



Dear Colleague

## **ONE SOMERSET: THE FUTURE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN SOMERSET**

I have the pleasure of enclosing a copy of the full business case for One Somerset for your information. The proposal has now been submitted to Government who will consider it over the coming months, before reaching a decision later in 2021.

One Somerset, overwhelmingly endorsed by the County Council on 29 July 2020, seeks to establish a single tier of local government for Somerset. We believe that a single unitary council working closely with communities and the rest of the public sector is the best option for our county and would end confusion, remove duplication and free up funding for key services.

We believe that one authority will improve local government and public service delivery across the area by allowing us to join up and deliver seamless local services, giving greater value for money, providing stronger strategic and local leadership with sustainable structures. It would end the artificial and needless administrative boundaries and a single council approach has worked well in other places that have adopted it in recent years.

The proposal addresses the wider context around promoting economic recovery and growth across the whole county. It would deliver of a unitary 'bonus' of £18.5m annually to direct toward front line services including to our most vulnerable, the 'levelling up' agenda of creating new opportunity and boosting skills, and to community recovery following the pandemic.

We also know, from extensive consultation, that One Somerset commands a good deal of local support from public sector partners, from businesses and our residents. Indeed, our residents overwhelmingly told us that they wish to end the confusion and duplication of the existing system whilst prioritising services for our most vulnerable. One Somerset would do exactly that, whilst delivering significant and tangible benefits to our entire county.

Finally, we want to continue to engage with you in the coming months and to ensure that your voice is heard. We will therefore be arranging specific briefing sessions and meetings early in the new year with myself, my fellow Cabinet Members and senior officers to explain more about the benefits of One Somerset and to answer any questions that you may have.

In the meantime, please see overleaf the ten pledges for One Somerset that we launched this week. Additional information can also be found on the dedicated One Somerset website ([www.onesomerset.org.uk](http://www.onesomerset.org.uk)) and please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Fothergill', with a horizontal line underneath.

**Cllr David Fothergill**

Leader, Somerset County Council

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P.S. Flaherty', with a horizontal line underneath.

**Pat Flaherty**

Chief Executive, Somerset County Council

# our pledges



No disruption to local services as we change, and a promise to keep you fully informed.



We will protect front-line staff working with vulnerable people across the county.



Council Tax will not increase because of moving to a single unitary council.



Physical, face-to-face council contact points across the county.



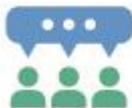
One telephone number and one website to access ALL council services.



Improved services for our vulnerable residents including housing, adults' & children's services.



Improved services for our children and young people, including education, training, jobs and transport.



More local decision making by our town and parish councils and new local community networks.



Closer relationships with partners including the NHS, police, education, and the voluntary sector to deliver better services.



And finally, we will not split Somerset in half, divide communities, lose our proud identity, or weaken our standing on a local, regional and national level.

# one somerset