

### Agenda item 3

For decision – To adopt the report from FTC’s unitary consultants on a strategy for asset devolution and an update on the Frome Area Local Community Network

Author: Paul Wynne, Town Clerk and Kate Hellard, Community Development Manager

#### Summary

This report provides an update on the latest developments in the unitary Somerset project.

Previous updates on unitary developments can be viewed at the links below:

<a href="#"><u>June 2020.</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>November 2020</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>March 2021</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>September 2021</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>November 2021</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>January 2022</u></a>

The Somerset (unitary) Council elections will take place on the same day as the Frome Town Council elections – 5 May. Between 5 May 2022 and 31 March 2023 a shadow Somerset (unitary) Council will operate. The district councils in Somerset will continue to operate until April 2023.

There is now a well established unitary project team comprising district and county staff overseen by Chief Executives of all five councils and there is a Local Government Reorganisation (LRG) committee comprising of senior Cllrs from the five councils. There is also a LGR advisory group that Paul sits on as one of the two Parish and Town Clerk representatives. This group also includes representatives from the CCG, the police, SALC and many third sector organisations.

#### Devolution

Our advisors – Ian Timms and Martin Woods have now completed their due diligence phase and will present their findings and advice at the meeting. Their report is at [Appendix 1 which can be viewed on the website here](#). It is recommended that Cllrs adopt their report.

At the last Council meeting on 19 January, Cllrs agreed to offer to take on a series of open spaces from MDC prior to unitary. MDC is still considering our request.

#### LCNs

Kate Hellard has been working closely with our neighbouring parishes in the Frome Area Local Community Network pilot. Good progress is being made on the given pilot subject of children, young people and families. Kate Hellard will provide a verbal update on the Frome Area LCN at the meeting.

In order to support the development work of the LCN, we would like to facilitate some

community development work to map the services, organisations and groups that meet in the wider Frome Area. This will enable us to extend the information available on FIND to a wider community and also to identify gaps in children and young people's services. Somerset County Council have agreed to fund this work and are currently drawing up a service level agreement. FTC would use this funding to provide staff time and we are proposing an extension to the maternity cover CYP PO role in order to do so.

It is likely that the SCC SLA won't be in place by the end of the month and so we plan to underwrite it by utilising an under spend in the Engaging Young People's budget. There is an underspend because we were unable to deliver the intended Make it Happen Conference for last year's year 8 pupils due to Covid restrictions earlier in this financial year. Once the budget has been received from SCC the underspend will return be transferred to the General Reserve.

**Recommendation**

Adopt the report at [Appendix 1](#).