



Somerset County Council
Business Plan 2018-19
(Draft)

Welcome to our Business Plan for 2018

This is Somerset County Council's Business Plan for 2018. It says how we will work with partners and communities to deliver the County Council's 'Vision for Somerset' in the most efficient way possible for Somerset's taxpayers.

The County Council Vision

Our Vision is all about improving lives by creating:

- A thriving and productive County that is ambitious, confident and focussed on improving people's lives.
- A County of resilient, well-connected and compassionate communities working to reduce inequalities.
- A County where all partners actively work together for the benefit of our residents, communities and businesses and the environment in which we all live.
- A County that provides you with right information, advice and guidance to help you help yourself and targets support to those who need it most.

Our Business Plan explains how we will work towards this Vision over the next three years. We will review the Plan every year to keep it up to date.

Delivering the County Council Vision

What the Council does is about making the most of the County's strengths, working together, and being prepared to do things in different ways: we don't just 'fix problems'.

To deliver the Vision, we will:

- Help people to help themselves.
- Target our resources to where they are needed most.
- Work with all our partners.

The people of Somerset have also told us what our priorities should be, which are reflected in the Vision and Business Plan:

- Helping vulnerable and elderly people.
- Investing in Somerset's economy and infrastructure.
- Attracting jobs and more apprenticeships.

Our strengths: what Somerset has to offer

Somerset boasts significant strengths. These are a strong foundation on which to improve lives in the county:

- Our economy is worth £11bn, the same size as Liverpool or Sheffield.
- Somerset has low unemployment and a mixed economy.
- We have many good performing schools.
- We work well with our partners. They consider us a 'partner of choice'.
- People can expect high quality home care.
- We have a fine natural environment and rich cultural heritage.

- A wide range of voluntary and community organisations contribute immensely to residents' wellbeing.

Somerset's challenges

Despite our strengths Somerset has challenges to overcome:

- Economic productivity that remains below the national and regional average.
- Poorer levels of public sector funding compared to other areas.
- Meeting the needs of a growing and ageing Somerset population.
- Inequalities in:
 - Educational outcomes.
 - Economic opportunity.
 - Access to services.
 - Life chances and aspirations.
- The need for more housing and infrastructure.
- Many people and communities remain digitally excluded or unable access fast and reliable broadband coverage.
- Many people suffer from poor physical or mental health and wellbeing.

The Council's own challenges and drivers

To be properly equipped to deliver, the Council has to understand its own drivers:

- We must always put our residents at the heart of everything we do.
- We have responsibilities across a range of partnership strategies:
 - [Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#).
 - [HotSW Productivity Strategy](#).
 - [Somerset Health and Care Strategy](#).
 - [Adults Promoting Independence Strategy](#).
 - [Children and Young People's Plan](#).
 - [Somerset Growth Plan](#).

And challenges...

- Continued austerity means that there will be further reductions in funding in future.
- We have significant funding pressures in key services, such as Children's Services and its journey to 'good'.
- The Council has a wide range of statutory responsibilities which we must meet.

Why a Business Plan?

The Business Plan says what the Council will do to deliver its Vision. Key to success is working with all our partners and making use of the County's many strengths and assets.

- It will focus our work on achieving better outcomes for our residents and communities.
- It helps us make difficult choices at a time when we have fewer resources than ever before and increasing demand for our services.
- It shows our partners precisely what our objectives are and what we are doing to achieve them.

The Business Plan also says how we will develop the capacity and capability we need.

To make the most of Somerset's strengths we will:

- Work with individuals, communities, providers, businesses, other public, voluntary and community sector organisations. We want to achieve 'more with more' and be their partner of choice.
- Work to retain the talent that we have in the County whilst attracting the additional expertise and resources that our economy needs.
- Work with businesses to grow and develop our economy.
- Promote Somerset as a great place to live and work.

To address Somerset's challenges, we will...

- Continue to focus on prevention and early intervention.
- Work across health and care to promote people's independence and reduce unnecessary demand on services.
- Protect vulnerable children and adults and support them to reach their potential.
- Work with our partners to provide the physical, digital and employment infrastructure that our economy and communities need.
- Work to create a County where people can aspire and achieve without being held back by their background or circumstances.
- Work with health partners and the police to tackle mental and emotional wellbeing issues and the harm they cause.
- Demonstrate Social Value and Value for Money in all that we do.

Meeting the Council's challenges

The Council must be confident, capable and financially sustainable if it is to deliver the Business Plan. So that we are equipped to deal with the challenges and grasp the opportunities ahead, we will:

- Address our financial challenge.
- Make sure our internal financial and decision-making processes continue to be strong
- Focus on 'getting to good' in Children's Services.
- Continuously develop and improve the way we work, find better ways of doing things and embrace new technology.
- Work with partners and communities.
- Focus on outcomes, making use of high-quality information and data.

To achieve this the Business Plan sets three organisational development priorities for the Council.

- Our culture and approach.
- Being a digital- and technology-enabled council.
- Effective and resilient delivery.

Everyone in the Council has a responsibility to consider and reflect the Business Plan in their service planning, budget setting and performance management. Everything in the Business Plan is subject to availability of funding and our decision-making processes.

Delivering the County Council Vision: our Plan for 2018-19

The Business Plan contains four strategic outcomes that show what the Council will focus on to deliver its Vision and improve lives. Beneath each strategic outcome sits four key priorities and a range of activities. By lining up these activities, priorities and strategic outcomes with the Vision we can plan ahead, monitor progress and above all ensure that we are working within our financial means.

The Business Plan shows our strong ambitions. This means that some activities are aspirational, and funding will need to be secured and formal decisions taken before they can begin.

A county infrastructure that drives productivity, supports economic prosperity and sustainable public services	Safe, vibrant and well-balanced communities able to enjoy and benefit from the natural environment	Fairer life chances and opportunity for all	Improved health and wellbeing and more people living healthy and independent lives for longer
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure all our services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Are financially sustainable. ○ Make decisions based on evidence and need. ○ Have the organisational, people and digital capacities and capabilities to deliver effectively. 2. Enable economic and housing growth by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Improving transport infrastructure and digital connectivity. ○ Working more effectively with developers and District Council planning colleagues. 3. Create the climate for enterprise and innovation that businesses need to grow and collaborate. 4. Deliver the Heart of the South West Productivity Strategy and influence the local Industrial Strategy for the benefit of Somerset. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support development of stronger communities including working with them to increase their resilience. 2. Work with partners and communities to protect and enhance the environment, manage our water better and produce less waste. 3. Make sure that Somerset remains a safe place to live, work and visit. 4. Support and promote enjoyment of Somerset's rich heritage, culture and natural environment. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tackle inequalities and poor social mobility across Somerset so everyone can realise their potential and give more to our economy and society. 2. Maintain the Council's focus and commitment to make Somerset a place where all children are healthy, safe, and have good physical and emotional wellbeing. 3. Ensure all children in Somerset have access to high quality schools, high quality educational, professional and support services, teachers and leadership teams. 4. Equip Somerset's workforce of the future with the skills they need, and enable them to aspire and achieve in Somerset's economy. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explore, define and implement robust health and social care integration. 2. Focus efforts on improving health and wellbeing outcomes, especially for those in greatest need. 3. Foster an environment which promotes healthier choices and supports people to take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing. 4. Support people to remain independent and within their homes and communities, without formal social care support wherever possible and for as long as possible.

Strategic Outcome	A county infrastructure that drives productivity, supports economic prosperity and sustainable public services
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Priority

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| <p>1. Ensure all our services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Are financially sustainable. ○ Make decisions based on evidence and need. ○ Have the organisational, people and digital capacities and capabilities to deliver effectively. |
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Activity to deliver this priority
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Develop and implement a Medium Term Financial Plan, that also responds to Peer Challenge recommendations regarding financial sustainability.
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| <p>Define and implement a robust financial plan for Children’s Services including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Developing a strategy for managing demand in high-cost services, as a top priority. ● Developing a model to fund the continuing improvement journey for Children’s Social Care through all-service budget management, communicated to all staff. |
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Commence discussions on local government review for Somerset.

Embed our People Strategy to improve the way we work with stakeholders.

Complete our library redesign programme to provide a modern and sustainable libraries service.
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Support new business start-ups for economic growth, which in turn will increase Business Rate income.

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| <p>Provide Business Intelligence and other management information to support better outcomes, through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Effective commissioning and delivery of services based on need. ● Effective management information to monitor performance. |
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Ensure our IT systems promote and enhance collaborative working and data sharing with public sector and other partners.

Develop and embed a Data Strategy that works in common with our partners.

Find new ways to map data at levels that support better, more focussed commissioning and decision-making.

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| <p>Improve asset management across the corporate property estate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Manage the Council’s property assets so that the non-school estate becomes self-funded and income-generating. ● Continue working with partners to share suitable existing property assets and develop joint new options. ● Use savings to invest in an optimised retained estate to improve value for money. |
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Priority
<p>2. Enable economic and housing growth by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Improving transport infrastructure and digital connectivity. ○ Working more effectively with developers and District Council planning colleagues.
Activity to deliver this priority:
Deliver phase 2 of the Connecting Devon and Somerset Programme to roll-out superfast broadband to more homes and businesses.
Deliver highways improvements, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colley Lane in Bridgwater. • Junction 25 of the M5. • Western Corridor, Yeovil.
Continue to press for improvements to the A303/A358 and rail services to and from Somerset.
Work with the rail sector to deliver improvements to stations including at Taunton and Bridgwater.
Enable delivery of infrastructure that supports economic and housing growth and community wellbeing.
Work with our District Council partners to deliver the access improvements funded by the Housing Infrastructure Fund.
Work with the Somerset Rivers Authority on new or improved infrastructure for economic benefit.
Establish a Sub-Regional Transport Board for the south west peninsula to lead on strategic transport issues that improve regional productivity and drive economic growth.

Priority
<p>3. Create the climate for enterprise and innovation that businesses need to grow and collaborate.</p>
Activity to deliver this priority:
Deliver enterprise and innovation space for new and growing businesses to develop. This could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New enterprise Centres at Bruton, Wiveliscombe and Wells. • Phases 2 and 3 of the Somerset Energy Innovation Centre. • Taunton Geovation Hub / Digital Innovation Centre. • The Somerset Grow-on Programme. • Working with partners to deliver the Huntspill Enterprise Zone and Energy Centre.
Deliver the iAero centre in Yeovil to drive innovation in the south west's aerospace industry.

Priority

4. Deliver the Heart of the South West Productivity Strategy and influence the local Industrial Strategy for the benefit of Somerset.

Activity to deliver this priority:

Work with partners to create a delivery plan for the Productivity Strategy that drives strong outcomes for people, places and businesses in Somerset.

Work with partners and MPs to lobby government to designate the Heart of the South West an early adopter of the Local Industrial Strategy initiative.

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Strategic Outcome	Safe, vibrant and well-balanced communities able to enjoy and benefit from the natural environment
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Priority

1. Support development of stronger communities including working with them to increase their resilience.

Activity to deliver this priority:

Increase the effectiveness of the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector, by:

- Identifying and supporting new volunteer opportunities.
- Launching the Somerset Fund.
- Supporting a greater role for the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector.

Work with partners and communities to make Somerset a more inclusive county for vulnerable children and adults.

Work with partners to improve practice and outcomes in our Early Help work.

Work with partners to develop and enhance Community Connect:

- Promote independence, empower communities and support people in their community wherever possible.
- Make sure all conversations are:
 - Person-centred.
 - Asset-based.
 - Prevention-focused.
 - Maximise people's capability
 - Using existing resources and community solutions before funded solutions.

Work with partners and communities to improve outcomes at Early Years Foundation Stage.

Develop stronger, more resilient communities by building on local resources including:

- Through integration of Family Support services.
- Community Connect.
- Village Agents.
- Community use of libraries.

Work with communities to increase community transport options.

Priority
2. Work with partners and communities to protect and enhance the environment, manage our water better and recycle more waste
Activity to deliver this priority:
Continue to support the work of the Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA) to reduce the impact of flooding in Somerset.
Continue to lobby Government to put the SRA on a sustainable financial basis.
Through the Somerset Waste Partnership deliver the Recycle More Project increase the opportunities for residents to recycle plastics and other materials.
Ensure the impacts of minerals and waste developments on our environment are properly mitigated through the planning system.
Co-produce a strategy and timetable for Somerset to become a single-use plastic free authority.

Priority
3. Make sure that Somerset remains a safe place to live, work and visit.
Activity to deliver this priority:
Ensure that work effectively with partners, especially health and the Police, to secure improved safeguarding outcomes for children.
Work with the Safer Somerset Partnership and Police and Crime Commissioner to reduce crime, disorder, re-offending and antisocial behaviour in Somerset.
Work with communities and partners to reduce exploitation of vulnerable residents, especially frauds and scams targeting the elderly and vulnerable.
Deliver high-quality commissioned services that help people stay and feel safe, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road Safety. • Domestic abuse.
Work with partners to protect Somerset and its residents from the risks of extremism and radicalisation.
Work with partners to protect the population from risks to public health.
Work with the Somerset Local Authorities Civil Contingencies Unit and Local Resilience Forum to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase partners' overall resilience. • Maintain the wellbeing of Somerset's communities and most vulnerable people.

Priority
4. Support and promote enjoyment of Somerset's rich heritage, culture and natural environment
Activity to deliver this priority:
Encourage individuals and communities to get involved in Somerset's heritage.
Support community and cultural activities and events to improve quality of life and people's enjoyment of their free time.
Support and promote the leisure, health and wellbeing value of our natural environment, and make it accessible to all.
Use Council assets to facilitate enjoyment of the County, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Libraries. • Dillington House. • Kilve Court.
Provide opportunities for vulnerable groups through the services we provide.
Consider social value across all commissioning, procurement and partnership activity.

Strategic Outcome Fairer life chances and opportunity for all

Priority

1. Tackle inequalities and poor social mobility across Somerset so everyone can realise their potential and give more to our economy and society.

Activity to deliver this priority:

Redefine our vision for children’s and lifelong learning to reduce gaps in educational attainment.

Work with institutions and stakeholders to focus on increasing the educational achievement of children in Somerset.

Improve educational attainment of all vulnerable groups.

Increase the proportion of children who are ‘school ready’.

Support the West Somerset Opportunity Area Action Plan to increase social mobility and opportunity in the district.

Promote and support digital inclusion throughout the County and within the County Council.

Work with EDF Energy and the Hinkley Point Training Agency to ensure that the Hinkley Point C project delivers opportunities for local people.

Establish an Education and Business Partnership with the Somerset Chamber of Commerce.

With partners, enhance people’s ability to make the best use of opportunities available to them through:

- The South West Heritage Trust.
- Libraries.
- Schools (including Independents).
- Carers and care providers.

Encourage gender-pay gap transparency amongst partners and providers.

Remove barriers for those on the edge of the labour market.

Priority
2. Maintain the Council’s focus and commitment to make Somerset a place where all children are healthy, safe, and have good physical and emotional wellbeing.
Activity to deliver this priority:
Improve the emotional wellbeing and mental health of children and young people, in particular: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the Clinical Commissioning Group’s review of Community Adult Mental Health Service.
Implement the new ‘Working Together’ guidance and reconstitute the Children’s Safeguarding Board.
Improve the consistency of social work practice.
Increase the capacity of the Children’s Services leadership team to accelerate the pace of change.
Provide advice, guidance and support to improve the resilience of parents and carers
Through our Sufficiency Statement, increase the range and quality of local care placements for Children Looked After.
Develop a new integrated family support service.
Promote healthier lifestyles for children.
Work with schools to maintain safe practices and environments in the County’s schools and academies.

Priority
3. Ensure all children in Somerset have access to high quality schools, high quality educational, professional and support services, teachers and leadership teams.
Activity to deliver this priority:
Renew our 0-25 SEND Strategy, including a strong approach to transitions.
Manage and deliver the schools and early-years building programme over the next five years.
Develop support for schools to promote the health and wellbeing of children and young people.
Improve transitions for children going through the education system.
Build on the existing programme of teacher training and apprenticeships to deliver a high-quality education workforce that meets the needs of Somerset’s early years settings and schools.
Coordinate and monitor school improvement arrangements in Somerset.
Increase leadership capacity in the education system.
Support schools to provide effective careers advice.

Priority
4. Equip the workforce of the future with the skills they need, and enable them to aspire and achieve in Somerset's economy.
Activity to deliver this priority:
<p>Ensure that all children, especially vulnerable children, have pathways into employment, further education or training, including through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Education Business Partnership. • Developing digital skills. • Other social value and work experience schemes.
Provide more key skills training, particularly for young people and adults.
Work with partners to create of a University of Somerset.
Work with partners to develop Productivity Strategy programmes on skills and workforce development.
Work with our partners to increase the numbers of apprentices in Somerset.
Develop our apprenticeship and graduate offer and increase the number of apprentices at Somerset County Council.

Strategic Outcome	Improved health and wellbeing and more people living healthy, safe and independent lives for longer
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Priority
1. Explore, define and implement robust health and social care integration
Activity to deliver this priority:
Further develop joint commissioning arrangements between the council, Clinical Commissioning Group and NHS England, to provide more effective and joined-up health and social care.
Develop a joint Health and Care Strategy, focussing on prevention and offering people the care they need closer to their homes.
Examine how health and care integration can improve the way we tackle mental health issues.
Develop a children’s commissioning approach across health, education and social care.
Develop and agree a robust financial and transformation journey for Adult Social Care.
Continue to provide leadership to organisational change and development in children’s social care, education and social care for adults.

Priority
2. Focus efforts on improving health and wellbeing outcomes, especially for those in greatest need.
Activity to deliver this priority:
Take full advantage of opportunities to support vulnerable young people and adults’ access to employment, housing and leisure.
Develop the ‘Team Around the School’ model to provide consistently high quality outcomes.
Reduce social isolation.
Establish a community development approach to promoting healthy eating and physical activity for those most in need.
Promote healthier transport options and smarter travel choices.
Improve schools’ commissioning capacity and capability.

Priority
3. Foster an environment which promotes healthier choices and supports people to take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing.
Activity to deliver this priority:
Work with partners and stakeholders to refresh the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
Continue to work with partners to tackle health inequalities.
Support children and young people to make informed life choices.
Maintain a focus on high-performing drug and alcohol treatment services, and other action, to tackle the harm caused by substance misuse.
Embed a multiagency approach to tackling self-harm.
Work with Discovery to embed the social enterprise offering for people with learning disabilities and deliver good quality, personalised services alongside a sustainable funding solution.
Work with partners to develop the Somerset Strategic Housing Framework.

Priority
4. Support people to remain independent and within their homes and communities, without formal social care support wherever possible and for as long as possible.
Activity to deliver this priority:
Work to ensure that people have easy access to solutions to their problems and can achieve good outcomes without needing formal care.
Work with health partners to enable the speedy discharge of patients from hospital and ensure that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They achieve the best possible outcomes. • Are supported by timely, targeted and effective reablement.
Improve the Local Offer for young people 18-25 (SEND and leaving care).

Meeting the Council’s challenges: sustainability, quality and focus

Council must be confident and capable if it is to deliver the Vision and Business Plan. These organisational priorities fall into three broad categories and a set of activities that will equip it to deal with the challenges, and grasp the opportunities, ahead. The Council will use them to develop and deliver its Service Plans.

Our culture and approach

Activity to deliver this priority:
Communicate our People Strategy across the Council and with the communities and organisations we work with.
Embed the Commissioning Operating Model and commissioning approach across the council and with partners, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing and implementing the Commissioning Gateway. • Delivering Somerset Academy Cohorts 2 and 3. • Commissioning learning and development activity.
Embed an evidence-led approach to commissioning and decision-making, supported by effective performance management.
Retain a positive reputation for the Council and good customer satisfaction.
Provide class-leading customer services.
Communicate and campaign with the public to deliver the County Vision.
Communicate, engage and consult with the public on our plans, especially those with protected characteristics.
Build positive relationships between Councillors and officers

A digital- and technology-enabled council

Activity to deliver this priority:
Roll-out our Technology and People Programme to enable workforce productivity and efficiency improvements, increase resilience and provide better data security.
Deliver next phase ICT capability linked to the County Vision and Business Plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connected ICT (co-production and partnership working). • Data Insight (Information sharing, reporting and analytics). • Integration of ICT systems.
Ensure secure management and effective sharing of data.
Develop a Digital Strategy to lead transformation across the council.
Integrate asset management data and functionality into corporate ICT systems.

Effective and resilient delivery

Activity to deliver this priority:
Retain and improve financial management including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Avoiding and addressing overspend.• Dealing with third party spend through effective procurement and contract management including:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Proactive management of significant supplier relationships.○ Pursuing opportunities for collaborative procurement with partners.• Freeing the Council from internal process and burdens that are not sustainable, serve little purpose or do not support outcomes.
Define and implement the next phase of our Core Council Transformation Programme.
Through the Council's Asset Management Plan make best use of County Council assets to deliver accessible, responsive and sustainable services.
Implement and deliver our commercial approach to asset management, specifically to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Exploit commercial investment and revenue generating opportunities.• Maximise income from selling assets, including for development purposes.
Meet our Constitutional and statutory requirements for reporting, decision-making and transparency.

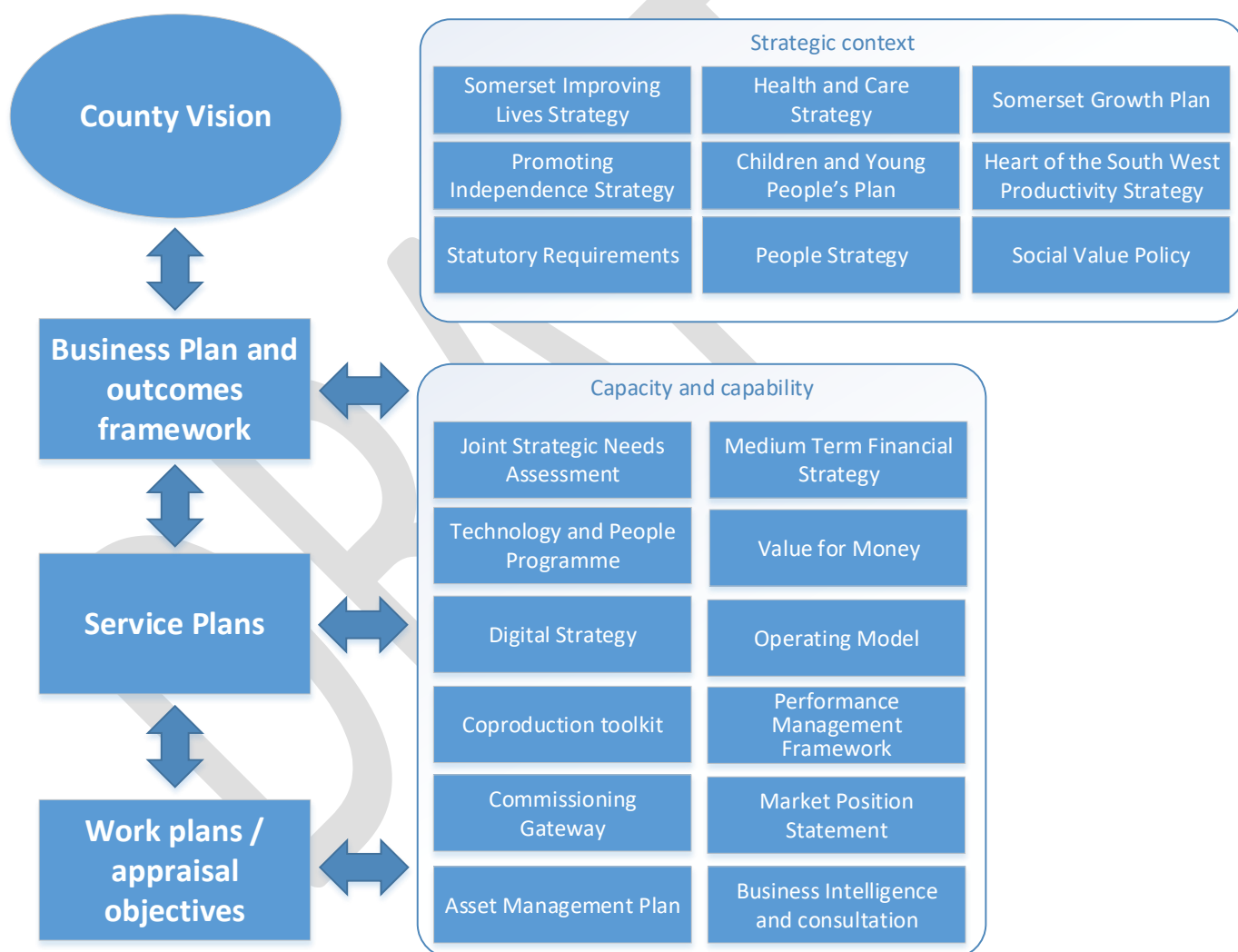
Delivering the Business Plan

Everything we do must support delivery of the activities, priorities and strategic outcomes in the Business Plan. If not, we must ask ourselves whether what we are doing is necessary.

Service Planning

The Business Plan has a key role in Service Planning. It creates a ‘golden thread’ from the Vision to individual Service Plans and performance management.

High-level measures for each priority will show how success will be seen at a strategic outcome and priority level. Service Plans identify specific metrics for each activity or intention. The diagram below shows the relationship between the Business Plan, performance management and service planning.



Using the tools available to us

There are a wide range of strategies, tools and approaches that support and guide all that we do. This diagram shows the strategic context that we work in, and the key capacity and capability tools that should be used to design and deliver the most appropriate services – including finding ways for a service to be provided in the community.