new Council.</p>	<p>Customer service training will be designed and incorporated into corporate onboarding training.</p> <p>Our approach to customer feedback will be reviewed.</p> <p>Our performance and learning from feedback will be published, including the steps we will take to improve.</p>	<p>We will work with service across the Council to design and improve the online and mediated services that you access.</p> <p>As our services transform, we will work with them to design and deliver training for our Customer Service Advisors, to ensure they are equipped to deal with enquiries as efficiently as possible.</p>

<p>Timeliness and Quality of Service</p>	<p>Our Customer Promise and Customer Standards will be published so you are aware of the service you should expect from us.</p> <p>There will be a standard way of providing feedback through a single complaints, compliments, and comments process.</p>	<p>We will publish our performance against our standards and our learning.</p> <p>We will develop a single, quality assurance process within our Contact Centre.</p> <p>We will review our Customer Promise and Customer Standards with you.</p>	<p>We work with our services to develop new service level agreements as our services transform.</p> <p>The system we use to monitor and track comments, compliments and complaints will be reviewed to ensure it is fit for purpose.</p>
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How we will measure our success



Gather

We will use a variety of methods to obtain your feedback and publishing the results.

Analyse

We will learn from what you are telling us and work with you to explore solutions.

Act

We will develop and test solutions with you before implementing them.

Feedback

We will use your feedback to improve our services and explore new ways of ensuring you can tell us about your experience.

- Customer satisfaction results
- Comments, compliments and complaints
- Customer Panel
- Community groups and organisations
- Focus groups
- Surveys

Using data

We will use data to better plan our services according to need and demand, and to move towards designing services that predict customers' needs based on what the data tell us.

- Volumes and types of comments, compliments, and complaints
- Trends and patterns
- Levels of achievement against our key performance indicators and SLA's
- Volumes and enquiry types
- Web analytics

A listening Council - how we will engage with you

Co-production

We recognise that listening to customers is the strongest foundation of great customer service.

Working with you helps us to provide the right service at the right time and in the right way and supports the value-for-money objectives we know matter to everyone.

Co-design

We will ensure that we work with our customers, Local Community Networks, our partners, businesses, community groups and organisations to co-produce our services and ensure that our services are accessible and inclusive for all our customers.

Engagement

To assist us with developing our services, one of the ways we intend to learn more from you is through our Customer Panel.

Consultation

This is a group of volunteers including members of the public, businesses, local interest groups and service providers who provide feedback about Somerset Council and its services.

Informing

Our aim is to ensure that membership is representative of the people of Somerset.

Customer Panel members are asked to take part in research that will help us:

- Understand the needs and preferences of our customers.
- Ensure our services are easy to access and use.
- Identify how we as a Council can improve.

Educating

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Somerset Council is committed to good customer care and aspire to deliver the best service we can.

The Customer Promise is a commitment between the council and its customers, whichever service they use and however they need to contact us. It is supported by a series of standards, which will be regularly monitored.

We have carefully considered how we meet the needs of those who need us most. We are asking for your support to access our services online wherever possible to give us the capacity to meet these needs.

The Customer Promise has been developed as part of our drive to put the customer first whilst delivering affordable, efficient services that are accessible to all.

The standards set by the Customer Promise ensure that everyone is dealt with courteously, fairly, and as soon as possible.

Our commitment to you

We will treat you in the right way and:

- Be open and honest with you.
- Understand and deliver services specific to your needs.
- Support you to engage and transact with us online wherever appropriate to do so.
- Keep your personal data secure.

We will get things done and:

- Answer your request the first time you contact us. When we can't immediately resolve it, we will tell you clearly what will happen next, so you know what to expect.
- Ensure our services work together to get you the best possible outcome.
- Update you on progress so you know what's happening next and by when.
- Learn from your feedback and, where possible, ensure that we take action to resolve any issues.

Making it easy:

- Be honest and easy to understand in all our communications with you.
- Be accessible, inclusive, and responsive to your needs.
- Explain clearly how you can contact us.

Involving you:

- Actively seek your views on our services.
- Listen to you and use your feedback to help us improve.

Our request of you:

- Treat us and other customers politely, fairly and with respect.
- Let us know if you have specific needs.
- Tell us when something changes.
- Tell us when things go wrong so that we can put them right.

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Our Customer Service Standards (Draft)

The Customer Service Standards have been developed to support the commitments we have made to you in our Customer Promise.

Aim for a positive outcome for any contact experience, across all our contact channels. We will measure and publish our results every three months.

Complaints

We will:

- Acknowledge your complaint within 3 working days. You will be informed of who is investigating and responding to your complaint.
- Respond to complaints within 10 working days, where possible.
- Where issues are more complex, we will aim to respond within 20 working days.
- For more information, please see our Feedback Policy (link to be inserted).

Website

We will:

- Aim to have the council website available for 24 hours a day all year round
- Ensure our online services are accessible, are simple to use and our information is kept up to date.
- Be clear about timescales and next steps when you submit an enquiry.

Telephones

We will:

- Aim to keep average wait times under 5 minutes.
- Do our best to resolve your enquiry the first time you contact us. If we are unable to do this, we will transfer you to the right person or we will take your details and ask someone to contact you.

Face to face

We will:

- Make sure our customer service buildings are welcoming, safe, fully accessible and designed to make it easy to get the help you need
- Aim to greet you within 5 minutes of arrival and see you on average within 20 minutes. At busier times, we will aim to let you know how long you may have to wait.
- Do our best to resolve your enquiry the first time you visit us.

Letter and E-mail

We will:

- Acknowledge e-mails within one working day.
- Aim to respond fully to written contact within 10 working days.

Where a different or statutory timescale exists for an enquiry (for example, a Freedom of Information request), then the associated timescale applies.

- Prioritise correspondence relating to welfare and vulnerability, to support early intervention.
- Inform you of the steps we are taking to provide a more detailed response and the timescales involved, when it is not possible to respond within 10 working days.

Social Media

We will:

- Be clear about the times when our social media channels are monitored and the level of response you can expect.
- Read all of the messages and comments we receive, although we may not be able to reply to every comment. Please remember that social media channels are not monitored 24/7 so should not be relied upon to raise a concern, particularly in an emergency.
- Respond to all direct messages received on Facebook within three working days. On other platforms we will do our best to read all direct messages but they are not continuously monitored so response times will vary.
- Signpost you to the best place to resolve your query as quickly as possible – for example, an online form or website, or via a direct message.
- Never ask you to share your personal details publicly.

Appendix D

LGR Tranche 1: Service Standards

1. The Tranche 1 product Service Standards is to:

“Have in place agreed and aligned standards of service to ensure continued stable service delivery on Vesting Day”

2. The product has been broken down into 3 stages:
 - (i) Planning for stable BAU service delivery on Vesting Day
 - (ii) Interim service standards are delivered on Vesting Day in line with MTFP resource levels.
 - (iii) Have in place an agreed programme of post vesting day further alignment of standards of service
3. The focus to date has been on identifying baseline service standards (i) above.
4. The Service Improvement and Alignment (SAI) Workstream bought in additional support to co-ordinate and assist in identifying service standards for the new Somerset Council. An interim task and finish team was set up to support the sub-workstreams populate a template for service standards agreed by the SAI Board. Whilst the focus was initially on the SAI sub-workstreams that contained the majority of direct/operational service delivery to the public, the template has also been rolled out to other workstreams in order to develop, where possible, a standard framework for Somerset Council.
5. The Service Standards included in this appendix are the Baseline Service Standards. The Lead member for LGR and the LGR Programme Board have been briefed on the baseline standards, and they have been shared with the Executive. The service standard templates provide a good overview of the activities covered, how success is measured, and critically highlight the differences in how that service is provided in District and/or County Council areas. Some services are only provided by one authority e.g. highways maintenance; and other services are provided in similar or quite different ways by one or more authority e.g. ports, harbours and leisure.
6. The LGR workstream leads have satisfied themselves that services standards are clear; relate to how services are planned, organised and/or aligned in such a way as to be operationally stable and meet all legal and regulatory requirements. For the baseline standards this has assumed current baseline levels of resource and capacity. The baseline standards have also been a consideration for developing MTFP savings options.
7. It is important that the service standards are visible and understood to assist with decisions on the 2023/24 budget and MTFP. Some baseline service standards may need to be altered as a result of MTFP decisions, and the final set will be published as Interim Service Standards as (ii) above.

8. The important thing to recognise is that not all service standards will be aligned by vesting day. There is a lot of work to be done on service alignment, and the resources required are currently being evaluated and identified as (iii) above. This will assist the new Tier 2 Directors with the Executive to consider and prioritise the internal resource required for any programme covering new ways of working, transformation, convergence and alignment for each service area or groups of services from vesting day and beyond.
9. The service standards can therefore be expected to change post vesting day as and when further alignment of service is able to take place. From a customer perspective the interim service standards will show, for each service, whether an aligned or differentiated approach is possible. For the majority of operational front-line services there will continue to be a degree of differentiation at vesting day.
10. Links with the Customer Strategy and promise are key from a customer perspective. The service standards below are in addition to the overarching Customer Standards that will apply to all services.
11. It will be important to publish not only the Interim Service Standards for vesting day, but post vesting day services will be responsible for letting the public, key contacts, suppliers, and partner organisations know if and when service levels are likely to change. There will be both external customers and internal – it will also be important to advise customer services staff, and ensure key materials are available for staff and member training hubs or briefings.
12. The following standards are Baseline only. Click on the service link and you will be taken to the full template where details of the service can be found.

Baseline External Service Standards

These are **in addition** to the overarching service standards within the Customer Promise that will apply to all services.

Under the Service column is a link to the detailed service standard template.

Service	Standard	Sub -WS / Workstream
Housing Allocations	<p>Homes for Sedgemoor (HiS)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact the applicant within 3 days of a successful bid to view property before signing up <p>Somerset West and Taunton (SWT) homes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact tenant within a week of end of cycle 	SAI – Housing 1
Housing – Anti-social Behaviour	<p>Homes for Sedgemoor (HiS)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respond to serious complaints or harassment by the next working day and less serious complaints in 10 days <p>Somerset West and Taunton (SWT) homes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact within 24hrs for racial harassment and domestic violence Agree response with complainant within 10 days 	SAI – Housing 1
Housing – Communal areas	<p>As part of the housing management service, we will keep the neighbourhood and communal areas associated with the homes managed clean and safe; working in partnership with tenants and other providers and public</p>	SAI – Housing 1

	<p>bodies where it is effective to do so.</p> <p>This service falls under the Regulator of Social Housing Neighbourhood and Community Consumer Standard.</p>	
<p>Housing - Customer Service</p>	<p>Homes for Sedgemoor (HiS)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Answer 80% of calls in 2 mins • Aim to resolve 80% of queries at first point of contact • Duty officer available • Call back attempts within 48 hrs • Acknowledge letter/email within 2 working days • Written response in 10 working days • Reception response within 10 mins (5 if pre-booked) • Acknowledge all complaints within 2 working days • Respond to complaints within policy timescales <p>Somerset West and Taunton (SWT) homes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call waiting time <60 secs • Abandonment <10% • Wait in reception <10 mins • Duty Officer available • Response from raising a case within 5 days • Respond to calls and emails within 3 days • Acknowledge complaints within 2 days • Respond to complaints within policy timescales (10 working days for Stage 1 and 20 working days for stage 2) 	<p>SAI – Housing 1</p>

Housing – Customer Engagement and Involvement	<p>Customer Involvement and engagement ensures customers are empowered to have a strong voice and can influence decision making by their landlord at all levels; about how housing-related services are delivered through scrutiny and challenge.</p> <p>We work to the national Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard for registered providers to take account of the diverse needs of tenants, treat all tenants with fairness and respect, and to demonstrate they understand the different needs of their tenants.</p>	<p>SAI – Housing 1</p>
Housing – Home Standard	<p>We comply with the national Home Standard which sets out our work to ensure the quality of the homes we manage and our repairs and maintenance service to make them safe and secure.</p>	<p>SAI – Housing 1</p>
Housing – Neighbourhoods and community	<p>This Neighbourhoods & Community standard relates to land and properties managed by Homes In Somerset and by Somerset West and Taunton , and ensures that communal areas are clean, safe and well maintained. This includes play and recreational areas, car parks, communal areas inside blocks of flats, shared gardens and grassed areas.</p>	<p>SAI – Housing 1</p>
Housing – Planned Works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure each home complies with the Decent Homes Standard • Survey homes and inspect conditions every 5 years • Contact tenants in advance of planned major works to the home or communal area • Consult with tenant about options or choices available <p>Homes for Sedgemoor (HiS)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish a programme of planned works on website and programme is available at any time upon request • Publish names of our main contractors on our website and ensure you are familiar with who we are working with • Ensure the rolling programme of planned works will be available on our website and is available at any time upon request 	<p>SAI – Housing 1</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce you to your Customer Liaison Officer who will be your main point of contact throughout the works 	
Housing - Rents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set rent in line with rent standard • Offer variety of ways to pay • Provide service charge explanation • Work with you to pay off any arrears • Refer for budgeting and benefits advice • Send out an annual rent statement <p>Homes for Sedgemoor (HiS)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signpost you to support agencies when in financial difficulty <p>Somerset West and Taunton (SWT) homes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal team to offer specialist debt and benefit advice • Funding of external agencies to provide enhanced support 	SAI – Housing 1
Housing - repairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete repairs on the first visit. If we attend a repair and cannot complete the job at that visit, we will arrange a follow up appointment before we leave your home. • Flexible appointments • Aim to complete on first visit • Provide various reporting channels • Emergency repairs are completed within 24hrs 	SAI – Housing 1

	<p>Homes for Sedgemoor (HiS)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other repairs are assessed next working day 	
Housing – Safe Homes	<p>The service will ensure compliance with all Statutory and Regulatory responsibilities as a Landlord and Employer including all obligations and requirements via the Building Safety Act 2022 in respect to Higher Risk Residential Buildings.</p> <p>The Service will also meet the requirements of the Consumer Standards of the Regulatory Standards contained within Homes England Regulatory Framework for Social Housing 2015.</p>	SAI – Housing 1
Housing- Tenancy Support	<p>Tenancy support services promotes independence and supports improving quality of life for older people and other vulnerable adults through a paid for service..</p>	SAI – Housing 1
Housing Options	<p>The Housing Options service provides information, advice and assistance to help you to resolve your housing situation. We also administer the Homefinder Somerset allocation scheme so that homes are allocated in a fair and transparent way. We provide a holistic outreach service to people that are sleeping rough and we manage three permanent Gypsy and Traveller sites.</p> <p>Where you have a housing issue, we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide you with tailored advice and information on your housing situation so that you can resolve your issue <p>Where you have made a homelessness application, we will:</p>	SAI - Housing 2

- Empower you to resolve your own housing situation so that you do not become homeless
- Complete an assessment within 5 working days of the homelessness application
- Create a Personal Housing Plan with customers within 5 working days of the assessment
- Be honest with you about barriers that you might have to retain or find accommodation
- Always carry identity badges - please always ask to see identification before letting anyone into your home
- Offer to phone you back if you are phoning the service from your mobile and you do not have credit / inclusive minutes
- Provide you with information on our complaints policy if you are unhappy with the service received
- Give you the contact details for the officer dealing with your case
- Keep arranged pre-appointment times with you wherever possible.
- Provide a private area for confidential enquiries for pre-arranged face-to-face appointments
- Use B&B accommodation to discharge a duty to secure accommodation for applicants with family commitments only as a last resort and then only for a maximum of 6 weeks

Where you have made a Homefinder Somerset application, we will:

- Process your Homefinder Somerset application within 21 days of receiving the required information
- Be realistic and transparent with you around the supply and demand of social housing
- Offer advice around how to find a home in the private rented sector
- Where you are not eligible to register for social housing, you will be offered advice and/or signposted to agencies who can provide additional support

Where you are accessing our rough sleeping outreach team, we will:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respond to all reports of rough sleeping and van dwelling within 1 working day and regularly search hotspot locations – most effective early morning or late night to verify someone bedding down or about to bed down. • Carry out bi-monthly and annual rough sleeper counts • Complete thorough assessments of the needs and aspirations of people sleeping rough. • Reconnect people back to areas where they have support / family where they have no local connection to Somerset <p>Where you have applied to live on a gypsy & traveller site, we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledge all new applications within 10 working days of receipt of the application. • Fully assess an application and confirm the points awarded within 20 working days of receipt of the application. • Make an initial offer of accommodation to the successful applicant no later than 5 working days after the property is ready to relet. • Carry out emergency repairs within 24 hours of reporting, urgent repairs within 5 working days and other repairs within 21 working days. <p>In all the above service areas, we will make appropriate and timely referrals to support services as required.</p>	
<p>Somerset Independence Plus (SIP)</p>	<p>Somerset Independence Plus is a service commissioned by Somerset County Council and the four Districts in Somerset to provide an integrated approach to disabled adaptations, home improvements, energy/fuel poverty advice retrofitting of insulation and heating measures, and prevention services.</p>	<p>SAI – Housing 3</p>

	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respond to a request for service within 10 working days • Respond to an urgent request for service within 1 working day • Submit a grant application for approval within six months of the enquiry * • Complete a Disabled Facilities Grant within twelve months of approval * • Customers who use our self-service support options can achieve an appropriate outcome • Achieve the individual and community outcomes in the attached document <p>Note: Those standards indicated by an * are statutory targets. The remainder are local service standards</p>	
Library Service	<p>The library service is a statutory duty for the Council under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964, which sets out that Councils must “provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons in the area that want to make use of it,</p> <p>There are no prescribed service standards nationally for public libraries. However, the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) has issued guidance to help local authorities understand their statutory obligation.</p>	SAI – Culture and Universal Service
Cemetery management	<p>The service ensures that all graves in managed cemeteries are in line with the policies of the cemetery and that all interments are managed professionally, and as expediently as possible with the relevant parties.</p>	SAI – Culture and Universal Services
Private Sector Housing and Enforcement	<p>The service works with domestic property owners and tenants to ensure homes are safe, healthy and appropriate for their use. They proactively licence and inspect Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs), enforce minimum standards in homes across Somerset and encourage owners of empty homes to bring them back into use.</p>	SAI – Housing 3
Bereavement Service -	<p>Taunton and Yeovil Crematoria are committed to providing a quality provision of accessible bereavement</p>	SAI – Culture and

Crematoria	<p>services in an efficient and effective approach that is both sympathetic and caring to all our service users.</p>	<p>Universal Service</p>
Arts and Entertainment	<p>Arts and Entertainment provides opportunities for residents of Somerset and visitors to our county to engage with and access high quality creative arts and entertainment that inspires, educates, brings joy and celebrates the unique culture of Somerset</p>	<p>SAI – Culture and Universal Service</p>
Registration Services	<p>Statutory Timescales</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •98% of birth and stillbirths registered within 42 calendar days of event •90% of deaths registered within 5 calendar days of death •95% of certificate applications dealt with within 7 days of request •100% of citizenship certificates to be completed correctly and notified to Home Office within 14 days of ceremony <p>Appointment Availability</p> <p>90% of customers offered an appointment to register a:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •birth within 5 working days of request. •death/stillbirth within 2 working days of request. •notice of marriage or civil partnership within 10 working days of request. <p>A minimum of 90% of customers with an appointment seen within 10 minutes of appointment time.</p>	<p>SAI – Culture and Universal Service</p>

Benefits	<p>Undertake activities governed by the Department for Work and Pensions to ensure the correct benefit is being paid at the correct time</p> <p>To pay benefits and support accurately and quickly. In doing so we aim to deliver these functions in an open and transparent manner that ensures access for our customers to information and to self-serve, fairness of decision making, clarity of explanation, support, understanding and empathy.</p>	<p>Finance</p>
Revenues	<p>Accurately process changes to accounts, ensuring that we determine liability for Council Tax or Business Rates in accordance with the regulations and issue bills.</p> <p>To obtain prompt payment in respect of every chargeable property. In doing so we aim to deliver these functions in an open and transparent manner that ensures access for our customers to information and to self-serve, fairness of decision making, clarity of explanation, support, understanding and empathy.</p>	<p>Finance</p>
Commercial and Procurement	<p>Operate a compliant and effective service which complies with all Governance requirements, the Authority's Contract Procedure Rules and Standing Orders, the relevant UK legislation relating to public procurement best practice, incorporating the National Procurement Strategy Framework and Transparency Code.</p>	<p>Finance</p>
Business Intelligence	<p>Business Intelligence is the delivery of analysis and insight which enable organisations to make evidence-led decisions.</p> <p>Acknowledge 98% of service requests and outline the timetable for completion (except for complex requests), within 5 working days of receipt. For urgent requests, providing the same within two days as far as possible.</p>	<p>Business Intelligence</p>
Business Change & PMO	<p>Promote effective and efficient change by inspiring and enabling the identification and realisation of benefits for "customers" and communities, including where internal or system-wide improvement facilitates additional benefit for service users.</p>	<p>Business Change & PMO</p>
Business Support	<p>Ensure that the services that we provide adapt and change to meet the requirements of the services that we support. We will do this through regular meetings with service managers and responding to the feedback from</p>	<p>Business Support</p>

	the annual satisfaction surveys.	
Flood and Water Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>The Planning Process</u> <p>As a statutory consultee, in line with the Code of Practice relating to consultations on planning applications, the LLFA is expected to respond to the LPA within 21 days of receiving a consultation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Land Drainage Consent Applications</u> <p>The turnaround time for consents is 2 months, as per the Land Drainage Act 1991.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Flood Investigations</u> <p>Play a lead role in emergency planning and recovery after a flood event. Local authorities are 'category one responders' under the Civil Contingencies Act and must have plans to respond to emergencies, and control or reduce the impact of an emergency.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Maintaining Register of Assets</u> <p>A comprehensive, accurate and up to date register of all relevant assets</p> <p>And to implement a Flood Risk Strategy for the County.</p>	Environment & Climate Change Sub Group 1 (Climate Change and Water)
Somerset Rivers Authority	<p>Work with our partner organisations to maintain funding for the Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA).</p> <p>Invite proposals to secure SRA funding to deliver projects that meet SRA objectives.</p> <p>Help the general public access information related to flooding and water management in Somerset and the work of the SRA.</p> <p>Respond to customer enquiries quickly and accurately.</p>	Environment & Climate Change Sub Group 1 (Climate Change and Water)
Environmental Protection Service	<p>Respond to enquiries and requests relating to statutory nuisance, anti-social behaviour, searches, and other general environmental protection matters.</p> <p>Issue permits and audit compliance for specified processes under the Pollution Prevention and Control regime.</p>	Environment & Climate Change - Sub-Group 3 (Environmental Health)

	Monitor local air quality and identify measures that may further assist air quality.	
Food Hygiene	Ensure all interventions at food businesses are in accordance with the Food Standards Agency Food Law Code of Practice (England) with priority given to higher risk premises	Environment & Climate Change - Sub-Group 3 (Environmental Health)
Environmental Health – Enforcement of Health and Safety at Work	Ensure we work with HSE as effective, modern, and professional regulators carrying out inspections of workplaces, investigating accidents and responding to complaints and enquires relating to health and safety matters in Local Authority enforced workplaces.	Environment & Climate Change - Sub-Group 3 (Environmental Health)
Infectious Diseases	Respond to reports of all reported infection where the risk to the public health is immediate and significant in accordance with the UK Health Security Agency Standard operating procedure for single cases of infectious disease RAG rating.	Environment & Climate Change - Sub-Group 3 (Environmental Health)
Private Water Supplies	Monitor private water supplies in accordance with statutory frequencies and take action to ensure supplies are clean and wholesome.	Environment & Climate Change - Sub-Group 3 (Environmental Health)
Licensing	Provide a prompt and efficient licensing service for a range of licensable venues and activities working with partners, balancing the need to protect the health and safety of residents and visitors as well as supporting local businesses.	Environment & Climate Change - Sub-Group 3 (Environmental Health)
Heart of the Southwest Trading Standards	Support economic growth by ensuring a fair, responsible and competitive trading environment and ensure consumers, especially the more vulnerable, protected, communities are safer, better informed and more fully engaged in the work of the Service.	Growth 1 - Prosperity & Economic Dev
Prosperity and Economic Development	Provide sustainable economic growth through place-based regeneration and business support activities.	Growth 1 - Prosperity & Economic Dev
Bridges Structures	To plan and undertake inspection regimes that ensure the condition of the assets is known and recorded and to prioritise and carry our repairs and improvement works based on inspection data and/or due to reactive events.	Highways

Highways Emergency Service	To comply with legal obligations concerning the safety of the travelling public. To prepare emergency plans in conjunction with other departments in order to respond to any civil emergency. Comply with National Standards.	Highways
Highway Lighting	To maintain the illuminated assets to our current Statutory Duty inline with the Code of Practice and Electrical Regulations as well as reduce or carbon and energy consumption by installing LED equipment.	Highways
Highways and Transport Asset Management	Provide the organisational platform for cohesive delivery of highways & transport asset management across Highways & Transport Operations to meet the requirements of the Highways Infrastructure Asset Management Policy (HIAMP) and Strategy (HIAMS) and National guidance and standards on the delivery of highway services – such as the DfT’s Local Highways Incentive Fund.	Highways
Rights of Way	Protect the public right to the use and enjoyment of the public rights of way network by; undertaking planned inspections; responding to path issues; and referring to enforcement where appropriate.	Highways
Routine Environmental Maintenance	To fulfil our duties under Section 41 of the Highways Act 1980. To fulfil our duties under the Under the Noxious Weeds Act 1959. To align with the general principles set out in the Code of Practice for Maintenance Management ‘Well-managed Highway Infrastructure’ 2016.	Highways
Highways Winter and Emergency Services	To comply with legal obligations concerning the safety of the travelling public. To prepare a Winter Service Plan to maintain access on roads on a priority network during adverse weather conditions. National Standards for winter & emergency maintenance are set out in the Winter Service Section of the Code of Practice for Maintenance Management, “Well-managed Highway Infrastructure”, which was published in 2016 by the Road Liaison Group. The standards adopted for Somerset are broadly in line with the recommendations in this document.	Highways
Road Closures Traffic Restrictions and Events	Facilitate safe events and road works through the agreement of Traffic Management plans and temporary traffic restrictions. Comply with statutory requirements to make permanent changes to traffic restrictions i.e one ways, speed limits, parking restrictions.	Traffic Management
Traffic Engineering	To support safe and efficient travel for all road users and comply with the duties under the Traffic Management Act 2004 by securing the expeditious movement of traffic and road users on the authority’s road network	Traffic Management

Road Safety	Develop, implement, and monitor the Safe Systems Road Safety Strategy to ensure that no one is killed or seriously injured as a result of a road crash, create safer communities, and improve the quality of life for residents and visitors.	Traffic Management
Traffic Control	Support safe and efficient travel for all road users by complying with the duties under the Traffic Management Act 2004.	Traffic Management
Transport Data	Collect, validate, manage, store, and share transport and travel data relating to the network in the Council area to understand the usage of the network, and support our duties under the Traffic Management Act.	Traffic Management
Parking Services	Manage the Council car parks and on street parking restrictions in accordance with The Civil Enforcement of Road Traffic Contraventions (Approved Devices, Charging Guidelines and General Provisions)(England) Regulations 2022, Traffic Management Act 2004 and associated regulations and Council guidelines. Introduce and review permit parking area in accordance with the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and associated regulations in line with Council guidelines.	Traffic Management
Street Works	Fulfil our statutory function and obligations. Meet the objectives and benefits of the Somerset Council Permit Scheme. Reduce disruption on the road network. Drive improvement in overall network management.	Traffic Management
Equality and Diversity	Make sure the organisation understands its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and provides relevant guidance and challenge to make sure this is maintained or improved.	Equality and Diversity
Building Control	Ensure that buildings subject to building work achieve the minimum standards of the Building Regulations.	Building Control
Civil Contingencies	Discharge the duties under Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and other relevant legislation through a team of suitability qualified and experienced emergency planning professionals. Operate in accordance with national resilience standards set out in the Cabinet Office Indicators of Good Practice for category 1 responders and the accompanying Local Resilience Forum Indicators of Good Practice.	Civil Contingencies & Emergency Planning
Commissioning	Provide assurance to Senior Leadership about the approach to designing, developing, delivering, and reviewing strategies / polices / services for governance purposes; Embed the framework for commissioning into all commissioning activity across the authority.	Commissioning

Fleet Service	Support the Council in delivering its services through procuring, maintaining, and ensuring that the management and operations of vehicles is safe and in line with relevant legislation across the whole authority (inc O licence Compliance). Additionally, the service aims to ensure value for money and support in the Council's climate emergency through decarbonising fleet and its operation.	Environment & Climate Change Sub Group 2 (Waste and Neighbourhood Services)
Ground Care	The service aims to support the wider environmental and community well-being objectives of the Somerset Council through delivering value for money services that meet local need (noting financial constraints) and are responsive to residents/the community. Identify discrepancies between service standards and seek to harmonise. Ensure services continue on day 1 (including the transfer of any licences or permits).	Environment & Climate Change Sub Group 2 (Waste and Neighbourhood Services)
Street Scene	The service aims to support the wider environmental and community well-being objectives of the Somerset Council through delivering value for money services that meet local need (noting financial constraints) and are responsive to residents/the community. Identify discrepancies between service standards and seek to harmonise. Ensure services continue on day 1 (including the transfer of any licences or permits).	Environment & Climate Change Sub Group 2 (Waste and Neighbourhood Services)
SWP	Preserve our environment by making every effort to ensure our household waste is not wasted but reused as a valuable resource. Deliver excellent customer service and value for money to create a more sustainable Somerset. A comprehensive rolling five-year business plan sets out the activities SWP is undertaking.	Environment & Climate Change Sub Group 2 (Waste and Neighbourhood Services)
Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty	The core duty of an AONB designation is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the designated landscape. The activities and priorities of the service have been agreed and adopted by all partners as part of the statutory 5-year Management Plan and will be delivered over the next five years.	Environment & Climate Change Sub Group 4 (sports, leisure and countryside)
Countryside	Maintain safe to access natural greenspaces; Provide relevant information and interpretation to encourage all visitors to explore and enjoy natural greenspaces; Conserve habitats and species and prioritise where appropriate; Preserve geological and heritage features.	Environment & Climate Change Sub Group 4 (sports, leisure and

		countryside)
Sport and Leisure	Maintain safe to access, high quality, sporting, and leisure facilities; Provide relevant information and booking procedures with agreed fees and charges to encourage participation in sporting and leisure activities. Lessen the carbon and environmental impact of facilities through programmes of decarbonisation and biodiversity enhancements at appropriate locations. Management of Third Party Leisure Operators.	Environment & Climate Change Sub Group 4 (sports, leisure and countryside)
Planning Service	Consult on and determine planning matters within the local planning authority area, including applications for new development, prior approvals, works to listed buildings, trees, mineral, and waste development; undertake required advertisements of applications/notices.	Growth 2 – Planning and Enabling
Highways Development Management – Planning applications and Technical Approvals	Work with developers, the local planning authority, and local communities to enable the economic growth of the area through positive engagement within the planning system.	Infrastructure Delivery & Active Travel
Insurance	Arrange insurance and assess all insurance claims made against the Council. Acknowledging receipt of the claim within 7 working days and tell the customer if we have enough information to investigate	Finance
Exchequer Services	Pending	Finance
Land Charges	Provide a consistent, effective, and quality land charges service contributing to the efficient working of the local property market.	Governance
Democratic Services	Provide a professional committee administration service for the Council and provide a thorough Member Training and Development programme to ensure that the approach to development of Members is structured, consistent and effective.	Governance
Elections	Maintain the Register of Electors and running elections, ensuring that they are carried out in accordance with	Governance

	the Law.	
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Appendix E

Background Information

Customer Strategy, Promise and Standards

1. Context

1.1 The Unitary business case sets a vision to *achieve ‘an improved customer experience through new ways of working (including ease of access, efficient processes and digital technology)’* alongside the manifesto’s commitment to *‘listen to Somersets residents so we are open and transparent and making informed decisions.’*

1.2 Approaches to customer access have been developed independently across the five councils. We recognise that demand for our services is increasing along with the expectations of greater access, ease of use and quality of customer service. So, there is now a need to ensure that, from the outset, the new council sets a vision and plan to meet these demands and expectations.

2. Products

1.1 In response to the commitments, the Customer Strategy for Somerset Council has been developed. It outlines the Council’s strategic vision to put customers at the heart of everything it does and sets out an ambition to deliver increased digital services, alongside a commitment to supporting and enabling those who are unable to self-serve.

1.2 Complimenting the Strategy are the Customer Promise and Customer Standards which have been developed to ensure customers are clear about what they should expect from the Council when they contact us, through a variety of contact channels.

3. Development and Consultation

1.3 The Customer Strategy, Promise and Standards have been developed within the Customer, Communities and Partnerships workstream and has drawn upon the experiences and best practice of all five Councils.

1.4 The development team consists of Customer Service Managers and Team Leaders across each authority and regular updates have been shared with the Digital and Website sub-workstreams, as well as colleagues within the Service Alignment workstream to ensure regular feedback was sought and links were

made between other key products, such as the Service Standards and Digital Strategy.

- 1.5** An initial audit was conducted of all current strategies, charters, and standards to fully understand the similarities and differences in approaches to customer access across the five authorities.
- 1.6** A series of focus groups were undertaken with customers from the new Somerset Council Customer Panel in October and December 2022. A total of 42 customers attended and they were given an overview of the five strategic principles and provided valuable feedback, with changes subsequently made to the products.
- 1.7** Internal consultation on developing the draft Customer Strategy, Customer Promise and Customer Standards has been undertaken with:
 - Customer, Digital and Website Workstreams – various engagement throughout product development.
 - Service Alignment Workstream - various engagement throughout product development.
 - Customer, Communities and Partnerships Board – approach endorsed 16/11/2022
 - LGR Workstream Workshop – approach endorsed 1/12/2022
 - LGR Programme Board – approach endorsed 13/12/2022

4. Customer Strategy

- 1.8** The Customer Strategy sets out our ambitions to develop and deliver an excellent customer experience for our customers. It is important to recognise that customer service should be a Council-wide priority. Whilst we have dedicated customer services teams, acting as the front face of the Council for customers, valuing customer service needs to be embedded in the culture for everyone who works for Somerset Council.
- 1.9** The principles within the Customer Strategy have been informed by the Customer Service Excellence standard. This is a framework which is commissioned by the Cabinet Office and tests organisations against areas that research has indicated are a priority for customers, with particular focus on delivery, timeliness, information, professionalism, and staff attitude.

1.10 The Customer Service Excellence framework has been used by Sedgemoor District Council since 2021 and allows organisations to:

- Continually improve by addressing areas for improvement.
- Allows individuals and teams to explore and acquire new skills in customer service and engagement, building capacity for delivering improved services.
- Provides external validation of achievement, demonstrating competence and celebrating success.

1.11 In the longer term, the Strategy sets an overall ambition to achieve Customer Service Excellence across the organisation however the initial aim, for the lifetime of this strategy, is to achieve accreditation within our Customer Services teams.

1.12 Whilst the ambition is to achieve excellence in customer service, there is also a commitment to delivering affordable and value for money services, underpinned by learning from and understanding the needs of our customers. Delivery against this commitment is already evident in the creation of the Customer Panel, which to date has over four hundred members.

1.13 Informed by the themes and principles set out in the Digital Strategy, there is a focus on developing a 'digital first' culture. Whilst committing to ensuring all our access channels are improved, such as telephone and face-to-face services, our ambition is to deliver quality, easy to use digital services which will be so appealing that they become the channel of preferred choice for our customers.

2 Customer Promise and Standards

2.1 The purpose of the Customer Promise is to condense the commitments of the Customer Strategy to make it clear for customers as to what they can expect from their experience with us.

2.2 Complimenting the Customer Promise, the Standards give clear timescales for responses to enquiries across our contact channels, as well as the quality of access and delivery.

2.3 A comprehensive audit of each of the five authorities' current standards has informed the development of these documents, as well as benchmarking against other local authorities.

- 2.4** Post vesting day, we will begin to have a clearer picture of the needs of our customers and our performance against these initial standards. A review of these products will be conducted in year 1, with our customers.

Proposed Asset Management Strategy for Somerset Council

Executive Member(s): Cllr Ros Wyke - Lead Member for Development and Assets

Local Member(s) and Division: All

Lead Officer: Oliver Woodhams, Head of Corporate Property

Author: Keith Pennyfather, Property Team Leader

Sally Stark, Assets Manager

Victoria Goscomb, Governance & Performance Officer

Contact Details: Keith.Pennyfather@mendip.gov.uk,

S.Stark@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk

Victoria.goscomb@somerset.gov.uk

1. Summary / Background

1.1 A draft Asset Management Strategy and Plan for Somerset Council forms Appendix A to this report. It sets out the Council's strategic objectives for property asset management, the approach the Council will take to managing its property assets, and a series of high-level commitments to guide property asset management decisions and policy making.

1.2 The scope of the draft Asset Management Strategy and Plan is focussed on 'real estate' (land and buildings) assets. Infrastructure assets, such as highways, street furniture, coastal and harbour infrastructure, cycle paths, rights of way and flood defences are not in the scope of this document; similarly, vehicles, IT infrastructure, plant and equipment and other asset groups will be governed by separate strategies. 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.

2. Recommendations

2.1. The Local Government Reorganisation Joint Scrutiny Committee is asked to scrutinise and comment on the proposed strategy and plan.

3. Reasons for recommendations

3.1 The proposed strategy will provide the strategic direction for the management of land and property assets for Somerset Council. A strategy for asset management provides a framework to guide the management of the property estate, so that it can serve the Council and the people of Somerset as effectively as possible.

4. Other options considered

4.1. The proposed Asset Management Strategy has been developed based on the

draft Somerset Council Plan and following an analysis of the land and property estate that the new Council will inherit. The strategy has been developed through the LGR Asset Optimisation workstream, in conjunction with the Lead Executive Members for Development and Assets and Finance.

- 4.2. The option of not creating an Asset Management Strategy was disregarded as guidance from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy and the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors recommends that property is managed strategically. This requires that a strategy be set and overseen.

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

- 5.1. The strategies and plan have been developed from the Council Plan Priorities and Vision and are designed to directly support them. Further detail can be found in the Asset Management Strategic Objectives (page 7) in Appendix 1, which details how each of the property strategies contributes to the priorities and vision.

6. Consultations and co-production

- 6.1. This Asset Management Strategy and Plan has been produced and reviewed by Lead Members and officers from across the five Somerset Councils as part of the Property Assets Optimisation Workstream.
- 6.2. The Strategy and Plan has also been discussed at the Local Government Reorganisation Asset Strategy Group, which is attended by members and senior officers including representation from Corporate Finance, as well as at a meeting between SLT and Executive on the 12th December 2022, and at the LGR Programme Board on the 22nd December 2022.
- 6.3. Before the strategy and plan is taken before the Council for a decision, stakeholder engagement will also have been undertaken with other public sector partners such as the Police and the NHS.

7. Financial and Risk Implications

- 7.1. There are no direct financial implications to this Strategy. The strategies contained, however, may be subject to budget and funding opportunities.
- 7.2. There are no specific risks associated with this strategy. All decisions taken with regards to property are subject to the Council's scheme of delegation and constitution and will be assessed individually for their risks.

8. Legal and HR Implications

- 8.1.** There are no legal and HR 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.

9. Other Implications

9.1. Equalities Implications

A draft EIA has been prepared and will be appended to the final document. The Asset Management Strategy and Plan does not on its own state actions to be taken, but instead sets the strategic direction of the department over the coming years. As such, there are no specific equalities implications from the strategy itself.

When these strategies are being implemented, there will be a requirement to assess the effect of the implementation on people with protected characteristics.

9.2. Community Safety Implications

There are no Community Safety Implications associated with this Strategy and Plan.

9.3. Sustainability Implications

While the Asset Management Strategy does not specifically detail how these actions are to be taken, as it provides strategic direction only, it does commit to using Council assets to address the Climate Emergency. This includes eliminating or reducing the use of fossil fuel heating systems, supporting active travel, encouraging sustainable agricultural practices, and reducing the consumption of embedded carbon in new build and refurbishment projects.

9.4. Health and Safety Implications

This strategy does not itself have any health and safety implications, but it does restate the commitment of the property department to providing fit for purpose, safe, and compliant assets, which will help to ensure people are safe when using Council assets.

9.5. Health and Wellbeing Implications

There are no health and wellbeing implications associated with this report.

9.6. Social Value

There are no social value implications associated with this report.

10. Scrutiny comments / recommendations:

10.1. This Strategy and Plan has not yet been considered by a scrutiny committee.

11. Background

11.1. The draft Asset Management Strategy and Plan for Somerset Council, which forms appendix A to this report, sets out the Council's strategic objectives for property asset management, the approach the Council will take to managing its property assets, and a series of high-level commitments to guide property asset management decisions and policy making.

11.2. This Asset Management Strategies and Policies have been produced by Lead Members and officers from across the five Somerset Councils as part of the Property Assets Optimisation Workstream and have now been drafted into a full document with background and contextual information. The Local Government Reorganisation Joint Scrutiny Committee is asked to scrutinise and comment on the proposed strategy and plan.

12. Appendices

Appendix A – Draft Corporate Property Asset Management Strategy

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APPENDIX A: Draft Property Asset Management Strategy and Plan

Note for DRAFT document: version history

Version	Date	Comments
0.1	11 th January 2023	<i>Initial draft reflecting strategy statements developed through LGR Asset Optimisation Workstream & LGR Asset Strategy Group, and Draft Council Plan agreed by Executive on 14th December 2022.</i>

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Introduction, Purpose, and Scope

This Asset Management Strategy and Plan has been created as part of the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) programme in Somerset. Senior officers from the property departments in all five former Somerset Councils have developed the strategy in conjunction with Lead Members from the Somerset Council Executive, and the strategy [*has been approved by the full Council*]. The document sets out the Council's strategic objectives for property asset management, the approach the Council will take to managing its property assets, and a series of high-level commitments to guide property asset management decisions and policy making. The strategy and plan are intended to guide policy and decision making for the first 4-5 years of the new Somerset Council and will be reviewed following the next council elections in 2027, or earlier on the request of the Executive.

Somerset Council has a significant property portfolio stretching across the county. It includes office accommodation, open space, schools, operational properties such as libraries, depots and customer access points, and a significant estate inherited from the five predecessor councils that is leased out. Some property assets are actively used to deliver operational services; others are held for strategic purposes or have been acquired in the past to address a particular objective. The Council's property portfolio will change over time through the acquisition or construction of new assets, remodelling and re-purposing of existing assets, and through the disposal of property interests. Active management of this significant asset base is essential to ensure that the property portfolio delivers value by meeting the changing needs and strategic objectives of the Council, to ensure that assets make a positive contribution to the Council's financial standing over the longer term, and to ensure that the risks associated with holding property are managed effectively.

This Corporate Property Asset Management Strategy provides a framework to guide the management of the property estate, so that it can serve the Council and the people of Somerset as effectively as possible. The overriding intention of the document is to ensure that land and building assets are held by the Council for a clear purpose, and that these assets deliver long term value and are managed and maintained effectively.

The scope of this Asset Management Strategy and Plan is focussed on 'real estate' (land and buildings) assets. Infrastructure assets, such as highways, street furniture, coastal and harbour infrastructure, cycle paths, rights of way and flood defences are not in the scope of this document; similarly, vehicles, IT infrastructure, plant and equipment and other asset groups will be governed by separate strategies. 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 first section of this document sets the high-level strategic objectives for property asset management and how these support Somerset Council's Vision and Council Plan priorities, set in the context of some of the challenges and opportunities presented by the Council's property portfolio. This is followed by a second section with further detail on how the Council will manage its property estate, and how the strategic objectives for property asset management will be implemented.

Asset Management Strategy

This Asset Management Strategy will set strategic priorities for property asset management, and guide policy making and decisions on how the Council's property and land portfolio will be used. It will support Somerset Council's Vision and Council Plan Priorities, the safe and effective delivery of statutory services, and the development of an affordable and sustainable property estate for the long-term future of the Council. The strategy is set by the full Council and can only be varied through a further decision by the full Council.

The Somerset Council Vision

Somerset Council has set the following vision as its guiding beacon for 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.”

Somerset Council Priorities

Four priorities have been developed to clarify the vision and provide a focus for the Council. These are:

- **A Greener, More Sustainable Somerset**
- **A Healthy and Caring Somerset**
- **A Fairer Somerset**
- **A Flourishing and Resilient Somerset**

Somerset Council Values

The priorities are underpinned by a set of core values that will guide the work of the Council:

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

Strategic Context: Asset Management Challenges and Opportunities

Somerset Council is a new organisation, created by combining the functions of 5 predecessor councils (Mendip, Sedgemoor, South Somerset, and Somerset West and Taunton District Councils and Somerset County Council). The Council will inherit a large property asset base, with a wide variety of lease / tenancy arrangements, occupants and building types – managing this large and complex estate will bring challenges. However, the combination of resources, skills and assets inherited from each of the predecessor councils will also bring opportunities, and strategic advantages.

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, and 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. This means that we are going to have to be incredibly careful with taxpayers' money.

One of the legacies of the years of austerity for property asset management in Somerset (and many other local authority areas nationally) is a **significant maintenance backlog**. Estimating the level of backlog maintenance across the Somerset Council estate is very uncertain, due to the age and quality of existing condition survey data; however a recent high-level estimate has valued the property maintenance backlog for high priority repairs at a range of £30-£40m for Local Authority maintained schools in Somerset, and a further £10-£15m for the non-schools operational properties that the new Council will have maintenance responsibility for. Across the schools and non-schools estate, there are properties that are approaching the end of their lifespan, where repair and maintenance is not economically viable – whilst there are no immediate concerns, in the longer term this issue will need to be addressed. Funding from government to address the condition of school buildings currently falls far, far short of what is needed, both locally in Somerset and at a national level. On top of the financial challenge of this significant maintenance backlog, Somerset Council will also face a **challenge in the cost and difficulty of decarbonising its estate** in order to meet its Climate Emergency Strategy commitments.

The new Somerset Council will also have opportunities to address these financial challenges. Although the challenge presented by the schools maintenance backlog is significant, Somerset Council **is changing its relationship with LA maintained schools** through the agreement of a core set of support services, which will enable a more effective, collaborative approach to addressing repairs and maintenance issues at school sites. If implemented, the current national government's longer-term ambition to transfer all school sites to academy status would change the relationship, and responsibilities for repairs and maintenance, more fundamentally. The predecessor County and District Councils have made a **positive start to estate decarbonisation**, and Somerset Council will inherit a non-schools estate where heat decarbonisation has been achieved in a number of properties, together with a technical / professional property workforce that has developed skills and learning in new, low-carbon technology.

As noted above, the size, diversity and complexity of the Somerset Council estate represents a challenge in itself. Somerset Council will have responsibility for a **very large number of assets**, many of which were acquired historically for different purposes, and some of which confer a **challenging set of legacy obligations on the council** as a landlord. Bringing five councils together, particularly at a point where the use of some operational assets (especially offices) is changing with post-COVID societal change, creates a unique **opportunity to rationalise the property estate**, seeking opportunities for the co-location of former district and county level services and teams, to transfer or dispose of assets to other bodies, and also **work with local partners to share assets across the public sector** in Somerset. As a unitary authority, Somerset Council has a wider range of operational and strategic objectives, which creates a **broader opportunity to change, re-model and re-purpose land and property assets in order to support a wider range of outcomes**. That said, changing and remodelling the estate will be constrained by a very challenging financial environment – in particular, **significant capital investment is likely to be unaffordable for the new Council** in the short to medium term, in particular with anticipated higher borrowing costs. Financing investment through the sale of surplus assets is also challenging in Somerset, where current **high construction costs often exceed local asset / land values**.

Bringing together professional property staff with a range of experience, expertise and networks from the five predecessor councils into the new Somerset Council will **consolidate asset management and real estate expertise** in a new property function that will have a

level of resilience and capability well beyond any of the predecessor councils. Developing new systems and a consistent approach to asset management will be a challenge, in particular given the **inherited range of approaches to managing property compliance and asset records**. Nonetheless, the property function in the new Somerset Council will enjoy a unique opportunity to establish a modern, effective and efficient approach to asset management, based around **the implementation of a Corporate Landlord model and a new, consolidated asset management system**.

In summary, Somerset Council faces the following asset management challenges:

- *A significant maintenance backlog – particularly in the maintained schools estate – with some assets that are approaching the end of their economic lifespan.*
- *The cost and difficulty of decarbonising the property estate to meet Climate Emergency commitments.*
- *A very large number of diverse assets – including a significant number of ‘legacy’ holdings, some with challenging, historic lease terms.*
- *A challenging financial context – in particular, the affordability of capital investment.*
- *High construction costs which, in Somerset, often exceed local asset / land values.*
- *An inherited range of approaches to managing compliance & asset records.*

... but will also benefit from new opportunities, including

- *A changing relationship with LA maintained schools.*
- *Learning from a positive start to estate decarbonisation.*
- *Changing the use of the estate to support a wider range of outcomes.*
- *The potential rationalisation of the property estate, including co-location with partners.*
- *The consolidation of asset management & real estate expertise from across the five predecessor councils.*
- *The implementation of a new asset management database & corporate landlord model.*

Strategic Context: The Somerset Council Property Portfolio

At the time of publishing this strategy, work is ongoing to identify and gather information on the entire land and property estate through the implementation of a single, combined asset management system. In particular, it will take further time to fully document the full range of small amenity and other land parcels owned by Somerset Council in some urban areas. The statistics on the property estate are always subject to change in the future as assets are acquired and disposed; the portfolio presented here excludes a large number of very small land holdings which are (at the time of writing) still being validated. It also excludes all residential Housing Revenue Account properties, and the vast majority of the public highway network, where the council does not own the underlying land. At the time of publication, excluding a large number of small land parcels and HRA dwellings as noted above, Somerset Council has nearly 1,300 individual real estate assets. These vary very significantly in size, value and type – from small play areas to large secondary schools, office blocks and innovation centres.

Chart 1 overleaf shows how these c.1,300 assets are split between categories – whilst the majority are held for operational purposes, there are groups of assets which have been acquired specifically for investment yield, and others which are leased out with no operational purpose.

Chart 1 – categories of real estate assets – operational and other assets.

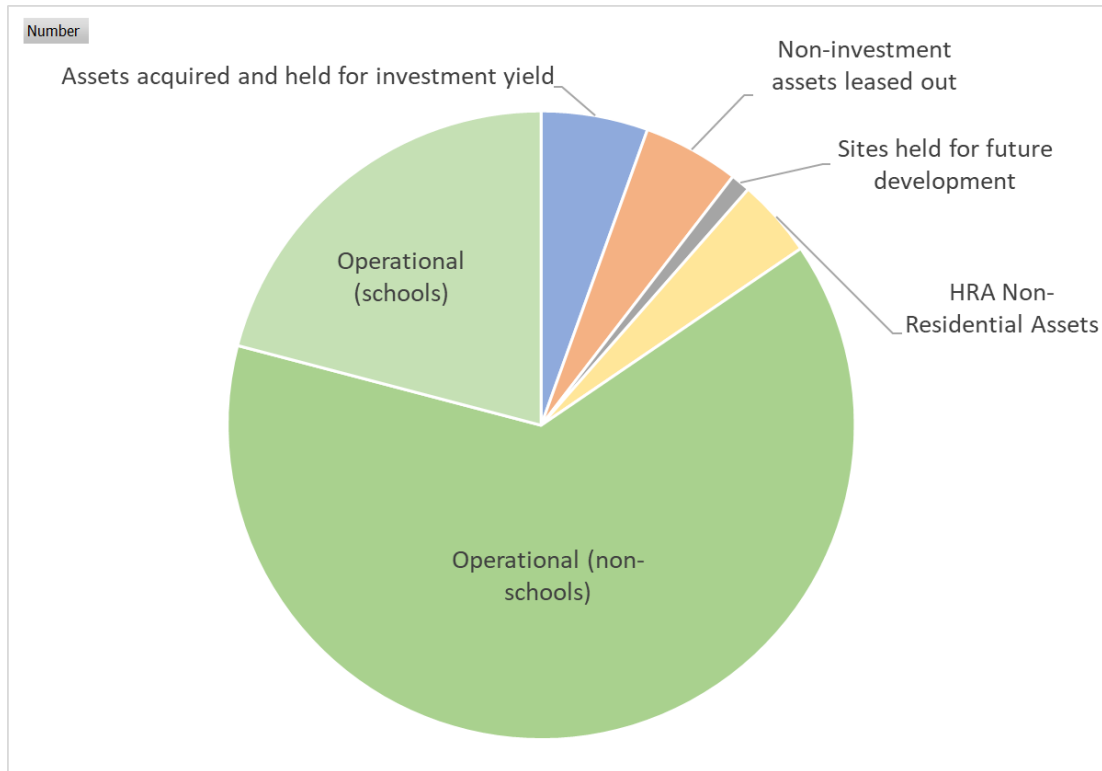
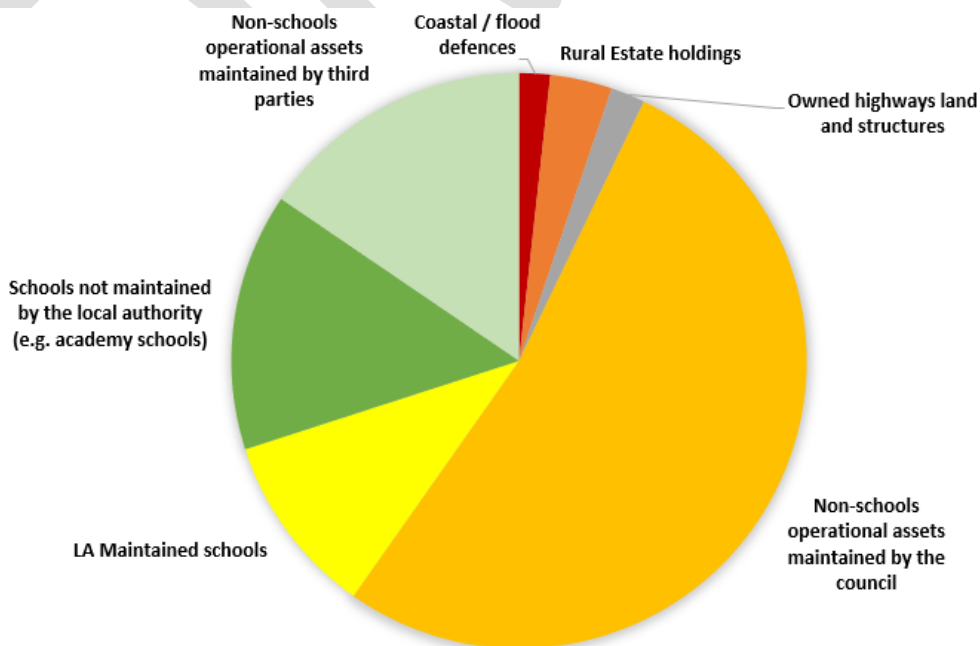


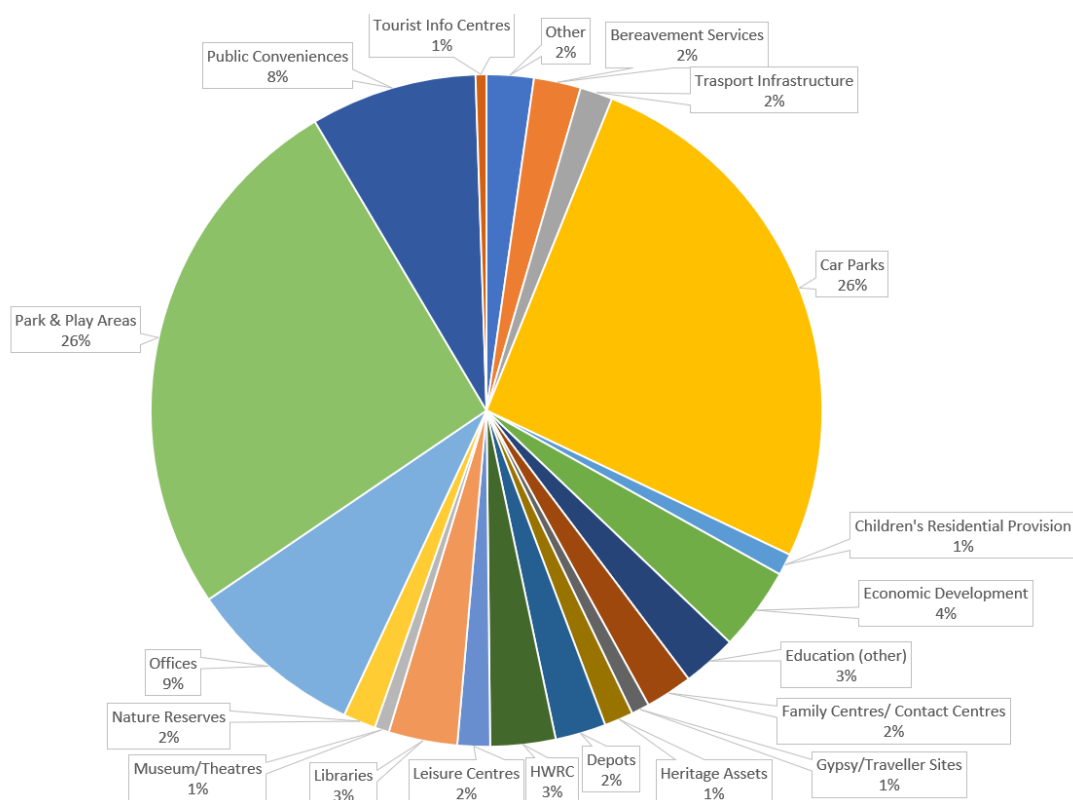
Chart 2a below analyses the subset of c.1,100 operational assets shaded in green above, distinguishing between those assets where the council is responsible for all aspects of asset management (including all repairs and maintenance), and those assets where the council is a landlord and repairs and maintenance risks have been substantively transferred to tenants or other third parties.

Chart 2a – Operational assets categorised by type and repairing liability.



Finally, Chart 2b below provides some further analysis of the c.570 non-school operational assets (the orange segment in Chart 2a above) where the council has responsibility for repairs and maintenance, to illustrate the range of different asset types in this portion of Somerset Council's property portfolio.

Chart 2b – Non-schools operational assets where the council has full repairing liability.



Asset Management Strategic Objectives

The following strategy statements have been developed from the Council Priorities and contextual analysis set out above. These objectives will guide policy making and decisions on how the Council's property and land portfolio will be used.

Strategic Objective 1: The Council's estate is financially sustainable, efficient, and effective.

This strategy objective will ensure that the Council is able to deliver effectively in a very challenging financial environment, and that the property estate does not create an unsustainable burden for future generations of Somerset council taxpayers.

Strategic Objective 2: Assets that are fit for purpose, safe & compliant.

This strategy objective will ensure that the Council meets all legal requirements in the management of its estate, and that assets support effective, modern service delivery for customers and effective, modern workspaces for staff.

Strategic Objective 3: Assets that address the Climate Emergency.

This strategy objective will directly support the Council Plan priority to deliver a **greener, more sustainable Somerset**, as well as delivering against the Climate Emergency Strategy goal of decarbonising the local authority estate and operations.

Strategic Objective 4: The Council's estate is used to meet housing and care needs, with an emphasis on social housing.

This strategy objective will directly support the Council Plan priorities to deliver a **healthy and caring Somerset**, and a **fairer Somerset**, in particular by ensuring that the council's land and property assets support the ambition to be innovative in its approach to housing, and deliver decent quality, low-carbon social housing.

Strategic Objective 5: The Council's estate supports prosperity and economic growth.

This strategy objective will directly support the Council Plan priority to deliver a **flourishing and resilient Somerset**.

Strategic Objective 6: Address the growing challenges in the Council's school buildings estate.

This strategy objective will also directly support the Council Plan priority to deliver a **flourishing and resilient Somerset**, as well as addressing one of the most significant challenges created by a long period of austerity.

Asset Management Plan

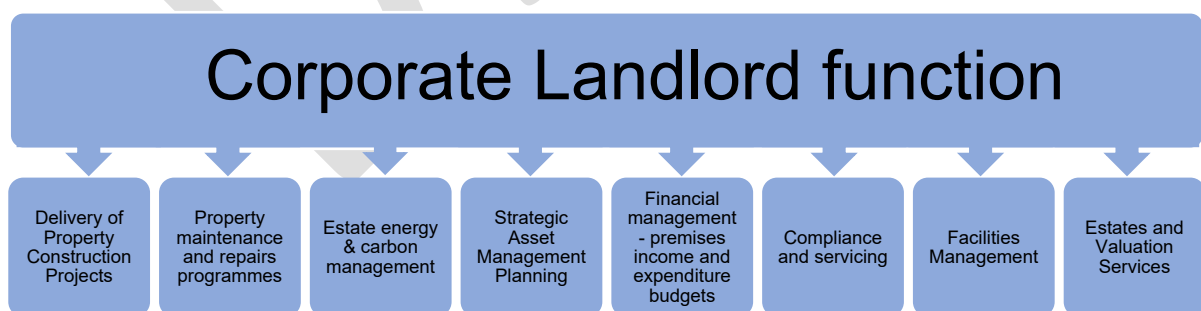
The Asset Management Plan in this section sets out a broad methodology and approach to property asset management which Somerset Council will adopt to deliver the strategic objectives identified in the Asset Management Strategy, as well as providing some additional detail on the initial, high-level plan for its implementation. The Corporate Landlord operating model, in conjunction with a new Asset Management System for Somerset Council, will be central to the effective management of the council's estate and the delivery of strategic objectives. The strategic objectives explained above will be implemented through the framework of policy commitments and high-level plans detailed at the end of this section.

The Corporate Landlord Operating Model

What is The Corporate Landlord Model?

In the past, public-sector assets have often been managed by services rather than a centralised department. For example, the libraries service would be responsible for all or almost all facets of property asset management for the buildings from which they operate – for example, arranging repairs, statutory compliance, and the financial management of premises costs.

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) recommend that property is used to meet the requirements and objectives of the organisation as a whole, rather than through decentralised, service-led arrangements¹. In order to do this, many local authorities are moving towards an asset management approach known as the Corporate Landlord model, which manages assets owned by the Council centrally by one dedicated property department. This allows for improved corporate oversight by the Council of important issues such as compliance and financial management. The approach also drives improvement in the utilisation and long term value of the property estate, by enabling flexibility to adapt to changing requirements, driving the optimisation of properties through co-location, and improving the quality of decision making on asset management issues by bringing a professional, longer term focus. Somerset Council will adopt this approach.



There are also financial benefits to the Corporate Landlord Model; through the benefits of economies of scale, a more focussed financial management of premises costs, and the

¹ The Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors. *RICS Public Sector Property Asset Management Guidelines*. Retrieved from RICS.org.uk: <https://www.rics.org/globalassets/rics-website/media/upholding-professional-standards/sector-standards/real-estate/rics-public-sector-property-asset-management-guidelines-2nd-edition.pdf/>

longer term financial benefits of considering whole-life building costs when making property investment or acquisition decisions. The centralised Corporate Landlord property function should be formed by a group of property experts with the appropriate technical / professional expertise, who work in conjunction with service managers who have different skills related to their core delivery functions. This allows the development of a pooled professional resource to focus on asset management leaving service managers and non-property professionals to focus on their various areas of expertise and knowledge.

What does this look like at Somerset Council?

Somerset Council will operate the Corporate Landlord model of property management for the majority of its non-Housing Revenue Account (HRA) land and buildings assets. There may be some exceptions for specialist groups of assets (for example, Leisure Centres) where economies of scale and expertise for some aspects of asset management is more appropriately concentrated in a service department. However, for all non-HRA, non-schools buildings the default operating model will be a Corporate Landlord approach.

The Corporate Landlord function will generally hold the budgets for rental income and premises costs, undertake all statutory compliance, management of records, estates activities, financial management, and improvement works. Generally, the management of building construction projects will be overseen through the Corporate Landlord function – with service commissioners taking a client role. This will ensure that property is treated as a corporate asset and is optimised to meet the needs of the Council as far as possible, as well as allowing strategic oversight of the entire portfolio simultaneously.

Corporate Landlord asset management principles will be extended to the day-to-day management of Somerset Council's Investment for Yield property estate (though, as noted above, these assets will be subject to different strategic objectives and sit outside of the scope of this strategy). Asset management of Local Authority maintained schools will sit outside of the Corporate Landlord model and will be subject to specific arrangements governed through the Financial Management Scheme for schools.

Working across Somerset Council, with local partners, and with communities

An important principle of the Corporate Landlord model in Somerset is ensuring that the property estate meets the needs of the Council, and the communities and customers it serves. For the Corporate Landlord model to work effectively, it is important that the property function engages thoroughly with its internal customers – the services occupying buildings and service commissioners who deliver outcomes through the council's estate - to fully understand their property requirements. This requires strong relationships to be built and maintained and for communication to be open in both directions. At Somerset Council, a collaborative approach with open communication will be fostered through formal, regular communication and feedback, and informally through a strong collaborative culture and positive working relationships.

Equally important is engagement work with communities and customers, using the insights of community representatives and customer intelligence data to understand how Council assets can be used to meet the needs of the population of Somerset most effectively. This engagement will drive discussions about how asset devolution, or a greater community involvement in local assets, might drive better value and outcomes for communities and customers.

The five predecessor councils have all been active in working with local partners, in particular through a long-running One Public Estate programme in Somerset. Somerset Council will build on this approach, using the opportunity of a stronger, single voice for local

government in Somerset to drive collaboration with local partners and stronger engagement with central government departments. This is particularly relevant for local Health and Police partner organisations, who are already integrated into the Somerset Council estate: the council will continue to collaborate closely with these partners, where appropriate taking joint decisions through the One Public Estate and Integrated Care System partner governance.

Property Records and the Asset Management System

A strong grasp of asset management data and property records underpins effective asset management, enabling the efficient evaluation and comparison of properties and land to support decision making and robust record keeping to support estate management and compliance activities. Somerset Council has implemented a new integrated Asset Management System which has an extensive range of asset management functionality.

This asset management database will be a fundamental foundation for property asset management at Somerset Council and will be fully utilised and optimised by the property function. This means that the system will be a single source of property records and data, and the property function will invest in populating the system fully, maintaining the integrity of data records over time, and integrating the new system functionality into day-to-day operations.

Governance & Decision-Making

Decisions on property and assets are made in line with the Somerset Council Scheme of Delegation, Contract Standing Orders, and the council's Constitution. In line with the Council's corporate governance framework, decisions on the acquisition or disposal of assets or spending on building condition works will be made by Executive members, or senior officers in consultation with Executive members as appropriate (depending on agreed thresholds). Informing and consulting with Local members is a key aspect of the Council's decision making governance, and Local members will be involved in the decision making process for asset acquisitions or disposals in their area in accordance with the Council's procedures. An important principle of the Corporate Landlord model, enshrined in the Council's Scheme of Delegation, is that decisions to acquire, grant or dispose of property interests for 'general fund' (i.e. non-HRA), non-schools properties will be overseen by the corporate property function. This will include decisions relating to leasehold interests, licences and tenancies.

Procurement activity will be carried out in consultation with the procurement department and in line with the Contract Standing Orders. Somerset Council's property asset management function will tender a wide range of contracts for condition and improvement programmes, and the construction of major projects.

The Asset Management Group

While this Asset Management Strategy is set by the full Council, its implementation will be driven and overseen by the Somerset Council Asset Management Group. This group will not be a formal committee of the Council, and as such it will not have decision making powers and will be subject to the Council's wider governance and scrutiny functions. The Asset Management Group will comprise of senior officers, including representatives of the finance and property asset management functions, with Executive Member representation. It will be chaired by the Lead Executive Member. The Asset Management Group may convene sub-

groups as required, on a task-and-finish or ongoing basis, to oversee specific asset groups or programmes of work. The group will also be responsible for developing further property policies.

It is important to note that the scope of the Asset Management Group will reflect the scope of this Asset Management Strategy: it will not be responsible for non-property assets, assets held within the Housing Revenue Account, or investment properties held for yield. These asset groups will be subject to separate governance and oversight mechanisms.

A Policy framework for Asset Management

Somerset Council will develop a suite of policies, through the Asset Management Group, and these will be agreed and adopted through the Council's corporate governance framework. The policy framework will be developed to meet the objectives of this Asset Management Strategy and Plan, but will, as a minimum, include policies governing the disposal and acquisition of properties, the operation of the Corporate Landlord model, and the approach to the Council's Rural Estate.

Asset Management Plan – implementing the strategy

Strategic Objective 1: The Council's estate is financially sustainable, efficient, and effective.

Policy commitments and implementation plan:

- Rationalise and reduce the number of buildings and areas of land wherever possible and appropriate, considering potential long- and medium-term needs, and ensuring assets are held for a clear purpose and provide best value.
- Improve the effectiveness and financial sustainability of assets, devolving assets where appropriate and working with partners and services to maximise use and value.
- Adopt and implement a Corporate Landlord model for the non-schools estate, which treats all properties as a corporate resource and manages them centrally.
- Protect heritage assets where and when affordable, bring them into a financially sustainable use, devolving or disposing of them to deliver long term sustainable protection.
- Develop an acquisitions policy to ensure new assets are financially sustainable and reduce costs.
- Develop proactive maintenance strategies, or dispose of assets, to ensure long term affordability.

Strategic Objective 2: Assets that are fit for purpose, safe & compliant.

Policy commitments and implementation plan:

- Work in partnership with building users and service departments to ensure assets are safe, effective and optimised to support service delivery.
- Modernise asset records and systems and monitor the condition and safe use of buildings to provide comprehensive assurance of compliance and health and safety.

Strategic Objective 3: Assets that address the Climate Emergency.

Policy commitments and implementation plan:

- Eliminate or reduce the use of fossil fuel heating systems and improve thermal efficiency across the estate, when and where affordable.
- Take opportunities to locate and utilise land and building assets to support active travel.
- Use our land and buildings to generate renewable energy and develop smart systems and processes to optimise energy use across the estate.
- Encourage sustainable agricultural practices on the council's rural estates.
- Develop an acquisitions policy to ensure new assets meet Climate Emergency pledges and reduce the consumption of embodied carbon in new build and refurbishment projects.

Strategic Objective 4: The Council's estate is used to meet housing and care needs, with an emphasis on social housing.

Policy commitments and implementation plan:

- Rationalise and reduce the council's estate in urban areas, to release sites for housing.
- Work with partners, central government and the council's housing services to facilitate the use of surplus land for social housing (including community led and self-build schemes).
- Work with social care commissioners to use the council's asset base to improve the sufficiency of care placements in the county.

Strategic Objective 5: The Council's estate supports prosperity and economic growth.

Policy Commitments and implementation plan:

- Maintain a strategic, targeted network of economic development sites to support business growth.
- Retain a rural estate to develop opportunities to support new entrants to farming.
- Where appropriate and affordable, work with partners and develop opportunities to utilise surplus assets to support regeneration and economic growth.
- Ensure that Asset Rationalisation strategies support the sustainability of Town Centre economies.

Strategic Objective 6: Address the growing challenges in the Council's school buildings estate.

Policy Commitments and implementation plan:

- Lobby and influence central government to provide funds to address the critical condition of Somerset schools.
- Develop strategies for the replacement of end-of-life school buildings.
- Work in partnership with school leaders to improve proactive maintenance practices in schools.
- Work in partnership with school leaders to ensure school buildings are safe.

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LGR Joint Scrutiny Committee

19th January 2023

Angela Farmer

Ask of LGR Joint Scrutiny Committee :

- To note the outcome of the SWAP report on programme risks
- To note the changes being made to the programme risk register including
 - The revised programme level risks
 - The transitional risks
 - The new risks identified as the programme moves to vesting day

Key points for discussion:

- The SWAP report
- The changes being made to the risk register

SWAP report – December 2022

- Requested by Programme Director to ensure that the current process for managing risks for the LGR programme are:
 - Effective
 - That there are sufficient controls and actions to mitigate risk and there is evidence to ensure that this is being done
 - That the risks and subsequently controls and actions are regularly monitored

This was a non-opinion advisory piece of work as independent assurance that the framework and process set up delivers an effective response to the risks faced given the size of the programme

Conclusion

‘Overall risk management is reasonably effective in managing the LGR programme although there are some areas for improvement. There is a Risk Management Framework in place, and our review demonstrates that risks are being added to the risk register and reviewed by the relevant boards as well as SCC Audit Committee. Survey results were positive in this area indicating regular discussion of risks. It is clear that the higher-level programme risks and strategic risks are an area of focus for monitoring. However we have found weaknesses in the completeness of the risk register and how actions and controls are documented, owned and monitored lower in the governance structure’

The whole report can be seen as appendix to this report.

SWAP report - action plan with update on progress

Area of focus: Effectiveness of Risk Management Framework				
SWAP Action	LGR Action	Owner	Date	Update
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with People, SAI, and Property to increase confidence in this area Remove fields of limited value to risk register, especially where they are not routinely populated For the remaining fields, instigate a process to validate missing fields 	1. Revised and refresh the Risk Management Framework, aligning where needed to the framework for the new Council, as well revision of the risk register to simplify it on SharePoint	AF	31/1/23	Will be done in readiness for presentation to PMO team 12 th Jan
	1. Present the practical application to workstreams	AF	31/1/23	Presentation 12 th Jan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure there is a clear process to identify and prioritise risk that are relevant to the delivery of LGR products due by 1st April 	1. Undertake a piece of work for programme risks that identifies relevant products and add these as mitigation with relevant delivery dates	AF/SH/RR	31/1/23	Starting w/c 9 th Jan with support from RR
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risks that are not LGR Programme risks need to be identified, dissociated with the programme and passed over for assessment and evaluation by Somerset Council risk group 	1. Create the transitional register for the programme and move risks to this register where it is clearly identifiable that the risk will exist beyond the 1 st April, using session below with PM to identify anything further	AF	31/1/23	Created following review with Programme Director and PMO leads, include in report

SWAP report - action plan with update on progress

Area of focus: Controls and actions in place to mitigate risk				
SWAP Action	LGR Action	Owner	Date	Update
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a definition for control and further action within the RM framework 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> This will be reflected in the Risk Management Framework for the new Council 	AF	31/1/23	Presentation 12 th Jan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add a due date for completing further actions, which can move over to controls upon completion 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Work with PM for each workstream and work through their workstream risks to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure controls and actions are correct That any relevant delivery dates are added for actions as well as action owners Identify any links to products Work to understand how controls and actions are monitored at a WS level Record this for each workstream to give overview of how this work in undertaken Understand role of workstream board in monitoring risks, with focus on controls and actions 	AF Workstream PM's - AM, AP, RR, KJ, AM,SL, JS, CL	31/1/23	Start work post 12 th Jan presentation to PMO team Products work will start w/c 9 th Jan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure all further actions included in the risk register have a named officer responsible for overseeing the delivery of the actions 	As above			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that there are target timescales for delivery of further actions 	As above			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Controls and mitigating actions need to be strengthened throughout the risk register to allow better oversight and challenge for monitoring 	As above			
** From monitoring arrangements for risks, controls and actions				

Moving forward towards 1st April 2023

With Vesting day fast approaching, and as the programme work towards business readiness, the opportunity has been taken to review programme risks

1. Review of programme level risks to determine what risk remains to the programme
2. Creation of a transitional register, picking up risks from across the programme and workstreams, that are being mitigated by the delivery of the products but will move into the registers of the new Council
3. Assessment of new programme risks connected to Business Readiness

Current PL risks - Jan 23

Ref	Risk Description	Inherent score	Residual score
10	There is a risk of a significant budget gap for new Somerset Council in 2023/24 when Districts and County budgets combined, significantly impacting the financial sustainability of the new unitary	20	20
11	The risk that there are insufficient people resources to implement LGR Programme and deliver the approved business case	20	9
12	Loss of staff from County and District Councils deemed essential to the programme delivery	20	16
13	Unforeseen emergency or business continuity interruption or rising tide situation that requires staff to be directed from the day job into incident response.	16	12
14	Loss of opportunity to align public and VCSE services to new operating model and outcomes as defined in the Business Case	16	12
15	Failure of workstreams/projects to achieve their expected financial benefits as described in business case	16	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	12	8
21	The risk that the LGR programme negatively impacts service provision and improvement activities of Children's services and Adult Social care	12	6
22	The risk that delivery of ICS implementation is not effectively joined-up with LGR implementation	9	9
23	The risk that non-delivery or late delivery of key LGR products that other workstreams are dependant on	12	12

Current PL risks - Jan 23

Ref	Risk Description	Inherent score	Residual score
25	The risk that BAU activity within the Councils is impacted by stretched staff resources balancing LGR and BAU work	20	9
26	The risk that the back-office ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) system not sufficiently implemented to support the new authority	16	8
27	Uncontrolled change to the scope of the LGR programme	20	9
103	Agreement not reached with Trade Unions on pay scales/terms and condition for new Council staff	6	4
111	The risk of overspend on the £16.5 m LGR implementation budget	16	12
139	Inter-dependencies between workstreams not managed effectively	12	6
228	Lack of a decision around contracts that are reaching the end of their life between now and April 2024	20	9
309	The risk that there is insufficient capacity to manage the people side of change	16	12
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	16	12
367	The risk that the 5 councils will overspend in 22/23 and have to use reserves	25	16

Overview of changes made – Jan 2023

Programme risks

- 14 risks now on the revised register
- 4 moved to a transitional register
- 2 risks closed -risks 21 and 27

Transitional risks

- 4 former programme level risks now moved to the transitional register

New programme level risks identified

- 13 new risks identified following exercise to of the 8 pillars of day one success

The revised registers for the programme and transitional are set out below with the new risks identified

Revised Programme Level risk register – Jan 2023

Ref	Risk description	I	R	Commentary
10	There is a risk of a significant budget gap for new Somerset Council in 2023/24 when Districts and County budgets combined, significantly impacting the financial sustainability of the new unitary	20	8	Reduced residual score to 8 following balanced budget. Will move to transitional risk once budget agreement towards end of Feb
11	The risk that there are insufficient people resources to implement LGR Programme and deliver the approved business case	20	9	Remains a current 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.	16	12	Remains a current risk
15	Failure of workstreams/projects to achieve their expected financial benefits as described in business case	16	12	Remains a current risk
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	12	8	This risk will be further reviewed following Executive on the 18 th January
23	The risk that non-delivery or late delivery of key LGR products that other workstreams are dependant on	12	12	Remains a current risk

Revised programme risks – Jan 2023

Ref	Risk description	I	R	Commentary
25	The risk that BAU activity within the Councils is impacted by stretched staff resources balancing LGR and BAU work	20	9	Remains a current risk
26	The risk that the back-office ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) system not sufficiently implemented to support the new authority – follow up	16	8	Remains a risk but a review will be undertaken with Finance to determine whether remain a programme risk
103	Agreement not reached with Trade Unions on pay scales/terms and condition for new Council staff	6	4	Remains a risk but wording changes to be made to identify wider risk around the Unions
111	The risk of overspend on the £16.5 m LGR implementation budget	16	12	Remains a risk
139	Inter-dependencies between workstreams not managed effectively	12	6	Remains a risk
309	The risk that there is insufficient capacity to manage the people side of change	16	12	Remains a 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	16	12	Remains a risk
367	The risk that the 5 councils will overspend in 22/23 and have to use reserves	25	16	Remains a risk

Transitional risks

Ref	Risk description	Inherent	Residual	Commentary
12	Loss of staff from County and District Councils deemed essential to the programme delivery	20	16	A review of the wording of this risk will be undertaken
14	Loss of opportunity to align public and VCSE services to new operating model and outcomes as defined in the Business Case	16	12	A review of the wording of this risk will be undertaken
22	The risk that delivery of ICS implementation is not effectively joined-up with LGR implementation	9	9	
228	Lack of a decision around contracts that are reaching the end of their life between now and April 2024	20	9	

New Programme level risks

Day One success	Risks
Customer access the services they want and get the support they need	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The risk that services will not be fully ready on vesting day
Somerset Council is operating safely and legally	
Staff and Members do their jobs, working well and staying safe	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The risk that there will not be visible and active leadership on vesting day and beyond 2. The risk that staff will be unclear who they report to on the 1st April
Somerset Council make effective and efficient decisions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The risk that decision making will be unclear and confused 2. The risk that decision makers will have insufficient knowledge and experience of the services that they represent, causing potential delays in decision making 3. The risk that Members will lack knowledge and understanding of district services to make decisions at Executive level

New programme level risks

Day One success	Risks
Staff and Members are positive ambassadors	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The risk that staff moral and resilience will be at a low ebb, impacting their wellbeing 2. The risk that staff will be unclear what the role will be in the new authority
Staff are uniting as one team	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The risk of capacity and resource issues 2. The risk that staff will not work together as teams 3. The impact of MTFP savings on staff and their ability to do their jobs
Customers have a positive experience	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The risk to continuity of service
Staff and Members have a positive experience	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The risk that Members will have not sufficient understanding of the range of services that the new Council will provide

Questions/Recommendations

1. Questions
2. Recommendations:
 1. To note the SWAP report and the actions being taken
 2. To note the changes to the programme risk register, the move of some risk to a transitional register
 3. To note the new risks identified based on day one success