

Committee: FULL COUNCIL

Date: 17 August 2021

Title: Local Government Reorganisation (Somerset)

Purpose of Report

To bring to the Town Council Agenda an item for the discussion of the future of Ilminster Town Council's engagement in the process of Local Government Reorganisation in Somerset.

Recommendation:

The Town Council agrees to hold a standing agenda item until further notice, in order to discuss the latest developments arising from negotiations over the future Local Government Reorganisation in Somerset.

Background:

1. In 2020 Somerset County Council applied to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government (SoS HCLG) to create a unitary council in Somerset.
2. As a result of the application a consultation was launched by the SoS HCLG which took into account both the proposal put forward by Somerset County Council and a counter proposal put forward by the four Somerset District Councils.
3. On conclusion of the consultation and after deliberating the two cases and consultation responses, the SoS HCLG announced on the 21st July 2021, that the preferred bid was that of Somerset County Council and their 'One Somerset' business case.

Report:

4. Both the 'One Somerset' and the 'Stronger Somerset' business cases envisaged new 'networks' to be created within and around Town and Parish Councils with additional responsibilities and possibly additional funding (although this is unclear at this time) being handed down.

5. As a result, it is for the Town Council to decide:
 - a. How much it wants to engage in any future structural proposals in the new authority.
 - b. How much responsibility the Town Council is willing or prepared to take on. For example, the running of the Car Parks, street cleaning or taking on additional land/buildings.
 - c. Setting up a working group to look at possible opportunities for the Town Council and/or local organisations cooperating in the running of additional services.

6. This is an opportunity for the Town Council to re-assess its position within local government and decide how it can best represent the people of Ilminster into the future.

Cllr Brian Hamilton
August 2021