

Local Community Networks (LCNs)



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New Somerset Council

Local Community Networks

Local Community Networks (LCNs) will give communities power to influence decisions about their local area. They will be an important part of how our new Somerset Council works – making sure that local areas will have an ongoing voice to shape their new council to suit their local needs.

Key points

- 15 to 20 LCNs to cover every part of the county
- Flexibility to set their own priorities
- Formal power as ‘Committees of the Council’
- Dedicated council officer support
- Ability to influence Council priority and spend
- 6 to 8 meetings a year

Membership

- Unitary Councillors
- City, Town and Parish Councillors
- Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise
- Local NHS, Police, Schools and other services
- Local Business
- Other engaged residents

Local Community Networks

LCN Pilots

Exmoor area – Highways

Focused on improved communication, influencing service delivery. Proposals including an LCN Highway Steward are being trialled. If successful, it is hoped that this model could then be replicated across the county.

Frome area – Children, Families and Young People.

The town council, surrounding parish councils and partners are gathering views and evidence to decide on the key priorities. Sport and recreation has already been identified for urgent intervention.

Wincanton, Bruton and Castle Cary area – Health and Wellbeing. Early stage consultation on priorities.

Early Lessons

- ✓ Many town and parish councils want to grasp the opportunity to do more locally – but not all.
- ✓ NHS and Police see LCNs becoming a central vehicle for engaging with the public.
- ✓ Voluntary and community sectors see the opportunity of being engaged with LCNs that have formal power as ‘committees of the council’.
- ✓ LCNs must remain flexible over time. Communities want the power to reshape themselves and change what they focus on as their situation changes.

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LCN Geographies for 1 April 2023

Developing initial options informed by range of datasets:

- Population sizes
- School catchment areas
- Travel to work data
- Electoral divisions

Plus:

- Information and feedback about existing communities, clusters and networks
- Principle of working with the grain of what already works locally

LCNs Geographies

Indicative timeline

- Initial options for consideration by LGR Advisory Board early summer 2022
- Stakeholder and public engagement – summer 2022
- Geographies formally agreed by end 2022

Exmoor LCN Pilot



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Exmoor LCN Pilot – Highways



The Pilot is designed to focus on highway service delivery and how this will integrate with Local Community Networks and the wider community.

The pilot includes the development of a Highway Steward, devolved budgets and the creation of a Community Highways Group.

Exmoor – Highways

Progress so far ..

Members of the Somerset Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) Programme Team spent three days visiting parishes in the Exmoor County electoral division in order to better understand the opportunities for improvement expressed by parishes in this area.



Exmoor – Highways

Progress so far ..

The parish feedback was summarised based on themes.

The feedback enabled proposals to be developed to test new ways of working as part of the pilot.

This supported the LCN's objectives and work programme based on 'real world' feedback and known local priorities.



Exmoor – Highways

Progress so far ..

The themes (resulting from parish feedback)

- Communication
- Programmes of planned and reactive works
- Discretionary local highway works (the provision of a Highway Steward)
- Discretionary budget for self-delivery of works
- Asset information

Theme	Timescale	Outcome
Communication	Q1 2022/23	To positively influence public perception To develop an informed and responsive relationship between the scheme promoters and communities.
Programmes of Planned and Reactive Works	Q4 2021/22 - Panel meeting to discuss 2022/23 programme Q2 (Summer) - Programme review meeting Q3 (Autumn) - Programme review meeting Q4 (Winter) - Programme review meeting	Local Influence and agreement of works programmes, including timing of works and diversions and road closures. Local accountability for decisions. To understand and apply available budgets. To monitor and improve the quality of works by contractors.
Discretionary local highway works	Q1 2022/23	Fully equipped single person operative to undertake minor works on the highway at the direction and priorities set by the Parishes.
Discretionary budget	Q1 2022/23	LCN have control over a proportion of capital and revenue expenditure for agreed local priorities
Asset information	Q2 2022/23	Provide contemporary map-based information showing highway assets

Frome LCN Pilot



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Frome Area LCN Pilot

Children, Families and Young People.

Building on the existing parish relationships

- Desire to better engage with and understand the needs of our communities

Using the principles of:

- Participation
- Engagement
- Enabling
- Community Development

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Frome Area LCN Pilot

Key principles of collaboration and co design

1. Facilitated groups of residents and cllrs from *all tiers* brought together to discuss and better understand the topics that are important to them
2. Formal Data overlaid with the topic summaries and other Qualitative Data.
3. Decisions on topic subjects to be further explored at any one time.
4. Convening of working groups; including stakeholder organisations, services, businesses and unitary strategic leads
5. Findings, work plan and Local Area Agreements created and presented back to the wider LCN.

Frome Area LCN Pilot

As a smaller parish our experience of being part of this Pilot LCN so far is.....

We are starting to explore.....

Frome Area LCN Pilot

A pilot LCN that creates an action plan to address issues for children, young people and their families.

A starting point for other topics in the future.

A way of working that builds capacity and resilience in communities; that reduces the financial implications for delivering high level statutory services – Social Care, Education and Public Health.

Evaluation

What next?

- Develop and consult on potential LCN boundaries.
- Learn more from similar networks in other unitary areas.
- Draw up LCN governance arrangements
- Monitor LCN pilots to assess what works and create toolkits to help all LCNs, ready for when the new Somerset Council is in place.