

# Public Agenda Pack



## **EXECUTIVE**

**Wednesday, 26 February 2025**

**10.00 am**

**Luttrell Room - County Hall, Taunton TA1 4DY**

### **SUPPLEMENT TO THE AGENDA**

To: The members of the Executive

We are now able to enclose the following information which was unavailable when the agenda was published:

Agenda Item 3      Public Question Time (Pages 3 - 6)

The Chair to advise the Committee of any items on which members of the public have requested to speak and advise those members of the public present of the details of the Council's public participation scheme.

For those members of the public who have submitted any questions or statements, please note, a three minute time limit applies to each speaker and you will be asked to speak before Councillors debate the issue.

We are now live webcasting most of our committee meetings and you are welcome to view and listen to the discussion. The link to each webcast will be available on the meeting webpage, please see details under 'click here to join online meeting'.

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Annexe A – Public Questions	
Name of person submitting	Question
<b>Ray Moore</b>	<p><b>PETITION – 5000+ signatures</b></p> <p>Eastwick Road Through the Chicanes</p> <p>This is a petition to reduce speed to 20mph with pedestrian crossings, speed platforms. For the children, parents, and elderly and disabled who don't stand a chance at present it is a rat race between drivers plus all the heavy goods vehicles also speeding with three bollards placed outside 201 footpath.</p>
<b>Mr David Orr</b>	<p>It usually pays to listen to one's peers. The recent LGA Peer Review report has stated:</p> <p>“Ensuring that there is a clear plan and appropriate corporate capacity in place to support transformation delivery will be key. However, for these technology opportunities to be fully realised, the council must ensure legacy system integration and harmonisation is equally prioritised – there are examples of services unable to produce statutory reports because they are working on multiple IT systems and relying on poor quality data. <b>Significant investment will be needed to address these issues and at pace given the reduction in workforce capacity.</b></p> <p>Ensuring this work is completed at the earliest opportunity will give the council the best chance to deliver their ambitions. Design skills are an important capability for any Council and their value has already been proven in the council's approach to service and process redesign with Adult's Social Care. Consideration should be given to securing design and continuous improvement skills for broader corporate benefit.”</p> <p>The year before vesting day should have been used to assess line of business applications, particularly in Districts, as duplication was inevitable. On vesting day, you should have had a list of applications where you would either transfer to one existing system as best-of-breed, or plan to go to market to commission a new application. Two years in on Day 665, this not-so-new council is still implementing one line of business application in Revs and Bens only, which is not an “at pace” plan. This work isn't “transformation” but is typical business-as-usual work post a merger of multiple organisations into one.</p> <p>IT is an enabling service and is vital to delivering unitary line-of-business systems, with just one set of processes for efficient service delivery and management control, using reliable and consistent data. Efficiency savings through “transformation” also requires IT to enable it. Adult Social Care got this Invest to Save treatment, so why not IT?</p> <p>IT needs to be given, on an Invest to Save basis (with 2-year payback business cases as with funding post reductions), additional capacity and capability, so they can do the “day job” but also consolidate inherited IT systems and enable</p>

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	<p>“transformation” for efficiency savings. There should be sufficient business and process analysis resources within IT and change management resources within the business to create “intelligent clients” for every system consolidation. Commissioned IT system suppliers should do the bulk of the consolidation work including legacy data cleansing and loading.</p> <p>Has the consolidation of Executive Directors, ahead of posts being lost and enabling systems being in place, created a leadership capacity issue at the top?</p> <p>Should you consider an Interim Director for Transformation (with a delivery track record) for 1-2 years to drive transformation efficiency savings “at pace and scale”?</p> <p>Every year of delay means more distressed sales of investment assets and/or increased borrowing of at least £40m a year</p>
<p><b>Mr Nigel Behan</b></p>	<p>Q1 relates to Item 6 <a href="#">2024-25 GF Revenue Capital Budget Monitoring Executive Report - Quarter 3 Final.pdf</a> and Item 10 <a href="#">LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Final Report</a></p> <p>In a recent response to the government consultation on local government funding CIPFA commented:</p> <p>“CIPFA is deeply concerned by the ongoing reliance on exceptional financial support (EFS) within the sector. Its prevalence within the sector (19 councils approved to receive EFS, with that number likely to rise dramatically in 2025/26 and 2026/27) means that it can no longer be considered exceptional. Covering recurring day-to-day revenue expenditure through capitalisation directions is unsustainable and represents poor financial management and most significantly poor value for money to the taxpayer. Our experience with the sector shows that this is leading to increased borrowing and consequently greater instability within the sector, and the government must urgently rethink its current position.”</p> <p>“Local authorities are also facing significant financial pressures relating to delivery of services for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), including provision of home-to-school transport. Research has identified a nationwide SEND deficit currently exceeding £3bn across English councils and this is projected to rise to £8bn in 2026/27. These deficits are not accounted for in the government’s £22bn budget gap due to the use of a statutory override. This is further complicated as it results in local authorities experiencing cash flow difficulties, putting them in the position where they are having to borrow to cover day-to-day spending.”</p> <p>The Peer Challenge report noted: “The work on values and behaviours carried out prior to the financial emergency being declared was well received by staff, however, there is now a sense that these have been undermined by actions subsequently taken especially in relation to the workforce reduction programme. As a priority, the council should focus effort on rebuilding trust with staff and demonstrating and recognising their value in order to secure their commitment and good will moving forward.”</p>

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	<p>As Somerset Council is now entering a second financial year requiring EFS, putting up Council Tax by 7.5%, cutting hundreds of jobs and cutting services, do you accept that the forecast underspend should be used to minimise compulsory redundancies and service reductions?</p>
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