



## Proposed Changes to the Senior Management Structure

Executive Portfolio Holder: Val Keitch, Leader of the Council  
Strategic Director: Alex Parmley, Chief Executive  
Lead Officer: Denise Mackey, People Specialist

## Purpose of the Report

Under the Council's Constitution the Rules of Procedure state that permanent revisions to the Senior Management Structure shall be approved by full Council. This report sets out proposed changes to the Senior Management Structure.

## Forward Plan

This report did not appear on the District Executive Forward Plan.

## Public Interest

The report sets out proposed changes to the Senior Management Structure. The Senior Management Structure is an important component of how the council operates to deliver services and achieve the Council's ambitions for South Somerset. The Senior Management Structure comprises the senior officer roles in the Council at Director and Chief Executive level. The Council may change the Senior Management Structure from time to time to reflect changing operating model and / or changing priorities.

## Recommendations

District Executive is recommended to:-

- a) Support the proposed changes to the Senior Management Structure as set out in sections 15 to 23 of the report and recommend their approval to the full Council.
- b) To support the principle of developing a shared approach to economic and community recovery including the sharing of resources with other Somerset authorities where possible.
- c) In line with b. above, to agree to the sharing of the Director of Place & Recovery role with another authority, if practical and agreeable, and delegate the finalising of the details of such arrangements, including role title and final role description, to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader and the Portfolio Holders for Economy and Community Health & Wellbeing.

## Background

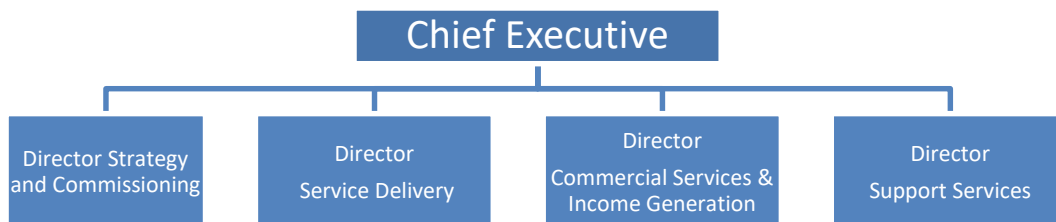
1. South Somerset District Council has been through a lot of change in recent years through the Transformation Programme which introduced a new operating model



## South Somerset District Council

and way of working. The current structure agreed by Council in April 2017 was designed to drive the delivery of that Transformation Programme and fit the new operating model and commercial ambitions the Council agreed.

2. The transformation operating model remains core to the way we work but the Transformation Programme has now formally come to an end. Whilst change in how we operate will continue to be a given going forward to meet different customer needs and take advantage of new technology and approaches, it is not envisaged that we will need the scale of change in how we operate required in transformation over the next couple of years.
3. As a council we do have a very ambitious programme to improve quality of life in our district through developing the economy; revitalising our town centres; dealing with poverty and low social mobility; accelerating housing delivery; improving the health of our residents; and improving the environment & tackling climate change. The needs of our communities, places and economy have grown as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. It is important that as an organisation our structures together with resources, priorities and ways of working, reflect our ambitions and the needs of the people and area we serve. The proposals to make change to the SLT need to be viewed in this context.
4. The current Senior Leadership Team was agreed in April 2017 as part of the Transformation Programme. It was designed with the delivery of transformation and the working of the “Future Model” or the new business model of the council in mind together with the commercial ambitions of the Council.

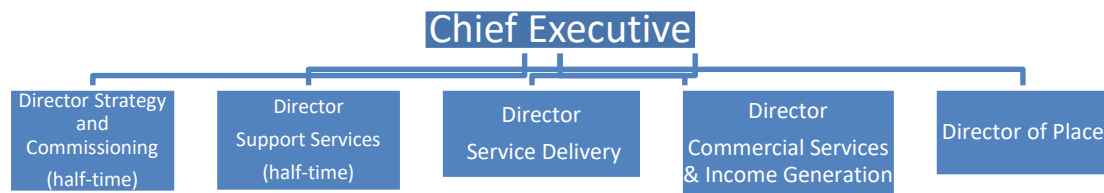


5. In November 2017, sadly our colleague, Ian Clarke passed away suddenly. Ian occupied the role of Director of Support Services and Monitoring Officer. To ensure delivery of these key services it was agreed one person would cover both of these roles. The role of Monitoring Officer has been combined with that of the Legal Lead Specialist. Taking this step enabled the council to provide additional opportunities for existing staff that might not have otherwise been there and to redirect financial resource on a temporary basis.
6. In February 2020, SSSDC put in place an interim or temporary SLT structure, which was primarily aimed at giving us the capacity at a senior level to deal with the work on the future of local government in Somerset and what became Stronger Somerset, whilst also ensuring senior capacity to deliver important work around our 3 town centre regeneration projects, economic development and accelerating housing delivery. In hindsight this change has also served us well in ensuring we



## South Somerset District Council

had the senior capacity to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic. The interim structure is as follows:



7. Whilst the temporary structure has served the organisation largely very well for the past ten months, it has had a deeper impact on the organisation in the form of a number of others acting up and interim arrangements spanning many services and levels. Whilst this is acceptable in the short term, it is recognised that prolonged use of interim arrangements can give rise to uncertainty as well as adding additional pressures to some teams.
8. Given the pressure the organisation is under currently, the uncertainty that lies ahead and the ambitious agenda the council has for South Somerset and its communities, there are many benefits a more permanent structure will have not just at the Senior Leadership Team level but across the organisation. It will enable more stability and certainty moving forward across the organisation including resolving the status of some other roles that are currently interim or temporary.
9. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, the pace of change and the demands it places on councils was continuing to increase. As an organisation, we determined that in going through Transformation, we needed to create an organisation that was fit for the future and part of that was having a flexible organisation that was able to rapidly respond to changing circumstances and adapt in order to meet the needs of our communities.
10. The pandemic and our response to it has shown we have come a long way in meeting this aim. However, there is more we will need to do to ensure we are able to continue to change. The report to January 2021 District Executive on the end of Transformation starts to lay the foundation for this.
11. The needs of our communities and of South Somerset have changed as a result of the pandemic and we need to be focused on how we complete the response phase – supporting our communities and businesses through the pandemic whilst the vaccine is deployed which we hope will lead to the eradication of the virus. However, we already know that even when the virus has gone, there will not be a return to normality and some parts of our communities and our economy have suffered greatly. There is a need to support recovery of our communities and economy and there is an opportunity to deal with some underlying issues within our communities and economy that existed prior to the pandemic. It is important that we have the right capacity – people, expertise, experience and skills – at all levels of the organisation to achieve this.



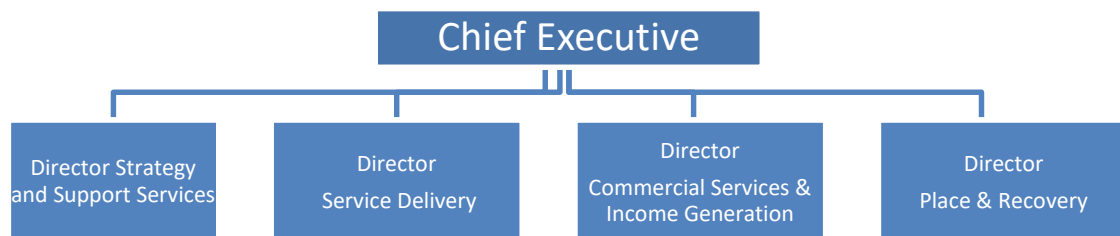
## South Somerset District Council

12. Overlaid on this is the potential change to local government in Somerset. It is important to remember that this is only a potential change to local government structures and that whilst one of the proposals for change - “One Somerset” or “Stronger Somerset” may be selected, if this was the case then SSDC would cease to exist in the future. It is also possible that the Secretary of State may choose not to change the structure of local government in Somerset. We must recognise that, at this stage, there is no agreement to change the structure of local government in Somerset.
13. If change is decided upon then the current timetable set out by the government envisages SSDC will exist until April 2023. Governments have historically found it challenging to meet timetables for change in local government and with the demands of the pandemic, recovery and Brexit, this government may also face challenges in meeting its timetable. Even if the government manages to meet that timetable, that change is still more than two years away. Sometimes when change is potentially around the corner in local government there is a tendency to “wait and see what happens”. However, given the significant needs of South Somerset’s communities and economy and the need to continue to respond to Covid-19 impacts as well as deploy recovery plans, it would be to the detriment of South Somerset, its communities and economy if we did not continue to make the changes necessary to our priorities, structures and the way we operate whilst we await the Government’s decision on potential changes to the overall structure of local government in Somerset.
14. Whatever the future of local government in Somerset, there is a general direction towards bringing the councils closer together and sharing effort and resources to deal with common challenges and shared ambitions for our areas and communities. Therefore the opportunity to collaborate with others in Somerset needs to be a part of our thinking.

### **Proposed Senior Management Structure**

15. South Somerset District Council (SSDC) has ambitious plans to continue to improve, modernise, ensure efficiency, ensure it is financially secure, commercially minded, deliver improvements to the quality of life of communities and quality of places, and now ensure the recovery of our communities and economy from the Covid-19 pandemic.
16. The council sets out its ambitions and priorities in the Council Plan 2020-2024 and in its annual action plan. Revisions to the Annual Action plan are being considered at the February meetings of the District Executive and Council. This includes a new priority project around delivering the economic and community recovery in South Somerset following the impact of the pandemic.
17. In order to deliver for the needs of the communities and places of South Somerset, to meet our ambitions for improving quality of life in South Somerset and to help our communities and economy respond, we need to make changes, including in the Senior Management Structure, to ensure we have the capacity and capability for success.

18. Set out below is a proposed revised Senior Management Structure. In addition to changes in the Senior roles there will be other potential changes that flow from this in the organisation to ensure we have capacity in the right places to meet changing demand and need in our communities. To be clear, it is not envisaged that widespread restructuring is required across the council as our overall structure is fit for purpose in relation to the business model we operate. Instead, small adjustments and additional capacity may be required in places, in particular, to support the recovery programme. To assist with this, as set out in the MTFP and budget report to February District Executive and Council, the 2021/22 budget will propose establishing a Covid Recovery Reserve as a resource to draw upon in this regard. This could cover resource needs to pull together proposals to access government recovery funds or to deal with particular issues such as the anticipated upswing in homelessness and hardship.



**Responsibility Areas:**

<b>Strategy &amp; Support</b>	<b>Service Delivery</b>	<b>Commercial &amp; Income</b>	<b>Place &amp; Recovery</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finance</li> <li>• People (HR)</li> <li>• Legal &amp; MO</li> <li>• Digital</li> <li>• Communications &amp; Marketing</li> <li>• Performance and Organisational Development</li> <li>• Strategic Planning               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Local Plan</li> <li>- Council Plan</li> <li>- Emergency Planning</li> <li>- Community Planning</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Democracy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customer Connect</li> <li>• Locality</li> <li>• Environment               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Environmental Health</li> <li>- Licensing</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Built Environment               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Development Management</li> <li>- Building Control</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Communities               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Revs &amp; Bens</li> <li>- Housing &amp; Homelessness</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commercial &amp; Operational Property</li> <li>• Arts &amp; Entertainments</li> <li>• Leisure &amp; Recreation               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Countryside</li> <li>- Yeovil Rec</li> <li>- TIC</li> <li>- Heritage</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Commercial Income &amp; Opportunity Development               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- YIC</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Environmental Services               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Streetscene</li> <li>- Horticulture</li> <li>- Waste Partnership</li> <li>- Bereavement</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economy &amp; Community Recovery Plan</li> <li>• Strategic &amp; Recovery Funding Bids               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Shared Prosperity</li> <li>- Levelling Up</li> <li>- Towns Fund</li> <li>- Other recovery funds</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Economic Development</li> <li>• Town Centre Regeneration               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chard</li> <li>- Wincanton</li> <li>- Yeovil</li> <li>- Market towns</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Accelerating Housing Delivery</li> <li>• Supporting Families / Poverty &amp; Social Mobility</li> </ul>

N.B. This is not the organisational structure of the teams but responsibility areas. The responsibilities are delivered across a variety of teams following the principles of the "Future Model" implemented through the Transformation Programme as agreed by Council.



## South Somerset District Council

19. The proposal for change retains four Directors as agreed by Council in 2017. However, it formalises the arrangement that has existed for some time, of putting Support Services and Strategy & Commissioning under one Director. This allows the fourth Director position to be re-designated as Director of Place & Recovery. The Director of Place & Recovery would have few direct reports but instead, in line with the SSDC operating model, would draw on the resources of teams and individuals from across the council to drive the delivery of the council's key place and recovery ambitions, programmes and projects. This way of delivering is already operating in SSDC where, for example, the delivery of the Regeneration Projects draws on resources from Strategy, Service Delivery, Support Services and Commercial Services.
20. Additional senior capacity and expertise is required to focus on place and recovery due to the already sizeable ambitions of the council in this area coupled with the increased need as a result of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on our economy and communities. In addition, through the various funds that are likely to become available in the coming months, the scale of delivery is likely to increase in terms of the range of projects and activities the council is managing, co-ordinating or involved in.
21. To be successful, this will require partnership building at a community, operational and strategic level and this will be a focus of the Director of Place & Recovery role. In line with this partnership approach and the general direction of local government in Somerset, there may be an opportunity to share the Director of Place & Recovery role with another authority and to share resources and approaches more generally. The five local authorities in Somerset have collaborated on the development of an Economic Recovery Plan, approved by District Executive in January 2021. This should be seen as a starting point in building wider collaboration to take forward recovery and discussions are currently being held on what form this might take. It is important that these progress at pace as we need to start finalising and delivering plans for recovery now.
22. In addition, it is not desirable to continue with an interim or temporary senior structure much longer, particularly with a vacancy soon arising. To this end, it is proposed to delegate the finalising of any such partnership arrangements with other councils in relation to the senior management structure, to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader and the Portfolio Holders for Economy and Community Health & Well Being, provided that any such agreement does not deviate from the structure and direction set out in this report.
23. As well as providing capacity with the senior team, our community ambitions and recovery will require bringing in additional specialist resources for temporary periods – through consultancy, interim and temporary appointments – to complete time limited tasks that require specialist skills and expertise not currently within the council or where there are capacity gaps.
24. The proposed changes are not temporary but to be considered permanent. They will serve the organisation until either change to local government in Somerset is implemented in 2023/2024 or in the event of a “no change” decision, beyond 2023.



### **Managing the Change**

25. If the changes are agreed, the Director of Place & Recovery and the Director of Strategy and Support Services roles will need to go through a recruitment process including a selection panel of Members and the Chief Executive. If the Director of Place & Recovery is shared with another authority, then the recruitment process will need to be shared. Therefore, it is likely to be some months from point of agreement to the structure becoming fully operational.
26. The proposal does not envisage change to the Director of Service Delivery or the Director of Commercial Services & Income Generation posts, where currently there are permanent appointments, and therefore no recruitment processes are envisaged for these posts.

### **Financial Implications**

27. With reference to the recommendations, an additional Director post has been included in the 2021/22 draft budget. This is a prudent stance which would reduce should it be possible to share this resource as proposed and thereby share the cost. This is therefore worse case cost scenario.

### **Legal implications and details of Statutory Powers**

28. The Local Government Act 1972 s112 allows a Council to appoint staff and Local Government and Housing Act 1989 s7 requires staff to be appointed on merit.

### **Council Plan Implications**

29. The proposal will provide senior capacity to lead and support delivery of the Council Plan and its priority themes as well as lead the delivery of the proposed new priority project concerning the recovery of South Somerset's economy and communities.

### **Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications**

30. None directly arising from this report.

### **Equality and Diversity Implications**

31. Recruitment to the vacant positions will follow the Council's recruitment process and guidance to ensure consistency with the Equality and Diversity Policies.
32. The focus of the proposed Director of Place and Recovery post will support dealing with the impacts of the pandemic on our communities which have had a disproportionate impact on disadvantaged members of our communities, ethnic minorities and residents with disabilities.



## **Privacy Impact Assessment**

33. No issues arising.

## **Background Papers**

- Somerset Economic Recovery Plan, District Executive, January 2021
  - South Somerset District Council Covid-19 Recovery Strategy, District Executive, July 2020
-