

# Public Agenda Pack



Notice of Meeting of

## **EXECUTIVE**

**Wednesday, 6 March 2024 at 10.00 am**

**John Meikle Room, The Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton TA1 1HE**

To: The members of the Executive

Chair: Councillor Bill Revans  
Vice-chair: Councillor Liz Leyshon

Councillor Theo Butt Philip	Councillor Adam Dance
Councillor Dixie Darch	Councillor Heather Shearer
Councillor Federica Smith-Roberts	Councillor Sarah Wakefield
Councillor Richard Wilkins	Councillor Ros Wyke

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For further information about the meeting, including how to join the meeting virtually, please contact Democratic Services [democraticservicesteam@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:democraticservicesteam@somerset.gov.uk).

All members of the public are welcome to attend our meetings and ask questions or make a statement **by giving advance notice** in writing or by e-mail to the Monitoring Officer at email: [democraticservicesteam@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:democraticservicesteam@somerset.gov.uk) by **5pm on Thursday, 29 February 2024**.

This meeting will be open to the public and press, subject to the passing of any resolution under the Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A: Access to Information.

The meeting will be webcast and an audio recording made.

Issued by (the Proper Officer) on Tuesday, 27 February 2024

# **AGENDA**

**Executive - 10.00 am Wednesday, 6 March 2024**

**Public Guidance Notes contained in Agenda Annexe (Pages 7 - 8)**

**Click here to join the online meeting (Pages 9 - 10)**

## **1 Apologies for Absence**

To receive any apologies for absence.

## **2 Minutes from the Previous Meeting**

To approve the minutes from the previous meeting (to follow),

## **3 Declarations of Interest**

To receive and note any declarations of interests in respect of any matters included on the agenda for consideration at this meeting.

(The other registrable interests of Councillors of Somerset Council, arising from membership of City, Town or Parish Councils and other Local Authorities will automatically be recorded in the minutes: [City, Town & Parish Twin Hatters - Somerset Councillors 2023](#) )

## **4 Public Question Time**

The Chair to advise the Committee of any items on which members of the public have requested to speak and advise those members of the public present of the details of the Council's public participation scheme.

For those members of the public who have submitted any questions or statements, please note, a three minute time limit applies to each speaker and you will be asked to speak before Councillors debate the issue.

We are now live webcasting most of our committee meetings and you are welcome to view and listen to the discussion. The link to each webcast will be available on the meeting webpage, please see details under 'click here to join online meeting'.

**5 Executive Forward Plan**

To note the latest Executive Forward Plan of planned key decisions that have been published on the Council's website.

[Click here to access - Executive Forward Plan](#)

**6 Somerset Annual Report of the Director of Public Health 2023 (Pages 11 - 46)**

To consider the report.

**7 Revenue Budget Monitoring Report month 10 (Pages 47 - 106)**

To consider the report.

**8 Corporate Performance Report Q3 (Pages 107 - 144)**

To consider the report.

**9 Revisions to the Terms of Reference of the Property & Investment Executive Sub-Committee (Pages 145 - 152)**

To consider the report.

## **Exclusion of Press and Public (Pages 153 - 154)**

**PLEASE NOTE:** Although the main report for this item is not confidential, supporting appendices available to Members contain exempt information and are therefore marked confidential – not for publication. At any point if Members wish to discuss information within this appendix then the Council will be asked to agree the following resolution to exclude the press and public:

### **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

To consider passing a resolution having been duly proposed and seconded under Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the press and public from the meeting, on the basis that if they were present during the business to be transacted there would be a likelihood of disclosure of exempt information, within the meaning of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972:

**Reason:** Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

## **10 Review of Street Cleansing and Groundcare Operations (Pages 155 - 198)**

To consider the report.

## **Exclusion of Press and Public (Pages 199 - 200)**

**PLEASE NOTE:** Although the main report for this item is not confidential, supporting appendices available to Members contain exempt information and are therefore marked confidential – not for publication. At any point if Members wish to discuss information within this appendix then the Council will be asked to agree the following resolution to exclude the press and public:

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## **11 Appointment of Contractor for the development of Phase B & Ci of the NTWP (Pages 201 - 250)**

To consider the report.

### **Exclusion of Press and Public (Pages 251 - 252)**

**PLEASE NOTE:** Although the main report for this item not confidential, supporting appendices available to Members contain exempt information and are therefore marked confidential – not for publication. At any point if Members wish to discuss information within this appendix then the Council will be asked to agree the following resolution to exclude the press and public:

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## **12 Executive Decisions in relation to Somerset Council's role as Host Authority and Accountable Body to the Somerset Rivers Authority partnership (Pages 253 - 266)**

To consider the report.

#### ***Appendices to follow:***

- Appendix 1 - DRAFT SRA 2024-25 Memorandum of Understanding and Constitution
- Appendix 2 - SRA Board paper 2024-25 Enhanced Programme and Budget
- Appendix 3 - CONFIDENTIAL 2024-25 SRA Enhanced Programme scheme descriptions WITH COSTS
- Appendix 4 - 2024-25-SRA Enhanced Programme scheme descriptions
- Appendix 5 – Draft Somerset Rivers Authority Strategy and Flood Action Plan 2024-2034

## Guidance notes for the meeting

### Council Public Meetings

The legislation that governs Council meetings requires that committee meetings are held face-to-face. The requirement is for members of the committee and key supporting officers (report authors and statutory officers) to attend in person, along with some provision for any public speakers. Provision will be made wherever possible for those who do not need to attend in person including the public and press who wish to view the meeting to be able to do so virtually.

#### Inspection of Papers

Any person wishing to inspect minutes, reports, or the background papers for any item on the agenda should contact Democratic Services at

[democraticserviceteam@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:democraticserviceteam@somerset.gov.uk) or telephone 01823 357628.

They can also be accessed via the council's website on [Committee structure - Modern Council \(somerset.gov.uk\)](#)

### Members' Code of Conduct requirements

When considering the declaration of interests and their actions as a councillor, Members are reminded of the requirements of the Members' Code of Conduct and the underpinning Principles of Public Life: Honesty; Integrity; Selflessness; Objectivity; Accountability; Openness; Leadership. The Code of Conduct can be viewed at: [Code of Conduct](#)

### Minutes of the Meeting

Details of the issues discussed, and recommendations made at the meeting will be set out in the minutes, which the Committee will be asked to approve as a correct record at its next meeting.

### Public Question Time

If you wish to speak or ask a question about any matter on the Committee's agenda please contact Democratic Services by 5pm providing 3 clear working days before the meeting. (for example, for a meeting being held on a Wednesday, the deadline will be 5pm on the Thursday prior to the meeting) Email

[democraticserviceteam@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:democraticserviceteam@somerset.gov.uk) or telephone 01823 357628.

Members of public wishing to speak or ask a question will need to attend in person or if unable can submit their question or statement in writing for an officer to read out, or alternatively can attend the meeting online.

A 20-minute time slot for Public Question Time is set aside near the beginning of the meeting, after the minutes of the previous meeting have been agreed. Each speaker will have 3 minutes to address the committee.

You must direct your questions and comments through the Chair. You may not take a direct part in the debate. The Chair will decide when public participation is to finish. If an item on the agenda is contentious, with many people wishing to attend the meeting, a representative should be nominated to present the views of a group.

### **Meeting Etiquette for participants**

Only speak when invited to do so by the Chair.

Mute your microphone when you are not talking.

Switch off video if you are not speaking.

Speak clearly (if you are not using video then please state your name)

If you're referring to a specific page, mention the page number.

There is a facility in Microsoft Teams under the ellipsis button called turn on live captions which provides subtitles on the screen.

### **Exclusion of Press & Public**

If when considering an item on the agenda, the Committee may consider it appropriate to pass a resolution under Section 100A (4) Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 that the press and public be excluded from the meeting on the basis that if they were present during the business to be transacted there would be a likelihood of disclosure of exempt information, as defined under the terms of the Act.

If there are members of the public and press listening to the open part of the meeting, then the Democratic Services Officer will, at the appropriate time, ask participants to leave the meeting when any exempt or confidential information is about to be discussed.

### **Recording of meetings**

The Council supports the principles of openness and transparency. It allows filming, recording, and taking photographs at its meetings that are open to the public - providing this is done in a non-disruptive manner. Members of the public may use Facebook and Twitter or other forms of social media to report on proceedings. No filming or recording may take place when the press and public are excluded for that part of the meeting.



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**Executive – 6 March 2024 – Public Questions**

Question

**Nigel Behan – Unite**

We are asking questions about the [Revenue Budget Monitoring Report Month 10](#) and the accompanying appendices.

It is stated in [M10 Appendix 01 - Adult Services.pdf \(somerset.gov.uk\)](#) that:

“Adult Services overspend is £24.2m due to increase in both fee levels for care home placements and delivery of home care, offset by a number of in year mitigations to reduce it to £14.9m. Additional costs within the intermediate care model have been identified and discussions are being held with Integrated Care Board. These costs mainly relate to pathway beds which are used to support discharges from acute hospitals.”

And

“To offset the overspend a number of in year mitigations and funding have been identified including the market sustainability funding - workforce grant of £3.8m, in year mitigations of £3m including reviewing all 1:1 with a view to reducing hours required and £2.5m NHS monies.”

Moreover

“Adult Social Care - Physical Disability/Sensory Loss/65 Plus This area of Adult Services is currently projecting to be £5.3m overspent. As in previous years, we continue to see pressure within residential and nursing placements, with pressure on the weekly costs, as well as the number of people receiving support. Historically the authority has paid low fee rates within this sector. The increase in fee levels for 23/24 are still not stabilising the market, due to the increase in inflation and cost of living.”

Furthermore

“Commissioning is currently projecting to overspend by £1.1m, as the Adult Services’ transformation ‘my life, my future’ will not achieve the full £5m saving relating to this financial year.”

**Q1 a)**

Is the market sustainability funding required (partly?) because of the years of 0% increase in CTAX as identified in the Full Council report(s) for the 2024/25 budget setting process?

**Q1 b)**

Why “(Historically the authority has paid low fee rates within this sector.)” has the authority paid lower fee rates and “The increase in fee levels for 23/24 are still not stabilising the market....” Does SC think there are better, more accountable, transparent and democratic methods to deliver care services (for service users rather than customers with cash?!) without relying on stabilising the care “market”(for example relying on Somerset Care’s business model -of financial viability-as reported in the Gazette [Councillor starts petition to avoid closure of two Somerset care homes | Somerset County Gazette](#) )?

**Q1 c)**

The My life, my future project (using consultants Newton Europe) seems to be duplicating “business as usual” work that ASC ought to be conducting – why has the use of Newton Europe been considered necessary and what are the overall projected savings etc?

## Decision Report - Executive Decision

Forward Plan Reference: FP/24/01/11

Decision Date – 6<sup>th</sup> March 2024

Key Decision – no

Confidential Information – no



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## Somerset Annual Report of the Director of Public Health 2023

Executive Member(s): Lead Member for Public Health, Equalities and Diversity

Local Member(s) and Division: N/A

Lead Officer: Professor Trudi Grant, Executive Director of Public and Population Health

Author: Alice Munro, Consultant in Public Health

Contact Details: [alice.munro@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:alice.munro@somerset.gov.uk)

### Summary / Background

1. The production of an annual report is a statutory obligation for Directors of Public Health (DsPH). It is an opportunity for the DPH to give an independent view of health and wellbeing priorities in Somerset. This is the first such report to discuss Somerset as a Unitary Authority, coterminous with the Integrated Care Board. The 2023/24 report covers the relationship between housing and health, providing context for the development of the Local Plan, due in 2028. It demonstrates the importance of housing as a factor in health and wellbeing and shows how working together in this field can improve lives in Somerset.
2. The DPH is given the independence by statute to make a personal statement in the Annual Report. It is brought to the Executive for endorsement rather than approval.

### Recommendations

3. The Executive is asked to note and endorse the recommendations in the report as seen below:
  - 3.1. Maximise opportunities to join up and integrate commissioning and delivery of supported housing and support services to better serve people with multiple complex needs.

- 3.2. Ensure the new Local Plan gives significant attention to current and future demographic trends and the related housing needs. Innovate solutions to the development of more one and two-bedroom homes, affordable homes, housing stability and homes built to accommodate future health needs are required;
- 3.3. That the Council and Integrated Care Board prioritise collaborative work to address the needs of people who experience multiple disadvantage.
- 3.4. It is recommended that the Integrated Care Board continues to develop the Inclusion Health Service and develops an overarching Somerset Inclusive Health Strategy.
- 3.5. It is recommended that Somerset Integrated Care System adopt a collaborative approach to reducing injuries and falls overall and in the home, including continuing to provide support for retrofit interventions and housing adaptations that enable people to live safely in their homes
- 3.6. Maintain support for approaches such as Personalised Care that seek to wrap individualised support around a person in their current place of residence to reduce the risk of needs escalating.
- 3.7. That a communications plan is developed to raise awareness among the public of the need to plan ahead for ageing in their home or moving to a more suitable home when the time is right, to reduce the number of people in homes in Somerset that are difficult to live in into old age.
- 3.8. That the council commits to, and supports, the development of the Public Health Ambassador Programme.
- 3.9. That the council embeds the HDRC and its principles into the new Target Operating Model for the Council going forwards.
10. It is recommended that Somerset Council adopts a strong “health in all policies” approach to Neighbourhood Plans, the new Local Plan and Transport Plan, embedding consideration of local health needs when developing and implementing the plans, and seeking to design neighbourhoods that improve health, support community resilience and reduce the risks and impact of climate change.

## Reasons for recommendations

4. The recommendations are based on the evidence presented in the report, using information derived from the 2021 census, Office for National Statistics, Somerset Citizens' Advice Bureau, Safe and Warm Somerset Helpline and more. The data describe the extent to which housing can affect health and wellbeing, and ways in which housing can be made a positive protective factor for health. The report also describes approaches and good practice undertaken by Somerset Council and partners have already brought about improvements.

## Other options considered

5. The production of an Annual Report is a statutory duty for all DsPH. The subject matter and format is the responsibility of the DPH alone.

## Links to Council Plan and Medium-Term Financial Plan

6. This report illustrates how widely housing affects the economy, society and environment, and thereby promotes:
  - A healthy and caring Somerset
  - A greener, more sustainable Somerset
  - A flourishing and resilient Somerset
  - A fairer, ambitious Somerset
7. The report shows how housing can contribute positively to health and wellbeing in Somerset and is written at this time in order to influence the forthcoming Local Plan (2028) and Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy (2025).

## Financial and Risk Implications

8. There are no significant risks to the council from the report, although failure to produce a report would have repercussions for the Director Public Health.

9. Key risks

None.

## Legal Implications

10. There are no significant legal implications.

## **HR Implications**

11. There are no significant HR implications. The report does consider the importance of key worker housing in ensuring the availability of an appropriate workforce.

## **Other Implications:**

## **Equalities Implications**

12. There are no significant equalities implications from the production of the report itself. Its contents include discussions of how access to housing, and its quality, varies between different groups, such as older people, younger people and gypsies and travellers.

## **Community Safety Implications**

13. There are no significant community safety implications from the production of the report, which does, however, consider how good neighbourhood design can help reduce crime, and the fear of crime.

## **Climate Change and Sustainability Implications**

14. There are no climate change implications of the production of the report itself; it is published online, in part to reduce the environmental impact of printing several hundred copies, as happened in the past. The report shows how well-insulated and ventilated dwellings can have positive impacts on health and reduce emissions of greenhouse gases.
15. The choice of housing as the subject of this year's report has been made particularly because of the forthcoming Local Plan (2028).

## **Health and Safety Implications**

16. There are no specific "health and safety" implications of the report itself. One subject discussed is the way in which reduced overcrowding and better design can reduce the risk of falls at home.



## Health and Wellbeing Implications

17. There are no health and wellbeing implications from publishing the report itself, although clearly the intention of its contents is the improvement of health and wellbeing in Somerset through better housing.

## Social Value

18. There are no specific social value implications of publishing the report.

## Scrutiny comments / recommendations:

19. The report's themes were discussed at the Adults and Health Scrutiny meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2024. The findings and recommendations were noted. Comments included that:
  - While we await a Local Plan for the County, the Council should support the development of neighbourhood plans and the consideration of local health needs in the development of those.
  - That the Council and health partners should jointly consider the implications of decisions across the system that affect access to services, including health. Examples were given of a bus route being cut that was relied on to reach a GP surgery, and of a GP surgery being moved to a less accessible location without public transport services.
  - That there would be value in a communications campaign to encourage people to plan for their old age and prepare their homes for when they may be less mobile and independent.

## Background

20. The production of an Annual Report is a statutory requirement for all DsPH. It is the personal responsibility of the DPH and an opportunity to give an independent view of the range of factors affecting health and wellbeing in the county.
21. Housing is amongst the most significant of the "wider determinants of health". The stress of unstable and insecure housing tenure can contribute significantly to mental ill-health; damp, mouldy accommodation can cause respiratory problems; heating draughty housing is expensive and exacerbates poverty, and so on. And homelessness (especially rough sleeping) is associated with multiple health impacts. On the other hand, well-designed and appropriate

housing can help prevent falls, encourage independence and provide affordable accommodation for key workers in health and care.

22. As a new Unitary Authority, and coterminous with the Integrated Care Board, Somerset is perhaps better placed than at any time previously to take a joined-up approach to housing as a determinant of health. A Local Plan is required by 2028, and a Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy is due for 2025. This report is intended to set the context for thinking about these issues as the strategies are prepared.

### Background Papers

23. The Annual Report of the Director of Public Health for Somerset is appended.

### Assurance checklist

	Officer Name	Date Completed
Legal & Governance Implications	David Clark	21.02.24
Communications	Peter Elliott	21.02.24
Finance & Procurement	Nicola Hix	21.02.24
Workforce	Alyn Jones	21.02.24
Asset Management	Oliver Woodhams	Sent 27 Feb 2024
Executive Director / Senior Manager		21.02.24
Strategy & Performance	Alyn Jones	21.02.24
Executive Lead Member	Cllr Adam Dance	21.02.24
<b>Consulted:</b>	Councillor Name	
Local Division Members		All
Opposition Spokesperson	Cllr Lucy Trimnell	Sent 27 Feb 2024
Scrutiny Chair	Gill Slocombe – Adults & Health Scrutiny	08 Feb 2024

# Somerset Annual Report of the Director of Public Health 2023

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## *Homes and Health*

*“Without housing, no one can have decent health.”*



**Somerset**  
Council

# Foreword – *“Without housing, no one can have decent health.”*

In my report this year, I will be considering housing, the places where people live and the relationship with our health. Our neighbourhoods, the quality of our homes, the type of home we have and indeed the very fact of having a home or not, profoundly affects our health and wellbeing.

This is my first report as Executive Director of Public and Population Health for a unitary local authority, but also as a joint post employed by the council and Integrated Care Board. This join-up means that in Somerset we have an unprecedented opportunity to improve housing and health together.

In particular, I hope this report sets the context and influences the opportunities presented by the new:

- **Somerset Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy due in 2025**
- **Somerset Local Plan, due in 2028**

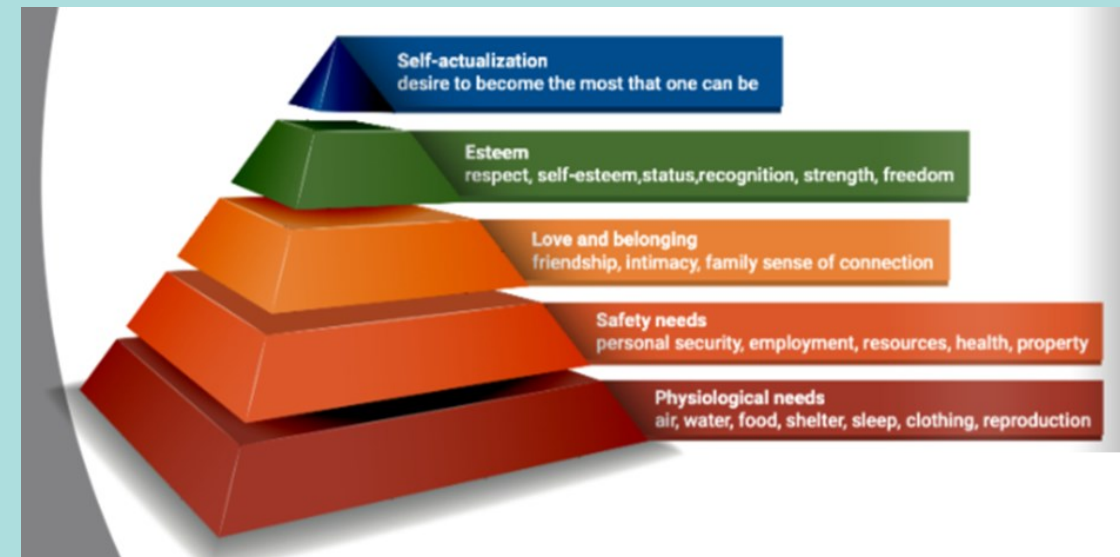
The title to this foreword is taken from words spoken over a hundred years ago by the MP Sir Christopher Addison, who was appointed as Joint Minister for Health and Housing. We have seen many reminders in recent years that our homes provide the foundations for health and wellbeing. For example, in our efforts together to ensure that children can achieve their potential, that adults can live independently, that people could stay well through a pandemic, cope with the cost of living crisis, and recover from the effects of the pandemic, housing has been foundational. Homes provide people with safety and security, demonstrated clearly by the thousands of Somerset residents who have welcomed Ukrainians into their homes to provide them with sanctuary at a time of need.

I have referred to Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs in previous Annual Reports and it is equally important in this one. Housing (“shelter”) is a fundamental aspect of basic human need, but I want to show here how a health-driven approach to housing gives protective factors to the population well beyond simply keeping the rain off.

Housing is of concern to all of us; we all have an interest in ensuring people have healthy, affordable and suitable homes and neighbourhoods.



Professor Trudi Grant, Executive Director of Public and Population Health – Somerset Council/Somerset ICB



# Introduction

Having a home that is affordable, good quality and meets our current needs provides us with the foundations for good health and wellbeing. More than that, it can positively enrich our lives, giving us a secure base from which to play an active role in our families and communities. Homes that are expensive to rent, buy or maintain can negatively affect health. If people are unable to maintain the house or live with hazards like damp and mould, this can lead to chronic stress which can have long-term effects on physical and mental health.

After the Second World War this country invested hugely in providing secure homes for all, and other protective factors such as transport and education which formed a safety net to prevent ill-health or people reaching crisis. Founding the NHS was only one part of this investment in population health and wellbeing. However, in the last 15 years investment in those protective factors for health has reduced significantly, and more people are now reaching crisis point as shown through increasing demand on high need services.

The overarching focus of this report is to consider what opportunities there are to improve health outcomes and reduce demand on services through the development of the Local Plan for Somerset and related Neighbourhood Plans.

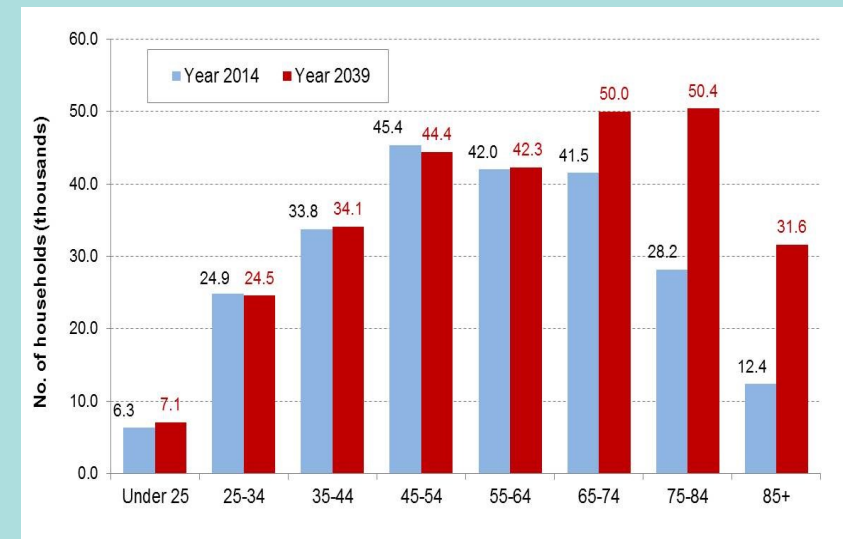
**The Somerset Local Plan is currently in development and will be the first Plan for the county as a whole; it will supersede Plans from former district councils when published in 2028. It will guide decisions on future development proposals and address the needs and opportunities within Somerset.** The Local Plan is the main vehicle for the Council and communities to identify where development should take place and areas where development should be restricted. The Local Plan can play a major role in reducing health inequalities, improving loneliness and mental wellbeing, and reducing lifestyle related disease risks.

As this report shows, we have a rapidly ageing population with more adults living alone, and more than half of homes in Somerset are now “very underoccupied”. Many may value the option to move to a smaller home that is local to the area they live in. The high cost of housing in Somerset, compared to wages, also puts huge strain on household budgets and affordability, affecting young people and key workers in particular, both of which we would like to attract to the county. We therefore have twin problems; a shortage of affordable homes, and an abundance of underoccupied homes. We have a housing “shortage”, particularly of smaller, affordable and lifetime homes, but we also have a housing distribution problem; we need the right type of housing in the right place.

In line with the Somerset population growth, there are projected to be substantial increases between 2014 and 2039 in households where the main representative is aged 75 or more. The number of households where the representative is aged 85 or more is projected to rise by more than 150% to 31,600 (Figure 1).

This report looks at three themes from the evidence for what makes a home a building block of good health, that it is: affordable and stable; good quality and suitable, and in a Healthy Neighbourhood. These themes structure this report, and topics have been chosen within each chapter that reflect some of our most urgent issues in Somerset.

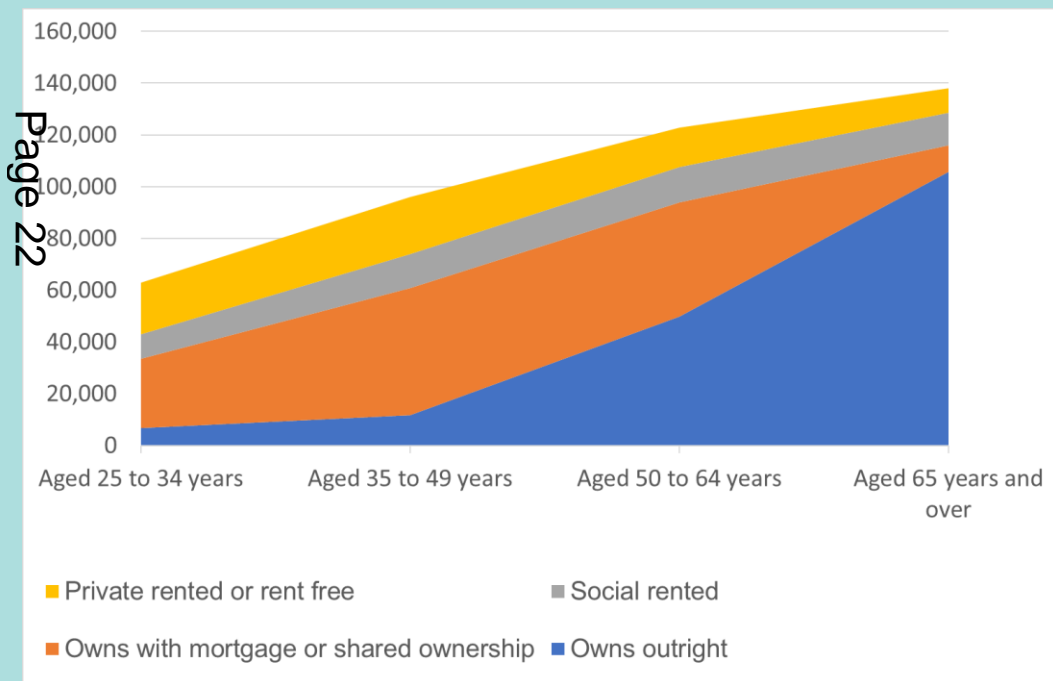
**Figure 1: Projected households by Age of Household Representative (in thousands) Source: DCLG**



# Housing for Demographic Change

As shown in Figure 2, there is a striking pattern of changing housing ownership by age. This is most notable in terms of outright ownership, which makes up only 11% of 25–35 year olds (some of whom may live in their parents' homes), but 77% of those aged 65 and over. Private rented, by contrast, falls from 32% to 7% over the same age span. This contrast shows that inequalities by tenure are often also, in practice, inequalities by age.

**Figure 2: Housing tenure – residents by age, Somerset**

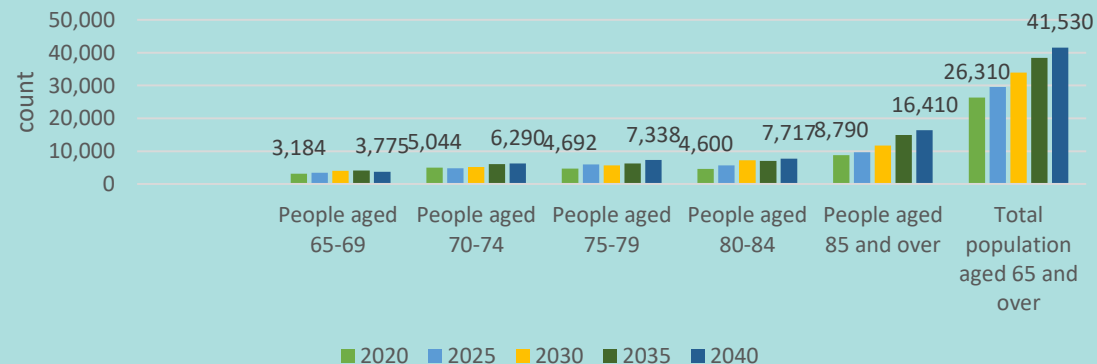


In Somerset, the population is ageing faster than average for England, with 25% of people aged over 65, compared with 19% in England. By 2040, over 33% of people in Somerset are expected to be over 65.

Many older adults in Somerset live healthy and independent lives and play an active and vital role in their families and communities well into advanced years. However, as we age, we are more likely to have additional needs that impact normal daily “mobility activities”, such as getting dressed or moving from a chair to a bed. In Somerset we face an increase in adults with care needs due to both a rise in long-term medical conditions and an ageing population. In 2020 approximately 18% of the population 65 and over in Somerset were unable to manage at least one “mobility activity” on their own. This is projected to increase to 20% by 2040. Combined with the ageing population, the number of people aged 65+ unable to manage at least one mobility activity is projected to increase 58% to 41,530 by 2040 in Somerset (see figure 3). In addition, the number of people living with dementia is expected to increase by 67% from 5,132 to 8,570 people in the same time period. These projections will have huge implications for the need for accessible housing and care provision.

It is essential that we start building homes, and designing places, which enable people of all ages to lead healthy, active and independent lives for as long as possible. This means increasing the number of houses built to “lifetime” homes standards, involving communities in how we set standards for the design of neighbourhoods, and considering the type and location of housing we will need both now and in the future.

**Figure 3: Projected number of people aged 65 and over with impaired mobility - unable to manage at least one activity on their own in Somerset**



# Homes and Health Inequalities

Good and secure homes are an essential foundation for good health and for the opportunity to make healthy choices in life. As such, people who live in unstable, unaffordable and/or poor-quality homes are at higher risk of physical and mental health problems.

**Disabled people** of all ages often face challenges accessing the right housing and support for their needs. They are also often disadvantaged in both education, employment and other opportunities, leading to lower income and higher rates of poverty. This reduces the likelihood of being able to afford appropriate and good quality housing. Local data shows that disability and poor health are frequently cited reasons both for applying for social housing and being at risk of homelessness, among all age groups. Disabled people are almost three times more likely than non-disabled people to live in social housing in South West England (15.5% vs 5.5% respectively). Meanwhile, housing and accommodation issues are contributing to **difficulties recruiting and retaining the workforce needed to care for an ageing population in Somerset**, both in health and social care. All of these factors put increasing pressure on unpaid carers, many of whom are older adults.

**Gypsy, Roma and other traveller people**, including “van dwellers”, make up perhaps 0.2% of the Somerset population – although almost by definition they and their needs may be under-represented in the statistics. Conventional health services are generally not designed to reach this population group.

There are also **people in all age groups who are affected by multiple disadvantages** and for whom poor quality and insecure housing has contributed to this, and who are more at risk of exploitation, living in poor housing, and of having less secure housing.

**Younger adults are at higher risk of homelessness.** Almost half (46.3%) of the main applicants owed a homelessness prevention or relief duty in Somerset were aged 16-34 in 2022/23, which includes households with children. This can have long-term mental and physical health implications, as well as driving outward migration and increasing the ratio of older to working age adults in the county.

The majority of homelessness is hidden, masked by people staying with family or “sofa surfing” in unstable or unsuitable accommodation, yet in September 2022 there were 89 people found to be sleeping on the streets, with 57 counted on one night as part of the national count. Rough sleepers’ health outcomes are strikingly poor. Many of these people have mental ill-health and substance misuse needs, physical health needs, and will have experienced significant trauma in their lives.

A recurring theme of conversations with colleagues in housing and support services is that to address the range of housing-related health challenges we face in Somerset, we require joined up, multi-agency working across the health, care and housing systems, as well as with community and voluntary, community and faith sector partners – of which we have some excellent examples to build upon in Somerset and which are highlighted in this report.

## RECOMMENDATION 1:

Maximise opportunities to join up and integrate commissioning and delivery of supported housing and support services to better serve people with multiple complex needs.

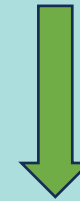
The remainder of this report is structured around three key themes taken from the evidence relating to homes and their impact on health:

Page 24

**Affordable and Stable Homes**

**Good Quality and Suitable Homes**

**Healthy Neighbourhoods**



**Enable people to live healthy independent lives for longer**



An aerial photograph of a city at sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm glow over the urban landscape. The city is densely packed with buildings, streets, and green spaces. The text is overlaid on the image.

# Affordable and Stable Homes

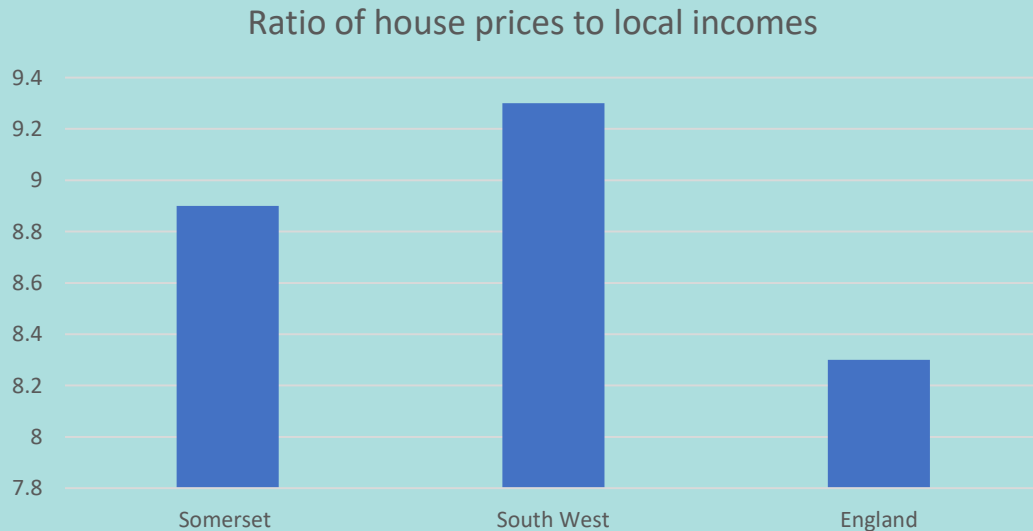
- **Affordability**
- **Security of tenure**
- **Homelessness and Rough Sleeping**

# Housing Affordability

For many, particularly younger households, buying in Somerset is simply not an option. Average house prices are 8.9 times the average (median) income in Somerset and more than 9 times in some areas, which is less affordable than the England average of 8.3 times median incomes but slightly more affordable than the South West as a whole (Figure 4).

The impacts of this are significant, placing high demand on private and social rented homes and driving up the cost of renting. Housing availability and affordability is undoubtedly a contributing factor in for people considering coming to work in Somerset.

**Figure 4: Ratio of Median House Price to Median Gross Annual Earnings, Somerset, South West region and England, 2022**



*“The only way I’ll own my own house is through inheritance.”*

Rurality JSNA - Engagement with young people

## Key Worker Housing:

It is well recognised that high housing costs relative to local incomes are one factor contributing to young people choosing not to live in Somerset and subsequently the related difficulty in recruiting key workers to health and social care roles. There is a risk to the health and care system if we are unable to attract, recruit and retain the future workforce required. At a minimum, about 300 workers are to be recruited internationally to work in the NHS and Local Authority in Somerset in 23/24, with many more likely to be recruited to the independent social care provider market.

Additional pressure is placed on the housing stock by inward investment in major infrastructure such as Hinkley Point C, where the expected workforce is anticipated to be 12,000 by mid-2024, with the majority of these workers needing to live in reasonable proximity to the site.

To address the challenges of key worker housing, new Key Worker Housing Hubs are being established by Somerset Integrated Care Board in two locations to provide support and advice on how to find the right home for different households moving to work in Somerset

# Housing Stability

Having a house is better than not having a house, but fragile and uncertain access to accommodation has its own problems. Central to this is the issue of affordability.

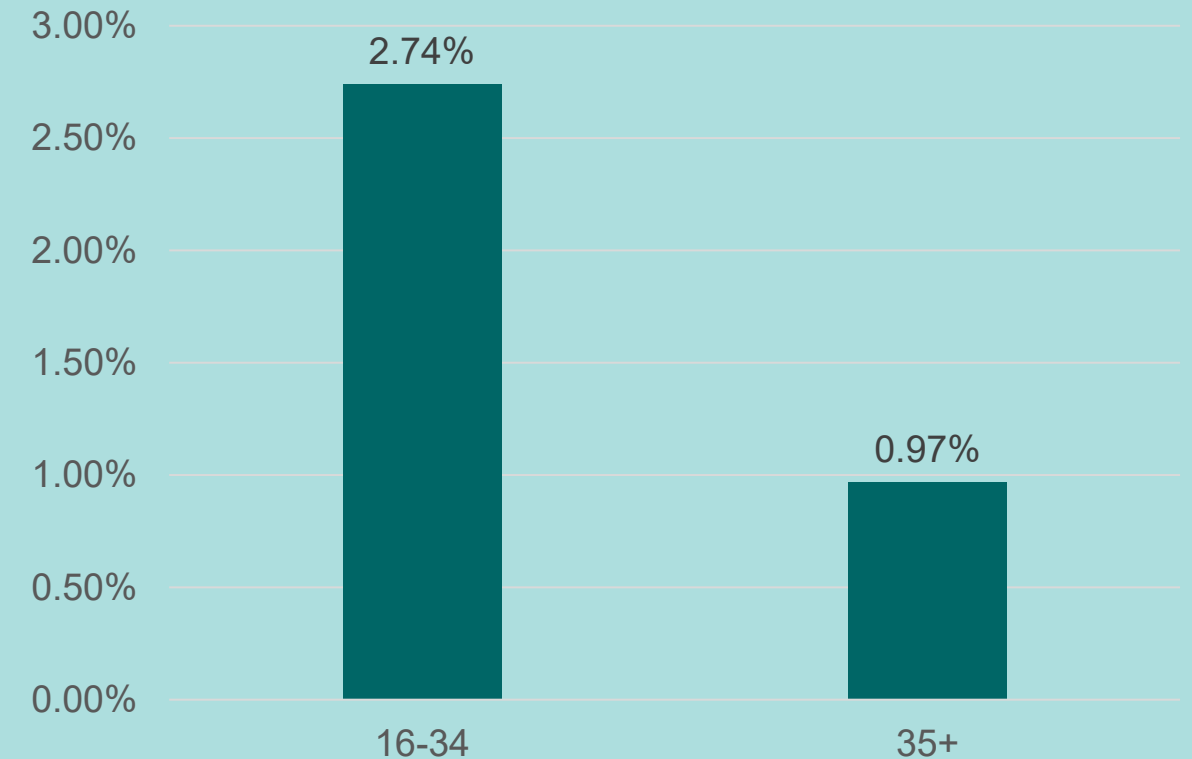
High rents and lack of affordable housing options often leave people living in unsuitable, poor quality and insecure homes. Uncertainty in itself has been shown to cause stress and ill-health. This causal link is shown most clearly in the private rented sector where levels of uncertainty are especially high.

The rental sector makes up about 32% of the housing stock in Somerset – 14% is social housing, and 18% private rented homes. Private renting is typically very insecure, with the highest costs and the lowest quality of housing. As younger adults are much more likely to live either in the private rental sector or with family, people under 35 in Somerset are almost three times more likely than those over 35 to apply for social housing in the county (Figure 5).

This particularly affects urban areas such as Taunton and Bridgwater, where the average private rent has risen to £750 per month. The impact this has on housing security has translated into increasing numbers of households in Somerset in temporary accommodation, which stood at 240 households in December 2023, compared with fewer than 100 in April 2023.

Difficulty affording private rental accommodation can affect the disposable income needed to afford other essentials such as transport, heating and food. If unaffordability requires households to move, this can disrupt family life, work, education, and neighbourhood links and particularly affects children in poverty, who are almost twice as likely to have moved three or more times.

**Figure 5: Percentage of Somerset population who had made Homefinder applications by age cohort, Jan 2022-Jan 2023**



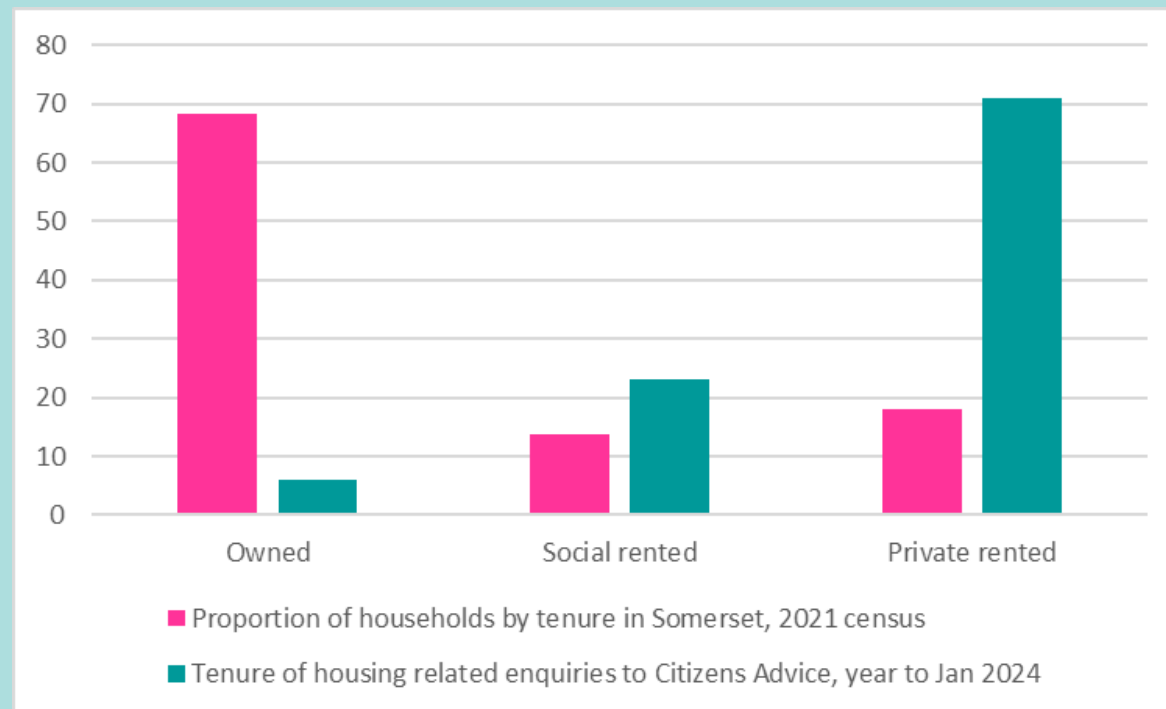
Renting privately is the most precarious form of tenure, and the end of a private rented tenancy accounted for 49% of 972 households owed a homelessness prevention duty in 2022/23. Most worryingly, more than one in four of these households included dependent children.

Unsurprisingly, private renters and social housing tenants are far more likely to go to Citizens Advice for support than owner occupiers. In the year 2022 to Sept 2023, 68% of people who asked for advice in Somerset were renting, homeless or staying with friends and relatives, and 57% of people who presented with threatened homelessness to Citizens Advice were private tenants, whilst only 8% were home-owners. Figure 6 shows the tenure of people seeking housing-related advice from Citizens Advice relative to the number of households of that tenure in Somerset, and the relative low level of need from owner occupiers compared with renters.

People with a history of offending are 50% less likely to reoffend if they have stable accommodation. However, they face additional barriers in accessing housing. In addition, difficulty in gaining employment, and living “chaotic” lifestyles, makes it difficult to retain tenancies.

New evidence suggests that the precariousness of private renting (versus living in another sector) has a greater impact on ageing than being unemployed (versus employment) or being a former smoker (versus never smoking). Encouragingly, though, the ageing effects are reversible with access to more secure accommodation.

**Figure 6: Tenure and housing related enquiries to Citizens Advice, 2023-2024**



#### **RECOMMENDATION 2:**

Ensure the new Local Plan and local Neighbourhood Plan give significant attention to current and future demographic trends and the related housing needs. Innovate solutions to the development of more one and two bedroom homes, affordable homes, housing stability and homes built to accommodate future health needs are required.

# Homelessness and Rough Sleeping

I have recently published a detailed [Health Needs Assessment on homelessness](#).

As this report says, homeless people:

*“...often suffer multiple disadvantage, experiencing a combination of problems including substance misuse, contact with the criminal justice system and mental ill-health. They often fall through the gaps between services and systems, making it harder to address their problems and lead fulfilling lives. Solutions to improve the health and wellbeing of the homeless population require both a system-wide commitment and well-coordinated local services.”*

Homelessness is a highly complex issue, with ill-health both a contributory factor and an effect. No two individuals have exactly the same story.

At its most visible and extreme, being homeless may mean rough sleeping.

Numbers of people sleeping rough in Somerset are difficult to ascertain and vary by area. In September 2022, there were 89 people found to be living on the streets, with 57 counted on one night as part of the national count.

The health outcomes for people who sleep rough are strikingly poor. Nationally, the average age of death within the homeless population in 2021 was 45 for men and 43 for women, and homeless people were up to six times more likely to die than their contemporaries in the same age groups. Often, this is due to co-occurring mental ill-health and substance misuse needs, physical health needs, and many homeless people having experienced significant trauma in their lives.

Not all people who are homeless are sleeping on the street. In addition to the 100 or so rough sleepers, there are perhaps another 500 who are “vulnerably housed”. This may mean relying on temporary accommodation, such as staying with friends or requiring frequent moves. There is much movement between these two groups, and with the more settled population. The Council receives on average 700 homelessness applications each month.

Somerset Council has a statutory duty to help prevent homelessness and provide accommodation for those at risk. The cost of living crisis has meant more people have sought help and the cost of providing temporary accommodation has increased significantly

Since the formation of a unitary council, these statutory duties are now covered by a joined-up Housing Options team, leading to a more consistent approach across the county, through for example a single case-management IT system.

Nevertheless, too many people who face the most acute housing needs face multiple barriers to finding a suitable home that meets their own expressed needs. Some people face multiple disadvantages that impact on their ability to live independently and maintain a home and tenancy. Their current circumstances are often based in long-term experiences of poverty, deprivation, trauma, abuse and discrimination. These people are considered to have “multiple complex needs”, which often result in being at increased risk of poor mental health, substance misuse, homelessness and contact with the criminal justice system, as well as long-term health conditions or disability and shorter life expectancy.

People who are less able to navigate multiple service pathways for different needs are at risk of experiencing poorer outcomes. A person with multiple complex needs may only meet the threshold of need for one or two services that they require, and yet without holistic support will be unable to resolve their issues. Alternatively, they may be unable to access some services they need because of addiction, a criminal record or challenging behaviours.

Many of these people have significant health need, but can benefit considerably from a preventative, Public Health approach to their welfare, helping strengthen the protective factors that can keep them from falling into greater need, and helping them get back on their feet.

I am incredibly proud of the pioneering work that Somerset has done in such “Inclusion Health”. The Inclusion Health Service is a nationally recognised initiative that recently won an NHS Parliamentary Award for services for action on health inequalities. The innovative and multidisciplinary approach taken to inclusion health is captured in this case study.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS 3 and 4:**

That the Council and Integrated Care Board prioritise collaborative work to address the needs of people who experience multiple disadvantages.

It is recommended that the Integrated Care Board continues to develop the Inclusion Health Service and develops an overarching Somerset Inclusive Health Strategy.

## **Case Study: Somerset’s Inclusion Health Service**

About half of Somerset’s homeless people are in contact with health services, although the proportion should probably be much higher. This group is socially excluded, typically experiencing multiple overlapping risk factors for poor health, such as poverty, violence and complex trauma. This complexity cannot be dealt with by looking at symptoms individually.

Instead, Somerset has engaged specialist outreach GPs in Taunton, Yeovil and the Mendips, outreach clinics in churches, hostels and day drop-in centres, and a Homeless and Rough Sleeper Nursing Service to address both the physical and mental health of these vulnerable people.

Each former Somerset district has an inclusion health and homeless GP surgery or hub, who collectively in the year to April 2023, provided over 2,000 appointments either as outreach or by phone to the target group of people. Meanwhile the homeless health nursing service is a multi-disciplinary team of mental health and adult nurses, paramedics, and peer support workers, who provide health checks, wound care, blood tests, and advice and advocacy, as well as helping people to register with a GP. The service has received over 900 referrals since it began in 2021 and held 4469 appointments between March 2021 and June 2023.

Complex problems require multidisciplinary solutions. One hundred new patient appointments at the Gateway in Yeovil identified 121 different problems, such as domestic violence, mental health issues, physical injuries and illnesses, sexually transmitted infections, dental health and confidential advice and advocacy.

The close work between Public Health, the NHS, accommodation providers and the voluntary, community and faith sector has resulted in an exceptional health and wellbeing offer for this incredibly vulnerable cohort of adults in Somerset.



# Good Quality and Suitable Homes

- Fuel poverty
- Damp and mould
- Preventing hazards in the home

Simply having a roof over your head is not enough. Many dwellings contain hazards that can affect health. We spend on average 90% of our time indoors<sup>III</sup>, and for people who are more vulnerable – the very young, elderly or ill - a higher share of this is often spent in the home. However, Somerset has higher rates of housing hazards than the national average, with more than one in seven homes estimated to have a Category 1 housing hazard, meaning it poses a serious and immediate risk to health and safety.

## Fuel Poverty

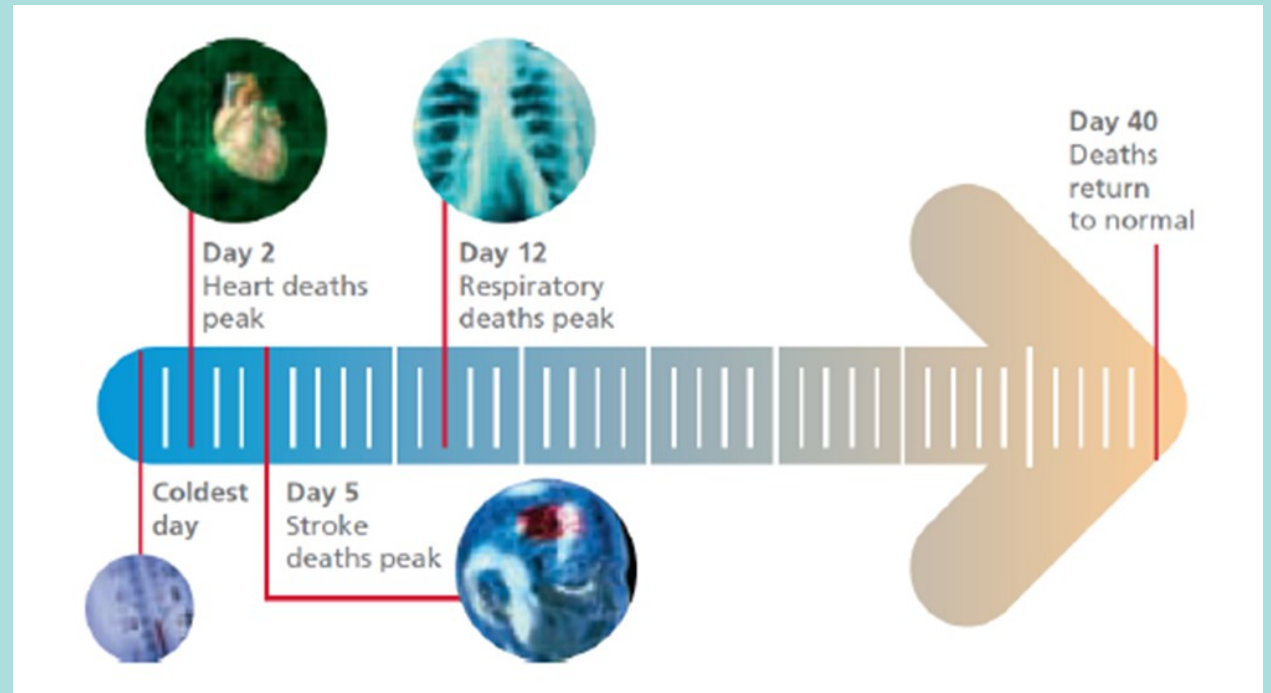
Fuel poverty has direct negative health impacts via its effects on respiratory, cardiovascular and mental health, in particular in people with pre-existing vulnerabilities, such as young children and older adults.

The impacts on health are not immediate and so not always obvious, with deaths from respiratory causes peaking 12 days after a very cold spell, whilst cardiac deaths peak earlier (Figure 7).

Fuel poverty has further indirect health effects due to its impact on disposable income for other essentials. Three factors lie behind fuel poverty: the cost of fuel, household income, and the efficiency of dwellings in maintaining warmth. For most, who are dependent on oil, gas and electricity, the first is set by global markets (albeit with national government support in the last year), and the second is a key component of inequality, underlying much discussion in Public Health (such as [my report in 2015](#)).

The third is a characteristic of the dwelling. This is very evident in Figure 8, on the following page, where the highest proportions of households in fuel poverty are in rural areas of Somerset. Housing in these areas is often detached, with more outside walls to lose heat. They also tend to be older housing stock, without the benefits of damp courses and built-in insulation as in more modern homes. It is estimated that over 65% of the housing stock across Somerset was built pre-1945. Rural areas are also likely to rely on oil or LPG heating, which is more expensive than the gas in most urban areas. The recent rise in home energy prices is estimated to have increased rates of fuel poverty in Somerset from 11.6% of households in 2015 to 19.1% in 2023; with more than one in four households fuel poor in some rural communities. <sup>III</sup>.

**Figure 7: Time lag between cold weather and health impacts in England (source: Cold Weather Plan for England)**





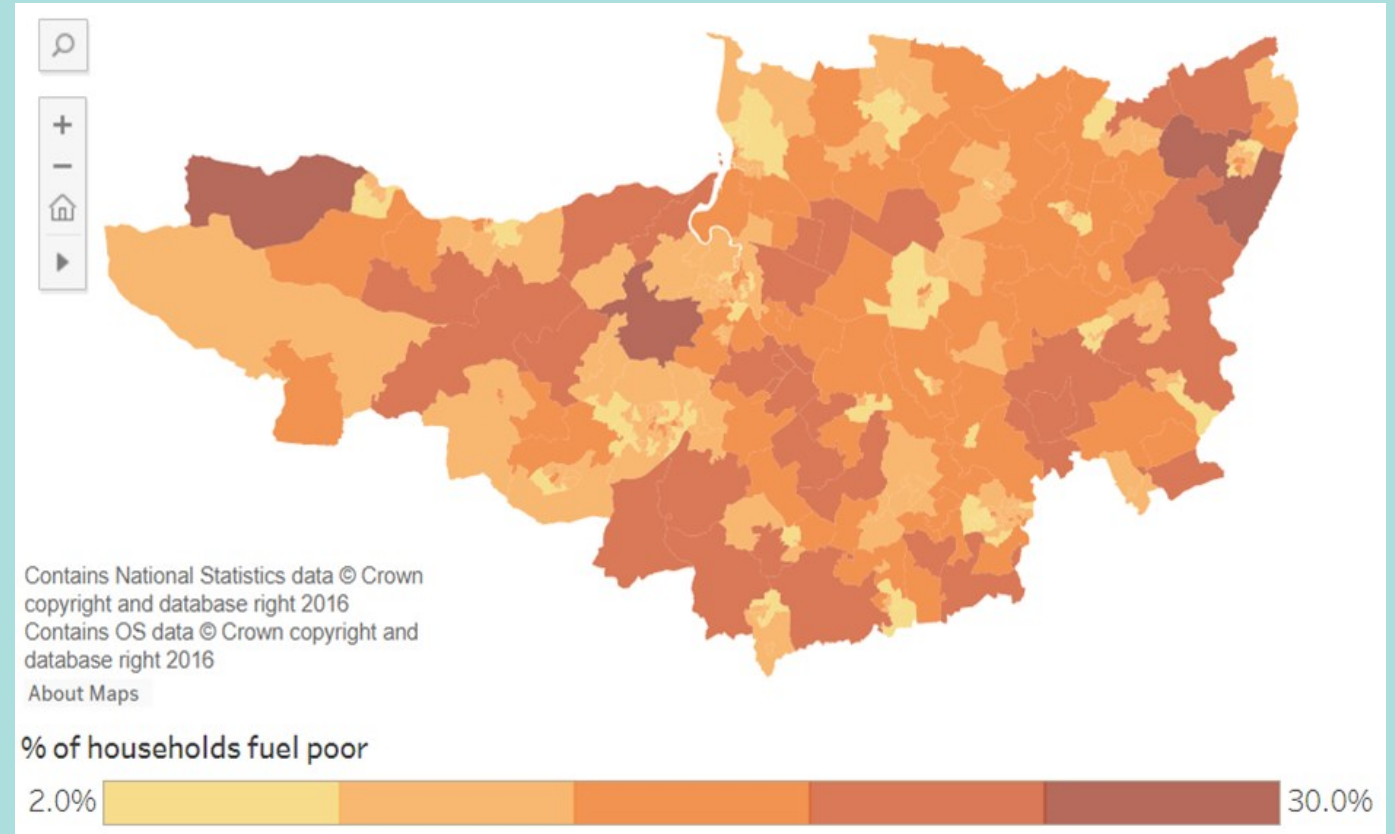
# Damp and mould

Cold, damp and mould are often found together. Mould thrives in the damp, and moisture persists where heating and ventilation are poor. The harmful health effects are particularly on the respiratory system, exacerbating conditions such as asthma and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD).

Overcrowding is also likely to make damp and mould problems worse, with more people, more cooking and more clothes to dry. Damp, mould and cold can be found in all tenures of house but are disproportionately found in the private rented sector. It is important that Environmental Health Officers work with landlords to reduce the risk of damp and mould. In severe cases Environmental Health Officers can prevent the property being occupied until improvements are made.

Citizens Advice Somerset saw almost a 300% increase in reports of damp, mould and condensation in the year to Sept 2023. This may be due to rising costs of home energy to stay warm and free of damp but may also be driven by increased awareness of the health harms and importance of addressing them.

**Figure 8: Proportion of Households in Fuel Poverty, Somerset, 2015**



# Disease conditions associated with exposure to cold, damp and mould

Our GP QOF (Quality Outcomes Framework) data for Somerset shows the prevalence of disease conditions. Here we show four of the main conditions that we know are made worse by exposure to cold, damp and mould. For each of these we can see that the situation in Somerset is getting worse over time and is worse compared with the national average. Only some of this disease prevalence will be due to poor quality housing but it is important to do all we can to address all causes of ill-health.

Chronic Obstructive Lung Disease (COPD) is a long-term condition where lungs that struggle to move air effectively, resulting in frequent chest infections. It affects 2.2% of our population, a total of 13,128 people, compared to the England average rate of 1.8%. (Figure 9).

Coronary heart disease (CHD), which causes heart attacks, affects 3.8% of our population, a total of 22,751 people, compared to the England average of 3.0%. (Figure 10).

Clinical depression is only one marker of poor mental wellbeing, but it affects 16.1% of our adult population, a total of 78,667 people, compared to the England average of 13.2% (Figure 11).

Asthma is particularly susceptible to cold, damp and mould. Out of everyone in Somerset who is over the age of 6, 7.3% have asthma, a total of 41,327 people, compared to the England average of 6.5% (Figure 12).

Figure 9: COPD prevalence (all ages)

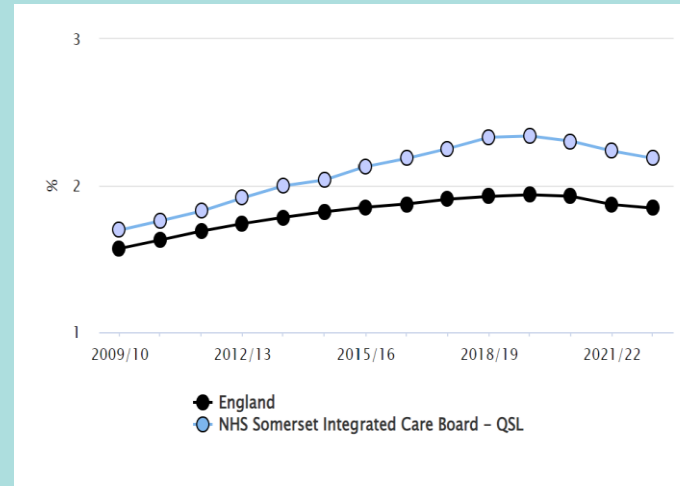


Figure 10: CHD prevalence (all ages)

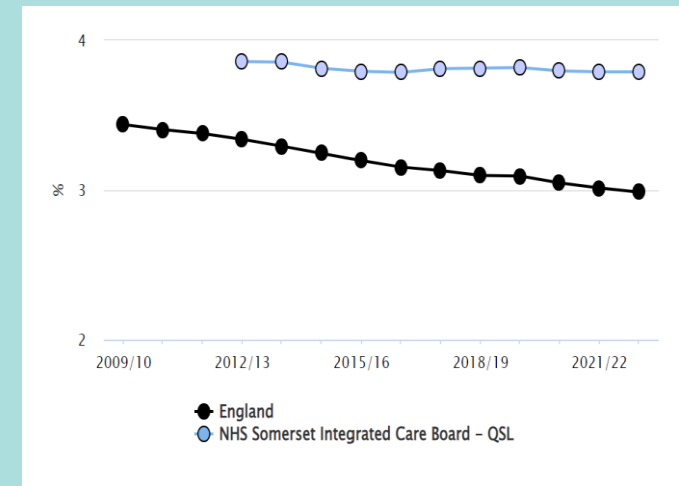


Figure 11: Depression prevalence (18+)

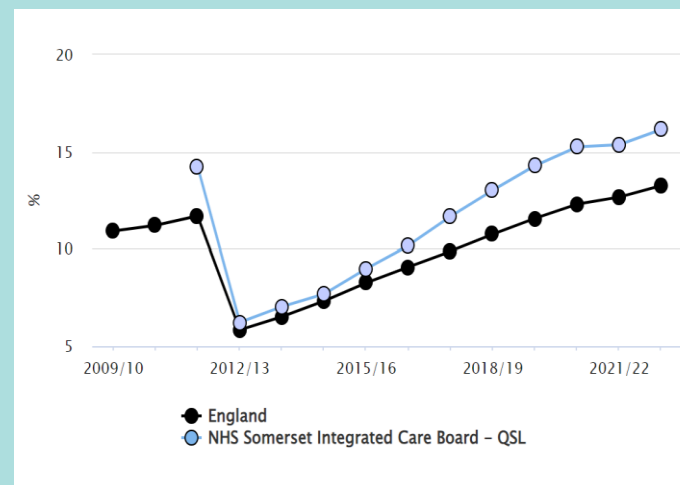
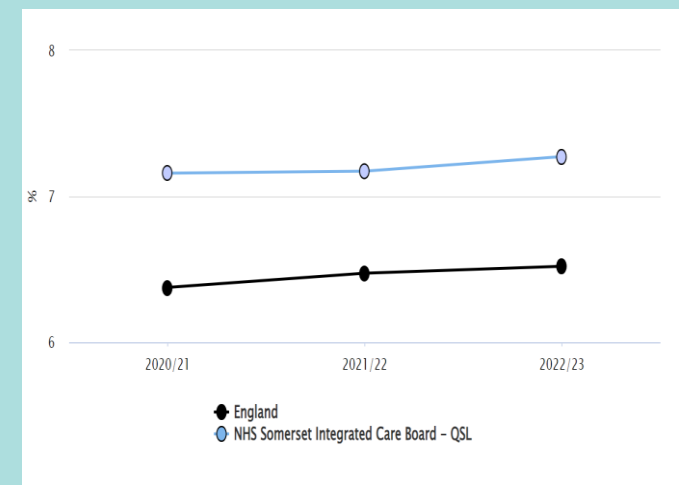


Figure 12: Asthma prevalence (6+)



# Cold, Damp, Mould - What are we doing about it in Somerset?

In Somerset, we recognise that housing standards regarding cold, damp and mould can only be effectively identified and reduced through working across different agencies. A multi-agency group has agreed a new pathway for families with children to escalate concerns about damp and mould affecting their health.

This begins with behavioural advice to minimise sources of damp build up and progresses to inspection and interventions to the fabric of the building to be undertaken by the landlord. There is also an option of removal of tenants from unsafe properties if a child with diagnosed asthma is living in a home with ongoing damp and mould.

Housing hazards can be mutually reinforcing; for example, an overcrowded property, particularly where the family has young children, is more likely to generate higher levels of moisture through normal household activities and therefore suffer with damp and mould if there is inadequate heating, insulation and ventilation.

Environmental Health Officers have considerable powers and duties under the Housing Act 2004 to enforce landlords to improve housing conditions. The Housing Ombudsman have made recommendations for landlords to understand the risks in their property portfolio, have an effective complaints policy and train staff to handle complaints sensitively and effectively.

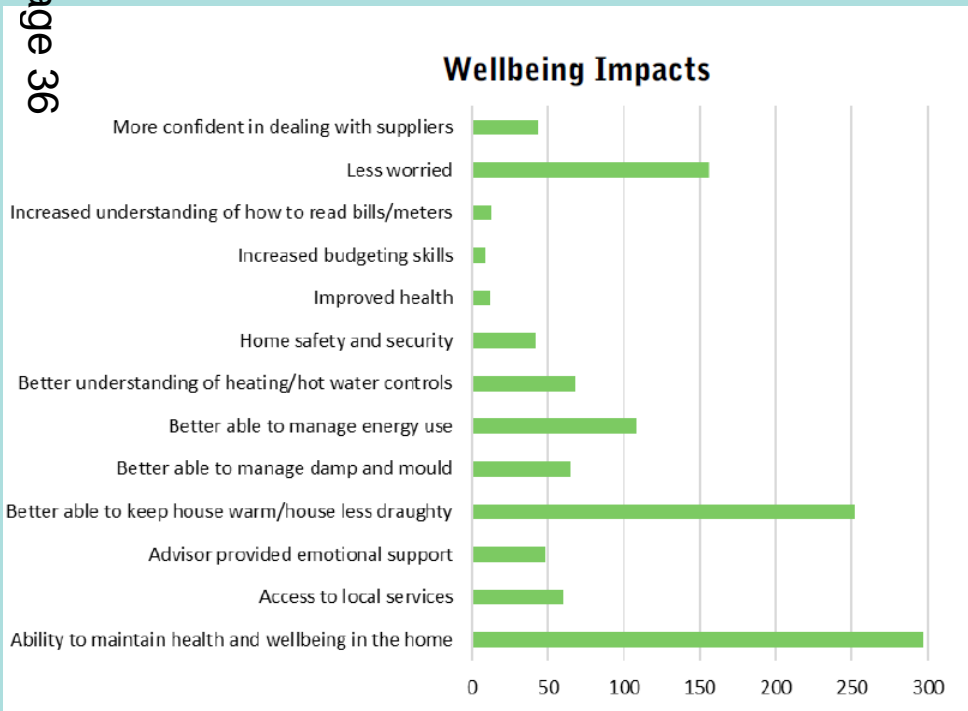


For the wider population, the Safe and Warm Somerset Helpline exists to support households with energy efficiency and heating measures. This case study on this page gives an example of how the helpline has successfully advocated for home improvements for an individual based on information from health care.

In 2023 the helpline saved households over £1million on home energy bills and reached over 1600 households reporting over 1200 health conditions. The self-reported impacts on wellbeing are presented in Figure 13.

**Figure 13: Self-reported impact on wellbeing of home energy efficiency measures supported by the Safe and Warm Somerset Helpline in 2023, number of households**

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## Case Study: Safe and Warm Somerset Helpline

Andy has Parkinson's disease, which is made worse by cold and damp. He called our Somerset Safe and Warm helpline in January 2023 because his house had significant damp and mould issues and he was interested in getting a cavity wall insulation. Although Andy's income was higher than the threshold for the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) scheme, our telephone advisor was able to refer Andy to an installer for a full house retrofit based on his health condition. We also provided Andy with some behavioural advice on how to reduce condensation, damp and mould.

Shortly after this referral Andy contacted our helpline again saying he had been told by ECO that he was not eligible due to his higher income. Our advisors checked the criteria and confirmed that Andy was eligible as long as he could get a letter from the NHS explaining how his condition was affected by the cold. We were able to confirm this with the installers, who then went ahead and Andy received cavity wall insulation, an air source heat pump and solar PV.

Along with our behavioural advice, these installations will help to keep Andy's home warm and dry and reduce the impacts that a cold damp home would have had on his health. Through our advocacy the total cost benefits to Andy amounted to £19,400 – one-off savings in installations covered by the ECO scheme, and £1,849 ongoing yearly savings.



# Child injury

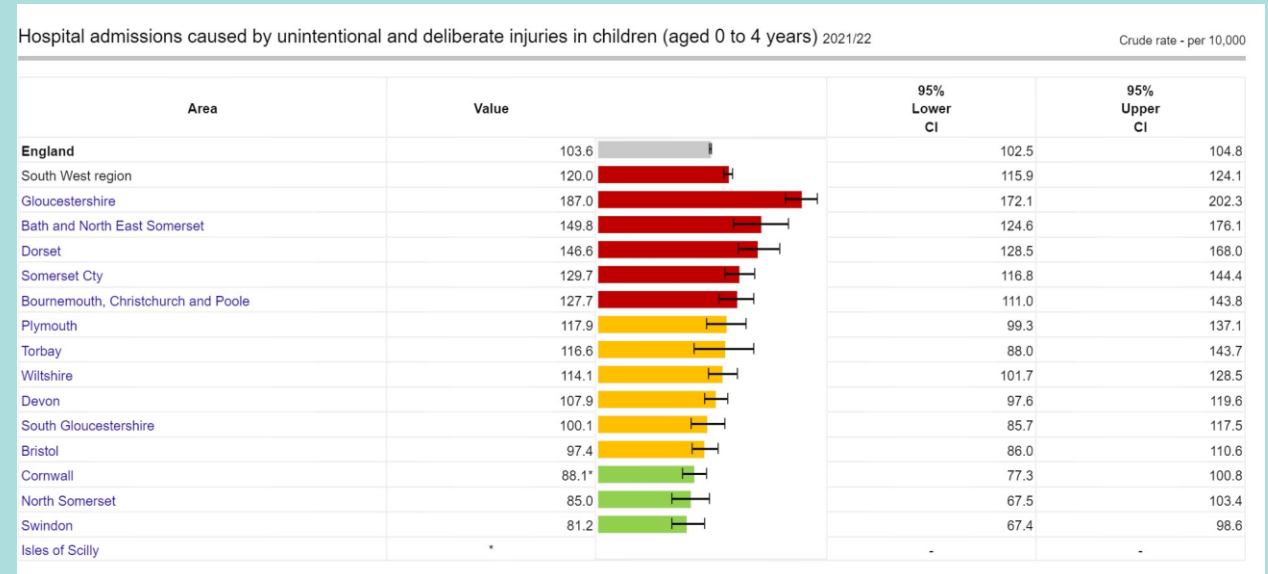
Injuries (both unintentional and deliberate) are a leading cause of hospitalisation for children and represent a major cause of premature mortality for children under 4 years of age. Child injury can significantly affect the child physically and emotionally, as well as impacting the family and wider health economy. Child injuries also disproportionately affect families who are poorer, causing widening health inequalities.

National indicators for child injury have recently changed meaning we are unable to look at trends, but historical indicators suggested a worsening picture for Somerset. For the year 2021/22 Somerset crude rates per 100,000 of emergency admissions for unintentional and deliberate injuries in children aged 0-4 are significantly higher than the England and South West averages (see Figure 14).

National policy and research stipulate that preventing child injury requires a whole system multi-faceted approach that includes supporting safe home environments, improving product safety, and providing education. There is clear guidance around implementing home safety assessments that combine the provision of advice, education and safety equipment, particularly to families living in deprived areas or social housing.

In Somerset our health visitors work in collaboration with Somerset and Devon Fire Service to provide safe home environments for young children as part of our universal healthy child programme. Health visitors routinely discuss injury prevention during contacts with families. Where there are additional concerns, families with children under 4 are referred to the Somerset Safer Home Scheme which is delivered by the Fire Service and includes fitting equipment to help mitigate risks (such as stair gates and cupboard locks).

**Figure 14: Hospital admissions caused by unintentional and deliberate injuries in children (aged 0-4 years) 2021/22**



There is still much work to be done to ensure that children in Somerset are safe and protected from injury. A multiagency working group convened by Somerset Council seeks to take future work forward and includes representation from housing, children's social care, education, and public health nursing and the voluntary, community and faith sector. The working group initial action plan builds on the evidence research and scope of best practice to reduce and prevent child unintentional injury through the following workstreams:

1. Whole system approach
2. Coordinated Interventions and collaborative partnerships
3. Education and training

# Falls in the Home

Overcrowding and poor design (for example, steep staircases, uneven flooring) can all contribute to falls risk. As people age they become more vulnerable to the effects of housing hazards and unsuitable homes, putting them at risk of falls. In 2022, there were almost 800 hip fractures in people over 65 in Somerset due to a fall.



Only one in three of these people were likely to regain full mobility, increasing the need to move into, or receive a more supportive living environment, if their home is not safe, warm and suitable for their needs.

Meanwhile, a higher proportion of people over the age of 65 are living with long-term conditions that affect their mobility. It is estimated that the number of people aged over 65 who are unable to manage at least one mobility activity will be almost 60% higher in 2040 than it was in 2020 in Somerset.

Last year I published a [Falls Needs Assessment](#) for Somerset which provides detailed evidence of the problem and the response in Somerset.

Somerset has a higher rate of emergency hospital admissions due to falls in people 65 and over (2,030 per 100,000 population, 3,015 falls), than regionally (1,943 per 100,000 population). Somerset's rate is similar to the national average. The overwhelming majority (86%) of these admissions were in people aged over 80.

There are three complimentary approaches we can take to reduce falls in the home:

- 1. Adapt existing homes to reduce hazards:** Somerset Independence Plus (SIP) works with Somerset Council to help people stay living independently in their homes for longer, through adaptations, improvements, safety and prevention services for disabled and vulnerable people. Many of the above are covered by subsidies such as the Disability Facilities Grant. People can request an assessment of their needs by SIP, or they can make a visit to one of three Independent Living Centres which offer people the chance to try out a range of equipment that can help them live independently for longer.
- 2. Diagnosing and treating illnesses early:** For people with multiple conditions, there may be a requirement to take multiple medications and this has been shown to increase the risk of falls. A personalised approach to care, particularly complex care, is critical to ensure different treatments do not interact in a way that can cause people to be at increased risk of falls.
- 3. Type of Housing:** To meet rising demand and adapt to an ageing population we need to think ahead about the type of housing we build and how we design places so that more people can stay healthy and independent well into later life, ideally within the communities they call home where they have established support networks.

## RECOMMENDATION 5:

It is recommended that Somerset Integrated Care System adopt a collaborative approach to reducing falls and injuries overall and in the home, including continuing to provide support for retrofit interventions and housing adaptations that enable people to live safely in their homes

# Personalised Care

Personalised Care is a new approach being rolled out by NHS England, to provide people with choice and control over the way their care is planned and delivered. It is based on “what matters” to them and their individual strengths and needs. To address needs holistically requires the involvement of multiple professionals from across health and care services, as well as community, voluntary and faith services, to ensure people feel connected to their communities and each other. A cornerstone of delivering Personalised Care includes people who are skilled in connecting people to what is available in their communities to improve their quality of life and overall wellbeing – known as Social Prescribing Link Workers (SPLWs). We have long valued the importance of this role, and there are 38 SPLWs in Somerset, complimented by additional roles that provide specialist holistic support such as to Carers.

Personalised care involves:

- Patient choice
- Shared decision making
- Supported self-management
- Social prescribing and community-based support
- Personal health budgets

For example, in South Somerset many people who needed care were waiting a long time for their needs to be assessed, and in the meantime their health and wellbeing was getting worse. When their needs were assessed, often Adult Social Care could not do everything and the person then needed to wait for further services: for example, pharmacists to review the medicines they were being prescribed, district nurses to visit them in their home, an occupational therapist to advise on adaptations like grab rails to help them stay mobile, and local voluntary services to help with food and friendship and keep people connected to their communities.

The Complex Care Team is a GP, a nurse and an Assistant Practitioner. The Team thought that if they also had a social worker who could help join up health and care decisions for individuals that more people would get the right support and fewer people would have to wait for a care assessment.

Tyna is a social worker in Adult Social Care and joined the team for three months initially. Together the team looked at the waiting list and assessed all the different needs of people on it. They then joined up the medical support, care provision, and wider community support.

A “team of teams” meets every week from the hospital, pharmacy, mental health trust and voluntary sector to work together to ensure people get all the support they need. As a result of this pilot, the waiting time for social care in the area has reduced from 300 days to 55 days. Also, 11 people received an urgent social care response within days, which reduced the costs to the NHS of treating the consequences of not having care.

As one person in the team says: “Patients and families are happier with [the] working together. Being able to work as part of this level of care is better for patients and increases job satisfaction.”

There is a strong correlation between unsatisfactory housing conditions and households in economic and social disadvantage. Elderly and vulnerable private sector households are over-represented in non-decent housing. There are limited resources available for private sector housing renewal but increasing dependency levels in the private rented sector and among vulnerable owner-occupiers who may be capital rich but revenue poor.

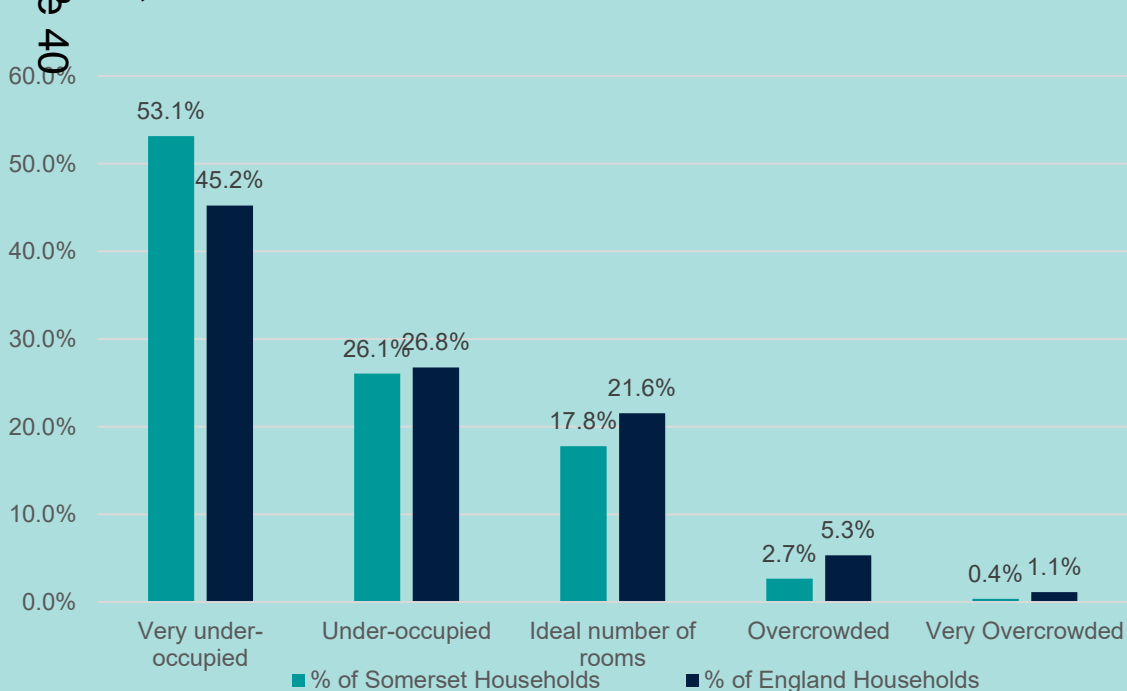
## **RECOMMENDATION 6:**

Maintain support for approaches, such as Personalised Care, that seek to wrap individualised support around a person in their current place of residence to reduce the risk of needs escalating.

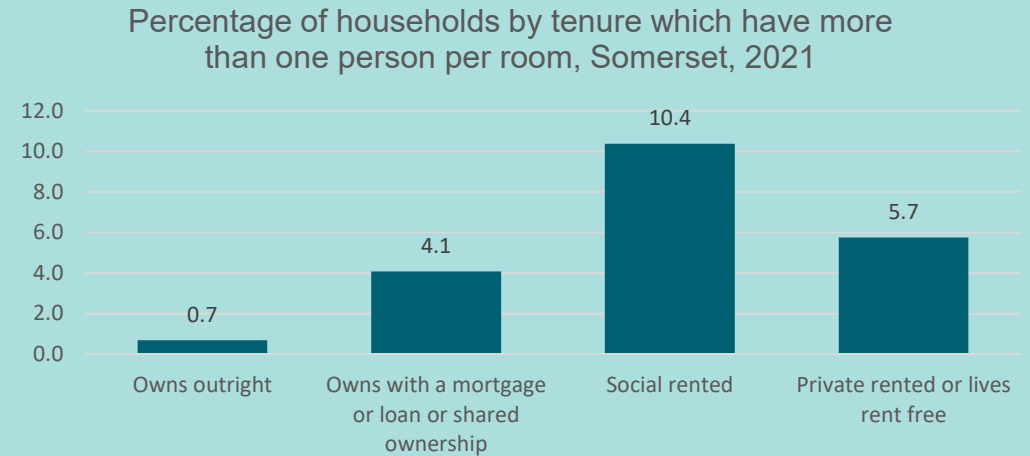
# Overcrowding and Under Occupation

Somerset has relatively low levels of household overcrowding, with one in 250 homes overcrowded, compared with more than one in 100 in England as a whole. However, where overcrowding exists, the highest rates are in the town centres, are more likely to affect families with children, and are more likely to be in the areas that experience the greatest multiple deprivation. Overcrowding is therefore often associated with the presence of other housing hazards and with other factors such as ill-health, crime, low educational attainment and unemployment; it is a particular health issue for children, for whom it can affect mental health and the ability to study and reach their potential in education. In Somerset it is much more common in the private rental sector as seen in Figure 15 - 10.4% of social rented homes and 5.7% of private rented having more than one occupant per room, compared with only 0.7% of households owned outright.

**Figure 15: Percentage of households by occupancy category, Somerset and England, 2021**



**Figure 16: Percentage of Somerset Households by tenure with more than one person per room (2021)**



However, whilst overcrowding affects some people, a more common phenomenon in Somerset, and nationally, is under occupation: when a household has one or more bedrooms in excess of what it strictly needs. More than half of Somerset homes are “very underoccupied”, and this coincides with a rise of 12.5% in single person households between 2011 and 2021. Given the ageing population, many of these are older adults who are living in homes that are bigger than their current needs, and which often require adaptations to remain accessible into old age. Somerset therefore does not have a housing “shortage” as such but has a housing stock that does not meet the needs of our current population.

**RECOMMENDATION 7:**

That a communications plan is developed to raise awareness among the public of the need to plan ahead for ageing in their home or moving to a more suitable home when the time is right, to reduce the number of people in homes in Somerset that are difficult to live in into old age.



# Healthy Neighbourhoods

- **Planning Healthier Neighbourhoods**
- **Climate Change**
- **Flood Risk**
- **The Place and its Health Impacts**

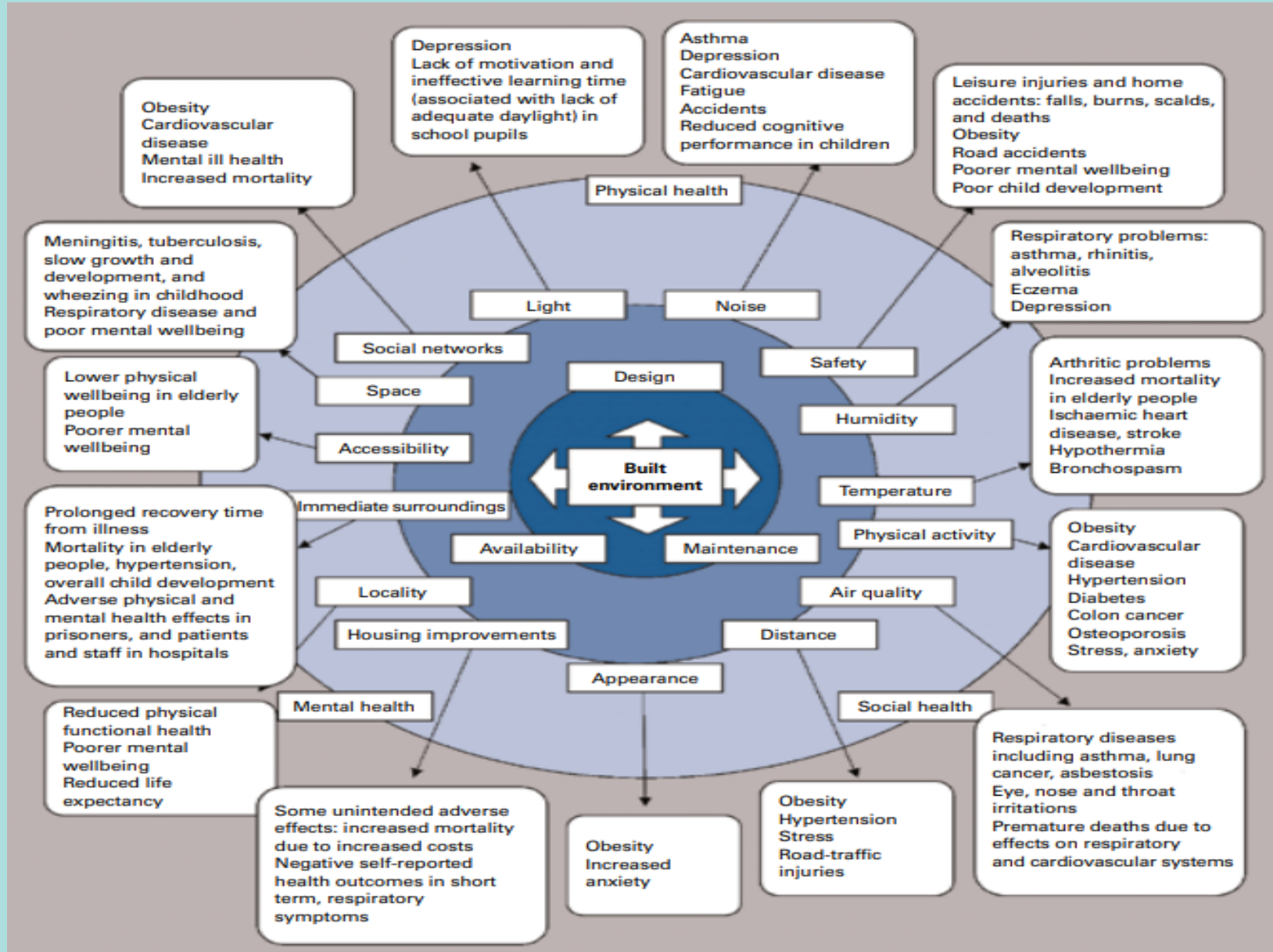
# Planning Healthier Neighbourhoods

The neighbourhoods in which we live play a significant part in health and wellbeing. How we plan neighbourhoods has a powerful role in influencing how people behave in and engage with their local area.

Figure 17 shows ways in which the built environment shapes health and behaviours, and the ways in which it influences, many risk of ill health and disease.

The Somerset Local Plan currently in development will be the first Plan for the whole county and will supersede Plans from former district councils when published in 2028. It will guide decisions on future development proposals and address the needs and opportunities within Somerset. The Local Plan is the main vehicle for the Council and communities to identify where development should take place and areas where development should be restricted.

Figure 17: The Relationship Between the Environment and Health Outcomes



Source: Rao M, Prasad S, Adshead F, Tissera H. The built environment and health. Lancet. 2007 Sep 29;370(9593):1111-3. doi: 10.1016/S0140-6736(07)61260-4. PMID: 17868821.

# Planning Healthier Neighbourhoods

As part of the Local Plan, local authorities are required to create a design guide or “code” based on the national model design code. Using design codes to accompany the Local Plan can play a major role in reducing health inequalities, improving loneliness, mental wellbeing and reducing lifestyle related disease risks.

The design codes can do this by considering, for example:

- how people experience and move around in their communities;
- security by design principles that can help people feel safe and walk after dark;
- inclusion of green spaces, play spaces and community facilities, which create opportunities for social interaction
- the adoption of a “lifetime homes approach” to design, and to support people living independently for longer;
- design of dementia-friendly communities.

Communities can choose to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development and growth of their local area through Neighbourhood Planning. Neighbourhood Plans can influence where new homes and amenities are built, their design, and infrastructure to support them. Neighbourhood planning is a power rather than a legal requirement, but Plans can be developed in shorter timescales than the county-wide Local Plan, and have the advantage of being grounded in the community’s own expressed aspirations and needs.

In Somerset we need to consider support for our ageing population by developing neighbourhoods that are safe, well connected and have good access to amenities which can improve wellbeing and help people stay independent and active. Meanwhile, there are also some qualities of urban environments that particularly benefit young people: places with good public transport to be able to access and stay in education and training; places with suitable 1-2 bedroom homes for first time buyers and young adults; places with a good mix of affordable homes across a range of tenures.

**Public Health Ambassador Programme:** As part of a new operating model for Public Health in Somerset, we have developed a new Public Health Ambassador Programme. This programme seeks to support and provide training for specific officers to become Public Health Ambassadors. The ambassadors will be critical to embed a “health equity in all policies” approach in all parts of the organisation. They would be well placed to understand how policy areas such as housing, transport, planning, education and so on, can shape the building blocks of health and embed a systems approach to how we improve these building blocks at a place level.

**Health Determinants Research Collaborative (HDRC):** The Ambassador Programme sits alongside Somerset’s exciting new Health Determinants Research Collaboration (HDRC) funded by the National Institute of Health Research. This programme will increase the council’s capacity to translate evidence into practice and to do local research into the building blocks of health in Somerset. As a rural and coastal county with a rapidly ageing population and with no university, Somerset faces a range of challenges to delivering effective public services that are distinct from most cities in England.

The Somerset HDRC will involve people in Somerset in every stage of the research process, from identifying our research priorities, asking the right questions, designing research, collecting information, and presenting and publishing the findings. Importantly, the HDRC will help provide more capacity to apply health evidence to Housing and Planning decisions.

## RECOMMENDATIONS 8 and 9:

It is recommended that Somerset Council fully commits to, and supports, the development of the Public Health Ambassador Programme.

It is recommended that Somerset Council fully embeds the HDRC and its principles into the new Target Operating Model for the Council going forwards.

# Designing for active lives

For sixty years at least we have been designing our urban areas around car transport. This manifests itself in many ways:

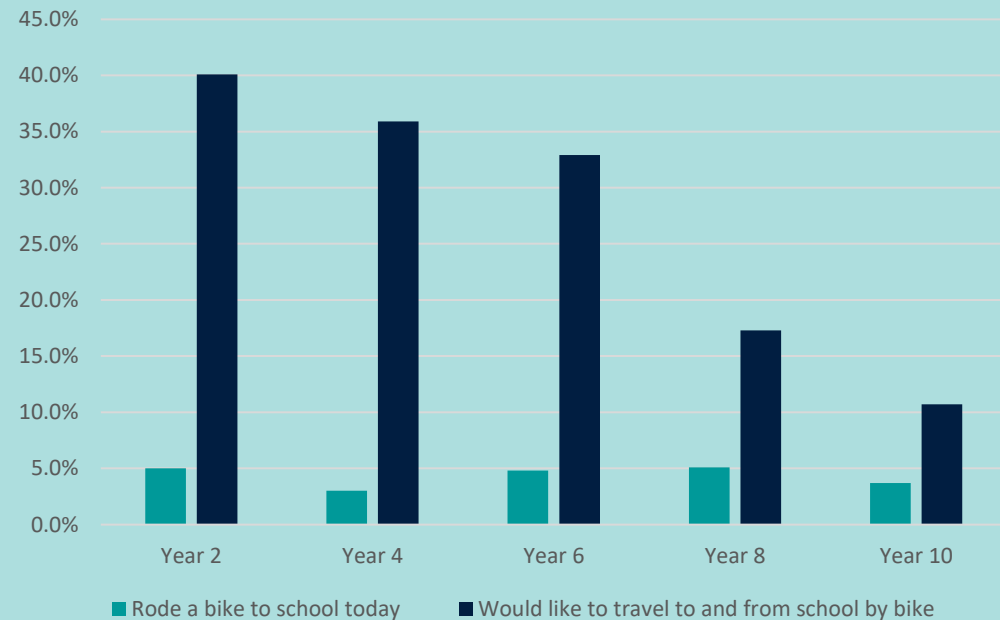
- Long waiting times for pedestrians at traffic lights, often requiring multiple stages to cross.
- One-way systems, gyratories and large roundabouts that are intimidating for cyclists and pedestrians;
- Roads designed for speeds well above the 30mph speed limit, let alone a 20mph limit.

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Slowly, attitudes are changing and there is increased recognition that prioritising vehicles and speed is not compatible with healthy active living. In the recent survey of school children in Somerset we asked how students currently travel to school and how they would like to travel to school. Obviously as Executive Director of Public and Population Health, I would like all children who are able to do so, to walk or cycle to school, for some if not all of their journeys. Active travel to school is associated with better health, but also with better educational attainment. But most parents do not allow their children to cycle to school because they quite reasonably do not consider it safe to do so, even if their children have had Bikeability training.

The survey shows us that primary age children in particular want to be able to cycle to school in large numbers (around 30%), but currently only 2% do so.

Neighbourhood Plans, The Local Plan and the Transport Plan together provide us with an opportunity to rethink how we design our neighbourhoods and transport system. By engaging our communities and finding out, as the school survey suggests, where there is unmet need for better walking and cycling infrastructure, we can develop healthy neighbourhoods that encourage and enable physical activity by design.

**Figure 18: Percentage of school children who biked to school and % who would prefer to ride a bike if they had a choice, Somerset School Survey, 2023**



# Climate Change

It is over 100 years since Patrick Geddes urged his fellow planners to “Think globally, act locally”. Good planning can indeed give local benefits in health and wellbeing, whilst simultaneously reducing the impact of climate change which is the biggest threat to health globally.

Communities designed with good insulation, local sustainable energy generation, active travel – walking and cycling – and public transport promote health without significant carbon emissions. This is, of course, easier to achieve in planning new communities than it is for existing housing stock.

UK homes are among the least energy efficient in Europe and in 2018, data from the Department for Business Industrial Strategy showed that emissions from the built environment in Somerset accounted for 24% of the total emissions released in the county. It is estimated that over 80% of the homes we are likely to be using in 2050 are already built, so maintaining and adapting those homes for a changing population and climate is vital to ensuring there are sufficient healthy homes in Somerset.



Towards a Climate Resilient Somerset  
**Somerset's Climate Emergency  
Strategy**



The Climate and Ecological Strategies set out commitments on how Somerset will decarbonise to reach its net-zero targets by 2030. This strategy includes objectives that:

- all new housing developments will be highly energy efficient and zero carbon as soon as possible
- all new developments will reduce the need to travel to access key services and employment opportunities and will facilitate sustainable travel options
- all local authority housing stock will be at least EPC C by 2030 and private landlord properties as well

The strategy recognises that there are barriers to achieving these objectives, as many are not within the gift of the local authority to deliver in their entirety. However, if achieved, the ambitions in the strategy have huge potential to deliver benefits to both population health, via increased walking and cycling and reduced pollution, and climate change via reduced carbon emissions.

# Flood Risk

Rainfall patterns will continue to change as part of the changing climate. Summers are likely to be drier and winters wetter, and we are likely to see more intense and longer period of rainfall throughout the year.

This will lead to an increasing risk of fluvial (river) flooding by 2080, which is predicted to rise by 85%. Similar risk profiles exist for coastal, surface water and groundwater flooding. We saw the impact of such risks in the floods of winter 2013-14, seeing approximately 600 households affected, of which 280 homes were internally flooded, and more cut off from utilities for up to 12 weeks. The flooding particularly impacted mental health with raised symptoms of depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder among people affected, even if not directly flooded.

Rising sea levels are also contributing to increased flood risk in low-lying coastal areas, and higher sea levels also make land drainage slow. The highest risk of coastal flooding in Somerset is around Porlock Weir, where holiday lets are particularly at risk.

Flash flooding is hard to forecast, where short bursts of intense rainfall exceed the capacity of streams and drains. This form of flooding can have disproportionately harmful consequences; the design and materials used in construction of homes, gardens and the wider built environment contribute to how rapidly heavy rain can lead to dangerous surface water. With fewer permeable surfaces associated with increasing housing and road development, such incidents may become more likely to occur, unless mitigation is incorporated at planning stage.

An additional way in which flood risk may impact on wellbeing is through effect on house values, as climate change will increasingly render some homes uninsurable, leaving people occupying those homes vulnerable to both the physical and financial consequences of flooding.

In anticipation of this, since 2013-14, not only has the physical infrastructure been invested in, such as a causeway linking Muchelney to nearby Drayton, higher riverbanks and larger capacity pumps, but also social ties within the communities have been strengthened. Our most vulnerable coastal areas are being prepared for a 1.0m sea level rise with new and strengthened flood defences.



## RECOMMENDATION 10:

It is recommended that Somerset Council adopts a strong “health in all policies” approach to Neighbourhood Plans, the new Local Plan and Transport Plan, embedding consideration of local health needs when developing and implementing the plans, and seeking to design neighbourhoods that encourage active travel, improve health, support community resilience and reduce the risks and impact of climate change.

# Summary of Recommendations

It is recommended that Somerset Council and Integrated Care Board (respectively):

1. Maximise opportunities to join up and integrate commissioning and delivery of supported housing and support services to better serve people with multiple complex needs.
2. Ensure the new Local Plan gives significant attention to current and future demographic trends and the related housing needs. Innovate solutions to the development of more one and two bedroom homes, affordable homes, housing stability and homes built to accommodate future health needs are required;
3. That the Council and Integrated Care Board prioritise collaborative work to address the needs of people who experience multiple disadvantage.
4. It is recommended that the Integrated Care Board continues to develop the Inclusion Health Service and develops an overarching Somerset Inclusive Health Strategy.
5. It is recommended that Somerset Integrated Care System adopt a collaborative approach to reducing injuries and falls overall and in the home, including continuing to provide support for retrofit interventions and housing adaptations that enable people to live safely in their homes

6. Maintain support for approaches such as Personalised Care that seek to wrap individualised support around a person in their current place of residence to reduce the risk of needs escalating.
7. That a communications plan is developed to raise awareness among the public of the need to plan ahead for ageing in their home or moving to a more suitable home when the time is right, to reduce the number of people in homes in Somerset that are difficult to live in into old age.
8. That the council commits to, and supports, the development of the Public Health Ambassador Programme;
9. That the council embeds the HDRC and its principles into the new Target Operating Model for the Council going forwards.
10. It is recommended that Somerset Council adopts a strong “health in all policies” approach to Neighbourhood Plans, the new Local Plan and Transport Plan, embedding consideration of local health needs when developing and implementing the plans, and seeking to design neighbourhoods that improve health, support community resilience and reduce the risks and impact of climate change.

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## Decision Report - Executive Decision

Forward Plan Reference: FP/23/09/12

Decision Date – 6 March 2024

Key Decision – No



## 2023/24 Budget Monitoring Report – Month 10 – End of January 2024

Executive Member(s): Cllr Liz Leyshon Deputy Leader of the Council and Lead Member on Resources and Performance

Local Member(s) and Division: All

Author: Nicola Hix, Director of Finance & Procurement

Contact Details: nicola.hix@somerset.gov.uk

### Summary

1. This is the General Fund revenue monthly budget monitoring report for the end of January 2024, (month 10). The last report the Executive received was the quarter three (month 9), as at the end of December 2023, which forecast a net overspend of £17.5m.
2. The Council is now projecting an overspend of £16.3m for 2023/24, which equates to 3.0% of the net budget for the year. This is a small improvement of £1.2m from the previous forecast overspend.
3. The forecast overspend for the year remains driven by Adults Services and Childrens Services which are both forecasting overspends of £14.9m. Together these total £29.8m and mask that the rest of the council is forecast to be £13.5m underspent.

**Table 1: 2023/24 Budget Monitoring Report Overview of Movement in Forecast Outturn Position**

Service Area	Month 3	Month 4	Month 5	Month 6	Month 7	Month 9	Month 10	Movement
	Variance	Variance	Variance	Variance	Variance	Variance	Variance	
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Adult Services	12.1	12.1	14.9	14.9	14.9	14.9	14.9	0.0
Children, Families & Education Services	8.8	8.8	11.8	12.4	13.9	15.3	14.9	(0.4)
Remaining Services	7.7	5.2	0.6	(8.6)	(10.5)	(12.7)	(13.5)	(0.8)
<b>Total Position</b>	<b>28.6</b>	<b>26.1</b>	<b>27.3</b>	<b>18.7</b>	<b>18.3</b>	<b>17.5</b>	<b>16.3</b>	<b>(1.2)</b>

4. The Adult Services projected overspend has remained the same as reported in Month 9 due to the mitigations the service has in place to reduce it down from the potential adverse variance of £24.2m, as detailed in Appendix 1.
5. In month nine, the Council reported an unfavourable variance within Children, Families & Education Services of £15.3m which predominantly related to external placements, fieldwork (support for children at home) and special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) transport budgets. Although this remains the case, there has been a small favourable movement of £0.4m since month nine.
6. The remainder of the Council continues to forecast an underspend of £13.5m, which is an improvement of £0.8m since month nine. Although this forecast underspend includes some one-off incomes for the Council, such as increased Treasury Management Income and Connecting Devon and Somerset funding repaid. We are also seeing the impact of the services responding to the financial emergency and making savings/cutting expenditure as much as possible.
7. The Council continues to have its control boards in place, and the monitoring and outcomes of these boards are included in our quarterly monitoring reports to Executive. However, the main achievement of the boards can be seen in the reduction of the forecast overspend each month. Having these control boards in place has encouraged the whole organisation to think differently, especially knowing that Officers on the boards will challenge and scrutinise from a non-service perspective.
8. **Table 2** provides a summary of budget, projections, and variances on a service-by-service basis as at the end of January 2024. This table has been updated to breakdown the budget into expenditure and income to show the net budget for each service.

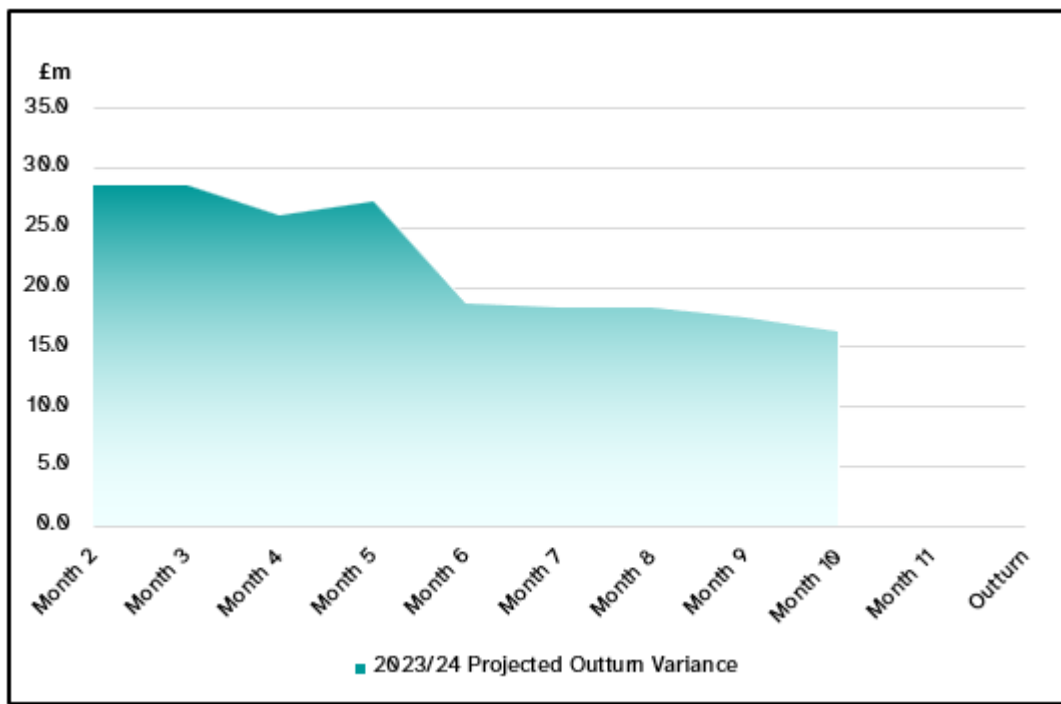
**Table 2: 2023/24 Budget Monitoring Report as at the end of January 2024  
(Month 10)**

Service Area	Original Budget £m	Current Expenditure Budget £m	Current Income Budget £m	Current Net Budget £m	Full Year Projection £m	Month 10 Variance £m	A/(F)	RAG Status	Movement From Month 9 £m
<b>Adult Services</b>									
Adult Social Care Operations:									
Physical Disability/Sensory Loss/65 Plus	111.9	140.8	(26.6)	114.2	119.5	5.3	A	Red	0.0
Mental Health	26.5	28.3	(4.6)	23.7	24.7	1.0	A	Red	0.0
Learning Disabilities	110.4	116.7	(6.9)	109.8	117.3	7.5	A	Red	0.0
Adult Social Care Commissioning	(62.2)	8.7	(75.1)	(66.4)	(65.3)	1.1	A	Red	0.0
<b>Adult Services Total</b>	<b>186.6</b>	<b>294.5</b>	<b>(113.2)</b>	<b>181.3</b>	<b>196.2</b>	<b>14.9</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>Red</b>	<b>0.0</b>
<b>Children, Families &amp; Education Services</b>									
Children & Families	81.8	95.2	(13.3)	81.9	94.7	12.8	A	Red	(0.3)
Commissioning & Performance	10.5	13.7	(3.5)	10.2	9.9	(0.3)	(F)	Green	(0.2)
Inclusion	12.6	79.8	(65.1)	14.7	16.8	2.1	A	Red	(0.1)
Education, Partnerships & Skills	17.4	29.7	(15.6)	14.1	14.6	0.5	A	Red	0.3
Childrens Services	0.7	1.1	(0.4)	0.7	0.5	(0.2)	(F)	Green	(0.1)
<b>Children, Family &amp; Education Services Total</b>	<b>123.0</b>	<b>219.5</b>	<b>(97.9)</b>	<b>121.6</b>	<b>136.5</b>	<b>14.9</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>Red</b>	<b>(0.4)</b>
<b>Community Services</b>									
Housing	5.9	10.4	(4.1)	6.3	6.6	0.3	A	Red	0.3
Customer Services	7.0	6.8	(0.7)	6.1	6.0	(0.1)	(F)	Green	(0.1)
Cultural Services	9.3	13.3	(3.9)	9.4	8.5	(0.9)	(F)	Green	(0.6)
Regulatory & Operational Services	12.4	25.8	(11.1)	14.7	14.7	0.0	-	Green	0.0
<b>Community Services Total</b>	<b>34.6</b>	<b>56.3</b>	<b>(19.8)</b>	<b>36.5</b>	<b>35.8</b>	<b>(0.7)</b>	<b>(F)</b>	<b>Green</b>	<b>(0.4)</b>
<b>Climate &amp; Place</b>									
Climate, Environment & Sustainability	54.6	63.9	(8.6)	55.3	55.3	0.0	-	Green	(0.1)
Infrastructure & Transport	22.5	47.5	(25.2)	22.3	22.6	0.3	A	Red	(0.3)
Economy, Employment & Planning	10.6	18.2	(8.3)	9.9	9.3	(0.6)	(F)	Green	0.1
Accountable Bodies	3.7	6.2	(2.8)	3.4	(3.6)	(7.0)	(F)	Green	0.0
<b>Climate &amp; Place Total</b>	<b>91.4</b>	<b>135.8</b>	<b>(44.9)</b>	<b>90.9</b>	<b>83.6</b>	<b>(7.3)</b>	<b>(F)</b>	<b>Green</b>	<b>(0.3)</b>
<b>Strategy, Workforce &amp; Localities</b>									
Partnership & Localities	0.8	3.5	(0.2)	3.3	3.3	(0.0)	(F)	Green	0.0
Strategy & Performance	3.2	8.1	(2.2)	5.9	5.3	(0.6)	(F)	Green	0.0
Workforce	6.0	10.8	(4.1)	6.7	6.0	(0.7)	(F)	Green	0.0
Governance, Democratic & Legal Services	10.2	11.4	(1.5)	9.9	11.1	1.2	A	Red	(0.2)
<b>Strategy, Workforce &amp; Localities Total</b>	<b>20.2</b>	<b>33.8</b>	<b>(8.0)</b>	<b>25.8</b>	<b>25.7</b>	<b>(0.1)</b>	<b>(F)</b>	<b>Green</b>	<b>(0.2)</b>
<b>Resources &amp; Corporate Services</b>									
Finance & Procurement	11.9	118.8	(104.1)	14.7	13.9	(0.8)	(F)	Green	0.3
Strategic Asset Management	(9.2)	19.6	(28.8)	(9.2)	(9.2)	0.0	-	Green	(0.1)
Information Communication Technology	17.8	21.0	(2.9)	18.1	16.5	(1.6)	(F)	Green	(0.2)
<b>Resources &amp; Corporate Services Total</b>	<b>20.5</b>	<b>159.4</b>	<b>(135.8)</b>	<b>23.6</b>	<b>21.2</b>	<b>(2.4)</b>	<b>(F)</b>	<b>Green</b>	<b>0.0</b>
<b>Public Health</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>23.6</b>	<b>(22.6)</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>Green</b>	<b>0.0</b>
<b>Corporate Management</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>Green</b>	<b>0.0</b>
<b>Non-Service</b>	<b>58.7</b>	<b>70.5</b>	<b>(16.4)</b>	<b>54.1</b>	<b>51.1</b>	<b>(3.0)</b>	<b>(F)</b>	<b>Green</b>	<b>0.0</b>
<b>Traded Services Total</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>(1.8)</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>Red</b>	<b>0.1</b>
<b>Total Service Position</b>	<b>536.7</b>	<b>996.3</b>	<b>(460.4)</b>	<b>535.9</b>	<b>552.7</b>	<b>16.8</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>Red</b>	<b>(1.2)</b>
Corporate Contingency	6.0	5.7	0.0	5.7	5.7	0.0	-	Green	0.0
<b>Total After Contingencies</b>	<b>542.7</b>	<b>1,002.0</b>	<b>(460.4)</b>	<b>541.6</b>	<b>558.4</b>	<b>16.8</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>Red</b>	<b>(1.2)</b>
Reserves	(19.9)	0.3	(19.9)	(19.6)	(19.6)	0.0	-	Green	0.0
Transfers to Schools	0.0	0.8	0.0	0.8	0.8	0.0	-	Green	0.0
Council Tax	(338.7)	0.0	(338.7)	(338.7)	(338.7)	0.0	-	Green	0.0
Business Rates	(122.2)	0.0	(122.2)	(122.2)	(122.2)	0.0	-	Green	0.0
Grants	(57.3)	0.0	(57.3)	(57.3)	(57.8)	(0.5)	(F)	Green	0.0
Flexible Use of Capital Receipts	(4.0)	0.0	(4.0)	(4.0)	(4.0)	0.0	-	Green	0.0
Collection Fund Surplus/Deficit	(0.6)	6.1	(6.7)	(0.6)	(0.6)	0.0	-	Green	0.0
<b>Total Position</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>1,009.2</b>	<b>(1,009.2)</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>16.3</b>	<b>16.3</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>Red</b>	<b>(1.2)</b>

9. The Finance Business Partnering team continue to work closely with directorate management teams to challenge the financial assumptions which are being forecast. Everyone continues to be fully engaged in understanding the reasons

behind the assumptions and are also working together as a team to mitigate overspends were possible.

**Chart 1** shows how the forecast outturn variance has moved month by month.



## Recommendations

10. That the Executive:

- a) Notes the forecast overspend of £16.3m (3.0%) for the year and the recovery action being taken and mitigations put in place to address this.

## Reasons for recommendations

11. To ensure that the Council continues to maintain tight financial control over its budget.

## Other options considered

12. No other options were considered as continuing to monitor the budget on a monthly basis is considered best practice.

## Links to Council Plan and Medium-Term Financial Plan

13. The 2023/24 Budget was approved by Council in February 2023 as part of the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and is the financial resourcing plan to deliver the Council Plan.

## Financial and Risk Implications

14. There are two relevant Strategic Risk which are ORG0070 Budget Overspend in the current financial year and ORG0057 Sustainable Medium Term Financial Plan. For both of these risks the current scores are:

<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Risk Score</b>	<b>25</b>
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15. The financial impact of an overspend of £16.3m in the current financial year would result in a reduction in the level of General Reserves from £49.8m to £33.5m. This remains above the £30m minimum risk-based assessment of the reserves approved by Council in February 2023.
16. The variances causing the net overspend are a mixture of on-going and once-off items. The on-going items will have a financial impact upon 2024/25 if they are not addressed.

## Legal Implications

17. There are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

## HR Implications

18. There are no specific HR implications arising from this report.

## Other Implications:

## Equalities Implications

19. There are no specific equalities implications arising from this report.

## Community Safety Implications

20. There are no community safety implications arising from this report.

### **Climate Change and Sustainability Implications**

21. There are no climate change and sustainability implications arising from this report.

### **Health and Safety Implications**

22. There are no health and safety implications arising from this report.

### **Health and Wellbeing Implications**

23. There are no health and wellbeing implications arising from this report.

### **Social Value**

24. There are no Social Value implications arising from this report.

### **Scrutiny comments/recommendations:**

25. This report will be presented to the Scrutiny for Corporate & Resources Committee, on 7 March 2024. As this is after the Executive meeting (6 March 2024), any comments will be taken to the next Executive meeting, being held on 8 April 2024.

### **Background**

26. Full Council approved the 2023/24 Budget in February 2023, the first budget for Somerset Council. Budget monitoring is delegated to Executive and Scrutiny, with revenue service reports presented monthly and a full overview of revenue, capital, and reserves quarterly. This report outlines the forecast year-end position of services against the 2023/24 budget of £541.6m as at the end of January 2024.
27. **Table 2** (section 8) provides a summary of each service budget, with projections and variances for the year shown against these. Further details and mitigations being taken by the responsible director are outlined in appendices 1 to 8. The significant variances at month ten are:
  - Adult Services have a £14.9m adverse variance against their budget (8.2% of service budget). This variance is mainly in the Adult Social Care and Learning Disabilities budget areas due to an increase in fee levels for both care home placements and delivery of home care.

- Children, Families & Education Services have a £14.9m adverse variance against their budget (12.3% of service budget), a favourable movement of £0.4m from month nine. The overall variance predominantly relates to external placements, fieldwork (support for children at home), and SEND transport budgets.
- Community Services have a £0.7m favourable variance against a budget of £36.3m (1.9% of Service budget). The underspend mostly relates to the Theatres budget which is due to additional income from ticket sales and underspends on premises budgets.
- Climate & Place (including Accountable Bodies) has a favourable variance of £7.3m against their budget of £90.9m (8.0% of service budget). This is an improvement of £0.3m since month nine. The underspend mainly relates to income received via Connecting Devon and Somerset.
- Strategy, Workforce & Localities have a £0.1m favourable variance (0.4% of service budget). There are some overspends within the service which mostly relate to external legal costs where specific expertise is required. These overspends are offset by vacancies and reducing Learning and Development costs by focusing on e-learning, statutory and mandatory training.
- Resources & Corporate Services have a £2.4m favourable variance (10.2% of service budget). Most of the favourable variance is seen in the Finance & Procurement budget and the Information Communication Technology budget and relates to the holding of vacant posts and additional grant income.
- Non-Service has a favourable variance of £3.0m due to once-off, in-year favourable treasury management activities, together with careful management of the Council's cashflow, which has at times seen higher than anticipated cashflow levels.

## **2023/24 Budget & Forecast Outturn Position**

28. The 2023/24 budget was put together using the information from the five predecessor councils before the full officer structure was finalised. Each council recorded things in different ways, therefore there is still some alignment of budgets to take place which will require budget virements. Service Directors are

currently developing their service structures which will require further adjustments to the budget in order to reflect the new staffing establishment.

29. After accounting for all service expenditure and contingencies the projected outturn position at month ten is £558.4m against a net current budget of £541.6m. This gives a £16.3m adverse variance which represents a variance of 3.0%.
30. With the financial challenges outlined in this paper the Council needs to move at pace to deal with the difficult financial situation that the council now faces. Further information for each service is shown in appendices 1 to 8, along with details on movements, actions to be taken, future risks and opportunities.

### **Background Papers**

31. 2024/25 General Fund Revenue Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan & Council Tax Setting report to Council February 2024
32. Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2024/25 to 2026/27 report to Corporate & Resources Scrutiny & Executive July 2023
33. 2023/24 Budget, Medium-Term Financial Plan & Council Tax Setting report to Council February 2023
34. Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2024/25 to 2026/27 report to Corporate & Resources Scrutiny & Executive November 2023
35. 2024/25 General Fund Revenue Budget & Capital Programme update report to Corporate & Resources Scrutiny & Executive
36. 2024/25 General Fund Revenue Budget update report to Executive January 2024
37. 2024/25 General Fund Revenue Budget update report to Executive February 2024
38. 2024/25 Budget, Medium-Term Financial Plan & Council Tax Setting report to Council February 2024



## **Appendices**

Appendix 1: Adult Services

Appendix 2: Children, Families & Education Services

Appendix 3: Community Services

Appendix 4: Climate & Place (including Accountable Bodies)

Appendix 5: Strategy, Workforce & Localities

Appendix 6: Resources & Corporate Services

Appendix 7: Public Health

Appendix 8: Other service areas

## Report Sign-Off

	<b>Officer Name</b>	<b>Date Completed</b>
Legal & Governance Implications	David Clark	26/02/2024
Communications	Peter Elliot	26/02/2024
Finance & Procurement	Nicola Hix	22/02/2024
Workforce	Dawn Bettridge	26/02/2024
Asset Management	Oliver Woodhams	26/02/2024
Executive Director / Senior Manager	Jason Vaughan	22/02/2024
Strategy & Performance	Sara Cretney	26/02/2024
Executive Lead Member	Cllr Liz Leyshon	26/02/2024
Consulted:		
Local Division Members	All	
Opposition Spokesperson	Cllr Mandy Chilcott Deputy Leader of the Opposition and Opposition Spokesperson for Resources and Performance	Sent: 27/02/2024
Scrutiny Chair	Cllr Bob Filmer, Chair - Scrutiny Corporate & Resources Committee	Sent: 27/02/2024

## Appendix 1 – Adult Services

Lead Member for Adult Services: Cllr Sarah Wakefield

Executive Director: Mel Lock

Service Directors

- Adult Social Care Operations: Emily Fulbrook
- Adult Social Care Commissioning: Paul Coles
- Adult Social Care Transformation: Niki Shaw

**Table 1: Adult Services as at the end of January 2024 (Month 10)**

- 2023/24 net budget £181.3m, projected adverse variance £14.9m, no movement from month nine.
- 2022/23 net budget £160.7m, outturn adverse variance £15.4m

Service Area	Current Expenditure Budget £m	Current Income Budget £m	Current Net Budget £m	Full Year Projection £m	Month 10 Variance £m	A/(F)	RAG Status	Movement From Month 9 £m
<b>Adult Social Care Operations</b>								
<b>Physical Disability/Sensory Loss/65 Plus</b>								
PD/SL/65P Residential & Nursing	76.5	(18.5)	58.0	58.9	0.9	A	Red	0.0
Home Care	30.5	(2.3)	28.2	31.0	2.8	A	Red	0.0
Direct Payments	14.8	(2.3)	12.5	14.2	1.7	A	Red	0.0
Staffing Costs	14.3	(1.9)	12.4	11.4	(1.0)	(F)	Green	0.0
Transport, Daycare & Other	4.7	(1.6)	3.1	4.0	0.9	A	Red	0.0
<b>sub total</b>	<b>140.8</b>	<b>(26.6)</b>	<b>114.2</b>	<b>119.5</b>	<b>5.3</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>Red</b>	<b>0.0</b>
<b>Mental Health</b>								
MH Residential & Nursing	17.2	(2.5)	14.7	14.6	(0.1)	(F)	Green	0.0
Home Care/Supported Living	7.7	(2.0)	5.7	6.9	1.2	A	Red	0.0
Staffing/Deprivation of Liberty, Safeguards	1.5	0.0	1.5	1.5	0.0	-	Green	0.0
Direct Payments, Day Care & Transport	1.9	(0.1)	1.8	1.7	(0.1)	(F)	Green	0.0
<b>sub total</b>	<b>28.3</b>	<b>(4.6)</b>	<b>23.7</b>	<b>24.7</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>Red</b>	<b>0.0</b>
<b>Learning Disabilities</b>								
LD Residential & Nursing	25.4	(1.6)	23.8	25.3	1.5	A	Red	0.0
Supported Living/Home Care	34.9	(1.3)	33.6	38.4	4.8	A	Red	0.0
Direct Payments/In Control	12.7	(2.0)	10.7	9.7	(1.0)	(F)	Green	0.0
Day Care	6.4	0.0	6.4	6.9	0.5	A	Red	0.0
Discovery	31.6	(1.1)	30.5	30.9	0.4	A	Red	0.0
Transport, Shared Lives & Other	3.3	(0.9)	2.4	2.6	0.2	A	Red	0.0
Central & Salaries	2.4	0.0	2.4	3.5	1.1	A	Red	0.0
<b>sub total</b>	<b>116.7</b>	<b>(6.9)</b>	<b>109.8</b>	<b>117.3</b>	<b>7.5</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>Red</b>	<b>0.0</b>
<b>Adult Social Care Commissioning</b>								
Commissioning	8.7	(75.1)	(66.4)	(65.3)	1.1	A	Red	0.0
<b>sub total</b>	<b>8.7</b>	<b>(75.1)</b>	<b>(66.4)</b>	<b>(65.3)</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>Red</b>	<b>0.0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>294.5</b>	<b>(113.2)</b>	<b>181.3</b>	<b>196.2</b>	<b>14.9</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>Red</b>	<b>0.0</b>

### Adult Services - key explanations, actions & mitigating controls

Adult Services overspend is £24.2m due to increase in both fee levels for care home placements and delivery of home care, offset by a number of in year mitigations to reduce it to £14.9m. Additional costs within the intermediate care model have been

identified and discussions are being held with Integrated Care Board. These costs mainly relate to pathway beds which are used to support discharges from acute hospitals.

Since 2020/21 we have seen an increase of 41% in residential placements costs and this significant increase can be seen across all care home placement types. In October 2022, the unmet needs list was around 150 people waiting for homecare, the number current waiting for over 7 days is zero, this increased in delivery is now showing as a full year effect in the table above.

To offset the overspend a number of in year mitigations and funding have been identified including the market sustainability funding - workforce grant of £3.8m, in year mitigations of £3m including reviewing all 1:1 with a view to reducing hours required and £2.5m NHS monies.

#### Adult Social Care - Physical Disability/Sensory Loss/65 Plus

This area of Adult Services is currently projecting to be £5.3m overspent. As in previous years, we continue to see pressure within residential and nursing placements, with pressure on the weekly costs, as well as the number of people receiving support. Historically the authority has paid low fee rates within this sector. The increase in fee levels for 23/24 are still not stabilising the market, due to the increase in inflation and cost of living.

There continue to be a number of interim placements as the service works with the NHS trusts to ensure a timely discharge for people from hospital. These placements are currently projected to cost £1.8m.

We continue to deliver more homecare, to allow people to remain in their own homes for as long as possible to help reduce the overreliance on beds, as well as it being the best place for them. This has led to reported overspends of £2.8m for home care. As we continue to offer choice and have a varied market that includes micro-providers, we have seen an increase in the use of direct payments, resulting in a projected overspend of £1.7m.

#### Mental Health

This budget includes individuals who have a diagnosis of dementia. The budget continues to be an area of growth for the past few years, and this has continued in 2023/24. We are currently projecting an overspend of £1m mainly within home care

and supported living. Residential and nursing continues to be a pressure for the service due to a combination of increasing numbers and high unit costs.

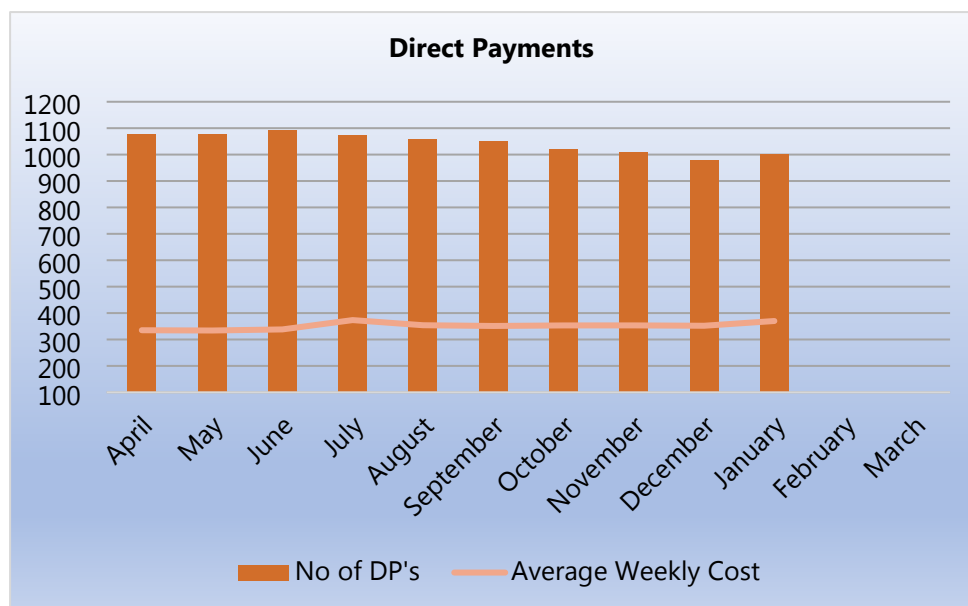
### Learning Disabilities

Overall, the cost of Learning Disabilities is projected to overspend by £7.5m. Since 2022/23 outturn we have seen a number of high costs placements come through, either via transitions or due to other forms of funding ending. The main pressure areas continue to be residential and nursing £1.5m, supported living and homecare £4.8m and day care £0.5m due to market sustainability. Supported Living is in the best interest of people but is an area where unit costs can be high.

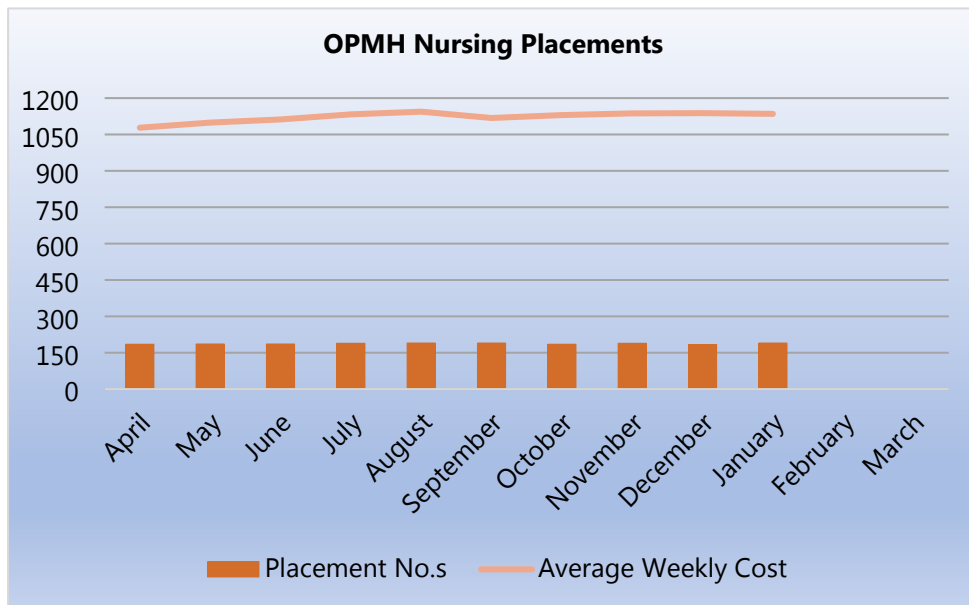
### Commissioning

Commissioning is currently projecting to overspend by £1.1m, as the Adult Services' transformation 'my life, my future' will not achieve the full £5m saving relating to this financial year.

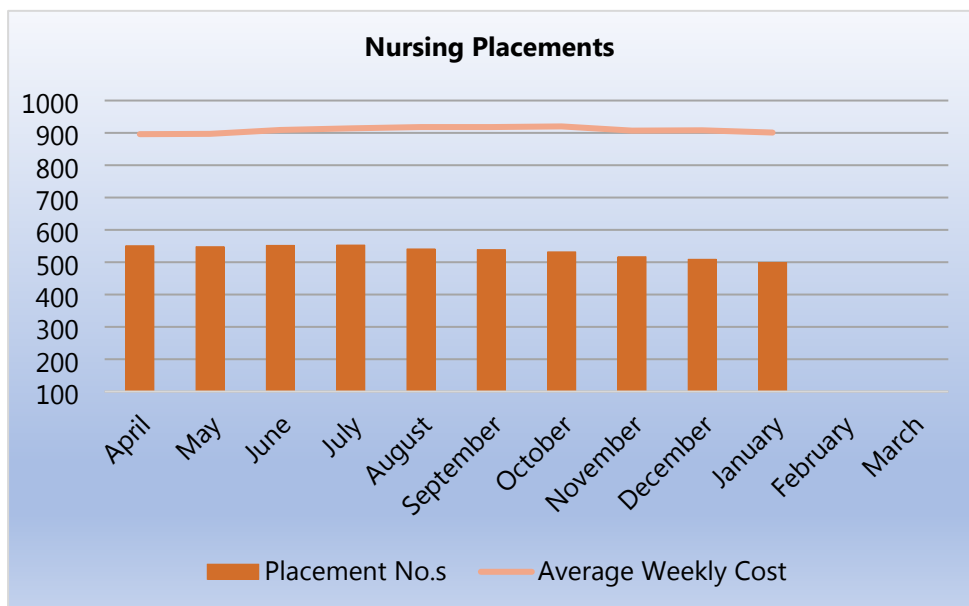
### **Adult Services - key performance cost drivers**



Since the beginning of the financial year, we have seen the number of people receiving a Direct Payment within ASC decrease from 1,077 to 1011 packages. The current weekly average cost of an ASC Direct Payment is £370 per package.



The number of Older People Mental Health (OPMH) Nursing placements has slightly increased from 185 to 190 placements since April. The current weekly average cost for OPMH Nursing is £1,135 per placement.



Nursing placements decreased by fifty-two since April from 551 to 499. The current weekly average cost for Nursing is £901 per placement.

**Adult Services - key risks, future issues & opportunities**

90% of the ASC budget is spent on individual placements purchased through the market via block and spot placements. Therefore, there is a significant risk that this

budget will continue to overspend. This is due to increased demand, the cost-of-living rise, particularly the increases in petrol, gas, electric, and food.

We have a number of mitigations that are reflected in the financial position above:

- Enhanced Peer Forum – Robust financial and operating challenge
- Reviewing Interim Placements – This review will identify those who should be self-funding/contributing towards their long-term care.
- My life, my future – reduce the overreliance on bed placements and redesign the reablement service.
- Review all high cost/complex placements.
- Review void costs.

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## **Appendix 2 – Children, Families & Education Services**

### **Children & Family Services**

Lead Member for Children, Families and Education: Cllr Heather Shearer

Executive Director: Claire Winter

Service Directors:

- Children and Families: Jayne Shelbourn-Barrow
- Commissioning and Performance: Richard Selwyn
- Inclusion: Rob Hart
- Education, Partnerships and Skills: Amelia Walker

### **Table 1: 2023/24 Children & Family Services as at the end of January 2024 (Month 10)**

- 2023/24 net budget £121.6m, projected adverse variance £14.9m, favourable movement £0.4m from month nine.
- 2022/23 net budget £107.1m, outturn adverse variance £21.2m

Service Area	Current Expenditure Budget	Current Income Budget	Current Net Budget	Full Year Projection	Month 10 Variance	A/(F)	RAG Status	Movement From Month 9
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m			£m
<b>Children &amp; Families</b>								
Prevention Services	6.8	(1.1)	5.7	5.6	(0.1)	(F)	Green	(0.0)
Fostering & Permanence	13.3	0.0	13.3	12.9	(0.4)	(F)	Green	0.3
External Placements	49.6	(11.3)	38.3	49.3	11.0	A	Red	0.1
Fieldwork	9.1	0.0	9.1	9.9	0.8	A	Red	(0.5)
Disabilities	7.1	(0.3)	6.8	6.2	(0.6)	(F)	Green	0.0
Partnership, Audit & Quality	3.0	(0.3)	2.7	2.6	(0.1)	(F)	Green	0.0
Children Looked After	4.7	0.0	4.7	4.9	0.2	A	Red	(0.1)
Leaving Care	2.5	(0.3)	2.2	2.4	0.2	A	Red	(0.1)
CSC Management	(0.9)	0.0	(0.9)	0.9	1.8	A	Red	0.0
C&F Apportionments	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-	Green	0.0
<b>sub total</b>	<b>95.2</b>	<b>(13.3)</b>	<b>81.9</b>	<b>94.7</b>	<b>12.8</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>Red</b>	<b>(0.3)</b>
<b>Commissioning &amp; Performance</b>								
C&P Commissioning	4.9	(3.3)	1.6	1.5	(0.1)	(F)	Green	(0.1)
Performance & Transformation	4.5	(0.1)	4.4	4.2	(0.2)	(F)	Green	(0.1)
Business Support	4.3	(0.1)	4.2	4.2	0.0	-	Green	0.0
Children, Families & Education Team	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-	Green	0.0
Early Help Services	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-	Green	0.0
<b>sub total</b>	<b>13.7</b>	<b>(3.5)</b>	<b>10.2</b>	<b>9.9</b>	<b>(0.3)</b>	<b>(F)</b>	<b>Green</b>	<b>(0.2)</b>
<b>Inclusion</b>								
Special Educational Needs & Disabilities	59.3	(56.7)	2.6	2.7	0.1	A	Red	0.0
Vulnerable Learners	4.6	(4.4)	0.2	0.3	0.1	A	Red	0.1
Educational Psychology	3.3	(1.3)	2.0	2.1	0.1	A	Red	0.1
Inclusion Transformation & Partnerships	1.0	(0.7)	0.3	0.4	0.1	A	Red	0.0
SEND Transport	10.2	(0.7)	9.5	11.2	1.7	A	Red	(0.3)
Inclusion Strategic Management	1.4	(1.3)	0.1	0.1	0.0	-	Green	0.0
<b>sub total</b>	<b>79.8</b>	<b>(65.1)</b>	<b>14.7</b>	<b>16.8</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>Red</b>	<b>(0.1)</b>
<b>Education, Partnerships &amp; Skills</b>								
Education Leadership	2.7	(2.6)	0.1	0.0	(0.1)	(F)	Green	0.3
Education Operations	6.1	(6.2)	(0.1)	(0.4)	(0.3)	(F)	Green	(0.1)
Curriculum & Literacy	3.2	(3.3)	(0.1)	0.2	0.3	A	Red	0.0
Education Places	2.1	(1.5)	0.6	0.6	0.0	-	Green	0.0
Home to School Transport	14.4	(1.5)	12.9	12.9	0.0	-	Green	0.1
EPS Management	1.2	(0.5)	0.7	1.3	0.6	A	Red	0.0
<b>sub total</b>	<b>29.7</b>	<b>(15.6)</b>	<b>14.1</b>	<b>14.6</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>Red</b>	<b>0.3</b>
<b>Childrens Services</b>								
Childrens Directorate	1.1	(0.4)	0.7	0.5	(0.2)	(F)	Green	(0.1)
<b>sub total</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>(0.4)</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>(0.2)</b>	<b>(F)</b>	<b>Green</b>	<b>(0.1)</b>
<b>Children, Families &amp; Education Services</b>	<b>219.5</b>	<b>(97.9)</b>	<b>121.6</b>	<b>136.5</b>	<b>14.9</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>Red</b>	<b>(0.4)</b>

## Children & Family Services - key explanations, actions, and mitigating controls

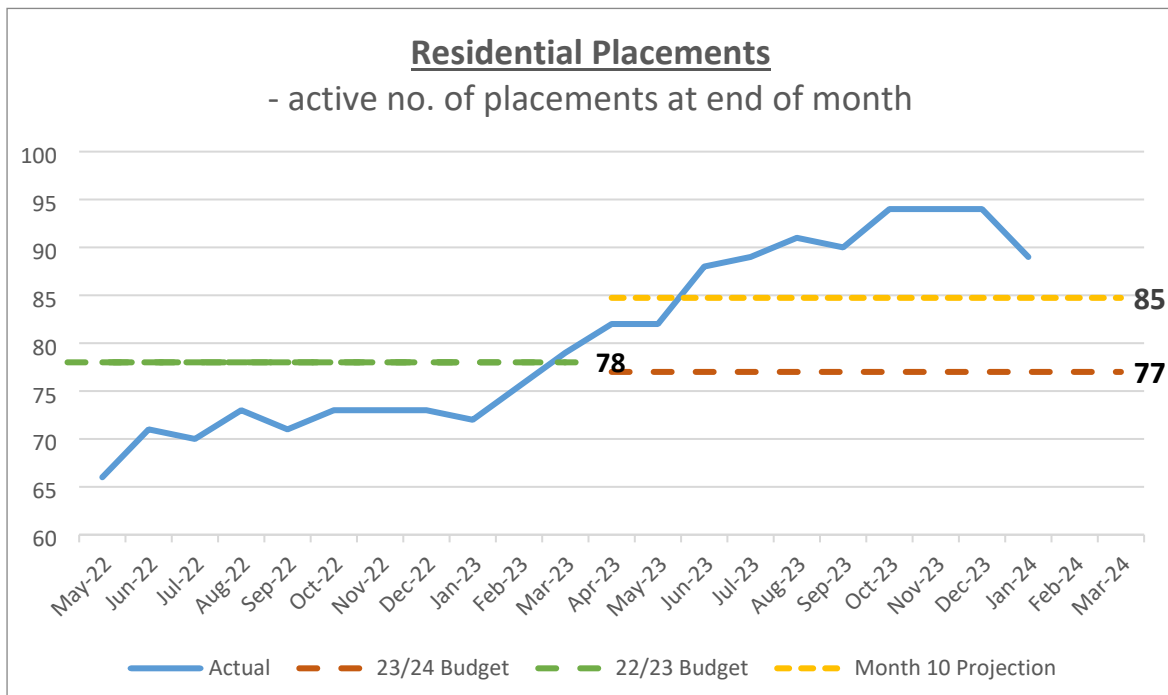
### External Placements

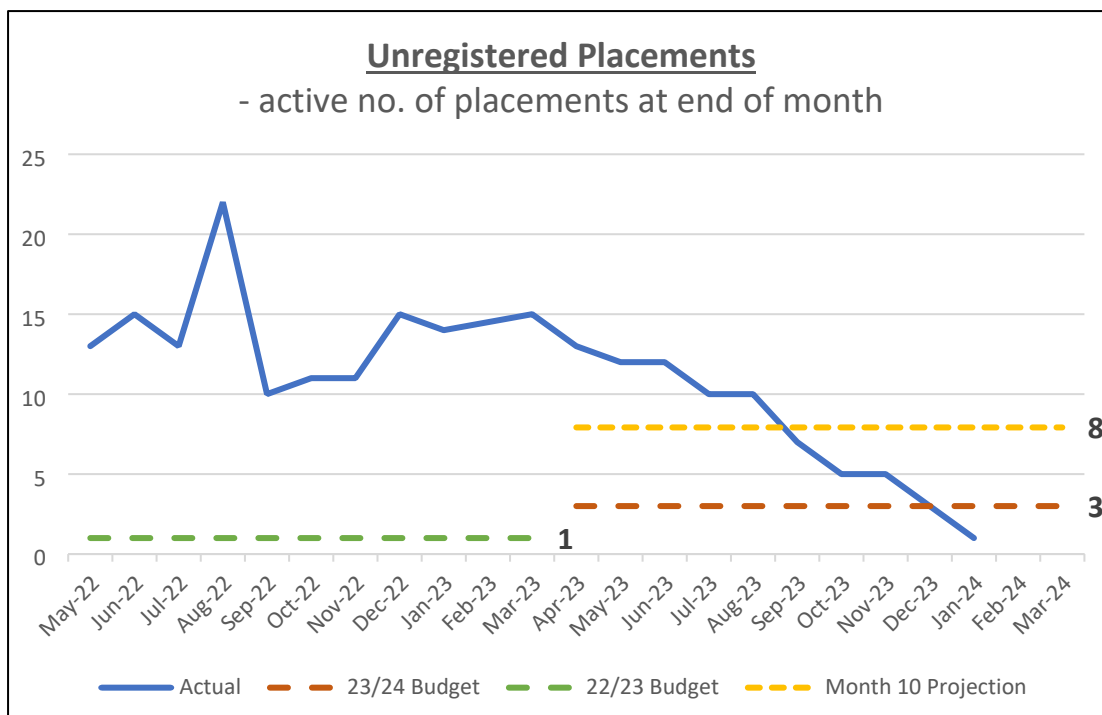
The table below provides a breakdown of the external placements budget by placement type.

The external placements budget is forecasting a total overspend of £11m an increase from month 9 of £0.1m. Of this overall variance, the unregistered placement overspend is £4m and the residential overspend is £4.3m (net of DSG Grant income).

External Placements	23/24	Full Year	Overall
	Budget	Projection	Variance
	£m	£m	£m
Residential Placements	24.6	29.7	5.1
Independent Fostering Agencies	8.2	7.5	(0.7)
16+ Supported Accommodation	5.7	7.4	1.7
Homes & Horizons	4.1	3.5	(0.5)
Unregistered Placements	3.7	7.7	4.0
UASC Placements	1.9	2.8	0.9
Residential Parent & Child	1.1	1.0	(0.1)
Secure	0.9	1.4	0.5
Other	1.3	2.7	1.4
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>51.4</b>	<b>63.6</b>	<b>12.2</b>
DSG Grant	(5.1)	(6.0)	(0.8)
UASC Grant	(2.4)	(2.8)	(0.4)
NHS Funding	(5.3)	(5.3)	0.0
Other	(0.2)	(0.2)	(0.1)
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>(13.1)</b>	<b>(14.3)</b>	<b>(1.2)</b>
<b>Net Expenditure</b>	<b>38.4</b>	<b>49.4</b>	<b>11.0</b>

The graphs below show the trend in the numbers of residential and unregistered placements over the past 2 years.





The service has been able to move children from out of unregistered placements, however, due to complexity of their need, these children have moved to residential care placements, which although less expensive than unregistered placements have increased the pressure on residential care budgets. As at the end of January, there is one unregistered placement.

### **Fieldwork (Support for Children at Home)**

In emergencies and when ordered to do so by the court, the service has provided 24/7 supervision of families in their own home. This is an expensive and usually externalised service. We are challenging the validity of this expenditure in the High Court.

The high number of 24/7 support at home packages has resulted in an overspend against the Fieldwork (section 17) budget of £0.8m This pressure has been mitigated by £0.4m of Household Support Fund in month 10.

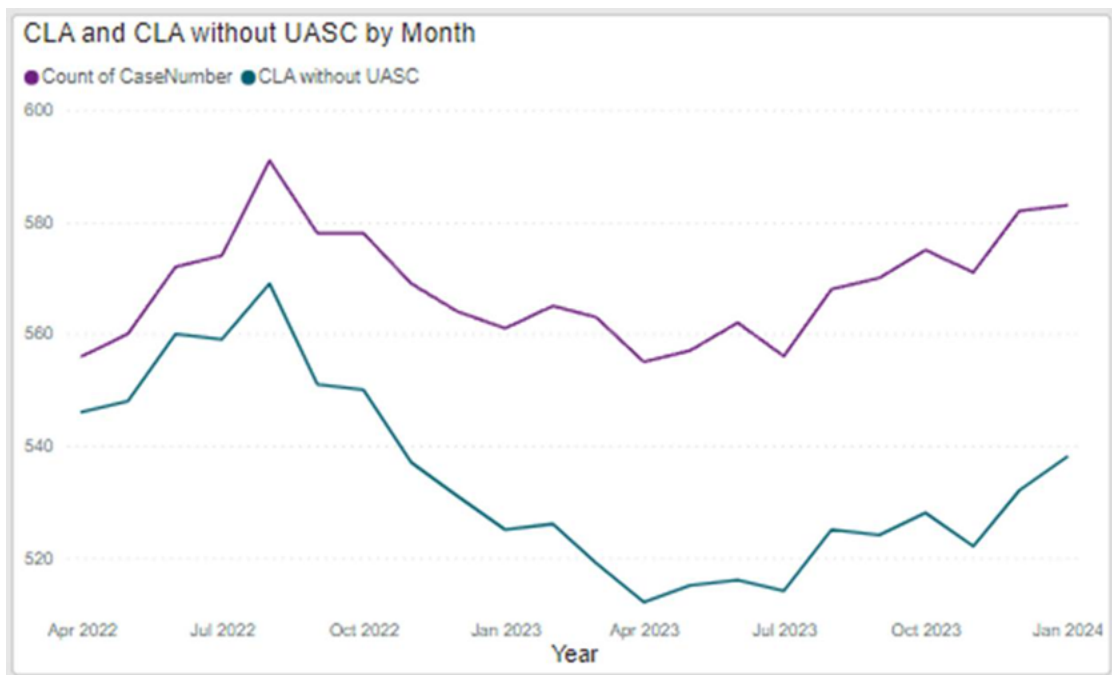
### **CSC Management**

IMPOWER were engaged and reported in February 2023 to undertake a rapid financial diagnostic of Children's Social Care Services with the aim of identifying and quantifying opportunities for sustainable cost savings over and above those already identified by the Council. These fees are resulting in a pressure in this area of £0.6m.

The Impower report identified potential savings including delivery of approximately six to eight step downs from residential to in house fostering over the next three years, however no portion of these savings will be delivered in 2023/24 resulting in a pressure of £1m. In-house foster placements have increased by two on average for the financial year which would result in a saving of £0.6m if those young people were to have gone into residential care however the overall pressure in residential external placements eliminates any potential savings.

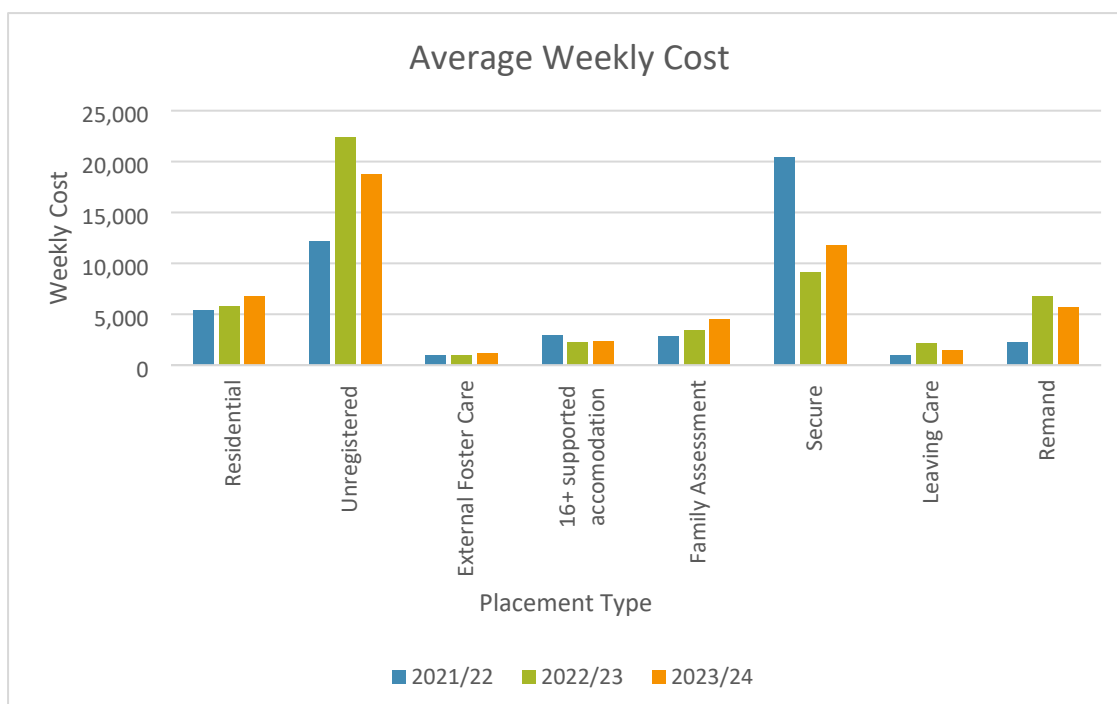
**Children & Family Services – key performance cost drivers**

**Increase in numbers of children in care** - The number of children in care has increased by approximately 30 since July 2023. This largely relates to sibling groups where a non-accidental injury has occurred with the majority of these children being placed in foster care during court proceedings. There is also a steady although small increase in the number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) living in the county as part of the mandatory national transfer scheme.



**Increasing costs for children in care**

The average weekly cost of unregistered placements continues to reduce and is now £18.7k, a 11% reduction on last year’s average weekly cost. The average weekly cost of residential placements has increased by 15% from last year.



## Children & Family Services - key risks, future issues, and opportunities

**Children’s Social Care** A County Council Network and Society of County Treasurers report published on the 31 October 23 identified that, despite an increase in children service’s budgets, county and large unitary authorities are predicting significant overspends in 23/24 in this area, due to rising demand and high care placement costs in a broken market.

As outlined above, there is significant increase in demand in Somerset particularly for placements for complex teenagers at high cost. An insufficiency of fostering provision compounds this as it does in many other local authorities nationally.

In parallel, there is a risk that the cost-of-living crisis and reducing budgets in partner organisations will have a significant impact on demand in children’s social care including the number of children requiring support, and therefore the cost of services. Demand is already rising and has been doing so since the beginning of the pandemic. This is not levelling out.

## Education Partnership and Skills (EPS)

Somerset schools are significantly underperforming, and the Council initiated a five-year strategy in April 2023 to improve educational outcomes. The EPS service delivers

a £12m trading account and in past years has delivered a healthy return, which has previously been used to generate a trading reserve. Two years of steep inflation and below inflation increases to school budgets have put unprecedented pressure on the trading account. While many businesses trading with schools have responded with significant charging increases, the council has rightly focused on balancing the viability of its own services with avoiding undue pressures on schools.

As of month nine, the EPS service is forecasting to be overspent by £0.5m by the year end (month 9, £0.2m overspent). Most of the £0.3m movement from month nine relates to additional expenditure on unbudgeted Soulbury Scale pay rises for 2023/24. The budgetary impact of this overspend will be mitigated at year end by the EPS trading reserve (£0.3m). There is also further income anticipated due to an agreement with LA maintained schools to allocate interest from school balances to the LA budget to reduce the cost of the 23/24 Core Offer to schools. The precise impact of this income won't be known until year end but in 22/23 was £0.2m.

### **Home to Schools Transport for Mainstream and SEN**

There is a favourable movement in Transport of £0.3m as we had not previously included a forecast for income from selling seats on our SEND buses. At month 10 the full year SEND transport overspend is projected to be £1.7m.

### **Opportunities**

Our transformation programme includes the following, which taken together change the model of children's services in Somerset to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of how we use our limited resources. The transformation programme is drawing in a wide all-age partnership across health, care, and education, including:

- **Sufficiency strategy including edge of care** – describing emerging needs and response. The strategy will inform a children looked after transformation plan, overseen by the new CLA Outcomes Transformation Board.
- **Homes and Horizons** – a strategic partnership with the charity, the Shaw Trust, to deliver up to ten homes for children, up to 20 foster homes and therapeutic education provision for the most complex children in our care. This aligns with the political ambition to ensure that children from Somerset in our care have a home in the county and allows us to bring children who have been placed elsewhere home to their communities.

- **Education for Life strategy** – with the ambition and confidence to improve outcomes for children in both our maintained and academised sector schools over the next five years. This is a central pillar of the Council’s work.
- **Our SEND strategy** – focussing with our partners on ensuring that our children with SEND are included with their peers in their schools and communities and well supported in all aspects of their lives. Two key elements of this that will help to address financial challenges are a focus on early identification and support to reduce demand for statutory support, and the focus on developing more inclusive mainstream education provision and specialist provision for children with social, emotional, and mental health needs.
- **Connect Somerset** – an early help partnership between the Council, the NHS, schools, the voluntary sector, and our communities, ensuring that professionals and communities work together to help families and residents to improve their lives. This work is integrated with the Neighbourhoods, Local Community Networks and Primary Care networks.



## Children, Families and Education Service– Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)

### **Dedicated Schools Grant - key explanations, actions, and mitigating controls**

The DSG is a ring-fenced grant which is allocated in four blocks:

- **Schools** funds the Individual Schools’ Budgets of Academies and Local Authority Maintained schools.
- **Early Years** funds the provision of education for children from age three up to age five and for qualifying two-year olds.
- **High Needs** funds the place budgets at special schools, Enhanced Resource schools and Pupil Referral Units within the local authority’s geographical boundary and other expenditure required to support children and young people with additional educational needs.
- **Central Schools Services** funds limited central expenditure on behalf of all schools and academies plus historic commitments that have been agreed by the Schools’ Forum

**Table 2: DSG forecast at the end of October 2023 (Month 10)**

The DSG is monitored monthly, and the table below shows the 2023/24 full year forecast as of month ten, with a comparative position showing the movement to month nine.

Movement from Prior month	Current budget	Full year projection	Month 10 Variance	RAG Status	Movement from prior month
Schools	2.5	2.9	0.4	Red	-
Central Schools	5.0	5.0	-	Green	-
Early Years	31.1	31.1	-	Green	-
High Needs	73.5	88.7	15.2	Red	-
Total	112.1	127.7	15.6	Red	-

**Table 3: DSG Allocations 2023/24**

The final gross DSG funding allocation for 2023/24 amounted to £491.8m. From this final allocation, the amounts shown in the table below have been allocated to Mainstream and Special School Academies and Local Authority Maintained Schools. The amounts allocated to Academies shown below are recouped by the Department for Education prior to payment to the Local Authority. The remaining balance is the funding available for services for 2023/24. The £2.5m on the Schools Block represents the Growth Fund allocation for the year.

In year allocations	Gross DSG funding allocation			2023/24
	2023/24	Allocated to Academies	Allocated to LA Schools	Funding available for services
Schools	372.0	(245.1)	(124.4)	2.5
Central Schools	5.0	-	-	5.0
Early Years	31.1	-	-	31.1
High Needs	83.6	(9.5)	(0.7)	73.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>491.8</b>	<b>(254.6)</b>	<b>(125.1)</b>	<b>112.1</b>

**Table 4: High Needs Block budget 2023/24**

As set out in Table 2, the main risk area for the DSG Block continues to be within the High Needs Block. A detailed summary of the High Needs Block budget and the forecast position at December 2023 (month 10) is set out below:

<b>High Needs</b>	<b>Current Budget</b>	<b>Month 10 Forecast</b>	<b>Variance A/ (F)</b>	<b>Month 9 forecast</b>	<b>A/(F)</b>	<b>Change from Month 9 A/(F)</b>
INMS	20.7	24.8	4.1	24.8	A	-
Special Schools	21.9	22.1	0.2	22.1	A	-
Mainstream Schools & Academies	10.9	12.4	1.5	12.4	A	-
Pupil Referral Units & Learning Partnerships	7.9	8.4	0.5	8.4	A	-
Post 16	6.0	6.8	0.8	6.8	A	-
CLA Pre 16	5.1	6.3	1.2	6.3	A	-
SEND Advisory Services	3.6	3.6	-	3.6	F	-
ASD Bases	2.2	2.2	-	2.2	-	-
Other	2.2	2.1	(0.1)	2.1	-	-
	80.5	88.7	8.2	88.7		-
Budget in Year pressure	(5.5)	-	5.5	-	A	-
Transfer from Schools Block	(1.5)	-	1.5	-	A	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>73.5</b>	<b>88.7</b>	<b>15.2</b>	<b>88.7</b>		-

The main areas (variances over £0.5m) contributing to the adverse forecast variance of £15.6m in the High Needs Block are:

1. Planned in year budget pressure (£5.5m adverse variance, no movement from month 9)

The planned budget allocation for 2023/24 included a forecast in-year pressure on the High Needs Block of £5.5 million. Largely this is due to two related factors: year-on-year growth in the number of children and young people with an EHCP (education, health, and care plan), (93% increase from 2019 to 2022) and a lack of sufficient provision within Somerset's maintained sector for children with social, emotional, and mental health needs.

2. Contribution from Growth Fund (£1.5m adverse variance, no change from month 10)

The budgeted contribution from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block budget of £1.5m was removed in month five. This transfer has been removed because the Schools Block is now forecast to not have sufficient surplus to allow it to take place. This is due to unforeseen pressures on the Growth Fund, including the arrival of the Refugee Accommodation earlier this year.

Because it is a movement of funds between two blocks within the DSG, this transfer does not have any net effect on the overall DSG deficit.

3. Independent & Non-Maintained Schools (INMS) and Independent Post 16 Schools (£4.9m adverse variance, no movement from month 9)

The effect of the significant increase in the number and cost of new INMS placements agreed through the LA's Placement and Travel (PAT) Panel or ordered by the SEND Tribunal continued in the first six months of 2023/24. In part, this has been due to insufficient availability of maintained specialist provision for pupils with social, emotional, and mental health needs. The reduction in forecast costs relates to anticipated placement growth built into previous forecasts that is not needed.

4. Mainstream Schools & Academies (£1.5m adverse variance, no movement from month 9)

Forecast additional increases in the number, complexity, and cost of new and extended EHCPs and related costed packages were not anticipated within the budget. The service is reviewing packages to limit the overspend.

5. Children Looked After (CLA) (£1.2m adverse variance, no movement from Month 9)

The average complexity and therefore, cost of CLA placements resulting in a contribution from education has increased above the budgeted assumptions. The adverse movement as resulted from further children moving into external placements during the month requiring educational contributions.

6. Pupil Referral Units and Learning Partnerships (£0.5m adverse variance, no movement from month 9)

The HNB budget included an amount of £0.9m of income anticipated to be received from Pupil Referral Units for work with Mainstream Schools. However, there is limited capacity to undertake this work due to the high workload on school exclusions. This is expected to reduce the amount of income that can be achieved in 2023/24. The forecast has therefore been reduced to £0.4m, and this work will be monitored by the Inclusion team in the coming months.

**Schools Block monitoring**

The £0.4m adverse movement on the Schools Block represents unplanned expenditure on asylum seeking children of £0.4m. This is unchanged from Month 9.

**DSG forecast deficit on 31 March 2024**

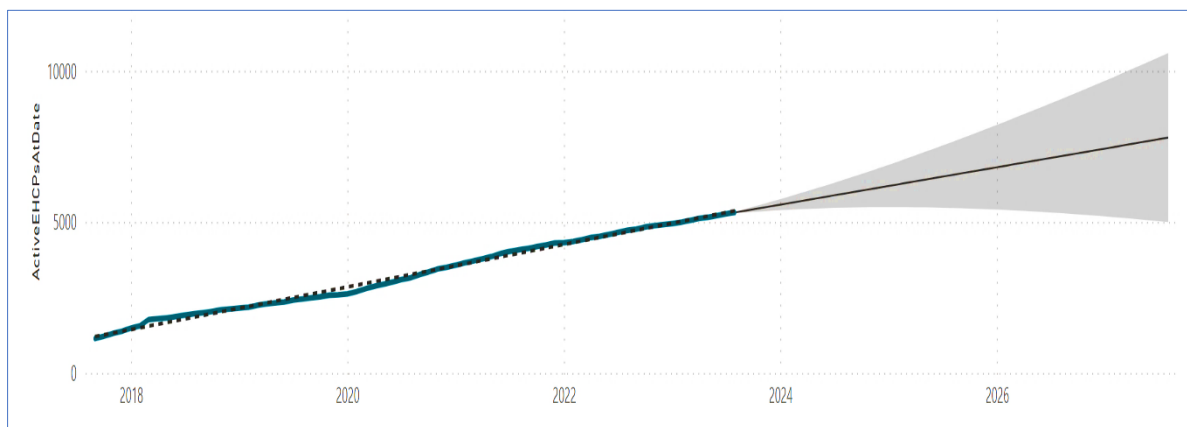
	Balance b/fwd at 1 Apr 2023 surplus/ (deficit)	NFF taken from opening reserve	Forecast in- year variance surplus/ (deficit)	Forecast carry forward 31 Mar 2024
Forecast deficit carry forward				
Schools	2.6	(1.2)	(0.4)	1.0
Central Schools	5.6	-	-	5.6
Early Years	0.9	-	-	0.9
High Needs	(29.8)	-	(15.2)	(45.0)
<b>Total</b>	<b>(20.7)</b>	<b>(1.2)</b>	<b>(15.6)</b>	<b>(37.6)</b>

The DSG is forecast to have an in-year deficit of £15.6m in 2023/24 giving a carried forward cumulative deficit of £37.6m when added to the brought forward balance of £20.7m. In order to fully adopt the National Funding Formula for Schools for 2023/24 it was agreed in January 2023 at Schools Forum that £1.2m would be drawn from the Growth Fund. The main area for concern continues to be the High Needs Block with a forecast in-year deficit of £15.2m. The Local Authority has recently submitted a refreshed deficit management plan.

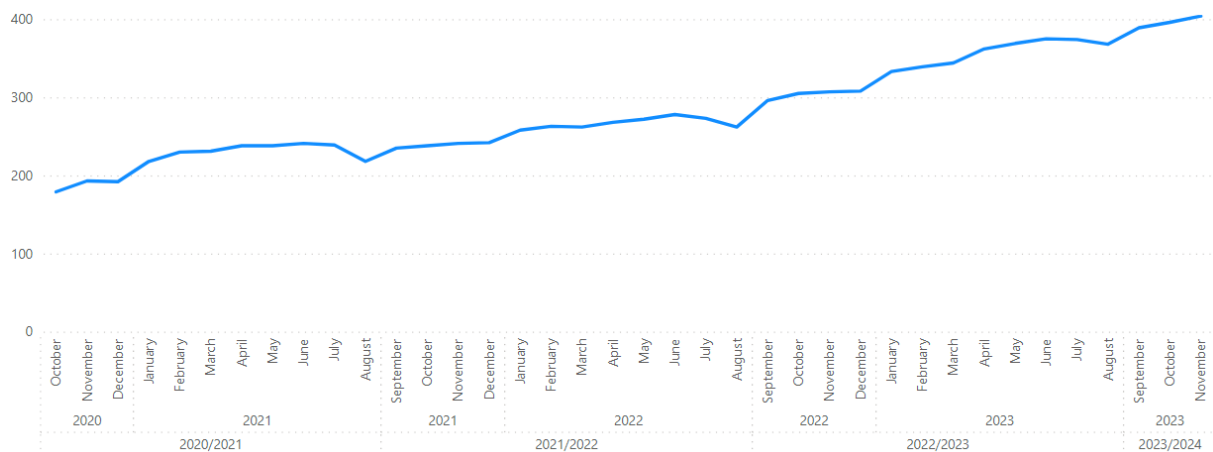
## Dedicated Schools Grant - key performance cost drivers

Since 2018, Somerset has experienced a steady growth in the number of children with Education Health & Care (EHC) plans as shown below. Previously, Somerset was an outlier, nationally, with extremely low numbers of children with EHC plans, as there was a policy of allocating high needs funding to mainstream schools to support children. This policy was changed in 2018 to ensure there was better oversight and accountability for use of high needs funding. From 2018 to 2023 there was an increase nationally in the proportion of school pupils from 2.9% to 4.3%. Somerset is now slightly above the national level at 4.6% of pupils with an EHC plan. Projections show that the numbers are expected to continue to increase in future years.

### Total Number of EHC Plans



The graph below shows the growth in the number of children (y axis) accessing independent non-maintained specialist (INMS) schools. INMS schools are significantly more costly (Approx £55k per pupil per year) than placements in either maintained specialist or mainstream schools. These placements are only made where there is no viable alternative placement available in a maintained setting, so the growth is a result of not having sufficient maintained provision in Somerset to meet the range of needs.



## Dedicated Schools Grant - key risks, future issues, and opportunities

The key issues relating to the DSG Reserves are:

1. The projected future overspends in the High Needs Block will continue to create increasing deficits within that block and hence within the overall DSG Reserves position. This is discussed further in the High Needs Block sections below.
2. The DSG had an overall cumulative deficit of £20.7m at 31 March 2023. The statutory override that allows the separation of DSG deficits from the local authority's wider finances is due to expire in March 2026 whereupon the DSG deficit will need to be recognised within the local authority's overall level of reserves.

The key risks in the High Needs Block are:

1. Increased demand for education, health, and care plans (EHCP)

The key driver for increases in high needs spending is increased demand for EHC plans. Having had one of the lowest rates of EHC plans nationally in 2018, Somerset has seen a continued increase in rates of EHC plans and the current rate of 4.6%, is now just above the national average of 4.3% (2022/23 figures). Although most children with EHC plans are educated in mainstream schools, there has been a gradual movement of children from mainstream settings into specialist settings, with demand for places exceeding the growth in the provision of specialist settings.

£10.1m of DfE capital funding was made available in 2022 allowing the development of a new phase of the capital programme, which focuses on special school satellites, enhanced learning provision across the county and new therapeutic education capacity, to enable more children to access inclusive provision close to where they live. In addition, service transformation activity linked to the national Delivering Better Value (DBV) programme focuses on improving interventions and support at an early stage to prevent the need for so many EHC plans.

## 2. Sufficiency of provision of Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) support

There is currently insufficient SEMH provision in Somerset with the only provider currently operating significantly below capacity. This has been caused by a poor Ofsted rating for this provider. In addition, the opening of a new special SEMH free school in South Somerset has been delayed from September 2022 to September 2024. These issues result in SEMH needs being met by higher cost INMS providers. In 2022 the Council successfully applied for another SEMH special free school in the Wells area, which will cater for 64 children. However, this is not expected to be delivered until 2027. These will help to address the current lack of SEMH provision.

## **Transformation, Savings, and Income Generation**

There have been two key programmes of work to address the ongoing challenges in the high needs block. The specialist capital programme began in 2019, supported by investment from the local authority, to expand and improve Somerset's specialist estate. This has resulted in an increase of 361 additional places in specialist SEND provision across the county to date. In 2022, the Council received a £10.1 million DfE high needs capital grant, which is being used to fund further increases in specialist SEND capacity, through development of special school satellites, enhanced learning provisions in mainstream settings, and therapeutic education provision. In addition, the Council has successfully bid for two new Special Free Schools, which the DfE is responsible for delivering. The first was due to open in September 2022, but has been delayed and is now expected to open in September 2024. This will ultimately provide 120 new places. The second is due to open in 2027 and will provide a further 64 places.

Since April 2022, the service has been working with IMPOWER Consulting to identify further opportunities to improve outcomes for children and reduce pressures on high needs budgets. This work has focused on improving early



identification and support and led to the set-up of a dedicated advice line for schools to support earlier intervention, as well as a trial of the Somerset Inclusion Tool (Valuing SEND) to improve planning around transitions for children with SEND. This is helping to identify children who can remain in mainstream settings with the right support, who might otherwise have moved into more specialist settings.

Following on from this, in summer 2022, Somerset was invited to participate in the DfE-led Delivering Better Value programme. This is aimed at 55 local authorities with significant high needs deficits, but not the 20 areas with the biggest deficits (who access a different “safety valve” programme). During autumn 2022 the service worked with Newton Europe and CIPFA to develop an improved understanding of our demand and financial trajectories in relation to high needs, as well as identify opportunity areas where improvements and efficiencies could be made. This has resulted in the award of a £1m grant from DfE to support transformation and test and learn activity.

Newton’s analysis has suggested that there are opportunities for reducing high needs expenditure, which could realise a £1m benefit by the end of 2024/25, and a cumulative benefit of around £8m by the end of 2027/28. However, based on Newton’s model, it is still expected that the cumulative deficit will continue to grow each year, unless there were to be significant changes to SEND policy or funding at a national level. Newton have reported that in each of the local authorities they have worked with, they are projecting that deficits will continue to grow, so Somerset is in line with other areas in this respect.

The Department for Education still requires the Local Authority to produce a DSG Deficit Management Plan to evidence how it will reduce the in-year deficit to zero by 31st March 2026 when the statutory override expires. The activities and opportunities identified through the work with IMPOWER Consulting and the DBV SEND programme are included in Somerset’s DSG Deficit Management Plan alongside other mitigations.

## **Children and Family Services - Local Authority (LA) Maintained Schools Revenue Reserves**

### **LA Maintained Schools - key explanations, actions, and mitigating controls**

These reserves are regarded as being under the control of the individual schools and not the local authority and are therefore not included in the calculation of the overall DSG reserves.

The overall revenue reserves of the 133 local authority's maintained schools were £19.8m at 31 March 2023. Projections for 2023/24 indicate a sharp downturn in the forecast for most schools, with overall revenue reserves expected to decrease by around £8m during the year and move into overall deficit during 2024/25.

- At the beginning of the year, seven schools shared a cumulative deficit position of £1.9m and 126 schools shared a cumulative surplus of £21.7m.
- Budget plans submitted by schools for 2023/24 show significant budgetary pressures with 102 of 122 plans submitted indicating projected in year deficits totalling £7.7m.
- Those schools with projected overall deficits and high in year deficits were invited to attend working groups this term to discuss their financial position. These meetings have now concluded, and action plans are being produced for individual schools to capture common themes causing problems for schools.
- One school, Wadham Secondary, had a cumulative deficit of £1.5m at 31 March 2023 and does not have an agreed recovery plan. The underlying problems have now been addressed by an area restructure, but the historic deficit is too large to be recovered solely by this school. A proposal has been developed to manage down this deficit over a 5-to-10-year period. There is a risk that the local authority may be required to fund the deficit if the school is required to convert to an academy due to underperformance.

### **LA Maintained Schools - key risks, future issues, and opportunities**

Alongside the Department for Education and Diocese of Bath and Wells (where appropriate) the local authority is managing a pipeline of academy conversions. This pipeline was put in place following a refresh of the council's policy approach to academisation in August 2023. The pipeline has been successful in giving stability and clarity to the academisation process, as well as allowing for more robust financial planning for both the council and affected trusts.

The process of academisation planning has demonstrated that it remains challenging to track school spending during the conversion process, and in a time of financial pressures this can create uncertainties for both the council and the trust. Further work is planned to consider what mechanisms could be put in place to secure this process further.

Somerset's education system is underperforming overall. However, while primary performance overall declined between 2022 and 2023 at Key Stage 2, LA maintained primary schools have improved their performance by 0.3 percentage points for all pupils achieve expected standard for Reading, Writing and Maths, and more markedly (2.5 percentage points) for children from low-income backgrounds. The introduction of a Core Offer and a stronger strategy for supporting schools to improve as stemmed the growth of inadequate and requires improvement judgements. While the local authority cannot compel LA maintained schools to accept with and engage in support, all schools that have willingly collaborated with the local authority's help have performed at or above expectation on inspection over the past year.

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## Appendix 3 – Community Services

Lead Member for Communities, Housing and Culture: Cllr Federica Smith-Roberts

Executive Director: Chris Hall

Service Directors:

- Housing: Chris Brown
- Culture: Elizabeth Dawson
- Customers: Jan Stafford
- Regulatory and Operational: Sarah Dowden

**Table 1: 2023/24 Community Services as at end of January 2024 (Month 10)**

- 2023/24 net budget £36.3m, projected favourable variance of £0.7m, favourable movement of £0.4m from month 9.

Service Area	Original Budget £m	Current Expenditure Budget £m	Current Income Budget £m	Current Net Budget £m	Full Year Projection £m	Month 10 Variance £m	A/(F)	RAG Status	Movement From Month 9 £m
<b>Housing</b>									
Housing Strategy	1.3	0.5	(0.2)	0.3	0.6	0.3	A	Red	0.3
Housing Options	4.6	7.4	(2.4)	5.0	5.0	0.0	-	Green	0.0
Housing Enabling	0.0	0.7	(0.2)	0.5	0.5	0.0	-	Green	0.0
Private Sector Support/ DFG's (SIP)	0.0	0.9	(0.4)	0.5	0.5	0.0	-	Green	0.0
Displaced Person Service	0.0	0.8	(0.8)	0.0	0.0	0.0	-	Green	0.0
Other Costs & Income	0.0	0.1	(0.1)	0.0	0.0	0.0	-	Green	0.0
<b>sub total</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>10.4</b>	<b>(4.1)</b>	<b>6.3</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>Red</b>	<b>0.3</b>
<b>Customer Services</b>									
Customer Services	7.0	6.8	(0.7)	6.1	6.0	(0.1)	(F)	Green	(0.1)
Somerset Lifeline	0.0	2.2	(2.4)	(0.2)	(0.2)	0.0	-	Green	0.0
<b>sub total</b>	<b>7.0</b>	<b>9.0</b>	<b>(3.1)</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>5.8</b>	<b>(0.1)</b>	<b>(F)</b>	<b>Green</b>	<b>(0.1)</b>
<b>Cultural Services</b>									
Library Service	3.8	5.1	(0.7)	4.4	4.1	(0.3)	(F)	Green	(0.4)
Heritage Service	1.7	1.7	0.0	1.7	1.7	0.0	-	Green	0.0
Leisure - Sports Centre	2.0	2.6	(0.5)	2.1	2.1	0.0	-	Green	0.0
Museums	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-	Green	0.0
Theatres	0.5	3.4	(2.4)	1.0	0.4	(0.6)	(F)	Green	(0.2)
Visitor Centres	0.1	0.3	(0.3)	0.0	0.0	0.0	-	Green	0.0
Tourism	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.2	0.0	-	Green	0.0
(wellbeing) Community Grants	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-	Green	0.0
<b>sub total</b>	<b>9.3</b>	<b>13.3</b>	<b>(3.9)</b>	<b>9.4</b>	<b>8.5</b>	<b>(0.9)</b>	<b>(F)</b>	<b>Green</b>	<b>(0.6)</b>
<b>Regulatory &amp; Operational Services</b>									
Registration	(0.2)	2.1	(1.9)	0.2	(0.1)	(0.3)	(F)	Green	(0.2)
Environmental Health	4.2	4.6	(0.3)	4.3	4.3	0.0	-	Green	0.0
Bereavement Services	(1.2)	1.1	(2.3)	(1.2)	(1.1)	0.1	A	Red	0.2
Harbours	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-	Green	0.0
Ports	0.0	0.2	(0.1)	0.1	0.1	0.0	-	Green	0.0
Street Cleansing	5.0	6.0	(0.9)	5.1	4.9	(0.2)	(F)	Green	(0.0)
Open Spaces	3.1	6.8	(3.5)	3.3	3.6	0.3	A	Red	0.3
Public Conveniences	0.0	0.6	(0.2)	0.4	0.3	(0.1)	(F)	Green	(0.1)
(wellbeing) Community Safety	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-	Green	0.0
CCTV	0.7	0.8	(0.1)	0.7	0.9	0.2	A	Red	0.0
Licensing	0.0	0.8	(1.1)	(0.3)	(0.3)	0.0	-	Green	0.0
Resorts	0.0	0.4	(0.2)	0.2	0.2	0.0	-	Green	(0.1)
Coroners	0.0	1.3	0.0	1.3	1.3	0.0	-	Green	0.0
Operational Support	0.0	0.7	(0.1)	0.6	0.6	0.0	-	Green	0.0
Scientific Services	0.0	0.4	(0.4)	0.0	0.0	0.0	-	Green	(0.1)
<b>sub total</b>	<b>12.4</b>	<b>25.8</b>	<b>(11.1)</b>	<b>14.7</b>	<b>14.7</b>	<b>(0.0)</b>	<b>(F)</b>	<b>Green</b>	<b>(0.0)</b>
<b>Community Services Total</b>	<b>34.6</b>	<b>58.5</b>	<b>(22.2)</b>	<b>36.3</b>	<b>35.6</b>	<b>(0.7)</b>	<b>(F)</b>	<b>Green</b>	<b>(0.4)</b>

## **Community Services - key explanations, actions & mitigating controls**

The four directorates in Community Services have been working to minimise general fund expenditure throughout the year, this has helped cover pressures that have emerged post combination of budgets on vesting day, and helped to provide financial support to the council's overall budget overspends.

The current in-year underspend has increased from the month nine report which is an overall positive message, but this has not happened without consequences. We have held off works that would usually have been completed, and deferred maintenance where it is not a statutory requirement or needed to meet a health and safety need.

### Housing

Currently we are identifying a £0.3m variance in the general fund Housing service. The finance team have undertaken considerable work in Culture and Customer Services which has brought clarity to those budgets. This detailed work has yet to be completed for the Housing service and we therefore we have less clarity in this area.

There continue to be significant challenges within the year relating to demand, which is being offset by additional Government grants to support homelessness and other housing initiatives.

The Housing Options service has seen increased use of Bed & Breakfast accommodation and increased reliance on agency staff. Actions are being progressed by the service to mitigate these additional costs in the future through improved process and structural change. There is also an increase in demand for the service due to flooding and winter pressures. Although the service has a core council budget of £4.9m the service has significant grant income increasing its budget to over £9.5m. The significant spend pressures are:

- Additional spend of **£0.960m** projected in respect of homelessness.
- **£0.270m** additional spend in respect of rough sleeping.

The **£1.230m** additional costs are to be fully funded by government grants which are ringfenced to this service area.

The Housing Enabling and Housing Strategy services are expected to generate a small budget saving by quarter four due to in-year staffing cost savings and income from grant and fees, as mentioned above this has yet to show itself in the figures as more in depth work is needed to ensure all the budgets are correct and allocations to budget are accurate.

The Displaced Persons Service is 100% grant funded and will break even with underspends carrying forward to support the service in 2024/2025.

The Private Sector Support/SIP service is anticipated to break even whilst also being able to reduce its fee income from Adult Social Care for 2023/2024 by £0.3m.

### Cultural Services

There is an anticipated underspend in respect of Theatres which is due to additional income from ticket sales for the performances at the Westlands Entertainment Centre, in addition there are expected underspends on premises budgets. This is generating an overall underspend of £0.6m, an improvement of £0.4m from month nine, due to better anticipated income from the final pantomime performances.

The previously reported pressures in respect of Leisure – Sports Centres have been covered by savings on other budgets within this service.

Library services are showing a projected underspend of £0.3m, this is a slight reduction on the reported position at month nine.

### Regulatory & Operational Services

Open spaces functions were previously carried out by the district councils, these include services such as grounds maintenance. The service is reporting a total adverse variance of £0.3m. This in part relates to a significant reduction of budgeted income associated with the loss of income from a grounds maintenance contract provided by the council to an external client. The contract ended in 2021/22. The service expenditure budget was reduced as part of the budget setting process, but the income budget was not reduced to reflect the change. Therefore, this income target remains and cannot be achieved. A pressure has been approved for 2024/25 to amend this income budget estimate from April. Additional work is underway in year to reduce the impact of this. In year open spaces has postponed spend and made use of a one-off reserve to help mitigate the pressure.

Bereavement services is presenting an under recovery of income against the budget of £0.1m this is due to lower than budgeted from year to year and throughout a given year.

The authority provides a CCTV service across the county. The service has additional costs in 2023/24 at over £0.2m. This is in part due to expenditure from 2022/23 that was not accounted for in the correct year creating a one-off pressure in 2023/24, alongside other variations which are being reviewed. Work is underway to mitigate this, and we aim to reduce it from the current reported £0.2m overspend by year end. It is unlikely at this stage that the full overspend can be mitigated.

These pressures are, in the main offset by a favourable variance at £0.2m for the Registration service which has had more income, a demand lead service so income can vary. Alongside this the Street Cleaning service currently has an overall net favourable variation of £0.2m being a combination of some extra external income which sadly ends in 2023/24 and other variances which are being worked through.

### **Customer Services**

Customer Services are currently showing a projected underspend of £0.1m from a position of a balanced outturn last month. Work continues to confirm the outturn position for the Lifeline Service.



## **Appendix 4 – Climate & Place, (including Accountable Bodies)**

### **Climate & Place**

Lead Members:

- Environment & Climate Change: Cllr Dixie Darch
- Transport & Digital: Cllr Richard Wilkins
- Economic Development, Planning & Assets: Cllr Ros Wyke

Executive Director: Mickey Green

Service Directors:

- Climate, Environment & Sustainability: Kirsty Larkins
- Infrastructure & Transport: Mike O’Dowd-Jones
- Economy, Employment & Planning: Paul Hickson

### **Accountable Bodies**

Lead Members:

- Transport & Digital: Cllr Richard Wilkins
- Economic Development, Planning & Assets: Cllr Ros Wyke
- Environment & Climate Change: Cllr Dixie Darch

Executive Director: Mickey Green

Service Directors:

- Somerset Rivers Authority: Kirsty Larkins
- Local Enterprise Partnership and Connecting Devon & Somerset: Paul Hickson

**Table 1: 2023/24 Climate & Place (including Accountable Bodies) as at the end of January 2024 (Month 10)**

- Climate and Place (including Accountable Bodies) 2023/24 net budget £90.9m, projected favourable variance £7.3m, favourable movement £0.3m from month nine.

Service Area	Current Expenditure Budget £m	Current Income Budget £m	Current Net Budget £m	Full Year Projection £m	Month 10 Variance £m	A/(F)	RAG Status	Movement From Month 9 £m
<b>Climate, Environment &amp; Sustainability</b>								
Climate & Place Management	0.8	(0.1)	0.7	0.7	0.0	-	Green	0.0
Business Support	0.8	0.0	0.8	0.8	0.0	-	Green	0.1
Somerset Waste	55.5	(6.6)	48.9	48.9	0.0	-	Green	(0.2)
Drainage Board Levy	2.3	0.0	2.3	2.3	0.0	-	Green	0.0
Climate Change Costs	0.7	0.0	0.7	0.6	(0.1)	(F)	Green	(0.1)
Emergency Planning	0.4	0.0	0.4	0.4	0.0	-	Green	0.0
Flood & Water	0.8	0.0	0.8	0.9	0.1	A	Red	0.1
Countryside	1.1	(0.7)	0.4	0.4	0.0	-	Green	0.0
Mendips AONB	0.2	(0.2)	0.0	0.0	0.0	-	Green	0.0
Quantock AONB	1.1	(1.0)	0.1	0.1	0.0	-	Green	0.0
Ecology	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.2	0.0	-	Green	0.0
<b>sub total</b>	<b>63.9</b>	<b>(8.6)</b>	<b>55.3</b>	<b>55.3</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>Green</b>	<b>(0.1)</b>
<b>Infrastructure &amp; Transport</b>								
Highways & Transport Commissioning	2.2	(0.6)	1.6	1.6	0.0	-	Green	0.0
Infrastructure Programmes Group	1.2	(0.8)	0.4	0.4	0.0	-	Green	0.0
Highways	17.0	(0.6)	16.4	17.2	0.8	A	Red	0.0
Traffic Management	4.9	(4.6)	0.3	(0.1)	(0.4)	(F)	Green	(0.3)
Transporting Somerset	15.4	(6.0)	9.4	9.3	(0.1)	(F)	Green	0.0
Car Parks	5.8	(12.3)	(6.5)	(6.5)	0.0	-	Green	0.0
Fleet Management	1.0	(0.3)	0.7	0.7	0.0	-	Green	0.0
Community Infrastructure	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-	Green	0.0
<b>sub total</b>	<b>47.5</b>	<b>(25.2)</b>	<b>22.3</b>	<b>22.6</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>Red</b>	<b>(0.3)</b>
<b>Economy, Employment &amp; Planning</b>								
Economy & Planning	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-	Green	0.0
Commissioning Development	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-	Green	0.0
Development Control	6.4	(5.0)	1.4	2.2	0.8	A	Red	0.1
Planning Policy	3.6	0.0	3.6	2.8	(0.8)	(F)	Green	0.0
Economic Development	6.2	(1.8)	4.4	3.8	(0.6)	(F)	Green	0.0
Building Control	2.0	(1.5)	0.5	0.5	0.0	-	Green	0.0
<b>sub total</b>	<b>18.2</b>	<b>(8.3)</b>	<b>9.9</b>	<b>9.3</b>	<b>(0.6)</b>	<b>(F)</b>	<b>Green</b>	<b>0.1</b>
<b>Accountable Bodies</b>								
Somerset Rivers Authority	3.0	0.0	3.0	3.0	0.0	-	Green	0.0
Local Enterprise Partnership	2.0	(2.3)	(0.3)	(0.3)	0.0	-	Green	0.0
Connecting Devon & Somerset (CDS)	1.2	(0.5)	0.7	(6.3)	(7.0)	(F)	Green	0.0
<b>sub total</b>	<b>6.2</b>	<b>(2.8)</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>(3.6)</b>	<b>(7.0)</b>	<b>(F)</b>	<b>Green</b>	<b>0.0</b>
<b>Climate &amp; Place Total</b>	<b>135.8</b>	<b>(44.9)</b>	<b>90.9</b>	<b>83.6</b>	<b>(7.3)</b>	<b>(F)</b>	<b>Green</b>	<b>(0.3)</b>

## Climate & Place - key explanations, actions, & mitigating controls

Climate and Place is currently forecasting a favourable variance of £7.3m at outturn, a favourable movement of £0.3m since month nine. The variances across Climate and Place are due to the following:

### Climate, Environment and Sustainability

**Waste Services** is forecasting to be within budget at outturn, a favourable variance of £0.2m reported between month nine and month ten. The favourable movement can be explained by the following:

- Total waste volumes to the end of month nine showed an increase of 2.7% compared to last year. However, the variance in waste tonnages is an improving position, moving from 4.1% at the end of month seven to 2.7% at the end of Month 9. The rise in tonnages is ascribed to unusually high tonnages of garden waste (+17%) and residual waste above expected levels at +2% to the end of month nine. This trend has been forecast to continue for the remainder of the year for budget monitoring. The impact of increased waste volumes has been partially offset by a lower than budgeted inflationary increase to contractor rates.
- Income from Garden Waste subscriptions continues to be higher than anticipated.
- The performance of Recycling centres has been reviewed and forecasts have been updated.

**Flood and Water** is forecasting to an overspend of £0.1m at outturn, an adverse movement of £0.1m between month nine and month ten. The overspend relates to updated salary forecasts and increased costs for Perfect Circle. Although Flood and Water is forecasting this overspend it is important to note that underspends in Climate Change salary costs have been identified to mitigate this pressure for Climate, Environment and Sustainability.

#### Infrastructure and Transport

**Highways** is forecasting an adverse variance of £0.8m at outturn due primarily to an increase in Safety defects across the road network causing significant pressures on the service due to more extreme weather events. The service continues to work hard to successfully complete the investigation and repair works whilst trying to manage and control the overspend.

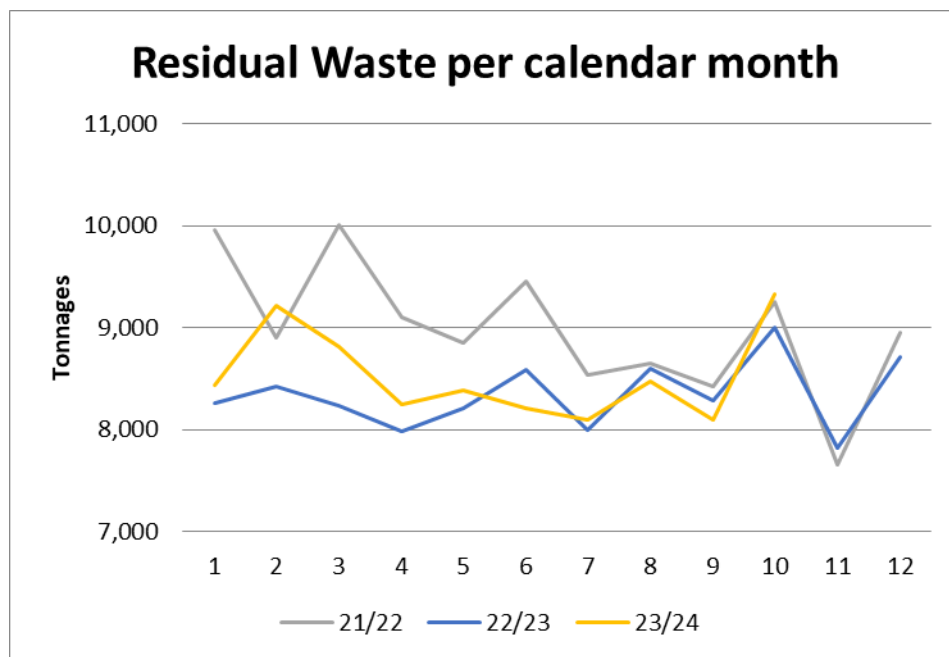
**Traffic Management** is forecasting a favourable variance of £0.4m at outturn, this is a favourable movement of £0.3m since month nine. This is due to receiving higher than anticipated income within the service relating to Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders (TTRO).

#### Economy, Employment and Planning

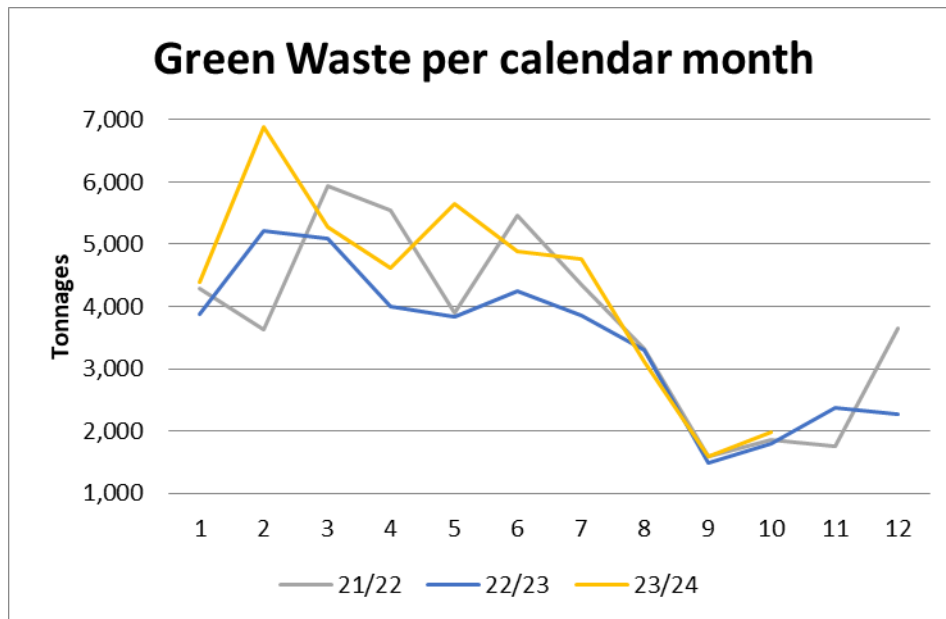
**Development Control** is forecasting an adverse variance of £0.8m at outturn, an adverse movement of £0.1m since month nine. There are several considerations here including ongoing reconciliation of income, income estimates for 2023/24 from legacy councils overestimating realistic annual income likely to be achieved and the current

economic climate. It is likely that economic factors in recent quarters in line with the national picture has resulted in lower levels of planning applications and that, in the short term, the national increase in planning fees on the 06 December 2023 may be having an impact on the anticipated budgeted income for the last quarter. This will be monitored, and the service will look at mitigating factors to offset the pressure in this area.

**Climate & Place - key performance cost drivers**



The above graph shows the residual waste (per tonnage) per month. The residual waste includes Kerbside collected waste and waste deposited at the recycling centre. The graph currently shows the reduction of waste in 2022/23 compared to 2021/22, however this highlights the unexpected increase in tonnages in the early months for 2023/24. Residual Waste from July to December have reduced and are more aligned to 2022 levels.



The above graph shows the green waste (per tonnage) per month. It is expected to see a downwards trend between month 6-12 (September to April) due to the seasonality of garden waste. The graph currently highlights a higher tonnage of green waste compared to 2021/22 and 2022/23 for the early months of 2023/24, this has been driven by the unusually mild, damp, weather this year propagating plant growth and increasing the moisture content of the material.

### Climate & Place - key risks, future issues & opportunities

Due to the current economic climate, there are several key risks and future issues that need to be taken into consideration:

- **Contract inflation** is applied at various times throughout the year, as the increase in contract could be led by RPI or CPI it is currently difficult to predict accurately what the impact for each contract might be. In addition, there are a number of contractual disputes which are being worked through. It is anticipated that these can be resolved in a timely matter, but in resolution may see increased costs agreed.
- **Impact of cost-of-living crisis.** As costs continue to rise, spending habits may change therefore it is possible that services across Economic and Community Infrastructure will see a decrease in income budgets.
- **Staff vacancy levels.** Difficulties in recruiting permanent staff across Climate and Place continue to impact on the ability to deliver services, where possible

agencies have been used to feel critical roles. However, this has a financial impact as generally the cost of these staff is higher than budgeted for. This reflects the national picture and is the same across a number of sectors.

- **Systems and Reporting.** Finance is continuing to work with service to bring together and understand five legacy authority budgets. There is a great deal of work to do to understand, relocate and align the legacy information to make one budget for Climate and Place. This work runs alongside the implementation of the new MS Dynamics finance system and Solver budget monitoring interface. It is there important to note that this may result in unknown under or overspends for the service.

Risks can be identified due to the change in climate. It is exceedingly difficult to be able to identify financially what the impact of climate change will be year on year, but risks with a potential financial impact include:

- Icy conditions will see a high demand on the Highways service to grit primary and secondary routes.
- Increased rainfall which has raised the risk of flooding across the County. This will require input from the Emergency Planning department, Highways and Traffic Management to help ensure residents can safely navigate around the affected areas.
- The extreme changes in weather will impact the road surfaces which continues to increase the safety defects reported and increases the costs of investigation and corrective action for potholes.

## **Accountable Bodies**

### Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA)

Somerset Rivers Authority is currently reporting to be within budget and are not anticipating any draws from or to reserves.

### Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)

LEP is currently reporting to be within budget in this financial year, this includes contributing a further £0.4m to the reserve.

### Connecting Devon & Somerset (CDS)

The Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS) programme included a phase one contract with British Telecommunications plc. To meet state aid requirements that contract included provisions which allowed for "clawback" of public subsidy where take up of

services exceeded the levels which the supplier had modelled. Delivery has completed and the contractual monitoring period to calculate amounts of clawback is now operational. The supplier is contracted to provide its calculation of the final clawback amount as of 31 March 2024, after which date relevant clawback funds are to be returned to CDS. The CDS collaboration will process any clawback so that collaborating public sector funders receive a proportionate return based on their original investment. At this initial stage it is estimated that the sum accruing to Somerset council is likely to be in the region of £7 million although this is subject to potential change.

### **Accountable Bodies - key risks, future issues & opportunities**

Somerset Council acts as the accountable body for the Heart of the Southwest LEP, providing a service across the core functions of the LEP and its programmes. This is in the context of an assurance framework for this programme funding meeting Government principles and expectations. In performing these functions, Somerset Council works closely with the LEP core team, and the services Somerset Council provides are specified and resourced via a service level agreement between the LEP and Somerset Council.

LEP performance is subject to periodic assessment and an annual formal review by Government – the most recent of these for 2022/23 looked positively on Somerset Council's accountable body services to the LEP.

Somerset Council, working with Plymouth Torbay and Devon County Councils, has submitted an integration plan to Government outlining proposals for how LEP functions are transferred and conducted by the authorities post the Government ceasing to fund LEPs post March 2024 and how revenue funding balances and legacy capital funds held by the LEP are managed post this date. Government sign-off of the proposals in the plan are awaited and dialogue with the LEP Board advised by the Council's Section 151 Officer are ongoing and will determine the position regarding the division of these funds in due course.

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## Appendix 5 – Strategy, Workforce and Localities

Lead Members:

- Governance and Communications: Cllr Bill Revans
- Resources and Performance: Cllr Liz Leyshon
- Transformation and Human Resources: Cllr Theo Butt Philip

Executive Director: Alyn Jones

Service Directors:

- Partnership and Localities: Sara Skirton
- Strategy and Performance: Sara Cretney
- Governance, Democratic and Legal Services: David Clark
- Workforce (interim): Dawn Bettridge

**Table 1: 2023/24 Strategy, Workforce & Localities as at the end of January 2024 (Month 10)**

- 2023/24 net budget £25.8m, projected favourable variance £0.1m, £0.2m favourable movement from month nine.

Service Area	Current Expenditure Budget £m	Current Income Budget £m	Current Net Budget £m	Full Year Projection £m	Month 10 Variance £m	A/(F)	RAG Status	Movement From Month 9 £m
<b>Partnership &amp; Localities</b>								
Localities	1.8	(0.2)	1.6	1.4	(0.2)	(F)	Green	0.0
Partnerships	1.7	0.0	1.7	1.9	0.2	A	Red	0.0
<b>sub total</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>(0.2)</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>(0.0)</b>	<b>(F)</b>	<b>Green</b>	<b>0.0</b>
<b>Strategy &amp; Performance</b>								
Communications	1.8	(0.3)	1.5	1.5	0.0	-	Green	0.0
Transformation & Change	5.1	(1.1)	4.0	3.4	(0.6)	(F)	Green	0.0
Digital Team	(0.1)	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.1	A	Red	0.0
Land Charges	0.5	(1.1)	(0.6)	(0.6)	0.0	-	Green	0.0
Performance	0.8	0.0	0.8	0.7	(0.1)	(F)	Green	0.0
<b>sub total</b>	<b>8.1</b>	<b>(2.2)</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>5.3</b>	<b>(0.6)</b>	<b>(F)</b>	<b>Green</b>	<b>0.0</b>
<b>Workforce</b>								
Human Resources & Organisational Development	7.6	(2.2)	5.4	5.0	(0.4)	(F)	Green	0.0
Learning & Development	3.2	(1.9)	1.3	1.0	(0.3)	(F)	Green	0.0
<b>sub total</b>	<b>10.8</b>	<b>(4.1)</b>	<b>6.7</b>	<b>6.0</b>	<b>(0.7)</b>	<b>(F)</b>	<b>Green</b>	<b>0.0</b>
<b>Governance, Democratic &amp; Legal Services</b>								
Democratic Services	4.5	(0.5)	4.0	3.8	(0.2)	(F)	Green	0.0
Legal Services	5.1	(0.8)	4.3	6.0	1.7	A	Red	0.0
Info Governance	0.8	(0.2)	0.6	0.4	(0.2)	(F)	Green	(0.2)
Elections	1.0	0.0	1.0	0.9	(0.1)	(F)	Green	0.0
<b>sub total</b>	<b>11.4</b>	<b>(1.5)</b>	<b>9.9</b>	<b>11.1</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>Red</b>	<b>(0.2)</b>
<b>Strategy, Workforce &amp; Localities Total</b>	<b>33.8</b>	<b>(8.0)</b>	<b>25.8</b>	<b>25.7</b>	<b>(0.1)</b>	<b>(F)</b>	<b>Green</b>	<b>(0.2)</b>

**Strategy, Workforce & Localities – key explanations, actions, & mitigating controls**

### Partnership and Localities

A favourable variance of £0.2m is forecast within Localities. The service is carrying several vacant positions which is resulting in a forecast reduction in employment costs. Despite this favourable variance, overall, the service budget is balanced due to the service bearing a one-off cost to honour a grant payment of a legacy Council.

### Strategy and Performance

An underspend of £0.6m is forecast across the service. There is a reduction in employment costs due to holding positions vacant, along with the non-requirement of a software budget.

### Workforce

An underspend of £0.4m is forecast within the Human Resources & Organisational Development budget mainly in respect of employment costs. This is mainly due to vacancies within the service.

An underspend of £0.3m is also anticipated on the Learning and Development budget, this is due to a focus on e-learning, statutory and mandatory training. The leadership and management programme across a wider learning and development framework will not be in place until 2024/25 resulting in an anticipated underspend on budgets associated with this programme.

### Governance, Democratic & Legal Services

An underspend of £0.2m forecast in Democratic Services mainly due to in year savings within staffing through vacancies, reduced expenditure in other areas and increased income.

The forecast £1.7m adverse variance within Legal Services is an estimate of anticipated increases in external legal costs. This is due to the continued need to place legal cases, principally in respect of childcare, with external legal experts.

An underspend of £0.2m forecast in Information Governance (IG) is mainly due to in year savings within staffing through vacancies.

An underspend of £0.1m forecast in Elections is due to reduced expenditure, and from releasing some budgets that are not required this financial year.

## Appendix 6 - Resources & Corporate Services

Lead Members:

- Economic Development, Planning & Assets: Cllr Ros Wyke
- Resources & Performance: Cllr Liz Leyshon
- Transport & Digital: Cllr Richard Wilkins

Executive Director: Jason Vaughan

Service Directors:

- Finance & Procurement: Nicola Hix
- Strategic Asset Management: Ollie Woodhams
- Information, Communication, Technology: Andy Kennell

**Table 1: 2023/24 Resources & Corporate Services as at the end of January 2024 (Month 10)**

2023/24 net budget £23.6m, projected favourable variance of £2.4m, no movement from month nine.

Service Area	Current Expenditure Budget £m	Current Income Budget £m	Current Net Budget £m	Full Year Projection £m	Month 10 Variance £m	A/(F)	RAG Status	Movement From Month 9 £m
<b>Finance &amp; Procurement</b>								
Finance	11.3	(2.4)	8.9	8.8	(0.1)	(F)	Green	0.3
Procurement	9.9	(8.0)	1.9	1.8	(0.1)	(F)	Green	0.1
Revenues	9.0	(6.1)	2.9	2.5	(0.4)	(F)	Green	(0.1)
Housing Benefits	88.6	(87.6)	1.0	0.8	(0.2)	(F)	Green	0.0
<b>sub total</b>	<b>118.8</b>	<b>(104.1)</b>	<b>14.7</b>	<b>13.9</b>	<b>(0.8)</b>	<b>(F)</b>	<b>Green</b>	<b>0.3</b>
<b>Strategic Asset Management</b>								
Property Services	18.6	(7.4)	11.2	11.2	0.0	-	Green	(0.1)
Commercial Investment Properties	1.0	(21.4)	(20.4)	(20.4)	0.0	-	Green	0.0
<b>sub total</b>	<b>19.6</b>	<b>(28.8)</b>	<b>(9.2)</b>	<b>(9.2)</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>Green</b>	<b>(0.1)</b>
<b>Information Communication Technology</b>								
Information Communication Technology	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-	Green	0.0
Hardware & Software	10.1	0.0	10.1	9.1	(1.0)	(F)	Green	(0.3)
ICT General	9.5	(2.5)	7.0	6.4	(0.6)	(F)	Green	0.4
ICT Traded	0.5	(0.4)	0.1	0.1	0.0	-	Green	(0.1)
Telecommunications	0.9	0.0	0.9	0.9	0.0	-	Green	(0.2)
<b>sub total</b>	<b>21.0</b>	<b>(2.9)</b>	<b>18.1</b>	<b>16.5</b>	<b>(1.6)</b>	<b>(F)</b>	<b>Green</b>	<b>(0.2)</b>
<b>Resources &amp; Corporate Services Total</b>	<b>159.4</b>	<b>(135.8)</b>	<b>23.6</b>	<b>21.2</b>	<b>(2.4)</b>	<b>(F)</b>	<b>Green</b>	<b>0.0</b>

### Resources & Corporate Services – key explanations, actions & mitigating controls

#### Finance

Several vacant posts across Finance and Procurement services have resulted in an underspend on employee budgets. This saving has been part offset by agency costs

and an increase in audit fees, accounting for the adverse movement from month nine.

Within Revenues and Housing Benefits there has been additional spend on temporary staff due to service pressures. This additional cost has been offset by income from Government grants and additional court fee income, resulting in an overall underspend for these two services of £0.6m.

### Strategic Asset Management

The service is holding many vacancies which has resulted in a forecast underspend on employee budgets.

There is a forecast reduction in energy costs across the estate due to improved pricing, energy efficiency measures and investment in decarbonisation projects.

Vacant property running costs are forecast to be higher than budgeted as the service is taking on larger complex sites and properties are vacant for longer periods due to ongoing phosphates issues delaying planning. The service will capitalise costs at constructions sites where possible and focus on progressing disposals as soon as phosphate mitigation solutions allow.

Tenancy changes at various properties has resulted in an anticipated shortfall of income in respect of rent receivable. The service continues to actively seek new tenants for void units.

Various other overspends anticipated on several budgets lines, including rates payable on void properties and an aborted capital scheme meaning income target not met.

Additional costs of surveying for Reinforced Autoclave Aerated Concrete (RAAC) are estimated to be around £0.3m and these unexpected costs have been funded from the Corporate Contingency budget.

Within Commercial Investment Properties it is anticipated that the income target in respect of the dividend payable from one of the Council's partly owned trading companies will not be achieved (£1.7m). Work is being undertaken to understand the factors and risks that are contributing to the non-payment of the dividend. There are adverse variances expected in respect of the rental income budgets (£1.2m), this is due to unexpected voids. The variance against the budget will be funded from the Commercial Investment risk reserve.

### Information Communication Technology

Additional costs have been incurred in respect of the Office365 backup costs. The cost in respect of consolidating into a single electronic payments system will be more than anticipated and the work on data centre consolidation is not achievable in this financial year meaning the budget will be exceeded. The additional costs have been offset by an underspend on employee budgets due to number of vacant posts and expenditure on several software licences and contracts being less than anticipated resulting in an underspend on the associated budget.

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## **Appendix 7 - Public Health**

Lead Member for Public Health, Equalities and Diversity: Cllr Adam Dance

Executive Director: Professor Trudi Grant

Deputy Director Public Health: Lou Woolway

**Table 1: 2023/24 Public Health as at the end of January 2024 (month 10)**

- 2023/24 Net Budget £1m, no projected variance, no movement from month nine
- 2022/23 Net Budget £1.3m, no variance at outturn

Service Area	Current Expenditure Budget	Current Income Budget	Current Net Budget	Full Year Projection	Month 10 Variance	A/(F)	RAG Status	Movement From Month 9
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m			£m
Public Health Grant	22.6	(22.6)	0.0	0.0	0.0	-	Green	0.0
Somerset Council Budget	1.0	0.0	1.0	1.0	0.0	-	Green	0.0
<b>Public Health Total</b>	<b>23.6</b>	<b>(22.6)</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>Green</b>	<b>0.0</b>

### **Public Health - key explanations, actions & mitigating controls**

A number of vacant posts within the service has resulted in savings on employee budgets funded from the Public Health Grant. Contractual spend has diminished as we strive towards a new targeted operating model to improve the health of our residents across the county. The Somerset Council funding managed by Public Health is anticipated to remain on budget.

### **Public Health - key risks, future issues & opportunities**

Both the Public Health Grant and the Somerset Council funding managed by Public Health are facing significant future pressure caused by contract and pay inflationary increases. This pressure will intensify following an early indication of a 1% increase to the Public Health Grant for the 2024/25 financial year which is again significantly below inflation.

There is a systemic underfunding of public health in Somerset. The Public Health Grant is significantly below the national average being 141<sup>st</sup> out of 153 local authorities nationally. Improvements in whole population health are not achievable within the constraints of the public health budget. A new operating model for public health is underway in order to focus the activity of the Public Health Team towards influencing policy, commissioning and spend right across the Somerset system towards improving health and tackling inequalities.

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## **Appendix 8 – Other Service Areas (including Collection Fund)**

### **Corporate Management**

Lead Member for Non-Service: Cllr Liz Leyshon

Executive Director: Jason Vaughan

**Table 1: 2023/24 Corporate Management as at the end of January 2024  
(Month 10)**

- 2023/24 net budget £1.3m, no projected variance, no movement from month nine.

Service Area	Current Expenditure Budget	Current Income Budget	Current Net Budget	Full Year Projection	Month 10 Variance	A/(F)	RAG Status	Movement From Month 9
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m			£m
Executive Directors	0.8	0.0	0.8	0.8	0.0	-	Green	0.0
Corporate Subscriptions	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.0	-	Green	0.0
Apprenticeship Levy/Reclaim	0.4	0.0	0.4	0.4	0.0	-	Green	0.0
<b>Corporate Management Total</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>Green</b>	<b>0.0</b>

### **Corporate Management - key explanations, actions, & mitigating controls**

There is currently no variance projected for outturn.

### **Non-Service**

Lead Member for Non-Service: Cllr Liz Leyshon

Executive Director: Jason Vaughan

**Table 2: 2023/24 Non-Service as at the end of January 2024 (Month 10)**

- 2023/24 net budget £54.1m, projected favourable variance £3.0m, no movement from month nine.

Service Area	Current	Current	Current Net	Full Year	Month	A/(F)	RAG	Movement		
	Expenditure	Income			10				Status	From
	Budget	Budget			Variance				Month 9	
	£m	£m	£m	£m			£m			
Local Government Reorganisation	4.1	(1.3)	2.8	2.8	0.0	-	Green	0.0		
Contributions	0.7	0.0	0.7	0.7	0.0	-	Green	0.0		
Corporate Costs	8.7	(2.0)	6.7	6.7	0.0	-	Green	0.0		
Financing Transactions	53.7	(13.1)	40.6	37.6	(3.0)	(F)	Green	0.0		
Special Grants	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-	Green	0.0		
Pay Award	3.3	0.0	3.3	3.3	0.0	-	Green	0.0		
<b>Non-Service Total</b>	<b>70.5</b>	<b>(16.4)</b>	<b>54.1</b>	<b>51.1</b>	<b>(3.0)</b>	<b>(F)</b>	<b>Green</b>	<b>0.0</b>		

## Non-Service - key explanations, actions, & mitigating controls

### Financing Transactions

The £3m favourable variance relates to the Council utilising internal borrowing in light of a higher than forecast cashflow level. This has decreased the cost of borrowing.

### Traded Services

Lead Member for Traded Services: Cllr Heather Shearer

Executive Director: Claire Winter

**Table 3: 2023/24 Traded Services as at the end of January 2024  
(Month 10)**

- Traded Services are required to set a net nil budget with full costs offset by income generated.

Service Area	Current	Current	Current Net	Full Year	Month	A/(F)	RAG	Movement		
	Expenditure	Income			10				Status	From
	Budget	Budget			Variance				Month 9	
	£m	£m	£m	£m			£m			
Dillington	1.8	(1.8)	0.0	0.5	0.5	A	Red	0.1		
<b>Traded Services Total</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>(1.8)</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>Red</b>	<b>0.1</b>		

## Traded Services - key explanations, actions, & mitigating controls

Dillington's deficit for the year is forecasted to be £0.5m, an increase of £0.1m from month nine due to higher costs than previously forecasted and final bills. This overspend relates solely to the operating costs, and not the related closure costs which are being funded by an earmarked reserve.

## **Contingencies**

Lead Member for Contingencies: Cllr Liz Leyshon

Executive Director: Jason Vaughan

**Table 4: 2023/24 Contingencies as at the end of January 2024 (Month 10)**

- 2023/24 allocation of £6m, £0.3m has been allocated, remaining £5.7m is committed.

Service Area	Current Expenditure Budget	Current Income Budget	Current Net Budget	Full Year Projection	Month 10 Variance	A/(F)	RAG Status	Movement From Month 9
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m			£m
Corporate Contingency	5.7	0.0	5.7	5.7	0.0	-	Green	0.0
<b>Contingencies Total</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>Green</b>	<b>0.0</b>

## **Contingencies – key risks, mitigations, future issues, and opportunities**

£0.3m has been allocated to the Strategic Asset Management budget to cover the costs associated with work on Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) surveys.

The balance of the Contingency budget (£5.7m) is forecast to be fully committed to cover the additional costs of the National Pay Award over and above the 5% that was budgeted for, temporary staffing, and costs of the Financial Resilience Review. The 2023/24 pay award has now been settled and the final agreed offer of £1,925 on most scale points.

## **Core Revenue Funding**

Lead Member for Core Revenue Funding: Cllr Liz Leyshon

Executive Director: Jason Vaughan

**Table 5: 2023/24 Core Revenue Funding as at the end of January 2024 (Month 10)**

- 2022/23 net budget (£522.8m), projected favourable variance £0.5m, no movement from month nine.

Service Area	Current	Current	Current Net	Full Year	Month	A/(F)	RAG Status	Movement From Month 9
	Expenditure Budget	Income Budget	Budget	Projection	10 Variance			
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m			
Council Tax	0.0	(338.7)	(338.7)	(338.7)	0.0	-	Green	0.0
Business Rates	0.0	(122.2)	(122.2)	(122.2)	0.0	-	Green	0.0
Grants	0.0	(57.3)	(57.3)	(57.8)	(0.5)	(F)	Green	0.0
Flexible Use of Capital Receipts	0.0	(4.0)	(4.0)	(4.0)	0.0	-	Green	0.0
Collection Fund Surplus/Deficit	6.1	(6.7)	(0.6)	(0.6)	0.0	-	Green	0.0
<b>Core Revenue Funding Total</b>	<b>6.1</b>	<b>(528.9)</b>	<b>(522.8)</b>	<b>(523.3)</b>	<b>(0.5)</b>	<b>(F)</b>	<b>Green</b>	<b>0.0</b>

## Core Revenue Funding - key explanations, actions, & mitigating controls

### Grants

The favourable variance of £0.5m for Grants is due to receiving confirmation that the Rural Services Delivery grant and the 2023/24 Services grant will be higher than budgeted. The grant confirmation was received after the budget setting process.

## Decision Report - Executive



Decision Date – 6<sup>th</sup> March 2024

Forward Plan Ref - FP/24/01/09

Key Decision – no

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## Corporate Performance Management Report Q3 2023/2024

Executive Member(s): Cllr Liz Leyshon

Local Member(s) and Division:

Lead Officer: Alyn Jones – Executive Director Strategy, Workforce and Localities

Author: Sara Cretney – Service Director Strategy and Performance

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## Background

1. This report outlines the performance of Somerset Council for quarter three (Q3) of the financial year 2023/2024 against a set of operational indicators for each Executive Directorate.
2. The operational indicators form part of an interim approach agreed by Executive at their meeting on 13/02/2023, pending the development and adoption of a Business Plan for the Council. The Business Plan, which will be developed post budget setting in Spring 2024 will set out the detailed activities being undertaken to deliver the Council Plan and will form the basis of performance reporting going forward.

## Summary

3. The 2023/2024 Q3 report contains 115 indicators, of which 57 have a RAG rating. Over the transition period for the new Council, the number of indicators will continue to increase and the approach to performance management will evolve and develop as more teams, services, budgets, and systems are aligned.

4. Where there are currently limited or no indicators for a service area, it is because service alignment and transition is taking shape and/or the indicators are complex and challenging to merge into a single measure for the whole of Somerset Council. Work is underway to further develop tolerance and targets for indicators as part of the development of the performance management approach.
5. Table 1 below summarises performance against the current set of indicators.

Directorate	No of KPIs	KPIs with RAG	Red			Amber			Green		
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q1	Q2	Q3
Public Health	6	5	0	0	0	3	3	4	2	2	1
Childrens Services	40	24	6	9	3	5	13	10	4	3	11
Adults Services	8	8	1	2	1	1	1	2	6	5	5
Community Services	22	15	2	6	3	3	2	4	6	5	8
Climate & Place	19	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Strategy, Workforce & Localities	16	2	0	0	0	2	1	2	0	1	0
Resources & Corporate Services	5	5	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	3	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>31</b>

Table 1: KPI Summary Table

6. A comparison between Q2 and Q3 of 2023/2024 shows that overall the number of red rated indicators has decreased. Positively the number of measures reporting green with satisfactory performance has increased between quarters.
7. Key issues identified from each Executive Directorate performance outturns for Q3 2023/2024 in appendix A are noted below.
- Public Health
    - a) The Public Health Ambassador programme is currently on hold due to the level of staff reorganisation in the rest of the council.
  - Children and Family Services
    - a) For Q3 the percentage of NEETs and Not Knowns has returned to expected levels with the colleges completing their enrolment returns at the end of September/beginning of October. SomersetWorks is receiving weekly enrolment data

from each of the Colleges and are sending these to our Secondary schools for checking of individual student destinations.

- Adult services
  - a) The number of overdue assessments and reviews continue to remain high and above our desired targets, impacted by rising demand, complexity of need, and ongoing internal workforce capacity pressures which our operational restructuring in part seeks to mitigate.
  
- Community Services
  - a) There is some incomplete data for Environmental Health service request response times from each of the former districts which is affecting the reported data. However, the Christmas period has also impacted the response times for each of the service areas. All high-risk complaints were responded to within target.
  - b) The Out of Hours/Lifeline service performance over the last quarter remains consistent, receiving 74,829 calls over the last three months. This quarter continues to see a slight dip in the answering within 60 seconds target of 97%, but it is not of concern as this is still strong. However, work continues to improve this to the agreed level.
  - c) Complaints for Somerset Council have declined over the quarter from 1057 to 889 with 53% being resolved within 10 working days. Capacity which was removed as part of the LGR restructuring is being reinstated.
  - d) Homes that do not meet the Decent Homes Standard: There are a number of reasons for Council homes managed by the inhouse service having higher than desired proportion of non-decent homes such as, the procurement pipeline has been rebuilt since covid and work continues to attract competent contractors with the capacity to deliver; validation delays that affect its ability to deliver Decent Homes; competitive employment market. The service continues to take steps to address these challenges.

- Climate and Place
  - a) Waste and Recycling: Due to increased workloads within one of our contractors around planning and roll-out of the first phase of the kerbside re-routing in February, data submissions have been significantly delayed for Q3 2023/2024. This has only affected data around our kerbside services, however due to the nature of how the measures work, until we have all data from all sources and contractors, we cannot calculate overall results. Our contractor has been asked for a breakdown of missing datasets and a timeline to rectify.
  - b) Highways and Transport: The number of people killed and seriously injured (KSI) in road collisions flow of data for 2023/2024 from Avon and Somerset Police is currently running 6 months behind due to issues experienced with Niche software. Latest update is that this issue is likely to remain until at least summer 2024 so it is unlikely normal dataflow will resume until Autumn 2024 at the earliest. We have updated Q2 and Q3 with available unvalidated collision data, low numbers, but we do anticipate more accurate figures at the next update. We are currently running 85% lower than expected.
- Strategy, Workforce and Localities
 

No performance issues to highlight for Q3 2023/2024.
- Resources and Corporate Services
  - a) In relation to Revs and Bens indicators for Council Tax and Business Rates collection, the target for the end of quarter 3 was 81.19%, whereas we had collected 79.82%. The shortfall of 1.37% is less than the shortfall reported at the end of quarter 2 (2.17%) and results from several factors including the economic climate and delays in commencing recovery action in some areas due to cash posting problems earlier in the year resulting from the implementation of the new finance system. Processes have not been fully implemented to make internal transfers to clear elements of the Council's own Business Rate liability, which we believe would make us broadly on target. Ordinarily this would happen early in the financial year, so this is further distorting the collection rates.

8. Possible key performance indicators that may be considered for future reporting are listed below. This list is not exhaustive.



- Climate and Place
    - a) Climate, Environmental and Sustainability service are considering carbon emissions indicators.
  - Resources and Corporate Services
    - a) Procurement and Strategic Asset Management continue to develop and align indicators to be included in the performance report.
  - Strategy, Workforce and Localities
    - a) Workforce indicators are being developed and aligned to provide a wider context for Somerset Council.
9. Alongside the development of the performance indicators and corporate performance framework, developmental work is being undertaken to test performance reporting systems that will enable more intuitive and interactive reporting, monitoring, and management of performance data.

## **Recommendations**

10. The Executive are asked to endorse Q3 2023/2024 Performance Management Report (appendix A) for Somerset Council.

The Executive are also asked to consider:

- a) whether the proposed actions are adequate and appropriate to address concerns and improve performance to the desired level.
- b) the content, level of detail provided and the format of the report and make any recommendations for improvements.

## **Reasons for recommendations**

11. To ensure performance management is being effectively managed, reviewed and any areas of concern identified and addressed.

## **Other options considered**

12. Alternative options involving the continuation of existing Somerset Councils' performance reporting arrangements were considered. However, this would

not enable the performance of the new unified council services to be managed effectively and efficiently.

### **Links to Council Plan and Medium-Term Financial Plan**

13. Future arrangements for Corporate Performance Reporting will align with the priorities set out in the Council Plan and activities detailed within the Business Plan. In this way performance management arrangements will focus on delivery of the priorities and vision of the Council.
14. The interim arrangements set out in this report will ensure key service delivery performance continues to be monitored and measured.
15. Performance and finance monitoring reporting will be aligned to ensure that these can be considered together.

### **Financial and Risk Implications**

16. There are no direct financial implications to the proposals set out in this report. Detailed Budget Monitoring reports are included within the meeting agenda pack.
17. Failure to have effective arrangements in place to adequately manage performance of key services would create a risk that service performance could deteriorate, and effective corrective action not being undertaken in a timely manner.

### **Legal Implications**

18. There are no legal implications to this recommendation being accepted.

### **HR Implications**

19. There are no direct HR implications resulting from this report. however, consideration will need to be given to resourcing areas of concern identified within the report.

### **Other Implications:**

### **Equalities Implications**

20. Where appropriate, measures will be reported including information against protected characteristics. Where services identify disproportionality in service delivery, uptake or impact, additional information regarding these impacts will be provided.

### **Community Safety Implications**

21. There are no implications

### **Climate Change and Sustainability Implications**

22. There are no implications

### **Health and Safety Implications**

23. There are no implications

### **Health and Wellbeing Implications**

24. There are no implications

### **Social Value Implications**

25. There are no implications

### **Scrutiny comments / recommendations:**

26. This is the third corporate performance management report for Somerset Council. Scrutiny arrangements are yet to be confirmed.

### **Background Papers**

- Performance Management Framework for Somerset Council [available on request]

## Appendices

- Appendix A: Corporate Performance Management Report for Q3 2023/2024 consisting of the following executive directorate areas.
  - Public Health
  - Children and Family Services
  - Adult Services
  - Climate and Place
  - Community Services
  - Resources and Corporate Services
  - Strategy, Workforce and Localities

## Report Sign-Off

	Officer Name	Date Completed
Legal & Governance Implications	Alyn Jones	19/02/2024
Communications	Peter Elliott	12/02/2024
Finance & Procurement	Jason Vaughan	19/02/2024
Workforce	Alyn Jones	19/02/2024
Asset Management	Oliver Woodhams	22/02/2024
Executive Director / Senior Manager	Alyn Jones	19/02/2024
Strategy & Performance	Alyn Jones	19/02/2024
Executive Lead Member	Cllr Liz Leyshon	21/02/2024
<b>Consulted:</b>	Councillor Name	
Opposition Spokesperson (circulated)	David Fothergill	22/02/2024
Scrutiny Chairs (circulated)	Martin Dimery	22/02/2024
	Leigh Redman	22/02/2024
	Gill Slocombe	22/02/2024
	Gwil Wren	22/02/2024
	Bob Filmer	22/02/2024

**Appendix A:**  
**Corporate Performance Management Report Q3 2023/2024**

**Introduction**

This appendix sets out performance against each indicator that has been agreed with Executive Directors as part of the interim performance management arrangements that will evolve and develop over the transition period for the new Somerset Council as teams, services, budgets, and systems are aligned.

Each Executive Directorate section below sets out:

- A summary overview of performance, including context, areas for improvement, and/or achievements during the period.
- An outturn table with key performance indicators with Red Amber Green (RAG) rating where possible.
- Direction of Travel arrows are comparing performance on a quarterly basis, even where there is monthly data added.
- Tolerances and targets are being developed and reviewed with services.

In addition to the performance indicators provided within this report there are many operational service performance indicators currently being reviewed and aligned across the organisation at Service Director level. Any indicators that are expected to be added to this report from Q4 2023/2024 onwards have been highlighted in the covering report. Trend data, where possible, to show performance over time has been included in this report.

Breastfeeding Going for Gold All standards are on track to be met for the final audit which has been confirmed this month to go ahead by UNICEF in June 2024.

The Council has started to implement a new digital process for developmental checks making it easier for parents to book appointments and a survey has been sent to parents to understand any barriers. The percentage different between the quarters isn't significant and is as expected, especially during the Christmas period. Comparing against rates in the Southwest (77.6%) and England (74.1%) Somerset Council are performing better.






For the Mental Health indicator in Q3 2023/2024, at least 50 people were receiving 1 to 1 support from the bereavement service each month, 100 people have signed up to the Orange Button Scheme (a key support network for suicide prevention in Somerset), 172 people completed suicide prevention training and 20 people completed mental health training. At the end of Q3 2023/2024 the Council are below the cumulative targets set for all training measures and the Orange Button scheme however, sign-ups will always be limited when training reach is restricted. The Council currently have a campaign running for the Orange Button Scheme and will report on the success.

Public Health Nursing have started to implement a new digital process called 'Choose and Book' making it easier for parents to book this review. In addition, a survey has been sent to parents and collated to establish the barriers to booking and attending the appointment to improve uptake.

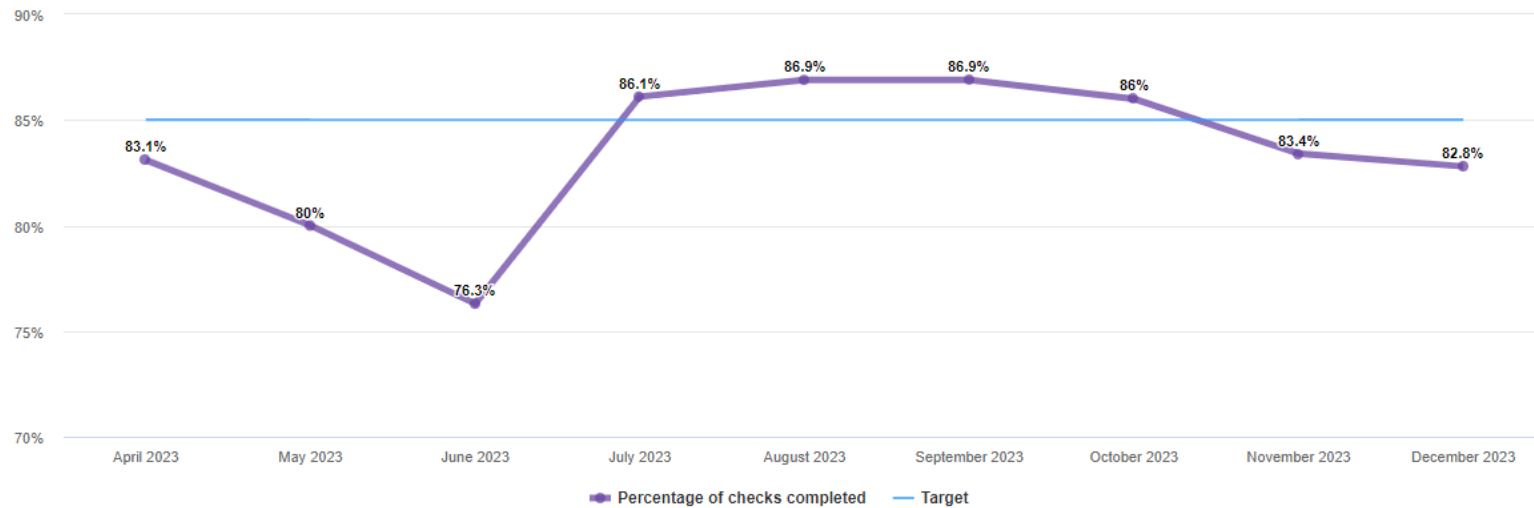
The adult substance misuse treatment trajectory is ambitious and set nationally, we have revised national targets based on new national prevalence data for opiate and crack use and increased alcohol targets. There is reasonable confidence that we will achieve these trajectories.

For smoking 4 week quit rates there is a normal variation due to small numbers and it is anticipated higher quit rates in upcoming quarters.

The Public Health Ambassador programme is currently on hold due to the level of staff reorganisation in the rest of the council.

Key Performance Indicators	What is good performance high or low	Target	Tolerance	Outturn									DoT
				July 2023	August 2023	Sept 2023	Q2 2023/24	Oct 2023	Nov 2023	Dec 2023	Q3 2023/24		
				Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value		
Breastfeeding - Gold Award working to gold accreditation in July 24 RAG	n/a	Green	no tolerance as an assessment	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	
Mental Health Promotion RAG based on range of metrics	n/a	Green	no tolerance as an assessment	Amber	Amber	Amber	Amber	Amber	Amber	Amber	Amber	Amber	
Coverage of 2.5 years developmental check	High	85%	Amber within 10% of target Red below 10%	86.1%	86.9%	86.9%	86.6%	86%	83.4%	82.8%	84.1%		
Adults in structured treatment for Substance Misuse Commissioning RAG against 20% increase from 2021/22 baseline option across a range of outcomes for adults and children	n/a	Green	no tolerance as an assessment	2,237	2,272	2,305	Amber	2,318	2,333	2,328	Amber		
Smoking: Number of people who are quit at four weeks (SC Commissioned Services Go Smoke Free and Smoke Free Families)	High	250	Amber within 10% of target Red below 10%	Reported Quarterly			283	Reported Quarterly			247		
Public Health Ambassador programme (apportioned target will be set) on hold	Low	8	Amber within 10% of target Red below 10%	0	0	0	0	On Hold				n/a	

Coverage of 2.5 years developmental check-



**Children and Family Services - Executive Director Claire Winter**

Children’s Services has just been awarded improvement partner status by the Department for Education. This is an accolade of the good practice in Children’s Social Care and means that the government will ask us to support improvement in Local Authorities whose Children’s Services are struggling.

Sufficiency

- Homes and Horizons - the strong partnership model between Somerset Council, CAMHS and Homes2Inspire is working well to create stability for young people in their new homes, enabling more Somerset young people to live in Somerset and preventing the use of high cost, out of county placements
- The new 16+ service has been commissioned - to enable young people to thrive and achieve positive outcomes in relation to independent living



### Efficiency

- Continued engagement with schools and partners to develop a programme of work that will support delivery of the Somerset Education for Life Strategy
- The 12 appointed Connect Somerset Area Champions continue to work closely with communities to make it easier for families to access the help that they need earlier
- #Help4All online services launched - providing advice for families on money, food, housing, health and wellbeing, domestic abuse, problems with drugs or alcohol and parenting advice
- The Christmas Healthy Happy Holidays programme launched successfully in December, with more than 4,000 places booked by 2,000 families on the launch day

### Managing Risk

- Launch of a new debt advice and income maximisation service from Auriga

*\*Please note that a number of the benchmark figures for the measures below have been updated. Therefore, the Direction of Travel and the RAG may not appear to correspond. Direction of Travel is reporting against the performance figure, with the RAG rating relating to the performance against benchmark. This will be in line from quarter 4.*

Key Performance Indicators	What is good performance high or low	Benchmark	Outturn		DoT
			Q2 2023/24	Q3 2023/24	
			Value	Value	
The percentage of Somerset schools rated inadequate	Low	3%	6%	5%	↑
Overall, School Attendance	High	92.5% (22/23, National) (updated benchmark)	93.8%	92.5%	↓
Primary Attendance	High	94% (22/23)(updated benchmark)	95.7%	94.7%	↓
Secondary Attendance	High	90.7% (updated benchmark)	92.1%	90.4%	↓

Key Performance Indicators	What is good performance high or low	Benchmark	Outturn		DoT
			Q2 2023/24	Q3 2023/24	
			Value	Value	
Children with SEND (EHCP & SEND support) Attendance	High	EHCP – 86.7% SEND Support 88.9% (Pre Covid) (updated benchmarks)	89%	87.3%	↓
Children with a Social Worker (Children Looked After (CLA)) Attendance	High	TBC	84.7%	81.8%	↓
Children with a Social Worker (Children In Need (CIN) & Child Protection (CP)) Attendance	High	TBC	75.9%	74%	↓
Overall Persistent School Absences	Low	2022/23 Ofsted: England 22.3% (updated) South West 25.7% Pre-Covid Somerset 11.3%	19.4%	21.4%	↓
Primary Persistent School Absences	Low	17.2% (22/23)	15.3%	15.4%	↓
Secondary Persistent School Absences	Low	28.3% (22/23)	23%	27.3%	↓
Children with SEND (Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) & Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Support) Persistent School Absences – Special Schools	Low	2022/23 EHCP: 37.8% SEN Support: 33.4%	35.5%	30.9%	↑
Children with SEND (EHCP & SEND Support) Persistent School Absences – Pupil Referral Units	Low	TBC	60.5%	77.3%	↓
Children with a Social Worker (Children Looked After (CLA)) Persistent School Absences	Low	TBC	28.1%	37.2%	↓
Children with a Social Worker (Children In Need (CIN) & Child Protection (CP)) Persistent School Absences	Low	TBC	48.1%	56.8%	↓
Overall Exclusions – Rolling 12 months	Low	120 (2021/22 Somerset Outturn)	140	162	↓
Children with SEND (EHCP & SEN Support) Exclusions – Rolling 12 months	Low	75 (2021/22 Somerset Outturn)	99	100	↓
Children with a Social Worker (CLA) Exclusions – Rolling 12 months	Low	TBC	2	1	↑

Key Performance Indicators	What is good performance high or low	Benchmark	Outturn		DoT
			Q2 2023/24	Q3 2023/24	
			Value	Value	
Children with a Social Worker (CIN & CP) Exclusions – Rolling 12 months	Low	TBC	14	19	↓
EHCPs – Request for Assessment	n/a	n/a	43	71	n/a
Percentage of Education Health and Care (EHC) Assessments Completed within 20 weeks	High	64% (updated benchmark)	37.93%	57.5%	↑
Total Number of EHCPs maintained	n/a	n/a	5,247	5,403	n/a
Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET) %	Low	Somerset 2.1% 2021-2.2% (National NEET)	2.4%	3.8%	↓
NEET – Unknown	Low	For 2021 6.3% Participation 93.6%	89.6%	3.8%	n/a
Percentage of Children receiving a 2-2.5 year review who are in receipt of a Universal Service at time of review	High	n/a	71.05%	72.67%	↑
Percentage of Children receiving a 2-2.5 year review who are in receipt of a Targeted Level Service at time of review	High	n/a	23.68%	22.81%	↓
Percentage of Children receiving a 2-2.5 year review who are in receipt of a Specialist Level of Support at time of review	High	n/a	5.26%	4.5%	↓
Proportion of Children receiving a New Birth Visit following discharge from midwifery at 10-14 days	High	England: 72.8% SW: 82.7%	84.91%	89%	↑
Proportion of Children receiving a New Birth Visit following discharge from midwifery after 14 days	High	England: 25.6% SW: 14.8%	13.4%	9%	↓
Overall proportion of children receiving their 2-2.5 year check	High	England: 77.6% SW: 74.1%	78.11%	82%	↑
Children Looked After (Rate per 10,000)	n/a	n/a	52.36	54	n/a
Number of children open to Social Care at Risk of Child Exploitation	n/a	n/a	94	106	n/a
Targeted Early Help referrals (Local Authority) Rolling 12 months	n/a	n/a	5,125	126	n/a
Number of children in residential care	n/a	n/a	84	96	n/a

Key Performance Indicators	What is good performance high or low	Benchmark	Outturn		DoT
			Q2 2023/24	Q3 2023/24	
			Value	Value	
Number of children in Foster Care (combined internal and external provision)	n/a	n/a	357	361	n/a
Ratio of children in Foster Care (Internal provision)	TBC	70%	64.71%	63.99%	n/a
Ratio of children in Foster Care (External provision)	TBC	30%	35.29%	36.01%	n/a
Number of children adopted over the last 12 months	n/a	n/a	45	35	n/a
Percentage of Children Looked After (CLA) in Residential Care who are placed outside of Somerset	TBC	TBC	40.99%	38.04%	n/a
Percentage of CLA in Foster Care who are placed outside of Somerset	n/a	n/a	37.72%	38.98%	n/a
Number of households with dependent children assessed as being at risk of homelessness	n/a	n/a	40	15	n/a

### Adult Services - Executive Director Mel Lock

Somerset has continued to see the impact of additional investment and focused commissioning activity, as well as some pick up in care provider recruitment of new starters over recent months, with levels of unmet homecare need falling to their lowest ever levels since March 2021. We are presently in a position where provision of domiciliary care outstrips demand, meaning we are not currently accepting any new home care providers onto our procurement framework. This is a significantly improved position to where we were a year ago.

November 2023 saw the highest number of contract handbacks this financial year to date; however, 16 of the 21 stemmed from one provider which decided to rationalise some of their runs to make it more economically viable to deliver support in other areas. Pleasingly, December figures have reduced to 7. Although occasional care package handbacks are not uncommon and can occur for a variety of reasons, most commonly staffing capacity issues within the provider, these rose sharply during the pandemic as

evidenced by annual stats below but have reduced by 34% when comparing 2023 numbers to those in 2022. 2020 – 54 package handbacks. 2021 – 233 package handbacks. 2022 – 238 package handbacks. 2023 – 157 package handbacks.

Care package contract handbacks place additional pressure on Local Authority staff to find replacement care within a stretched care market and is therefore an indicator we monitor closely as part of both commissioning and quality activity.

New placements (both permanent and temporary) into residential and nursing care are closely tracked and monitored by the service. During 2022/2023 we averaged 40.5 placements per month for people aged 65+. So far in 2023/2024 we are averaging 46 new placements per month for people aged 65+. As well as permanent placements, we are also monitoring the number of temporary / interim placements being made. A key part of this is ensuring that temporary placements are reviewed in a timely manner. Our work with Newton Europe as part of our 'My Life My Future' transformation programme is focused on seizing opportunities to support our practice and approach in promoting people's independence and ensure people receive the right support at the right place at the right time.

The overall resolution rate for contacts handled and resolved with no costed service for 2022/2023 was 63.7%. The equivalent figure for 2021/2022 was 64.9%. The cumulative figure for the period April to December 2023 is 60.9%.

Between April and December 2023, in approx. 93% of cases, the identified safeguarding risk was either removed or reduced following enquiry completion. Data and trends continue to be routinely monitored by the service and the multiagency Safeguarding Board. Its Performance and Quality Subgroup met most recently in early November 2023 and examined latest performance in depth. National SAC data for 2022/2023 was published on 7th September 2023 and is supporting benchmarking analysis. Both the Board and the ASC Safeguarding Service will play a key role in informing the CQC Assessment of LA in relation to how the system ensures safety and is focused on improving local effectiveness. The service submitted an organisational self-audit relating to adult safeguarding as part of regional SAB work in late December 2024 and has a new Practice Development AP joining in January. The service and SSAB were very active in supporting national Stop Adult Abuse week during November – this included contributing to webinars regionally, the internal Carnival of Practice, launching a new public-awareness campaign and refreshing the Board's website.

Since launch in January 2022, our ASC Feedback form responses have offered valuable insights on the experience of service users and carers, partner colleagues and other key stakeholders, and opportunities for learning and improvement. We know the single biggest element and influencer of both positive and negative feedback is communication – how clear, responsive, professional and compassionate we are in our respective job roles makes a fundamental difference to the experience of those we engage with and

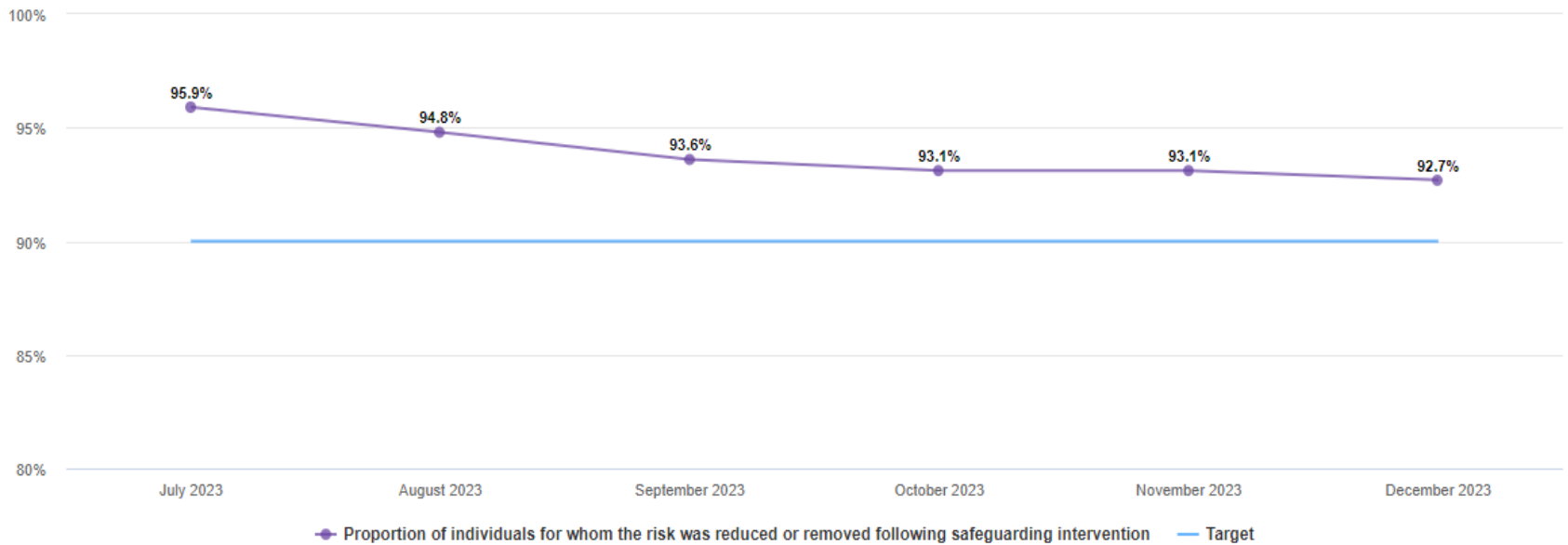
support. In December 2023, 67% of the feedback received via this route rated the overall service received from our staff and teams as good or excellent. To date this financial year from April, 211 submissions have been received and 167 (79.1%) of these are rated good or better. We are also now capturing feedback from people receiving services as part of our monthly auditing approach. The experience of people is critical to our understanding of our performance and will play an important part in future CQC assessment. A detailed report on the experience of people using adult social care services during 2023 will be presented to our Practice Quality Board in January.

These figures reflect Care Act Assessments that are overdue (above a 28 day target timeframe), with the December 2023 standing at 910 – a sharp rise on the previous month’s figures. Detailed assurance reports in relation to high levels of overdue assessments and reviews are presented on a quarterly basis to the Safeguarding Adults Board’s performance and quality subgroup, with the latest report received in November 2023 and the next due in early February 2024. Significant work is being undertaken by ASC Ops to address wait lists, but capacity and demand pressures continue to impact on performance. A 12 month trajectory plan was signed off in May for overdue assessments and reviews. Each neighbourhood team has created a recovery plan based on the monthly trajectories and targets. Advanced practitioners are expected to undertake regular monitoring of the teams’ performance and reporting statistics. Service Managers meet with APs weekly to review and update the Action plans. A monthly Operational Assurance Group has been established to scrutinise individual team performance against trajectories and it is expected that strategic and service Managers will provide regular feedback to teams regarding their performance toward their trajectory and addressing any issues that are restricting the flow through of work.

Key Performance Indicators	What is good performance high or low	Target	Outturn						DoT
			July 2023	August 2023	Sept 2023	Oct 2023	Nov 2023	Dec 2023	
			Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	
Sourcing Care: Number of care packages on unmet need list	Low	15	2	4	2	1	0	0	↑
Number of returned packages of care (homecare 'hand backs')	Low	TBC	10	14	13	4	21	7	↓
No of new placements in residential and nursing care in month (18- 64)	Low	10 per 10,000	1	3	1	4	0	3	↓
No of new placements in residential and nursing care in month (65+)	Low	52 per month	39	50	40	43	42	42	↓

Key Performance Indicators	What is good performance high or low	Target	Outturn						DoT
			July 2023	August 2023	Sept 2023	Oct 2023	Nov 2023	Dec 2023	
			Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	
% of total contacts handled and resolved with no costed service by Somerset Direct	High	60%	59.1%	59.1%	60%	59.7%	61.5%	60.8%	↑
Safeguarding risk outcomes – proportion of individuals for whom the risk was reduced or removed following safeguarding intervention	High	90%	95.9%	94.8%	93.6%	93.1%	93.1%	92.7%	↓
ASC stakeholder feedback - % rating service received from ASC as 'Good' or 'Excellent' overall	High	75%	90%	74.1%	53.3%	87.5%	84%	66.7%	↑
Total number of overdue Care Act Assessments	Low	200	826	845	858	866	858	910	↓

Safeguarding risk outcomes



**Community Services - Executive Director Chris Hall**

Cultural Services

The overall performance for libraries in Q3 2023/2024 has increased compared to Q3 2022/2023, which is as expected for this service and the Council is in a good position against national benchmarking. The number of library members has grown significantly over the past 12 months, due to a targeted membership drive, and is up 10.5% year on year. The number of events (reading, digital and other) has increased by 8%, and both digital use indicators are also up year on year. However, the total number of visitors has decreased by 2.8%, compared with the same period last year, as expected due to the increased number of library opening hours impacted by the statutory holiday this December.



Key Performance Indicators	What is good performance high or low	Target	Tolerance	Outturn		DoT
				Q2 2023/24	Q3 2023/24	
				Value	Value	
Library Services - Events (total of: Reading, Digital and other)	High	n/a	Compare to same ¼ previous year	1,838	1,832	↓
Library Services - Total Visitors (in person)	High	n/a	Compare to same ¼ previous year	240,095	202,531	↓

### Customer Services

Customer Services received over 150,000 calls over the last quarter with an expected seasonal dip in December due to the festive period and fewer working days, with customer satisfaction remaining high with an average of 84.59% of callers rating the service as good or better. The team also supported increased volumes in October due to emergency situations brought about from flooding and severe weather. The average wait time for Customer Service calls over the last quarter has been consistent at 2 minutes and 22 seconds which shows an improvement over quarter 2 where the average was 3 minutes. Whilst we are pleased with this performance it does mask longer wait times on some queues such as Revenues and Benefits, Adults and Children Social Care. We are working hard and creatively to try to reduce longer wait times by ironically increasing the wait time on those lines where traditionally performance is strong and where Advisers add less value and encourage customers to self-serve using digital means. This enables capacity to be redirected to our busy lines and support our most vulnerable who cannot do it for themselves.



Our Welcome BOT abandonment of 8% is consistent month on month and we continue to review why customers abandon the call. Performance at the first point of contact remains consistent at 73% resulting in only 27% of calls being transferred to services. Currently we are developing new service dashboards and setting up ongoing monthly conversations to identify how customer interactions can be improved and self-help further enabled. This quarter we have also seen a further reduction in customers using the old legacy council telephone numbers from 19,529 in April to 4,436 in December. We are now moving to decommissioning these lines for the end of March 2024, which in turn will deliver a small financial saving.

Over the last quarter we have seen 6,281 customers visit our face-to-face Customer Service Points and answered/resolved on average 95.94% of all interactions at the first point of contact. Use of our virtual assistants [VAL], where customers connect to the service through the Attend Anywhere software continues to be slow but whilst Face to Face offers exist customers tend not to want to go online. We are currently consulting on proposals to convert 5 Customer Service Points in East and West to Customer Access

Points due to reductions in demand, seeking to deliver a consistent service countywide and to contribute to the financial emergency. A decision will be made in March and plans for implementation will be rolled out dependent on the outcome.

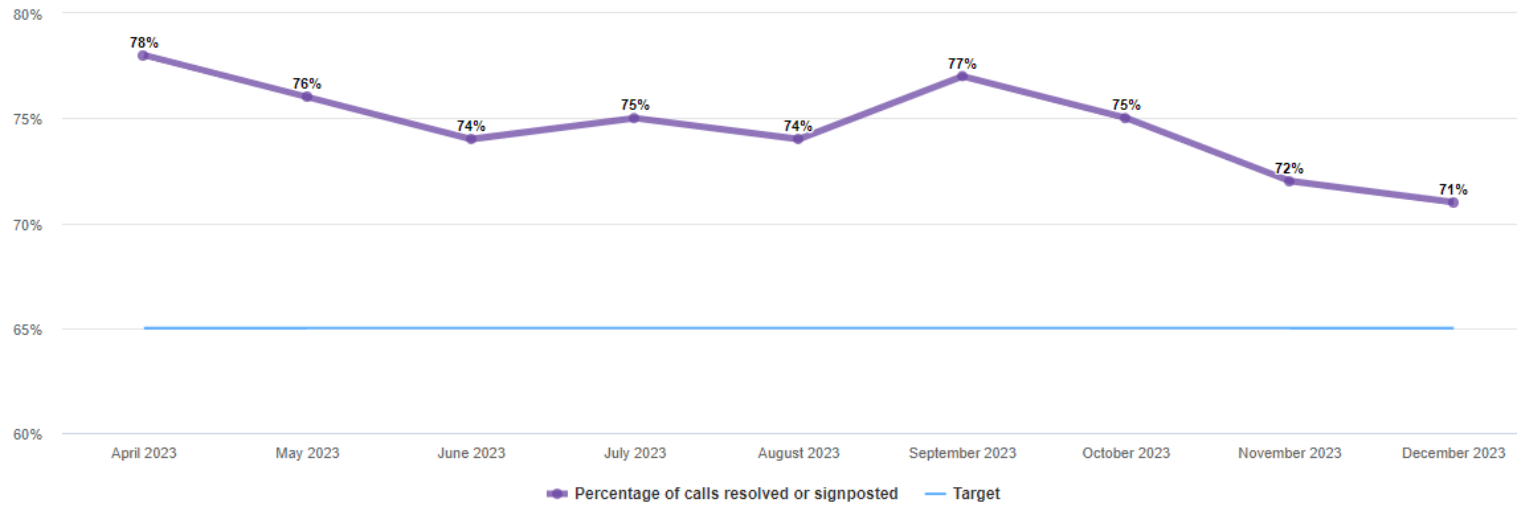
The Out of Hours/Lifeline service performance over the last quarter remains consistent, receiving 74,829 calls over the last three months. This quarter continues to see a slight dip in the answering within 60 seconds target of 97%, but it is not of concern as this is still strong. However, work continues to improve this to the agreed level. A digital switchover programme has commenced and aim to deliver by the government deadline of 2025.

Complaints for Somerset Council have declined over the quarter from 1057 to 889 with 53% being resolved within 10 working days. The number of complaints escalating to stage 2 also slightly improved over the last quarter from 92 to 89. Capacity which was removed as part of the LGR restructuring is being reinstated. We have also introduced a new indicator 'The number of complaints which have been upheld across all services' which is currently 53%. Work continues with services to improve this performance.

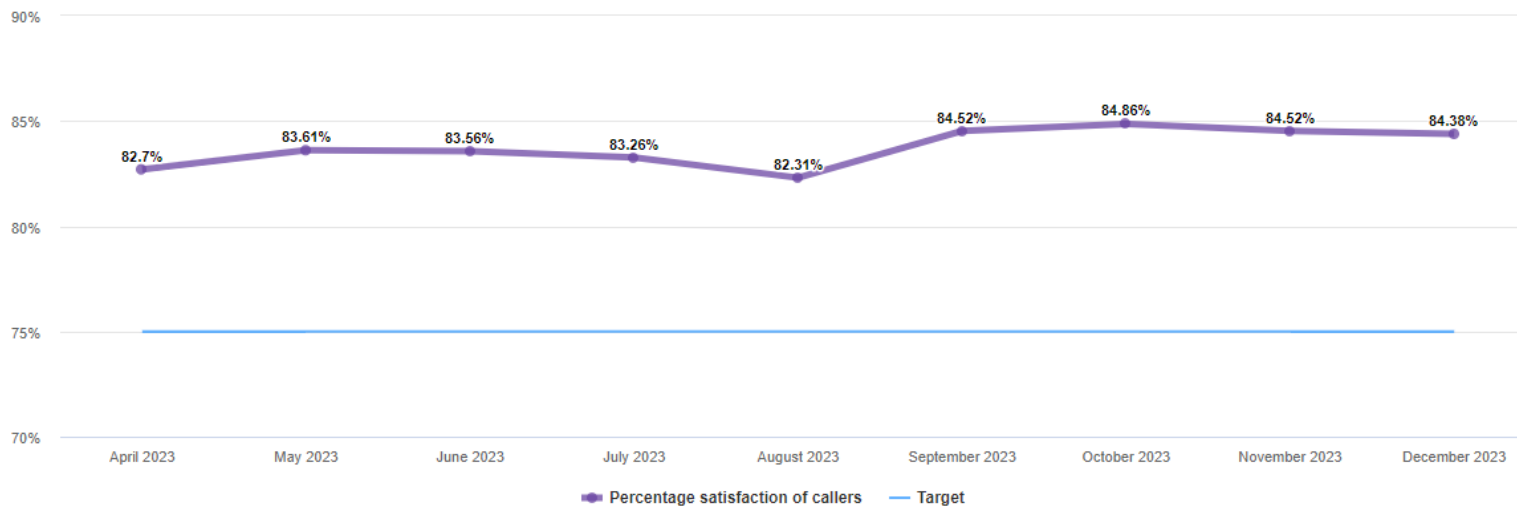
Key Performance Indicators	What is good performance high or low	Target	Tolerance	Outturn								DoT
				July 2023	August 2023	Sept 2023	Q2 2023/24	Oct 2023	Nov 2023	Dec 2023	Q3 2023/24	
				Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	
Overall volume of calls received within period	n/a	n/a	n/a	58,699	57,854	58,130	174,683	55,682	54,826	40,106	150,614	n/a
Resolved at first point of contact - Percentage of calls which have been resolved or signposted	High	65%	Green 65% + Amber 50%+ Red <50%	75%	74%	77%	75%	75%	72%	71%	73%	
Customer Satisfaction - Represents how satisfied callers are with the service they have received	High	75%	Green 75% + Amber 60% + Red <60%	83.26%	82.31%	84.52%	83.36%	84.86%	84.52%	84.38%	84.59%	
Out of Hours Somerset Lifeline - Number of calls received in total within period	n/a	n/a	n/a	35,013	22,907	22,232	80,152	22,794	27,558	24,477	74,829	n/a

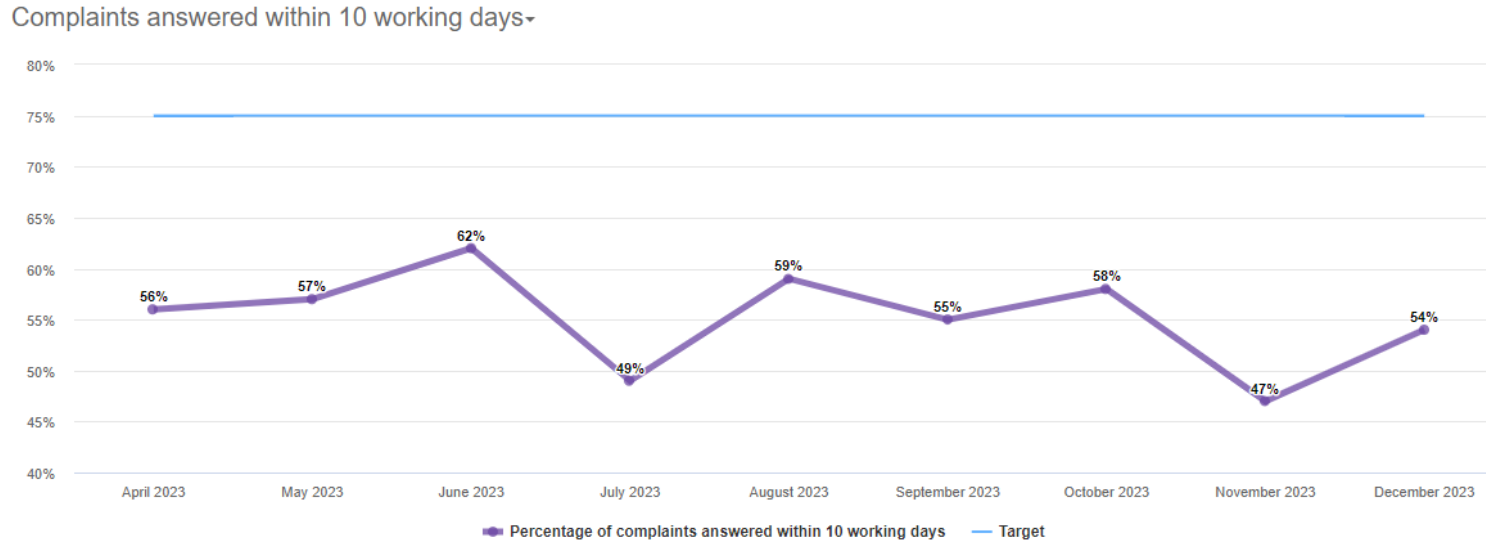
Key Performance Indicators	What is good performance high or low	Target	Tolerance	Outturn								DoT	
				July 2023	August 2023	Sept 2023	Q2 2023/24	Oct 2023	Nov 2023	Dec 2023	Q3 2023/24		
				Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value		
Out of Hours Somerset Lifeline - Percentage of calls answered within 60 seconds	High	97.5%	No threshold as it is a pass / fail	97.65%	97.73%	96.17%	97.18%	95.93%	94.73%	94.77%	95.14%	↓	
Complaints - Percentage of complaints answered within 10 working days across all services	High	75%	Green >75% Amber 50-74% Red <50%	49%	59%	55%	54%	58%	47%	54%	53%	↓	
Complaints - Number of complaints which have been upheld across all services	Low	n/a	n/a	49%	69%	65%	61%	59%	47%	54%	53%	n/a	NEW
Complaints - Number of Ombudsman enquiries received in period across all services	Low	n/a	n/a	8	6	10	24	7	17	10	34	n/a	

### Calls resolved at first point of contact-



### Customer Satisfaction-





Regulatory Services

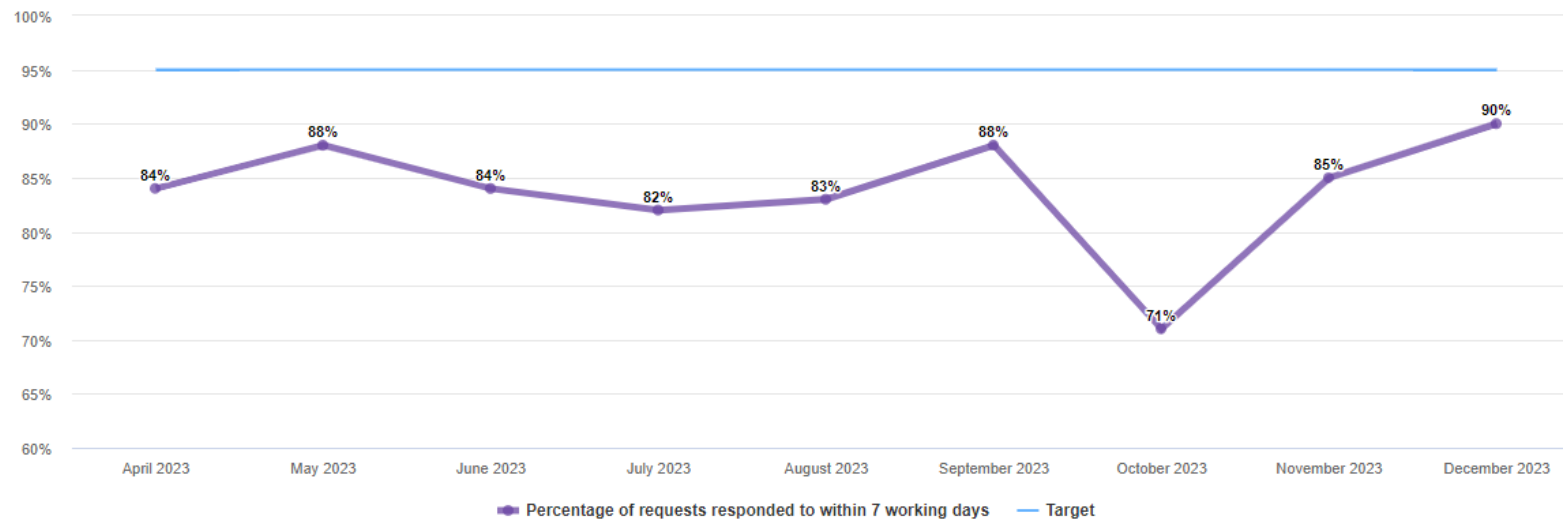
Fly tipping collection performance has stabilised after sickness and recruitment issues caused some problems in certain areas over the summer. A high of 90% of collections is being reported across all geographical areas in general, with one recent dip in the West. However, the figure reported remains within the KPI target.

78% of high risk food inspections were completed in December 2023. Nine inspections were due, and 7 inspections undertaken. The two outstanding inspections were because of being unable to gain access to the premises and the Christmas period.

There is some incomplete data for service request response times from each of the districts which is affecting the reported data. However, the Christmas period has impacted the response times for each of the service areas. All high risk complaints were responded to within target.

Key Performance Indicators	Target	Outturn								DoT
		July 2023	August 2023	Sept 2023	Q2 2023/24	Oct 2023	Nov 2023	Dec 2023	Q3 2023/24	
		Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	
Licensing - 90% of valid Licensing applications processed within required timescales from receipt of a valid application	90%	96%	97%	97%	97%	99%	97%	98%	98%	↑
Food Hygiene - Carry out 100% of all programmed high risk food hygiene inspections and interventions each quarter	100%	46%	92%	100%	79%	78%	156%	78%	98%	↑
Environmental Health Requests - Responding to 95% of all service requests about Environmental Health, Private Sector Housing and Licencing within 7 working days	95%	82%	83%	88%	84%	71%	85%	90%	82%	↓
Fly-tipping - incidents responded to within 5 working days (Somerset Wide)	n/a	87% 291/333	84% 314/374	86% 322/373	86% 927/1080	96% 338/352	98% 382/391	96% 298/309	97% 1018/1052	↑

Environmental Health Requests-






Housing Services

Within the Executive report for Decent Homes the outturns are for in-house service (former Somerset West and Taunton Council properties), not from Homes in Sedgemoor (HiS).

There are a number of reasons for Council homes managed by the inhouse service having higher than desired proportion of non-decent homes such as, the procurement pipeline has been rebuilt since covid and work continues to attract competent contractors with the capacity to deliver; validation delays that affect its ability to deliver Decent Homes; competitive employment market. The service continues to take steps to address these challenges.

The Council set a 100% decency target for the Arm’s Length Management Organisation (ALMO) and this is the target for the in-house service. Due to challenges surrounding energy efficiency, which is one of the Decent Homes compliance criteria, a small number of homes will fail unless they are disposed of, or a large investment is made. Properties fall out of decency as components reach their decent homes life period. To manage this asset managers are bringing forward those components by one, or more, years to remove the just in time approach.

Somerset Council are aligning decent homes and net zero investment with the intention to deliver net zero target efficiently over the next 20 years. The council currently have access to £22.5m of grant and therefore the challenge is to match grant opportunities to homes.

Key Performance Indicators	What is good performance high or low	Target	Tolerance	Outturn								DoT
				July 2023	August 2023	Sept 2023	Q2 2023/24	Oct 2023	Nov 2023	Dec 2023	Q3 2023/24	
				Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	
Percentage of tenants are overall satisfied with the housing services provided by Somerset Council	High	77%	TBC	76%	76%	76%	76%	76%	76%	73%	73%	
True current tenant arrears at the end of month percentage	Low	2%	2.0-2.2% is Amber	1.84%	1.85%	1.84%	1.84%	1.67%	1.58%	1.96%	1.96%	
Percentage of housing dwellings with a valid gas safety certificate	High	100%	TBC	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	

Key Performance Indicators	What is good performance high or low	Target	Tolerance	Outturn									DoT
				July 2023	August 2023	Sept 2023	Q2 2023/24	Oct 2023	Nov 2023	Dec 2023	Q3 2023/24		
				Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value		
Percentage of communal areas with a Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) in place and FRA Review complete (where applicable)	High	100%	TBC	99.18%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	
Homes that do not meet the Decent Homes Standard	Low	1%	4%	6.2%	5.99%	5.93%	5.93%	6.09%	6.12%	6.25%	6.25%		
Percentage of cases where Prevention duty ended successfully in the period (note: circa 50% national average)	High	TBC	TBC	42%	33%	29%	29%	25%	32%	37%	37%	n/a	NEW
Number of households in temporary accommodation at the end of the period	Low	TBC	TBC	137	156	255	255	244	240	240	240	n/a	NEW
Number of families in B&B more than 6 weeks at the end of the reporting period	n/a	0	1 family in accommodation would be a fail			7	n/a	8	5	5	n/a		NEW

**Climate and Place - Executive Director Mickey Green**

Climate, Environment and Sustainability

Due to increased workloads with a contractor around planning and roll-out of the first phase of the kerbside re-routing in February 2024, data submissions have been significantly delayed for Q3 2023/2024.

Staff capacity has been significantly affected by this ongoing work due to a lack of resilience and expertise regarding certain functions within their workforce.



This has only affected data around our kerbside services, however due to the nature of how the measures work, until we have all data from all sources and contractors, we cannot calculate overall results. Our contractor has been asked for a breakdown of missing datasets and a timeline to rectify.


Key Performance Indicators	What is good performance high or low	Target	Tolerance	Outturn								DoT
				July 2023	August 2023	Sept 2023	Q2 2023/24	Oct 2023	Nov 2023	Dec 2023	Q3 2023/24	
				Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	
Waste - Residual household waste per household (N191) cumulative outturns (Kg)	Low	412kg per year	+ / - 5kg over the year	142.12	176.67	210.98	210.98 cumulative					
Waste - % of household waste reused, recycled or composted (NI 192)	High	56.35%	+ 4% / - 1% per year	58.48%	61.02%	57.71%	59.13% monthly					
Waste - Total amount of food waste (tonnes)	High	None set	None set	Reported Quarterly			5,438	Reported Quarterly				
Waste - % of food treated at Somerset's anaerobic digester	High	None set	None set	Reported Quarterly			100%	Reported Quarterly				
Waste - Total number of visits to recycling centres	n/a	None set	None set	Reported Quarterly			497,234	Reported Quarterly				n/a
Waste - Total amount of waste received at recycling centres (tonnes)	n/a	None set	None set	Reported Quarterly			24,753.04	Reported Quarterly				n/a
Waste - % of waste received at recycling sites that is recycled (incl composted, recovered, residual and hardcore)	High	None set	None set	Reported Quarterly			56%	Reported Quarterly				n/a

Infrastructure and Transport

The number of people killed and seriously injured (KSI) in road collisions flow of data for 2023/2024 from Avon and Somerset Police is currently running 6 months behind due to issues experienced with Niche software. Latest update is that this issue is likely to remain until at least summer 2024 so it is unlikely normal dataflow will resume until Autumn 2024 at the earliest. We have updated Q2 and Q3 with available unvalidated collision data, low numbers, but we do anticipate more accurate figures at the next update. We are currently running 85% lower than expected.

The outturns provided for planning applications responded to within the statutory deadline are reported two months in arrears this is due to the 21-day consultation period on planning application which would impact on our figures. The total percentage includes both Standing Advice and detailed comment applications. Outturns have remained consistent during Q3.

All the remaining outturns for Q3 are within the parameters we would expect for the services.

Key Performance Indicators	What is good performance high or low	Outturn								DoT
		July 2023	August 2023	Sept 2023	Q2 2023/24	Oct 2023	Nov 2023	Dec 2023	Q3 2023/24	
		Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	
Highways & Transport - % planning applications responded to within statutory 21-day deadline	High	92.43%	90.54%	93.22%	92.06%	90.83%	91.79%	88.44%	90.35%	
Highways & Transport - No. of parking penalties issued - On Street	TBC	2,123	2,468	2,312	6,903	2,655	2,961	2,507	8,123	n/a
Highways & Transport - No. of parking penalties issued - Off Street (car parks)	TBC	2,004	1,954	2,142	6,100	2,035	2,381	2,248	6,664	n/a
Highways & Transport - No. of parking penalties issued - Bus Gate	TBC	662	777	603	2,042	483	492	393	1,368	n/a
Highways & Transport - No. of people killed and seriously injured (KSI) in road collisions	TBC	26	31	12	69	7	8	2	17	n/a
Highways & Transport - No. of Street works permits processed	TBC	3,492	2,998	2,866	9,356	3,176	3,405	4,610	11,191	n/a

Key Performance Indicators	What is good performance high or low	Outturn								DoT
		July 2023	August 2023	Sept 2023	Q2 2023/24	Oct 2023	Nov 2023	Dec 2023	Q3 2023/24	
		Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	
Highways & Transport - No. of Traffic Regulation Orders (incl. TPCA's) processed	TBC	341	287	293	921	354	314	244	912	n/a
Highways & Transport - No. of events applications received	TBC	18	29	24	71	13	34	27	74	n/a
Highways & Transport - No. of enquiries into Traffic Engineering (as logged onto SharePoint)	TBC	928	1,121	882	2,931	967	1,014	420	2,401	n/a

Economy, Employment, and Planning

Performance this quarter remains significantly above the nationally set targets, with minimal change since last quarter. Volumes of decisions remain high, with officers working hard, despite the local challenges.

Key Performance Indicators	Target	Outturn								DoT
		July 2023	August 2023	Sept 2023	Q2 2023/24	Oct 2023	Nov 2023	Dec 2023	Q3 2023/24	
		Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	
Planning (major applications) Decisions total and % in time or extended time within reporting period	65%	Reported Quarterly			87%	Reported Quarterly			89%	↑
Planning (minor applications) Decisions total and % in time or extended time within reporting period	75%	Reported Quarterly			91%	Reported Quarterly			88%	↓
Planning (other applications) Decisions total and % in time or extended time within reporting period	85%	Reported Quarterly			93%	Reported Quarterly			95%	↑

**Strategy, Workforce and Localities - Executive Director Alyn Jones**

Partnerships and Localities

The team continue to bring together existing expertise and experience from the predecessor authorities to create structures and services that support a whole systems approach to community and partnership engagement and development. Whilst it is early days for the Local Community Networks (LCNs), the intention is that each one will identify local priorities which will translate into a delivery plan. These plans will need to have SMART measures. The intention is also to create performance measures relating to LCNs as a function and service, for example around participation and engagement levels, positive impact and community and stakeholder satisfaction.

Strategy and Performance

There are two key performance indicators for Equalities that are provided every six months. They do not have a RAG status applied but a commentary update.

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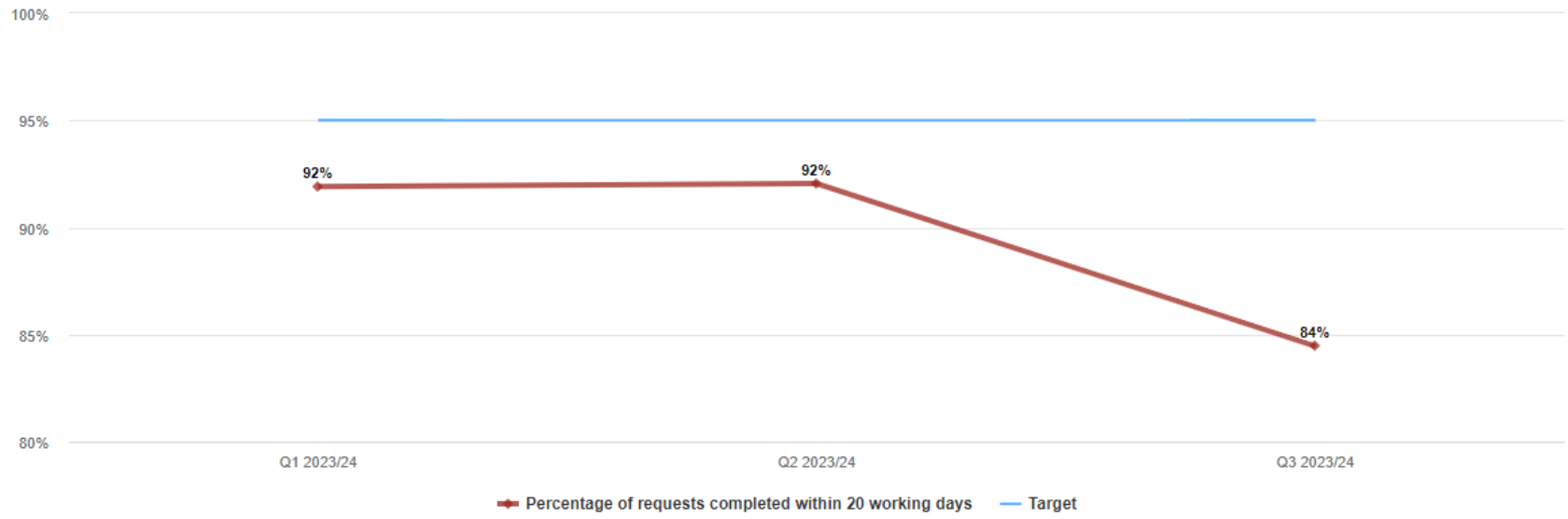
Key Performance Indicators	What is good performance high or low	Target	Outturn		DoT
			Q2 2023/24	Q3 2023/24	
			Value	Value	
Equalities: Percentage of (permanent) staff completing mandatory equalities modules on the learning management system	High	100%	Currently mandatory training has not been launched, although there is individual service-based training being undertaken		n/a
Equalities: compliance with the action plan that supports the equalities objectives	High	100%	The current Equality Objectives are being reviewed with the intention of identifying 3 new ones from 1st April 2024		n/a

Governance, Democratic and Legal

There was a reduction in the number of FOIs responded to within the 20 working day limit in Q3. This is due in large part to staff turnover in the FOI team towards the end of Q2, and a delay in the start date of the new staff member, due to notice periods, which impacted on performance during Q3. It also illustrates how easily service delivery can be impacted by a spike in submissions or a drop in capacity based on current resourcing.

Key Performance Indicators	What is good performance high or low	Target	Tolerance	Outturn				DoT
				Q2 2023/24		Q3 2023/24		
				%	Number	%	Number	
FOI/EIR: The number of requests received in period	n/a	n/a	n/a		472		426	n/a
FOI/EIR: % of requests received that were acknowledged within 2 days (when ack required)	High	95%	Green 95%+ Amber 80-94% Red <80%	97%		90%		↓
FOI/EIR: The number of FOI requests completed in period	n/a	n/a	n/a		390		399	n/a
FOI/EIR: The number & % of completed requests where all information was sent	n/a	n/a	n/a	57%	223	63%	252	↑
FOI/EIR: The number & % of completed requests where response was a full refusal	n/a	n/a	n/a	14%	55	13%	50	n/a
FOI/EIR: The number & % of completed requests where response was a partial refusal	n/a	n/a	n/a	8%	32	9%	36	n/a
FOI/EIR: The number & % of requests which did not result in disclosure for other reasons (e.g. info not held, invalid or lapsed request)	n/a	n/a	n/a	21%	80	15%	61	n/a
FOI/EIR: Percentage of requests completed within 20 working days	High	95%	Green 95%+ Amber 80-94% Red <80%	92%	359	84%	337	↓
FOI/EIR: The number of internal reviews requested in period	n/a	n/a	n/a	10		8		n/a
FOI/EIR: The number of requests outstanding at the end of the period	n/a	n/a	n/a	82		27		n/a

### FOI/EIR requests completed within 20 working days



Workforce

While there is a small increase in days lost due to staff sickness for Q3 2023/2024, this is in line with previous years due to the presence of winter illness and is not a cause for concern. The number of days lost remains close to the lower end of the target range. Work remains ongoing to verify vacancy information to ensure this is accurately reflecting budgeted vacancies. The Establishment and Recruitment Control Board (ERCB) has been in place since the start of November 2023 as part of financial control measure ensuring only essential posts are filled. Vacancies have been reviewed, first by the service and then by ERCB to challenge whether the post should be recruited to. As a result, the number of starters was less than the number of leavers in both November and December and for Q3 2023/2024, as a whole. ERCB remains in place for Q4 2023/2024.

Empty positions and funded hours on positions are going through a validation process with HR and Finance. The vacancy count figures include positions covered by Agency shown on SAP (payroll system) and exclude positions with 0 hours in the position hours field – these are being reviewed.

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Key Performance Indicators	What is good performance high or low	Target	Outturn								DoT	
			July 2023	Aug 2023	Sept 2023	Q2 2023/24	Oct 2023	Nov 2023	Dec 2023	Q3 2023/24		
			Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value		
Staff sickness – Working Days lost per Full Time Equivalent (FTE)	Low	2.2 days per quarter or 8.8 days per annum	Reported Quarterly			2.24 days	Reported Quarterly			2.47 days	n/a	NEW
Number of vacancies	n/a	n/a	926	938	964	n/a	956	874	911	n/a	n/a	NEW
Number of new starters	n/a	n/a	43	25	93	171	61	47	21	129	n/a	NEW
Number of leavers	n/a	n/a	45	71	69	185	31	56	55	142	n/a	NEW

## Resources and Corporate Services - Executive Director Jason Vaughan

### Finance and Procurement

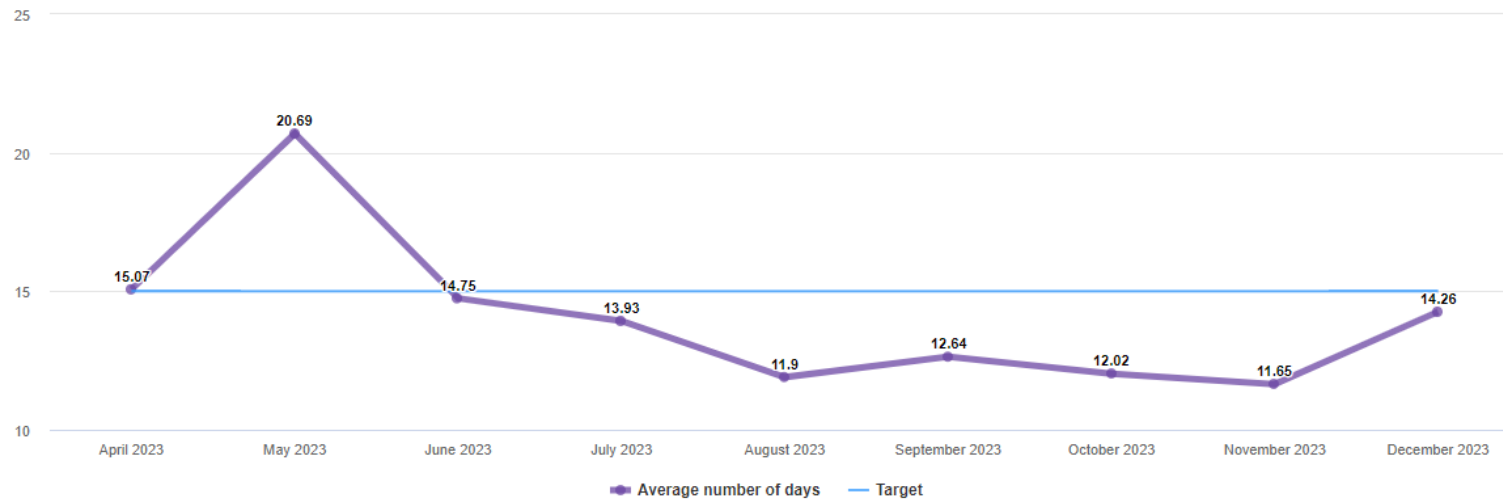
The target in-year collection rate for Business Rates for 2023/2024 is 96.71%. This represents the proportion of the net collectable debit (£169m) that is collected in year. Progress is tracked monthly against cumulative monthly targets. The target for the end of quarter 3 was 81.19%, whereas we had collected 79.82%. The shortfall of 1.37% is less than the shortfall reported at the end of quarter 2 (2.17%) and results from several factors including the economic climate and delays in commencing recovery action in some areas due to cash posting problems earlier in the year, resulting from the implementation of the new finance system. Processes have not been fully implemented to make internal transfers to clear elements of the Council's own Business Rate liability, which we believe would make us broadly on target. Ordinarily this would happen early in the financial year, so this is further distorting the collection rates. We have now recommenced recovery activity in all areas, which should help to get us back on track with collection.

We also track the position in relation to the combined arrears relating to previous financial years. On 1 April 2023 these stood at £13.3m and had reduced to £9.4m at the end of quarter 3. This represents a 28.9% reduction since the start of the financial year. However, most of the debt collected is recently new outstanding debt from the last financial year and the arrears will become progressively more difficult to collect with time. We do not anticipate the collection rate being as good over the remainder of the year.

Key Performance Indicators	Target	Outturn								DoT
		July 2023	August 2023	Sept 2023	Q2 2023/24	Oct 2023	Nov 2023	Dec 2023	Q3 2023/24	
		Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	
Council Tax collection rate (%)	TBC	38.89%	48.06%	58.01%	58.01%	66.22%	75.35%	85.16%	85.16%	↑
Business Rate collection rate (%)	TBC	35.65%	44.79%	55.19%	55.19%	63.75%	71.55%	79.82%	79.82%	↑
Average number of days for processing new Housing Benefit claims	15	13.93	11.9	12.64	14.61	12.02	11.65	14.26	12.64	↑
Average number of days for processing Housing Benefit change of Circumstances	7	6.21	4.86	5.46	6.95	4.92	4.2	3.73	4.28	↑



Average number of days for processing new Housing Benefit claims-



Strategic Asset Management

As per previous comments we are now seeing an improvement in the quality of our reporting data as we start to align processes and use of the new asset management system (Civica Property). The figure is still an amalgamation of percentages from each of the separate FM teams as it will take time to continue to migrate all teams and processes onto the system and same way of working. Items deemed non-compliant generally relate to a mix of outstanding paperwork or reports being chased from contractors and inspections which have fallen overdue although in all cases are scheduled and being followed up accordingly.

Key Performance Indicators	What is good performance high or low	Target	Outturn		DoT
			Q2 2023/24	Q3 2023/24	
			Value	Value	
An average for all building compliance across Somerset Council	High	100%	78%	91%	↑

Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

There are no key performance indicators for this service area, at this stage, for Q3 2023/2024. However, there are many operational service level indicators the team are reviewing and aligning. As the service evolves, any key indicators that are identified will be included within the quarterly corporate performance management report.

Decision Report - Executive  
Forward Plan Reference: FP/24/01/25  
Decision Date – 6<sup>th</sup> March 2024  
Key Decision -no



Confidential Information – no

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## Revisions to the Terms of Reference of the Property & Investment Executive Sub-Committee

Executive Member(s): Lead Member for Economic Development, Planning & Assets  
Local Member(s) and Division: N/A  
Lead Officer: Oliver Woodhams, Strategic Assets Management Service Director  
Author: Robert Orrett, Commercial Property Land Development Manager  
Contact Details: Robert.Orrett@somerset.gov.uk

### Summary / Background

1. The Executive agreed on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2023 to form the Property and Investments Executive Sub-Committee with Terms of Reference set out in Appendix 1 of that report. These arrangements were incorporated into the Council's Constitution and reported for information to the Council on 20 December 2023.
2. This decision makes revisions to those Terms of Reference of the Sub-Committee to update the chairing arrangements and to clarify the decision making of that Sub-Committee.

### Recommendations

3. The Executive agrees:
  - a. To the revisions of the Terms of Reference for the Property and Investments Executive Sub-committee as set out in *Appendix A Revisions to Property &*
4. The Property and Investment Executive Sub-Committee met on the 21 December 2023 and reviewed the Terms of Reference and requested these changes be brought to the next available Executive meeting.

5. It was unclear from the original Terms of Reference that the usual levels of council delegations of decisions for the asset management of the investment property portfolio could apply to allow decisions to be delegated to the Lead Member for Economic Development, Planning and Assets or to officers as per the usual scheme of delegation. The revision clarifies that the Sub-Committee is enabled to take decisions in the stead of the Executive for the matters set out, and leaves non key decisions and limited key decisions to the Lead Member and or to officers as per the Council's Scheme of Delegation. Thus avoiding disrupting the effective asset management of the commercial investment portfolio which generates a significant volume of smaller decisions around leases and lease terms.
6. A fifth member of the Executive be added as a standing member of the Sub-Committee instead of the original co-opted non-voting member.

#### **Other options considered**

7. Retaining the wording on decisions from the approved terms of reference was considered. This disrupts the effective asset management of the commercial investment portfolio which generates a significant volume of smaller decisions around leases and lease terms. It would be wasteful of resources to refer all of these to the sub-committee for approval and would damage the financial performance of the portfolio by delaying asset management improvements or reducing the ability to deliver them.

#### **Links to Council Plan and Medium-Term Financial Plan**

8. None

#### **Financial and Risk Implications**

9. None

#### **Legal Implications**

10. None

#### **HR Implications**

11. None

**Other Implications:**

**Equalities Implications**

12. None

**Community Safety Implications**

13. None

**Climate Change and Sustainability Implications**

14. None

**Health and Safety Implications**

15. None

**Health and Wellbeing Implications**

16. None

**Social Value**

17. None

**Scrutiny comments / recommendations:**

18. The Chair of Scrutiny Committee for Corporate & Resources was informed of the proposed decision.

**Background Papers**

None

**Appendices**

Appendix A: *Revisions to Property & Investments Sub-committee Terms of Reference.*

## Assurance checklist

	Officer Name	Date Completed
Legal & Governance Implications	David Clark	12/2/2024
Communications	Peter Elliott	13/2/2024
Finance & Procurement	Nicola Hix	12/2/2024
Workforce	Alyn Jones	14/2/2024
Asset Management	Oliver Woodhams	8/2/2024
Executive Director / Senior Manager	Oliver Woodhams	8/2/2024
Strategy & Performance	Alyn Jones	14/2/2024
Executive Lead Member	Cllr Ros Wyke	8/2/2024
<b>Consulted:</b>	Councillor Name	
Local Division Members	N/A	
Opposition Spokesperson	Cllr. Mark Healey	Sent 13/2/2024
Scrutiny Chair	Cllr Bob Filmer	12/2/2024

## Property and Investments Executive Sub-Committee – Revised terms of reference

### Membership and meeting arrangements

1. The Sub-Committee takes decisions on behalf of the Executive in terms of commercial property and investments in accordance with the Council's plans, policies, strategies and procedures, including in particular the Non-Treasury Management Investment Strategy (the Strategy) and Financial Regulations.
2. The sub-committee will be made up of 5 members drawn from the Executive as follows:
  - Leader of the Council
  - Lead Member for Resources and Performance (Deputy Leader)
  - Lead Member for Economic Development, Planning and Assets
  - Lead Member for Transport and Digital
  - Lead Member for Adult Social Care
  - Any substitute members must be from the Executive.
3. The quorum shall be 3 members.
4. The Chair will be the Leader of the Council and Lead Member for Governance and Communications
5. In the absence of the Chair, the Deputy Leader of the Council and Lead Member for Resources and Performance (or the Lead Member for Economic Development, Planning and Assets in the Deputy Leader's absence) will chair the meeting and another member of the Committee will be appointed if they are absent.
6. The sub-committee will meet as and when required and be governed by the Executive Procedure Rules.
7. The sub-committee will report annually to the Executive.

## Functions

1. The Sub-Committee will be responsible for advising the Executive and Council in respect of any strategy, policy or other arrangements required to ensure the Council has appropriate governance arrangements in place to protect and maintain the value of the Council's non-treasury and commercial investments (the Portfolio) and providing assurance that those arrangements, including in particular the management of risk, are operating properly and to the benefit of the Council.
2. The Sub-Committee will be responsible for all decisions relating to the Portfolio which would otherwise be taken by the Executive, noting that the usual scheme of delegations to Executive Lead Members and to Officers of the Council continues to apply.
3. The Sub-Committee will meet as and when required to deal with real and personal property disposals or acquisitions and other matters within the scope of the Strategy.

## Commercial Investment Property

4. The Sub-Committee will be responsible for establishing, maintaining and monitoring arrangements to ensure that the routine management of tenancies and licences within the Portfolio, is handled in a robust and agile manner and delegated appropriately and that adequate financial provision is made to meet the Council's responsibilities under such tenancies and licences. This includes, but is not limited to:
  - The grant, variation, extension, renewal or termination of leases;
  - The grant, variation, extension, renewal or termination of new licences;
  - The conduct and agreement of all rent reviews, including the award of rent free periods;
  - The grant, variation, extension, renewal or termination of easements and wayleaves;
  - Agreement to changes of use;
  - The agreement of compensation claims where budgetary provision has already been made.

## Companies

5. The Sub-Committee will be responsible for establishing, maintaining and monitoring arrangements to ensure that the arrangements in place for any joint ventures within



the Portfolio are properly established, maintained and monitored. This includes, but is not limited to, arrangements for:

The appointment and removal of Council appointed directors;

The appointment and removal of observers;

Granting or refusing consent for matters requiring the Council's consent as shareholder.

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Somerset Council



## Notice of private meeting

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### **The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 – Regulation 5**

Following prior publication in the Forward Plan February 2024, in accordance with the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 – Regulation 5, notice is hereby given that the Executive is requested to consider agreeing a resolution at its Meeting on 6 March 2024 to exclude the press and public from any part of the meeting where exempt information relating to the items below is to be disclosed:

#### **Review of Outsourced Grounds Maintenance and Street Cleansing Services**

Author: Jonathan Stevens - Head of Operations, Regulatory & Operational Services  
Contact Details: [sarah.dowden@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:sarah.dowden@somerset.gov.uk) / [jonathan.stevens@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:jonathan.stevens@somerset.gov.uk)

#### **Phase B & Ci of the North Taunton Woolaway Project**

Author: Jane Windebank, Development Specialist  
Contact Details: [jane.windebank@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:jane.windebank@somerset.gov.uk), Tel: 01823 219520 / 07799 534071

#### **Executive Decision in relation to Somerset Council's role as Host Authority and Accountable Body to the Somerset Rivers Authority partnership.**

Author: David Mitchell, Somerset Rivers Authority Manager  
Contact Details: [david.mitchell@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:david.mitchell@somerset.gov.uk) / 01823 356789

#### Reasons for the items to be considered in private session at the meeting

Local Government Act 1972 – Schedule 12A

The item is likely to contain information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that

information).

Representations received to hold the item in open session

None.

Council's response to representations received

Not applicable.

Circulation:

All Somerset Council Members

Council's website

27 February 2024

David Clark – Monitoring Officer

For questions about this notice please contact Mike Bryant, Democratic Services, County Hall, Taunton, TA1 4DY.

Tel: 01823 357628 Email: [mike.bryant@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:mike.bryant@somerset.gov.uk)

## Decision Report - Executive Decision

Forward Plan Reference: FP/24/01/26

Decision Date – 6/3/24

Key Decision – yes

Confidential Information – appendix



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## Review of Outsourced Grounds Maintenance and Street Cleansing Services

Executive Member(s): Cllr Federica Smith Roberts - Lead Member for Communities, Housing and Culture

Local Member(s) and Division: All

Lead Officer: Sarah Dowden – Service Director for Regulatory and Operational

Author: Jonathan Stevens - Head of Operations, Regulatory & Operational Services

Contact Details: [sarah.dowden@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:sarah.dowden@somerset.gov.uk) / [jonathan.stevens@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:jonathan.stevens@somerset.gov.uk)

### Summary / Background

1. This report updates members on the proposals for devolution and in sourcing at the end of the current contract arrangements for outsourced grounds maintenance and street scene services in the former Mendip, Taunton Deane and West Somerset districts.
2. All contracts are currently serviced by IDVerde. The contract in former West Somerset District council area expires on 30/11/2024, and for Taunton Deane, it expires on 31/1/2025. However, there is an automatic 3-year extension clause if the service has previously been delivered to a satisfactory standard. This is likely to be triggered.

The contract for the former Mendip District Council area expires in June 2025.

3. This report outlines officer progress on analysing costs savings and community benefits from a possible insourcing of the service, and how these impacts on the devolution agenda.
4. The council aims to align service delivery more closely with community needs, increase flexibility in adapting to evolving circumstances, and ensure a higher standard of quality and sustainability, either through direct delivery by Somerset Council or under an alternative devolution model.

5. It is the view of officers that both delivery models can deliver savings to Somerset Council.

### **Recommendations**

6. The Executive agrees:
  - a) To explore and agree devolution of services to town and parish councils at point of expiration of contracts.
  - b) To in source all remaining services under the contract that aren't devolved to town and parish councils at the point of contract expiration.
  - c) The case for applying exemption information provision as set out in the Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A and therefore treat the attached confidential Appendix, as they contain commercially sensitive information, and as the case for the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing that information.
  - d) To exclude the press and public from the meeting where there is any discussion regarding confidential Appendix (to be treated as exempt information).

### **Reasons for recommendations**

7. With contracts due to expire, the Council needs to give notice to the contractor in good time that it does not wish to extend the contract beyond its current expiry date. Arrangements need to be put in place to ensure continuation of service.
8. As part of the Council's devolution programme, major towns covered by these contracts have expressed an interest in taking on services currently provided via the contractors either now or at the expiration of the contract.
9. Devolution of services supports the Council's devolution agenda and delivers savings to the Council.
10. To be able to devolve services, the Council needs control of its services. Outsourced arrangements are a barrier to delivering devolution. Depending on timings it may be that services need to be insourced initially to allow for devolution. It is hoped that the process can be aligned neatly to avoid this, but it is important to note that unless the Council has direct control over its services it cannot devolve them.

11. Where devolution agreements are not reached, the Council needs to ensure continuation of service at the expiration of the contract. This includes street cleansing, which is a statutory service. Officer analysis suggests that insourcing would be the best option, delivering both savings for the authority and better performance overall.
12. Two separate pieces of analysis undertaken by officers has suggested that savings can be made by in sourcing, particularly in the old Mendip area.
13. Information within this report is commercially sensitive due to the existing contractual agreements with IDVerde, and therefore the report should be treated as private and confidential.

#### **Other options considered**

14. Officers have considered the following alternative options:
  - a) Outsourcing of all depot services  
Somerset Council provides in sourced grounds maintenance and street cleansing services in the former South Somerset and Sedgemoor District Council areas, and in sourced grounds maintenance services only at the old Somerset West and Taunton area. Outsourcing of these services in line with the existing outsourced arrangements has been discounted as it takes control away from the Council and prevents it's from fulfilling its devolution agenda.
  - b) Extension of existing outsourced arrangements  
An extension of existing contract arrangements where it can be avoided has been discounted as it takes control away from the Council and prevents it from fulfilling its devolution agenda.
  - c) Full insourcing of existing outsourced arrangements  
A full analysis of insourcing all outsourced arrangements at the expiration of the contracts has taken place to understand the financial feasibility of the Council providing these services. The analysis suggests that this delivers a saving for the council whilst improving quality of delivery. However this option has been discounted in part in favour of devolving services where appropriate. This option remains as a mitigation for areas where devolution is not achieved.

## **Links to Council Plan and Medium-Term Financial Plan**

15. This decision links to the following Somerset Council Plan 2023-27 objectives:
- a) **A Greener, More Sustainable Somerset**  
City, Town and Parish Councils are key partners for delivering on the Council's climate emergency and nature emergency declarations. The ability to work more flexibly with these partners is vital, especially around grassland management and tree planting.
  - b) **A Fairer, Ambitious Somerset**  
City, town and parish councils are well placed to understand their local communities, and run their services to support this. The supports the Council's priority to reduce inequalities that cause this disparity, so everyone in Somerset can live their lives as they choose.  
A stated priority for Somerset Council is to reduce the inequalities that cause these disparities, so that everyone in Somerset can live their lives as they choose.
  - c) **A Flourishing and Resilient Somerset**  
Devolution of services to City, town and parish councils give these organisations the freedom to invest in their key open spaces and high streets to support the existing economy, increase the number of events and encourage visitors.  
Insourcing operations, either through Somerset Council or city, town and parish councils, contributes to economic stability by managing costs effectively. It supports the development of a skilled workforce and local opportunities, aligning with the council's goal of promoting a stable and flourishing economy.
16. Financially, analysis has shown that a full insourcing of services currently provided by IDVerde would generate an annual saving to the Council of between £200k and £300k. This saving will be significantly higher if devolution is achieved within key towns.

## **Financial and Risk Implications**

17. In the MTFP for 2024/25 this proposal was included as a proposed saving. A full insourcing programme would generate an estimated annual saving of between £200k and £300k. This is detailed below. More details can be found in the attached business case.



However, it should be noted that this has been done for the purpose of ensuring that in a worse case scenario, and all devolution processes failed or were not agreed before the expiration of the contracts, that the Council could deliver services itself within the existing financial envelope.

Savings are made by the rationalising of the contract delivery team, and the ability to delivery additional works within the workforce. These are currently chargeable as non-core elements of the contracts.

### Summary

<b>Current Budget Provision</b>	<b>£</b>
West Somerset Street Cleansing	1,192,000
Mendip Groundcare (inc trees & play areas)	546,500
Mendip Street Cleansing	871,000
Mendip Public Toilets	149,100
SWT Public Toilets	120,600
National Living Wage Uplift	143,500
Mendip Additional Tree Works Budget	60,000
Mendip Fees & Hired Charges Budget	25,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,107,700</b>
<b>Additional Costs</b>	
Contract Manager (40% of role)	21,846
Contract Supervisor	37,832
Contract Supervisor (50% of role)	18,916
Contract Supervisor (29.6 hours per week)	30,265
Mendip Flytip Additional Works	31,000
Other miscellaneous repairs	7,000
EzyTree Software License	6,170
Annual contractual GM87 uplift	66,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>219,030</b>
<b>Total Contract Cost</b>	<b>3,326,730</b>
<b>Estimated In House Provision Cost</b>	

Street Cleansing Mendip	654,873
Street Cleansing West Somerset	1,340,712
Open Spaces Mendip	579,838
Trees Mendip	96,764
Play Areas Mendip	80,058
Public Toilets Mendip	126,536
Public Toilets SWT	129,536
<b>TOTAL</b>	3,008,317
<b>+/- of in house provision</b>	-318,412
<b>Contingency</b>	80,000
<b>Total Estimated Saving 25/26</b>	-238,412

18. The following risks exist within this proposal:

<b>Contract Extension Trigger in West Somerset and Taunton.</b>					
<p>The IDV contract in SWT expires on 30/11/2024 for West Somerset and 31/1/2025 for Taunton. There is an automatic three year extension built into the contract if performance during the contract has been acceptable. It is likely this will be triggered, which restricts devolution and insourcing options.</p> <p>From a cost perspective, the in sourcing estimate is comparable to the existing contract price on this element, so an extension would not impact the Council's existing budgets. However, it does potentially hamper devolution.</p> <p>These are short timescales, so any extension does also act as a mitigation for service continuation in this area.</p>					
<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Risk Score</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Please enter mitigation here</b>					
<p>Early discussions with IDVerde around devolution have taken place, and IDVerde are open to potential devolution in some areas of this contract. If successful, this would deliver a saving for the Council.</p>					

<b>Unsuccessful Devolution to City, town and parish councils.</b>					
<p>Should the Council be unable to agree devolution with city, town and parish councils, then it would be left to deliver the service itself.</p>					
<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Risk Score</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Please enter mitigation here</b>					

If the Council were deliver all services under the contracts itself from the expiration date, analysis by officers suggests that this could be done in house, with an estimated annual saving of £200k - £300k achieved.

Further mitigation has been provided by early engagement with the key city and town councils impacted by this proposal, namely Taunton, Wellington, Minehead, Wells, Shepton Mallett, Glastonbury, Street and Frome. Early indications is that all towns are very keen on devolution of grounds maintenance services in particular.

**Only partial devolution achieved**

Should the Council only achieve partial devolution either geographically or by service, then it would be left to deliver remaining services itself.

<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Risk Score</b>	<b>10</b>
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**Please enter mitigation here**

If the Council were to deliver all services under the contracts itself from the expiration date, analysis by officers suggests that this could be done in house, with an estimated annual saving of £200k - £300k achieved. Therefore there is sufficient budget for the Council to still deliver some services if only partial devolution was achieved.

**Cost**

It should be noted that outsourcing can often result in cost savings, as external providers may achieve economies of scale or have specialized equipment and expertise. The costings exercise does suggest that in some areas the current outsourced arrangements are cheaper.

<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Risk Score</b>	<b>6</b>
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**Please enter mitigation here**

Devolution aside, wider savings would be achieved from the removal of Somerset Council staff overseeing the contract delivery, and the flexibility to be able to undertake additional, non-core contract work internally rather than relying on the contractor for this.

**TUPE of IDVerde staff into the Council**

With any insourcing, there would likely be a requirement for Somerset Council to transfer in some current IDV staff as part of TUPE regulations, although the breadth of this isn't clear yet. HR advice will be sought in due course.

Where devolution was involved, the city, town or parish council would be subject to the TUPE obligations, not Somerset Council.

<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Risk Score</b>	<b>10</b>
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**Please enter mitigation here**  
Early engagement with HR Advisory.

**Contractual obligations - potential need to negotiation early exit.**

If the contracts reaches their natural expiration date then there are no contractual obligations with the outsourced provider, including termination fees or penalties for early contract termination. However, if there was a need to negotiate these terms early this could add complexity to the devolution and insourcing process.

<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>Risk Score</b>	<b>8</b>
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**Please enter mitigation here**  
An early review of contract exit terms has been undertaken by Commercial Services. Elements of the existing arrangement, such as TUPE and vehicle leases may require negotiation and agreement. This will require further support from other areas of the authority, such as Procurement and Commercial, Human Resources and Fleet.

**Temporary Impact on Service Delivery**

As IDVerde run the contract down, there will likely be additional workload in managing the contract, once notice has been given to the provider. There is a risk that IDV may begin to move staff elsewhere and not provide as much resource to the contract. This may result in a reduced level of standards.

There may also be teething issues with the start up of the new in house arrangements as teams get up and running. Effective recruitment, induction, training and procurement is also vital to ensure all teams have everything they need to be able to work effectively from the first day.

However, it should also be noted that IDVerde have been very supportive of the devolution agenda, and are committed to working with the Council to achieve it's aims. IDVerde have been involved with successful devolution programmes elsewhere and have shared some useful learnings with officers.

<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Risk Score</b>	<b>6</b>
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**Please enter mitigation here**

A full implementation plan will be delivered upon approval from Exec to insource and devolve the service.
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### **Legal Implications**

19. As per previous risk, if the contract reaches its natural expiration date then there are no contractual obligations with the outsourced provider, including termination fees or penalties for early contract termination. However, if there was a need to negotiate these terms early this could add complexity to the insourcing process.

### **HR Implications**

20. With any insourcing, there would likely be a requirement for Somerset Council to transfer in some current IDV staff as part of TUPE regulations, although the breadth of this isn't clear yet. HR advice will be sought in due course.

Where devolution was involved, the city, town or parish council would be subject to the TUPE obligations, not Somerset Council.

There are also potential impacts on a number of contract delivery roles within the former Mendip area.

### **Other Implications:**

### **Equalities Implications**

21. An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed and is attached to this report.

### **Community Safety Implications**

22. Direct, in sourced services do have greater flexibility to react to minor crime such as graffiti and vandalism. If damage is repaired quicker, this can have a positive impact upon quality of life and wellbeing.

City, town and parish councils are also often better placed to be part of dealing with local issues in their open spaces and town centres.

## **Climate Change and Sustainability Implications**

23. A smaller estate as a result of evolving open spaces to city, town and parish councils could lessen Somerset Council's wider impact on nature recovery. There would be less control over key urban sites, and consistency on nature friendly grassland management and tree planting and maintenance would be reduced. However, the Council's Climate Emergency Strategy, Tree Strategy and Local Nature Recovery Strategy identify city, town and parish councils as key partners in the delivery of these agendas, so it is hoped that this will be overcome.

## **Health and Safety Implications**

24. There are no health and safety implications associated with this report.

## **Health and Wellbeing Implications**

25. There are no significant negative impacts on health and wellbeing associated with this report.

The positive impact that open spaces and a clean street scene environment has on health and wellbeing is widely recognised. It is the view of officers that devolution and/or insourcing of these services would improve the quality of service delivery, and therefore would have a positive impact on health and wellbeing.

## **Social Value**

26. There is no procurement process associated with this proposal, but it is acknowledged that devolution to city, town and parish councils can bring a feeling of local communities being closer to their open spaces and in turn this can play a role in helping build community capacity and improving health wellbeing.

## **Scrutiny comments / recommendations:**

27. N/A

## **Background**

28. The Council's Street Cleansing and Grounds Maintenance services sit within the Regulatory and Operational Services directorate, and covers the following functions:

- Street Cleansing (road and street sweeping, bin emptying, cleaning and servicing of public toilets).
- Parks and Open Spaces (grounds maintenance of Council owned cemeteries, parks and open spaces; play area maintenance and inspections and tree maintenance and inspections).

Street Cleansing and Grounds Maintenance were responsibilities of the former district councils. The services were performed via a mix of in house and outsourced provision across the county. These arrangements transitioned into the new unitary authority and are still in place within the old district boundaries.

<b>Former District</b>	<b>Groundcare</b>	<b>Street Cleansing</b>
Somerset West and Taunton (SWT)	In house	Outsourced
Mendip (MDC)	Outsourced	Outsourced
South Somerset (SSDC)	In house	In house
Sedgemoor (SDC)	In house	In house

29. Both outsourced arrangements at SWT and MDC are managed through separate contracts with the same supplier, IDVerde (IDV). The SWT contract is a legacy contract prior to the merger of the former Taunton Deane Borough Council (TDBC) and West Somerset District Council (WSDC), and therefore has two expiry dates: 30/11/2024 for West Somerset and 31/1/2025 for Taunton.

The current outsourced arrangement within the former MDC area delivers the following on a day to day basis:

- Grounds maintenance on Council owned cemeteries, parks and open spaces in Frome, Shepton Mallet, Glastonbury, Street, Wells, Baltonborough, West Pennard, Butleigh, Croscombe, Pilton, Cranmore, North Wootton, St Cuthbert Out, Wookey, Westbury Sub-Mendip, Stoke St Michael, Leigh-on-Mendip, Coleford, Kilmersdon, Holcombe, Mells, Elm, Hemington, Norton St Phillip, Rode, Beckington, Telisford, Trudoxhill, Witham Friary, Nunney, Wanstrow, Whatley, Ashwick, Chilcompton, Litton,

Evercreech, Ditcheat.

The current specification in the contract stipulates that grass is cut to a minimum height of 25mm. The total square metreage 680 square metres per grass cut.

- Tree inspections and tree maintenance work on all trees in the former MDC area. This is circa 4,000 trees.
  - Playground inspections and maintenance on all play areas in the former MDC area. There are currently 37 council-owned play areas maintained as part of the core contract.
  - Street sweeping throughout the former MDC area.
  - Emptying of bins throughout the former MDC area (approximately 400).
  - Removal of flytips throughout the former MDC area.
  - Cleaning of 5 public toilets in MDC area.
30. The current outsourced arrangement within the former SWT area currently delivers the following on a day to day basis:
- Street sweeping throughout the former SWT area.
  - Emptying of circa 75% of council-owned bins in the old SWT area.
  - Removal of flytips throughout the former SWT area.
  - Cleaning of 8 public toilets in former SWT area.
31. In Summer 2023, a project team was established to understand whether the Council could in source the outsourced elements of the service upon expiration of the contract. This followed a formal review by the Commercial Services team during the LGR programme, which highlighted that savings could be made by insourcing, particularly in the old Mendip area.
32. The project team undertook a full cost analysis of outsourced areas and returned a view that the Council could save between £200k and £300k per annum by insourcing. The project team also identified a number of additional benefits, including direct control and accountability, flexibility in delivery, better local knowledge and community engagement and an improved service quality.

The business case for complete insourcing is attached as an appendix to this document, and includes a financial breakdown of the projected savings.



33. However, the group also highlighted that the wider aspiration should be devolution of services to city, town and parish councils at the expiration of the contract, with the Council insourcing what remains. This would deliver the biggest financial saving for the Council, and support the Council's emerging devolution agenda.
34. This is particularly relevant in the old MDC area, where Shepton Mallet Town Council (SMTC), Frome Town Council (FTC), Glastonbury Town Council (GTC) and Wells City Council (WCC) have all expressed a desire to take on services. A continued outsourced arrangement will mean that savings through devolution in those areas will be much harder to achieve.
35. The early indications from city and town councils is that the main interest is in parks and open spaces, grounds maintenance and public toilets. If devolution was successful in these services, then Somerset Council would need to insource street cleansing. The attached business case demonstrates that this could be done at a financial saving within the Mendip area.
- The 3 year extension clause would be triggered in Taunton and West Somerset, so Somerset Council would need to continue the outsourced arrangement. However, this contract is street scene only and the sense from town and parish councils is that they are not minded to take on street cleansing services. This is the one element of the combined contracts where an in sourcing saving is not predicted, so an extension would give time to review this arrangement in more detail to achieve this at a later date.
36. It is also worth noting that Street Cleansing is a statutory service. Somerset Council is the accountable authority and would remain so even if the service was devolved.

### **Background Papers**

37. Initial business case for insourcing of IDVerde contract.

### **Appendices**


None

### **Assurance checklist**

	Officer Name	Date Completed
Legal & Governance Implications	David Clark	9.02.2024
Communications	Peter Elliott	9.2.2024
Finance & Procurement	Nicola Hix	27.02.24
Workforce	Sari Brice	23.2.2024
Asset Management	Oliver Woodhams	8.2.2024
Executive Director / Senior Manager	Sarah Dowden	31.1.2024
Strategy & Performance	Alyn Jones	
Executive Lead Member	Cllr Federica Smith-Roberts	31.1.2024
<b>Consulted:</b>	Councillor Name	
Local Division Members	All	27.02.2024 agenda publication
Opposition Spokesperson		
Scrutiny Chair	Cllr Gwil Wren	14.2.2024

## Somerset Equality Impact Assessment

Before completing this EIA please ensure you have read the EIA guidance notes – available from your Equality Officer or [www.somerset.gov.uk/impactassessment](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/impactassessment)

<b>Organisation prepared for (mark as appropriate)</b>						
<b>Version</b>		<b>Date Completed</b>				
<b>Description of what is being impact assessed</b>						
<p>Insourcing of IDVerde services in West and East. This includes street cleansing, open spaces, play areas and cleaning of public toilets in East, and street cleansing and cleaning of public toilets in the West and will be provided by the Council's in-house team. Please note this EIA does need to be read in part with the EIA for the closure of public toilets as there will be an impact if the decision is taken to close all public toilets or if some of them are devolved to town and parish councils.</p>						
<b>Evidence</b>						
<p><b>What data/information have you used to assess how this policy/service might impact on protected groups?</b> Sources such as the <a href="#">Office of National Statistics</a>, <a href="#">Somerset Intelligence Partnership</a>, <a href="#">Somerset's Joint Strategic Needs Analysis (JSNA)</a>, Staff and/or <a href="#">area profiles</a>, should be detailed here</p>						
<p>Access to good open space and a clean-living environment is important for all. This proposal does not suggest reducing opportunities, it suggests managing the areas in house rather than using an external provided.</p> <p>There is no data available on how different groups use our open spaces or public realm although everyone is welcome to use the spaces available to them across Somerset.</p>						
<b>Staffing</b>						

The county has 2 IDverde contracts covering the former Mendip area and the former Somerset West and Taunton area. The council is looking to devolve services to town and parish councils as part of the devolution framework and the services currently provided under each contract will inevitably be part of the devolution of services to town and parish councils. A further review of the EIA will be undertaken when it is clear what services will be devolved and what potential implications this could have.

**Who have you consulted with to assess possible impact on protected groups and what have they told you?** If you have not consulted other people, please explain why?

No consultation has been undertaken.

#### Analysis of impact on protected groups

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires us to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations with protected groups. Consider how this policy/service will achieve these aims. In the table below, using the evidence outlined above and your own understanding, detail what considerations and potential impacts against each of the three aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty. Based on this information, make an assessment of the likely outcome, before you have implemented any mitigation.

Protected group	Summary of impact	Negative outcome	Neutral outcome	Positive outcome
<b>Age</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No group is disproportionately impacted as the service will remain but undertaken by an inhouse team</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Disability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No group is disproportionately impacted as the service will remain but undertaken by an inhouse team</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Gender reassignment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No group is disproportionately impacted as the service will remain but undertaken by an inhouse team</li> </ul>	□	⊗	□
<b>Marriage and civil partnership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No group is disproportionately impacted as the service will remain but undertaken by an inhouse team</li> </ul>	□	⊗	□
<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No group is disproportionately impacted as the service will remain but undertaken by an inhouse team</li> </ul>	□	⊗	□
<b>Race and ethnicity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No group is disproportionately impacted as the service will remain but undertaken by an inhouse team</li> </ul>	□	⊗	□
<b>Religion or belief</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No group is disproportionately impacted as the service will remain but undertaken by an inhouse team</li> </ul>	□	⊗	□
<b>Sex</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No group is disproportionately impacted as the service will remain but undertaken by an inhouse team</li> </ul>	□	⊗	□
<b>Sexual orientation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No group is disproportionately impacted as the service will remain but undertaken by an inhouse team</li> </ul>	□	⊗	□

<b>Armed Forces (including serving personnel, families and veterans)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No group is disproportionately impacted as the service will remain but undertaken by an inhouse team</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Other, e.g. carers, low income, rurality/isolation, etc.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No group is disproportionately impacted as the service will remain but undertaken by an inhouse team</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Negative outcomes action plan**

Where you have ascertained that there will potentially be negative outcomes, you are required to mitigate the impact of these. Please detail below the actions that you intend to take.

Action taken/to be taken	Date	Person responsible	How will it be monitored?	Action complete
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>

**If negative impacts remain, please provide an explanation below.**

There are no negative impacts identified

<b>Completed by:</b>	<b>Jonathan Stevens</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>20/11/2023</b>
<b>Signed off by:</b>	<b>Sarah Dowden</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>22.11.2023</b>

<b>Equality Lead sign off name:</b>	<b>Angela Farmer</b>
<b>Equality Lead sign off date:</b>	<b>5/1/24</b>
<b>To be reviewed by:</b> (officer name)	
<b>Review date:</b>	

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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Somerset Council



## Notice of private meeting

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### **The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 – Regulation 5**

Following prior publication in the Forward Plan February 2024, in accordance with the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 – Regulation 5, notice is hereby given that the Executive is requested to consider agreeing a resolution at its Meeting on 6 March 2024 to exclude the press and public from any part of the meeting where exempt information relating to the items below is to be disclosed:

#### **Review of Outsourced Grounds Maintenance and Street Cleansing Services**

Author: Jonathan Stevens - Head of Operations, Regulatory & Operational Services  
Contact Details: [sarah.dowden@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:sarah.dowden@somerset.gov.uk) / [jonathan.stevens@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:jonathan.stevens@somerset.gov.uk)

#### **Phase B & Ci of the North Taunton Woolaway Project**

Author: Jane Windebank, Development Specialist  
Contact Details: [jane.windebank@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:jane.windebank@somerset.gov.uk), Tel: 01823 219520 / 07799 534071

#### **Executive Decision in relation to Somerset Council's role as Host Authority and Accountable Body to the Somerset Rivers Authority partnership.**

Author: David Mitchell, Somerset Rivers Authority Manager  
Contact Details: [david.mitchell@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:david.mitchell@somerset.gov.uk) / 01823 356789

#### Reasons for the items to be considered in private session at the meeting

Local Government Act 1972 – Schedule 12A

The item is likely to contain information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that

information).

Representations received to hold the item in open session

None.

Council's response to representations received

Not applicable.

Circulation:

All Somerset Council Members

Council's website

27 February 2024

David Clark – Monitoring Officer

For questions about this notice please contact Mike Bryant, Democratic Services, County Hall, Taunton, TA1 4DY.

Tel: 01823 357628 Email: [mike.bryant@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:mike.bryant@somerset.gov.uk)

## Decision Report - Executive Decision

Forward Plan Reference: FP/23/11/05

Decision Date – 6 March 2024

Key Decision – yes



## Confidential Information – Appendices B and C

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### Phase B & Ci of the North Taunton Woolaway Project

Executive Member(s): Lead Member for Communities, Housing and Culture

Local Member(s) and Division: NTWP – Ward: Cllr Lee Baker & Cllr Tom Deakin

Lead Officer: Chris Brown, Service Director, Housing

Author: Jane Windebank, Development Specialist

Contact Details: [jane.windebank@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:jane.windebank@somerset.gov.uk), Tel: 01823 219520 / 07799 534071

### Summary / Background

1. Following completion of an invitation to tender for the main contractor of Phase B & Ci of the North Taunton Woolaway Project, this report seeks approval to appoint the lead bidder for this work.
2. A Tender Report (Appendix A) has been prepared by Procurement setting out the procurement process and evaluation methodology. The Tender Evaluation Report (Appendix B) provides details of the evaluation of the bids together a Value for Money Statement.
3. Equans, the main contractor for Phase A, withdrew their intention to develop the next phase of the NTWP (Phase B and Ci) and it was necessary to procure a replacement main contractor. Equans will be withdrawing from Phase A upon completion of the last plot (est. March 2024) and will be unable to conclude the S278 Agreement highway works in that time and will not be undertaking the conversion works for the change of use of the community facility (which will be provided to shell and core stage) to 2 x additional self-contained flats. These additional Phase A works are included in the Phase B and Ci contract.
4. Subject to performance and price, the allocated contractor will be able to continue to develop the future phases, Cii, Ciii and D.

## **Recommendations**

5. The Executive:
  - a. Approves the outcome of the procurement process to award a contract to the lead bidder named in the Tender Evaluation Report Confidential Appendix B.
  - b. Agree the case for applying exemption information provision as set out in the Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A and therefore treat the attached confidential Appendices B and C in confidence, as they contain commercially sensitive information, and as the case for the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing that information.
  - c. Agree to exclude the press and public from the meeting where there is any discussion regarding confidential Appendix and confidential Appendix C (to be treated as exempt information).

## **Reasons for recommendations**

6. To allow the continuation of the North Taunton Woolaway Project and enable Phase B and Ci to be built. The Council has already approved the appointment of a separate demolition contractor and the appointment of the main contractor will enable a seamless transition between end of demolition and the construction start on site. The grant funding for Phase B & Ci for start on site is required in the first quarter of 2024/2025.
7. The Tender Evaluation Report (Appendix B) and Risk Register (Appendix C) should be considered confidential and are exempt as they contain commercially sensitive information relating to the bidders' submissions and as the case for the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing that information.

## **Other options considered**

8. Following receipt of the tenders the following options were considered:
  - a) Option 1: Do not appoint and do nothing.
  - b) Option 2: Do not appoint and proceed via another OJEU compliant framework.

- c) Option 3: Appoint lead contractor on basis of scores for quality, social value and price, ensuring Value for Money is achieved.
9. Options 1 and 2 were discounted as tenants have been decanted and are awaiting their new homes in the North Taunton Woolaway Project. Time is of the essence to complete Phases B and C to ensure the Home England Regeneration Funding can be claimed and new funding secured for the next phases.
10. Option 3 is recommended as the bids have been evaluated and value for money achieved from the lead bidder. This will ensure no further delays to programme and enable decanted tenants to be rehomed.

### **Links to Council Plan and Medium-Term Financial Plan**

11. The projects link to the following priorities in the Council Plan
- a. A Greener More Sustainable Somerset – by providing very low carbon homes (NTWP)
  - b. A Healthy and Caring Somerset – through the provision of higher quality homes for the returning NTWP tenants and new tenants via Homefinder.
  - c. A Fairer, Ambitious Somerset – the plan commits the council “to be innovative in our approach to housing and supporting people who are struggling. The provision of decent, low carbon social housing will be integral to us in delivering a fairer county.”
12. The Council’s Housing Revenue Account Business Plan sets out the financial model for the Housing Service over a 30-year period. The Council has agreed a number of priorities in its updated Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan 2020-2050, which are included in the vision statement “Great Homes for Local Communities” that accompanies the business plan (‘the Action Plan’). Its overarching mission statement is: “Our homes will be safe and secure, and we will build many more in which our tenants will thrive. To do this we will develop a great team to provide excellent and modern services...” The Project complements these strategy objectives.

### **Financial and Risk Implications**

13. On the 21 February 2019, the Shadow Full Council (for Somerset West and Taunton) approved a budget of £7.2m for the delivery of Phase A as part of the North Taunton Woolaway Project (NTWP). On the 3 December 2019, Full Council (for Somerset West and Taunton) approved a further budget of £1.5m for Phase A plus a budget of £5.7m for Phases B-E.

14. On the 1 December 2020 Full Council (for Somerset West and Taunton) approved to allocate a total scheme budget and borrowing requirement for Phases B-E and the conclusion of all phases of the regeneration scheme. This report approved a supplementary budget of £60.67m, in addition to the existing budget of £14.4m, bringing the total approved budget for the entire scheme to £75m.
- To delegate authority to the Section 151 Officer to determine the final funding profile for each future phase once the finalised designs have been received for Phases B-E and any relevant planning approval and contract costs have been received.
  - To delegate authority to the Director of Housing and Communities in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing authority to approve future decanting and demolition for future phases.
  - To set rents for all new build properties (Phase A-D) at affordable rents in line with the 2020 Rent Setting Policy and that rents would be capped at the equivalent social rent if being rehoused in the new NTWP development.
15. The financing of the scheme was originally £7.480m RTB Receipts and £67.590m of borrowing. The low percentage of subsidy represents the high proportion of regeneration and low additionality.
16. The original business case for Phase B & Ci assumed c£15m of capital investment, funded by c£2m of RTB receipts and the remaining c£13m from borrowing. In October 2023, the Council was successfully awarded and allocated additional funding of c£3m by Homes England, reducing the borrowing requirement to c£10m with c£3m from Homes England and c£2m from RTB receipts through the delivery of a split (regeneration versus additionality) scheme. The scheme will still deliver affordable rented units.
17. The current Business Plan, approved by Full Council on 20 February 2024, presents a starting position that is affordable for much of the planning period but becomes financially unsustainable from 2048/49 when balances fall below minimum levels. With regards to Phase B & Ci, the Business Plan considers the original capital investment, the updated capital financing, along with revenue impact assumptions with regards to ongoing repairs and maintenance and rental income at affordable rents.



18. The capital investment expenditure to date has reduced the original capital budget of £15m to £13.192m as of 1 April 2023, with minimal spend incurred this financial year. Officers have now completed the evaluation of the tenders for the construction contract and are now seeking approval to appoint the contractor. The contract proposed to be awarded is in excess to the remaining approved budget and therefore a virement from an alternative NTWP phase will be proposed and submitted for approval as per the Council Financial Regulations. Any virements will be reported to Members through the Council's Budget Monitoring and Outturn Reports. The projected capital investment required for remaining phases of NTWP will be updated and any additional budget required will be requested and assessed as part of the budget setting process and updated business plan for 2025/26.
19. A Value for Money Statement and a comparison to Equans original bid can be found within the Tender Evaluation Report (see Appendix B).
20. There are financial implications if the awarding of the contract is delayed. Delaying the appointment of a main contractor will cause delay to the construction of the new homes, and result in an increase in costs due to inflationary rises in build costs. There would also be a need to re-tender which would result in further costs to obtain updated information such as ecology surveys and property valuations, as these are time limited. Any delay would also impact the Business Plan assumptions with regards to projected rental income based on occupation projections, as well as put at risk our Homes England grant as they require a start on site claim to be submitted in Q1 of 2024/25. We also have tenants in temporary accommodation (decant) who are waiting to move into their new homes.
21. Construction activities carry inherent health and safety risks and these are the most significant risks for this procurement. These risks will be managed through multiple mitigation measures at the ITT stage and prior to and during the works phases as described in the attached risk register (Appendix C). The project is being supported by a Council Health and Safety Business Partner and a qualified and experienced consultant employed as the Principal Designer.
22. There is also a risk to the reputation of the Council as tenants have been decanted to enable the demolition phase of this development and will be seeking to return to their new homes which will be built as part of Phase B & Ci. The Risk Register is attached (Appendix C) setting out the risks arising and the mitigation actions taken.

## **Legal Implications**

23. The tender process requires the lead bidder to enter into a legal construction contract. This is an industry recognised form of contract, the JCT Design and Build contract. Legal Services support has been obtained to approve the particulars and amendments to the contract documents.
24. As the proposed decision relates to the procurement and award of a contract, Head of Procurement, Risk and Insurance, Claire Griffiths in Commercial & Procurement Team has been consulted. As the proposed contract has a total value over £500k, the Legal Services Contract Team have been consulted and provided legal advice.

## **HR Implications**

25. The cost of staff time will be met from existing resources or charged to the capital scheme as appropriate.

## **Other Implications:**

## **Equalities Implications**

26. Due regard has been given to any disproportionate equality implications and none have been identified for this report. The Equalities Impact Assessment is appended to this report as Appendix D.

## **Community Safety Implications**

27. Through the design of the Project, tenants and residents will feel safe in the public realm and feelings of safety and security in the home due to the adoption of crime prevention measures in the new development.
28. Consultation with Police and other statutory authorities has already been undertaken as part of the planning application process. No implications arose thanks to the meticulous design and resident consultation that was undertaken to achieve planning permission.

## **Climate Change and Sustainability Implications**

29. New build homes will be constructed to a minimum of Part L of the Building Regulations which will substantially improve the thermal performance of the

dwellings compared to the existing dwellings. In addition, the contracted specification has increased insulation, air tightness and reduced cold bridging. The units will also have Air Source Heat Pumps, PV, Batteries, and water reduction measures. The properties will have no gas and are zero carbon 2050 ready. The carbon and fuel efficiency are 12 times better than the Woolaway homes being demolished. On the first let carbon saving and tenant fuel costs are anticipated to be 70%-80% less than current Woolaway homes.

30. The new development has been designed to take advantage of biodiversity opportunities in the neighbourhood such as planting trees and creating a new public open space.
31. The Project has enabled the Council to embrace and design a new garden community to incorporate the Garden Town Principles and safeguard the natural environment, providing areas of planting and open space whilst ensuring residents have access to suitable homes and facilities.
32. Phosphates and housing development within the hydrological catchment of the Somerset Levels and Moors Ramsar Site - This scheme falls within the water catchment area of the Somerset Levels and Moors Ramsar Site. The planning application for Phases B, C and demolition of Phase D did not require a mitigation strategy. However, a mitigation strategy is required to build homes in Phase D and the HRA and Council are exploring options for mitigation. Phase D planning permission is not required until 2025/2026 which allows significant time for a phosphate mitigation strategy to be agreed.

### **Health and Safety Implications**

33. Construction activities carry inherent health and safety risks, and these are the most significant risks for this procurement. These risks will be managed through multiple mitigation measures at the ITT stage and prior to and during the works phases as described in the attached risk register (Appendix C). The project is being supported by a council Health and Safety Business Partner and a qualified and experienced consultant employed as the Principal Designer.
34. There are Health and Safety risks involved with delaying the construction of the new homes mainly in regard to trespass and the possibility of injury and illegal occupation. While maintaining and adapting the security measures put in place reduces these risks, the most certain form of mitigation is the completion of the build.

## **Health and Wellbeing Implications**

35. The Project as a whole has been designed to Nationally Described Space Standards to ensure properties are future-proofed and residents can benefit from some of the principles of lifetime homes and will contribute to the improve health and wellbeing of the residents.
36. The new detailed Planning Permission for Phases B–D illustrates the provision of public open space for community use which has been informed by public consultation.

## **Social Value**

37. The Invitation to Tender included the Social Value template supplied by Procurement. The completed template will form part of the contract documents to ensure these obligations are met.
38. The template incorporated mandatory criteria to ensure the new contractor provided the same social value outcomes which were achieved by Phase A – Equans, if not more.

## **Scrutiny comments / recommendations:**

39. The proposed decision has not been considered by a Scrutiny Committee. The Chair of Scrutiny Committee for Communities has been sent a copy of this Report.

## **Background**

40. In February 2019 the Somerset West and Taunton Shadow Council approved the redevelopment of the NTWP area.
41. The regeneration of the NTWP is an essential part of the Council's (previously Somerset West and Taunton) commitment to offer a choice of good quality homes for our residents, whatever their age and income, in communities where support is available for those in need.
42. The Project will deliver up to two hundred and thirty (230) new Council homes and retrofit twenty-seven (27) Council homes in five (5) phases.

43. This Project is the most substantial regeneration scheme of the Council's stock in many years. Not only is this scheme land led by the Council (rather than a partnering HA), but it is also larger in scale (number of homes, m2 of land) and tackles some of our worst performing stock in one of the most socially deprived areas in our County. It is the flagship housing project of our housing development programme.
44. Phase A, which is now nearing completion, is being built by the appointed main contractor, Equans. The Council had also appointed Equans to carry out pre-construction services to facilitate the development of Phases B, Ci and Di with the intention to then award the construction contract (including demolition) to them subject to terms being agreed. Equans informed the Council in January 2023 that while they would be completing their pre-construction services responsibilities, but they would not be proceeding with the construction of Phases B, Ci and Di due to Equans withdrawing from the South West region. The impact on the project is that the Council needed to carry out a full procurement exercise for a new main contractor and this would result in several months of delay. To reduce this delay and mitigate risks involved with maintaining the empty properties for an extended period, it was agreed to secure demolition separately so this can commence ahead of the main contractor appointment. Following a procurement exercise a demolition contractor has been appointed and is due to start on site imminently.

### **Contractor Procurement**

45. Permission to proceed with the procurement of a main contractor was granted by Nicola Hix, Service Director, Finance and Procurement on 18 October 2023 (via a Non-Key Decision Report).
46. The procurement for the main contractor has been carried out with extensive support from the Council's Procurement Team. Following the Procurement Advisor's recommendation, the Westworks OJEU Compliant DPS framework was used.
47. The Invitation to Tender was published on 30 October 2023. The bids were received and assessed on quality, price and social value. For full details please refer to the tender report, Appendix A.
48. Details of the evaluation of bids and resultant scores are contained in Confidential Appendix B.

## Background Papers

- Shadow Council Report dated 21 February 2019
- Council Report 3 December 2020
- Non-Key Decision Report 18 October 2023
- Key Decision Report 21 December 2023

## Appendices

- **Appendix A Tender Report**
- **CONFIDENTIAL Appendix B – Tender Evaluation Report (NOT FOR PUBLICATION)**
- **CONFIDENTIAL Appendix C – Risk Register (NOT FOR PUBLICATION)**
- **Appendix D – Equalities Impact Assessment**

## Assurance checklist

	Officer Name	Date Completed
Legal & Governance Implications	David Clark	23/2/24
Communications	Peter Elliott	23/2/24
Finance & Procurement	Nicola Hix Kerry Prisco	23/2/24 21/2/24
Workforce	Alyn Jones	23/2/24
Asset Management	Oliver Woodhams	23/2/24
Service Director (Housing)	Chris Brown	21/2/24
Strategy & Performance	Alyn Jones	23/2/24
Executive Lead Member	Councillor Frederica Smith Roberts	21/2/24
<b>Consulted:</b>		
Local Division Members	Councillor Lee Baker, Councillor Tom Deakin	21/2/24
Opposition Spokesperson	Councillor Andy Dingwall	21/2/24
Scrutiny Chair	Councillor Gwil Wren	21/2/24

**APPENDIX A**

**Tender Evaluation Report**

**North Taunton Development Phases B & Ci**

**DN663350**

**Author:**     **Name: Michael O’Halloran**  
                  **Title: Procurement Specialist**  
                  **Commercial & Procurement**  
                  **Date: 20 February 2024**

Page 1 of 5  
Appendix A - Evaluation Report

## **1. Management Summary**

Somerset Council has embarked on a major redevelopment scheme to transform the North Taunton neighbourhood and build quality, energy efficient new homes where people will want to live.

The proposed scheme will provide up to 230 new build homes and retrofit 27 existing council homes through a phased approach. There will be a net increase of 64 new homes as a result of the overall scheme. Phase A comprising some 47 new dwellings is nearing completion.

The Council is now seeking to secure the delivery of Phases B and Ci comprising 51 new dwellings along with 2 new dwellings in what was to be the new community centre (completed to shell and core standards under the Phase A Contract).

Subject to satisfactory performance the Council is also seeking to secure the option for the delivery (by mutual agreement) of Phases Cii (31 new dwellings), Ciii (29 new dwellings) and D (69 new dwellings). These Phases will commence immediately on the completion of Phases B and Ci.

This procurement was carried out by Somerset Council who wished to select a Contractor to carry out the future development work in the North Taunton neighbourhood. The procurement was conducted under the Westworks Dynamic Purchasing System (Westworks CONST2018DPS - Development and Construction) as a call for further competition under Category 3. It was issued to all contractors on the DPS.

The Council sought to appoint a suitably accredited and experienced Contractor to undertake the design and construction of Phases B and Ci of the North Taunton Regeneration Project under a JCT Design and Build 2016 with Standard and Employers Amendments. The Council also intends to reserve the option to extend the appointment to cover the design and construction of Phases Cii, Ciii and D if the Contractors performance on Phases B & Ci is satisfactory.

## **2. Procurement Process**

This procurement was carried out in accordance with the authority's Contract Procedure Rules and Standing Orders, and Public Contracts Regulations 2015 principles.

Suppliers were invited to submit a response to the Invitation to Tender (ITT) through the Westworks In-Tend e-Tendering System. The Procurement Documents were published on 30 October 2023.



Bid responses were received by the closing date of 12 noon on 29 January 2024 (an extension of 1 week was allowed for the deadline) as follows:

- Two Bidders responded within the deadline.
- One Bidder submitted a compliant Bid.
- One Bid was deemed non-compliant with requirements, following advice from the Legal team.
- Bids were evaluated in accordance with the criteria set out in the Procurement Documents and set out in section 2.1 below.

The Commercial and Procurement Team conducted compliance checks and Finance supported with financial risk assessment.

Clarification questions were issued to the compliant Bidder to confirm their Pricing and Social Value proposals.

## 2.1 Evaluation Methodology

Each bid was reviewed for compliance with the Pass/Fail criteria set out in the Procurement Documents and all clarifications issued to all Bidders during the tender period. One of the Bids did not meet all the selection requirements.

The compliant Bid was evaluated in accordance with the evaluation award criteria set out within the Procurement Documents and were applied as follows:

Evaluation criteria breakdown		Weighting
<b>Quality</b>		<b>20%</b>
Professional team, project management and collaboration	5%	
Design and Management, Risk Management, and Project Management	15%	
<b>Price</b>		<b>70%</b>
<b>Social Value</b>		<b>10%</b>
Procurement Document F Social Value Calculator	5%	
Social Value Commitment	5%	

## 2.2 Quality

The quality questions were scored and evaluated in accordance with the published criteria.

The quality element of the Tenders was evaluated by a panel of officers and moderated in a moderation meeting following initial collation of scores and comments. The moderation process was facilitated by the Commercial and Procurement Team at Somerset Council (see Confidential Appendix B for the list of evaluators and moderators). Each evaluation panel member scored each Bid on an individual basis and prior to the moderation meeting.

Moderated scores are available in Confidential Appendix B, including the proposed award decision.

## **2.3 Pricing**

Pricing was assessed based on the total tender price for the Works included by bidders within the Contract Sum Analysis return. The tendered prices are available in Confidential Appendix B, including the proposed award decision.

## **3. Contractual Position**

The Authority intends to enter into contract using a JCT Design and Build 2016 with Standard and Employers Amendments for the design and construction of Phases B & Ci.

This is subject to approval of an Executive Key Decision to award supported by this evaluation report.

### **3.1 Proposed Term**

The expected contract period will not exceed 24 months, with an option to extend by mutual agreement for the delivery of Phase Cii and Ciii for up to a further 48 months.

### **3.2 Performance Levels and Contract Management**

Performance levels will be monitored as part of Contract Management and specific Key Performance Indicators. The contract will be managed to ensure that the performance meets expectations and to identify further opportunities for cost and improvement.

## **4. Risk and Mitigation**

Risks and associated mitigations are detailed in Confidential Appendix B.



## 5. Next Steps

- Unsuccessful Bidder to be informed of non-compliance with requirements.
- Executive Key Decision to award to be approved. (Wednesday 6 March 2024)
- Suppliers to be informed of the decision by Commercial and Procurement Team. (Following approval)
- Standstill period to elapse. (10 days)
- Contract award
- Contract Mobilisation/Implementation to begin.

## End of Report

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## Somerset Equality Impact Assessment

Before completing this EIA please ensure you have read the EIA guidance notes – available from your Equality Officer or [www.somerset.gov.uk/impactassessment](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/impactassessment)

Organisation prepared for (mark as appropriate)	 <b>Somerset</b> Council	x	 <b>NHS</b> <b>Somerset</b>	 <b>NHS</b> <b>Somerset</b> NHS Foundation Trust
Version	2		Date Completed	19 February 2024
Description of what is being impact assessed				

### **North Taunton Woolaway Project (NTWP) - Implementation of Phase B and Ci the Development in line with the Equality Act 2010**

The NTWP will make a significant contribution toward delivering quality housing to meet the needs of the Councils' residents. The Project will provide a significant contribution towards:

- Resolving severe structural matters in relation to 162 defective Woolaway Homes through demolition and replacement with up to 230 new low carbon homes and 27 defective Woolaway properties with better insulated and structurally sound retrofitted homes.
- Affordable Housing supply; with 227 – 230 new homes for rent
- Healthier homes and community; well-designed green space and road layout and efficient to heat homes
- Low carbon homes; a significant step toward zero carbon with a fabric first approach and a fund for renewable heat and power
- Accessible housing; a major contribution towards meeting the councils demand for wheelchair accessible homes
- Garden Town; the scheme adopts many principles of the Garden town design guide
- Larger accommodation; national space standards have been maintained throughout the scheme including the design of larger family accommodation (4 / 5 bed).
- The community open space will be accessible for all groups in the community reflecting the diversity of the local population, helping to bring people together and foster good relations between different groups.

#### **Evidence**

**What data/information have you used to assess how this policy/service might impact on protected groups?** Sources such as the [Office of National Statistics](#), [Somerset Intelligence Partnership](#), [Somerset's Joint Strategic Needs Analysis \(JSNA\)](#), Staff and/ or [area profiles](#), should be detailed here

Through the extensive resident consultation undertaken, a detailed understanding and demographic profile of the existing community and its potential future needs has been created.

The consultation in 2018 included four public consultation events in a venue selected for its close proximity and accessibility to the affected residents, the opportunity for home visits from the project team alongside the project team being based in an office hub to provide a 'drop in' facility for the residents.

The scheme proposals have evolved in consultation with a project Design Group. The Design Group consisted of residents, both SC tenants and homeowners, with a range of housing and lifestyle requirements.

In addition to information gathered through the resident consultation, the community profile has been further populated through information held by the Somerset Intelligence Partnership, specifically the area Indices of Multiple Deprivation results.

Housing needs have been further informed by data held within the Choice Based Lettings System 'Homefinder Somerset'.

All affected home owners have been contacted during the consultation phase and kept up to date with the project progress and phasing plans via newsletters, letters and meetings. Negotiations are preferred option and will continue throughout the CPO process.

**Who have you consulted with to assess possible impact on protected groups and what have they told you? If you have not consulted other people, please explain why?**

The demographic profiles includes every single household within the projects redline area. The information gathered, particularly through 1-2-1 home visits included completing questionnaires to help identify vulnerable and protected groups.

The project team have worked across a range of agencies and partners within the Priorswood 'One Team' area.

To assist with Skills and Learning, Somerset Academy and Skills and Learning Council have been invited to discussions. The local primary school and doctors surgery have been provided with progress updates.

SC (formerly SWT) Tenants Forum and Tenant Services Management Board have received regular feedback on the project and provided views and considerations.

## Analysis of impact on protected groups

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires us to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations with protected groups. Consider how this policy/service will achieve these aims. In the table below, using the evidence outlined above and your own understanding, detail what considerations and potential impacts against each of the three aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty. Based on this information, make an assessment of the likely outcome, before you have implemented any mitigation.

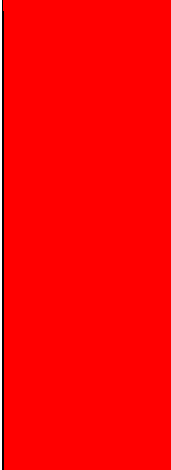
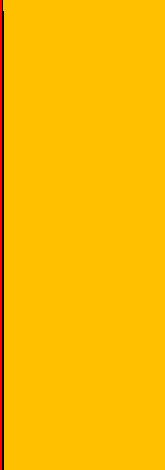
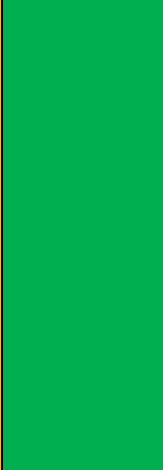
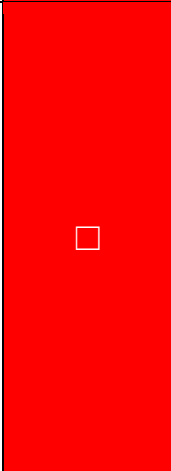
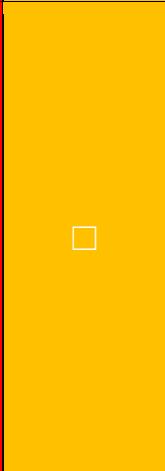
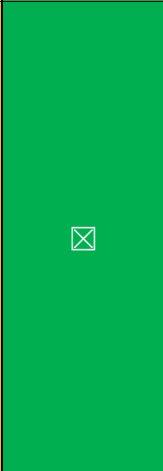
Protected group	Summary of impact	Negative outcome	Neutral outcome	Positive outcome
<b>Age</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The increased choice of affordable housing type, size and tenure provides housing options for all age groups.</li> <li>For rented properties Lettings will be taken from the choice based lettings system 'Homefinder Somerset' which has equality and diversity policies in place to ensure protected groups are not disadvantaged.</li> <li>For private owners there is choice of housing type, size, tenure and location that will not negatively impact on this protected group</li> </ul>	□	□	☒
<b>Disability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specific provision for a range of adapted properties has been made within the scheme proposal to provide a housing choice for those with a disability</li> <li>For rented properties Lettings will be taken from the choice based lettings system 'Homefinder Somerset' which has equality and diversity policies in place to ensure protected groups are not disadvantaged.</li> <li>For owner occupiers with disabled adaptations or aids, these will be replicated at their new homes and costs covered by the</li> </ul>	□	□	☒

	Disbursement Compensation as set out in the Compulsory Purchase and Compensation Guide (Compulsory Purchase and Compensation, Compensation Guide to Residential Owners and Occupiers: Communities and Local Government, April 2010)			
<b>Gender reassignment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The increased choice of affordable housing type, size and tenure provides housing options that will not negatively impact on this protected group.</li> <li>For rented properties Lettings will be taken from the choice based lettings system 'Homefinder Somerset' which has equality and diversity policies in place to ensure protected groups are not disadvantaged.</li> <li>For private owners there is choice of housing type, size, tenure and location that will not negatively impact on this protected group</li> </ul>	□	□	☒
<b>Marriage and civil partnership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The increased choice of affordable housing type, size and tenure provides housing options that will not negatively impact on this protected group.</li> <li>For rented properties Lettings will be taken from the choice based lettings system 'Homefinder Somerset' which has equality and diversity policies in place to ensure protected groups are not disadvantaged.</li> <li>For private owners there is choice of housing type, size, tenure and location that will not negatively impact on this protected group.</li> </ul>	□	□	☒

<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The increased choice of affordable housing type, size and tenure provides housing options that will not negatively impact on this protected group.</li> <li>• For rented properties Lettings will be taken from the choice based lettings system 'Homefinder Somerset' which has equality and diversity policies in place to ensure protected groups are not disadvantaged.</li> <li>• For private owners there is choice of housing type, size, tenure and location that will not negatively impact on this protected group</li> </ul>	□	□	☒
<b>Race and ethnicity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The increased choice of affordable housing type, size and tenure provides housing options that will not negatively impact on this protected group.</li> <li>• For rented properties Lettings will be taken from the choice based lettings system 'Homefinder Somerset' which has equality and diversity policies in place to ensure protected groups are not disadvantaged.</li> <li>• For private owners there is choice of housing type, size, tenure and location that will not negatively impact on this protected group</li> </ul>	□	□	☒
<b>Religion or belief</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The increased choice of affordable housing type, size and tenure provides housing options that will not negatively impact on this protected group.</li> <li>• For rented properties Lettings will be taken from the choice based lettings system 'Homefinder Somerset' which has</li> </ul>	□	□	☒



	<p>equality and diversity policies in place to ensure protected groups are not disadvantaged.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For private owners there is choice of housing type, size, tenure and location that will not negatively impact on this protected group</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Sex</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The increased choice of affordable housing type, size and tenure provides housing options that will not negatively impact on this protected group.</li> <li>For rented properties Lettings will be taken from the choice based lettings system 'Homefinder Somerset' which has equality and diversity policies in place to ensure protected groups are not disadvantaged.</li> <li>For private owners there is choice of housing type, size, tenure and location that will not negatively impact on this protected group</li> </ul>	<p>□</p>	<p>□</p>	<p>☒</p>
<p><b>Sexual orientation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The increased choice of affordable housing type, size and tenure provides housing options that will not negatively impact on this protected group.</li> <li>For rented properties Lettings will be taken from the choice based lettings system 'Homefinder Somerset' which has equality and diversity policies in place to ensure protected groups are not disadvantaged.</li> <li>For private owners there is choice of housing type, size, tenure and location that will not negatively impact on this protected group</li> </ul>	<p>□</p>	<p>□</p>	<p>☒</p>

<p><b>Armed Forces (including serving personnel, families and veterans)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The increased choice of affordable housing type, size and tenure provides housing options that will not negatively impact on this protected group.</li> <li>• For rented properties Lettings will be taken from the choice based lettings system 'Homefinder Somerset' which has equality and diversity policies in place to ensure protected groups are not disadvantaged.</li> <li>• For private owners there is choice of housing type, size, tenure and location that will not negatively impact on this protected group</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Other, e.g. carers, low income, rurality/isolation, etc.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The increased choice of affordable housing type, size and tenure provides housing options that will not negatively impact on this protected group.</li> <li>• For rented properties Lettings will be taken from the choice based lettings system 'Homefinder Somerset' which has equality and diversity policies in place to ensure protected groups are not disadvantaged.</li> <li>• For private owners there is choice of housing type, size, tenure and location that will not negatively impact on this protected group</li> </ul>			

<b>Negative outcomes action plan</b>				
Where you have ascertained that there will potentially be negative outcomes, you are required to mitigate the impact of these. Please detail below the actions that you intend to take.				
<b>Action taken/to be taken</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Person responsible</b>	<b>How will it be monitored?</b>	<b>Action complete</b>
No adverse equality impact identified. These have been mitigated through an extensive resident consultation process and the resultant scheme design.  Any negative outcomes which may emerge during the implementation of the development will be addressed through strong project management and identifiable workstreams.	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>If negative impacts remain, please provide an explanation below.</b>				
<b>Completed by:</b>	<b>Jane Windebank, Development Specialist</b>			
<b>Date</b>	<b>19 February 2024</b>			
<b>Signed off by:</b>	<b>Chris Brown</b>			
<b>Date</b>	<b>21/2/24</b>			
<b>Equality Lead sign off Name:</b>				

<b>Equality Lead/Manager sign off date:</b>	<b>Tom Rutland – report sent 19/2/24</b>
<b>To be reviewed by: (officer name)</b>	<b>Jane Windebank</b>
<b>Review date:</b>	<b>19 February 2025</b>

Somerset Council



## Notice of private meeting

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### **The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 – Regulation 5**

Following prior publication in the Forward Plan February 2024, in accordance with the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 – Regulation 5, notice is hereby given that the Executive is requested to consider agreeing a resolution at its Meeting on 6 March 2024 to exclude the press and public from any part of the meeting where exempt information relating to the items below is to be disclosed:

#### **Review of Outsourced Grounds Maintenance and Street Cleansing Services**

Author: Jonathan Stevens - Head of Operations, Regulatory & Operational Services  
Contact Details: [sarah.dowden@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:sarah.dowden@somerset.gov.uk) / [jonathan.stevens@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:jonathan.stevens@somerset.gov.uk)

#### **Phase B & Ci of the North Taunton Woolaway Project**

Author: Jane Windebank, Development Specialist  
Contact Details: [jane.windebank@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:jane.windebank@somerset.gov.uk), Tel: 01823 219520 / 07799 534071

#### **Executive Decision in relation to Somerset Council's role as Host Authority and Accountable Body to the Somerset Rivers Authority partnership.**

Author: David Mitchell, Somerset Rivers Authority Manager  
Contact Details: [david.mitchell@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:david.mitchell@somerset.gov.uk) / 01823 356789

#### Reasons for the items to be considered in private session at the meeting

Local Government Act 1972 – Schedule 12A

The item is likely to contain information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that

information).

Representations received to hold the item in open session

None.

Council's response to representations received

Not applicable.

Circulation:

All Somerset Council Members

Council's website

27 February 2024

David Clark – Monitoring Officer

For questions about this notice please contact Mike Bryant, Democratic Services, County Hall, Taunton, TA1 4DY.

Tel: 01823 357628 Email: [mike.bryant@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:mike.bryant@somerset.gov.uk)

## Decision Report - Executive Decision

Forward Plan Reference: FP/23/01/04

Decision Date - 06/03/2024

Key Decision - Yes

Confidential Information - Yes



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### **Executive Decision in relation to Somerset Council's role as Host Authority and Accountable Body to the Somerset Rivers Authority partnership.**

Executive Member(s): Lead Member for Environment and Climate Change

Local Member(s) and Division: All

Lead Officer: Kirsty Larkins, Service Director - Climate, Environment and Sustainability

Author: David Mitchell, Somerset Rivers Authority Manager

Contact Details: [david.mitchell@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:david.mitchell@somerset.gov.uk) / 01823 356789

### **Summary / Background**

1. Somerset Council took on the role of Host Authority and Accountable Body for the Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA) in 2023, carrying on the role that Somerset County Council had performed since 2015. Once approved, this decision will ensure that the residents of Somerset continue to benefit from extra funding and extra actions that reduce the risks and impacts of flooding across the county. These extra activities are only possible because of the unique arrangements we have in Somerset to fund the Somerset Rivers Authority.
2. Winter 2013-14 was the wettest in Somerset for 250 years. Around 150km<sup>2</sup> of land was submerged for weeks, 165 homes flooded, 7,000 businesses affected, 81 roads closed. An Economic Impact Study estimated the cost to Somerset as being up to £147.5m. The Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA) was launched in January 2015 to provide an extra level of flood protection and resilience for Somerset. Through the SRA an additional £25.9m has already been raised to reduce the frequency, depth and duration of flooding and increase resilience to flooding across the county. 2024-25 will be the tenth year that the SRA funds an 'Enhanced Programme' of projects to tackle flood risks. As the impacts of climate change are felt more and more, the risk of flooding increases. The flooding we are seeing now is as likely to be surface water flooding in steep-sided catchments as it is flooding that slowly builds across the Somerset Levels and Moors. Between the start of January 2023 and the end of January 2024, more than twice as many houses were flooded across the county as were flooded in 2014 - mostly as a result of intense downpours.

3. Somerset is unique in having the SRA and the ability to raise funds in the way it does. The SRA is a partnership of Somerset Council, the Environment Agency, the Axe Brue Internal Drainage Board, the Parrett Internal Drainage Board, Wessex Regional Flood and Coastal Committee, Natural England and Wessex Water.
4. In 2024-25, a further £3,078,886<sup>1</sup> will be raised locally and spent on 12 different projects and activities. SRA activities stretch across the county. Full details are provided in Appendices 3 and 4.
5. A key decision has been taken each year by the Host Authority to approve the allocation of funds, raised through an Alternative Notional Amount on Council Tax and contributions from Somerset Internal Drainage Boards for use in the coming financial year by the SRA.
6. The Alternative Notional Amount (ANA) is the formal name for the process used by central government to allow Somerset councils to make a small increase to council tax charges in the 2016-17 financial year solely for the purpose of funding the activities of the Somerset Rivers Authority. This mechanism ensured that funding the SRA did not reduce funding for other council services. This ANA is rolled forward each year to fund the SRA. The amount charged is currently fixed at 1.25% of the 2016-17 council tax charge. For 2024-25 the charge per band D property will be £14.65, resulting in approximately £3.059m being raised for the SRA.
7. The purpose of funding raised for the SRA is to provide an extra level of flood protection and resilience for Somerset residents using locally raised funding to deliver on locally agreed priorities. The SRA Board each year approves a series of projects which are collectively referred to as the Enhanced Programme. Since 2015 the SRA Board has approved funding for approximately 240 schemes and activities. The 2024-25 Enhanced Programme will see a further 12 separate projects funded: full details are contained in Appendix 3 (confidential) and Appendix 4 (public).
8. The Executive is asked to review the 2024-25 SRA Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and approve the signing of the current MoU by the Lead Member for Environment and Climate Change on behalf of the council.

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<sup>1</sup> Includes £10,000 from the Axe Brue Internal Drainage Board and £10,000 from the Parrett Internal Drainage Board.



9. The Somerset Rivers Authority partnership has been developing a new Strategy and Flood Action Plan during 2023-24. The Strategy follows on from the 20 Year Flood Action Plan (FAP) that was produced in 2014 in response to the floods of that year. Many actions in the FAP are now completed. The SRA's new Strategy and Flood Action Plan 2024-2024 will set the strategic direction of the SRA partnership for the next ten years and beyond. There are 6 Somerset Councillors on the SRA Board who have been involved in the development of the Strategy. The Executive is asked to review the final draft of the document in advance of the SRA Board approving and publishing the document on 8 March 2024.

## **Recommendations**

10. The Executive agrees:
  - a. To Somerset Council continuing in the role of Host Authority and Accountable Body for the Somerset Rivers Authority.
  - b. To review the revised 2024-25 Local Memorandum of Understanding and Constitution set out in Appendix 1 and authorise the Lead Member for Environment and Climate Change to sign this on behalf of Somerset Council.
  - c. To review the proposed SRA Budget and SRA Enhanced Programme for 2024-25, (Appendix 2 SRA Board 2024-25 Enhanced Programme and Budget) in accordance with the recommendations to be considered by the SRA Board at its meeting on 8 March 2024.
  - d. To the release of funding committed from all sources in 2024-25 for the purposes of the SRA, subject to receipt of those funds, in accordance with the budget for 2024-25 as set out in Appendix 2 SRA Board Paper 2024-25 SRA Enhanced Programme and Budget.
  - e. That Somerset Councillors that sit on the SRA Board can approve the publication of the SRA's new Strategy and Flood Action Plan at the SRA Board meeting on 8 March 2024.
  - f. That the detailed management of the 2024-25 SRA Budget and Enhanced Programme within the control total allocated to the SRA is undertaken in accordance with the constitutional, financial regulations and decision-making arrangements of Somerset Council as Accountable Body.
  - g. The case (set out in 'legal implications' for exempt information) for Appendix 3 CONFIDENTIAL 2024-25 SRA Enhanced Programme

scheme descriptions WITH COSTS to be treated in confidence, as the case for the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing that information.

- h. To exclude the press and public from the meeting where there is any discussion at the meeting regarding exempt or confidential information (Appendix 3).

## **Reasons for recommendations**

11. Somerset Council is the accountable legal body for the Somerset Rivers Authority until such time as it becomes a separate legal entity. The recommendations, once approved, will confirm Somerset Council as the accountable legal body for the Somerset Rivers Authority. This will enable the SRA to continue to work with partners to deliver the actions within the agreed Somerset Flood Action Plan and the SRA's new Strategy and Flood Action Plan, leading to an enhanced level of flood protection and resilience in the county.
12. The majority of the £3,079,000 funding raised will be used to fund Enhanced Programme activities with the remainder (£310,000) covering SRA staff costs, overheads and running costs. The 2024-25 Enhanced Programme will consist of 12 projects aimed at reducing flood risk, increasing resilience to flooding and encouraging adaptation to the water-related impacts of climate change across Somerset. Full details are contained within Appendix 4.
13. The allocation of funding to specific projects within the 2024-25 Enhanced Programme is proposed, if required, to be considered in exempt session to avoid compromising the procurement position of the delivery partners (Appendix 3).
14. The Local Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and Constitution which sets the context for the work of the SRA has been revised to reflect changes relevant to the 2024-25 financial year. The MoU has been revised to reflect that the SRA Board will be responsible for oversight of the new Somerset Rivers Authority Strategy and Flood Action Plan from April 2024. Proposed changes are shown in blue in Appendix 1.
15. The MOU must be formally agreed by all Partners to ensure the ongoing support of Partners in delivering the SRA Enhanced Programme of work and to provide a clear governance structure for setting and managing that work. SRA funds are not disbursed until the MoU has been signed by all parties. The MoU will be

signed on behalf of Somerset Council by the Lead Member for Environment and Climate Change.

### **Other options considered**

16. The only alternative option is for Somerset Council not to take on the role of the host authority for the SRA and not to approve the funding for use by the SRA. This would result in the SRA being unable to proceed in its current form, or at all. The funding raised through the Alternative Notional Amount is explicitly for the funding of SRA activities. If the funds are not used for the SRA they will be lost to the county and the extra benefits the SRA brings will also be lost. This is not considered to be a viable option. As SRA funding is raised through Council Tax no other organisation can fulfil the role that the council can.

### **Links to Council Plan and Medium-Term Financial Plan**

17. SRA schemes and activities support the priorities of Somerset Council.
18. The work of the SRA addresses a number of the priorities in the adopted Somerset Council Plan and the “Vision” for Somerset Council. The vision states:

“Somerset Council will build a fairer, greener, more flourishing, Somerset that cares for the most vulnerable and listens to you.”

SRA activity delivers against the priorities of:

- A greener, more sustainable Somerset
- An environmentally sustainable and more resilient Somerset

Climate change is increasing the likelihood and impacts of flooding. The work of the SRA helps Somerset prepare for, mitigate the impacts of, become more resilient to and ultimately adapt to, the impacts of climate change

19. The work of the SRA directly supports achieving Goal 3 of the Climate Strategy – ‘To have a Somerset which is prepared for, and resilient to, the impacts of Climate Change. Through delivering the Somerset 20 Year Flood Action Plan and the SRA’s new Strategy and Flood Action Plan, the SRA partners undertake schemes and activities that contribute towards tackling many of the climate change related risks identified in the Somerset Climate Emergency Strategy.
20. The work of the SRA directly supports the objectives contained within Somerset Council’s Local Flood Risk Management Strategy.

21. Medium Term Financial Plan: It was resolved at Full Council on the 20 February 2024 to agree to set a Council Tax precept of £14.65 (Band D) within the base budget for the Somerset Rivers Authority. This results in a Council Tax Requirement of £3,058,886. As explained in paragraph 6, SRA funding does not impact on council tax funds available for other council services.

### **Financial and Risk Implications**

22. Funding amounting to £3,655,785 is available to the SRA for 2024-25, of which Somerset Council will contribute £3,058,886 from Council Tax receipts (as confirmed at the Full Council meeting on the 20 February 2024). Funds raised for use by the SRA do not reduce the funds available to Somerset Council through council tax.
23. SRA funding is raised by a 1.25% 'Alternative Notional Amount' (ANA) added to council tax bills. The funds raised are in addition to that raised for core SC functions. Funds raised for the SRA cannot be used for other reasons as this would be in contravention of why the Alternative Notional Amount was originally approved by central government.
24. Somerset Council, as the Accountable Body, will be responsible for the proper oversight, management and accounting of all funds raised for, and spent by the SRA. All SRA funds are overseen by a Somerset Council Finance Manager. The SRA Board allocates SRA funding as grants. The SRA's constitution defines the Board's purpose and authority of the Board and sets out delegations for financial decisions. All SRA Board decisions must align with Somerset Council Standing Orders and, where necessary, a key or non-key decision will be taken by the relevant council officer or Executive Member to ratify decisions of the SRA Board.
25. The flexibility afforded to Somerset Council to raise a funds through Council Tax for SRA activities will continue for as long as Somerset Council chooses to raise it.
26. The primary risk of not approving the SRA funding and Enhanced Programme would be that the SRA could ultimately be wound up. Without funding, the SRA would be unable to deliver its objectives of an extra level of protection from flooding and an increase in resilience to flooding. The momentum achieved since the SRA's inception in 2015 in mitigating the intensity and duration of flooding events would not be maintained.

27. There is a risk of reputational damage to Somerset Council if funding is not approved and the SRA ceases to continue in any meaningful form.
28. If funding is not approved there is a risk of (4) staff redundancies within the SRA team and a potential financial liability for Somerset Council from redundancy payments. This is mitigated by the agreement to use any remaining SRA funds to settle this liability in the first instance.
29. The SRA provides grant funding, paid in arrears, to SRA delivery partners upon evidence of agreed and eligible works being completed. Organisations delivering SRA-funded projects must first settle any charges and then claim funds back from the SRA by submitting a grant claim. Claim forms must be signed off by a suitably qualified financial officer from the delivery organisation giving the SRA assurance that any claim is for eligible spend. This process minimises the risk of funds being spent on ineligible activity. The SRA undertakes an audit annually of selected claims to provide an additional level of assurance that SRA funds are being spent for the intended purpose.
30. Just as some projects underspend, so some SRA projects occasionally face cost increases. In such a case, there is a risk that an SRA delivery partner may be unable or unwilling to absorb those costs. In this instance the SRA may be asked to fund the cost increase. When this occurs the delivery partner must seek approval for additional funding from the SRA Board. This approval process allows the SRA Board to consider funding requests in advance of committing to those cost increases and allows the Board to manage its available funds in a prudent manner and to consider any impacts on the overall Enhanced Programme and budget. Where a cost increase occurs that could not be identified in advance, the SRA Board has the option to not fund that cost increase and the delivery partner would be liable for that cost. Any decision taken by the SRA Board must also follow council Standing Orders and, where necessary, a key or non-key decision will be taken to ratify the SRA Board decision.
31. The Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) granted £13.049m to a 'Somerset Flooding' project in 2015. These LEP funds are now fully claimed. Project delivery is still underway using match funding. There is a risk that the LEP could claw back previously granted funds if a project was not completed or it was found that the funds had been incorrectly spent. This is mitigated by the SRA claims procedure which requires any partner claim to be certified by a suitably

qualified finance officer or other senior officer of the organisation claiming, and also by annual auditing procedures.

- 32. Somerset County Council agreed to ‘own’ the risks associated with spending of LEP funding on behalf of the SRA. This commitment has now passed to Somerset Council (SC). This risk is mitigated by the fact that SC has signed ‘strategic grant agreements’ with SRA delivery partners which makes the delivery partner liable for the risk of LEP funding clawback. All LEP funds have now been claimed from the LEP, further reducing this risk.
  
- 33. Due to the measures and procedures set out above, financial risk to Somerset Council as Host Authority and Accountable Body for SRA is deemed to be low. The SRA follows strict processes for the allocation and management of the grant funding that it provides. These processes mean there is a low likelihood that the SRA will exceed its available budget. The likelihood and impact of the above risks coming to fruition have been assessed as having a low likelihood but a high impact.

<b>Please enter risk description</b>					
<b>Risk that Somerset Council is liable for any cost associated with the winding up of the SRA or of SRA grant-funded projects going over budget.</b>					
<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>Risk Score</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Please enter mitigation here</b>					
<b>The SRA has clear governance and decision-making processes that minimise the risk that costs associated with SRA grant-funded projects will exceed the available SRA funds.</b>					

**Legal Implications**

- 34. If Somerset Council agrees to be the Accountable Body for the SRA, then all decisions will be taken in accordance with Somerset Council’s Standing Orders and procedures. This means that SRA Board decisions, where relevant, will be decisions in principle until ratified by the Accountable Body. For example, if the

SRA Board takes a significant financial decision, this will be accompanied by a key or non-key decision by the Accountable Body.

35. The amendments to the SRA's Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and Constitution do not carry any legal implications for Somerset Council or any of the SRA partners. The MoU confirms organisational support for the SRA and codifies the governance arrangements for the proper operation of the SRA Board.
36. Appendix 3 contains exempt information. "Exempt information" is defined by Section 100 of the Local Government Act 1972 and by Schedule 12A to that Act. The information in Appendix 3 is exempt information because it is considered to fall within paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A:

"Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)".

The public interest test is then applied and in this instance it is considered that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information for the reasons set out in paragraph 1.3 in the Background section below.

### **HR Implications**

37. Somerset Council will act on behalf of the SRA Board as Host Authority. It will employ SRA staff (4 full-time permanent staff and 1 part-time - 2 days per week - member of staff employed through an agency). As such Somerset Council will be responsible for all HR-related matters for the SRA team.

### **Other Implications:**

### **Equalities Implications**

38. This decision relates purely to the role that Somerset Council will fulfil as Host Authority and Accountable Body for the Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA). In this role the council will take a formal decision to allocate the funds raised through the Council Tax for the activities of the SRA as set out within the SRA's Enhanced Programme.
39. Equalities and due regard issues have been considered. Project-specific due regard issues will be considered on a project by project basis. The Somerset

Council Lead Equalities Officer has confirmed a full Equalities Impact Assessment is not required for this decision. Grant funding recipients are required to have due regard to equalities issues when planning and undertaking work funded by the SRA.

40. The SRA Enhanced Programme of works is a series of mostly relatively small-scale interventions related to flood risk management. The works often have localised impacts and are developed in consultation with landowners, property owners and statutory bodies such as Lead Local Flood Authority, Environment Agency and Natural England.
41. Where community-based work is undertaken as part of the Programme, such as building community resilience, these will be undertaken in an inclusive manner with reference to Somerset Council expectations on equalities and inclusion.
42. Representation of the communities of Somerset, and their various characteristics, will be achieved through councillor representation on the SRA Board. SRA projects often involve stakeholder groups from across Somerset. The SRA funds two community engagement officers who work in communities at risk of flooding across Somerset. SRA meetings are public meetings.
43. The local Memorandum of Understanding sets out that the SRA shall, where relevant and unless otherwise agreed, operate in accordance with Somerset Council practices and procedures, relating to:
  - Equalities policies.
  - Policies for dealing with access to information and data protection.

### **Community Safety Implications**

44. There are no implications with regard to crime, but the aim of the funding is to improve community safety by reducing risks associated with flooding

### **Climate Change and Sustainability Implications**

45. The aim of setting up the SRA is to provide a long-term sustainable funding solution to enhance flood risk management in the county. The SRA will directly support Somerset Council to respond to the challenges of climate change. SRA funds will invest in projects that support adaptation to climate change and help communities and businesses be resilient and sustainable into the future. Many SRA-funded projects deliver multiple benefits such as water quality, improved



biodiversity, carbon sequestration, etc. SRA projects will directly support delivery of the Climate Emergency Strategy.

46. SRA grant proposal forms expressly require proposers to say how their project will help tackle climate change. The proposal form states:

Addressing Climate Emergency: The SRA encourages proposals which directly support Somerset's response to climate change by increasing resilience and encouraging adaptation to the effects of climate change. Please pay particular attention to the Water Sector Detailed Report (Appendix 12). Describe to what extent your proposal supports Somerset in achieving its goals of carbon neutrality and/or long-term resilience to the impact of climate change. Such as:

- Carbon reduction and energy conservation
- Support biodiversity and ecological adaptation and resilience
- Flood risk management through nature-based solutions
- Implementation of water conservation measures including agriculture, homes, business and industry
- Mitigation of environmental impacts
- Strategies to raise awareness and preparedness involving our communities

### **Health and Safety Implications**

47. None identified.

### **Health and Wellbeing Implications**

48. The aim of the Enhanced Programme as a whole is to improve community well-being. There are specific actions in the Enhanced Programme that are aimed at improving community resilience. The health and wellbeing of residents potentially impacted by flooding is improved through increasing resilience to flooding and protection from flooding.

### **Social Value**

49. This decision will not instigate any procurement directly but rather releases funds that can then be allocated as grants for SRA projects which are delivered by SRA partners. To date, SRA funds have been used to directly support local businesses on many projects – this will continue into the future. SRA funds support two community engagement officers who are helping local communities to increase

the capacity they have to respond to the risk of flooding and adapt to likely future impacts of climate change.

### **Scrutiny comments / recommendations:**

50. Scrutiny Committee – Climate and Place considered a draft version of the report on 17 January 2024. Reassurance was sought that SRA funding would not further exacerbate cost pressures on the council or increase costs to Somerset residents. One committee member recommended that costs and benefits of SRA-funded projects be carefully considered before funding is granted. Scrutiny Committee Members overall supported the work of the SRA. No amendments to the report were requested.

### **Background**

51. Winter 2013-14 was the wettest in Somerset for 250 years. Around 150km<sup>2</sup> of land was submerged for weeks, 165 homes flooded, 7,000 businesses affected, 81 roads closed. An Economic Impact Study estimated the cost to Somerset as being up to £147.5m. The SRA was launched in January 2015 to provide an extra level of flood protection and resilience for Somerset; it was an Action in Somerset's 20 Year Flood Action Plan (FAP) drawn up at the Government's request in 2014 to reduce the severity, duration, frequency and impact of flooding.
52. The SRA is a partnership of existing Flood Risk Management Authorities (FRMAs). Its members are Somerset Council, the Environment Agency, Natural England, the Wessex Regional Flood & Coastal Committee, the Axe-Brue Internal Drainage Board and the Parrett Internal Drainage Board and Wessex Water. The SRA does not diminish the roles, funding and responsibilities of any of its Flood Risk Management partners - nor indeed of landowners (who have their own riparian responsibilities). Somerset Council appoints 6 council representatives to the SRA Board.
53. Through the use of SRA funds, additional work is undertaken with increased coordination. The aim is to ensure that Somerset residents benefit from organisations' collective experience and knowledge. The SRA does extra, not instead of. It delivers an extra level of flood protection and resilience for the whole of Somerset. It raises extra money. It enables extra work.

54. The 2024-25 General Fund Revenue Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) was considered by Somerset Council on 20 February 2024. The Council resolved to continue the Council Tax precept of £14.65 within the base budget for the Somerset Rivers Authority. This results in a Council Tax requirement of £3,058,886 as detailed in ITEM 11, appendix 16, Council Tax Setting 2024-25. The outcomes of that meeting can be found by visiting the Somerset Council website -Full Council Agenda and Decisions. This funding raised through Council Tax plus £10,000 from the two Somerset Internal Drainage Boards totals £3,078,886 and is ring-fenced to finance the SRA in 2024-25, its 10th financial year. The SRA budget will have a neutral impact on Somerset Council's own budget.
55. This local funding will deliver a range of flood risk management activities across all areas of Somerset as part of the SRA Enhanced Programme. Appendix 3 of this report gives details of the projects with costs. Appendix 4 has project details without costs for the public. Appendix 3 is confidential to avoid compromising commercial negotiations with contractors when tenders are published for project delivery by grant recipients.
56. The Scheme of Delegation referenced in the SRA Constitution will be met by adherence to the Somerset Council constitutional arrangements and schemes of delegation. This is appropriate given that Somerset Council will be the accountable body, and the SRA in its current form lacks status as a decision-making body. Appendix 6 of the SRA Constitution (contained within Appendix 1 of this report) outlines the SRA decision making processes and reflects that these decisions are decisions 'in principle' and are subject to formal approval by its host authority and the accountable body for all SRA funding.
57. The proposed budget and associated SRA Enhanced Programme are scheduled to be approved by the SRA Board on 8 March 2024.

## **Background Papers**

None

## **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 - DRAFT SRA 2024-25 Memorandum of Understanding and Constitution
- Appendix 2 - SRA Board paper 2024-25 Enhanced Programme and Budget

- Appendix 3 - CONFIDENTIAL 2024-25 SRA Enhanced Programme scheme descriptions WITH COSTS
- Appendix 4 - 2024-25-SRA Enhanced Programme scheme descriptions
- Appendix 5 - Draft Somerset Rivers Authority Strategy and Flood Action Plan 2024-2034

### Assurance checklist

	Officer Name	Date Completed
Legal & Governance Implications	David Clark	13/02/2024
Communications	Peter Elliott	13/02/2024
Finance & Procurement	Nicola Hix	23/02/2024
Workforce	Alyn Jones	14/02/2024
Asset Management	Oliver Woodhams	22/02/2024
Executive Director / Senior Manager	Mickey Green	22/02/2024
Strategy & Performance	Alyn Jones	14/02/2024
Executive Lead Member	Dixie Darch	22/02/2024
<b>Consulted:</b>	Councillor Name	
Local Division Members	All	When published
Opposition Spokesperson	Steve Ashton	22/02/2024
Scrutiny Chair	Martin Dimery	06/02/2024