

**Stronger
Somerset**

Stronger together: **a new relationship with communities**

Welcome and purpose of the webinar

Consider the thoughts of city, parish and town councils about the future of local government in Somerset

Provide an overview of the Stronger Somerset proposal

Set out the role of stronger communities in making the ambition a reality

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Running order

- Poll: *what most worries you and most excites you*
- Max Wide, Transformation Lead: *what does the evidence tell us about good engagement with towns and parish councils?*
- Stuart Brown, Chief Executive, Mendip District Council: *brief overview of the Stronger Somerset proposal*
- Sara Skirton, Communities and Localities Lead: *the Stronger Somerset approach, Charter and locality agreements*
- Questions
- Poll revisited

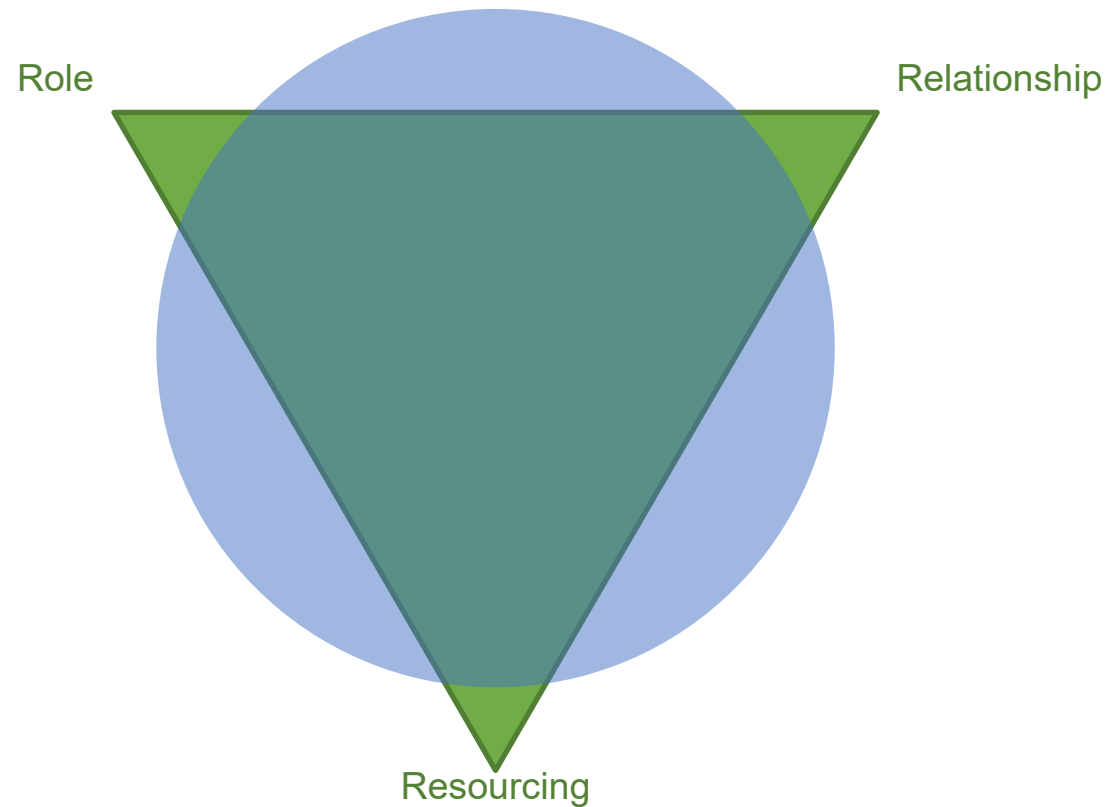
Listening to your concerns

Opening poll:

Thinking about the proposals for local government reform in Somerset, what are you most worried about?

And which opportunities are you most excited about?

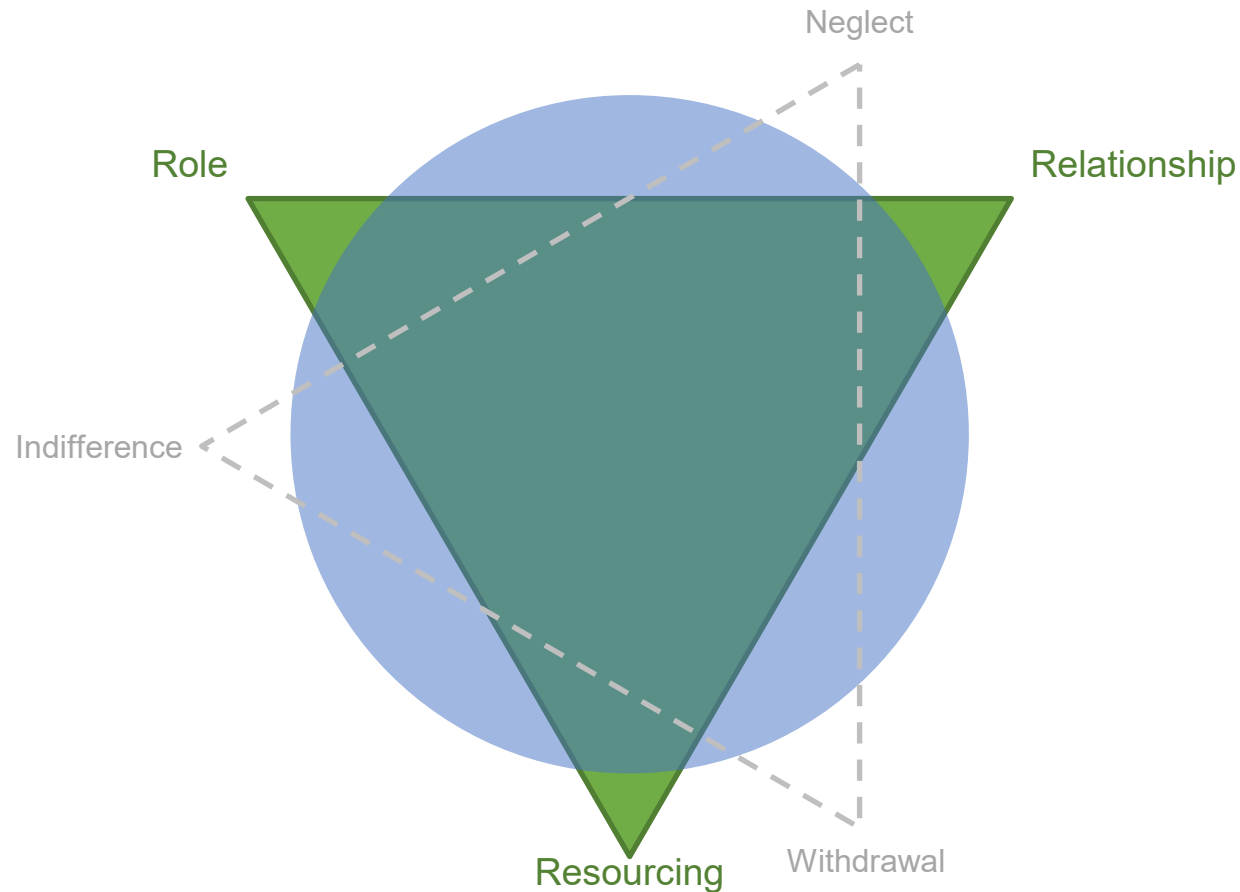
What does good look like?



The 'ideal'

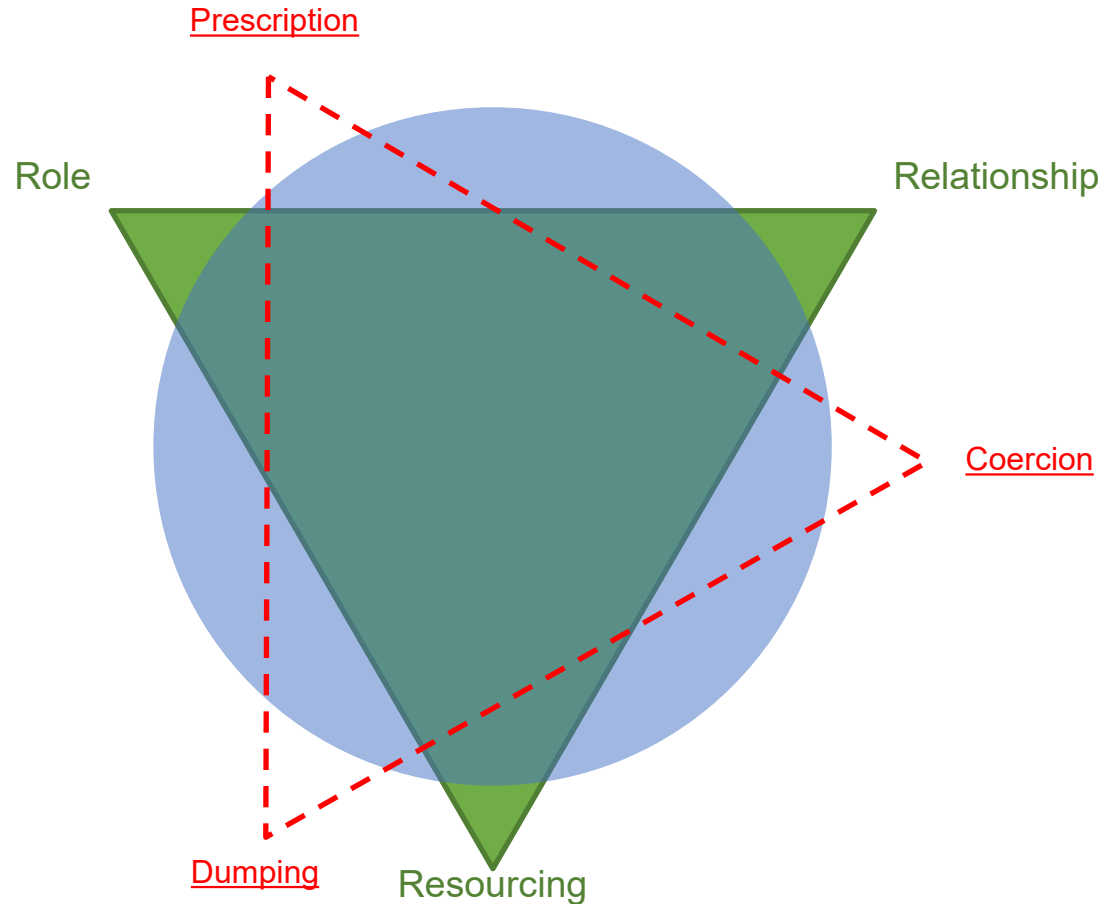
- Clear and agreed vision that sets the range of roles that towns and parishes might have, potential recognized but nothing proscribed
- Relationships are ongoing and have mutual feedback and formal/informal elements
- Resourcing is appropriate to the task and recognises the need for continuous improvements and widening the resource base

Undercooking



- Northamptonshire 2 unitaries
- Forced LGR
 - Saving money the imperative
 - Structure orders creating town councils but very little engagement
 - No real vision for a role for town and parish councils
 - Withdrawal likely to lead to poor consequences

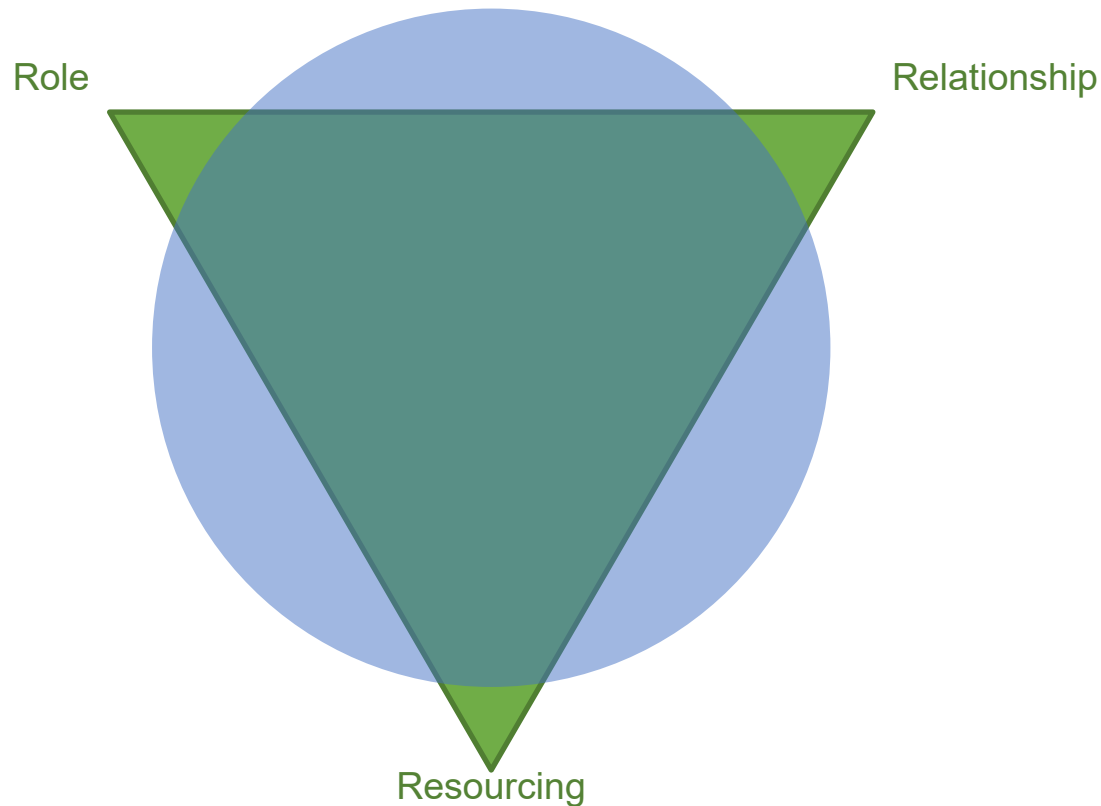
'Overcooking'



Some local examples

- Much promise but little delivery
- Geography dictated by the UA
- Very little remit or responsibility for the area boards
- Being talked at– many councils just don't go

Getting the balance right



Shropshire/Cornwall

- Team Shrewsbury:
 - Role came first and then assets and budgets followed
 - Some service take on but not the central focus
 - Town Council 'convenes' the public sector
- Cornwall
 - Tiered devolution scheme
 - Flexibility for towns and parishes to play the role they want
 - Capacity assistance from the new unitary

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Pause for questions...



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Keep it local – make it a Stronger Somerset

We trust in local solutions for a Stronger Somerset

Keeping it local delivers better services for a Stronger Somerset

**Western
Somerset**



**Eastern
Somerset**

Together we will build a stronger future

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Right size, right place

Two councils that listen and can respond to their communities will deliver the improvements needed to your services

Two councils, working side by side, closer to their communities, can deliver the change we need

These new councils will be small enough, to think and act locally, but big enough to be effective and economic

This is the right solution for a county of Somerset's size

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Pause for questions...



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Stronger communities

Localism is at the heart of Stronger Somerset

We will invest through a new community and devolution team similar to that in Cornwall

With a Charter, Locality Agreements and Community Networks, we will tap into the capacity and capability of our communities

Building on joint working, focusing on prevention and wellbeing

We will provide support services that localities may struggle to fund on their own

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Stronger Somerset Communities

- Stronger Somerset proposes to invest through a new community and devolution team.
- Proposals include:
 - A **Charter**, to support collaboration and strengthen relationships between the Unitaries and Town, Parishes and City Councils
 - An open ended offer to enter into a **Locality Agreement** to help communities define their needs and be supported to deliver
 - Establishing, or linking with existing, **Community Networks**

A Charter

- To help establish and articulate a strong collaborative relationship between town, parish and city councils and the new unitary councils
- We want a bottom-up approach that truly reflects the ways that communities operate and interact
- The Charter will set out mutually agreed rights and responsibilities and be flexible, recognising the range of local councils and localities across Somerset
- Timeline – working on a draft for consultation

Locality Agreements

Will vary in scope and scale to reflect local circumstances, for example:

- **Council Development Agreements** – with city, town and parish councils to help with governance arrangements and community engagement, access to services such as favourable procurement frameworks, HR and finance

or

- **Service or asset-based agreements** – these could involve assets, such as a building or a service, transferred permanently or for a fixed-term

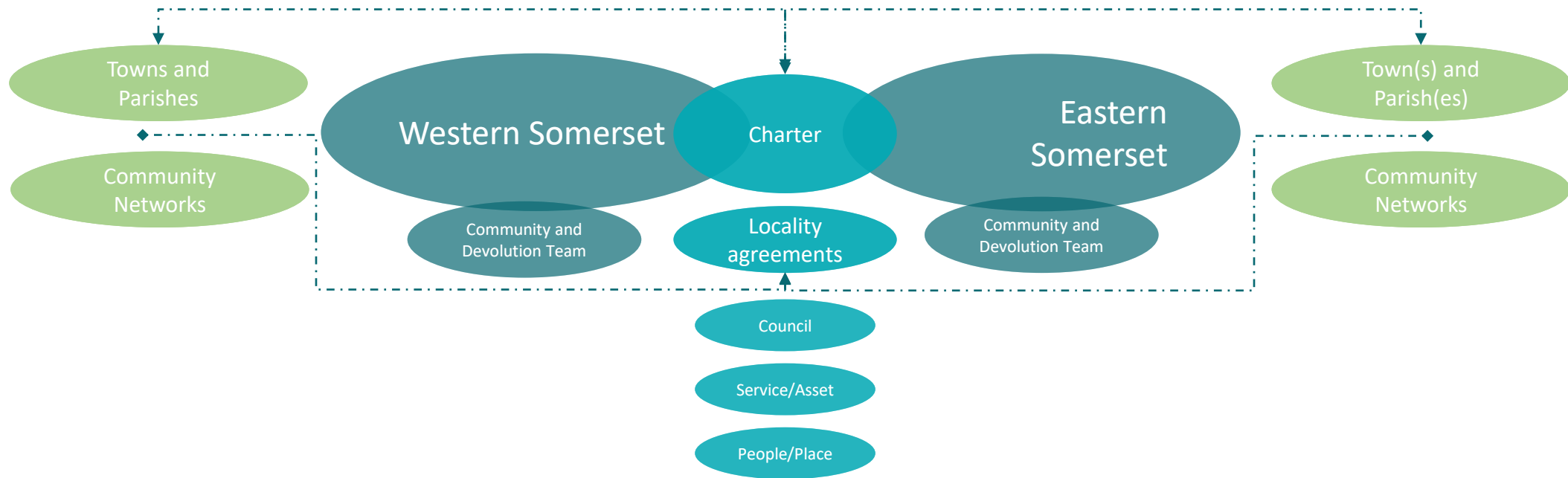
or

Locality Agreements

- **People or Place based agreements** – for example, an agreement to work to reduce isolation and inactivity of older people, that would in turn reduce demand on residential care places or the number of emergency hospital admissions

These agreements could support wider agendas such as population health, or crime prevention. They could involve the investment of money for evidence-based activity with projected benefits to public services.

How it might work... making it a reality



Pause for questions...



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Summary – a vision for a Stronger Somerset

- Reform leading to better services, improved quality of life, lower demand and more sustainable local public services
- Modern councils with a culture of working collaboratively with others
- A fresh start for Adult Social Care and Children's Services
- Stronger ties to localities and communities
- Driving economic growth – improving quality of life, increase tax base
- More power from Westminster to make our own decisions

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Second poll

Revisiting your thoughts

- Thinking about local government reform in Somerset, what are you most worried about?
- And which opportunities are you most excited about?

Respond to the consultation by 19 April



Complete the online questionnaire at:

<https://consult.communities.gov.uk/governance-reform-and-democracy/somerset/consultation/>



Email:

unitaryconsultation@communities.gov.uk



Write to:

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