

## Appendix 2

### Answers to questions and comments raised by members during workshops

General	
1. What is the end point? Is it to share or is this a step on the way?	<i>It is to share in the medium term, but with Government agenda changing so swiftly it may be a step on the way.</i>
2. Have we learnt all the lessons from East Devon DC?	<i>Yes we are taking them into account.</i>
3. Is joining 'forever'?	<i>No. It could be messy to disentangle, but this is not insurmountable.</i>
4. Could a potential big (5?) district partnership undermine the County?	<i>No. It could complement the County but does depend on government legislation which could change the landscape.</i>
5. What is best approach: - Transformation → sharing, or - sharing → transformation?	<i>Both</i>
6. When is the best window of opportunity?	<i>Now</i>
7. What is the Government intending?	<i>Lots of different agendas but joint authorities are desirable.</i>
8. When will members see the papers?	<i>After consultation workshops on 1<sup>st</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> October, report to Full Council will be circulated on 14<sup>th</sup> October.</i>
9. We have many shared services already – can these be listed?	<i>Somerset Waste Partnership, South West Audit Partnership, Cleaning Contracts (hospital), Civil Contingencies (EDDC &amp; all Somerset Councils), Goldenstones &amp; Wincanton Leisure Centres (LED), Homefinder (Somerset districts), Home Loans (Wessex Reinvestment Trust), Workplace Nursery (Hospital), Yeovil Crematorium, Insurance (East Devon DC).</i>
10. How do shared officer teams deal with sovereign council member committees? For example Scrutiny?	<i>As now separately. Scrutiny can be joint if members of both councils wish or can be separate scrutiny committees.</i>

11. Should we go for short-medium term benefit or long term gain?	<i>Ideally both</i>
12. What are SSDC's 'deal breakers'?	<i>All proposals will be evaluated. Members will decide on deal breakers.</i>
<b>Sharing fit</b>	
13. If two councils join up, does it make adding a third more difficult?	<i>No.</i>
14. Do we have to rush this? Would Taunton Deane BC be more logical?	<i>There is no rush but currently Mendip DC have an imperative for an early decision due to their procurement timescales of their proposals to change the way services are delivered in Mendip.</i>
15. Why not Mendip DC + Sedgemoor DC + SSDC?	<i>It is easier to pair before we go wider simply due to logistics of agreement and neither Sedgemoor DC nor Mendip DC have shown interest in working with each other at present. The Working Group consider it is easier to start with 2 and then add to the partnership as others have done elsewhere.</i>
16. What is the process for a structured analysis?	<i>Gather data by different means, analyse and draw conclusions. A Working Group has been set up to do this work.</i>
17. What work has been done to work on what would be lost by such an arrangement?	<i>Will be part of the above analysis.</i>
18. What is the risk of failure?	<i>Will be assessed and steps outlined to mitigate the risk.</i>
19. What are the costs of those risks?	<i>As above, risks in the analysis will be assessed for potential cost.</i>
20. Are either Mendip DC or Sedgemoor DC considering other sharing arrangements?	<i>Not that we are aware of to date.</i>
21. The geographical issues are important. Have we considered which way the communities 'face'?	<i>This should not affect communities. It is about management arrangements.</i>
22. Does the unknown outcome on Hinckley Point affect the risks or benefits?	<i>Not that we are aware, however if it ceases it is a separately funded project.</i>

<b>Staff issues</b>	
23. Are our officers jobs secure?	<i>In neither case are management jobs secure. Staying alone – threats to staff Joining up – threats + opportunities</i>
24. Can we have reassurance that staff will be fully informed at all parts of the process?	<i>Yes there will be a communication plan and we are starting this process now through normal channels.</i>
25. What is the situation with existing CEO within the potential partner authorities?	<i>They are current incumbent CEOs and their position will be decided later in the process.</i>
26. How do the staff feel?	<i>Hasn't been tested but can expect them to feel the anxiety that change creates.</i>
<b>Savings and Resilience</b>	
27. Can the same level of savings be made if a partner authority has a significant number of contracted out staff?	<i>The Working Group assumes there will be more savings with a council that delivers services similar to SSDC's.</i>
28. What are the staff numbers in Mendip DC and Sedgemoor DC?	<i>See Table 1</i>
<b>Comments arising in workshops</b>	
29. We should involve all members in discussions if/when we choose a preferred partner.	<i>Reports will be taken to Council and members will be involved.</i>
30. Trick should be to anticipate the next stage.	<i>Yes. We are following and anticipating the Government agenda.</i>
31. Communication is vital to carry people along with you.	<i>Agree and as mentioned there will be clear communication.</i>
32. Need to build on ground work.	<i>Agree</i>
33. For this to be a success it requires strong management and a clear member vision	<i>Agree</i>
34. We need to recognise that if something is not working we should stop and put it right then and there	<i>Agree</i>