

Together we are delivering your

New Somerset Council

Governance Arrangements for Local Community
Networks

30th January 2023



Local Community Networks

Local Community Networks (LCNs) will give communities power to influence decisions about their local area. They will be an important part of how our new Somerset Council works – making sure that local areas will have an ongoing voice to shape their new council to suit their local needs.

Key points

- 15 to 20 LCNs to cover every part of the county
- Flexibility to set their own priorities
- Dedicated council officer support
- Ability to influence Council priority and spend
- 6 to 8 meetings a year

Membership

- Unitary Councillors
- City, Town and Parish Councillors
- Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise
- Local NHS, Police, Schools and other services
- Local Business
- Other engaged residents

Recent LCN Development Activity

- Consultation and engagement on LCN Function and Form during Sept/Oct 2022
- Informed a mapping exercise to develop a single proposed option for LCN areas, based on consultation findings and other data, guided by principles agreed with Executive.
- Discussions with colleagues and partners about how we can align LCN development with partnership working and service delivery at a locality level
- Work to understand the scope of current community development and engagement activity, resource and capacity across the five councils
- Development of proposed initial governance arrangements and Terms of Reference for LCNS
- Consideration of what aspects of LCNs it is feasible to have in place by Vesting Day

Executive Resolutions 18 January 2023

Agreed:

1. The purpose and initial roles for LCNS, and that there are opportunities for future development, as set out in sections 13 and 14 of the report
2. The proposed eighteen LCN areas as a basis for moving forward for Vesting Day
3. That decisions on any changes to the LCN areas or names resulting from discussions with stakeholders, to be delegated to the Lead Member for Local Government Reorganisation & Prosperity in consultation with the appropriate Divisional Members
4. The draft initial model Terms of Reference for LCNs
5. An earmarked reserve of £300k to establish LCNs and to support the completion of a community engagement and development spend review across the five councils, to identify existing funding to support LCNs on an ongoing basis.

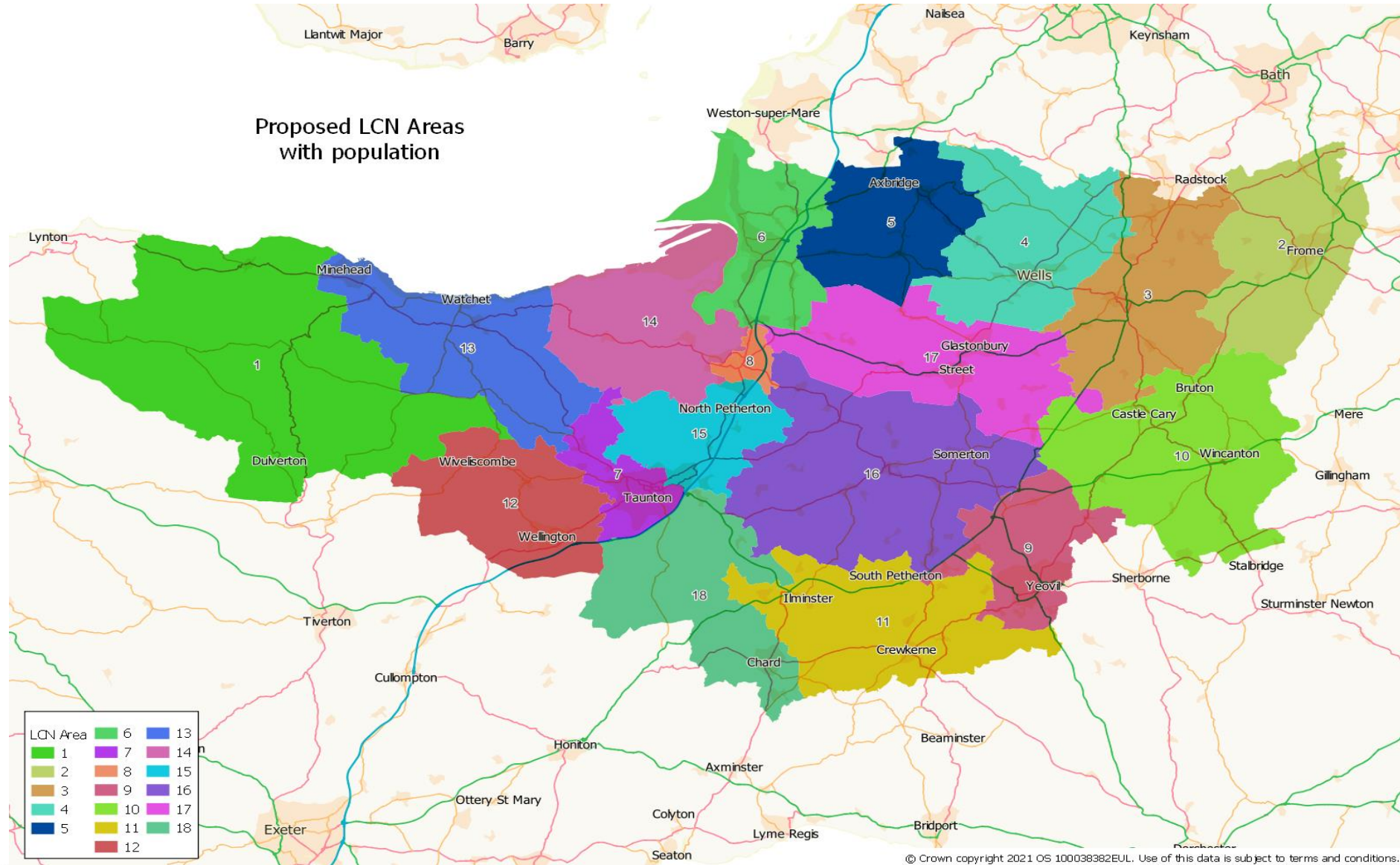
LCNs - Purpose

To be the focus for the new Council for community engagement and development, within an ethos of local partnership working, looking to improve outcomes for residents through establishing strong connections between Somerset Council, our communities and our partners.

Initial Roles for LCNs

- Be a forum for community voice, engagement and influence
- Be a means for enhancing participation in democracy and local decision making
- Enhance collaboration by bringing together at a local level, representatives from partner organisations, town, City and parish councils, community groups and residents
- Identify evidence-based community priorities; across Economic, Social and Environmental issues
- Create plans to reflect how the priorities will be addressed
- Identify and secure resource opportunities for local projects

Proposed Areas for LCNs (18)



Governance for LCNs

- Business case envisaged LCNs as Committees of Cabinet
- Proposal, based on feedback, for LCNs to initially be classed as area boards
- Facilitates collaboration and an equal partnership approach
- Recognition that LCNs need to be firmly embedded in the governance 'fabric' of the Council and its constitution
- Worked with governance colleagues to create draft Terms of Reference.
- To be tested and kept under review as LCNs mobilise and evolve

Day One Readiness

- LCNs purpose and initial roles and functions will be agreed and widely communicated
- LCN geographies will be defined
- City, Town and Parish councils and local community groups will know which LCN they are in, and the other parishes within it
- There will be a defined staffing structure with agreed job descriptions and a timetable and approach for recruitment
- Initial 'link officers' identified for each LCN, who may be drawn from existing staffing / roles.
- The Pilot LCNs will have agreed infrastructure and support to enable their successful transition into the new LCN arrangements
- Headline Terms of Reference will be in place for LCNs

Recommendations

That the Constitution and Governance Committee:

- Recommends to Full Council that the proposed LCN governance arrangements and Terms of Reference be included in the Constitution of the new Somerset Council.

Noting that:

- The terms of reference have been developed to reflect the proposed roles and responsibilities of LCNs in their initial stages, appropriate and proportionate to their function
- Each LCN will adopt the model terms of reference to enable a level of consistency, noting that there will be scope to consider local flexibility where appropriate.
- The terms of reference will be reviewed during year one of LCNs.

Questions