

Full Council Meeting – 7 February 2023

Portfolio Holder Report for the Leader of the Council – Cllr Federica Smith-Roberts.

LGR

We are now less than 2 months out from vesting day and the reorganisation into Somerset Council. It has been a busy two months since our last Full Council and I am in awe as to how we are putting all of our energies into creating a council that is safe and legal from 1 April but also running business as usual and completing our aims for Somerset West and Taunton residents in the final few months.

The LGR programme is working at pace and the implementation board has met on 20 December and will meet on 30 January. The programme is RAG rated as Amber at present, a full overview can be found here as to how the programme is progressing

<https://democracy.somerset.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=454&MId=1697&Ver=4>

SWT has now undertaken our transfer over to the single council IT system. This has been a mammoth task and my thanks goes to all the team involved in this as due to their hard work and planning, it has been pretty seamless.

Taunton Theatre AGM

It was great to attend the TTA AGM recently and see how they continue to adapt and rise to the challenges that Covid and now the Cost of Living crisis is having on the culture industry. The plans that they have for the forthcoming year, including their Christmas production, will look to benefit the wider area and enrich the lives of many people. Cllr Caroline Ellis has more on the great work they are doing and it is a positive relationship that we hold with them and the exciting collaborations that they have throughout the year.

Titan Arcardia

After the last SWT Full Council I had the pleasure, along with many of my fellow councillors, to visit the wonderful exhibition in our Coal Orchard development.

It was great to see such talented local artists on display and to get up close to such beautiful pieces of sculpture. I am excited to see the further collaboration we have with Matt Crabbe through the public art piece being installed in February.

Digital Innovation Centre Board

Recently I was shown around the Digital Innovation Centre which is due to open in late spring. It was great to see how the SCC project is progressing which is sited on our land at Firepool.

The Centres Board is made up of a variety of partners looking to oversee the opening of the Centre and attract small to medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and new start-ups within the data and digital industries into the facility. Its location, both within the Firepool development and such close proximity to the Railway Station, looks to be a strong positive for the area.