

Local Community Network Meeting Notes

Meeting Title: Local Community Network - Levels and Moors

Date: Monday, 15 January 2024

Time: 7 - 8.25 pm

Location: Online via Teams

Chaired by: Cllr Richard Wilkins

CORE MEMBERSHIP

Somerset Council Elected member attendees:

Name:	Attendance:
Cllr Adam Dance	Apologies
Cllr Alan Bradford	Apologies
Cllr Andy Dingwall	Present
Cllr Bill Revans	Apologies
Cllr David Fothergill	Apologies
Vacancy	
Cllr Diogo Rodrigues	Absent
Cllr Emily Pearlstone	Apologies
Cllr Harry Munt	Absent
Cllr Jo Roundell-Greene	Absent
Cllr John Bailey	Apologies
Cllr Matthew Martin	Apologies
Cllr Mike Stanton	Present
Cllr Norman Cavill	Apologies
Cllr Richard Wilkins:	Present
Cllr Tim Kerley	Present

Parish/Town Council attendees:

Council name:	Representative name:
Aller Parish Council	Judy Brown

Ash Parish Council	
Barrington Parish Council	
Beercrocombe Parish Council	Andrew Plumbly
Burrowbridge Parish Council	Stephen Kirk
Charltons (The)	Tamzin Elliott
Chedzoy Parish Council	Marion Detier
Compton Dundon Parish Council	Geoff Walker
Curry Mallett Parish Council	Fleur Wood
Curry Rivel Parish Council	Marcus Hembrow
Drayton Parish Council	
Fivehead Parish Council	
Hambridge & Westport Parish Council	Richard Meecham
High Ham Parish Council	David Vigar
Huish Episcopi Parish Council	Jane Redfearn
Isle Abbots Parish Council	Lorraine Vaughan Davis
Isle Brewers Parish Meeting	
Kingsbury Episcopi Parish Council	David Hall
Kingsdon Parish Council	
Langport Town Council	Sean DromGoole

Long Load Parish Council	
Long Sutton Parish Council	Graham Stoddart-Stones
Lyng Parish Council	Helen Barrington
Martock Parish Council	Paul Helyer
Middlezoy Parish Council	Paul Baker
Muchelney Parish Meeting	Andrew Flower
North Curry Parish Meeting	Mike Dennis
Othery Parish Council	Anthony Betty
Pitney Parish Council	
Puckington Parish Meeting	
Somerton Town Council	Phil Flowers
Stoke St Gregory Parish Council	
Westonzoyland Parish Council	Elizabeth Parfitt

Core Partnerships and Stakeholder attendees:

Organisation:	Name:
Avon and Somerset Police	Lora Bray – PCSO Supervisor for Sedgemoor area
NHS	
Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue	
Spark Somerset	
Society Local Council Clerks	

Somerset Association Local Councils	Ewan Jones
Somerset Activity Sports Partnership	
Community Council for Somerset	Vicky Presley, Village Agent
Citizens Advice	
Department of Work and Pensions	
Somerset Rivers Authority	Caroline Dunn
Somerset Local Nature Partnership	
Business Chamber	
Young Farmers	

Other attendees/members of the public present:

Name:
Graham Hil – Hambridge and Westport PC
Julia Gadd – Huish Episcopi PC
Leanne Jeanes – Burrowbridge PC
Rodney Young – Chedzoy PC
Alexander Priest - MIND
Philip Atherton – Member of the public
Louise Brooks - Member of the public
Amanda Chuter – High Ham PC
Kim Larsson – Clerk various
Brian Oakwell- Member of the public
Grace Salter – Lyng PC
Eddie Watts - Member of the public

Andrew Tizzard – Othery PC
Richard Maidment – Hambridge and Westport PC

Somerset Council Officer attendees:

Name:	Service area/Team
Kate Hellard	LCN
Adrian Moore	LCN
Emily Window	LCN
Ally Laing	Communications
Stephanie Gold	Democratic Services
Terena Isaacs	LCN
Rachael Selway	Facilities Management

Summary of discussion:

**Agenda Summary of key points of discussion and outcome:
item:**

Item 26: **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Somerset Councillors John Bailey, Norman Cavill, Bill Revans, David Fothergill, Matthew Martin, Emily Pearlstone, Alan Bradford and Adam Dance, and Cllr Gerad Tucker from Aller Parish Council.

Item 27: **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest received.

Item 28: **Notes from the Previous Meeting**

The meeting notes of the previous meeting held 13th November 2023 were approved as a correct record.

Item 29: **Discussion on the Executive Committee agenda**

The Chair, Cllr Wilkins Executive Lead member for Transport and Digital at Somerset Council gave a verbal summary of the discussions that had taken place during the Somerset Council Executive [agenda](#) and advised that the Executive had noted a first draft of the savings proposals that would be brought back to the Executive for approval on the 7th February 2024, before going on to Full Council for approval at the Council's Budget Setting meeting on 20th February 2024.

Kate Hellard, LCN Development Lead added that a summary document had been sent to all Parish and Town Councils, and invited comments and questions from the LCN.

There were several questions, comments and concerns raised from members of the LCN including: -

- Some members felt disappointed in the lack of communication regarding the impact of the savings proposals on parish and town councils.
- The information regarding all of the direct and indirect costs of the Somerset Council savings proposals for Parish and Town Councils is coming through very late. Many parish councils will have already set their precepts for the year, others have delayed their meetings. This is unhelpful. considering Parish and Town Councils will likely be expected to fund more services from April '24 onwards.
- Most Parish and Town councils do not have the knowledge or expertise to start delivering services that may be cut under the Somerset Council savings proposals.
- The reduction of Highways Services down to statutory duties only is very concerning, particularly for the most rural and flood risk areas.
- Is there any scope to increase CIL (community infrastructure levy) to help Parish and Town Councils fund extra services.
- Further clarification was sought regarding any potential devolution of decision making in services such as licensing and planning.

Members were invited to take part in the Council's [budget consultation](#) which runs until 22 January, the result of which will help influence councillors as they seek to set a balanced budget.

During the debate, Ally Laing, Senior Media and Communications officer, via the Teams Chat function, gave two examples of potential cuts to services; -

- Public Toilets: Indicative costs to run a block of toilets are estimated between £30K-40K.
- Grass Cutting: Somerset Council charges £40-£70 per hour for a grass cut. A typical parish recreation ground would take up to two hours.

Regarding item 8 of the Executive agenda, draft Asset and Service Devolution Framework, the Senior Media and Communications officer shared links to the [Somerset Council land and property assets](#) lists and invited members to email the Asset and Devolution team with any questions: -

- Somerset County Council: [Land and Property Transparency List](#)
- Mendip District Council: [Land and Property Transparency List](#)
- South Somerset District Council: [South Somerset Land and Property Transparency List](#)
- Somerset West and Taunton Council: [Land Transparency List](#) and [Property Transparency List](#)
- Sedgemoor District Council: [Sedgemoor Building Asset Transparency List – 8 February 2016](#)
- HM Land Registry website: [Search for land and property information](#)

Following on from the discussions regarding asset and service devolution, the LCN Development Lead gave a [presentation](#) on a new scheme entitled Highway Steward. Members considered the presentation and, in terms of next steps, the LCN Development Lead asked members to consider forming a Highway Steward working group to explore the scheme further.

At the end of the item, the Chair paid tribute to Somerset Councillor, Executive Lead Member for Adult Social Care and member of this LCN Cllr Dean Ruddle who passed away suddenly on 5th January 2024. He invited Cllr Tim Kerley to speak, who expressed his deep sadness at the loss of a close friend and colleague for many years. He advised that a Book of Condolences is available in Edgar Hall, Somerton, and at the Church in Somerton town centre.

Resolved

The LCN Development Lead invited members to raise a hand if they would be interested in forming a working group to explore the Highway Steward Scheme and there were 8 expressions of interest from members in attendance.

Item 30: **Updates from Working Groups**

Adrian Moore, Localities Officer, gave the following updates from the working groups.

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|------------------------|---|
| Active travel – | The first meeting was well attended, and 33 maps have been printed and shared with members to begin work on route planning. |
| Health and Wellbeing – | Officers will be talking to colleagues in Health at Somerset Council in advance of the next meeting. |

Item 31: **Actions and next steps**

Adrian Moore, Localities Officer advised that -

Active travel -	The next meeting of the working group would be held at 7pm on the 18th January 2024. All welcome.
Health and Wellbeing -	The next meeting of the working group would be held online sometime during the week commencing 29th January 2024 (tbc) All welcome.

Item 32: **Public Question Time**

There were no questions received from any members of the public.

Item 33: **Dates of future meetings**

The Chair advised that the next meeting of the LCN Levels and Moors would be held on Monday 4th March 2024 at Long Sutton Village Hall. The LCN team have worked hard to avoid diary clashes but please contact them on LCN@somerset.gov.uk if there are any issues. The team would also like information on alternative suitable venues within the Levels and Moors area.

For any other queries regarding the LCN Levels and Moors, please email LevelsandmoorsLCN@somerset.gov.uk