

# Public Agenda Pack



Minutes of a Meeting of the Full Council held in the Hollinsworth Hall, Canalside Conference Centre, Marsh Lane, Huntworth, Bridgwater, TA6 6LQ, on Wednesday, 24 May 2023 at 2.00 pm

## **Present:**

Cllr Mike Best (Chair)

Cllr Lee Baker (Vice-Chair)

Cllr Steve Ashton

Cllr John Bailey

Cllr Brian Bolt

Cllr Alan Bradford

Cllr Theo Butt Philip

Cllr Mike Caswell

Cllr Nicola Clark

Cllr Barry Clarke

Cllr Simon Coles

Cllr Nick Cottle

Cllr Hugh Davies

Cllr Andy Dingwall

Cllr Michael Dunk

Cllr Caroline Ellis

Cllr Ben Ferguson

Cllr Andrew Govier

Cllr Andy Hadley

Cllr Philip Ham

Cllr Bente Height

Cllr Ross Henley

Cllr Edric Hobbs

Cllr John Hunt

Cllr Helen Kay

Cllr Marcus Kravis

Cllr Liz Leyshon

Cllr Martin Lovell

Cllr Matthew Martin

Cllr Tessa Munt

Cllr Suria Aujla

Cllr Marcus Barr

Cllr Adam Boyden

Cllr Hilary Bruce

Cllr Simon Carswell

Cllr Norman Cavill

Cllr Mandy Chilcott

Cllr Peter Clayton

Cllr John Cook-Woodman

Cllr Adam Dance

Cllr Tom Deakin

Cllr Lance Duddridge

Cllr Sarah Dyke

Cllr Habib Farbahi

Cllr Bob Filmer

Cllr Tony Grimes

Cllr Pauline Ham

Cllr Mark Healey

Cllr Alistair Hendry

Cllr Mike Hewitson

Cllr Henry Hobhouse

Cllr Dawn Johnson

Cllr Andy Kendall

Cllr Christine Lawrence

Cllr Tony Lock

Cllr Dave Mansell

Cllr Harry Munt

Cllr Frances Nicholson

Cllr Sue Osborne  
Cllr Kathy Pearce  
Cllr Derek Perry  
Cllr Tom Power  
Cllr Steven Pugsley  
Cllr Wes Read  
Cllr Bill Revans  
Cllr Diogo Rodrigues  
Cllr Dean Ruddle  
Cllr Heather Shearer  
Cllr Brian Smedley  
Cllr Federica Smith-Roberts  
Cllr Andy Soughton  
Cllr Claire Sully  
Cllr Lucy Trimnell  
Cllr Martin Wale  
Cllr Alex Wiltshire  
Cllr Rosemary Woods  
Cllr Ros Wyke

Cllr Oliver Patrick  
Cllr Emily Pearlstone  
Cllr Evie Potts-Jones  
Cllr Hazel Prior-Sankey  
Cllr Faye Purbrick  
Cllr Leigh Redman  
Cllr Mike Rigby  
Cllr Jo Roundell Greene  
Cllr Peter Seib  
Cllr Gill Slocombe  
Cllr Fran Smith  
Cllr Jeny Snell  
Cllr Mike Stanton  
Cllr Andy Sully  
Cllr Sarah Wakefield  
Cllr Richard Wilkins  
Cllr David Woan  
Cllr Gwil Wren

## **1 Election of Chair of the Council - Agenda Item 1**

Councillor Hazel Prior-Sankey, Vice Chair of Council, invited nominations for the election of Chair of Council, to serve until the Annual General Meeting of Somerset Council in May 2024.

Councillor Bill Revans proposed, which was duly seconded by Councillor Mandy Chilcott that Councillor Mike Best be elected as Chair of Council to serve until the next Annual General Meeting in May 2024. The Chair then read and signed the formal Declaration of Acceptance of Office and received the Chain of Office:

*"I, Mike Best, having been elected to the Office of Chair of Somerset Council, declare that I take that Office upon myself and will duly and faithfully fulfil the duties of it according to the best of my judgment and ability. I will now sign that declaration."*

## **2 Election of Vice Chair of Council - Agenda Item 2**

Councillor Mike Best, Chair of Council invited nominations for the election of Vice Chair of Council, to serve until the Annual General Meeting of Somerset Council in May 2024.

Councillor Bill Revans proposed, which was duly seconded by Councillor Mandy Chilcott that Councillor Lee Baker be elected as Vice Chair of Council to serve until the next Annual General Meeting in May 2024. The Vice Chair then read and signed the formal Declaration of Acceptance of Office and received the Chain of Office from the Chair:

*"I, Lee Baker, having been elected to the Office of Vice Chair of Somerset Council, declare that I take that Office upon myself and will duly and faithfully fulfil the duties of it according to the best of my judgment and ability. I will now sign that declaration."*

### **3 Apologies for Absence - Agenda Item 3**

Apologies were received from Councillors Jason Baker, Shane Collins, Dawn Denton, Martin Dimery, David Fothergill, Val Keitch, Jenny Kenton, Tim Kerley, Mike Murphy, Graham Oakes, Connor Payne and Tony Robbins.

### **4 Declarations of Interest - Agenda Item 4**

Councillors present at the meeting declared the following interests in their capacity as a Councillor of a City, Town or Parish Council or any other Local Authority:-

<b>UNITARY COUNCILLOR</b>	<b>TOWN AND/OR PARISH COUNCIL</b>
Steve Ashton	Crewkerne Town Council / Hinton St George Parish Council
Suria Aujla	Bridgwater Town Council
Lee Baker	Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish Council
Marcus Barr	Wellington Town Council
Mike Best	Crewkerne Town Council
Alan Bradford	North Petherton Town Council
Theo Butt Philip	Wells City Council
Simon Carswell	Street Parish Council
Norman Cavill	West Monkton Parish Council
Peter Clayton	Burnham Highbridge Town Council
Nick Cottle	Glastonbury Town Council / St Edmunds Parish Council
Adam Dance	South Petherton Parish Council
Tom Deakin	Taunton Town Council
Caroline Ellis	Taunton Town Council
Ben Ferguson	Axbridge Town Council
Bob Filmer	Brent Knoll Parish Council
Andrew Govier	Wellington Town Council

Pauline Ham	Axbridge Town Council
Philip Ham	Coleford Parish Council
Ross Henley	Wellington Town Council
Edric Hobbs	Shepton Mallet Town Council
John Hunt	Bishop's Hull Parish Council
Andy Kendall	Yeovil Town Council
Marcus Kravis	Minehead Town Council
Tony Lock	Yeovil Town Council
Martin Lovell	Shepton Mallet Town Council
Sue Osborne	Ilminster Town Council
Kathy Pearce	Bridgwater Town Council
Emily Pearlstone	Ilchester Parish Council
Wes Read	Yeovil Town Council
Leigh Redman	Bridgwater Town Council
Mike Rigby	Bishop's Lydeard and Cothelstone Parish Council
Dean Ruddle	Somerton Town Council
Peter Seib	Brympton Parish Council / Chilthorne Domer Parish Council
Heather Shearer	Street Parish Council
Gill Slocombe	Bridgwater Town Council
Brian Smedley	Bridgwater Town Council
Federica Smith-Roberts	Taunton Town Council
Jeny Snell	Yeovil Town Council / Brympton Parish Council
Andy Soughton	Yeovil Town Council
Richard Wilkins	Curry Rivel Parish Council
Dave Woan	Yeovil Town Council
Ros Wyke	Westbury-sub-Mendip Parish Council

## **5 Chair's Announcements - Agenda Item 5**

The Chair of Council, Councillor Mike Best, referred to the events detailed on the Chair's Information Sheet, circulated and published with the agenda.

Council observed a minutes silence in memory of Councillor Mike Lewis who had sadly passed away. Several councillors paid tribute to him at the meeting, including Councillors David Fothergill, Mandy Chlicott, Martin Wale, Bill Revans and Henry Hobhouse.

Councillor Andy Dingwall raised a question, regarding the amount of money the Council had spent marking the recent Coronation, the detail and the response provided are attached to the minutes in Appendix A.

Councillors Henry Hobhouse and Sarah Dyke both thanked officers for all the hard work carried out in their local area to support those affected by the recent flooding events in the County.

## **6 Minutes from the Previous Meeting - Agenda Item 6**

The Council **RESOLVED** that the minutes of Full Council meetings held on 22 February 2023 and 1 March 2023 be confirmed as a correct record.

## **7 Public Question Time - Agenda Item 7**

Public questions were received from:-

- Matt Harrison, Shepton Mallet Town Council
- Amanda Millar, Problems on the Dunstan Park Estate, Glastonbury
- Loretta Whetlor, B3191 Watchet, Nolan Principles of Public Life
- David Redgewell, Public Transport in Somerset
- Tess Gill, Petition, Cross to Axbridge Safe Path
- Sigurd Reimer, Climate Emergency and Carbon Neutrality
- Nigel Behan, Global Warming
- Elizabeth Browne, Social Care Provision and Housing Development
- Sarah Baker, Social Care Provision and Housing Development
- Simon Peter McKie, Library Service and OUP Reference Database
- Eva Bryczkowski, Save Yeovil's Acute Stroke Care Services
- Rick Beaver, spoke on behalf of Ray Tostevin – Petition to Save Yeovil's Acute Stroke Care Services.

The questions and the responses provided are attached to the minutes in Appendix A.

The Council debated the Petition to Save Yeovil's Acute Stroke Care Services and the following points were raised:-

- Councillors thanked the representatives of Quicksilver Community Group for their submission of the petition.
- Councillors supported the views raised within the petition.
- Councillors echoed the concerns raised, especially those on travel time which impacted on stroke victims who were seeking medical treatment within the 'golden hour'.
- Praise was given to the speakers who set out their issues in a clear manner.
- Councillor Bill Revans informed the Council of his personal experiences and the care received by his late wife.
- Councillors agreed that the debate needed to go further with the National

Health Service (NHS) as with any lack in NHS provision, it could mean that council services suffered as a consequence.

- Councillors highlighted that the issue had previously been taken to meetings of Scrutiny Committee for debate.
- Councillors highlighted that the proposed closure was due to lack of funding from Central Government.
- Councillors agreed that the petition needed to be passed onto the NHS for action.

Councillor Faye Purbrick proposed the following recommendations, which were duly seconded by Councillor Bill Revans.

Having been duly proposed and seconded the Council **RESOLVED** to approve the following:

- 1) That Somerset Council undertake to make representations to our partners about our concerns on the potential risks to all Somerset residents by the removal of the acute stroke provision in Yeovil.
- 2) That Somerset Council further explored the impact and options of the proposed change and for the Somerset Council Adults and Health Scrutiny Committee to allow for debate and public representations, at the 31st May meeting, on their concerns related to risk to outcomes and Somerset Council services.
- 3) That Somerset Council wrote to all MPs in the County to request their support.

*Meeting adjourned at 16:08*

*Meeting restarted at 16:20*

## **8 Report of the Special Members Panel - Somerset Council Redundancies Arising from Implementation of the Senior Leadership Structure - Decision - Agenda Item 8**

The Chair of the Special Members Panel, Councillor Bill Revans, introduced the report which set out the recommendations to Council which arose from the consideration of the report at the Special Members Panel meeting held on 10 May 2023.

The purpose of the report was to present details of proposed dismissals on account of redundancy in relation to the creation of Somerset Council and the appointments to its Senior Leadership Team. It provided recommendations on the role of Full Council in relation to those dismissals and requested the necessary delegation to the Somerset Council Chief Executive to finalise details of the payments associated with the redundancies, in line with the appropriate legislation and policies.

The Council discussed the report and the following points were raised:-

- Councillors gave their sincere thanks and appreciation to all the officers affected and noted the loss of experience and expertise to the Council.
- Councillors urged that the remainder of the recruitment process be undertaken as soon as practicably possible for the officers in the remaining tiers, as concern was raised on morale and mental health for those waiting for the outcome of any re-structuring of departments.
- Councillors highlighted that the detail within the report was formed as part of the original unitary bid and thanked the officers who had worked on the business case.
- The Leader of Council thanked all councillors for their comments and reminded all that the Council had to follow the legal and fair process for the recruitment.

Councillor Bill Revans proposed the recommendations which were seconded by Councillor Faye Purbrick.

Having been duly proposed and seconded the Council **RESOLVED** to accept the following in response to the Special Members Panel report “Somerset Council Redundancies Arising from Implementation of the Senior Leadership Structure” (Appendix B) considered by the Special Members Panel on 10 May 2023:

- 2.1.1 Approve the recommendations of the Special Members Panel, in respect of the proposed dismissals on account of redundancy of current and former chief/deputy chief officer posts and associated costs set out in section 9.3 of Appendix B to the report.
- 2.1.2 Approve the severance costs for posts as set out in section 8.2 of Appendix B, where Full Council approval was required for costs that exceeded £100,000.
- 2.1.3 Note the decisions of the Special Members Panel, in respect of dismissals on account of redundancy for posts that were not included in 2.1.1 - 2.1.2, above.
- 2.1.4 Delegate authority to the Chief Executive to agree the final date of dismissal and the final redundancy packages, noting that such settlements would not exceed contractual redundancy pay, the payment required under statute to the Local Government Pension Scheme, or the requirement for Full Council approval for any severance payment that exceeded £100,000.

The Chief Executive, Duncan Sharkey, highlighted an addendum to the paper regarding a non-Local Government Review related redundancy associated to the cancellation of the Libraries West contract.

Councillor Bill Revans proposed the recommendations included within the addendum report which were seconded by Councillor Mandy Chilcott.

Having been duly proposed and seconded the Council **RESOLVED** to:

- 2.1 Approve the costs of the redundancy, as set out in Appendix One.
- 2.2 Delegate authority to the Chief Executive to agree the final date of dismissal and the final redundancy package, noting that the settlement would not exceed contractual redundancy pay or the payment required under statute to the Local Government Pension Scheme.
- 2.3 Delegate authority to the Service Director to conclude discussions on the contribution from partner organisations towards redundancy costs.

## **9 Report of the Chief Executive - Decision - Agenda Item 9**

The Chief Executive, Duncan Sharkey, introduced the report which detailed the process to appoint the Monitoring Officer, the Executive Director of Children and Families and the Service Directors.

The Council discussed the report and the following points were raised:-

- Councillors congratulated those officers who had been successful in being appointed to Executive Director and Service Director roles.
- Councillors highlighted the detailed and thorough recruitment process.
- Councillors thanked the current Monitoring Officer, Scott Wooldridge, for all his hard work.

Councillor Bill Revans proposed the recommendations which were seconded by Councillor Mandy Chilcott.

Having been duly proposed and seconded the Council **RESOLVED** to:

- 2.1 Note the appointments of Service Directors for Somerset Council
- 2.2 Designate and empower David Clark with the statutory chief officer functions of the Monitoring Officer for Somerset Council.
- 2.3 Note the appointment of Claire Winter as the Executive Director, Children and Family Services
- 2.4 Approve the salary of £146,892 for the Executive Director of Children and Family Services.

## **10 Report of the Standards Committee - Decision - Agenda Item 10**

The Chair of the Standards Committee, Councillor John Bailey, introduced the report which set out a recommendation agreed at the meeting held on 19 April 2023, to appoint a Vice Chair for the Standards Committee.

Councillor John Bailey advised that the reason behind the recommendation was to



provide resilience for the committee should the Chair be absent or unable to preside over any part of the meeting.

Councillor John Bailey proposed the recommendations which were seconded by Councillor Leigh Redman.

Having been duly proposed and seconded the Council **RESOLVED** to:

- 2.1 Amend the Standards Committee's terms of reference in the Constitution to include the appointment of a vice-chair;
- 2.2 Agree the Committee's nomination of Councillor Brian Smedley for the role of vice-chair; and
- 2.3 Request that the Independent Remuneration Panel considered and recommended to the Council whether the role should be awarded a Special Responsibility Allowance and if so at what level that should be set at.

## **11 Report of the Returning Officer - Decision - Agenda Item 11**

The Chief Executive and Returning Officer, Duncan Sharkey, introduced the report which set out the scale of fees and charges now that Somerset Council had assumed the responsibility for running the various elections which were previously run by the four district councils.

The Council discussed the report and the following points were raised:-

- Councillors urged officers to calculate an actual cost of an election for Parish Councils to use in calculations for their council tax precepts.
- Councillors suggested that the Local Community Networks should receive training on election costs to better assist their local councils.
- Councillors thanked officers for their work on the elections and were happy to support the recommendations.

Councillor Bill Revans proposed the recommendations which were seconded by Councillor John Hunt.

Having been duly proposed and seconded the Council **RESOLVED** to note the report and approve the fees and charges to apply to the various elections in Somerset for 2023/4 set out in the Appendices to the report.

## **12 Report of the Executive Director Public Health - Decision - Agenda Item 12**

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Bill Revans, introduced the report which set out the proposed future arrangements for the Board for consideration and approval by Full Council including amendments to the current Health and Wellbeing Board

(HWB) and Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) terms of reference to allow them to be better aligned.

The proposed purpose of the Somerset Board would see it become a high-level strategic partnership for health care and wellbeing across the county; in essence to consider all influences on what it was to live and work in Somerset. It would be comprised of members of the Somerset HWB and ICP.

The Council discussed the report and the following points were raised:-

- Councillors thanked officers for their work on the HWB and ICP.
- Councillors endorsed joint working with colleagues in the Health Sector.
- Councillors highlighted the importance of scrutiny within the work of the Board.
- Concern was raised regarding the lack of frequency of meetings.
- Concern was raised regarding the composition and membership of the Board.

In response to the points raised, the Leader of the Council, Councillor Bill Revans, noted: that he was happy to monitor and review meeting frequency if this proved necessary; that he was happy to review the composition and membership of the Board if this proved necessary; and that the Lead Member for Public Health, Equalities and Diversity would ensure other key partners and stakeholders were invited to attend meetings and present feedback from their organisations for debate.

Councillor Adam Dance proposed the recommendations which were seconded by Councillor Mandy Chilcott.

Having been duly proposed and seconded the Council **RESOLVED** to approve the following:

- 2.1 That Full Council considered the proposals and approved the approach to align the HWB and the ICP committees to sit in common through the Somerset Board.
- 2.2 That Full Council approved the attached overarching Somerset Board Constitution which included updates to the Terms of Reference for the HWB and ICP (Appendix 1).

### **13 Motions on Notice - Decision - Agenda Item 13**

#### **Somerset Council to treat Care Experience as if it were a Protected Characteristic Motion**

Councillors Leigh Redman introduced the Motion and noted the following:-

- The role of all Councillors as a corporate parent.
- The Council had undertaken much work of late, including the Care Leavers Covenant.
- The need to revisit the Care Leavers Covenant to ensure it remained fit for purpose.
- The importance of Councillors supporting the Motion.
- The Motion included some pretty harrowing statistics like the UCL study which showed 70% of care experienced people died early or 'Become Charity's' research that showed over 50% of people who were in custody up to the age of 21 had been in care or the facts contained in the Independent Review of Children's Social Care that showed a quarter of the homeless population was care experienced.
- The Motion was already being adopted by Councils around the country, taking the issue into their own hands.
- That the Motion was not seeking to change legislation, but that it was hoped this would happen in line with one of Josh McAlister's recommendations in his independent care review.

The Council discussed the Motion and the following points were raised:-

- Councillors thanked Councillor Redman for the Motion.
- Councillors welcomed the Motion.
- Councillors highlighted it was about the principles over and above corporate parenting.
- Councillors agreed it was right for the people of Somerset and the country.

Councillor Leigh Redman proposed the recommendations which were seconded by Councillor Frances Nicholson.

Having been duly proposed and seconded the Council **RESOLVED** to approve the following:

- 1) That the Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer ensured that all council making decision documentation had in it appropriate sections to allow for the impact upon 'care experienced people' to be considered in decision making, where relevant and that:
- 2) Officers considered how information might be captured and reported to council.
- 3) Any publication of information relating to people who shared a Protected Characteristic also included 'care experienced people'
- 4) To proactively seek out and listen to the voices of care experienced people of all ages when developing new Council policies and plans and, where possible, those where the Council produced them in partnership with others.
- 5) To request that the Chief Executive, as Head of Paid Service, explored with

the Director of HR how the Council could seek to guarantee all care experienced persons an interview where they met the essential criteria of the post applied for.

- 6) That the Executive Member for Children and Families wrote to all public bodies represented in the Council area to make them aware of this motion and, where possible and within available resources, offer training on corporate parenting and issues facing care experienced people and to work with our partners and our care experienced population to understand what corporate parenting meant for them.
- 7) And further the Executive member should write to Somerset MPs making them aware of this motion and asking them to press government to amend the law to include Care Experienced persons as a Protected Characteristic and for the extension of Corporate Parenting to all public bodies, following the recommendations of the MacAlister Report.
- 8) That the Chief Executive, Senior Directors, and Monitoring Officer attend a Corporate Parenting Board meeting early in the next council year to report on the actions taken as a result of this motion on notice.

### **Commit to working with bus operators across Somerset to establish a Somerset-wide discounted bus pass for 16-25 year olds**

Councillor Diogo Rodrigues introduced the Motion and noted the following:-

- He firmly believed that young people should have access to affordable and reliable bus travel throughout the entire year, and regardless as to whether or not they were in education.
- The current limited availability of youth fares, coupled with challenging costs, had deterred many young people from using the local bus services. The Bus Service Improvement Plan survey revealed that 38% of 16 to 25-year-olds cited cost as the primary reason for not using buses more frequently, with a staggering 44% stating that they did not use local buses at all.
- By simplifying bus travel and making it more accessible and affordable for young people with a single county-wide youth buss pass, we not only addressed their concerns but also aligned with our commitment to decarbonise the county through greener transport options.
- That accessible and affordable bus transport also held immense potential for young people, particularly those living in rural communities who often faced social isolation. By providing them with reliable means to connect with education, employment, and social activities, we could foster greater community cohesion and break down barriers of isolation.

The Council discussed the Motion and the following points were raised:-

- Councillors strongly agreed with the Motion.

- Councillors agreed that it was important that reduced bus fares were offered to all young people and not just those in education.
- Concern was raised on the reliability of the bus services in the county.
- Councillors highlighted that some rural areas did not have a bus service for young people to use.
- The Lead Member for Transport and Digital agreed with all the comments but suggested a discounted pass should be introduced at the point the current national £2 reduced fare scheme ended.

Councillor Diogo Rodrigues proposed the recommendations which were seconded by Councillor John Hunt.

Having been duly proposed and seconded the Council **RESOLVED** to approve the following amended recommendation: This Council reaffirmed its commitment to working with bus operators across Somerset to establish an affordable Somerset-wide discounted bus pass for 16 to 25-year-olds.

#### **14 Annual Report of the Leader of the Council and Report of the Leader and Executive - Information - Agenda Item 14**

The Leader of the Council introduced his annual report which included a summary of the key decisions taken by the Leader and the Executive.

The Council discussed the report and the following points were addressed to the Lead Members:-

- Wellington Library refurbishment contract
- Capital Programme and allocation of funds for projects
- Medium Term Financial Plan
- Grass cutting and lack of service
- Timeline for Schools for Special Educational Needs
- Traveller encampments and park and ride site configuration to restrict access

Councillor Liz Leyshon proposed the recommendations which were seconded by Councillor Heather Shearer.

Having been duly proposed and seconded the Council **RESOLVED** to:

- 2.1 Receive the annual report of the Leader of the Council as set out in Appendix 1; and
- 2.2 Note the details of key decisions taken by the Leader, the Executive, Executive Lead Members and Senior Officers as set out in Appendix 2.

#### **15 Report of the Monitoring Officer - Decision - Agenda Item 15**

The Monitoring Officer, David Clark, introduced the report which set out for the 2023/24 municipal year the proposed allocation and appointment of members to committee places/seats (see Paper A), the proposed appointment of members to Outside Bodies (see Paper B) and the Council's approval to the accuracy of minutes of several former committees of legacy district councils (see Paper C).

The Council discussed the report and the following points were raised:-

Paper A

- Councillors supported the recommendations but questions were raised regarding the delay in the publication of the report.

Paper B

- The Deputy Leader highlighted that the representatives on the Somerset NHS Foundation Trust should be Councillor Adam Dance and Councillor Heather Shearer to ensure continuity of representation.
- It was noted that as a mark of respect, any Outside Body appointments formerly held by Councillor Mike Lewis had been left vacant at this time.
- Councillors questioned when the Outside Bodies would be notified of any changes to their nominated member representatives.

Paper C

- Councillors requested work was undertaken to ensure that actions agreed by the previous councils were not lost in the transition period.

Councillor Liz Leyshon proposed the recommendations which were seconded by Councillor Heather Shearer.

Having been duly proposed and seconded the Council **RESOLVED** to approve:

Paper A

- 1) Note the political balance of the Council and agreed the proposed allocation of committee places as set out in this report and its appendices;
- 2) Agree the terms of reference, size and quorum arrangements for all committees as set out in the Council's Constitution
- 3) Continue to agree the recommendation of the political group leaders to continue to set aside the political balance rules for the Standards Committee and the four area-based Planning Committees and instead allocated places for those committees on the basis set out in Appendix 3;
- 4) Approve the appointment of Chairs, Vice-Chairs, members and co-opted members to the Council's committee and joint committees as set out in the Appointments Schedule (see Appendix 3)
- 5) Delegate authority to the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the appropriate political group leader, to make in-year changes to committee and joint committee appointments (excluding the appointment of Chairs and

Vice-Chairs) in accordance with the allocation of places to political groups by the Council and the wishes of the relevant political group leader.

Paper B

- 6) Agree the appointment of members to internal, partnership and outside bodies for 2023/24 until the next Annual General Meeting, as set out in Appendix 1.
- 7) Delegate authority to the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the political group leaders, to make in-year changes to internal, partnership and outside bodies appointments in accordance with the wishes of the relevant political group leader.

Paper C

- 8) Approve the accuracy of the minutes of several former committee meetings of legacy councils as set out in Appendices 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5.
- 9) Agree the case for exempt information for the minutes of the former Mendip District Council Audit Committee meeting on 22 March 2023 (Appendix 1), the Mendip District Council Asset Management Group meeting on 24 March 2023 (see Appendix 1), the Somerset Waste Board meeting on 10 February 2023 (see Appendix 3) and the Somerset Joint Waste Scrutiny meeting on 8 February 2023 (see Appendix 3) to be treated in confidence, as the case for the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing that information.
- 10) Agree to exclude the press and public from the meeting where there was any discussion at the meeting regarding the minutes of the former Mendip District Council Audit Committee meeting on 22 March 2023, or the former Mendip District Council Asset Management Group meeting on 24 March 2023, or Somerset Waste Board meeting on 10 February 2023 or the Somerset Joint Waste Scrutiny meeting on 8 February 2023 (to be treated as exempt information).

**(The meeting ended at 6.10 pm)**

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**CHAIR**

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**Full Council – AGM - 24 May 2023 – Public and Member Questions**

	<b>Annexe A – Public Questions</b>
<b>Name of person submitting</b>	<b>Question</b>
<p><b>Town Cllr Matt Harrison</b></p>	<p><b><i>At its full council meeting of 2 May 2023, Shepton Mallet Town Council unanimously resolved to submit the following requests to Somerset Council.</i></b></p> <p><b><u>Shape Campus Commercial Options Appraisal</u></b> Somerset Council should engage with Shepton Mallet Town Council’s resolution to undertake a commercial options appraisal so the two organisations can have a serious commercial and political conversation about it. Given the context of Shepton Mallet now being without a leisure centre and question marks looming large over the future of the Minor Injuries Unit, the Town Council should lead this conversation. The Integrated Care Board and local Primary Care Networks are undertaking significant research about potentially needing space at Shape so the organisations should make sure we are joined-up on this.</p> <p><b><u>Shape Campus car park and Park Road utilisation</u></b> The new Collett Park play park and Strawberry Line link opening have shown Shepton Mallet Town Council means it when it says they are physically developing the town. However, Shepton Mallet Town Council needs cooperation from Somerset Council to best utilise the car park to make visiting Shepton and the park easy. This would encourage tourism and drive economic regeneration. See also Town wide car parking strategy.</p> <p><b><u>Levelling Up Fund Round 2 bid project deployment</u></b> Shepton Mallet Town Council needs to ensure the thousands of pounds spent on this work is not wasted before time dilutes its relevance. Shepton Mallet Town Council needs to ensure the work is considered by highways and planned in. Specifically, we need highways to consider the High Street reversal project, as proposed both in the Levelling Up Fund round 2 bid and the Neighbourhood Plan. As our incumbent MP has made clear, the work</p>

## Full Council – AGM – 24 May 2023 – Public and Member Questions

identified in the bid should have been delivered by the previous County Council as business as usual. Shepton Mallet Town Council needs to make sure the new Council knows this will be expected of them. Specifically also, the Rectory Road safety improvements as resolved in Shepton Mallet Town Council 's TD&P committee need implementing by highways.

### **Leisure Centre / Sports provision**

As Shepton Mallet Town Council develops a strategy for addressing the structural shortfalls - a legacy from previous administrations - we need both expertise and funding from Somerset Council so when Shepton Mallet Town Council is in a position to build, it is able to do so.

### **West Shepton Playing Fields**

Shepton Mallet Town Council needs to take ownership of this land to (i) protect from future housing development, other than the much-needed social provision already planned (ii) give the town quality open green space that can be used for sports in perpetuity. It's in such a great position now (Scouts, football club, skate park, BMX track, Strawberry Line), a development strategy would be easy to pull together. The Somerset FA has serious money on the table now to help develop physical assets such as 5G training pitches and pavilions.

### **Commercial Road car park**

There have been two serious offers from commercial developers in the last three years; Shepton Mallet Town Council needs to truly benefit from any development and play a much more upweighted role than the standard statutory consultee position it normally takes. Whoever/whatever buys the land would shape that part of Shepton for decades to come.

### **The former registry office**

Shepton Mallet Town Council should take ownership of this strategically located modern, relatively well maintained building which is currently not in use.

**Friday markets charter**

The opportunity to drive economic regeneration could be much more easily realised if Shepton Mallet Town Council takes ownership of the weekly Friday market. Exploratory research into effective operational and marketing of other markets has already begun. It is vital that footfall is raised on the High Street and pedestrianised Town Street, not just to assist existing businesses but also to help make people feel safer on our streets; regular markets are a great way of facilitating this and Shepton Mallet Town Council believes it can vastly improve on the current offering.

**B3136 / A37 cycle bridges**

Highways need to maintain the momentum of the Mendip legacy of the Strawberry Line by funding the installation of these bridges. Priority to the B3136 so a direct, traffic-free route to Wells is created. Shepton Mallet Town Council commissioned the engineering plans. Highways should provide the installation funds. Shepton Mallet Town Council can project manage it, like it did the Market Place resurfacing.

**Free parking for existing Sunday market**

Shepton Mallet Town Council needs to be able to actively promote the Shape Mendip car park as being free to park in over weekends to help the Sunday market thrive. According to the current market organiser, it is the only monthly market in Somerset not to benefit from advertised free parking. See also Town wide car parking strategy.

**Flooding mitigation work**

Shepton Mallet Town Council needs Somerset Council to commit to fund the proposed works pulled together by the Mendip-funded Calm Engineering and Carroll Environmental project. Especially as house building increases, the known bottlenecks in the foul and surface water waste works need to be addressed.

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### **Social housing commitment**

Shepton Mallet Town Council needs Somerset Council to commit to deliver on the confirmed social housing plans for West Shepton.

### **National Planning Policy Framework support**

Shepton Mallet Town Council needs Somerset Council to help assist with the delivery of the 'CG Fry / former Mid-Somerset Showground' plans to alleviate the local housing shortage. This will (i) provide much needed S106 (or CIL if that replaces it) and reduce the potential of speculative developers wanting to build on inappropriate sites.

### **Citizens Advice Bureau funding**

Shepton Mallet Town Council should not be funding this organisation. It should insist on requesting this is funded in a more strategic way and all CABs in the county funded holistically, by the county council.

### **Bringing tourism to Shepton**

Shepton is proud of The Prison which is now a major tourist attraction in the South West. The town needs to capitalise on this to make it a destination rather than a single visit location. There are several decaying buildings in need of restoration and development, including The Anglo Trading Estate, a Grade II\* building at risk, The Bell pub in the town centre, and the Amulet. Shepton Mallet Town Council has ideas for projects in such key buildings that would attract tourism if funds can be sourced.

### **Town wide car parking strategy**

Somerset Council should fund a town-wide car parking strategy that identifies issues perceived by residents, availability of car parking and then implement mitigation plans to assist with the economic regeneration of the town.

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	<p><b><u>Library</u></b> Somerset Council to continue to fund library provision to enable the facility to remain in its current location and provide the same opening hours and service.</p> <p><b><u>Citizens Advice</u></b> Shepton Mallet Town Council should be considering its long-term funding of this organisation. It should insist on requesting this funding in a more strategic way and all Citizen’s Advice in the County funded holistically by Somerset Council and remains committed to supporting its residents.</p> <p><b><i>Response from: Cllr Ros Wyke, Lead Member for Economy, Planning &amp; Assets</i></b></p> <p>We would like to thank the Town Council for its questions. It is recognised that there a number of concerns, issues and opportunities that have been raised which are important to the Town Council and the community of Shepton Mallet. We value engagement with all our partners in Parish, Town and our City Councils. As I am sure you will appreciate, it is challenging to address each of the points raised in this format in an appropriately detailed way. With that in mind, I can assure you that relevant Cllrs and Officers would be willing to meet with you to discuss each of the points in detail and, discuss possible next steps.</p>
<p><b>Amanda Millar</b></p>	<p><b>Problems on Dunstan Park Estate</b></p> <p>Welcome to Chaos Road!</p> <p>Problems on Dunstan Park Estate and the Need to Prevent Children From Harm.</p> <p>Residents who live on Dunstan Park Estate in Glastonbury are concerned about the lack of traffic calming measures and potential danger to children playing on or near any of the roads into the estate.</p>

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It is a relatively new estate just off the Wells Road and round the corner from West Mendip hospital.

Taylor Wimpey built it and have been responsible for its maintenance.

Residents have written to them a number of times asking what are they are doing about transferring the responsibility to Somerset County Council highways department and when will it ever happen. They always reply that it takes a long time to do all the checks properly before the transfer is done.

But the first section of the busy main road into estate was originally built 14 years ago!

Furthermore, this part of the thoroughfare has now become the responsibility of the highways department.

Their latest email states that section 28 applies to part of our estate, Sharpham Road, the main thoroughfare into the estate and therefore the highways department is responsible for it.

Then it is the transport department's responsibility, according to them.

I rang the transport department and they were very helpful.

They advised us to:-

Look up the Somerset County council's site online to find out about speed limits.

Look into additional information about traffic calming measures.

Contact our local councillor Phillip Ham about this.

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Contact our local town council.

Contact our local parish council.

Make an application to the appropriate department in Somerset County Council.

We will do this but we fear that it will take a long time.

We want to avoid a child being injured or fatally wounded as soon as possible.

Some residents have decided to take matters into their own hands regarding speed limits and other measures.

A resident called round to my house just now.

He described how when new people, (including drivers of emergency vehicles), come into the estate via Sharpham Road they don't know the layout of the estate.

They will then drive into the narrowest road of all.

This is the only road where vehicles are able to go into and out of the estate. They won't be able to see around the sharp corner until it is too late.

No matter how slowly they drive, they will meet oncoming traffic within a very limited space, with cars parked either side of this narrow road.

Emergency vehicles, paramedics, have been delayed due to the preponderance of parked cars everywhere blocking the corner and not able to reach critically ill patients quickly enough.

Residents call the above,

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CHAOS ROAD.

We residents will do our best but feel that this is far too urgent.

We would like somebody in Somerset County Council, if at all possible, to take on some of the responsibility and help us with our enquiries.

Workers in the transport department have been very helpful so far, unlike Taylor Wimpey, who we will write to yet again.

We would like traffic calming measures put in place as soon as possible.

And we want it done now in order to protect children on our estate from harm.

QUESTION ONE

What help can any department, person or officer give to us in order to prevent a child being injured or fatally wounded?

QUESTION TWO

What timescale can be given regarding the above?

QUESTION THREE

What S.M.A.R.T. goals can be put in place to achieve the above?



(S. Specific  
M. Measurable  
A. Achievable  
R. Realistic  
T. Timed)

ie how long will this take, a day, a week or months away?

***Response from: Cllr Mike Rigby, Lead Member for Transport and Digital***

We are sorry to learn about your concerns regarding traffic on this new development. While this development is substantially complete the developer has not yet satisfied all obligations to secure highway authority adoption and therefore it does not yet form part of the maintainable public highway asset, this includes Sharpham Road. If residents want speed reducing measures then they could canvass the developer directly although they are only obligated to complete the works in accordance with the planning consent, which they have done.

As you may be aware Somerset Council looks after over 6600 km of roads and we have to carefully prioritise improvement works in line with the limited budgets available which involves making some very difficult decisions to make sure our resources are directed where there is clear evidence of significant problems or incidents. Fortunately, there have been no recorded personal injury collisions within this development which does mean that even if these roads were public highway this area would not be a priority for us in terms of funding and the only mechanism of taking any scheme forward would be if the Town Council/community were able to fully fund it.

I am sorry that this is not the answer you were looking for.

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**Loretta  
Whetlor**

### **B3191 Watchet**

Thank you for allowing me to come and address you today. I am here as a very concerned resident of Watchet. Back on 12<sup>th</sup> January this year Somerset County Council closed the B3191 following the results of a geotechnical survey. More detailed inspections revealed further movement of the road as reported in the news on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2023. Since that date no further information has been passed to the people of Watchet. They are very unhappy about this they feel that they have been forgotten and wonder if it's a case of "if we don't mention it perhaps it will go away". Well, it won't go away and nor will the people of Watchet. It is affecting businesses and residents alike. Tourism will be drastically affected this summer.

My questions are :

1. Has there been any more movement of the road/cliff documented since the last date on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2023? If so please can we in Watchet be told. If not, why has no more been done. It is now 2 months since this last report and 5 months since the road was closed initially. Please advise the people of Watchet that you have not abandoned them.
2. Can you please advise whether all the Councillors on the Somerset Council are aware of the 7 Nolan Principles of Public Life. If not, can you assure me that they will be.
3. A resident recently told me that she has written to the Leader of the Council, The Chair of the Council, several MPs in London including the Prime Minister and the Portfolio Holder of the Council responsible for Highways regarding my first question. These letters/emails were sent over the past two months. She has to date not received ONE response to her letters/emails. I find this appalling. I am happy to provide her name to you privately.

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**Response from: Cllr Mike Rigby, Lead Member for Transport and Digital and Cllr Bill Revans, Leader of the Council**

**Response to Q1** (Andrew Turner) The B3191 Cleeve Hill, Watchet has been closed indefinitely due to the substantial risk associated with the cliff instability.

Somerset Council initially closed the road on 12 January 2023 following the results of a geotechnical survey. Since then, two further surveys have been undertaken on 16 February and 19 April. Both surveys indicate a further cumulative movement of up to 6 millimetres at some survey points located on the road surface.

The permanent directional signage package was issued to our contractor in May 2023 after consultation with communities. The new and replacement signs will be delivered at the end of May and installation is expected to commence from 5 June 2023.

The English Coast Path at Cleeve Hill has already been diverted and further work continues in collaboration with Natural England and adjacent landowners to assess alternative route options.

An economic development business survey has been launched.

Possible improvements to the pedestrian environment in the town centre, include (subject to budget allocations and consultation):

- a. restriction of vehicle access to Swain St Car Park to create a loading bay to free up pedestrian/cycle space on Swain St
- b. cosmetic improvements such as painting exterior of doctor's surgery, additional planters, etc.
- c. longer term, there is an ambition is to remove kerbs in town centre to enhance public realm

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	<p>Public Rights of Way and Active Travel: improvements to current diversion (footpath WL 30/2, running from the top of B3191 down to the ‘donkey field’ and Mineral Line) are taking place at the end of May including additional aggregate and improvements to the steps. Evidence shows this diversion is well used and well signed. Discussions with landowners are still ongoing for improving path on Mineral Line (cutting back vegetation, surface improvements, considering permissive agreement for cycling). The Council is also considering how to avoid drainage issues on footpath WL 18/64 plus mitigating safety concerns for increased footfall over West Somerset Railway level crossing (at Kentsford Cross). Further diversions to reopen walking and cycling access around the closure (potential for a further diversion for England Coast Path) are ongoing. A key focus of this workstream is to encourage walking and cycling from Warren Bay to Watchet town centre in peak season.</p> <p>With respect to future communications, the Council is working on a new page for Somerset Council website that will have FAQs, to be updated regularly to reflect current information.</p> <p><b>Response to Q2</b> (Scott Wooldridge) – I can confirm that all Councillors on Somerset Council are aware of the 7 Nolan Principles of Public Life. Members received Code of Conduct training following the elections in May 2022. The principles are also set out in the Members Code of Conduct in the Council’s Constitution and that was adopted by the Council at its meeting on 22 February 2023.</p>
<p><b>David Redgewell</b></p>	<p><b>Public Transport in Somerset</b></p> <p>Question 1.</p> <p>What progress is being made on the Wells bus and coach station to Westbury Sub Mendip Draycott Cheddar Axbridge bus routes and connections with Winscombe Banwell Locking Weston bus and coach station, service 51.</p>

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Especially with the summer tourist season in Somerset and the need for access to Cheddar and Axbridge by public transport network.

Local residents also need access to education, colleges and university in Weston Super Mare and Weston Super Mare hospital.

This is an urgent matter for Somerset Catch the Bus Campaign, Somerset Bus Partnership, Railfuture Severnside with the main line First Group, Great Western Railway Station at Weston Super Mare. Councillors Tessa Munts and Theo Butt Phillips, Wells Bus Users Group.

Visit Somerset and Visit West South West Transport Network, Severnside Railway Partnership.

In view of the fact North Somerset Council has provided a new bus service from Cribbs Causeway bus and coach station to Portishead and Clevedon.

What progress is being made with North Somerset Council and Somerset Council on this important transport link, urgently for the summer season as a 16 seater westlink demand responsive bus service is not big enough for the transport link.

Questions 2.

What progress is being made with First Group Plc Bus Division South on the recruitment of drivers at the following bus depots: Minehead, Bridgwater, Taunton and Yeovil and First Group Plc Wales and West Bus Division on bus drivers for Wells Bus Depot in Somerset, which is subject to an electrification plan.

Is any monitoring being carried out by Somerset Council officers on the streets in Taunton and District or Minehead on the effect on passengers or discussion with the western traffic commissioner Kevin Rooney.

Questions 3.

What progress is being made on the plans to improve bus railway integration at Taunton railway station for buses and coaches with waiting shelters and passengers facilities and Taunton transport hub.

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With Network Rail, Western Route, First Group Plc, Great Western Railway, Arriva Cross Country Trains, German State Railway, Department for Transport, Severn Railway Partnership, Heart of the West, Local Enterprises Partnership and Peninsula Transport Board.

To make bus rail integration work for the West Somerset by First Group Plc Bus 28 and the West Somerset Railway via Bishop Lydeard station. And bus 25 to Dulverton and progress on Taunton transport hub.

In the town centre for buses and coaches service on First Group Plc South Division, Buses of Somerset, National Express coaches, Megabus, Flixbus, Berrys Coaches, Hatch Green and Dartline Go Ahead Group South West.

On waiting rooms changing places toilets, cafe or snack bar, CCTV cameras and modern waiting facilities bus and rail realtime information systems.

When is a public consultation and planning application due.

David Redgewell South West Transport Network, Railfuture Severnside.

***Response from: Cllr Mike Rigby, Lead Member for Transport and Digital***

Driver shortage – missing miles are running at just over 1% which is close to the long-term average. more resources – borrowed drivers – 8 drivers from Cornwall.

**Question 1 response**

We understand that North Somerset Council are continuing to explore options to either link up a conventional registered local bus service with our 126 at Cheddar or provide a through service which Somerset Council would be asked to contribute to. At present there are no further details available, however with the recent announcement by the Department for Transport in relation to the replacement of Bus Recovery Grant with Bus Service Improvement Plan Plus funding, the future of the current 126 service is now secure in the short to medium term.

**Question 2 response.**

We are receiving daily updates from Buses of Somerset regarding reliability of services from depots at Minehead, Bridgwater, Taunton and Yeovil. These updates are providing us with lost mileage information which is much improved from February 2023 when there were a significant number of cancellations. Officers met with Buses of Somerset managers on 15 May and were advised that they are currently 10 drivers short, but they continue to operate with 8 drivers provided from outside the area leaving them only two short overall which is manageable, with a steady stream of drivers currently entering their training school. We are not carrying out on street monitoring of services in Taunton at present as the operator is sharing reliability information freely with us and we are not in conversation with the Western Traffic Commissioner as we are satisfied that Buses of Somerset are doing all they can to restore and maintain reliability at this time.

For the Wells depot of First West of England we are not aware of any significant driver shortage, and we are not currently receiving complaints about reliability of services operated from this depot.

**Question 3 response:**

With regard to the rail station interchange, the interchange is in place, but the Trenchard Way junction works need to be completed before the buses can use it (so buses can be routed past the platform and egress from the new junction). The works being undertaken by Milestone are on-programme and will be completed in early June as originally planned. We are liaising with the local bus operators with regard to the bus stops that will be served once the interchange is operational.

The Taunton mobility hub is about to enter stage 2 feasibility. Once complete we will have a preferred layout with high level design and costings. The hub will include a waiting area with wifi and real time bus information. The feasibility study will help our understanding of what other components, such as a café, could be included. Public consultation and detailed design will take place this autumn.

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	<p>There is a changing places facility being located at the site too, that work is being done by a team within Major and Special Projects.</p>
<b>Tess Gill</b>	<p><b>Petition Cross to Axbridge Safe Path - Get the Job Done</b></p> <p>Thank you for this opportunity to present and speak in support of our online petition, (Cross to Axbridge Safe Path - Get the Job Done <a href="https://chnng.it/YDM92NzJWk">https://chnng.it/YDM92NzJWk</a>) asking the Council to take action to ensure the right of way between Cross and Axbridge is safe and accessible to all users. This has been an objective of the Parish Council and local community for many years due to the danger to pedestrians of walking on narrow Cross Lane which is the only alternative route between Cross and Axbridge and is increasingly congested with HGV vehicles. Axbridge has the shops, school, chemist, Doctor making it an essential destination for Cross and Compton Bishop which have none.</p> <p>Our campaign was established in 2013 by the Parish Council and our first action was a procession of local people from Axbridge to Cross where we were addressed by Tessa Munt then our MP.</p> <p>In 2016 we presented our first petition to SCC and with the support of David Fothergill and local Councillor Bob Filmer work was carried out in 2020 installing a pedestrian refuge on the A38 and a pavement along Cross Lane up to the entrance to the right of way across the fields. This was a big step forward but we have had numerous reports since then of pedestrians using the right of way including children being worried by cattle. An Axbridge resident was seriously injured. One field along the way still has no fencing separating the cattle from pedestrians, the other a flimsy electric fence easily breached. The grassy surface is unsuitable for buggies and mobility scooters or for those less mobile and the gates are inaccessible for such users.</p> <p>Therefore the steps set out in the petition are also urgently needed, namely:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The footpath has a firm stable surface</li><li>2. Stock proof fencing is installed along the whole length to ensure the safety of pedestrians, prams, children and dogs on leads;</li><li>3. Any gates if necessary are accessible to all users including mobility scooters and buggies.</li></ol>



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	<p>We have been told there is a new programme of SIS projects that will focus on the Government’s transport priorities of carbon reduction, promoting active travel, safety and rural mobility. We believe that upgrading the right of way has excellent policy alignment with these objectives. It will stop car use for a distance of less than a mile and encourage the pleasant walk along the path with views of our beautiful countryside. Our petition which is supported by the Parish Council, Axbridge Action Group, and our County Councillors is the latest of many expressions of strong community support. The comments made by signatories to the petition attest to the dangers of Cross Lane and problems with access to and safety from cattle of walking along the right of way. As Cross Lane is the only alternative to using the right of way there is no current safe route and we would ask the Council to give it its support.</p> <p><b><i>Response from: Cllr Ros Wyke, Lead Member for Economy, Planning &amp; Assets</i></b></p> <p>The Council wholeheartedly supports your objective to create an off-road active travel route between Cross and Axbridge. Upgrading the current RoW may be an option but will need the agreement of Landowners along the route and we suggest that initial discussions are best conducted at a local level to understand the willingness of Landowners to engage and support the proposal. Council Officers are available to give support and advice to local community representatives on the technical and legal issues that are likely to need to be explored and agreed with Landowners along the RoW.</p>
<b>Sigurd Reimer</b>	<p><b>Climate Emergency – Carbon Neutrality</b></p> <p>Four years ago Somerset County Council and the four District Councils declared a climate emergency. A number of positive initiatives followed in their wake, and during this period Taunton Extinction Rebellion had a number of meetings with its local Council, based on our worries about the risks from climate breakdown. In particular, we expressed, and are still expressing, concern around the evidence from United Nations scientists</p>

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	<p>of an imminent and irretrievable tipping point being reached in extreme weather patterns, caused by climate change.</p> <p>With today being the first meeting of the new Council, how realistic does it now regard achieving its aim of carbon neutrality by 2030?</p> <p><b><i>Response from: Cllr Sarah Dyke, Lead Member for the Environment and Climate Change</i></b></p> <p>We are still very much committed to doing what we can to achieve our goal of carbon neutrality by 2030. We have recently commissioned a review of the baseline emissions of the new authority and are now currently reviewing and aligning the corporate priorities from across the previous five councils with a view to reviewing and refreshing our Climate and Ecological Emergency strategy and developing a robust and costed Action Plan.</p> <p>This Action Plan and Strategy refresh will set out the steps and actions that we intend to take necessary to deliver our aims of net zero across our estate and operations, delivering a carbon neutral county, ensuring resilience to the risks of Climate Change and addressing the ecological crisis.</p>
<p><b>Nigel Behan</b></p>	<p><b>Global Warming</b></p> <p>As the BBC have reported: <a href="#">Global warming set to break key 1.5C limit for first time</a></p> <p>a) What steps and measures can the New Unitary Council apply to actively minimise the forecasted rise in global warming?</p> <p>“The LGA have produced a series of (Adapting to climate change) case studies:</p>

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“Highlighting best-practice communications of councils who are communicating climate change action to residents, businesses and staff.” As they assert.

- b) Does Somerset Council plan to participate in similar activities and propose meaningful, significant and practical projects – with measurable outputs etc?
- c) The NALC noted that: “Recommendations for NALC policies and services: a) As part of its range of ‘good-practice’ publications, NALC is recommended to produce one or a number of Climate Change related material, which includes ‘legal advice’ on the creative use of the powers already available to local councils, as summarised in this document b) Local councils should be given a direct power to undertake tree planting and other eco-friendly activities on a much wider range of land, beyond just their own recreational spaces and highway verges. c) The ‘section 137’ expenditure limit on community energy facilities and activities should be removed d) Local councils should be given the power to promote and operate facilities and services to recycle waste and re-use resources. e) The role and effectiveness of neighbourhood plans in relation to Climate Change should be protected and given more weight in decision-making. f) Local councils should be given a power to promote and run facilities for their local community which make effective use of ICT (Information and Communications Technology), such as community broadband systems.”

How can Somerset expand (develop further existing powers) on these proposals in a meaningful and significant way?

***Response from: Cllr Sarah Dyke, Lead Member for the Environment and Climate Change***

**What steps and measures can the New Unitary Council apply to actively minimise the forecasted rise in global warming?**

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Obviously, we are all very concerned and alarmed at the news reported last week that average global temperature will break the 1.5C threshold, set back in 2015 under the Paris agreement to limit the worse impacts of climate change, between now and 2027. Set in this global context we recognise that Somerset Council has a very limited scope to influence this issue but we still must take action to play our part in tackling this global crisis.

The first step we must take it to understand where we are generating our carbon emissions from, and we have recently commissioned a piece of work to map the carbon baseline for the new unitary council. Once we understand what our emissions are and where they arise we can then set targets, plan and take action to reduce and minimise these emissions. We can also monitor progress against this baseline.

But we are not waiting for this Baselining work to be completed, we have already undertaken many projects to cut emissions from our assets and estates, such as the investment on refurbishing County Hall B-block, Yeovil library etc and the recent successful Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) bid which will look to cut the emissions from Wellington Sports centre and Alcome Childrens home.

Work is also underway to review our newly combined transport fleet and to transition this as quickly as possible to as green a fleet as possible through the use of Electric vehicles under 3.5 tonnes and alternative fuels for some of our large fleet vehicles such as our waste and gritter fleet.

Work is underway to cut emissions from street lighting through the investment in greater energy efficient lighting and we will investigate opportunities for part night lighting where appropriate.

Improving and enhancing our natural environment will also play a significant part in tackling the climate and ecological emergency by both sequestering carbon dioxide and through the use of natural solutions to tackle issues such as flooding and improving air quality. I am pleased to say Somerset Council and partners have

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developed a Somerset Tree Strategy which will soon be adopted which high ambitions to increase tree cover in Somerset from a very low base (7-8%) to nearer the national average of 13% and beyond. We have been successful in bidding for funding for dedicated posts to help deliver the ambitions of this Strategy from the Woodland Creation Accelerator Fund.

We are also early in the process of developing our Local Nature recover Strategy, a statutory requirement under the Environment Act. This will look to identify those areas of Somerset where Biodiversity can be enhanced or restored to create wildlife corridors and protect and support our vulnerable species of flora and forna, again this is being developed with key partners from across the county.

Other key elements in tackling the climate and ecological emergency will be Somerset Council transitioning all our Services to ensure that Carbon reduction and enhancing nature are key considerations within any policy decision making and that being prepared for and resilient to the impacts of climate change and that we set these parameters when procuring goods and services or letting our contracts. We will also look to use our influence, working with partners, other public sector organisations and businesses to drive action to decarbonise the wider Somerset and increase our preparedness for all that future climate change will bring.

**Does Somerset Council plan to participate in similar activities and propose meaningful, significant and practical projects – with measurable outputs etc?**

Within the Somerset wide Climate Emergency Strategy ‘Towards a Climate Resilient Somerset’ we state the importance of our residents taking action to tackle the climate emergency and that without their support, we will not be able to meet our 2030 Climate goals as the council’s own carbon emissions, and influence on others, is limited in the wider countywide context.

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	<p>As part of the work in preparing for the transition to a single council, we recognised the need to develop a dedicated climate and ecological emergency Communications and Engagement Plan to support and encourage Somerset’s residents to take action to cut carbon emissions, protect and enhance our natural world and to help prepare for the expected impacts of a changing climate and any extreme weather events. Officers are now in the process of developing this Communications and Engagement strategy, with support from the Communications team. The engagement will be built around attendance at key local events to promote the climate work and offer advice, communicating via social media platforms and traditional routes actions that everyone can take to both save money, but also save carbon and thematic programmes to run throughout the year targeting, for example, energy efficiency and reducing energy demand in the lead up to winter when energy use increases, or opportunities to look at active travel campaigns or biodiversity enhancements.</p> <p><b>How can Somerset expand (develop further existing powers) on these proposals in a meaningful and significant way?</b></p> <p>Somerset Council, working with the National Association of Local Councils (NALC), Somerset Association of Local Councils (SALC) and through the emerging Local Community Networks (LCN’s) will continue to support Town and Parish Councils develop their responses to the Climate and Ecological Emergencies. We will look to develop consistent and complimentary approaches and try to share best practice across all of the T&amp;P councils and also encourage representatives to join our growing community of Environment Champions across the county.</p>
<p><b>Elizabeth Browne</b></p>	<p><b>Social Care Provision and Housing Development</b></p> <p>Taking future health and social care provision into account, how can it be acceptable to consider permission for major developments in Bridgwater using statements based on building space capacity rather than list sizes for primary care and available bedspace in secondary care? Also why are some developers not being asked to</p>

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	<p>contribute towards local healthcare provision whilst their proposals will have significant impacts on the above services?</p> <p><b><i>Response from: Cllr Heather Shearer, Lead Member for Adult Services and Cllr Ros Wyke, Lead Member for Economy, Planning &amp; Assets</i></b></p> <p>See below (Sarah Baker Section) in respect of the technical note setting out the assessment process. If there is a significant impact on healthcare provision a financial contribution will be sought.</p>
<p><b>Sarah Baker</b></p>	<p><b>Social Care Provision and Housing Development</b></p> <p>Recently Sedgemoor District Council approved outline planning consent for Land at East Bridgwater, as approved by the planning inspectorate in the local plan for 1200 homes. This land is being developed in 3 parts, Strawberry Grange 260 homes are being built, Folletts farm 530 homes outline planning approved and, the ex Somerset County Council farm 750 homes will be coming to planning soon.</p> <p>Q1.The planning inspectorates comments in their report on the local plan, says the council could not change the number to 1300 homes, as a consultation had only been conducted for 1200. Why has Sedgemoor district changed this to a now proposal of over near 1600 homes?</p> <p>Q2. Sedgemoor District Council failed to successfully implement an actual traffic strategy to create new roads for this major application, despite all the monies from central government. Westonzoyland and Bawdrip are crumbling with traffic, along with their surface drainage systems, including Bower and Westonzoyland road who are suffering due to the construction traffic for the strawberry grange. The roads have become an unlawful night construction lorry stop. The westonzoyland bridge is crumbling with national rail evidently being a fragmented strategic partner in bridge and traffic management, especially with the previous weight restriction being</p>

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removed. Somerset County Council did comment on the local plan that the now Squibbers Way was to connect to Dunwear lane, but it did not seem that East Bridgwater land would really be used, due to the high cost of developing the land.

Q3. The follets farm outline was deferred for a pollution assessment, but instead the officers allowed the applicant to use SDC's reports that only had the nearest monitors approximately 0.5 miles away from this development, and the average mean figure accepted by the government included several months of the monitors not working. This town as a crisis of people suffering with COPD. And was still allowed to build a school with a tiny amount of land for our most vulnerable children, along side the motorway, where officers have noted they mis calculated the bund, and submitted plans for a second school to be built near.

Q4. During the planning process, the SDC housing officers response was to not approve a reduction of 10% of social housing from 30%, yet we have residents who have been on waiting lists with medical conditions for over 7 years. The social housing will be three storey flats, with triple glazing for noise, acting as sound barriers for the privately owned homes. It is stupid to believe that our most vulnerable in society are to be locked into flats, hounded by noise and poisoned with car fumes if they open their windows. How can this council resolve its social care and equalities public duty with this liability?

Q5. The follets planning application received a consultee response from the NHS that NO ONE is taking any credit for submitting, stating that the Town's GP practices have capacity to provide for all these new residents to the town! Sedgemoor District Council used to use a formula calculating a square meter formula to calculate how many patients a surgery can handle. Who is going to be held for this catastrophe, we all know how over capacity our GP surgeries are?

***Response from: Cllr Heather Shearer, Lead Member for Adult Services and Cllr Ros Wyke, Lead Member for Economy, Planning & Assets***



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**Question 1 response:**

The Planning Inspector in paragraph 111 refers to the suggestion that the allocation could accommodate 1350 dwellings. She supported the more efficient use of allocated sites but as the increase in numbers had not been put forward at earlier consultation stages she did not put it forward as a modification stating that “It would not therefore be appropriate to modify the Plan in this respect at this stage. Any increase in numbers of dwellings on the site would therefore be a matter for the Council at application stage.” In line with the Inspector’s report therefore, it is entirely appropriate for the Council to consider higher dwelling numbers based on detailed technical assessments undertaken in support of planning applications. It should also be noted that the adopted Development and Design Principles for East Bridgwater increased the allocation capacity to a minimum of 1,350 dwellings based on more detailed assessment. The current applications therefore suggest potentially 1,540 dwellings, an increase of 190 dwellings.

**Question 2 Response:**

It is noted that some of the concerns are related to the current construction activities and are therefore controlled through existing planning conditions in respect to the construction management plan. In respect of Squibbers Way, this was never shown in the local plan to connect to Dunwear Lane. Whilst in the past various alternative schemes were investigated these were discounted. The local plan as a whole, including the East Bridgwater allocation is supported by a transport strategy whilst individual planning applications are required to undertake a detailed transport impact assessment. Contributions have been secured to provide improvements to the strategic network including J.23/Dunball roundabout, as well as funding for local network improvements. The final stage of development will provide for the distributor road that will link Westonzoyland Road to the A39 and also enable Bower Lane to be downgraded to a “green lane” that will benefit pedestrians and cyclists.

Following the first deferral at Committee for Members to seek further clarity of the Highways Authority’s position, Highway officers re-affirmed their lack of objection to the scheme specifically setting out that the site access

from Dunwear Lane has been designed to accommodate up to 560 dwellings and the proposed roundabout on Westonzoyland road tested for up to 1608 dwellings (+ background growth). In addition the local highway network modelling had been provided to show the dispersal of traffic from the East Bridgwater site based on an uplifted number of 1600 dwellings. This shows the number of increased movements that are predicted on various routes from the site to the town centre and towards the town's employment areas. Whilst it was accepted that a number of junctions will experience increased congestion as a result of the development, there is ongoing review of the transport model for Bridgwater and improvements are in the pipeline at the Cross Rifles roundabout and at the junction of Monmouth St and St John St. It was also acknowledged that improvements are likely to be needed to the Bath Road roundabout and potentially to St John Street including the mini roundabout near the railway station. The applicant has agreed to a substantial contribution towards off-site improvements and the highway authority did not object to the proposal on the grounds of an adverse impact on the local highway network.

**Question 3 Response:**

The Council's Environmental Services are a consultee on the planning applications and have assessed noise and air pollution issues. Where appropriate conditions are placed on any planning consent. Whilst air quality is an important factor to assess, currently there are no specific air quality issues at Bridgwater although this continues to be carefully monitored. The SEN school has been constructed with the appropriate amount of indoor and outdoor space, it has both sports pitches, dedicated areas for outdoor active learning and large areas of formal and informal open space. The bund and acoustic fence provide the necessary noise mitigation. As part of the East Bridgwater allocation a new primary school is planned, this has always been the case and is not related to the SEN school. This new school will again have the appropriate level of indoor and outdoor space.

Extensive assessment of noise pollution and air quality has been undertaken with the application, with the main source being the M5 motorway but the potential for the proposal to affect existing residents in terms of noise and air quality as a result of traffic movements associated with the construction and the subsequent occupation of the proposed new homes was also considered. The Environmental Health Officer concluded that the

assessment of air quality had followed an appropriate process in order to assess the risk of any adverse impacts including the scope, methodology and compliance with the relevant standards. The officer concludes on air quality that they are satisfied with the conclusion that “Future occupants of the Proposed Scheme would not be exposed to pollutant concentrations above the relevant objective levels, therefore the effect of the Proposed Scheme with regards new exposure to air quality is considered to be negligible, which is not significant.”

**Question 4 Response:**

The resolution to grant for 530 dwellings at Folletts Farm is an outline application. The detailed design and layout will be set out in subsequent reserved matters applications. Therefore, the design and location of the affordable housing has not yet been determined. The reduction in affordable housing from 30% to 10% was on the basis of the submitted viability assessment that took account of all developer contributions, build costs and anticipated sales values. The Local Plan and National Planning Policy Framework require the Council to take into account viability on schemes. This will be reviewed through a review clause that has been agreed to be included within the S106 Agreement and should viability prove to be better than anticipated, additional affordable housing will be secured.

**Question 5 Response:**

Planning North (formally Sedgemoor District Council) approved a technical note for developers on Health Contributions for GP provision. This note is published on the Council’s web site and provides the methodology for calculating whether financial contributions are required as a result of new development. This note is the same method that the NHS use to provide the Council with their response to major planning applications. In the case of Folletts Farm, the NHS re-confirmed that there was sufficient capacity within existing GP surgeries to accommodate new patients from the proposed development and therefore no additional financial contributions would be sought. It is important to note that the contributions are based on the floorspace of GP surgeries and contributions are for the capital cost of extending these where necessary (the response refers specifically to “sufficient infrastructure capacity”). This is separate from the wider funding, recruitment and retention of GP’s

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	<p>themselves that is a direct matter for the NHS. It is possible therefore that in some cases the surgeries themselves are of sufficient size but there are short term issues with recruitment/vacancies resulting in increased waiting times to see a doctor. This is not though a planning matter.</p>
<b>Simon Peter M<sup>c</sup>Kie</b>	<p><b>Library Service and OUP Reference Databases</b></p> <p>For many years, the Library Service has subscribed to the OUP’s suite of reference databases and made it available to library members without charge. This suite is an incomparable source of authoritative information and includes, amongst much else, the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography and the Oxford English Dictionary. The OED, in particular, is a uniquely authoritative account of current and historic English usage.</p> <p>The Council, however, has not renewed its subscription and has ceased to provide the suite to the inhabitants of our County. I have been given three reasons for this decision:</p> <p><i>(1) First, I have been told that the OUP suite of programmes is little used.</i></p> <p>In fact, the suite was accessed 6,552 times last year. Greater publicity of the availability of this suite would further increase that usage. The annual subscription is, I understand, £9,600 or about £1.47p per reference. For such a valuable resource that is not expensive. What is more, simple numerical measures cannot take account of the importance of each reference. Somebody studying a Victorian novel for A Level or a degree may only consult the OED once but that may be crucial to his understanding of the work.</p> <p><i>(2) Secondly, I have been told that hard copies of the 20 volume OED are held at Frome, Taunton and Yeovil Libraries.</i></p> <p>English usage, and our understanding of its history, is changing constantly. No hard copy dictionary can be updated as quickly as an online version. Relying on a hard copy version, even if were practical, risks using outdated information. It is, in any event, not practical. To suggest that the Council’s constituents,</p>

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scattered over the whole area of Somersetshire, might travel to Frome, Taunton or Yeovil every time they need to look up a word in the OED is absurd.

*(3) Thirdly, I have been told that other, perfectly adequate, dictionaries are available.*

This assertion displays a shocking ignorance. There is no other dictionary of the English language which is authoritative as to English usage.

Our Libraries are an essential public service. The loss of the OUP suite of programmes will be harmful to the older children and young adults of the County as they progress through their GCSE's, A-Levels and degrees and to other adults in the County who are regular readers or writers or who are seriously interested in English language, literature, history or law.

With my Councillor's, Dawn Denton's, full support, I ask that the Council reverses this decision and again gives access to this unique suite of programmes for the benefit of the inhabitants of the County.

***Response from: Cllr Federica Smith-Roberts, Lead Member for Communities, Housing and Culture***

In response to financial pressures last year all services were asked to identify potential savings and one of those identified for libraries was to not renew the Oxford Online licence, which included the OED & ODNB

The rationale for this was that compared to other online resources such as e-books, e-audio, e-magazines & e-newspapers, the usage of Oxford Online was very low and offered a saving of £9,600 per annum. Furthermore, the vast majority of information covered by the OUP licence was available elsewhere online for free.

The full OED is not freely available to all online. However, extracted versions are, as are a number of alternative dictionaries from other suppliers, which are suitable for the vast majority of people's enquiries.

In addition, customers can still use hardcopy versions of the 20 volume OED at Frome, Taunton & Yeovil libraries.

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	<p>The majority of the subjects of the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography are available via other free online biographical sources, with the hard copies of the ODNB we have retained covering many of the more obscure historical figures, for whom the content has not appreciably changed.</p>
<b>Eva Bryczkowski</b>	<p><b>Save Yeovil's Acute Stroke Care Services</b></p> <p>A group of residents got together to raise a petition against the above closure. Although the Trust ran a consultation, it was presented as if they had already decided to close it completely. The preference for closure was clearly pointed out.</p> <p>The treatment of strokes is very time sensitive. As the Trust's Dr Whiting acknowledges, 'With a stroke, what matters is the total time taken from calling 999 to having a scan and starting the right treatment.'</p> <p>Residents are worried that the large increase in drive time to Musgrove Park hospital will adversely affect how a patient will recover.</p> <p>My late younger brother Zygmunt had a stroke last year in Portsmouth. Paramedics did not get to him in time to begin quick treatment and get him to the hospital. This adversely affected him in a massive way.</p> <p>Whilst Somerset County Council does not have total control over the decisions of the Trust, both are partners in the Integrated Care Board, (ICB), which takes an overview of healthcare in the Somerset area. If SCC accepts their decision that in itself will carry some weight.</p>

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The ICB generally tends to mark its own homework, and unfortunately the SCC often acts as their mouthpiece, in my and other members of the public when we have asked questions about the proposed closure of other hospital wards.

Reading the Health and Wellbeing reports when I attended their Scrutiny Committees some time ago, the SCC often brag about how committed they are about achieving excellent physical and mental health for Somerset residents.

They monitor such stakeholders such as the ICB.

They claim to ensure that everybody in Somerset gets a very good service that meets their varied needs.

### QUESTION ONE

What do County councillors think about the long term effects of delayed time sensitive treatment of strokes and how this will impact on the greater need for social care afterwards regarding extra costs for us council tax payers and the local authority?

The council is trying to save money isn't it?

### QUESTION TWO

How do you feel councillors, if a loved one of yours has to travel much further after experiencing a severe stroke, when it would have been possible to keep open BOTH the unit in Yeovil and Musgrove Park?

### QUESTION THREE

What can be done NOW in terms of SMART GOALS to give the best care to somerset residents?

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***Response from: Cllr Heather Shearer, Lead Member for Adult Services***

Thank you for your questions I intend to answer both questions with this response. Eva, please except my condolences for the loss of your brother last year who received stroke services in Portsmouth.

We all want every stroke patient in Somerset to have the best and most appropriate care possible. After a stroke, if the right specialist treatment, care, and support is received people can go on to live full and independent lives. We know that our acute hospital-based stroke services are not currently set up in the best way and that there are differences in the way these services are delivered, due to staffing pressures.

It is important that Somerset NHS commission high-quality stroke services, which are sustainable and fit for the future, which is why they are proposing to change the way acute hospital stroke services are organised in our area, so that everyone in the county will have the best opportunity to survive and thrive after a stroke.

The public consultation sought to understand views on whether hyper acute and acute stroke services should be provided at:

- one hyper acute stroke unit in Somerset and, if that is the right way forward, whether the unit be located at Musgrove Park Hospital in Taunton, and;
- acute stroke services at either:
- Two acute stroke units, one at Musgrove Park Hospital and one at Yeovil District Hospital; or
- One acute stroke unit, which would need to be located at the same hospital as the hyper acute stroke unit proposed to be Musgrove Park Hospital.

The Stoke Consultation came to the Scrutiny Committee on 12 October 2022. Following a presentation on the options the Committee made the following comments:



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- Looking at the options the Committee wanted to know why there was not an option to have all the services in Yeovil. This was part of the longer list of options but was dismissed as it has proven historically very challenging to recruit Consultants to Yeovil Hospital.

- The Committee wanted to know the timescale for the consultation, and to continue to influence and debate the findings.

There is a further update planned for the Scrutiny Committee on the 31st of May and the 3rd of August.

This is a decision for NHS Somerset to make after listening closely to the consultation feedback and based on the staffing and funding pressures the system is under. NHS Somerset have not made any final decisions yet and they remain open-minded about the solution until after all the feedback, evidence and information has been analysed and considered.

Hearing the views of people throughout the consultation process was and is an important part of the decision making and will be fully taken into account alongside other essential factors such as clinical, financial and practical considerations. Any decision to proceed with the proposals will be informed by the feedback from the consultation.

All the feedback gathered during the 12-week consultation is now being analysed by an external research organisation. They will prepare a report setting out what people have said about the proposals for the NHS Somerset Board in due course.

I have been made aware by Dr Bernie Marden that NHS Somerset has reached out to the Quicksilver Community Group, who have raised the petition and invited them to meet with him and members of his team. Although the 12-week public consultation closes today they still welcome engagement with the community group.

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Ray Tostevin

See response above for both of the questions about Stroke

### **Petition – Save Yeovil’s Acute Stroke Care Services**

Note 5k+ signatures = debate

<https://www.change.org/p/save-yeovil-s-acute-stroke-care-services>

At the time of submission of this notice to Somerset Council, close to 5,000 signatures have been added to our petition, from across the local community in south Somerset. We call on Somerset Council to add it's opposition on the proposed changes; we believe the changes would be highly detrimental to the health and wellbeing of the 180,000+ people who currently rely on Yeovil Hospital to provide healthcare.

As stated in our petition:

*"It is widely recognised that the first 45 minutes after onset are crucial to recovery for a stroke patient. The additional time taken for patients, currently served by YDH, in transporting them to the Hyper-Acute Stroke unit at Musgrove in Taunton is likely to have significant detrimental consequences to their subsequent recovery."*

We urge councillors to join us in lobbying NHS Somerset (aka Integrated Care Board) to reject the planned closure of Hyper-Acute Stroke care at YDH, as a matter of urgency. We understand the consultation period has officially closed. NHS Somerset have engaged an outside consultancy to study the results of that consultation and to provide NHS Somerset, with its findings, over coming months.

We understand there is a full council meeting on Wednesday 24th May and hope that this petition and proposal can be discussed at that meeting as a question from the public. If it is possible for our representatives to attend the meeting, we should be very grateful if you could indicate where and when the meeting will take place.

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	<p><b>Response from: Cllr Bill Revans, Leader of the Council</b></p> <p>It is recognised that this is an important issue for Hyper-Acute and Acute Stroke care in Somerset. This matter has previously been debated and discussed at the Council’s Scrutiny for Policies Adults and Health Committee on 8 March 2023. We acknowledge that the level of change proposed by Somerset NHS Foundation Trust is of significant concern to our communities. We are aware that our partners in the Somerset Integrated Care System have undertaken a public consultation on the provision of Hyper-Acute and Acute Stroke care in Somerset and that that consultation is now closed, and the outcome awaited. However, on behalf of Somerset Council, I will write to our partners forwarding the petition and supporting information urging them to give full consideration to the issues that are raised and to set out clearly to us how these concerns will be mitigated depending upon which decision the Somerset NHS Foundation Trust takes.</p>
	<b>Annexe B – Member Questions</b>
<b>Name of person submitting</b>	<b>Question</b>
<b>Cllr Andy Dingwall</b>	<p><b>Coronation Celebrations Cost</b></p> <p>I am sure like myself, others in the council were delighted to see Somerset Council engage in a broad range of celebrations for the Kings Coronation and to see our new branding on various promotional items.</p>

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I would like to understand how much – in terms of both money and resources – the council allocated to marking this historic event in each of our major towns, specifically:

- Taunton
- Yeovil
- Bridgwater
- Frome

**Response from: Cllr Mike Best, Chair of Council**

The only events in the county supported directly by Somerset Council were the activities in Taunton.

These activities were initiated by Somerset West and Taunton Council who began planning for the Coronation event in December 2022. SWT was historically responsible for events and the Mayoralty in Taunton as it was the only part of Somerset not to have a city, town or parish council as a result of local government reorganisation in 1974.

Funding of £40,000 was carried across from the former SWT's Economic Development' budget. Somerset Music contributed to production and staffing costs using £4,300 of the £12,000 grant funding it had received from Music for Youth to deliver the musical festival element of the event in Vivary Park as part of the 'King's Coronation Bandstand Project'.

Events such as this in towns in Somerset are usually be organised by the relevant town council as several town councils did to mark the Coronation.