

# **Full Council Meeting – 5 July 2022**

## **Report of Councillor Federica Smith-Roberts – Leader of the Council**

### **Armed Forces Day**

On Mon 13 June Somerset West and Taunton Council showed its support for the Armed Forces by holding two flag-raising ceremonies. The flag will be flown leading up to National Armed Forces Day on Saturday 25 June. One service was hosted at Deane House in Taunton and one at West Somerset House in Williton. I was very pleased to be asked to read the hymn/prayer 'The Falklands Hymn'. I look forward to the Somerset Armed Forces Event on 2 July.

### **Town and Parish Council Election 5 May**

110 people were elected for County Council seats. Councillors representing their communities on town and parish councils will serve a five-year term, bringing these elections into line with county elections going forward.

For their first year, the elected councillors will take responsibility for all current County Council services and oversee the local government reorganisation to establish a single unitary council on 1 April 2023.

From 1 April 2023, the 110 councillors of the unitary council will be responsible for services that are currently delivered by the county and four district councils, ranging from adults and children's social care to highways and housing, and from libraries to planning and licensing.

District councils will remain until 31 March 2023 and the councillors serving on them will continue in their roles until that date.

### **Annual Council – Final Year Appointments**

The Annual Meeting of Somerset West and Taunton Council was held on 24 May, when the Chair and Vice-Chair were elected along with the portfolio holders.

Somerset West and Taunton Council will remain a sovereign council until 31 May 2023. From 1 April, a single unitary council will be responsible for services that are currently delivered by the county and four district councils.

### **Annual Plan – April 22 – 31 March 23**

The Annual Action Plan 2022/23 outlines what the Council aims to achieve by 31 March 2023, in order to support the delivery of these priority strategic themes and outcomes.

The Plan doesn't contain everything we do, but sets out at a high level, the key projects and actions outside of our core work, that we intend to focus on during the

12 months from 1 April 2022. These are in addition to delivering excellent day to day services on which our communities rely.

The Council will formally report on the progress of the Annual Action Plan twice a year as part of its performance management arrangements.

I have included the link to the Annual Plan for 2022/23 here [Annual Plan \(somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk\)](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/annual-plan)

For a real work lived experience of that Annual Plan in action I'm sure you will have seen the ongoing work at Firepool, the environmental improvements at Vivary Park and other outside areas and our ongoing commitment to work with our Parish and Town Councils, where we have funded works that benefit the local communities they serve.

### **The Queen's Platinum Jubilee**

On 5 June Somerset West and Taunton Council put on a party in Vivary Park to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee which included the Big Lunch and activities and attractions for the whole family. SWT decorated the district with red, white and blue planters and hanging baskets filled with plants from its own nursery. A whole host of commemorative events were held including a Beacon Trail in Taunton.

### **LGR**

LGR is continuing as a collaborative effort between the 4 District councils and the County Council as we head towards vesting day. Now that the elections have taken place, the pace will now pick up as the new administration sets out its plan.

My involvement will continue as Leader of SWT through the Implementation Board and most recently as a consultee for the recruitment of the new Chief Executive Officer.

### **Switch Inward Investment Launch Event**

On 12 May I attended the launch of the SWT new inward investment campaign to put the area on the map with future business investors. The campaign is backed by business leaders and is being delivered to promote the area of Somerset West and Taunton as a key business destination, rich in growth and innovation opportunities. The SWITCH campaign demonstrates that, in terms of opportunities for business growth, Somerset West and Taunton is a very viable alternative to locations such as Bristol and London.

### **Royal Garden Party**

On 17 May I was delighted to represent SWT at the Royal Garden Party, it was truly a memorable experience to see both behind the scenes of Buckingham Palace and to meet people from different sectors of society who all contribute to the different organisations that they are involved with.