
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF DECISIONS

Monday, 2 December 2024
(Published on 3 December 2024)

Item No.	Title
6	<p>Somerset Council Improvement and Transformation Programme – December Update</p>
	<p>DECISION</p> <p>Following consideration of the officer report, appendices and discussion, the Executive resolved to note the latest progress update report including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The progress made in the month from 12 October – 8 November 2024. • The current assessment of programme risks which includes those with a score of 16 or higher that may arise during the change process, along with the status of actions to mitigate these risks, as detailed in Appendix A <p>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report.</p> <p>REASON FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report.</p>
7	<p>2024/25 General Fund Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring Report - Month 6 (Qtr2)</p>
	<p>DECISION</p> <p>Following consideration of the officer report, appendices and discussion, the Executive resolved to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note Council is now forecasting a balanced revenue position (on-budget). • Note the total Council Revenue forecast underspend of £8.479m for the year. There is a forecast underspend of

	<p>£2.419m within Service Directorates for 2024/25 and the Corporate Contingency of £6.000m, whilst remains unallocated it has been released into the forecast outturn within budget lines Table 1.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note that the planned use of reserves of £36.800m for Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) Support towards the budget is forecast to reduce by of £8.479m to £28.321m, due to the forecast underspend within budget lines. • Agree that mitigating actions are to be identified in order to reduce any overspends, to take action and to contribute to the long-term financial sustainability of the authority. • Agree that the Council continues with the aim of avoiding a Section 114 notice by taking all of the necessary actions and continuing to operate as if one has been issued. • Note the progress and delivered savings of £13.114m of the approved savings programme as set out in Table 2 and Appendix J. • Note that work will continue to find mitigating or substitute savings for the £0.432m of Red unachievable savings, deliver the £5.142m Amber at risk savings and the £20.189m Green on track savings. • Note the in-year forecast overspend on the Dedicated Schools Grant of £28.259m, an increase of £2.419m from Month 5 (in paragraph 14). • Note the total forecast Dedicated Schools Grant year-end deficit of £64.199m as set out in Appendix C. • Note the collection rates for Council Tax and Business Rates as set out in paragraph 24. • Note the quarterly update on the prudential indicators detailed in Appendix L. • Note the outstanding debt position as detailed in Chart 3 and Appendix M. • Note the level of General Reserves is £52.4m (risk-based assessment – minimum £30m, maximum £60m). • Approve the additional Quarter 2 capital slippage of £75.690m into future years. • Approve £22.123m of externally funded additions to the capital programme, as detailed in Section 34 of this report. • Note £2.708m of virements within the capital programme, as shown in Appendix O. <p>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report.</p> <p>REASON FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report.</p>
8	2024/25 Housing Revenue Account Revenue & Capital Budget Monitoring Report - Qtr2

	<p>DECISION</p> <p>Following consideration of the officer report, appendices and discussion, the Executive resolved to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note the Housing Revenue Account forecast overspend of £1.717m for 2024/25, the mitigations actions in the report and the impact on the HRA General Fund Reserve of this overspend. • Agree to take further mitigating actions to pull back the forecast overspend for the next quarter and by outturn. • Note the forecast outturn position of the Capital Programme of £55.172m for 2024/25. • Approve slippage of £37.723m into future years. • Note the Capital virements in paragraph 27. <p>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report.</p> <p>REASON FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report.</p>
9	Budget Proposals 2025/26 to 2029/30
	<p>DECISION</p> <p>Following consideration of the officer report, appendices and discussion, the Executive resolved to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree the new Budget Savings for 2025/26 of £43.950m as set out in Appendix A • Agree the substitution of the £9.000m saving in 2025/26 as per paragraph 22. • Note the revised 2025/26 budget gap of £53.846m after taking into account the proposed savings and substitution. • Recommend the savings and substitution to Full Council • Agree that the Council continues with the aim of avoiding a Section 114 notice by taking all of the necessary actions and continuing to operate as if one had been issued. <p>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report.</p> <p>REASON FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report.</p>
10	Q2 Corporate Performance Management Report

	<p>DECISION</p> <p>Following consideration of the officer report, appendices and discussion, the Executive resolved to review the performance information provided within appendix A, and in particular the narrative relating to performance this quarter.</p> <p>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report.</p> <p>REASON FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report.</p>
11	<p>Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2025/26</p>
	<p>DECISION</p> <p>Following consideration of the officer report, appendices, debate, and amendment of the written recommendations the Executive resolved to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree and recommend that Full Council approve the increase to income band thresholds by the September 2024 CPI rate of 1.7% in line with the percentage increase to state benefits as implemented by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) • The Leader of Council to write to the Minister for Local Government to explore the case for Somerset Council's Council Tax to be raised by more than the referendum limit, due to Exceptional Financial Support, low Council Tax base and rate, increasing demand, and taking into account Government's requirement that plans be in place to protect vulnerable people. • Agree and recommend that Full Council approve the CTR and associated EH scheme for 2025/26 as set out in this paper except for the reduction in back dating a CTR claim to 3 calendar months. • Ask Officers to urgently investigate and report back on the potential to use an element of the Household Support Fund to support those who may be affected by future changes to CTRS thresholds. <p>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report.</p> <p>REASON FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report.</p>
12	<p>Review of the Non-Domestic Rating Discretionary Rate Relief and Hardship Policy</p>
	<p>DECISION</p>

	<p>Following consideration of the officer report, appendices and discussion, the Executive resolved to agree and recommend to Full Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the Non-Domestic Rating Discretionary Rate Relief and Hardship policy is amended to prevent Private Schools from applying for assistance in anticipation of the changes to the Local Government Finance Act 1988. The recommended wording is to be found in Appendix D of the policy and states: ‘The ratepayer must not fall within the definition of a Private School. For business rates purposes, ‘Private Schools’ are defined by HM Treasury as schools at which full time education is provided for pupils of compulsory school age where fees are payable.’ • To delegate authority to the Council’s Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Monitoring Officer to make any additional amendments as necessary to ensure the wording aligns with that Act once such amendments come into force. • To reduce the relief percentage within the policy for Retail, Hospitality and Leisure sector for 2025/26 from 75% to 40% as a result of changes to Central Government policy. • To end Local Newspaper Relief in line with Central Government policy. <p>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report.</p> <p>REASON FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report.</p>
13	Award contract for Advocacy Services
	<p>DECISION</p> <p>Following consideration of the officer report, appendices and discussion, the Executive resolved to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Endorse the procurement process and approve the contract award and recommendations detailed in Appendix B (Confidential Tender Evaluation Report) for the provision of Advocacy in Somerset • Approve the commissioning of the successful bidder for an initial period of 5 years with an option to extend by 3 years. • Provide a delegation to the Executive Director for Adults Services and Housing to agree the 3 year extension option in consultation with the Lead Member for Adult Services, Housing and Homelessness. The decision to implement the extension, or otherwise, will be assessed against an agreed set of performance and service measures.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree the case for applying the exempt information provision as set out in the Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A and therefore to treat the attached confidential Appendix B in confidence, as it contains commercially sensitive information, and as the case for the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing that information. Agree to exclude the press and public from the meeting where there is any discussion at the meeting regarding the confidential tender evaluation report (Appendix B) (to be treated as exempt information). <p>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report.</p> <p>REASON FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report.</p>
14	The Provision of OPMH Block Beds in Somerset
	<p>DECISION</p> <p>Following consideration of the officer report, appendices and discussion, the Executive resolved to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve the procurement of 5 contracts in Care Homes, securing 78 Older Peoples' Mental Health Block Beds. • Approve Commissioners to work with the care home market to explore a direct award for a further 10 beds. • Agree the case for applying the exempt information provision as set out in the Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A and therefore to treat the attached confidential Appendix B in confidence, as it contains commercially sensitive information, and as the case for the public interest in maintaining • Exclude the press and public from the meeting where there is any discussion at the meeting regarding the confidential tender evaluation report (Appendix B) (to be treated as exempt information). <p>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report.</p> <p>REASON FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report.</p>
15	The Provision of Dementia Residential Block Beds
	DECISION

	<p>Following consideration of the officer report, appendices and discussion, the Executive resolved to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve the outcome of the procurement process to award contracts to the suppliers named in Tender Evaluation Report Confidential Appendix B for Dementia Residential Block Beds, for the length of 5 years (plus permitted extensions). • Approve commissioners to work with the care home market to explore a direct award for a further 20 beds. • Agree the case for applying the exempt information provision as set out in the Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A and therefore to treat the attached confidential Appendix B in confidence, as it contains commercially sensitive information, and as the case for the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing that information. • Exclude the press and public from the meeting where there is any discussion at the meeting regarding the confidential tender evaluation report (Appendix B) (to be treated as exempt information). <p>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report.</p> <p>REASON FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report.</p>
16	Award contract for Extra Care Services
	<p>DECISION</p> <p>Following consideration of the officer report, appendices and discussion, the Executive resolved to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Award the following contracts for care and support commencing on 01/04/2025 for a period of 5 years, with options to extend for up to a further 2 years. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lot 1 (East & South) • Lot 2 (West) • Lot 3 (North) • Equalise the charge for the core support in all schemes at a rate of £29.27 from 01/04/2025, removing the rate of £59.04 that is currently being paid by residents of those schemes where housing related support is currently commissioned from care providers, but will be directly provided by social landlords under the new model. • Initiate a consultation with ECH residents on a proposal to review the charges paid by the residents of ECH schemes annually as part of the annual Adult Social Care fees and

	<p style="text-align: center;">charges process.</p> <p>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report.</p> <p>REASON FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report.</p>
17	<p>Key Decision to enter into a lease for a Commercial Investment Property</p>
	<p>DECISION</p> <p>Following consideration of the officer report, appendices and discussion, the Executive resolved to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authorise the recommendation regarding a lease on terms identified in Appendix 1 • Agree the case for applying the exempt information provision as set out in the Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A and therefore to treat the attached Appendix 1 in confidence, as it contains commercially sensitive information, and the case for the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing that information. • Delegate authority to make all necessary arrangements and agreements to conclude arrangements for the lease to the Executive Director for Resources, Strategy and Transformation in consultation with the Lead Member for Economic Development, Planning and Assets. <p>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report.</p> <p>REASON FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report.</p>