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**Health, Care and Housing – Reflecting on '*Improving Health and Care Through the Home in Somerset – a Memorandum of Understanding*'  
Understanding the Challenges and Identifying Ways of Taking Forward Collaborative Working**

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<b>Summary:</b>	<p>The Somerset Health and Wellbeing Board has recognised the need to deliver improved collaboration between the health, care and housing systems.</p> <p>Improving collaboration, and working towards integrated commissioning across health, care and housing can generate improved outcomes for the population at large, but especially for those who are vulnerable. It can also reduce costs and improve the overall effectiveness of 'the system'.</p> <p>On the 17<sup>th</sup> September 2020 the Somerset Health and Wellbeing Board adopted '<i>Improving Health and Care through the Home in Somerset – A Memorandum of Understanding</i>'. The MoU contains five themes where enhanced collaboration is sought: rough sleeping and complex homeless; independent living; climate change; nomadic and transient communities; and Health Impact Assessments (HIA).</p> <p>This report reflects on the content of the MoU and seeks to understand the level of progress made against each of the five themes. Importantly, the report seeks a recommitment from partners to collaboration between health, care and housing systems/services – as a key driver of prevention-based service delivery. The report seeks to identify priority activity for the next 12 to 18 months, noting the capacity issues that are being experienced across 'the system'. The report recommends collaboration with external programmes that can offer support, such as Leading for System Change, which can bring extra leadership capacity to these complex areas of activity.</p>
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<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p>	<p><b>That the Somerset Health and Wellbeing Board:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Notes the progress made with delivering <i>Improving Health and Care Through the Home in Somerset</i> (MoU);</b></li> <li><b>2. Reconfirms the integration of health, care and housing systems/services as a HWBB priority, recognising that progress in this area is an important driver of prevention-focused service delivery, and confirms that all HWBB partners are committed to supporting this work via relevant partnership arrangements;</b></li> <li><b>3. Supports a programme of work (suggestions on Pages 11/12) that will enable us to make significant progress within the realm of health, care and housing integration, recognising that this will require both robust leadership and resources (staff/funding), and commits to this programme of work to coming back to the Board for ratification and monitoring;</b></li> <li><b>4. Supports collaboration with external support programmes (e.g. Leading for System Change/others) who can bring additional leadership capacity, ideas and general support towards this priority area of activity.</b></li> </ol>								
<p><b>Reasons for recommendations:</b></p>	<p>To ensure that the Board has oversight of the work being undertaken to deliver 'Improving Health and Care through the Home in Somerset – a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), to understand current capacity issues and other challenges, and to provide the Board with an opportunity to directly influence the programme of activity.</p>								
<p><b>Links to The Improving Lives Strategy</b></p>	<p><b>Please tick the Improving Lives priorities influenced by the delivery of this work</b></p> <table border="1" data-bbox="544 1473 1468 1944"> <tr> <td><b>A County infrastructure that drives productivity, supports economic prosperity and sustainable public services</b></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><b>Yes</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Safe, vibrant and well-balanced communities able to enjoy and benefit from the natural environment</b></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><b>Yes</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Fairer life chances and opportunity for all</b></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><b>Yes</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Improved health and wellbeing and more people living healthy and independent lives for longer</b></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><b>Yes</b></td> </tr> </table> <p>It is critical that we enhance collaboration and partnership working in the realm of housing and its interrelationship with health and care services (and indeed, other parts of 'the system')</p>	<b>A County infrastructure that drives productivity, supports economic prosperity and sustainable public services</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Safe, vibrant and well-balanced communities able to enjoy and benefit from the natural environment</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Fairer life chances and opportunity for all</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Improved health and wellbeing and more people living healthy and independent lives for longer</b>	<b>Yes</b>
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	<p>including crime, work and skills, and town planning). Housing is deeply connected to care and health and, when one part of the system fails, there are repercussions for individuals and families, as well as financial impact on services. Through enhanced collaboration, we can make progress against all the above priorities.</p>
<p><b>Financial, Legal, HR, Social Value and Partnership Implications:</b></p>	<p>Financial and Legal: None at this stage, <i>but potentially significant</i>. This report is seeking agreement to 'nudge' the system and / or build upon existing areas of activity, to help deliver better ways of working. Various projects are suggested that, in due course, will have significant financial / legal implications. Clarity will emerge as we begin to understand the detail. For example, the long-term aspiration of moving towards integrated commissioning arrangements in the sphere of complex vulnerabilities will have significant legal and financial implications, as we potentially work towards bringing together strategy, budgets and workforce. We are at the beginning of this process and more work needs to be undertaken. These factors will be explored within the realm of the ICP/HWBB, LGR, the Homelessness Reduction Board, etc. The same is true for the other priority areas covered by the MoU. For example, a focus on understanding demand and need for specialist accommodation will inevitably produce recommendations that will have financial and legal implications. Clearly, this report is laying down a marker that to get on the front-foot in relation to prevention-based activity, more resources will need to be invested in this area. How that is to be achieved will be a matter for ongoing/priority debate.</p> <p>Social value: There is significant potential to deliver enhanced social value from the content of the MoU. For example, enhanced commissioning arrangements (coproduction) will provide further scope for the VCS to directly influence the nature of the contracts, align contracts to local priorities, achieve wider community benefits and person-centred benefits, and so maximise the value of public expenditure.</p> <p>Partnership Implications: Significant. This report seeks enhanced partnership arrangements within the sphere of health, care and housing.</p>
<p><b>Equalities Implications:</b></p>	<p>This report is not proposing any new strategy, policy or programme. Rather, it is a review of existing policy/programmes with a view to suggesting priority areas of focus to help us make progress. As such, a detailed Equalities Impact Assessment is not required.</p> <p>However, the work under-pinning the MoU is informed by a need</p>

	<p>to support vulnerabilities in a holistic manner. Many of the 'protected characteristics' such as age, disability, gender etc can present as vulnerabilities, dependent on the circumstances.</p> <p>As such, a failure among partners to support priority activity within the sphere of this MoU can have an adverse impact on those with protected characteristics</p> <p>The Somerset Housing Strategy (2019) and the Somerset Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy (2019) are underpinned by comprehensive Equalities Impact Assessments. As was more detailed activity such as the need to support rough sleepers during 'Everyone In'. These have been used to help drive the work that forms the content of the MoU.</p> <p>As we progress, it is essential that the equalities agenda forms an integral part of our considerations. These will be matters to be considered by the various partnerships/services that will be responsible for the suggested areas of work i.e. work programmes within the realm of the ICS, Homelessness Reduction Board, the Gypsy and Traveller Working Group, Somerset Independence Plus, etc</p> <p>Critical to this will be the voice of the customer. The customer voice is being used to shape the work of rough sleeper services, the future P2I contract, the expansion of the hospital discharge service etc. It is important that we use data, intelligence and lived experience to shape our future policy, programmes and commissioning intentions.</p>
<p><b>Risk Assessment:</b></p>	<p>There are significant risks around the failure to maintain and enhance coordination of service delivery within the sphere of health and care and housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risks to an individual's health</li> <li>• Risks to partner relations</li> <li>• Impacts on budgets across systems as we lose coordination</li> </ul> <p>There are risks to collaborative working should we fail to engage appropriately with all partners on the implementation of the MoU.</p> <p>Unitary Council: The activity within the MoU should assist strategic conversations around the delivery of a unitary authority rather than present any significant risks. Proposals within this report seek to either 'nudge' the system or build upon existing areas of activity, rather than present new areas of complex activity, that could pre-empt the priorities of the new Somerset Council. It is understood that a focus on driving forward prevention-based</p>

	activity (the key thrust of this report) will be a priority for the new Unitary Council.
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## 1. Background

**1.1.** As partners we recognise that housing is a key social determinant and that housing conditions/circumstances are a driver of health inequalities. Similarly, poor physical and/or mental health will impact on the ability of an individual or family to maintain a home and / or a tenancy. The link between housing, health and care is being increasingly recognised, as are the calls for enhanced collaboration.

Nationally, there are several key policy drivers / good practice guidance that seek enhanced collaboration across systems. Examples include:

- Health and Social Care Act 2012
- Care Act 2014
- Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
- Improving Health and Care Through the Home – a National Memorandum of Understanding 2018
- Supported housing – a National Statement of Expectations
- NHS white paper 2021
- People at the Heart of Care: Adult Social Care Reform White Paper 2021
- ADASS: Care and Support and Homelessness: Top Tips on the Role of Adult Social Care (2022)
- ADASS: Housing and Care: Good Practice Guide (to be published Autumn 2022)

At its meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2020, the Somerset Health and Wellbeing Board adopted *Improving Health and Care Through the Home in Somerset – A Memorandum of Understanding* (MoU). The MoU is a commitment, across health, care and housing systems, to work together collaboratively in order to help improve the health and wellbeing of the Somerset population.

The MoU contains 5 priority areas for activity:

- Rough Sleeping and Complex Homeless
- Independent Living
- Climate Change
- Transient and Nomadic Populations
- Health Impact Assessment

Each has resourcing implications that will need to be understood and met collaboratively.

Appendix 1 provides more context on the interplay between health, care and housing. A quick summary on progress against the five themes within the MoU is provided below.

## Rough Sleeping and Complex Homeless

- No rough sleeper deaths due to Covid
- Establishment of **Somerset Homelessness Reduction Board (HRB)**
  - *Note: This meeting is well attended, but not all partners are engaging with this important strategic partnership*
- Progression of **Better Futures for Vulnerable People in Somerset**
  - Assessment of demand (housing/support) for individuals with complex needs
  - Creative Solutions Panel (pilot) – with countywide roll-out planned for Autumn 2022
    - *Note: not all partners are currently engaging with this initiative*
  - Collaboration to deliver specialist accommodation solutions (e.g. Housing First, treatment accommodation, move-on etc)
  - Development of countywide metrics
- Countywide expansion of nursing support within rough sleeper settings
  - Royal Society for Public Health award nomination (final decision 20<sup>th</sup> October 2022)

## Independent Living

- The Better Care Fund (BCF) continues to drive a range of prevention related activity (this is delivered through Somerset Independence Plus – SIP):
  - Disabled Facilities Grant (DFGs), Decent Homes (repair grants), Prevention Grants, Modular Ramping, Independent Living Officers (ILOs), Hospital Resettlement Coordinators, Assistive Technology Development, North Taunton Project – low interest loans, accommodation solutions for homeless/rough sleeper community, Empty Homes, Housing Option OTs, Energy (Warm Homes Fund – match funding) – funds currently amount of £6.7M for insulation and heating measures, Independent Assessment Centres (IACs), Discretionary DFGs, Hoarding Services, Support for Lifeline Systems (careline and others). See report to HWBB (Nov' 21)
- SIP have completed 750 home safety checks since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 in response to requests from Public Health for the Ukrainian Resettlement programme (recently employed two additional ILOs for this work following receipt of £100k grant from Public Health)
- Winter Plan – collaboration between SIP, Public Health, Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE) and Village Agents – to assist the vulnerable, elderly and fuel poor households cope with soaring fuel bills (from 1<sup>st</sup> Sept)
- Care and housing services had hoped to collaborate to develop a detailed understanding of the demand and need for specialist accommodation – to inform investment and commissioning decisions (including new build/repurposing of existing accommodation). However, we have been unable to make progress in this area
- Individual housing providers have responded to the need to work with care and health services to support independent living. There are many good examples

(see Appendix 1) as well as frustrations as initiatives sometimes fail / are not fully utilised due to lack of engagement and/or commissioning decisions

### Climate Change

- The context to this area of work is shaped by the following:
  - JSNA – Climate Change and Health (2019/20) – significant implications for housing, care and health services
  - Somerset Climate Change Emergency Plan
  - Cost of Living Crisis – response (including fuel poverty interventions)
- There is plenty of activity in this area, including district council led housing retrofit /zero carbon programmes. There is also pan-Somerset multiagency activity, e.g.
  - The Safe and Warm Initiative (CSE/SIP/Citizens Advice/HIS) continues to invest in the following:
    - Improving the energy efficiency of homes
    - Making homes healthier
    - Improving people's confidence to manage energy
    - Reducing Fuel Debt
    - Improving Income
    - Winter crisis support
    - Multi-agency partnerships
  - There is a need to continually upscale energy efficiency interventions

### Transient and Nomadic Communities

- Excellent multi-agency support during the Covid pandemic
- Reconstituted the Gypsy and Traveller Working Group set up under Covid to continue to work in partnership across agencies. Sedgemoor District Council chair the group. Governance repositioned to sit within the HRB
- Funding for 2 x Gypsy/Traveller Liaison officers extended
- Progress being made to identify potential sites for permanent and transit solutions – including funding streams

### Health Impact Assessments

- This relates primarily to how health, care and housing services relate to the town planning process, and the development and adoption of HIA guidance to inform plan making and the consideration of planning applications for major developments
- Ultimately, this is about neighbourhoods and communities, it's about how we promote sustainable transport, deliver green spaces for recreation, leisure and sport, deliver the type of accommodation (including specialist) and neighbourhoods that are good for both physical and mental health. It's about how we work with the town planning process to deliver healthy communities
- Presentation to Somerset Strategic Planning Conference, but unfortunately slow

/ no progress in this area

### Demonstrating Impact

It is essential that we can demonstrate the impact of collaborative working. This needs detailed study. External organisations such as The Kings Fund have long provided evidence at a national level of both improved customer outcomes and cost savings. There are plenty of local examples that are worthy of study:

- Canonsgrove (and generally, the 'Everyone In' initiative across Somerset) – success at increasing the numbers of rough sleepers who were able to move from the streets, to supported accommodation to permanent homes
- Nursing Team – supporting rough sleepers across the county, improved health outcomes and reduced hospital / care admissions – this initiative has been shortlisted for an award by the **Royal Society of Public Health**
- Creative solutions – delivering multi-agency creative solutions to those with the most complex of conditions
- BCF / Somerset Independence Plus – a quick example is given at Appendix 1

### Challenging Times

The MoU proposes that we aspire to a place where we have alignment of strategies, budget and workforce. However, delivering system integration is a difficult and complex area of work. This is made more challenging by current circumstances, both locally and nationally.

A SWOT analysis is provided at Appendix 1.

### Addressing the Challenges

Despite the challenges, work continues with the aim of improving systems and service collaboration, with customer outcomes being centre stage. We are very aware of the potential support and advice that can be provided by external parties (as well as internal innovation).

- The HRB continues to govern and champion the **Better Futures Programme**. The BF programme has six workstreams and we are fortunate to have the continued support of Ark Consultants (commissioned by the four district councils), who bring extra capacity to this challenging area of work. This includes their steer to the Creative Solutions Board, their work to advise future commissioning priorities (e.g. helping us to understand demand and need), their work to support collaboration with Registered Providers (Housing), and their chairing of a sub-group that is seeking to improve access to the private rented sector.
- We are also fortunate to have an offer of help from **Leading for System Change**. LFSC is a support offer to enable people involved in integrating services, in our case via the Somerset Integrated Care System (ICS), to



strengthen their leadership capacity to work effectively across systems and sector/professional boundaries. It's a national offer that's being funded via the NHS Leadership Academy, and Somerset is one of 19 ICSs around the country that are involved. The aim is to provide learning, in designated sessions and working with designated Leadership Academy Faculty, to up to five groups of people, ideally from across sectors and disciplines, who are grappling with complex issues (such as homelessness and related issues) and to support them to apply that learning to work more effectively in collaboration across a system. The offer runs for c 6-8 months, with a view to seeing progress in new thinking, behaviours and approaches. The process started on July 27<sup>th</sup> with a HWBB sponsored event, that saw 25 people (officer and members) come together to discuss the complexity of collaboration across health, care and housing. We agreed that, given the current challenges and complexity, we need to take small steps and accumulate – in order to drive change. We developed a 'Statement of Common Purpose' and identified 'key themes and areas that we may wish to focus on'. More detail is provided at Appendix 1.

- The topic of testing system integration between health, care and housing is a 'challenge theme' within the next round of **Co-Lab** training. Co-Lab is short for 'Commissioning Labs' with an emphasis on the '**Co**' – doing things in partnership. Somerset Co-Labs is a development-based opportunity to support the new authority to transform the impact of commissioning in Improving Lives in Somerset. Co-Lab presents an opportunity to help us explore some of the suggested areas of activity highlighted within this report.

#### Housing and Care: Good practice guide and ongoing conversations

Usefully, the Association of Directors for Adult Social Services and Housing LIN are about to publish a good practice guide on collaboration between housing and care services. The guide supports councils, with their local partners, to plan for and deliver the range of housing and care options needed by older people and working age adults with care/support needs (this includes working age adults with eligible care needs as well as young people and adults with support needs for example people at risk of homelessness and care leavers)

The guide proposes a framework of activity as follows:

<b>Evidence and Strategy</b>	<b>Market Shaping, Planning and Funding</b>	<b>Delivery and Outcomes</b>
Assessment of need for housing and supported accommodation for olde people	Encouraging and stimulating the market of housing and supported accommodation providers	Housing and supported accommodation delivery
Assessment of need for housing and supported accommodation for	Making best use of planning and housing policy	Managing the quality and value for money provided by supported

working age adults with care/support needs		housing
Developing plans/strategies covering housing and supported accommodation for older people and working age adults with care/support needs	Resourcing and funding housing and supported accommodation	Access to housing and supported accommodation: provision of information and advice

The framework is consistent with the ambitions of the MoU and indeed, reflects much of what we know we need to be undertaking. It certainly provides useful context for reflection and planning.

Recently, on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2022, approx. 50 staff from care and housing services within Somerset came together to discuss challenges of both operational service delivery and commissioning. Following workshop sessions, various themes / ideas began to emerge. The top four are listed below, but it is important to note that other important areas of work were also highlighted:

#### Top 4 solutions / ideas

- Money – we need to be investing / pooling money for prevention / tenant support – this includes budgets held by social care (adults/children), public health, health and housing. There was a view that, we are good at talking about this, but little gets done to actually crack this issue
- Multi-disciplinary teams – this can help stop the ‘revolving door’ and help prevent people from going into crisis. Establishing a fully functioning Creative Solutions Panel needs to be a priority.
- Invest in communities – help communities to help themselves, particularly with low-level issues. Invest in locally based prevention packages – this will help prevent crisis
- Under-occupation of social housing stock – we need more investment (staff/budgets) to help encourage tenants who are under-occupying to downsize. There are good models that are being supported by Hinkley Point C funding within Somerset West and Taunton (delivered by SWT Housing and Magna) and SDC, but more investment is needed for a countywide approach

It was agreed that the HWBB should be made aware of these solutions / ideas. All these topic areas are within the suggested ‘areas of potential focus’ below. The group has agreed to come together again to review progress. The HWBB (via the MoU/it’s associated partners arrangements) can help move these matters forward.

## Areas of Potential Focus

In summary, and having consulted with a range of HWBB partners, we believe that there are several priority areas that we should focus on. These could be areas that will be lead/supported by (individually or in combination) the HRB, LFSC, other partners. All will require the support of partners within the realm of the ICS/HWBB. A list of potential areas of focus are provided below, these have been grouped into those that facilitate outcomes, and those that deliver outcomes

Potential Areas of Focus – those that *enable* impact/outcomes

- Governance and Leadership
  - The HWBB / ICP to proactively consider the relationship of health and care services with that of housing services, and to seek to drive integration. This includes funding to invest within prevention-based activity.
  - For all partners to proactively support the work of the HRB
- Family Hubs
  - We collaborate as services to pilot work with local neighbourhoods to help deliver placed based outcomes
- Better Care Fund
  - To further explore the potential of the BCF to drive prevention activity
- Commissioning – specific areas of inquiry to include:
  - To explore how we commission, to ensure a person centred/trauma informed approach, to deliver services that can flex to changing circumstances
  - To undertake detailed work to understand the overall demand/need for specialist accommodation and associated support (for older people/those working age adults with care/support needs)\*
  - Identify resources to help develop and deliver a countywide approach to HIA

Potential Areas of Focus – those that *deliver* impact/outcomes

- Creative Solutions – working to support individuals with extreme complexity
  - As partners we commit to this. If we can collectively identify solutions for such individuals, the learning can be deployed to other areas of vulnerability
- Workforce – addressing the shortage of affordable, quality and secure accommodation options for key workers
- Specialist Accommodation – to deliver more specialist accommodation and associated support (for older people/those working age adults with care/support needs)
- Adaptation – the need for expansion of housing adaptations to enable older adults to stay mobile in their homes and remain independent
- Gypsy and Traveller Working Group – seeking to deliver permanent and transit

- accommodation with relevant support
- Climate Change – the need to upscale energy efficiency interventions

Further work is needed to understand how these areas of work are to be progressed. This includes identifying lead officers and partnerships, alongside any external / internal support programmes. Some are already in progress, such as Creative Solutions/Family Hubs/Gypsy and Traveller Working Group etc. However, all require the support of the HWBB and associated partners. This detail will be brought back to the HWBB for consideration.

\*The Better Futures Programme has made good progress in assessing demand/need for complex homelessness/rough sleeper accommodation and support. However, there also needs to be a focus on other vulnerabilities – elderly, learning disabilities etc

### Partnerships

We are often asked about the governance arrangements around the various housing partnerships and their links to other parts of the system. Appendix 2 shows a 'simplified' view of these arrangements, together with reporting lines. All activity flows towards the HWBB, apart from some related activity such as the Homefinder Management and Monitoring Board, Homelessness Managers Group etc. However, these areas are all reporting in (or linked to) to the other parts of the system – the diagram is not sophisticated enough to show all the linkages. The Somerset Strategic Housing Group (SSHG) is responsible for the Somerset Housing Strategy and has been the initial driver behind the MoU. It is linked to wider housing conversations.

## **2. Improving Lives Priorities and Outcomes**

- 2.1.** Housing impacts significantly on health inequalities, through poor housing standards (e.g. cold and damp, trip hazards), inappropriate housing (too big, too small, lack of level access, no adaptations) and insecurity of tenure (inability to pay your rent, leading to eviction, homelessness and possibly rough sleeping). The Somerset Housing Strategy (2019 to 2023), Improving Lives (2019 to 2027) and the Somerset Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy (2019 to 2023) all recognise this relationship. Please refer to the section titled 'Links to the Improving Lives Strategy' above

## **3. Consultations Undertaken**

- 3.1.** The original report on this topic that was presented to the HWBB on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2020 sets out the consultations that were undertaken to develop the MoU. The follow up report (July 2021) noted advice/comments received from the then Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

In developing this progress report, dialogue was undertaken with relevant officer representation from public sector partners: Somerset County Council (Adult and Children services), Public Health, NHS Somerset and the

district councils

#### 4. Request of the Board and Board Members

- 4.1. Board members are asked to note the progress being made with the delivery of *Improving Health and Care Through the Home In Somerset (MoU)*; to reconfirm their commitment to supporting the integration of health, care and housing services through a programme of work that will be ratified and monitored through the HWBB. To support collaboration with external support programmes who can bring additional leadership capacity, ideas and general support towards this priority area of activity.

Board members are also asked to continue to work across the health, care and housing systems, seeking to challenge any aspect of that system that is not undertaking a collaborative approach as described within the adopted MoU.

#### 5. Background Papers

- 5.1. Report to the Somerset HWBB – 17<sup>th</sup> September 2020: Agenda Item 6

[Somerset County Council](#)

Report to the Somerset HWBB – 15<sup>th</sup> July 2021: Agenda Item 7

[Somerset County Council](#)

Better Futures for Vulnerable People in Somerset

[Housing Advisers Programme - Better futures for vulnerable people, Somerset | Local Government Association](#)

#### 6. Report Sign-Off

	<b>Seen by:</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Report Sign-Off</b>	Relevant Senior Manager / Lead Officer (Director Level)	Trudi Grant	15/09/22
	Cabinet Member / Portfolio Holder (if applicable)	Bill Revans	12/09/22
	Monitoring Officer (Somerset County Council)	Scott Wooldridge	15/09/22