

## **TAUNTON DEANE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**EXECUTIVE: 4 APRIL 2007**

### **Report of Head of Policy and Performance**

(This matter is the responsibility of the Leader of the Council – Councillor John Williams)

### **Team Somerset and Potential Local Government Re-organisation**

#### **1. Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 To recommend that the Executive seeks the endorsement of Full Council for the Team Somerset Outline Business Case, and associated actions to enable its further development.

#### **2. Background**

- 2.1 The Local Government White Paper (October 2006) included an invitation for councils in 'two-tier' areas to submit proposals to become unitary councils, or to pioneer, as 'pathfinders' an innovative two-tier model of their choice for their area.
- 2.2 Following the terms of this invitation, Somerset County Council submitted a proposal in January 2006 for the creation of a single unitary council for the whole of Somerset. This has recently been 'short-listed' by the Department for Communities and Local Government, triggering a 12 week period of 'stakeholder consultation'. Following stakeholder consultation, the Government will announce those areas that will be restructuring into unitary councils in early July 2007.
- 2.3 Council, at its meeting on 12 December 2006, decided to oppose the unitary bid for the whole county. All other districts in Somerset have also rejected the proposal for a single county unitary. The letter to Ruth Kelly MP, attached as Appendix 1, highlights the strength of opposition from all districts.
- 2.4 Also following the terms of the Government's invitation, South Somerset District Council submitted a proposal for an 'East Somerset' unitary council, covering the areas currently served by themselves and Mendip District Council. Taunton Deane Borough Council considered this proposal on 22 January 2007, as part of a 'two unitary Somerset' that would also have involved the creation of a new 'West Somerset' unitary council covering the areas currently served by Taunton Deane Borough, Sedgemoor and West Somerset district councils. This 'two unitary Somerset' option was rejected by this Council and all other Somerset districts, except South Somerset. The Government has

recently announced that South Somerset District Council's proposal for an East Somerset Unitary has not been short-listed and will therefore not proceed to the further stakeholder consultation stage.

- 2.5 As a positive alternative to any unitary option, Somerset districts have co-operated to produce a prospectus (attached as Appendix 2) on how the aims of the White paper could be achieved without structural reform of local government in the County. This enhanced partnership approach, termed 'Team Somerset', received the formal support of Taunton Deane Borough Council and all other Somerset districts in January 2007, with South Somerset voting it as their second preference. The Team Somerset approach did not (and still does not) have the formal support of Somerset County Council.
- 2.6 Having set the background, the remaining sections of this report focus on the Council's favoured *Team Somerset* approach to local government working in the County.

### **3. The Team Somerset Proposal**

- 3.1 The Team Somerset prospectus supported by Full Council is attached as Appendix 2. The prospectus proposed a clear 'direction of travel' for local government in Somerset, based on:
- strong leadership at strategic planning level;
  - joined up local political engagement and strategic decision making;
  - efficiencies through shared services: improved satisfaction and joined up customer access;
  - Equity of service for Somerset citizens
- 3.2 Since endorsement by Full Council, district councils have worked together to further develop the Team Somerset approach, establishing clear proposals that will bring the aspirations of the prospectus into reality. The result is the Team Somerset Outline Business Case, proposing a fresh approach to delivering better outcomes and more efficient services across Somerset within a renewed and re-invigorated system of county, district, town and parish councils. The Outline Business Case is attached as Appendix 3.
- 3.3 The proposals in the Team Somerset Outline Business Case build on, and are entirely consistent with, the aspirations of the earlier prospectus document. As such, it has been endorsed by the Leaders and Chief Executives of *all* Somerset district councils, with South Somerset maintaining its position that the Team Somerset approach is supported as a second preference. South Somerset's current position on Team Somerset is not known at the time of writing, following the

Government's decision not to shortlist its East Somerset unitary proposal.

3.4 A brief overview of the main proposals contained in the Outline Business Case is provided below:

#### **Strong, effective and accountable leadership**

- A Team Somerset Board, comprising leaders of all principal local authorities in Somerset.
- Aligned political and management arrangements across all principal authorities, strengthening partnership working across the County.
- A joint strategy unit across Somerset, eliminating duplication on key priority areas whilst recognising and respecting the need for local variation

#### **Neighbourhood flexibility and empowerment**

- A strengthened network of district Local Strategic Partnerships, accountable to the Team Somerset Board and the relevant district council.
- A strong network of Community Partnerships, operating at a sub-district geographical scale,

#### **Value for money and equity**

- A rapid acceleration of shared service and collaborative working across all local government services.

3.5 As well as rising to the challenges of the Local Government White Paper, the Team Somerset model provides a robust alternative to a single unitary council and offers the best and most appropriate solution for the citizens of Somerset. The key benefits featured in the Outline Business Case include:

- Greater voice and influence for citizens and local communities, through enhanced democratic and management arrangements that are flexible and responsive to the needs of Somerset's many different localities.
- Maintenance of existing levels of democratic representation across the County.
- Better services that put the needs of customers first. Service delivery will be socially inclusive; defined and driven by customers needs.

- A stronger voice for Somerset - locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.
- Annual efficiency savings in excess of £22 million from 2012, and almost £8 million within just two years.
- Establishment of proposed new arrangements in their entirety from within existing resources.
- No need for any legislative change or structural reform of local government.

3.6 Implementing the Team Somerset Business Case will require further work by all local authorities. Members will be informed at regular intervals of significant progress made.

#### **4. Recommendation**

4.1 The Executive is **recommended** to seek the endorsement of Full Council for:

- i) The Team Somerset Outline Business Case attached as Appendix 3.
- ii) The Chief Executive and Leader to take decisions as required for the further development of the Team Somerset Outline Business Case
- iii) A further report on progress in August 2007.

#### **Contact Officers:**

Brendan Cleere, Head of Policy and Performance  
Tel: 01823 356350  
Email: [b.cleere@tauntondeane.gov.uk](mailto:b.cleere@tauntondeane.gov.uk)

Penny James, Chief Executive  
Tel: 01823 356401  
Email: [p.james@tauntondeane.gov.uk](mailto:p.james@tauntondeane.gov.uk)



7 March 2007

Rt Hon Ruth Kelly MP  
Secretary of State  
Department for Communities and Local Government  
Eland House  
Bressenden Place  
London  
SW1E 5DU

Dear Mrs Kelly

### **WE DON'T WANT A SINGLE UNITARY COUNCIL IN SOMERSET**

We are aware that your department will now be making final deliberations on which bids to become a Unitary Authority should go forward to stakeholder consultation after April.

We, the Leaders of all the District Councils in Somerset, have written to you on many occasions advising you and your department that the bid submitted by Somerset County Council is fundamentally flawed (see Professor Chisholm's reports of 8 January 2007 and 6 February 2007.)

We have now received correspondence from the following MPs and MEP who have all made it known that they are against a single unitary authority.

#### Against

- i. Rt Hon David Heathcoat-Amory (Conservative) - MP for Wells
- ii. Ian Liddell-Grainger (Conservative) - MP for Bridgwater
- iii. Jeremy Browne (Liberal Democrat) - MP for Taunton
- iv. Neil Parrish (Conservative) – MEP for South West and Gibraltar

Further, we are aware that David Heath, MP for Somerton and Frome has declared in the media that he is not for a single unitary authority.

In addition, we also understand that David Laws, MP for Yeovil, has written directly to you indicating that his preference is not for a single unitary but also that all submitted options should go out to consultation.

We have advised you that large scale polls across Somerset for Parish and Town Councils and Councillors are reflecting a very significant vote against the creation of a single unitary authority.

In conclusion then, we ask that in your deliberations culminating in a number of bids going through to the final phase, we ask that you conclude that the Somerset County Council bid goes no further on the basis of the following:

1. District Council Resolutions in Somerset all being against a single unitary authority for Somerset.

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**RT HON RUTH KELLY MP**

2. The Somerset County Council single unitary submitted proposal demonstrates no evidence of “broad support” whatsoever – a prerequisite to a successful bid going forward.
3. The single unitary bid was an option that was considered and rejected in the previous Local Government Review in Somerset (Banham Commission) in the 1990s.
4. Our MEP and the majority of MPs being against a single unitary authority for Somerset.
5. On polls taken thus far (covering 69% of the county) for Parish and Town Councillors, a very substantial majority have voted against a single unitary authority.
6. Independent analysis from Professor Chisholm clearly illustrates the bid put forward is fundamentally flawed.
7. The workings within the Districts and County on the creation of a Joint Venture Company (ISIS) differentiate this County’s bid from all of the other bids on the basis that the vast majority of the efficiency savings put forward can be delivered anyway, without recourse to restructuring.

We are happy to provide you and/or your officials with documentary evidence to support the contents of this joint letter and look forward to your response in due course.

**SIZE MATTERS – KEEP IT LOCAL!**

Yours sincerely



Councillor Ken Maddock  
Leader of Council  
Mendip District Council



Councillor Duncan M<sup>c</sup>Ginty  
Leader of Council  
Sedgemoor District Council



Councillor Tim Carroll  
Leader of Council  
South Somerset District Council



Councillor John Williams  
Leader of Council  
Taunton Deane Borough Council



Councillor Mrs Christine Lawrence  
Leader of Council  
West Somerset District Council

Cc: Rt Hon David Heathcoat-Amory MP  
Ian Liddell-Grainger MP  
Jeremy Browne MP  
David Heath MP  
David Laws MP  
Neil Parrish MEP  
David Prout, Department for Communities and Local Government  
Government Office for the South West






# A Partnership Prospectus for Team Somerset: Connecting Communities A Collaborative Approach







'We believe that by working together we can tackle the challenges Somerset faces in fresh and innovative ways'

# Team Somerset: A new approach for Somerset

A new approach to public service is being taken in Somerset – a team approach. We are confident that this is the way forward for the local government community in Somerset. This Team Somerset approach will enable us to build on successes in recent years and put us in a strong position to deliver efficient and effective services to meet the rising expectations of our local residents.

As District/Borough Councils we are in a strong position to make connections between different communities, as we already have a strong relationship with them. We know and understand the issues and challenges they face on a day-to-day basis and we want to ensure they are effectively represented at a local level. We want to get the best for them, within the region and at a national level. To do this, we need to speak with one voice.

Team Somerset are committed and determined to:

- Make a real impact on the quality of life enjoyed by our citizens of today and more importantly, those of tomorrow.
- Become leaders in the delivery of customer focused, cost effective and efficient public services.
- Deliver on all our aspirations for Somerset.

It has become increasingly obvious over the last few years that to meet the rising expectations of both central government and those of our local population, the way we do things has had to change. We have grasped the opportunity and risen to the challenge by developing new and innovative ways of working resulting in some very exciting projects.

Working with partners from within the local government community, from other public sector agencies, business and the voluntary sector has become commonplace. We are confident that we can learn from the experience and expertise of each Council, for example, Mendip for Procurement, Sedgemoor for working with the Chinese community, South Somerset has national recognition and Beacon Status for its locality based working, Taunton Deane has excellent CPA status and West Somerset for tackling rural issues. There has been some hard learning from these early projects which has set us in a good place for going forward and all authorities have seen the gain in this type of working and are now keen to take partnership to the next level and to show that we are a team.

There have been several Government policy papers in recent times that raise issues that will require a team approach if we are to find effective solutions. These include the Leitch report on skills, the Eddington report on transport and the Barker report on planning. The recent Local Government White Paper also corroborates our approach and sets out the outcomes that we must achieve:

- Enhanced strategic leadership
- Neighbourhood empowerment
- Value for money
- Equity

We are confident that we will achieve these with our team approach. Our evidence shows that our communities feel connected to and represented by the area governance structures in which they live – it adds to their “sense of place”.



# Enhanced strategic leadership in Somerset

We already have an excellent track record of collaborative working in Somerset. Our current partnerships range from those which just share information to those that work together to achieve efficiency savings. Dependent on their purpose these partnerships cut across tiers of local government, including regional agencies, go between the same levels of local government and include local community partnerships. Somerset authorities have not been afraid to embrace this style of working and to let go of individual interests in favour of the greater good. We want to enhance this collaborative style, learn from others and improve the efficiency and focus of working together.

Below, we have summarised examples of projects that have delivered key outcomes:

## **Somerset partnerships working to tackle local issues and regeneration**

- We have responded together in a planned and robust way to the compiling of evidence to inform and influence the long term vision of the region through the Regional Spatial Strategy. Thus we have had an agreed approach to this document which fundamentally shapes the scale and location of future employment and housing growth in Somerset.
- We have developed a partnership approach with joint governance arrangements for regeneration projects such as Project Taunton - a partnership that is enabling the regeneration of Somerset's county town made up of the County and Borough Councils', the Regional Development Agency, the Environment Agency and a variety of other local organisations. This team through its joint governance

arrangements has successfully provided strategic leadership for the project and has enabled this regeneration programme to deliver quickly by together finding the solution to providing the necessary infrastructure. A similar approach has been used to deliver the Yeovil Vision and the Bridgwater Challenge regeneration projects.

- Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership: in the east of the county we have amalgamated the District based CDRP's to align with the police BCU (Basic Command Unit) to give more strategic focus.
- Joint Civil Contingency planning across all authorities to ensure joined up approach to major incidents.

## **Somerset partnerships delivering value for money**

- We have developed a partnership approach to the delivery of waste services. The Somerset Waste Partnership – a partnership of both waste collection authorities and the waste disposal authority – is delivering value for money for the community by seeking tenders for a County wide waste collection contract. Strategic leadership in safeguarding the environment by driving up recycling and diminishing the threat of the impact of potential fines under LATS (Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme). We are currently setting up a Joint Committee to operate all waste services in Somerset (October 2007) and our plans are to set up a Joint Waste Board for Somerset once the legislation has been established.

- We have established a South West Audit Partnership which brings together audit staff from four of the District/Borough Councils providing not only value for money but also added value in service delivery via the retention of staff and the opportunity to employ a wider range of specialists.
- We have a track record of procuring services through public and private sector partnerships, for example the established business support contract in Mendip. We are currently in the process of establishing the ISiS (Improving Services in Somerset) joint venture which is a partnership between Somerset County Council, Taunton Deane Borough Council, Avon and Somerset Constabulary and a private sector partner (currently being procured). ISiS is committed to joining up and bringing efficiencies to the support and transactional services and also bringing investment in new technologies and transformational ways of working to all areas of business. ISiS is due to be launched for the two founder partners (Somerset County Council and Taunton Deane Borough Council) in summer 2007. Avon and Somerset Constabulary are also in the process of joining as a founder partner. The other Somerset District Councils have supported the ISiS Partnership by becoming signatories to the Framework Agreement. They are keeping in close contact with its development so they will be able to quickly assess the benefits that can be delivered to them and thus the case for joining. Subject to the business case being demonstrated all the Districts in Somerset are committed to working with ISiS. Mendip District Council's existing business support contract is a factor that will need to be considered when evaluating the business case for Mendip's inclusion within ISiS. Mendip District Council is committed to proceeding to gain the highest level of efficiencies and service quality.

- We have established joint Development Control Services between Sedgemoor and West Somerset providing value for money and additional capacity.

## **Strengths in neighbourhood empowerment**

All Somerset District/Borough Councils have led innovative community engagement strategies.

- South Somerset has established a model that has attracted national interest and Taunton Deane has developed community planning models in six areas.
- A Gypsy and Travellers Housing assessment was jointly commissioned by all authorities to ensure an equitable approach for our Gypsy and Traveller community, value for money, strategic leadership and a regional focus.
- In Somerset we have a strong relationship with our third tier of local government, Parish Councils. These are the representatives of our communities at the most local level and we have a good track record of consulting with them, empowering them to act locally within their communities and working in partnership with them.
- We have close ties with the voluntary and community sector (VCS). We are all committed to making a difference where it counts. We work with VCS to achieve its goals and especially to enable gaps in service provision to be effectively filled. We are keen to build on this good practice.
- Recent consultation with parishes is showing that parishes favour the retention of the two-tier system.



# How does Team Somerset see the future?

We are confident that as we work together to form our plans and strategies that Team Somerset will become the key influencer of public service delivery for the County. Therefore, to continue to deliver effective strategic and local government in the future we will require:

- Strong leadership at a strategic planning level entailing efficiency and closer alignment of strategy through joined up strategic planning thereby gaining influence with other public agencies.
- Joined up local political engagement and interaction and strategic decision making.
- Efficiencies through shared services – also addressing the issue of improved professionalisms, retention etc. We will also need to play to our strengths and share specific experience across the

county by allowing those with recognised expertise to lead on relevant issues.

- Improved satisfaction and joined up customer access– access not just between local government layers but with other public sector agencies and overall satisfaction levels rising as we transform our services to focus on the customer's needs.
- Equity of service for the citizens of Somerset. We are committed to consistent standards of service throughout the County and we also need to ensure mechanisms are in place to deal with the pockets of deprivation that exist and the very dispersed nature of our population. We need to be able to give people choice in how they prefer to access public services, by working together we are confident we can deliver this.

## How Team Somerset could address key community issues

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We are confident that by working together we can tackle our problems in a fresh way and bring new approaches to solving some of the key issues facing our local communities. Our thoughts need further work but already the added value from a team approach is clear. Together we will be able to have more influence and be able to develop more innovative solutions to problems, some examples of how this could work in practice are summarised below:

**Affordable Housing:** We have a number of ideas that we want to explore and by doing this together we will not only have greater access to resources but we will also have greater influence with both public and private

sector partners:

- The opportunity for using land not only in our ownership but also in wider public sector ownership to bring forward schemes on exception sites and using our joint power of influence to this end.
- To look at assets that are held in public ownership for longer term growth and explore bringing them into use for the shorter term (10 – 15 years) for accommodation to meet the needs of some of our specific professional group requirements.
- The use of Community Land Trusts to deliver more affordable units.
- A County-wide Choice Based Lettings Scheme is supported by strategic housing IT systems

**Economic Prosperity:** We all aspire to delivering sustainable growth, better pay and quality employment for our citizens today but also and more importantly to ensure we retain our young professionals. We already have consensus about this and an established economic partnership is being developed into an inward investment bureau. However, we believe there are other ways we need to explore if we are to address this issue:

- To increase access to higher education locally we would like to explore and facilitate the opportunity for universities to partner with Somerset institutions, so that a wider range of degrees are available within the County. Thus building on the good work already carried on by colleges across Somerset.
- The Leitch report (November 2006) makes it clear that workforce training is of paramount importance. We believe that Team Somerset can work with the Learning and Skills Council and the business community as a pilot area to facilitate this in innovative ways that truly will make a difference.
- We want to increase the opportunity for start up businesses, particularly by young people, by the provision of a network of support facilities (units, advice, training and mentor support). Working together we want to explore setting up hubs and spokes of these “start up villages” throughout the county.
- SMEs (Small and Medium Size Enterprises) are the majority of our business community. We want to explore targeting particular industries that naturally fit with the profile of Somerset County – for example environmental technologies – and open negotiations with universities to support these emerging innovative enterprises.

**Transport:** We want to halt the rise of congestion in Somerset and address the issue of provision of an improved public transport

system. We have ideas that we believe should be explored together:

- We have already learned that by working together we increase the chances of Somerset securing capital investment in infrastructure and are delighted that the County Council’s Local Transport Plan has resulted in two major schemes for Somerset. We believe that a team approach will enable us to lift the profile of transport in Somerset with government even more effectively.
- Application to the Transport Innovation Fund for piloting ways that we can work together to reduce congestion solutions in market towns rather than the current emphasis on cities.
- To bring together other players in the public sector to explore how we can join up provision of transport by for example sharing provision with the Health sector.
- We have two major routes that run through the heart of Somerset, the M5 and the A303/A30. We would make a case to Government to ensure that once the road tolling is in place Somerset gets a proportion of this income to reinvest in alternative transport solutions for the County.

**Environment:** We want to ensure we act now to protect the environment that our current communities enjoy and to safeguard it for the communities of tomorrow.

- We will develop a sustainability and climate change strategy that will set targets to substantially reduce Somerset’s carbon footprint including plans for the use of renewable energy in the major new housing growth areas.
- We will join with the Environment Agency to agree a County-wide approach to flood alleviation, coastal management and general water management.



# How Team Somerset could shape the future

## Improved Leadership

Team Somerset will be the hub that co-ordinates a strategic focus for the County. We believe we will need to make changes to our governance arrangements if we are going to achieve this approach – an example of what this *could* look like is attached at Appendix 1 – though we recognise we need to do further work on this before coming up with a final model. We can do this without our communities losing the current level of representation and feeling of connectivity they currently enjoy.

Whilst we do not have all the answers at the moment, whatever model is chosen will need to manage the complexity of representation and work for Somerset. We do know it will require joint Executive or Leaders' decisions at a strategic level and a joint management team approach between authorities. The Somerset Strategic Partnership (SSP) will have an input into the strategic level and the Local Strategic Partnerships will input at District/Borough and community level. The outcome that the structural arrangement must deliver is clear leadership and strategic planning for the County and - derived from this - greater influence with other public sector agencies to ensure that the plans for Somerset are delivered effectively by all.

At a managerial level it entails a team approach that is quite different to what we see today. It means a shared vision and a clear indication within an individual organisation's plans of how that shared vision is being delivered. It means joint management teams at both senior and middle management levels. We need to build this new team and its vision together through joint team building events and envisioning exercises and then cascade the message throughout our own organisations as well as sharing it with the wider public sector. We will

hold an annual Team Somerset conference that engages all those who deliver services to our communities.

One of our roles will be to champion careers within the public sector. Thus our organisations will develop joint career paths, secondment opportunities and joint training events.

We believe that this approach will enable Somerset to have a greater influence at regional, national and international level.

## Better Integration

We believe there is much more to do in delivering sensible joined up services. Somerset has taken this approach seriously in many of its partnerships illustrated by the Somerset Waste Board project and in the South West Audit Partnership. We believe there are other services that would benefit from the same approach:

- Set up a Joint Strategy Unit to work with the SSP on long range strategy and policy options. Within this unit we would consolidate research data, technical evidence, GIS analysis.
- Create a major planning application response team.
- Investigate creating a county wide regulatory service that includes Environmental Health, Licensing and Trading Standards
- Ensure closer alignment of housing and social care services.
- Develop stronger links with and devolution to the third tier of Parish and Town Councils



We want to explore all of these and others where we can work in a more resource efficient way in more detail and we want to keep the customer at the heart of our organisations. Decisions will be made based not only on efficiency but also on what improvements would be made to services, what would make them more sustainable and what will give added value for the customer. We will also commit to exceeding the Government's efficiency requirements through this agenda.

We can demonstrate that we have experience of connecting our services – at a District level and at a County level. We have made connections between both these levels of local government where it can be delivered most effectively. We believe we can use this experience with a wide range of other organisations to enable joined up public services in Somerset. We intend to work more closely with the other key public agencies in the County, in particular the Regional Development Agency, the Learning and Skills Council, the Police and the PCT to achieve this. Two areas that we would want to focus on initially are joined up planning around crime, youth offending and our drug and alcohol services and joint planning by the relevant agencies to ensure that the significant pockets of deprivation in Somerset are addressed.

We are passionate about improving customer service and will be working to provide integrated public access to services with other public agencies.

### **More Local Empowerment**

In Somerset, our strength is that we know and understand the day-to-day issues and challenges our local communities face. But more than this, we have an excellent track record of delivering working examples of how local communities can be empowered to make changes. For example, in 1992 Taunton Deane Borough Council pioneered the unique scheme which entrusted the making of planning decisions to

Parish Councils. We want to build on this local expertise and commitment to innovation to deliver a more joined up approach to our local area focus.

We believe that all three tiers of local government can develop new ways of working together locally. We are confident that we can advance this work through new community partnerships or area forums. These would ensure our local communities are able to set their own priorities and draw in the required resources.

These local community partnerships would be based where possible on existing local area networks or local community planning areas and would include representation from the Parish Councils, local community networks. South Somerset has a long established system of area committees that has recently extended in exactly this way to include area forums and community partnerships. Together, we already have a record of building strong local relationships and using this expertise and knowledge of locality working we can demonstrate that we are in the strongest position to advance this work. These new local area forums must cover areas which are meaningful to residents and where there is an existing sense of place.

We also want to develop our schools as local community hubs with access to a wide range of services and facilities.

### **Modernised Ways of Working**

All authorities are committed to providing back office services in the most efficient way. The main, though not exclusive, vehicle for this will be the ISIS Programme. It is committed to joining up and bringing efficiencies to the support and transactional services and also bringing investment in new technologies and transformational ways of working to all areas of our business.

ISiS is due to be launched for the two founder partners (Somerset County Council and Taunton Deane Borough Council) in summer 2007. Avon and Somerset Constabulary are also in the process of joining as a founder partner. As mentioned above, all the Somerset authorities are signatories to the Framework Agreement and other authorities could join as early as 2008. This is an approach already in place at Mendip working through their existing Business Support Strategy Partnership with the private sector.

### Improved Customer Access

We have exciting plans to deliver improvements to our customer access. The plans being formed within the ISiS Programme will be applicable to all areas of Somerset. This will include upgrading the telephony and IT infrastructure to give much improved access via these two channels. It will mean the opening of new customer access centres in main towns – but also in other communities using the library network and other community facilities. It will also facilitate the use of much improved mobile communications technology bringing our services to people's homes and businesses. The IT investment being made by the joint venture of ISiS is the building block that underpins this and ensures it works effectively. Through ISiS we are already working with Avon and Somerset Police and discussing joint public access arrangements. As this approach takes shape we would be inviting others to join to enable a single point of access (or at very least a signposting service) for the main public services.

We are passionate about meeting the needs of all of our communities within Somerset. We believe that the most effective way to meet these needs is via a mix of structures that can be both strategic in its thinking and locally focussed in its delivery. This would enable us to have greater influence regionally and nationally

and yet respond flexibly and quickly to a local requirement. For our rural communities we believe that our new approach to customer access through the ISiS Programme will better address the local customer access issues. We also believe that retaining a three tier local government approach means that the needs of these dispersed communities will continue to be championed effectively.

Where we have pockets of deprivation within our towns we are confident that our more joined up approach will enable us to have a greater influence strategically. We will work together to engage all the relevant agencies in working together with the community to reduce this deprivation.

### Efficiency Savings

We are absolutely clear that joint working brings efficiency savings. We have already achieved savings, both in cash and in efficiencies where we are doing this (for example through the South West Audit Partnership). We also have the business case of savings that will be achieved through the joint approach to waste collection and client services (the Somerset Waste Board) and also through the joint venture approach for support and transactional services that ISiS will deliver. We are also confident that the business case targets will be exceeded in both these cases and there will then be the opportunity to add to these savings through extending ISiS to the other Districts. Whilst we have not been given the opportunity to comment on the savings being claimed in the one Somerset unitary bid, we know that the above savings will feature and that these occur whatever model is chosen. We can therefore confidently commit to making similar levels of efficiency gains overall once the enhanced partnership model is **fully** developed (by 2009/10), but without the cost and disruption to service that a unitary model would incur.



# When could Team Somerset implement this?

## A year from now...

- We will have implemented our new leadership structures
- ISiS will be up and running with the founding partners and new partners will be in the process of joining
- We will have one customer access strategy for Somerset
- We will have investigated the next phase of services which need to be joined up across the County and implemented a Somerset Waste Board
- Plans will be in place for the community partnerships
- We will have set up the Joint Strategy Unit plus think tank sub-groups to find innovative solutions to Somerset's key issues
- We will have implemented a single Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership in the west of Somerset to align to the police BCU (Basic Command Unit)
- Efficiencies will be delivered above the level required from 2008 onwards
- We will have continued to deliver our services and operations without interruption

## Five years from now...

- Somerset will have a significant voice at regional and national level
- Investment in Somerset will be strong and our citizens will be seeing the fruits of regeneration
- Our communities will have their own local area plans
- Our service planning will be fully integrated, between ourselves and also with other public agencies in the area
- We will have better balance between strategy and local focus
- We will have modernised services, resulting from investment made from efficiencies
- Citizens will have improved access to services and satisfaction with our services will be in the top quartile nationally

## Conclusion

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We are confident that this new Team Somerset approach has all the hallmarks to potentially deliver great services to the people of Somerset. Our strength is that we know and understand the issues and challenges facing our residents because we work closely with them. We are passionate about our local communities and have nationally recognised expertise in locality based working. It is this experience and ambition which will provide a strong foundation for the new Team Somerset approach.

We have started down the road of change in Somerset but to realise our ambitions we are now prepared to act in some radically new ways.

This statement is based on our knowledge of what has been achieved, what is possible to achieve, and the importance of balancing co-ordinated strategy and service with local delivery, accountability and focus.

We believe that by working together we can tackle our problems in a fresh way and bring some new approaches to solving some of the key issues that our communities are concerned about. This illustrative example of how the governance of enhanced two tier working could operate demonstrates how this could be achieved strengthening a local focus with a sub-regional overview. It is probable that this will not be the final model of Governance that is used in Somerset, its purpose is to demonstrate that our prospectus in one of innovation in improvement to address the complex needs of our sub region.

The illustrative model below addresses the four key goals of the Government's White Paper, Strong and Prosperous Communities in a way that resolves the tensions between what can be seen as the potentially competing objectives of:

- Enhanced Strategic Leadership
- Neighbourhood empowerment
- Value for Money
- Equity

The following paragraphs outline the roles of each element of this enhanced two tier working model.

---

### Strategic Board

The Strategic Board would comprise the Leader from each Council and key representatives from the Somerset Strategic Partnership such as Government Office and business representatives. The Strategic board would be supported by a Project Board comprising the Chief Executives of each Council.

The Strategic Board would lead Team Somerset setting the sub-regional strategic direction, overseeing the changes that will be required to deliver the efficiencies that will be required whilst addressing the needs of our communities and

citizens. This would include agreeing lead authorities and areas where we will share service delivery so we can share and build upon our strengths. We could also make better use of agency agreements among Councils to reduce the need for citizens to have to know who is providing a service and at the same time improve the level of service being provided.

The Strategic Board would not operate as a quasi-council but a group responsible for setting the parameters and objectives for collaborative working in Somerset.

---

### County and District/Borough Councils

The Strategic Board would reduce the inappropriate hierarchical nature of the relationship between County and District/Borough Councils creating a local focus whilst addressing the county-wide overview. One of the key aims of all the Councils would be to work collaboratively to achieve the vision agreed by the Strategic Board. There would still be a strategic role for each Council and the purpose of this model is not to reduce local accountability but enhance it. Local people would still be represented by their local council, who would still deal with the day-to-day issues that affect their communities. There would also be a number of

collaborative arrangements among the authorities that would create a network of purposeful partnership working. Examples of this are already in place with the Somerset Waste Partnership, the South West Audit Partnership, the ISIS Programme and the Joint Transformation Group arrangements between Mendip and South Somerset District Councils.

It is proposed to increase the integration of the LSP's on the Somerset Councils by facilitating a joint conference between the District/Borough Executives and the LSP's twice a year to ensure an in-depth understanding of the issues facing key stakeholders and the progress that is being made in address our communities needs.



## Community Partnerships

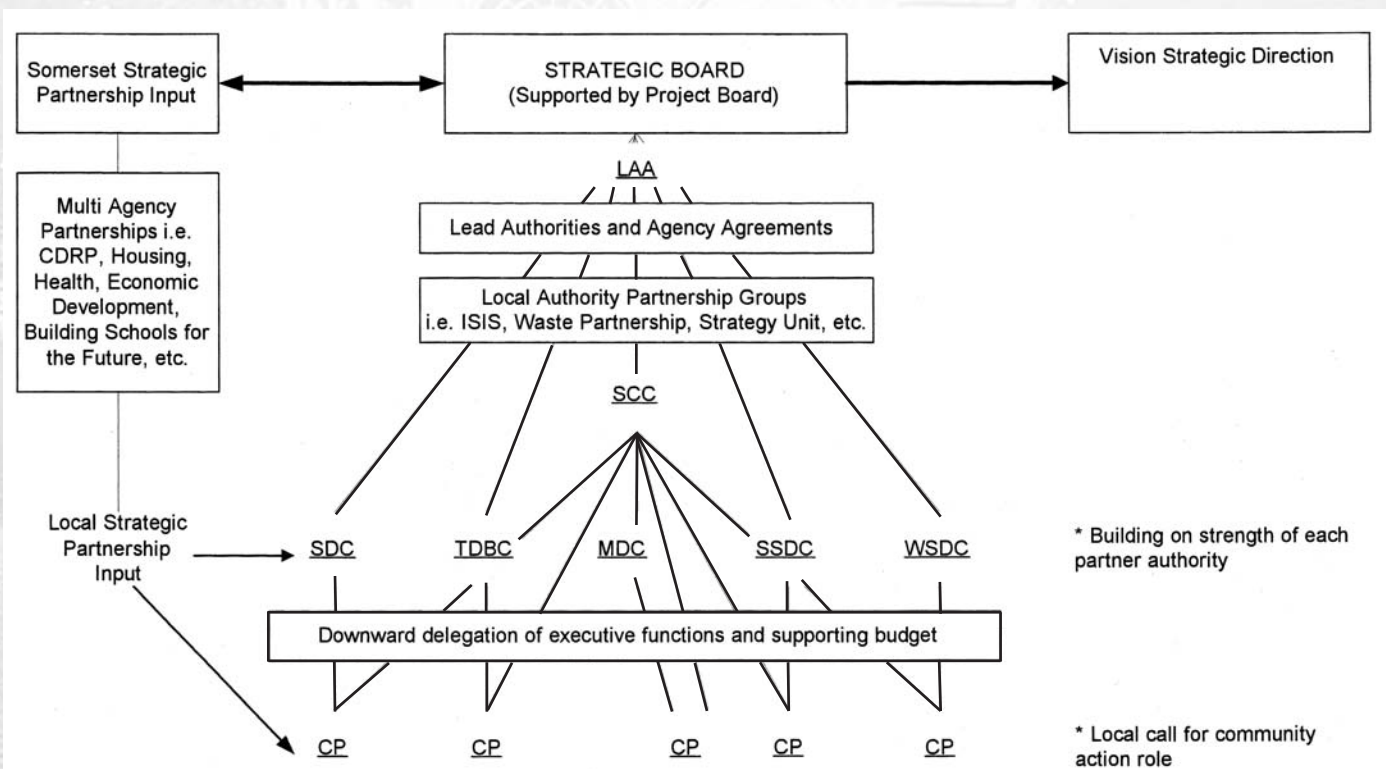
As part of facilitating a more joined up approach with a local focus we will establish Community Partnerships (CP's) across Somerset. These Partnerships would comprise County and District/Borough Councillor for that area and a representative of the LSP, all members of the CP would have equal voting rights. They would also include representatives from the Parish Councils in that area. These CP's would have executive functions delegated to them by County and District/Borough Executives and a budget to enable them to affect change for their local communities. They would also be responsible for community planning within their area. It is anticipated that each CP would serve a population of between 30,000 to 50,000 people depending on the nature of the area, this would probably create between 11 to 15 CP's. CP's would have a local call for community action

role where local communities could represent their views/hopes/aspirations/concerns via their representative of the CP in accordance with the aims of the White Paper.

Somerset is made-up of a diverse range of communities and the CP's need to reflect this. It is proposed that there is a range of options for the management of each CP so they can serve the local distinctive needs of their communities. This could include the option to co-opt representatives from other sectors such as voluntary and community sector and business community.

To ensure that the CP's are able to effectively operate within the parameters of the strategic framework for Somerset there would be clearly defined delivery levels or County-wide minimum standards that each CP would have a responsibility to achieve.

## Illustration Example of Enhanced Two Tier Working



CP = Community Partnership comprising County, District Cllrs and Parish - Voluntary Community Sector. The CP is to have considerable scope on how they want to operate to allow for local distinctiveness.



If you have any comments or require further information concerning this document please contact:

Ruth James, Communications and Information Manager,  
Policy and Performance  
Taunton Deane Borough Council,  
The Deane House,  
Belvedere Road,  
Taunton  
TA1 1HE

Telephone 01823 356499

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<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Hindi</b></p> <p>अगर आप इस दस्तावेज़ में प्रस्तुत किसी भी जानकारी का अनुवाद दूसरी भाषाओं या ब्रेल, बड़े अक्षरों वाली छपाई, ऑडियो टेप, या सीडी में चाहते हैं, तो कृपया हमें इस नंबर पर फोन कीजिये 01823 356499 या यहाँ ईमेल कीजिये <a href="mailto:r.james@tauntondeane.gov.uk">r.james@tauntondeane.gov.uk</a></p>
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'This is a positive statement  
of ambition for Somerset'



# Team Somerset: Connecting Communities Outline Business Case



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# I. Introduction

**1.1** The prospectus document *Team Somerset: Connecting Communities* received the formal support of all the District/Borough Councils of Somerset in January 2007. The prospectus is aspirational, outlining a new approach to achieving our joint ambitions for Somerset and meeting the challenges and opportunities of the Local Government White Paper (published in October 2006).

**1.2** This document has been developed as a supplement to our earlier prospectus. It describes in greater detail how we plan to turn our aspirations into reality, proposing a fresh approach to delivering better outcomes and more efficient services across Somerset, within a renewed and reinvigorated system of integrated county, district and parish/town councils.

**1.3** We firmly believe that our programme ***offers the best and most appropriate solution for the citizens of Somerset***, providing a model of excellence that other authorities will wish to follow. We will provide opportunities for citizens and stakeholders to jointly shape and deliver our programme.

**1.4** The main benefits we will deliver as Team Somerset include:

- **Greater local flexibility and empowered communities** - through renewed locality working arrangements that hold local knowledge, intelligence and understanding firmly at their heart. Communities will be further empowered to have a real say on local services, priorities and issues affecting their day-to-day lives. Frontline councillors and staff of all Somerset Councils, with partner agencies, will have greater capacity to focus on and respond flexibly to the different needs of Somerset's many distinct communities. The role of

frontline councillors cannot be understated. Their capacity to tackle local issues, represent their communities and use their local knowledge effectively goes to the very heart of the Local Government White Paper's aspirations of neighbourhood management, community ownership and putting people first. Existing levels of democratic representation will not be diminished under the Team Somerset governance model.

- **Excellent services that put the needs of customers first** - through a rapid acceleration and expansion of collaborative working and reduced duplication across all council services in Somerset. Our service transformation programme will build on the strong foundation of shared service models already in place. ***Somerset citizens will experience excellent value for money, with service performance and costs that compare with the very best in the Country. Team Somerset will achieve annual efficiency savings in excess of £22 million from 2012, and almost £8 million within just two years.***

- **Strong and accountable strategic leadership** - through a joint Board of Somerset's elected leaders. The Team Somerset Board will oversee the delivery of the sustainable community strategy and Local Area Agreement (LAA) outcomes, as well as our broad service transformation programme. This approach to collaborative working will deliver the robust strategic leadership needed to effect genuine place-shaping and community cohesion for communities in Somerset. The Team Somerset Board will also have a major outward focus, ensuring that Somerset's influence is increased regionally, nationally and internationally.

**1.5** Our programme will bring about radical changes to the way that local government currently works in Somerset. We have already

started on our transformation journey, with a number of key shared service projects already under way or about to begin. As part of Team Somerset, authorities will appoint a senior post to sit on a management board, responsible for the wider development and acceleration of our service transformation programme. Similarly, senior level posts from each authority will work together to develop and implement renewed locality working arrangements across Somerset.

**1.6** Our programme can be delivered in its entirety from within existing local government resources across Somerset. Our focus on new

and collaborative ways of working will not require legislative changes and ***will avoid the costly and unnecessary disruption to service delivery that would be caused by any wholesale structural reform of local government in Somerset.***

**1.7** The next section of this business case provides a brief factual profile of Somerset, as the context for our programme. Remaining sections are structured around the aims set out in the Government's invitation to councils to pioneer, as pathfinders, new two-tier models of local government. Supporting information is provided in the five appendices.

## 2. Somerset - A Place of Variety and Distinctiveness

---

**2.1** Any system of local government needs to reflect and respond to the nature of the place and communities it serves and represents. Somerset is a place of variety and distinctiveness in many respects:

- Somerset has a diverse inheritance of landscapes and environmental assets, such as the Mendip Hills, Quantock Hills and Blackdown Hills, the Somerset Levels and Moors, Exmoor National Park and over 40 miles of coastline. Our diverse environment and poor communication links between different parts of the County have been major factors shaping the unique identities and characteristics of our communities over the centuries and to this day. Team Somerset's approach is flexible and highly responsive to the challenges faced by our distinct communities, giving them greater voice in Somerset and beyond.
- 28% of Somerset's population lives in the relatively densely populated centres of Taunton, Yeovil and Bridgwater. Market and coastal towns, villages and small hamlets account for the remaining 72% of the population. Many of these communities are remote and isolated, posing

particular challenges in terms of transport, access to services and representation. To illustrate Somerset's transport and access challenges, an east-west journey across the County takes approximately two and a quarter hours by car. It takes a similar time to travel by car from the County Town of Taunton to Birmingham, in the West Midlands. The flexible, joined-up approach of Team Somerset, working within new and established partnerships and alongside local Councillors, will deliver tailored service solutions that get to the heart of local issues. ***Somerset does not have a 'one size fits all' community and Team Somerset will provide solutions that meet needs at a local community level.***

- Generally, quality of life in Somerset is above regional and national averages. However, there are pockets of deprivation right across Somerset that feature highly in national indices. There are 13 super output areas in Somerset (4%) that fall within the most deprived in the country, including one classed in the worst 10%. There are also many challenges associated with rural deprivation that are often less visible on the national radar, because of low population density.

The 1997 Rural Services Survey revealed that 77% of parishes in the South West don't have daily bus services, 46% don't have access to a local school and 83% don't have access to a local doctor. These are typical challenges found within rural communities that need to be addressed through effective partnership working. There is a distinct lack of affordable housing in Somerset, with the average home now costing £209,000, more than 8 times the average annual household income. The affordability ratio ranges from 7.4 times in Mendip to 9 times in West Somerset. Team Somerset will work to provide better solutions by using local knowledge and local commitment, tackling affordable housing and creating a higher wage economy through more effective cross-agency working.

- A recent independent report of the Somerset economy found that “Over the past decade, Somerset's rate of economic activity has continued to grow while national rates have remained static. Somerset's economic activity rate ranks second highest of the South West sub-regions. Into the future, the economy of Somerset is projected to grow and perform fairly well”<sup>1</sup>. This reflects the work being done by economic development teams across the county, however we recognise that collaboration through Team Somerset is needed to further consolidate Somerset's economic growth.

- Somerset's main employment sectors are wholesale and retail trade, manufacturing, health and social work, real estate, education and public

administration. However, the economic composition of each Somerset district varies significantly, bringing often different challenges of regeneration and development. Common challenges being tackled by all include raising the skills profile of the local economy and collectively working to attract greater levels of inward investment into the County (see case study attached as Appendix E)

- Somerset's population is growing and ageing at a faster rate than regional and national averages, presenting particular challenges for support/public services and the wider economy. There are also recent trends of growth in the Black and Minority Ethnic and migrant worker populations. The Local Government White Paper challenges local authorities to create strong, vital and cohesive communities. We believe that Team Somerset, by utilising its many successful existing partnerships and relationships, will further encourage community participation and cohesion.

**2.2** Somerset's communities consistently express a strong affinity for their own unique place and locality within the County. A founding principle of Team Somerset's approach is to maintain and build on the strong sense of place that exists in different localities across the County, whilst delivering the excellent services, better outcomes, clear accountability and value for money that our citizens and communities rightly expect and deserve.

### 3. Strong, Effective and Accountable Strategic Leadership

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**3.1** We recognise the need to fundamentally review the way that we work, to meet the challenges and expectation of our communities and citizens, and deliver national and local outcomes. Our proposed new local governance arrangements for Somerset represent a radical departure from the status quo. These governance arrangements will provide a mix of

strongly connected components that provide strategic leadership and focus at *all* levels, from County wide to local community. Our proposed governance arrangements appear in diagram form as Appendix A. This section describes those aspects of our governance model that will operate at strategic level, across Somerset.

## The Team Somerset Board

**3.2** In our proposed governance model, strong, effective and accountable leadership will rest primarily with the Team Somerset Board. The Board will comprise elected leaders, supported by chief executives from each principal local authority. The Board will:

- Ensure delivery of priority outcomes within the Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement (LAA), formed through the wider forum of the Somerset Local Strategic Partnership.
- Ensure delivery of the Team Somerset shared service transformation programme and the efficiency gains that will accrue from this.
- Be the democratic voice and advocate for Somerset, regionally, nationally and internationally.

**3.3** Through its activities, the Board will bring together overall delivery of theme and service based outcomes within a framework that is more accountable and coherent than the present joint governance arrangements in Somerset.

**3.4** The Team Somerset Board will be accountable to central government for delivery of LAA outcomes. It will be responsible for directing the new LAA grant monies from Government (no longer ring-fenced to particular LAA 'blocks') to the best possible effect across Somerset. The Board, and other elements of our proposed governance model, will also be subject to regular challenge through the new 'Comprehensive Area Assessment' process, from 2008.

**3.5** The Team Somerset Board will meet in public at locations across the County. It will be accountable to localities through robust area-working arrangements described in greater detail in section 4 of this document. A joint scrutiny committee comprising of elected members from all principal local authorities in Somerset, will be established to strengthen democratic accountability of the Team Somerset Board. In addition, decisions made by the Team Somerset Board will be subject to scrutiny and potential call-in by any principal local authority in Somerset.

**3.6** The Team Somerset Board will be set up in 'shadow' form during 2007 and fully operational by 1 April 2008.

## Strategic Leadership of Team Somerset:



## Team Somerset Board

- Somerset County Council
- Taunton Deane Borough Council
- Sedgemoor District Council
- West Somerset District Council
- Mendip District Council
- South Somerset District Council



## Local Authority Arrangements

**3.7** Our collaborative approach to political and managerial leadership does not end at the Team Somerset Board. We recognise that working arrangements at individual authorities need to be reviewed, and we are committed to making a number of significant changes that are necessary to achieving our ambitious programme.

**3.8** Team Somerset believes that strong democratic arrangements must remain in each principal authority across the County. Political leadership in each authority will be democratically accountable to citizens for the local delivery of priority outcomes in the sustainable community strategy and LAA, and for the delivery of services at levels of performance and cost that compare with the very best councils in the Country. Following the May 2007 local elections, District Councils will work with Somerset County Council to closely align executive portfolio arrangements, to facilitate the timely implementation of our transformation programme. Closely aligned executive arrangements will be fully operational across all Somerset local authorities by April 2008.

**3.9** Frontline Councillors in all Somerset local authorities will play a key role in strengthened overview and scrutiny and locality working arrangements across the County (outlined in section 4).

**3.10** Management arrangements under Team Somerset would see the retention of chief executive and director level posts in each local authority in the short term. It is anticipated that this too will be rationalised over time with a more 'federated' approach with authorities 'sharing' the skills of senior officers. In the short term however, this capacity will be vital in

strengthening engagement, understanding, representation and delivery of services across Somerset's many and varied communities. The needs of our communities deserve strong representation within the locality, county, region and beyond.

**3.11** Reflecting changes to political management arrangements, senior management in each local authority will closely align to facilitate implementation of our programme. Each Somerset local authority will nominate a senior lead officer for transformation, to sit on a team responsible for delivering our service transformation programme. A senior lead officer for localities will also be nominated by each authority, to ensure the delivery of effective locality working across Somerset (see section 4). Lead directors for specific themes across Team Somerset will be nominated where appropriate, to reduce duplication between authorities. Links between the County and District Councils will be strengthened by a nominated County Council director attending each District Council Management Team on a regular basis. ***This will ensure that the combined effort and resources of all authorities are tailored and directed to achieve the best possible outcomes for Somerset's communities.***

**3.12** A county-wide strategy unit will be established during 2007, and will be fully operational by April 2008, as part of Team Somerset, comprising senior officers from each local authority. This unit will be responsible for developing and ensuring the delivery of joint strategies on specific priority themes, creating greater harmonisation and alignment and eliminating duplication between tiers of local government, whilst recognising and respecting the need for local variation.

## 4. Neighbourhood Flexibility and Empowerment

**4.1** In this section, we describe our proposed locality working arrangements across Somerset. These arrangements are also represented in diagram form in Appendix A. Our definition of 'locality' is the geographical scale of a district, and smaller.

**4.2** We are acutely aware that a 'one size fits all' approach to locality working will not be appropriate or desirable for different places and communities in Somerset. Our locality working model therefore provides a broad and common framework that can be applied flexibly to address the varying characteristics, needs and priorities of different communities across the County.

### District Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs)

**4.3** The existing network of district LSPs across Somerset will be strengthened under our proposed governance model. District LSPs will comprise key public, private and voluntary sector partners, convened by the relevant district council. The main duties of district LSPs will include:

- Agreeing the sustainable community strategy for the district, reflecting and informing the Somerset Local Area Agreement and other key strategies.
- Overseeing the local delivery of sustainable community strategy and Local Area Agreement (LAA) outcomes, joining resources as appropriate.
- Promoting greater coherence in partnership working activity, rationalising where appropriate.
- Ensuring that the voice for the district and its communities is heard within the County, region and beyond.

**4.4** LSPs will be accountable both to the Team Somerset Board for delivery of LAA outcomes in the relevant district area, and to the relevant

district council for delivery of the sustainable community strategy and LAA outcomes.

### Community Partnerships

**4.5** A strong network of Community Partnerships forms a critical part of our governance model. Community Partnerships will provide the main forum for councils (including parish and town councils), partner agencies, community groups and citizens to jointly shape the future of neighbourhoods and localities, improving services and outcomes for residents.

**4.6** Community Partnerships will be set up at a geographical level that is smaller than a district, although their precise coverage will vary depending on local circumstances and views. In many cases, Community Partnerships will be a natural extension of locality working arrangements that already exist in different parts of the County. The main responsibilities of Community Partnerships will clearly require agreement with the communities involved, but we suggest that these may include:

- Ensuring that citizens have a real say in shaping the delivery of local services.
- Managing the delivery of the sustainable community strategy and LAA at local level.
- Identifying priorities that need to be included in future revisions of the sustainable community strategy and LAA.
- To challenge and scrutinise the performance and effectiveness of local authorities and partners (e.g. the Police, Health), holding them to account for the delivery of local services and outcomes.

**4.7** *It is important to us that communities are provided with simple and effective ways of engaging with and influencing public agencies.*

***Community Partnerships will provide an opportunity to join up various community engagement and area based initiatives led by different partner agencies, eliminating duplication.*** For example, we are already working with the Avon and Somerset Constabulary to develop Community Partnerships in a way that advances Neighbourhood Policing across the County.

**4.8** With a membership that includes elected frontline councillors, Community Partnerships will form an important part of local authority overview and scrutiny arrangements. In addition to the bullet points set out in section 4.6, Community Partnerships may identify and investigate local community issues, contribute to 'task and finish' reviews on specific topics and

administer 'Community Calls for Action' within the locality.

**4.9** Community Partnerships will feed in to, and be represented on, the relevant district LSP. This will strengthen the link between the outcomes specified in the LAA and sustainable community strategy and ensure their delivery at local level.

**4.10** As mentioned in section 4.6, different models of community engagement are already in place across Somerset. Building on these models, a County-wide network of Community Partnerships will be fully operational by April 2008. By agreement with each Community Partnership, we will seek to devolve as many powers and responsibilities as possible and appropriate.

## 5. Value for Money and Equity

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**5.1** ***We are committed to ensuring the delivery of consistently high quality services that represent excellent value for money for all Somerset citizens.***

**5.2** We recognise that some citizens do not necessarily understand who provides local government services, or where to go to make enquiries, seek information and advice about the support that might be available to them.

**5.3** ***Our proposal is for a rapid acceleration of shared service and collaborative working models, providing streamlined, efficient and cost effective services to all citizens.*** For some services, we believe that a streamlined County-wide delivery arrangement is the most appropriate, while for others we believe that a more local unit of management and delivery, tailored to particular communities' needs, is required.

**5.4** Services where we believe a County-wide delivery arrangement would be most appropriate include all customer contact and corporate support services. We will establish one consistent approach for all customers to

access all County and District Council services by 2010 at the latest. This will encompass the full range of customer service channels, from face-to-face and telephone through to internet and others. Excellent customer service will be underpinned by modern technology and delivered by highly trained and multi-skilled staff.

**5.5** Similarly, corporate support services such as human resources, finance, ICT, procurement and others will be delivered through streamlined County-wide arrangements that encompass the County and all District Councils. In our earlier prospectus document, we described the ISiS (Improving Services in Somerset) project, currently led by Somerset County and Taunton Deane Borough Councils (see also separate case study at Appendix D). ***All Somerset districts have signed a framework agreement that will enable them to procure services from the joint venture company that will emerge from ISiS.*** As part of Team Somerset, all District Councils remain committed to ISiS, subject to approval of a robust business case.

**5.6** There are other services where we believe a more localised management arrangement is more appropriate, such as 'street-scene', regulatory and planning services. Strong local management arrangements will provide greater capacity for customers and citizens to engage with and influence the design and delivery of local services. In all services that are managed and delivered locally, opportunities for greater efficiency through common business processes and joint procurement across the County will be realised.

**5.7** Details of shared service proposals, and efficiency gains accruing from these, are outlined in Appendix B. The case studies

attached as Appendices C - F demonstrate the strong track record that we are building from in Somerset.

**5.8** Through our programme of shared services, we will achieve efficiency savings in excess of £22 million from 2012 onwards. In the same timescale, citizens across Somerset will experience excellent value for money, with service performance and costs that are comparable with the very best in the Country.

**5.9** The summary table below provides a brief overview of the efficiency savings arising from different aspects of our programme:

#### Efficiency Savings Arising from Team Somerset

Savings Area(s)	2008/09 £'000,s	2009/10 £'000,s	2010/11 £'000,s	2011/12 £'000,s	2012/13 £'000,s	Total £'000,s
Cost of democracy	94	94	94	94	94	<b>470</b>
Management savings	305	914	1,218	1,218	1,218	<b>4,872</b>
Staff savings in areas of identified duplication	859	2,147	4,295	5,726	5,726	<b>18,753</b>
Staff savings – support services	985	4,270	6,405	8,540	8,540	<b>28,740</b>
Accommodation	-	-	3,249	4,922	4,922	<b>13,093</b>
ICT (non-staff)	-	-	433	866	866	<b>2,165</b>
Procurement	-	300	400	450	450	<b>1,600</b>
Financial saving	-	-	-	-	426	<b>426</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,242</b>	<b>7,725</b>	<b>16,093</b>	<b>21,816</b>	<b>22,242</b>	<b>70,118</b>

## 6. Implementation Timetable

6.1 Many aspects of our programme are already well under way and in some cases completed, as described in our earlier prospectus document and the case studies

attached to this document.

A summary timetable of key activities from now onwards is provided in the timetable below:

### Implementation Timetable

Activity	Deadline
<b>Strong, Effective and Accountable Leadership</b>	
Service Transformation Management Team established	Sept 2007
Team Somerset Board established, together with other key aspects of Team Somerset Governance (see Appendix A)	April 2008
Aligned leadership portfolios across all Somerset local authorities.	April 2008
Aligned management arrangements in place across all Somerset local authorities.	April 2008
County wide strategy unit established	April 2008
Establishment of one Crime and Disorder Partnership for Somerset West, coinciding with the Police Basic Command Unit (BCU) area.	April 2008
<b>Neighbourhood Flexibility and Empowerment</b>	
Roles and membership of County and district LSPs reviewed and aligned as appropriate	April 2008
Community Partnerships model fully operational across Somerset.	April 2008
<b>Value for Money and Equity</b>	
One consistent approach across Somerset for all customers to access all County and District Council services	April 2010
Shared Service Transformation Programme delivered	See Appendix B

## 7. Conclusion

**7.1** We believe that the communities and citizens of Somerset deserve a quality of life and standards of service that are second to none. We also recognise that the current local government arrangements in Somerset can work more effectively - radical change is necessary to meet the demands and expectations of citizens and the Government, as well as our own ambitions for Somerset and its communities.

**7.2** We believe passionately that Team Somerset's approach is the best and most appropriate governance model for the County, now and into the future. We believe that the different needs and priorities of our communities require a blend of governance arrangements and service delivery approaches that are able to represent Somerset on a regional and national level on the one hand, yet engage and respond strongly and flexibly to local citizens on the other.

**7.3** The benefits of our approach will include:

- Greater voice and influence for citizens and local communities, through enhanced democratic and management arrangements that are flexible and responsive to the needs of Somerset's many different localities. Existing levels of democratic representation will not be diminished under the Team Somerset governance model.

- Better services that put the needs of customers first. Service delivery will be socially inclusive; defined and driven by customers needs. Our aspiration is for overall customer satisfaction and performance levels to be in the top quartile nationally, from 2011.
- A stronger voice for Somerset - locally, regionally, nationally and internationally
- Annual efficiency savings in excess of £22 million from 2012.
- Establishment of our proposed new arrangements in their entirety from within existing resources.
- No need for any legislative change or disruptive structural reform.

**7.4** We are committed to maintaining effective dialogue with communities and partners, ensuring at all times that we have the broad support of those we are proud to serve and represent.

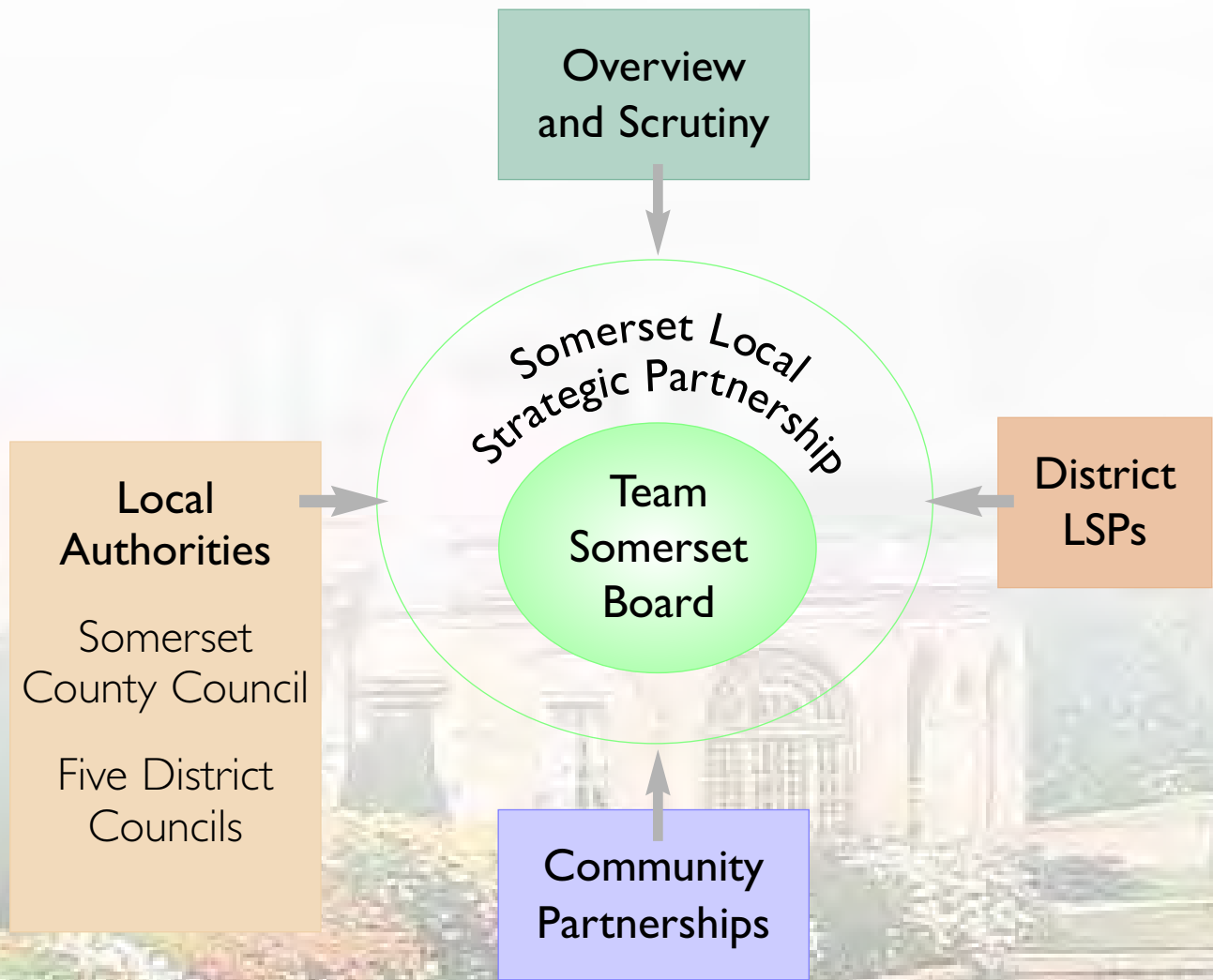


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## Team Somerset - Shared Service Proposals

Ref.	Service Area	Team Somerset Proposal	Key Features/Benefits	Projected Annual Savings (£'000s)	Implementation from:
1	<b>Regulatory:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental Health</li> <li>• Licensing</li> <li>• Trading Standards*</li> </ul>	Somerset Regulatory Services Partnership, comprising single management structure for Somerset, with strong local delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cross disciplinary working</li> <li>• Common ICT platform</li> <li>• Common staff terms and conditions and recruitment/retention policies</li> <li>• Consistent standards of enforcement across Somerset</li> <li>• Economies of scale through common ICT platform and business process re-engineering (BPR)</li> <li>• Top quartile service standards across Somerset</li> <li>• Emphasis on home working</li> <li>• Reduction in CO2 emissions</li> </ul>	369	2008
2	<b>Planning and Building Control:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning Control</li> <li>• Building Control</li> <li>• Highways planning*</li> <li>• Specialist advisory services* (eg ecology, archaeology, landscape and listed buildings.</li> </ul>	Two planning and building control teams in East and West of Somerset, with one manager for each team. or: Outsourcing of planning and building control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tailoring of services to local character and circumstances</li> <li>• Economies of scale through common ICT platform and BPR</li> <li>• Common staff terms and conditions and recruitment/retention policies</li> <li>• Staff re-deployment between teams.</li> <li>• Top quartile service standards across Somerset</li> <li>• Emphasis on home working</li> <li>• Reduction in CO2 emissions</li> </ul>	536	2008

## Team Somerset - Shared Service Proposals

Ref.	Service Area	Team Somerset Proposal	Key Features/Benefits	Projected Annual Savings (£'000s)	Implementation from:
		services (see main body of Business Case)			
3	<b>Street Scene:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Street cleansing</li> <li>Ground maintenance</li> <li>Litter and fly-tipping</li> <li>Graffiti</li> <li>CCTV</li> <li>Abandoned vehicles</li> <li>Car parking &amp; enforcement</li> <li>Community/park wardens</li> </ul>	Five district-based teams across Somerset, each with a manager.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>County-wide joint contracts for street cleansing, Grounds maintenance, CCTV and removal of abandoned vehicles</li> <li>Strong local presence - public service ambassadors</li> <li>Cross disciplinary working</li> <li>Community engagement</li> </ul>	1,481	2008
4	<b>Corporate Support and Transactional:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revenues and benefits</li> <li>ICT</li> <li>Design and Print/Postal Services</li> <li>Finance</li> <li>Human Resources</li> <li>Joint Procurement (works, services and goods)</li> <li>Property</li> <li>Single Customer Contact Strategy</li> <li>Legal (not in scope of ISIS)</li> </ul>	All Somerset authorities have signed up to the framework agreement to participate in a new joint venture company, to be established in 2007 to deliver support services to public sector bodies in Somerset and beyond.	<p>See separate case study on the ISIS ("Improving Services in Somerset") Project.</p> <p>Every principal authority in the County is committed to joining ISIS at the earliest opportunity subject to agreement of a detailed business case</p>	11,531 <sup>2</sup>	2008
5	<b>Audit:</b>	SCC to join the	See case study	-	2007

## Team Somerset - Shared Service Proposals

Ref.	Service Area	Team Somerset Proposal	Key Features/Benefits	Projected Annual Savings (£'000s)	Implementation from:
		SW Audit Partnership			
6	<b>Joint Strategy</b> eg: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economic development</li> <li>Procurement</li> <li>Culture</li> <li>Customer Contact</li> <li>Strategic Housing</li> <li>Local plan</li> </ul>	Creation of a county wide joint strategy team	Joining up strategies to reduce duplication and generate greater efficiency, consistency and standards of service	180	2008
7	<b>Democratic and Governance:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Single electoral services unit</li> </ul>	Creation of a single electoral services unit	Reduced duplication	94	2007
8	<b>Management Reductions:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Education</li> <li>Highways</li> <li>Social Services</li> <li>GF Housing</li> <li>Housing benefits</li> <li>Cultural Services</li> <li>Environmental Services</li> <li>Street Cleansing</li> <li>Planning (DC)</li> <li>Fire Services</li> <li>Central Services</li> <li>Management Teams</li> </ul>	Reduction in management through more collaborative working		1,218	2008
9	<b>Accommodation and new</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More efficient use of assets.</li> </ul>	5,348	2010



## Team Somerset - Shared Service Proposals

Ref.	Service Area	Team Somerset Proposal	Key Features/Benefits	Projected Annual Savings (£'000s)	Implementation from:
	<b>ways of working:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced staff numbers</li> <li>• Home working</li> <li>• Asset Disposal</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CO2 reduction through more efficient travel patterns and home working</li> </ul>		
10	<b>Reduced duplication in front line service delivery</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced duplication</li> <li>• Greater efficiency and value for money</li> </ul>	1,485	2008
<b>TOTAL (£'000s)</b>				<b>22,242</b>	

The Somerset Waste Partnership is an excellent example of collaborative two-tier working in Somerset, delivering improved services and greater efficiency without any loss of local democracy.

### **The Challenge**

The EU Landfill Directive and the National Waste Strategy 2000 required local authorities to significantly reduce landfill and to improve waste recycling. This was enforced by the introduction of the Landfill Tax and Statutory Recycling Targets. Furthermore, local surveys reveal that Waste Management and Recycling is consistently a top priority for the residents of Somerset.

The Challenge across Somerset was for the six Councils to work collaboratively to radically improve recycling services, reduce landfill, increase recycling rates and to reduce costs.

### **How we addressed the challenge**

The Somerset Waste Partnership (SWP) was formed in 1992 and is made up of the County Council and five District Councils in Somerset. In 2002 the SWP completed a joint Best Value Review of waste services with an improvement plan to significantly improve the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of waste services throughout Somerset. The five District Councils then wrote a joint specification to procure a Kerbside Recycling Service; the contract was awarded and commenced in October 2002. This joint approach has resulted in economies of scale for all five District Councils, along with much improved collection and separation of waste. Additionally, the County Council has invested in its household waste recycling centres to more effectively recycle household waste.

Since 2004/05 the SWP, with the support of Defra, has worked collaboratively to integrate

the waste disposal and collection functions across Somerset through the creation of a new arms length organisation, the Somerset Waste Board (SWB), to manage all the municipal waste functions. This mini local government reorganisation includes the procurement of a county wide waste collection contract for all household waste and recycling materials. The complex procurement involves joint planning, sharing resources and skills to deliver a key service that is used, every week, by the half million citizens of Somerset. The creation of the SWB will save the five Somerset Districts around 10% of their current waste and recycling costs.

In addition to these substantial savings, we are constructing a link between the County Council as waste disposal authority and Districts as waste collection authorities to manage the Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme (LATS). This vertical and horizontal service integration enables the SWP to provide excellent waste collection services while enabling the County Council to minimise the financial risk of LATS to taxpayers and maximise the potential financial benefit.

This investment in improved collection regimes will minimise biodegradable waste going to landfill with the benefit of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and the need for future waste treatment facilities. Our collaborative working is creating a win-win situation for both tiers of local government in Somerset and most of all for the communities we serve.

The SWP is currently finalising the budget pooling arrangement for the funding of the new waste body. The pooled budget will total circa £30million per annum, which in itself illustrates the level of trust and mature approach to collaborative working that exists in Somerset.

The SWP's collaborative working is a pathfinder project; we are going further than any other successful waste partnerships that exist in England. Defra recognise the cutting edge nature of this work and have made a significant contribution to our consideration of the appropriate legal form for the SWB. The approach that is being endorsed by the partner authorities is to create a new Joint Waste Authority. In January 2007, the government announced new powers through a Local Government Bill that will support the creation of joint waste authorities in two tier areas. Our aim will be to have the new Joint Waste Board established by 2009/10. In the meantime all authorities have agreed to establish the SWB as a Joint Committee, commencing in September 2007, which will be responsible via a newly formed centralised client team for both the new collection contract (October 07) and the disposal contract.

## **Outcomes**

Somerset is now one of the leading areas in the UK with regard to municipal waste management and our approach is recognised as a pathfinder project.

Our residents now enjoy a comprehensive recycling service both on their doorstep and at recycling sites and this is set to improve further once the Joint Waste Authority is in operation.

- 40.4% of all Household Waste was recycled in 2005/06
- 72% of waste entering Household Waste Recycling Centres was recycled
- The best performing site (in Bridgwater) recycled 82% of household waste
- The Waste Education Team have now made over 1000 visits to schools to promote recycling and composting
- The new Joint Waste Authority should realise savings of 10% of the current waste and recycling costs across the five District Councils
- The Joint Waste Authority will be in an excellent position to take advantage of the flexibilities of trading, banking and borrowing allowances under the Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme (LATS) in the most cost effective way

ISiS offers a gold-plated opportunity for Somerset authorities to achieve enormous efficiencies and improvements for our transactional and back office services while allowing us to focus on strengthening strategic leadership, place shaping and community cohesiveness to improve the quality of life for Somerset citizens.

All of the Somerset Districts recognise the value of ISiS and have signed the Framework Agreement to join the partnership in principle, as part of the Team Somerset proposal.

### The Challenge

Local councils face increasing budgetary pressures, a requirement to make savings, efficiencies and service transformation through the Gershon agenda and rising expectations from customers. Clearly a radical rethink is required to deliver services in a better and more efficient way across the county.

We believe that working in partnership with other Somerset Councils is the only way to deliver the good value and quality of service our customers deserve.

The ISiS vision was to transform the founder partners, Somerset County Council, Taunton Deane Borough Council and potentially the Avon and Somerset Police, into strikingly modern and progressive organisations capable of delivering high quality local services across Somerset through excellence in customer experience. The proposal was designed specifically to admit other public authorities in the region.

### How we addressed the Challenge

After much consideration between the founder partners, it was agreed to form a Joint Venture Company with the private sector to deliver

transactional and back office services for the founding organisations. The programme to deliver this strategic partnership was named ISiS - Improving Services in Somerset.

We advertised across Europe for a private sector partner and received an overwhelming response. In April 2006, we short-listed three companies: BT, Capita and IBM.

We specified six objectives for the ISiS programme:

- To improve access to and delivery of customer-facing services
- To modernise, reduce the cost of and improve corporate, transactional and support services
- To help modernise and transform the overall workings of the Councils
- To invest in new world class technologies to improve productivity
- To create an excellent working environment and sustainable employment for staff
- To generate economic development by a partner willing to invest in Somerset

### Outcomes

- We plan to appoint a preferred private sector bidder for a ten years plus ISiS Joint Venture partnership later in March 2007, with the contract to commence in July 2007
- The three short-listed bids offer enormous benefits to the county including tens of millions of pounds in efficiencies and savings, enormous economic regeneration, improved service delivery and customer service standards and better access to customers
- ISiS will also deliver a raft of other added value initiatives to the region that will benefit a large number of communities
- ISiS will improve a number of key service areas and should elevate them to beacon status within a few years



The Somerset Inward Investment Company is the way forward for Somerset to secure future economic vitality and regeneration, while maintaining existing strong links and support for business partners and local businesses. It will work through strong collaborative partnership across both tiers of Somerset authorities.

### The Challenge

The Somerset economy has been a success story over the past decade, with economic activity growing while national rates have remained static. Our economic activity rate is ranked second highest of the South West Sub Regions and the economy is projected to continue to grow well in the future.

Contrary to these economic facts, there is a problem with the perception of Somerset as a place to do business, which has made it difficult for the local authorities to promote inward investment. The County has no distinctive employment sector, an ageing population and suffers from low wages and low skills when compared nationally. It is a key strand of the Economic Development Strategy at both County and District level that attracting new companies in high skills areas of work will address many of the issues currently being faced within the local economy.

Despite the fact that the Somerset economy has out-performed the region (with an economic activity rate of 84.6% compared to 78.7% nationally and 81.6% regionally), until recently the six Councils have been working separately to attract and support existing businesses and have had no coordinated approach to collaboratively marketing Somerset.

### How we addressed the Challenge

Early meetings between the five District Councils and the County Council made it clear that the most effective means to make Somerset a serious contender for inward investment would be to work collaboratively and form an Inward Investment Company whose primary role was to

market Somerset and its Districts to the business sectors in the Midlands, the M4 Corridor and the South East of England. The Company was formed with the six Somerset Councils, the Regional Development Agency (RDA), business representative organisations and 'champion businesses' (such as Augusta Westland Helicopters). Roles, responsibilities and funding levels have been agreed for the first three years, providing in the region of £300k per annum to seriously tackle the issue. Three members of staff are being appointed to manage the company and deliver the objectives and the organisation will officially commence in April 2007.

The Company has been organised so that it utilises the strengths of the existing organisations (e.g. the District Councils' knowledge of local businesses, local agencies and sites and premises) in a collaborative manner. There are regular meetings between portfolio holder councillors for Economic Development from each Council that ensure political unity, a retained focus on the Economic strand of the Local Area Agreement (LAA) and a continued focus on the aims of the Inward Investment Company. The Company will report to the Somerset Strategic Partnership through the economic leaders group.

### Outcomes:

The Inward Investment Company will commence April 2007 and we are confident of it achieving the following outcomes:

- Positively change the perception of Somerset to business leaders around the country, especially in the South East, the M4 corridor and the midlands, to further enhance the economic position of Somerset
- Have a focus in Somerset on the creative industries sector, especially around communication technologies and aerospace engineering, creating a regional centre of excellence for creative industries and attracting businesses and jobs to the area

- 
- Deliver a smart, co-ordinated marketing campaign to attract new businesses to relocate to the County
  - Increase business relocations into the area by attracting more enquiries and providing more professional coordinated responses and visits
  - Support the expansion of existing businesses across Somerset, including expanding into other districts
  - Utilise existing successful businesses in Somerset to act as ambassadors and engage with other interested organisations
  - Work closely with the Inward Investment function of the new ISIS partner; using their knowledge, ability and technology to further enhance the economic outcomes for Somerset
  - Develop the Inward Investment service to businesses to ensure we are providing the right information and support to best meet their needs
  - Build upon the already identified growth in business across Somerset and ensure we continue to out-perform the regional economy as we have consistently done in the last decade

# Team Somerset: Outline Business Case

## Case Study: South West Audit Partnership (SWAP)

# Appendix F

The South West Audit Partnership is another example of successful collaborative working across the County, providing a win-win solution for all four partner Councils. The remaining two Somerset Councils, which include the County Council, are both negotiating joining the partnership and are currently reviewing the business case.

### The Challenge

All local councils are required by law to provide an internal audit function. The District Councils in Somerset recognized that their internal audit functions were already efficient, but had further potential to improve their working practices and efficiency, by adopting a partnership approach to audit across the County.

The drivers for change included the need to address: improved cost effectiveness; staff recruitment difficulties; the development of specialist audit skills; more flexible shared resources; and the development of best practice and common procedures. By addressing these, the partnership drives up the overall quality of Internal Audit Services available to Somerset Councils.

### How we addressed the Challenge

A number of 'joint audits' were trialled between Taunton Deane and South Somerset District Councils, which helped build relationships and an understanding of joint working.

In April 2005, the South West Audit Partnership was established using the Joint Committee model. The founding members were Taunton Deane and South Somerset, with Mendip and West Somerset both joining six months later.

The model allowed for equal governance of the partnership, overseen by a board of members and Section 151 officers. Allocation of resources was agreed to be proportional, based

on the size of the financial contributions from the respective authorities. The management of the new partnership was scaled down from four Chief External Auditors to a Head of internal Audit and two Group Auditors.

The two remaining Councils in Somerset, Sedgemoor and Somerset County Council, are both in the process of negotiating to join the partnership and the details of this are being worked up.

### Outcomes:

This partnership approach to delivering audit services has already provided many benefits to the partners:

- Significant efficiency improvements by providing an expanded and more comprehensive service, with numerous benefits, for the same costs
- The recruitment of a specialist computer auditor has led to more robust audits across the County, mitigating IT risks faced by the partner Councils.
- More flexible staffing to meet audit requirements. This has already proved useful when two auditors at South Somerset Council went on maternity leave and the partnership was able to cover this without additional recruitment.
- The scope of audits has been widened from traditional financial systems to include other non-financial areas that have a greater impact on the achievement of the Councils' corporate priorities. Recent reviews include Customer Services, Environmental Protection and Corporate governance, and there is now audit capacity to review risk management and health and safety. This also has the benefit of job enrichment for the audit staff.
- Acquired learning through identifying and sharing best practice is leading to more standardised working procedures across all the councils, which in turn, is improving systems across the range of council services.

# Team Somerset: Outline Business Case

## Appendix F

### Case Study: South West Audit Partnership (SWAP)


- The audit partnership effectively promotes further partnership working between the Somerset Councils, by signposting examples of best practice at other Councils (e.g. standardised procedural guides, risk management processes and policies) reducing the replication of work and delivering real process improvements.
- This greater assurance, increased quality of audit services and added value is being provided for the same resources. As the partnership expands, further efficiencies and financial savings will be realised.





If you have any comments or require further information concerning this document please contact:

Ruth James, Communications and Information Manager,  
Policy and Performance  
Taunton Deane Borough Council  
The Deane House  
Belvedere Road  
Taunton  
TA1 1HE

 Telephone 01823 356499

 e-mail [r.james@tauntondeane.gov.uk](mailto:r.james@tauntondeane.gov.uk)

#### English

If you need any information in this document translated into another language or in Braille, large print, audio tape, or CD please telephone us on 01823 356499 or e-mail us at [r.james@tauntondeane.gov.uk](mailto:r.james@tauntondeane.gov.uk)

#### Bengali

যদি এই দলিলপত্রের কোন তথ্য আপনার অন্য কোন ভাষায় অনুবাদ করে প্রয়োজন হয়, বা ব্রেল, বড়ো ছাপার অক্ষর, অডিও-টেপ বা সিডিতে প্রয়োজন হয়, তাহলে আমাদের টেলিফোন করুন এই নম্বরে : 01823 356499  
বা অথবা ই-মেল করুন : [r.james@tauntondeane.gov.uk](mailto:r.james@tauntondeane.gov.uk)

#### Chinese

如果你需要這文件內的任何資料翻譯成另一語言或盲人凸字,大號字,聲帶,或光碟,請致電我們,電話 01823 356499  
或電郵 [r.james@tauntondeane.gov.uk](mailto:r.james@tauntondeane.gov.uk)

#### Hindi

अगर आप इस दस्तावेज़ में प्रस्तुत किसी भी जानकारी का अनुवाद दूसरी भाषाओं या ब्रेल, बड़े अक्षरों वाली छपाई, ऑडियो टेप, या सीडी में चाहते हैं, तो कृपया हमें इस नंबर पर फ़ोन कीजिये  
01823 356499  
या यहाँ ईमेल कीजिये [r.james@tauntondeane.gov.uk](mailto:r.james@tauntondeane.gov.uk)

#### Portuguese

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