

Hayward Burt. Blackmoor Vale Councillor February Report 2025

Somerset Council Budget

The discussions on the council budget are ongoing, there are a number of meetings this month in relation to this

While discussions with Government are ongoing, the Council has revised its budget setting timeline with meetings moved to align with expected decisions. The budget will now be discussed at the following meetings:

- Extraordinary meeting of Scrutiny Corporate & Resources – 17 February
- Extraordinary meeting of the Executive – 19 February

Revised Full Council meeting date for Budget proposals – 26 February

BOUNDARY COMMISSION REVIEW FOR SOMERSET

The deadline for phase 2 of consultation has been extended to 4 March 2025. The Somerset Council request to extend the deadline followed the Constitution and Governance Committees Meeting on 14 January where the committee resolved to:-

Reject the recommendations of the cross-party Electoral Review Working Group for submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) for Stage 1 of Somerset Council's Phase 2 response.

The Committee Asked the Monitoring Officer to write to the LGBCE requesting an extension of the deadline for Somerset Council to submit a proposal for Stage 1 of Phase 2 due to the challenges in finalising a submission that strikes a good balance in meeting the three statutory criteria.

In the absence of a submission from Somerset Council by the original deadline of 20th January the Conservative Group at Somerset Council submitted the report prepared on behalf of the working group before the deadline. The submission included details of some areas that we felt needed further consideration.

More information can be found here: - <https://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/somerset>

Somerset

Extension of consultation

The Local Government
Boundary Commission
of England

New Consultation Close: 4 March 2025

Our initial consultation on communities and wards in has been extended until 4 March 2025.

For more details about the timetable for this electoral review please visit: lgbce.org.uk



Consultation closes: **4 March 2025**

<https://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/somerset>

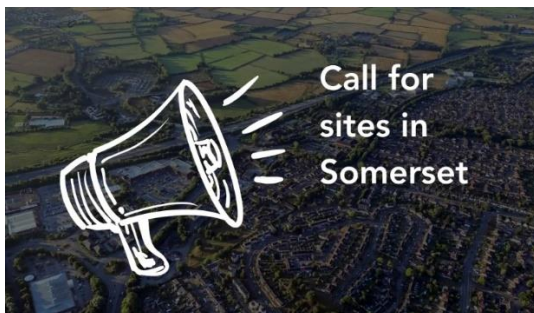
SOMERSET WASTE SERVICES ASSISTED WASTE COLLECTIONS

Somerset Waste Services offer assisted waste collections to over 13,500 homes.

This is where Crews collect containers from an agreed place outside a resident's home, empty the contents, and return the containers back to the agreed location. This is a free service, offered to any resident who needs extra help with their recycling and rubbish removal on collection day.

More information can be found here:- <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/.../assisted-clinical-and.../>

To ensure the councils records are up to date anyone that currently receives the service (prior to June 2024) will be receiving an email or letter in the near future to ask you to confirm that you still require the service.



A CALL FOR SITES IS OPEN until 24 February 2025 - This gives residents, businesses, landowners or developers the opportunity to suggest suitable plots of land that might be available for possible future development.

Work has started on the first stages to draw up the first Local Plan covering the Local Planning Authority Area for Somerset. (it does not include Exmoor National Park as that has its own Local Plan).

A Call for Sites has been launched - whereby Landowners, developers, and site promoters are being invited to submit land they would like to be considered for possible future development with potential uses such as housing, economic development, gypsy and traveller pitches, renewable energy installations, and leisure/recreation facilities. However, anyone can suggest a site for consideration that they think may be suitable for development.

The call for sites will run until 24 February 2025. This will be followed by an assessment of each site's suitability, availability, and achievability. The findings will be presented in a Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) report later this year. This will be one source of evidence to help inform which sites might be considered for allocation in formal consultations for the Somerset Local Plan.

More information can be found on this site:- <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/.../local-plan-call-for-sites/>

ONLINE SESSIONS TO HELP PEOPLE UNDERSTAND COMPLEXITIES OF CARE PLANNING

Somerset Council is holding a series of free, online webinars to help individuals plan care and support needs for themselves or those they care for. These informative sessions aim to provide valuable insights and practical advice on navigating the complexities of care planning.

Topics covered will include understanding your care options, financial planning, and how to access local support services. Attendees will have the opportunity to ask questions and receive guidance from professionals in the field.

You can register for the free events from the following page:-

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/news/online-sessions-to-help-people-understand-complexities-of-care-planning/>

Tuesday 4 February, 6.30pm – 8pm, [Financial Assessments for Care Funding](#)

Wednesday 12 February, 6.30pm – 7.15pm, [Navigating Direct Payments](#)

Wednesday 12 February, 7.15pm– 8pm, [Supporting the Armed Forces community in Somerset](#)

Thursday 27 February, 6.30pm – 7.15pm, [Personalised Community Support for Carers in Somerset](#)

Thursday 27 February, 7.15pm – 8pm, [Understanding how Adult Social Care works](#)

SOMERSET GETS A TREE-MENDOUS BOOST FOR URBAN TREE PLANTING

Somerset Council has secured half a million pounds of Government funding to bring hundreds of trees to towns across the county.

The £500,000 grant from the **Urban Tree Challenge Fund** will see nearly 700 mature trees planted and cover maintenance and care costs for the next three years.

This initiative will benefit parks managed by the Town Councils in Shepton Mallet, Crewkerne, Taunton, and Castle Cary and Ansford, as well as several council-owned parks in Yeovil. Somerton Sports Ground Trust will also receive new trees. Planting has already begun and should be complete by the end of the tree planting season at the end of March. Castle Cary and Ansford Town Councils receive 74 trees which are proposed for the Cricket Ground and Fairfield.

- Somerset Council owned parks in Yeovil are receiving 100 trees at Oak Tree Park, Yew Tree Park, Milford Park, and Lower Milford.

DEFRA SCRAPS ENGLAND DEADLINE TO REGISTER THOUSANDS OF MILES OF RIGHTS OF WAY.

The deadline for registering historic rights of way is to be scrapped. The last government set a deadline of 2031 for all rights of way in England to be added to an official map. The new government has now said it will repeal this new deadline when parliamentary time allows.

Once recorded as rights of way and added to the definitive map, paths are protected under the law for people to use. In an announcement timed to mark the traditional Boxing Day stroll by many people, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) announced it would remove the registration deadline.

GUIDANCE FOR REPORTING SAFETY ISSUES ON SOMERSETS ROADS

A quick and simple online reporting service is available 24/7. It's the best way to report any problems spotted on our county's roads – including snow and ice issues. This can be used to report non-urgent incidents both during hours and out of hours at the weekend

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/report-a-problem-on-the-road/>

You can also report a hazard on the road using this online form, including items or obstructions such as rubbish, tyres or blown/displaced traffic cones.

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/hazards-on-the-road/>

How do I report an urgent incident that's a safety risk at the weekend, or outside normal working hours?

To report an **urgent out-of-hours** highways issue that's a risk to public safety, please call Somerset Lifeline 0300 123 2224.

There is a dedicated call centre resource to deal with out-of-hours highways matters. Operators will notify the highways duty officer if appropriate, and they will take any necessary action.

IMPORTANT NOTE: If the hazard is on the M5, A303 or A36 please contact National Highways 0300 123 5000.

Gritting/salt spreading – this is the link to the roads that are salted in Somerset.
<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/gritting-map/>

OTHER OPEN CONSULTATIONS - <https://somersetcouncil.citizenspace.com/>

School Term Dates consultation for Academic Years 26-28 - closes 7 March 2025

Somerset Council is consulting on the draft school term and holiday dates for the 2026 - 2027 and 2027- 2028 academic years. These will apply to Community and Voluntary Controlled schools. While Academies, Voluntary Aided, Foundation, and Free schools can set their own dates, many choose to align with those set by Somerset Council.

Feedback from this consultation will be gathered and presented to a working party in March 2025, with the final dates published on Somerset Council's website in April 2025.

A Fire Service Consultation relating to responses to Automatic Fire Alarms Closes 9 April 2025

Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service has started a consultation with options to change how we respond to automatic fire alarms. The consultation is open until 9 April 2025. <https://www.dsfire.gov.uk/about-us/AFA-consultation>

A family Feedback Survey on digital Social Care Records – closes April 2025

A Digital Social Care Record (DSCR) is the digital recording of care information and care received by your relative, from their care provider, replacing traditional paper records. This is sometimes called an electronic care plan, electronic care record or electronic care management. This allows everyone involved in a person's care to see appropriate information to help with that care.

The Digitising Social Care Records initiative is being managed by NHS England

Useful phone numbers to use in an emergency

| Service name | Phone number |
|---|--------------|
| Police, Fire, Ambulance and Coastguard | 999 |
| Police (Non-emergency) | 101 |
| Gas (Transco) | 0800 111999 |
| Western Power Distribution | 0800 365 900 |
| Scottish and Southern Energy | 0845 7708090 |
| Bristol Water | 0800 801011 |
| South West Water | 0800 1691144 |
| Wessex Water | 0845 6004600 |
| Environment Agency | 0800 807060 |
| Floodline | 0845 9881188 |
| Met Office | 0870 9000100 |
| NHS non-emergency number – Use this service if you urgently need medical help or advice but it's not a life-threatening situation. You can find more information about this service on NHS Choices | 111 |
