Somerset

One Public Estate
Your Questions Answered
& Glossary of Terms

One Public Estate (OPE) Programme – Your Questions Answered

Below you'll find a series of questions we have been asked by colleagues about the One Public Estate (OPE) Programme – if you have a question that isn't answered below, please contact the project team (our contact details are at the end) and we will provide the answer for you.

This document also includes a Glossary with explanations of the terminology used in the OPE Programme.

Q: What does OPE stand for and what is the principle behind it?

A: 'One Public Estate'

The national One Public Estate (OPE) Programme is an initiative managed by the Cabinet Office Government Property Unit (GPU) and Local Government Association (LGA). Its aim is to provide support and funding to local authorities to encourage a partnership approach to "rationalise their asset and estates management", typically through the sharing of buildings and services with relevant partners.

Launched in 2013, OPE encourages councils to deliver ambitious property-focused programmes in collaboration with central government and other public sector partners. At its heart, OPE is about getting more from our collective assets – whether that's catalysing major service transformation such as health and social care integration and benefits reform; unlocking land for new homes and commercial space; or creating new opportunities to save on running costs or generate income.

The national OPE programme has three core objectives:

- creating economic growth (new homes and jobs)
- delivering more integrated, customer-focused services
- Generating efficiencies, though capital receipts and reduced running costs.

Nationally the programme is aiming (by 2019-20) to generate 44,000 jobs, release land for 25,000 homes, raise £415 million in capital receipts from sales, and cut running costs by £98 million.

From its start with 12 pilot councils in 2013, OPE now has over 250 local authorities in England participating in the programme. There is a link on SCC's website which lists all the councils currently participating in OPE. In a press statement in 2016, Ben Gummer, the Minister for the Cabinet Office and Paymaster General said: 'One Public Estate is not just about creating savings and collecting land receipts, it also enables the delivery of houses and jobs. Through this ground-breaking programme, local councils can transform services, unlock significant local growth and crucial efficiency savings through smarter use of property and land.'

Q: Why is Somerset County Council doing this?

A: To save money for Somerset residents and ensure local services are sustainable

In 2014, an Audit Commission Report estimated Councils spent around 4% of all revenue on premises-related expenditure (running costs, repairing buildings etc). Somerset County Council has approximately 110 customer-facing properties, located in 38 towns and large villages. Much of this estate is in a poor condition and would require significant repairs and maintenance in the years ahead. Therefore this programme provides a means to save money for Somerset residents through reducing running costs and sharing services, as well as seek opportunities to generate additional (one-off) income by selling off unneeded capital assets.

Q: Who is funding this programme?

A: Mix of national programme bid-for funds & input from partners

The One Public Estate (OPE) Programme in Somerset commenced with £177,500 of funding to look at the feasibility of running projects in Somerset. This initial grant from the national programme was obtained in October 2016 after a successful bid by the Somerset OPE Partnership (made up of all of Somerset's Councils, Police, Fire and Health services).

Different funding rounds will be made available during the course of the programme and new funding opportunities will be published as they are made available.

Q: How does OPE link to the Customer Access and Shared Assets (CASA) Programme?

A: The funding awarded in October 2016 enabled the OPE Programme to look at how we could build on the success of the CASA Programme, which aimed to create shared customer access hubs across the county.

CASA's objectives were to support the relevant elements of SCC's County Plan, Our Council Targets: 1) A Sustainable Council (by reducing the number of buildings we operate and living within our means) and 2) All about you (by looking to improve our Customer Support whilst helping residents to help themselves).

To do this involved working with partner organisations across Somerset to provide customers with convenient access to a range of complimentary public services in one place. Plus sharing space allowed SCC and our partners to apportion building running costs and resources, generating significant financial savings.

The first pilot CASA hub was delivered at Glastonbury in July 2016 – click here to find out more. The CASA programme has now been absorbed into the OPE Programme.

Q: What other organisations are involved?

A: Wide range of public sector organisations (partners differ depending on the needs of the local project).

Across England there are more than 250 councils currently (at June 2017) involved in projects transforming local communities and public services. Whilst SCC is the lead authority for the Somerset OPE programme, the individual projects are defined by the relevant public sector partners, which include:

- Mendip, South Somerset, Sedgemoor and West Somerset District Councils, and Taunton Deane Borough Council
- Avon and Somerset Police
- Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service
- Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)
- Somerset Partnership NHS Trust
- South Western Ambulance Service
- Department of Work & Pensions (Job Centre Plus)

Q: Where in Somerset will OPE projects be delivered?

A: Currently the OPE Programme is focused on the following towns across Somerset where projects are either being considered (at Feasibility Stage) or have their business cases at the review stage (see below for the full OPE Partnership Business Case Approach):

- Chard
- Shepton Mallet
- Taunton
- Yeovil

At the end of 2017, the OPE Programme was successful in securing future funding to assist the initial high level visioning and planning around the future development of Norton Manor camp following its planned closure in 2028.

Q: What are the expected outcomes and benefits of the OPE programme?

A: Outcomes will vary depending on a variety of factors.

The nature of OPE (working with buildings and property across a variety of partner organisations) means that each project requires a period of investigative / research work to be undertaken to identify the optimum outcomes and benefits to justify a business case for all the participant organisations. This Feasibility Study would aim to identify outcomes and benefits such as:

- Economic growth through regeneration of vacated sites
- Generation of capital receipts through sale of unwanted property
- Savings on operational running costs through sharing of buildings and services

- Improved collaboration and service integration between different public sector organisations eg more services available to residents in one location
- Extended opening hours for services through sharing of buildings and services

It must be noted that these feasibility studies may identify a business case where going ahead with the operational stage would be unjustified and the best outcome would be to keep things as they are, for example if the cost of change outweighed the potential savings to be made.

Q: What are the stages of an OPE project?

A: A typical approach requires 4 key stages: Feasibility, Concept Design, Detailed Design and Implementation.

- Feasibility – starting with a Visioning Workshop where the Vision and Objectives for the project are identified, along with the key organisational partners to be involved. This becomes an "As Is/To Be" data gathering process to provide sufficient information for the options to be developed ready for the Concept Design stage.
- Concept Design – emerging proposals are analysed and reviewed in greater detail by all the stakeholders and partners to make recommendation(s) for an Outline Business Case. This is when the Partnership selects the preferred option based on the benefits and outcomes – this may include the decision to do nothing/make no changes if the Outline Business Case cannot improve on the "As Is" situation.
- Detailed Design – once a 'project go' decision is made, more detailed designs and specifications are developed to enable contractors to be appointed and final designs to be signed off, leading to a Full Business Case to be presented.
- Implementation – once the Full Business Case is agreed, the operational aspects of the project start.

Q: What are the timescales for each project?

A: Timescales will be dependent on what has been agreed for each project.

As an example, the outline of the OPE Business Case Approach suggests 5 months each for the Outline Business Case and Full Business Case, leading to implementation of the agreed project. However this timescale can be impacted by various factors, such as how many Partners are involved in the project; how does the project timeline fit with existing projects; what the specific requirements of the project entail (eg a relocation from one building to another, or building/renovation work required before any changes can take place).

Q: How might the programme affect what I do?

A: Impacts will vary depending on a variety of factors.

At the feasibility stage (see below for full explanation of a typical project approach), a key element of the decision making process involves the Impact Assessment that is undertaken for every

potential option and/or scenario for a project. All staff and stakeholders are involved in the data collection from the start and kept appraised of what happens at each stage (see below), especially where there may be a direct impact on someone's role.

Depending on the final implementation decisions that are taken for a project, examples of changes the project might require include having more services in one location (customer hub); your role may involve working with colleagues from other public sector organisations in a shared (back-office) hub; you may be working in a different building; for customer facing roles, more services may be included under your remit and/or your working hours may be changed to suit customer requirements.

Q: Who will be available to support me through any change OPE creates?

A: Your managers / Change Champions / OPE Project Team

The Project Team appreciate the wide ranging implications for teams, individuals and services across the county council, as well as our partner organisations. At every stage, we will share information via Managers and Change Champions, who are appointed to support your manager and act as a link between staff and the Project. In addition, the OPE Project and Change Officer Sue Windley is also available to support you through the changes and give you the latest updates on any of the current OPE projects.

Q: I've been through change before so why do I need a Change Champion?

A: The OPE Programme may have wider impacts than just relocating services.

As stated in the question above about how OPE might affect what you do, potential changes to workplace location, roles, working times, new colleagues or requiring new additional knowledge can have emotional and behavioural impacts on individuals as well. Commonly known as the Change Journey, it is a recognition that organisational change is not linear, especially in multi-partner programmes such as OPE where much of the change that is likely to happen will be unpredictable.

We will ensure that Managers fully appreciate individuals and teams go through change at different speeds with different emotions – it can be a case of two steps forward, one step back (or sideways!). As a Project Team, we will endeavour to keep everyone as up to date as possible – in some instances, this may be by letting you know nothing new has happened!

Change Champions will be there to provide support and feedback as you go through the Change Journey. Of course, we will also ensure you have all the training and skills updating you need to ensure you feel comfortable in your new situation.

Q: How do I raise any thoughts and ideas I may have and to whom?

A: Staff will have the opportunity to raise any concerns or questions they may have through their line manager, Change Champion or by contacting the OPE Somerset Team, who are:

Role	Name	Email
SRO (Senior Responsible Officer)	Claire Lovett	CLovett@somerset.gov.uk
Programme Manager	Jon Marks	JPMarks@somerset.gov.uk
OPE Project Manager	Sian Powell	SLPowell@somerset.gov.uk
OPE Project & Change Officers	Sue Windley	SWindley@somerset.gov.uk

Q: Where can I find out more information about the OPE Programme?

A: Please contact any of the team (details above).

Glossary Of Terms for the OPE Programme

"As Is"	A measurement and/or statement of current (starting) conditions before a project is undertaken, eg cost of service, running costs for a building, levels of customer satisfaction etc.
Benchmarking	The comparison of a performance measure or process with OPE Partner organisations to identify best practice/ appropriate improvement targets.
Benefits	The measurable improvement resulting from an outcome perceived as positive by project stakeholders – these can be both Financial (eg capital asset release of £xx, operational savings of £xx, reduction of running costs by £xx/%) and Non-Financial (increased use of services by customers, higher customer satisfaction)
Business Case (Outline / Full)	A proposal containing costs, benefits, risks and timescales to test the viability of a project and/or options. For OPE projects, an Outline Business Case gathers 'top-line' data to produce options that can be reviewed by the Project Partnership. Once this is approved, a Full Business Case is completed to enable project implementation.
Capital Receipt	Non-recurring and non-routine income created by the sale of an SCC asset, such as a building.
CASA Project	The OPE Programme has replaced the Customer Access and Shared Assets (CASA) Project, which was set up to change SCC's customer access approach and reduce the Council's operational estate. The key aim was to have fewer but higher quality buildings, located in areas of identified need where people could easily access services in one place. The first pilot CASA hub was delivered in Glastonbury in July 2016. To find out more, click here
Concept Design	Collation and evaluation of commitment and clarification on partner/staff/stakeholder needs to develop initial floor plans to be costed in the Outline Business Case.
Core Council programme	SCC's Core Council Programme currently consists of 7 transformational programmes which the Senior Leadership Team have recognised as strategically important. They are organisation wide and complex and drive service improvement and financial savings. OPE is one of these programmes.
Consultation	Engaging with potential/relevant stakeholders to identify, assess and evaluate their views, opinions and potential impacts on proposed Vision / Options and/or Business Case for each project.
Customer	A recipient of goods and/or services from Somerset County Council and any of our Partners within scope of the OPE Programme.
Detailed design	Production of technical and service specifications to enable engagement with a contractor as a result of agreed floor plans.
Engagement	The active communication with/to relevant individuals and organisations to ensure effective understanding and buy-in for every aspect of an OPE project.
Environmental Sustainability	Ensuring any OPE Project Outputs deliver improved outcomes without exhausting natural resources or causing severe ecological damage. This is analysed as part of an Impact Assessment, using evidence to underpin current decision making/option selection by balancing the operational needs of the present with the strategic needs of the future.
Equality Impact Assessment	An analysis and evaluation of the likely impact of every option of a potential OPE Project on anyone who lives, works, visits or uses our services in Somerset.

Feasibility Study	Researching and collating data (such as customer footfall, service need and demand etc) of all the options put forward for a project proposal to check the viability for an Outline Business Case.
Heads of Terms	A document which sets out the terms of a commercial transaction, agreed in principle, between parties in the course of negotiations, for example a building's lease. Heads of Terms do not legally compel the parties to conclude the deal on those terms (or even at all) although provisions relating to confidentiality and costs may be binding on the parties. Typically heads of terms are used once preliminary terms have been agreed, but before starting detailed due diligence and the drafting of definitive agreements (which is where significant costs are incurred).
Hubs	As part of collaborative working, a key theme for the OPE programme in Somerset is the development of hubs – shared space in existing buildings. These consist of 3 types: - Back Office Hubs (shared office space between public sector organisations) - Customer and Operational Hubs (shared space where customers can access a wider variety of services across multiple public sector organisations) and - Business Incubator Hubs (space within vacated buildings or customer hubs focused on business support and generation)
Implementation	Start to finish of operational works once the Full Business Case has been agreed and signed off; scheduling activities and resources, such as negotiating and securing lease arrangements with partners; vacating surplus buildings, securing dilapidations and handing empty buildings back to Property; handover of project to operations team; post project review activities.
Integration Opportunities	Analysis and evaluation of cross-public sector collaboration for the use of existing buildings and /or disposal of property as a means to deliver better customer service whilst enabling cost-savings and boosting economic growth. Typically involves asset mapping (to identify relevant property) and then generating ideas across the partner organisations as to the best means to collaborate.
Inter-dependencies	Activities in another project or programme on which a current project is dependent upon being delivered in order to progress. Within Partnership-based programmes such as OPE, inter-dependencies occur frequently and impact the timeline of what may appear to be a simple project activity.
OPE	One Public Estate, a national programme managed by the Cabinet Office Government Property Unit (GPU) and the Local Government Association (LGA).
OPE Partnership & Partnership Board	Across England, there are more than 250 councils involved in OPE Partnership projects to transform public services – each local programme will have a Partnership Board to oversee the governance and implementation of each project. SCC is the lead authority for the Somerset OPE programme, but individual projects are defined by the relevant public sector partners, which include: - Mendip, South Somerset, Sedgemoor and West Somerset District Councils, and Taunton Deane Borough Council - Avon and Somerset Police - Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service - Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)

	• Somerset Partnership NHS Trust • South Western Ambulance Service • Department of Work & Pensions (Job Centre Plus) Partnership is defined as a 'joint working arrangement between partners who are otherwise independent bodies; plan and implement a jointly agreed programme; share relevant information and pool risks and rewards.
Space Plans	Plans which measure the amount of space available within a building to identify the best ways to utilise that space. Within OPE projects, space plans are used at the initial stages to assess options and requirements.
Stakeholder Stakeholder Map	An individual, team or organisation that can influence / have interest in any aspect of a project or programme. In the case of OPE, this may involve a wider range of external interested parties including Members (at County, District, Town and Parish levels), local/community organisations and the general public. For each OPE Project, a Stakeholder Map is developed to identify the level of interest and/or influence (these will differ across the programme). This feeds into the OPE Programme Communications action plans to enable the right means, approach and frequency of engagement with each stakeholder to keep them informed and up to date.
Surplus Estate	Some OPE projects may identify buildings and property that are no longer required (surplus estate), so these will be sold off to generate capital receipts and/or be available for regeneration/re-development.