

## Decision Report - Non-Key Decision

Forward Plan Reference: FP/23/01/04

Decision Date - 15/03/23



### LGR Business Continuity Management for Somerset Council

Executive Member(s): Cllr Federica Smith-Roberts - Lead Member for Communities

Local Member(s) and Division: N/A

Lead Officer: Nicola Dawson and Claire Malcolmson

Author: Nicola Dawson

Contact Details: nicola.dawson@somerset.gov.uk

#### 1. Summary / Background

**1.1** Somerset Council will have a statutory duty to maintain business continuity for service delivery in the event of disruptive challenges. The five existing councils have had robust business continuity management frameworks in place for many years.

**1.1.1** To enable the new Somerset Council to meet its statutory duties, a new business continuity strategy and corporate level business continuity plan have been developed from the existing arrangements. Service managers have been required to produce updated service level plans on a new template.

#### 2. Recommendations

**2.1.** The Executive to note this report as assurance that the business continuity management arrangements are in place for Vesting Day and beyond. This is a tranche one deliverable for LGR.

#### 3. Reasons for recommendations

**3.1** Business continuity is a statutory duty for local authorities under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. Business Continuity is mentioned in the order for the new council.

#### 4. Other options considered

**4.1.** This is a statutory duty and a required tranche one deliverable for LGR.

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

**5.1.** Effective business continuity arrangements are intended to ensure that critical services are able to continue in the event of disruptive challenges in order to prevent or minimise harm, distress or inconvenience to service users.

## **6. Consultations and co-production**

- 6.1.** Development of new business continuity documents has been coordinated by the civil contingencies and emergency planning sub-workstream within the LGR Service Alignment and Improvement workstream. The sub-workstream included officers with civil contingencies responsibilities and expertise across the four District council plus the Civil Contingencies Unit staff. Subject matter experts for business continuity have been involved with the drafting of the new documents which are informed by good practice from the Business Continuity Institute.
- 6.2.** Progress has been monitored by the LGR Service Alignment and Improvement Board with regular input from other sub-workstreams. The LGR Programme Board noted and agreed the arrangements on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2023.

## **7. Financial and Risk Implications**

- 7.1.** No financial implications.
- 7.2.** The main risk to the new Council will be failure to have robust business continuity management arrangements in place to operate from Vesting Day.

Mitigations are that this is a well understood set of processes. The five existing local authorities have well developed and tested business continuity systems which have informed the arrangements for the new Council. New combined plans have been developed for the new council.

## **8. Legal and HR Implications**

- 8.1.** No legal implications.
- 8.2.** No HR implications for the arrangements for Vesting Day.

## **9. Other Implications**

### **9.1. Equalities Implications**

There are no new equalities implications.

### **9.2. Community Safety Implications**

No community safety implications.

### **9.3. Sustainability Implications**

No sustainability implications from the aligned plans.

#### **9.4. Health and Safety Implications**

No new health and safety implications.

#### **9.5. Health and Wellbeing Implications**

No new health and wellbeing implications.

#### **9.6. Social Value**

Not applicable.

### **10. Scrutiny comments / recommendations:**

**10.1** Arrangements have not been considered by a Scrutiny Committee.

### **11. Background**

**11.1.** Business continuity is a statutory duty under Civil Contingencies Act 2005 and the five Somerset local authorities all currently have effective and long-standing arrangements in place. Good practice from all five local authorities and the Business Continuity Institute have been taken into account in developing the combined arrangements.

**11.2.** To ensure readiness for Vesting Day, the following activities have been undertaken: production of a new overarching business continuity strategy, production of a new corporate level business continuity plan, production of a combined service criticality list and development of a new template for service level plans.

As at the date of this report, the majority of services have produced or are in the final stages of producing new service level business continuity plans to reflect service delivery changes as at 1<sup>st</sup> April. Southwest Audit Partnership has carried out an independent assessment of the first batch of service level plans and reported that 94% were graded as good or acceptable. The remaining plans are being given feedback and advice and the remaining service plans are under assessment. The corporate level plan and strategy will be signed off by the Chief Executive.

Although the key documents for the new business continuity management system are in place, final checking and assurance is likely to continue up to Vesting Day and it is intended to have contingencies in place over the Vesting Day period in case of any business continuity issues. The new corporate level plan is due to be validated by the table-top exercise in early May. Business continuity is a process of continuing improvements so business continuity planning, training and exercising will need to remain a

priority during 2023/24 as service level plans will require amendment as transformation rolls out across the organisation.

## 12. Background Papers

**12.1** Somerset Council draft business continuity strategy and draft business continuity corporate plan. SWAP assessment report for service business continuity plans.

### **Report Sign-Off**

		Date completed
Legal Implications	Honor Clarke	06/03/23
Governance	Scott Wooldridge	06/03/23
Corporate Finance	Jason Vaughan	06/03/23
Customers, Digital and Workforce	Chris Squire	N/A
Property	Paula Hewitt / Oliver Woodhams	N/A
Procurement	Claire Griffiths	N/A
Senior Manager	Claire Malcolmson	02/03/23
Commissioning Development	Sunita Mills / Ryszard Rusinek	N/A
Executive Member	Cllr Federica Smith-Roberts - Lead Member for Communities	06/03/23
<b><u>Consulted on Non-Key Decision</u></b>		
Local Member	N/A	N/A
Opposition Spokesperson	Opposition Spokesperson - Communities - Cllr Faye Purbrick	7/3/23 Informed Executive Agenda
Scrutiny Chair	All Scrutiny Chairs	7/3/23 Informed Executive Agenda