

Somerset County Council

Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee

Somerset Connect and links to the Frome LCN development

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1. Summary

1.1. Somerset Connect is an emerging jointly-commissioned (children, adults, and health) community-based model which seeks to better connect, and add value to, the amazing work already taking place in communities across the County. The model focuses on three key areas of improvement:

- Access – Ensuring families and people in need can easily access the information, guidance and support they need. Removing any existing barriers caused by siloed working.
- Connections – Ensuring those services working in communities (health, social care, schools and voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sectors (VCFSE)) can easily connect to ensure the right support, in the right place, at the right time is available.
- Relationships – Ensuring that through every contact families and people in need are being empowered to be resilient, building their own community and networks of support.

1.2. The Frome LCN has a Children and Families Focus and has been mapping services and gaps across the area resulting in some clear areas of focus. This work will help inform the development of Somerset Connect in the Frome area and the working group will lead in this development.

1.3. Somerset Connect helps to realise the following priorities contained within the County Plan:

- Safe vibrant and well-balanced communities able to enjoy and benefit from the natural environment whilst addressing climate change.
- Fairer life chances and opportunity for all
- Improved health and wellbeing and more people living healthy and independent lives for longer

2. Issues for consideration / Recommendations

2.1. That the Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee consider the report and presentation, comment as appropriate and support local implementation.

3. Background

- 3.1.** Hub models and embedded partnership models were identified as vital within any cost-of-living response by the LGA. This is because the impact of the crises is wide ranging and requires support across a range of areas. Hubs allow people to access this holistic support face-to-face, providing empathy and making them feel listened to and supported. Many Somerset families are facing a difficult period, with the combined impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and looming cost-of-living crisis. These additional financial and mental stresses on families can lead to tipping into difficulties which then require additional and costly support from public services.
- 3.2.** Somerset Connect provides a blueprint for a sustainable model of support in Somerset, where residents are more resilient, have strong networks and communities to help them, and an integrated response from services that is proactive and compassionate. We have lots of great practice and resources to draw on, such as the Village Agents, PFSAs, One Teams and team around the school. We can also draw upon pockets of local innovation which provide a test bed for early help design, such as the West Somerset Opportunity area, the Wincanton Balsam Centre and the Yeovil4Families hub in Yeovil. In addition, we have emerging structures to build from such as that described in the LCN consultation and the Primary Care Networks.
- 3.3.** To sustain the quality of residents' lives and to balance Somerset systems budgets, we need to build from design principles that are common to all sectors of Somerset public services. For example:
 - Integrate Health and Care and integrate People and Place
 - Set coterminous boundaries to enable professionals to work together and wrap around residents in their local area
 - Help more residents earlier and in a pro-active whole family way to reduce the impact of the pandemic and cost-of-living crisis

4. Consultations undertaken

- 4.1.** Listening Events for Somerset Connects have taken place in east and west somerset with the help of the Somerset Parent Carer Forum
- 4.2.** A number of area meetings have taken place and more are being arranged. These are open to all interested parties within a defined geographical area.
- 4.3.** The Frome LCN Steering group meet regularly and include members from the Somerset Connect steering group.

5. Implications

- 5.1.** There are no negative implications identified. The model seeks to add value to the work already taking place and ensure clear links between related areas of work such as the Neighbourhood work and the development of LCNs.

6. Background papers

- 6.1.** PowerPoint to aide discussion.