

Minutes of a Meeting of the Executive held in the Luttrell Room - County Hall,  
Taunton TA1 4DY, on Wednesday, 7 June 2023 at 10.00 am

**Present:**

Cllr Bill Revans (Chair)  
Cllr Liz Leyshon (Vice-Chair)

Cllr Theo Butt Philip  
Cllr Tessa Munt  
Cllr Dean Ruddle  
Cllr Ros Wyke

Cllr Sarah Dyke  
Cllr Mike Rigby  
Cllr Federica Smith-Roberts

**In attendance:**

Cllr Mandy Chilcott  
Cllr Andy Dingwall  
Cllr Val Keitch  
Cllr Oliver Patrick  
Cllr Faye Purbrick  
Cllr Heather Shearer  
Cllr Sarah Wakefield

Cllr Dixie Darch  
Cllr David Fothergill  
Cllr Frances Nicholson  
Cllr Connor Payne  
Cllr Leigh Redman  
Cllr Fran Smith

**Other Members present remotely:**

Cllr Steve Ashton  
Cllr Norman Cavill  
Cllr Dawn Johnson  
Cllr Marcus Kravis  
Cllr Martin Lovell  
Cllr Peter Seib  
Cllr David Woan

Cllr Jason Baker  
Cllr Habib Farbahi  
Cllr Helen Kay  
Cllr Tony Lock  
Cllr Sue Osborne  
Cllr Lucy Trimnell

**8 Apologies for Absence - Agenda Item 1**

Apologies were received from Cllr Adam Dance

**9 Minutes from the Previous Meeting 10 May 2023 - Agenda Item 2**

The minutes of the Executive meeting held on 10 May 2023 were agreed upon, and signed by the Chair.

**10 Declarations of Interest - Agenda Item 3**

To receive and note any declarations of disclosable pecuniary or prejudicial or personal interests in respect of any matters included on the agenda for consideration at this meeting. (The personal interests of Councillors of Somerset Council, Town or Parish Councils and other Local Authorities will automatically be recorded in the minutes.)

Members of the Executive declared the following personal interests in their capacity as a Member of a City/Town, or Parish Council:

Cllr T Butt Philip – Wells City Council  
Cllr A Dance – South Petherton Parish Council  
Cllr M Rigby – Bishop’s Lydeard and Cothelstone Parish Council  
Cllr D Ruddle – Somerton Town Council  
Cllr F Smith-Roberts – Taunton Town Council  
Cllr R Wyke – Vice Chair Westbury-sub-Mendip Parish Council

**11 Public Question Time - Agenda Item 4**

The Chair noted that there had been no public questions submitted by the published submission deadline.

**12 Adult and Health Services Transformation - Agenda Item 5**

The Leader of the Council, Cllr Bill Revans, invited the Lead Member for Adult Social Care, Cllr Dean Ruddle, to introduce the report.

The Lead Member for Adult Social Care, Cllr Dean Ruddle, introduced the report, highlighting: the Scrutiny Committee – Adults and Health consideration and feedback on the report; the requirement for and the opportunity to transform Adult Services; and achieving cost reductions in a timely manner.

At the invitation of the Lead Member the Executive Director, Adult Services, Mel Lock, proceeded to present the report, highlighting: Adult Services budget growth, including the complexity of need and associated cost of care, alongside

demographic growth within the county; the need to control the increased demand for services and improve people's independence; the diagnostic opportunities identified to change and improve Adult Services delivery and the three primary areas included - improving the environment within which practitioners operate, ensuring that the right care is available in the right place, at the right time, and optimising intermediate care, in particular the discharge to assess and the reablement service; the options available for the Council to proceed and deliver the transformational opportunities to realise the projected cost reductions and the improved outcomes; the key opportunities and improved outcomes, based on prevention, better use of communities and reabling people to maintain independence; the economic value of social care; next steps including setting milestones and targets; and the tracking of benefits and financial impact through that Transformation Board, the MTFP Board and Scrutiny Committees.

The Leader of the Council, Cllr Bill Revans, invited comments from other Members present, questions and points raised included: the risk sharing model and approach to drive transformation; the formal recording and reporting of learning, development, upskilling and use of performance tools; working with and the capacity of the voluntary sector across the county to deliver services, including the use of Local Community Networks; the Care Act assessments in supporting movements of individuals and use of legal advice and support; the work of Newton Europe in other Local Authorities; the contingency fee model based on core principles; the risk impact of the reduction of hours in the delivery model, including reablement and the use of technology to support people; the production of an Equality Impact Assessment; the use of earmarked reserves to fund the cost to engage Newton Europe; identified reductions, including during the current financial year and during 2024/25; the work to bring the five Councils accounts together as one organisation; the cost reductions built into the MTFP; the investment and uplift in care sector staff payments to continue as part of cost of care exercise; and the level of confidence that the savings outlined can be delivered.

The Executive proceeded to vote on the recommendations, which were agreed unanimously.

**Following consideration of the officer report, PowerPoint presentation, appendices and discussion, the Executive agreed:**

- **The aims and objectives of the next phase of the Transformation Programme for Adults Services.**
- **To engage Newton Europe as strategic change partner to work alongside the service to deliver these transformational objectives by implementing the opportunities identified in the diagnostic and support**

**the delivery of identified reductions.**

- **To fund the costs of the transformation programme of £3.5m each year for the next two years, initially from Earmarked Reserves and review the position later in the financial year once the 2022/23 statement of accounts from the predecessor Councils has been completed.**

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report.

REASON FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report.

### **13 Adoption of the Somerset Tree Strategy - Agenda Item 6**

The Leader of the Council, Cllr Bill Revans, invited the Lead Member for Environment and Climate Change, Cllr Sarah Dyke, to introduce the report.

The Lead Member for Environment and Climate Change, Cllr Sarah Dyke, introduced the report, highlighting: that the Somerset Tree strategy had been developed over 10 months in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders across Somerset to shape the future of Somerset's treescapes, recognising the Council's supporting role and the twin crises of the climate change and biodiversity loss; the feedback and input incorporated into the report, including public consultation outcomes and following Scrutiny for Policies Environment Committee consideration; that the strategy contained three documents - Somerset Tree Strategy 2023-2033, Somerset Actions & Objectives 2023-2033 and Somerset Tree Strategy Evidence Document; funding from the Forestry Commission for the employment of three dedicated officers - a project officer, a community empowerment and a technical officer; and the ongoing development and fluidity of the document to sit and align with other documents as they are developed.

At the invitation of the Lead Member, the Climate Change and Resilience Officer, Jacob Hall, proceeded to present the report, sharing a video covering the concerns and how the strategy can help positively impact, make woodlands resilient, adaptable and well managed, and create a diverse treescape that connects rural woodlands to urban treescapes.

The Leader of the Council, Cllr Bill Revans, invited comments from other Members present, questions and points raised included: the high level strategy and the importance of working holistically and in alignment as part of a suite of strategies, including land mapping, planning, local nature recovery, biodiversity and land use; the welcome document structure to appeal to a wide public audience; the Somerset Wood project; working in collaboration with Children Services to develop a children

and young people's strategy and to work with forest schools; ash tree protection and replacement; housing developer landscaping conditions, including working with officers, local plans for tree planting, tree maintenance responsibilities, timeframes and statutory limits; informing communities of the tree strategy through Local Community Networks; the geographic comparison and achievable limits of land and tree management including AONB; the National Forest inventory 2023 map; improving engagement with young people; hedgerow data; the national planning policy framework regarding tree lining streets; the agricultural and environmental regulations, enforcement, compliance and the use of tree preservation orders; land management and importance of the right tree in the right place; tree supply and demand, including the importance of advance planning and cost effective purchasing; and community tree nurseries.

The Executive proceeded to vote on the recommendations, which were agreed unanimously.

**Following consideration of the officer report, appendices and discussion, the Executive agreed:**

- **To adopt the Somerset Tree Strategy with Somerset Council as the responsible body for delivery.**
- **To take appropriate action to develop and adopt a Council wide policy to implement and guide everyone on the objectives of the strategy, and to report back to the Scrutiny Committee – Climate and Place in 6 month's time.**

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report.

REASON FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report.

**14 Early Careers Strategy - Agenda Item 7**

The Leader of the Council, Cllr Bill Revans, invited the Lead Member for Transformation and Human Resources, Cllr Theo Butt Philip, to introduce the report.

The Lead Member for Transformation and Human Resources, Cllr Theo Butt Philip, introduced the report, highlighting: that the Early Careers Strategy (ECS) aims to establish Somerset Council as an employer of choice for young people across Somerset and in neighbouring counties; that bringing young people into the organisation has been a long-standing objective to counteract an ageing workforce within Somerset Council; the legacy of the predecessor Councils to build upon and

develop, maximising the opportunities to strengthen the workforce and recruit and retain apprentices, graduates and work experience students; and the potential to work with Somerset Council partners and beyond.

At the invitation of the Lead Member, the Senior Project Manager, Misha Liddiatt, proceeded to present the report, highlighting: that the ECS for Somerset Council had been created building upon the positive work of Somerset's five former Councils; the cross organisation representation, and consultation with key stakeholders; the support for the younger population; the ECS offer, including apprenticeships, work experience, the graduate scheme and internships; the potential expansion of opportunities, including a young employees network, pathway to employment budget, support of SMEs, improved work with the ICS, and relationships with local schools/colleges; and the next steps and ongoing work, including a launch of the updated graduate scheme, supported employment initiatives, continued support towards care leavers, large scale apprenticeships programmes and the work with government colleagues.

The Leader of the Council, Cllr Bill Revans, invited comments from other Members present, questions and points raised included: the recognition of the work completed across the HR service area; the experience that can be gained working for Somerset Council and the variety of careers available; the alignment of the strategy with the countywide skills agenda, other programmes and organisations; the potential benefits of work experience for lower age ranges; employers visiting schools to inspire children; the employment opportunities available to care experience and SEND children outside of pathways to employment; the Equality Impact Assessment and mitigation reporting; the strategy link to opportunities in the South West, including employment, organisational young people academies, care experience employment opportunities and the ability to encourage young people to stay in Somerset; the suggested introduction of detailed reporting measures, i.e. key performance indicators.

The Executive proceeded to vote on the recommendations, which were agreed unanimously.

**Following consideration of the officer report, PowerPoint presentation, appendices and discussion, the Executive agreed:**

- **To endorse the Early Careers Strategy and its roll-out across Somerset Council;**
- **To receive updates annually from the Organisational Development team on Early Careers activity across Somerset Council.**

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report.

REASON FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report.

**15 Executive Forward Plan - Agenda Item 8**

The Deputy Leader of the Council and Lead Member for Performance and Resources, Cllr Liz Leyshon, advised on the current work to update the forward plan.

The Executive noted the Forward Plan.

**(The meeting ended at 12.00 pm)**

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**CHAIR**