

## Decision Report – Leader Decision

Forward Plan Reference: N/A

Decision Date – 25 August 2023

Key Decision – no



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## Leader's appointment to the Executive – Lead Member for Environment and Climate Change

Lead Member(s): Cllr Bill Revans – Leader of the Council and Lead Member for Governance & Communications

Lead Officer: Scott Wooldridge – Deputy Monitoring Officer and Interim Head of Governance & Democratic Services

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### 1. Summary / Background

- 1.1 In line with legislation and the Council's Constitution, a number of appointments to key roles within the Council and to outside bodies are reserved to the Leader of the Council, Councillor (Cllr) Bill Revans. The Leader of the Council has authority to agree Executive appointments alongside a number of other key elected member appointments which form part of the executive functions of the Council.
- 1.2 The Leader took a decision on 24 May 2023 confirming Executive Member portfolios and appointing to Lead Member roles (along with a subsequent decision on 15 June 2023 amending a Lead Member role title from the Lead Member for Economy, Planning & Assets will be changed to the Lead Member for Economic Development, Planning & Assets)
- 1.3 Following the resignation of Cllr Sarah Dyke from the Somerset Council Executive, this decision specifically appoints Cllr Dixie Darch to the role of Lead Member Environment and Climate Change.
- 1.4 The portfolio and allocation of responsibilities to the role will remain unchanged:

*To be the Lead Member for Climate Change and Emergency Climate Strategy.*

*To be accountable for policy development and the financial and operational performance of services within their area of responsibility, including the meeting the requirements of the Council Plan and Medium Term Financial Plan*

1.5 Cllr Darch's appointment to the Lead Member role creates a consequential vacancy in the position that she currently holds of Associate Lead Member for Climate Change & Active Travel. A further decision report will consider that vacancy.

## 2. Recommendations

2.1 That the Leader of the Council and Lead Member for Governance & Communications agrees the appointment of Cllr Dixie Darch to the role of Lead Member Environment and Climate Change.

## 3. Reasons for recommendations

3.1 Somerset Council operates a Leader and Executive model of governance, under which the majority of functions that the Council undertakes are now the responsibility of a small number of councillors operating as an 'Executive'. The Leader of the Council has responsibility for agreeing the executive arrangements.

### Executive Membership and Executive Lead Member Roles & Responsibilities

3.2 Legislation enables the Leader of the Council to appoint up to 9 other members to be members (known as Lead Members with specific areas of responsibility) of the Executive. As part of the Executive's membership, the Leader appoints the Deputy Leader of the Council.

3.3 The Leader of the Council has appointed a 10-member Executive. For clarity the Executive roles are:

- Leader of the Council and Lead Member for Governance & Communications
- Deputy Leader of the Council and Lead Member for Resources and Performance
- Lead Member for Children, Families & Education
- Lead Member for Adult Social Care
- Lead Member for Transport and Digital
- Lead Member for Public Health, Equalities and Diversity
- Lead Member for Transformation and Human Resources
- Lead Member for Environment and Climate Change
- Lead Member for Economic Development, Planning & Assets

- Lead Member for Communities, Housing and Culture

3.4 In the event that a Lead Member is unable to discharge their specific decision making functions for any reason (e.g. illness or holiday), the Leader (or in the Leader's absence or their inability to act – the Deputy Leader) may discharge those functions or decisions.

#### **4. Other Options Considered**

4.1 The only other alternative is not to appoint to the role of Lead Member for Environment and Climate Change and for those responsibilities to be held by the Leader, Deputy Leader or another Lead Member. That option has been discounted due to the significance of this portfolio and therefore the proposed appointment reflects the Leader of the Council's wishes.

#### **5. Links to Council Plan and Medium-Term Financial Plan**

5.1 These recommendations seek to enable good and effective management of the council's business and ultimately good outcomes for citizens and service users. These arrangements are intended to enhance the Council's ability to effectively pursue its vision as set out in the Council Plan. The Executive arrangements of the Council are key elements within the Council's Constitution which is the key governance document of the Council and facilitates delivery of the Council Plan.

#### **6. Consultation and co-production**

6.1 This proposal has been discussed with all members of the Executive and the Monitoring Officer has been informed.

#### **7. Financial and Risk Implications**

7.1 This decision has no additional financial implications for this proposal as funding is already allocated for the Special Responsibility Allowance for this executive role. The proposals seek to mitigate the risk of not currently having a Lead Member for Environment and Climate Change.

#### **8. Legal and HR Implications**

8.1 Under the Local Government Act 2000 and Local Government and Public Involvement Act 2007, the Leader of the Council may appoint the Deputy Leader and an Executive of his choosing, set the Executive portfolios and decide how executive functions are to be discharged. The size of the Executive (including the Leader of the Council) can be between 3 and 10 members of the Council.

Under Section 9P of the Local Government Act 2000, the Council is required to prepare and keep up to date a Constitution containing the standing orders of the Council and such other information as is required or desirable.

Legislation sets out those functions of the new Council which must not be the responsibility of the Executive and those functions which authorities may decide either to give to the Executive or not – these are referred to as “local choice functions”, other functions are, by default, the responsibility of the Executive. All non-executive functions are for the Council to approve, whereas all executive functions are for the Leader of the Council to approve.

8.2 There are no direct HR implications resulting from this decision.

## **9. Other Implications**

**9.1 Equalities Implications** - The Council’s duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 is to have “due regard” to the matters set out in relation to equalities when considering and making decisions on the provision of services. Members must consider the effect that implementing a particular policy will have in relation to equality before making a decision. It is highlighted that the proportion of women in Lead Member and Associate Lead Member roles has increased to 55% compared to 45% for the 2017-2022 former Cabinet. No specific implications have been identified. An Equalities Impact Assessment is not considered necessary for this decision as there are no direct impacts.

**9.2 Community Safety, Climate Change & Sustainability, Health & Safety, Health & Well-Being and Social Value Implications** - There are no direct Community Safety implications resulting from this decision.

## **10. Scrutiny comments / recommendations:**

10.1 The proposed decision has not been considered by a Scrutiny Committee.

## **11. Background Papers**

- Council’s Constitution
- Leader of Council – Appointment of Executive May 2023
- Local Government Acts 1972 and 2000

Report Sign-Off

	Officer Name	Date Completed
Legal & Governance Implications	Scott Wooldridge	24/08/2023
Communications	Chris Palmer	N/A
Finance & Procurement	Jason Vaughan	24/08/2023
Workforce	Chris Squire	N/A
Asset Management	Oliver Woodhams	N/A
Executive Director / Senior Manager	Alyn Jones and Mickey Green	24/08/2023
Strategy & Performance	Alyn Jones	24/08/2023
Executive Lead Member	Cllr Bill Revans and Cllr Liz Leyshon	24/08/23
<b>Consulted:</b>		
Local Division Members		N/A
Opposition Spokesperson	Cllr David Fothergill	On publication
Scrutiny Chair	Cllr Martin Dimery	On publication