

## Achievements of South Somerset Families Project

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Service Manager:	
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### Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to highlight to Members the achievements of the South Somerset Families' Project, and to request continuation of the grant funding.

### Forward Plan

2. This report appeared on the District Executive Forward Plan for May 2022

### Public Interest

3. This priority project aims to support struggling families and help address child poverty and low rates of social mobility in the district over the 3 years 2020-23. The project is playing a key role in supporting and enabling families, recovering from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

### Recommendations

4. That District Executive recommends that the Chief Executive agrees to:
  - a. Note the achievements of the South Somerset Families Project across the district.
  - b) Increase the revenue budget by £382,000 to fund the South Somerset Families Project for this financial year (2022/23) – using its delegation under section 4 of the Constitution– as set out in paragraph 20 of this report.
  - c) Use £382,000 of General Fund Reserve to fund this expenditure – using its delegation under section 4 of the Constitution – as set out in paragraphs 20 of this report.
  - d) Note that, depending on whether the Council's overall outturn position for 2021/22 is in a surplus position, the funding for this budget increase could be met by carrying forward unbudgeted/unspent grant income received in 2021/22 and budgeted transfers into reserves. The outturn position for the last financial year is currently being analysed as part of the annual closure process.



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- e) Note that the Chief Finance Officer will seek urgent approval from the other S151 Officers across the Somerset councils for these proposals as required under the Finance & Assets Protocol. – see paragraphs 23 of this report

### Background

5. The South Somerset Families Project (SSFP) has now run for two years and expanded from being predominantly Yeovil based to working across the district, in the areas with highest demand.
6. The programme is delivered by Yeovil4Family who have been delivering specialist support to vulnerable people in South Somerset for over 10 years
7. There has been a high demand for the service, along with some very positive outcomes from service users set out under performance for 2021/22
8. In the approved annual action plan for 2022/23 one of the main areas of focus is Healthy and Self-Reliant Communities. This project supports the Council plan by addressing some of the long-standing barriers and challenges facing local families that affect attainment, social mobility and wellbeing.

### Performance 2021/22

9. The most up to date performance data comes from the most recent project monitoring statistics covering the 10-month period from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 to February 2022.
10. Key indicators of the programme's 2021/22 activity include:-
  - A. **174** new family referrals into the service from 20 different agencies.
  - B. A maximum of **169** families supported in any one month
  - C. Family referrals presented a total of **1,387** issues and needs; of these, mental health was the single most prevalent issue with **236**. Other significant issues include managing finances, parenting and managing behaviour, managing family and other relationships, social isolation and an inability to build positive social networks, poor physical health and being able to access help from other agencies.
  - D. **7** new single people referrals into the service from 5 different agencies; of which 2 were referrals from SSDC
  - E. A maximum of **19** single people supported in any one month
  - F. Single people referrals presented a total of **82** issues and needs; of these, mental health, social isolation, benefits and budgeting being the most prevalent.
11. As well as delivering face-to-face support through trained Link Workers and Volunteer Mentors, South Somerset Families Project workers often act as the link/access- route for people who struggle to engage with other support agencies. This has become particularly



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challenging over the past two years since a lot of support went online and demand for services has risen to unprecedented levels.

12. Information from the 2020/21 Impact Report has been included below. Due to a time lag of obtaining all the information, we are unable to fully report on the figures for 2021/22. However, if the 2021/22 Impact Report has been received in time for the meeting, updated performance data can be reported to members verbally.

### Benefits to Families

- 49% of users indicated improved mental health and wellbeing.
- Aggregated family reports showed that 61% stated that they had seen a positive change in their confidence levels
- 48% showed reduced feelings of isolation
- 52% reported improved mood.
- 39% of families indicated that they had noticed improvement in their children's mental health and wellbeing.
- 30% of all families reported improvement in their children's behaviour
- 37% of all families reported improvement with housing issues, rent arrears, managing a budget and debt.
- 41% reported an improvement in feelings of regaining a sense of control over family lives

### Single People

- 48% reported an overall improvement in their mental health
- 60% reported there had been a significant improvement in low mood
- 50% said they felt less lonely and isolated.
- 56% indicated they had observed a change in their concerns over their physical health and their ability to maintain a healthy lifestyle.
- 43% reported improvement with housing issues, rent arrears, managing a budget and debt.
- Overall, on exiting the project 63% of all respondents reported improved feelings around maintaining positive, healthy relationships within their family and wider social networks; crucial to good mental health

### Overall

Overall the key outcomes achieved as reported by programme participants in their exit assessments included:-

- 83% of parents reporting an improvement in control
- 75% an improvement in their mental health.
- 82% of parents reporting an improvement in child mental health
- 67% of parents reporting an improvement in managing the household budget
- 50% an improvement in coping with debt.
- 42% reporting a reduction in their social isolation and loneliness.

### Reporting in 2022/23

13. In addition to the above statistical performance data, in 2022/23 we will also look at qualitative data in the form of case studies and a simple cost/benefit analysis to better understand the wider societal savings the programme delivers.
14. For example, prior to the commencement of what was called the 'Troubled Families Programme' in 2013 (the same client profile as those now worked with by the Somerset Families Programme), data collected by Central Government from local authorities was indicating that the costs to society of a Troubled Family were in some cases 10 to 11 times that of the cost of an 'average' family.
15. Prior to receiving an intervention on the Troubled Families Programme the average cost to the tax payer was approximately an additional £26,700 per family per year (across a range of public services). Of this £26,700, the cost to Local Authorities alone was £9,600.

### Financial Implications

16. At its meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2021, District Executive agreed to fund the South Somerset Families Project £303,000 for the financial year 2021/22. It also noted that a decision to continue funding the project in the 2022/23 financial year would be considered as part of the budget setting process for 2022/23.
17. However, the budget proposals inadvertently did not consider this project and therefore there is no amount included in the revenue budget agreed by Council at its meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2022.
18. The South Somerset Families Project has requested an uplift in funding from that received in 2022/22 to support the full costs of the project. The increase is £79K to help fund increased staffing costs and office space.
19. If District Executive agrees to fund this project, it will also need to agree an increase to the Council's 2022/23 revenue budget of £382,000 and the use the General Fund Balance to fund this increase.
20. Under Section 4 of the Constitution, District Executive can utilise Council balances (capital and revenue) in responding to matters of urgency or to deliver the agreed policy framework provided that all uses of balances are reported to full Council in the Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan report and Audit Committee in the Annual Outturn report, subject to a limit of 5% of useable reserves/balances. This expenditure, and the proposed means of funding it, meets the delegated authority as:
  - The expenditure proposed will help meet one of the key areas of focus in the approved Corporate Plan namely to enable healthy & self-reliant communities which are cohesive, sustainable and enjoy a high quality of life.
  - The S151 Officer confirms that the expenditure sought is less than 5% of useable revenue reserves.



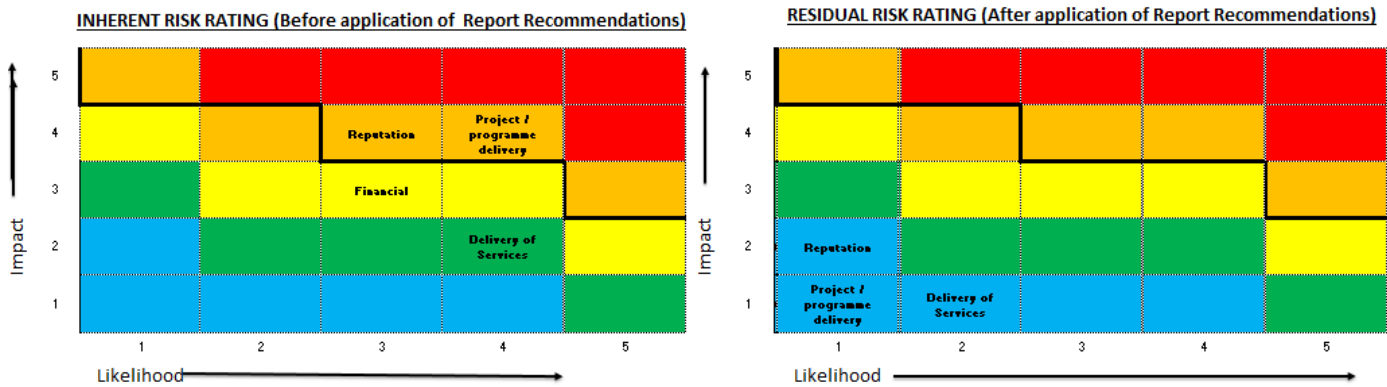
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21. It should be noted that if the 2021/22 overall outturn position is favourable i.e. a surplus of at least £382,000 (being the amount of budget increase being requested), the Chief Finance Officer will, using delegations given in to her in Financial Procedure Rules, replenish the General Fund Balance by:
  - Carrying forward unbudgeted and unspent grant income received in 2021/22 (New Burdens and Council Tax Family Annex Discount Grant) of £217,080.
  - Undertaking the already budgeted transfer of £164,920 from the waste budget into the General Fund Balance.
22. Financial Procedure Rules 2.4 (b) and (c) state:
  - The S151 Officer is responsible for approving all budget carry forwards due to timing differences between financial years in meeting agreed commitments.
  - The S151 Officer shall transfer Revenue Budget Net Underspend or Overspend, after approved carry forwards and allocations to/from earmarked reserves, to General Reserves at the end of the financial year.
23. The Chief Finance Officer will seek agreement from the other S151 Officers across the Somerset councils for the increase in revenue budget and its proposed funding. Under the Finance & Assets Protocol, such approval is needed for any new financial or asset-related commitments (beyond those specifically agreed within their approved budgets subject to agreed limits of £100,000 for revenue and £1m capital. The Chief Finance Officer will update District executive orally on this issue.

### **Legal implications (if any) and details of Statutory Powers**

None at the current time.

### **Risk Matrix**



Risk Ref	Risk Category	Inherent Risk Rating	Residual Risk Rating
1	Project / programme delivery	20	1
2	Financial	14	1
3	Delivery of Services	10	3
4	Staffing & Capacity	0	0
5	Reputation	19	2
6	Health & Safety	0	0
7	Governance & Legal	0	0

Risk Description	Mediation / Controls
project will cease if funding stops	allocation of funding is confirmed
risk of project not being delivered successfully	robust project monitoring by SSDC to ensure funds used appropriately
increase demand on SSDC services without the project	partnership looking to ensure customer receives support required
high profile priority project fails	SSDC committing full support to the project

### Council Plan Implications

**Healthy and Self-Reliant Communities-** To enable healthy communities which are cohesive, sustainable and enjoy a high quality of life

- Work with partners to keep our residents safe and feel safe in their homes and communities
- Collaborate with local partners to reduce the impact of social isolation and create a feeling of Community
- Work with local partners to support people in improving their physical and mental health and wellbeing and reduce inequalities
- Enable quality and inclusive cultural, leisure and sport activities
- Proactively support residents facing hardship and tackle the causes of economic & social exclusion, poverty and low social mobility

### Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications

Few implications – but a localised delivery of services reduces the need to travel to access services.

### Equality and Diversity Implications



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<i>An Equality Impact Relevance Check Form has been completed in respect of the Proposal?</i>	<i>Yes / No</i>
<i>The Impact Relevance Check indicated that a full EIA was required?</i>	<i>Yes / No</i>
<i>If an EIA was <b>not</b> required please attach the Impact Relevance Check Form as an Appendix to this report and provide a brief summary of its findings in the comments box below.</i>	
<i>If an EIA <b>was</b> required please attach the completed EIA form as an Appendix to this report and provide a brief summary of the result of your Equality Impact Assessment in the comment box below.</i>	
<b>Additional Comments</b>	
<p>The full Equality Impact Assessment is attached to this report</p> <p>In summary, if members choose to approve the recommendation to fund South Somerset Families Programme then there will be no negative impacts on people sharing Protected Characteristics. A decision not to fund would likely to result in the closure of the service. If such a closure were to occur than some of the district's most vulnerable and disadvantaged residents would be denied access to a critical service, particularly significant given that being able to access other statutory or voluntary services is a major issue users experience. Loss of the service will have negative impacts on users sharing a number of the protected characteristics.</p>	

### Privacy Impact Assessment

Privacy considerations are covered in the Service Level Agreement.

### Background Papers

SSFP-Budget Request October 2021, District Executive