

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Local Government Reorganisation
Implementation Board held 10am on the 21st of March 2023**

Luttrell Room, County Hall, Taunton

PRESENT:

Cllr V Keitch – Lead Member for LGR and Prosperity, Somerset County Council
(Chair)

Cllr Liz Leyshon – Deputy Leader, Lead Member for Finance and Human Resources –
Somerset County Council

Cllr Roz Wyke – Lead Member for Development and Assets, Somerset County
Council

Cllr Faye Purbrick – Somerset County Council

Cllr Frances Nicholson (Substituting) Somerset County Council

Cllr Mike Rigby- (Substituting) Somerset County Council

Cllr Mike Best-(Substituting) Somerset County Council

Cllr Sarah Wakefield (Substituting) Somerset County Council

Other Members Present in person: Cllr Tom Deakin

Other Members present – virtually.

Cllr John Hunt, Cllr Christine Lawrence, Cllr Bob Filmer, Cllr Brian Smedley, Cllr
Claire Sully, Cllr David Fothergill, Cllr Faye Purbrick, Cllr Leigh Redman, Cllr
Adam Boyden, Cllr John Wood-Cookman and Cllr Marcus Kravis.

1 Apologies

Apologies received from:

Cllr Bill Revans, Cllr David Fothergill, Cllr Federica Smith-Roberts and Cllr John
Clark.

2 Declarations of Interest – Agenda item 2

Declarations of interest – none.

3 Minutes from the last meeting – Agenda item 3

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 20th December and 31st of
January 2023 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4 Public Question Time (PQT) – Agenda item 4

The Chair informed the LGR Implementation Board that no public representations had been received by the submission deadline.

5 Programme Update- Agenda item 5

The Chair of the LGR Implementation Board, Cllr Val Keitch highlighted that the program is now marked as green overall and 66% of products are now delivered. The remainder were on track to be delivered; Service readiness is at 61% at the end of February. Somerset County Council had a visit from the Department of Levelling up Homes and Communities last week, who gave a glowing report on progress.

The Chair invited the LGR Programme Manager, Alastair Higton, to present the presentation highlighting; overall programme status of green also resources are green.

- The board were informed about the previous Amber RAG rating and it was explained how the programme has moved on to green.
- The workstreams are ready for vesting day and the change readiness continues to improve.
- The product deliver is on track there is one highlighted in red and mitigation are in place for this and will continue to monitor.
- A Service Readiness Checklist has been developed and in use since January 23. This will help provide crucial assurance to workstreams, the services and the programme that our services are ready to operate with continuity from Vesting Day, as part of the new Somerset Council. It is also a mechanism for services to use to raise any readiness issues that might need support or intervention, in order to be ready, and identify barriers to readiness that need resolving centrally.

The Programme Leader for LGR Sarah Hawkins highlighted the following:

- The day 1 readiness for vesting day and the vision and outcomes for day 1 and understanding the impact on customers and staff to manage.
- The Venn diagram shows individuals, customers and staff that the organisation is ready.

The Joint Lead for Customers, Communities and Partnership Sara Skirton highlighted the following:

- The customers will see one telephone number, single complaints policy, 19 customer access points, customer promise and standards.

- The customers on day 1 will hear the following natural language bot, empowered and trained staff ready to give the best customers services across the unitary function.
- The Staff and Member readiness and what they will see and hear with the transition support for the success for day 1 readiness with employee tool kits to support staff and managers.
- Peer network including tech champions, well-being ambassadors and other employee's support.
- Organisational readiness with the new leadership team in place, a new senior management structure, a new brand for Somerset Council, agreed the new model for ways of working for implementation after vesting day.
- A new operating model in place for vesting day.

The Programme Lead for LGR at Mendip District Council Elizabeth Dawson highlighted the delivery of the payroll structure for bringing all five councils into one for payroll purposes, essentially a safe landing point, but also to give staff a sense of belonging but ensuring that staff could get paid. The development of the structure prior and drawing the recruitment of Executive Directors and Service Directors.

A team was developed and set the principles to understand the future structure. Over five thousand staff would need to be placed in the structure briefing the senior management teams on the process and how it would look and ensuring the engagement and communication were key. FAQ are available on SharePoint and shows the structure and a directory is provided for staff to find their reporting lines. This is only a payroll structure and responsibilities will not change on day 1.

The Programme Communication Lead Steve Coomber informed the board staff surveys and track how sentiment is shaping and how staff are feeling about it and understand the New Council is ready for day 1. The last staff survey showed that 92% of the workforce of all five council agree to make the Council a success and 80% who had the knowledge around the move to Unitary Council. It was noted that 60% positively agree being part of the New Council.

The LGR Implementation Board proceeded to debate the report and invited comments from members and other members present, points raised included; Natural language bot can this be expressed differently; Amber rating the people workstream has been amber all the way through and averages on 50%. The team were thanked for the work and the progression that has been made, will the feedback go to members on how it has been after vesting day and the communications to members of the public. To send a briefing note out to members to keep them up to date. The responsibility to be present at Parish Council meetings and communicate and fortnightly with their Clerks and

explaining about what is happening moving to a Unitary Council. is there a plan launch to the website before the 1st of April. Clear instruction of the day-to-day function to share with Parish Councils. In regard to the survey are we supporting the staff that may not have agreed or disagree. The out of hour systems in place and how to report issues. The stability for staff and the interim structure has there been communication to staff about a permanent structure.

Sarah Hawkins informed the board in the people workstream, currently the tier three recruitment being significant and deliverable for vesting day or part way through and progressing as planned. The amount of delivery going in for vesting day and ensuring everyone is ready. There are three areas that will be focused till vesting day.

The Programme Communication Lead Steve Coomber informed the board communication has been put in place on the new website with public information with council tax bills and measures in place of the interim period through the communication team and to respond to customers. All member briefing with town and parishes was also in place to ensure the communication is robust across all.

The Programme Director Alyn Jones informed the board the outward communication with Town and Parish Councils along with their clerks and checklist with a clear approach. The key areas are establishing the transition and transformation with a clear priority and building on the foundation that the Council had already begun. The next steps will be down to engagement and interim structures may be in place for some time and be based on the priority of the teams and functional areas. The Executive Directors will take the lead and tier four recruitment will take place in the next 3 to 6 months.

RESOLVED

That the LGR implementation Board note the programme update.

Risk update

The Chair of the LGR Implementation Board, Cllr Val Keitch, welcomed the LGR Risk Manager Angela Farmer to introduce the presentation highlighting;

- Where the risk had come from and the management of these and the progression made to date.
- Major review of the programme level risks in December and agreed in January resulting in 3 risks closed, 13 risks identified as risks to the programme.
- 50% of the programme level risks have been mitigated.
- The next phase of the program from a perspective of the program and looking at what those risks will be. On the 1st April with a small register, which is based on the work done today.

- From a strategic risk point of view, we are continuing with the Somerset County Council risks bar one and the one that will close obviously is the LGR 1.
- Identified 5 new risks that will be developing including housing, community resilience, staff resilience, waterborne risks and commercial investments. It was noted that a further risk around the voluntary and community sector may be added.
- Creation of the new Strategic risk register for Somerset Council already identified that a majority of current SCC strategic risks will move over. New risk areas based on the district strategic risks including housing, water borne risks, commercial investments, staff resilience and community resilience work to do with Executive Directors and Service Directors to support the development of these risks including what the risks are, scores, mitigation and ownership. This is expected to be completed by the end of April 2023.
- Creation of service level risk register for Somerset Council – bring forward the current district service risk registers and develop the service level risk registers for the new Council. These are expected to in place by the end of June 2023 but with ongoing monitoring and work as services align.
- Amalgamation of major project risk registers as needed. It is intended to work through these over a period 4 months, so that combined risk registers are in place by early August where necessary with clear understanding of ownership, monitoring and escalation routes.
- Ongoing Member participation so that they can seek assurance and scrutinise risks will include: SCC Audit Committee every other month, Major project programme boards, Performance, risk and budget monitoring board (joint officer and Member board) and Local Government Reorganisation Transition and Transformation Executive sub-committee.

The LGR Implementation Board proceeded to debate the report and invited comments from members and other members present, points raised included: the concerns around the volunteer section and taking the appropriate action as a risk. The Audit Committee will have one additional meeting during this course and risk will be continued to be identified. Concerned about some of the risk going from Red to Green.

The Programme Director informed the board Risk Management is making sure the mitigation is in place and that the team understand not only what that mitigation is, how it's monitored, and particularly a named accountable person for that risk. A service directory in place for the 1st of April that will take the lead on the engagement at a strategic level with the VCSFE and be able to work with that sector alongside the town.

The LGR Risk Manager Angela Farmer informed the board the risk owner makes those decision and perspective on how the risk have been mitigated, the risk team can advise on this.

RESOVLED

That the LGR implementation Board acknowledge the work done to date on the management of risks, noted the current programme risk position, the work that has been undertaken to deliver risk management for the New Council and transition.

Transition and Transformation Blueprint

The Chair of the LGR Implementation Board, Cllr Val Keitch, welcomed the LGR Programme Lead Roshan Robati to introduce the presentation highlighting;

- A plan that program in 2-3 tranches one, which was the focus on what needed to happen for vesting day. which is bringing more of the service alignment, making sure the teams are working as one team and that further alignment of the services and Tranche 3 which now we know it's a transformation.
- To maintain focus on planning and delivering the required transition, transformation, and change after Vesting Day to deliver the Local Government Reorganisation Business Case objectives, Corporate Plan and Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTEP).
- Highlighting the Council Plan Principles and Transition and Transformation Programme Principle.
- The move from Vesting Day onwards must be managed well. During the Transition and Transformation period and bring all service alignment, improvement, transformational and cost reduction activities across the Somerset Council together under a single programme.
- It provides a visible common plan and methodology that empowers whilst defining where accountability lies. It supports delivery of Somerset Council's priorities both in term of our capacity and ability to deliver.
- It is required to link the new council's operating model and emerging benefits strategy in an organisational framework to deliver the Council Plan and achieve the transformational potential of a single unitary council.
- The blueprint provides the detail necessary for officers, teams and Members to understand how the post-Vesting Day transition and transformation work is being delivered, see what is being delivered and monitor whether it is being done well.

The Programme Leader for LGR Sarah Hawkins highlighted the following:

- Programme principles aligned to Council Plan principles
- Transition period of up to 24 months. Single Transformation Programme for Somerset Council – running concurrently.

- A single board that will assure the delivery and the prioritisation of our transition program. The ongoing alignment as well as the priority transformation and improvement projects and programs Council wide. Bringing in adults, children's, public health and taking that holistic approach.
- Baseline of service's alignment on Vesting Day and transition activity planned by each service, to help define what transition activities are required and when.
- Programme Management Office built on LGR, Peer Review and other learning.
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- Benefits Realisation Management for open and transparent delivery of financial and non-financial benefits of the programme.
- The benefits and opportunities with quality, transparency and accountability. This supports prioritisation of activity and allows difficult decisions to be taken transparently and with confidence. It enables the council to deploy limited resources (financial, people) on the right priorities at the right time.

The LGR Programme Manager Alastair Higton advised the board about the peer review, it forms a trio of plans. The operating model, when that's finalised, the blueprint summarises the benefits realisation is essentially delivering. Member physical engagement, participation is key, and this can be continued through transformation Executive Sub committees or the five scrutiny committees with also Audit and HR committee.

The LGR Implementation Board proceeded to debate the report and invited comments from members and other members present, points raised included: where will the transition, transformation Committee sit in the Scrutiny function. No mention of member in the principle and would be great to have this to value all 110 members to take part.

The LGR Programme Manager Alistair Higton advised the board that the transition, transformation committee board structure is still being determined how this will look.

The LGR Programme Manager Alyn Jones advised the board the overall program benefits map and the workaround transition and change as services transition in particular transformation that those are reported into the individual relevant scrutinise and clearly executive members and the administration would have a heavy hand in setting that direction first.

AOB –

The Chair highlighted the beginning of the board 18 months ago as Vice Chair and Chair was David Fothergill and thanked Cllr Faye Purbrick who led on the work initially before Cllr Val Keith took over in May 2022. The Chair thanked all staff for the hard work that had gone into the programme.

(The meeting ended at 11.45am)

Chair