



Somerset
Council

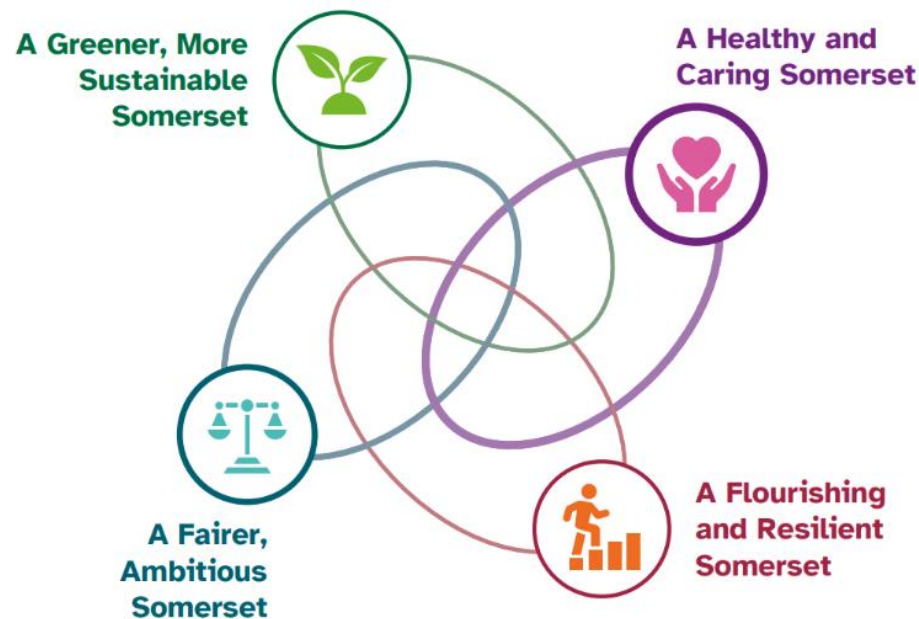
DRAFT Somerset Council

Adult Learning Accountability Statement: 2023/24

Strategic Vision

Somerset Council will build a fairer, greener, resilient, more flourishing Somerset that cares for the most vulnerable and listens to you.

The Council has four priorities to make our vision clearer and more meaningful:



We will:

- Enrich the stability, prosperity and social cohesion of our communities
- Empower the personal responsibility of individuals to become independent, healthy and maintain their own social well-being
- Increase social mobility and aspirations based on an ethos of lifelong learning
- Support an inclusive, flourishing and resilient economy

Strategic Aims and Objectives

Somerset Council will be strategic and dynamic to ensure a skilled workforce is available to support the innovative industries within Somerset. We aim to have well balanced communities and will work hard to attract, and retain, young people and working age adults in the county.

The need for a striving education sector will be paramount to making sure that Somerset flourishes economically. Somerset Council will be a strategic leader in improving the education, skills, and vocational training offer at all levels, working closely with partners to raise aspirations and boost local opportunities.

The Somerset County Plan can be found here: [SCC - Public - Somerset Council - Council Plan.pdf - All Documents \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

An Employment and Skills Strategy, including a plan for Adult Education will be developed over the coming 12 months.

Context and Place

Somerset Council came into being on April 1, 2023. The new unitary council brings together the services previously provided by the four district councils in Somerset (Mendip, Sedgemoor, Somerset West and Taunton, and South Somerset) alongside the services provided by Somerset County Council.

Facts and Figures

- Somerset's population is ageing at a faster rate than the national average with predictions suggesting that by 2036 one third of the population will be over 65 while the working age population is set to decrease.
- Almost half of the population live in rural areas (top 10 in the country) causing infrastructure and connectivity challenges which are associated with issues of rural isolationism, and in places social mobility with West Somerset having the lowest social mobility in the country.
- There are lower levels of productivity and 99.73% of businesses have less than 250 employees with 89.78% of these employing less than 10 people.
- Employment stands at 77.8% compared to national rate of 75.5%. but at £28,676, the median gross annual full-time wage is lower than the national (£31,285). This gap increases if part-time, of which there is a greater prevalence. There is a significant difference in the median wages between female (£18,579) and male (£28,549) workers. The rate of economically inactive stands at 19.8% of which 26% are females and 13.7% are males. Housing in Somerset is less affordable than it is nationally with a typical home (average £263,000) costing more than 9 times the typical annual wage.
- 2019 Indices of Deprivation reveals Somerset to be 92nd out of 151 top tier authorities in terms of deprivation especially in respect of services to housing and services. There are 9 LSOAs within the most deprived 10% of neighbourhoods in England and 29 in the most deprived 20%. There has been a fall in the number of children in absolute poverty (10,500 in 2021 compared to 13,800 in 2016).
- Somerset residents perform on a par or slightly above the national average on qualification and skills apart from Level 4 (35.70% compared to the rest of the UK of 43%). 9% of the working population are thought to have no qualifications compared to the national average of 6.6%. Approximately 8.8% of 16-18 year olds are classed at NEET (not in education, employment or training).

The table below provides a snapshot of some of Somerset's key statistics:

Population	
Total population (2021)	573,119
Living in rural area (2021)	48.2%
Under 16	16.8%
Between 16-64	58.2%
Over 65	24.9%
LSOA within the most deprived 20% nationally	29 (47,000 people)
LSOA within the most deprived 10% nationally	9
Employment	
Employed males	83.3%
Employed females	72.1%
16-64 year olds employed (2022)	77.8%
16-64 unemployed	3.1%
Economically inactive of working age (Labour Force Survey 2022)	19.8%
Females economically inactive	26%
Males economically inactive	13.7%
Attainment levels	
No qualifications	9%
NVQ 1	87.70%
NVQ 2	76.10%
NVQ 3	57.40%
NVQ 4	35.70%
Earnings	
Median wage (FT and PT) male and female	£23,266
Median wage males	£28,549
Business	
Less than 250 employees	99.73%
Less than 10 employees	89.73%

Planning

Somerset Council has not led on the delivery of adult education (with the exception of internal apprenticeship training programmes primarily within our Children and Young Peoples Workforce which are delivered by Somerset Centre for Integrated Learning) since 2015 when the Adult Learning function was transferred out of the Council into a community interest company, Somerset Skills and Learning (SS&L). Initially all related grants from the Department for Education (DfE) were transferred directly to SS&L, but since 2017 funding was awarded via competitive procurement processes putting investment at risk in Somerset.

In recent years Somerset Council has applied for, and has successfully been awarded, funding from the DfE to deliver the Multiply Adult Numeracy programme and the Skills Bootcamp programme. In the 2023/24 academic year, the Community Learning Grant will also move from a competitive procurement process back to direct grant to the Council. This will bring The Council in line with other local authorities as Somerset is the only area where community learning provision is directly procured by the DfE.

This document, therefore, primarily relates to the Community Learning programme, but will be developed and expanded as we build our internal capabilities over the coming year.

In 2023/24 we will be putting in place a transitional arrangements where SS&L will continue to deliver the Community Learning programme in Somerset. They will continue to work with a range of local delivery partners through the Community Learning Partnership arrangements.

Localised delivery is especially important in some of our more rural areas and among the harder to reach population to ensure a wider participation reach for our communities.

During the forthcoming transitional year, will put in place the knowledge and resources to take over the direct management and administration of the programme and identify a range of robust and challenging objectives based on local, regional and national priorities that will inform the Community Learning programme from August 2024.

Partnerships

Somerset Council has forged strong and effective partnerships with a range of organisations across the county. The knowledge gathered through these relationships, alongside Labour Market Intelligence and other data analysis, supports the understanding of the need to help further inform and expand the adult learning offer. Our partners include:

- Skill Up Somerset – an apprenticeship and skills advisory service offering impartial advice to employers on upskilling their workforce.
- Employment and Skills Hubs - based in outreach locations, providing guidance on opportunities for learning, training and work, links to volunteer work and referrals to other support including IT, Citizen Advice, apprenticeships and positive mental health. The Hubs identify barriers raised by individuals that prevent their progression.

- Somerset Employment Support Group - made up of organisations connected with employment, skills and training which actively inform on current and potential issues.
- Other Council Services including, but not limited to, Public Health, Adults and Childrens Services, Libraries, and Economic Development.
- Business Representative Organisation – such as Somerset Chamber of Commerce, Federation of Small Business who provide the employer voice.
- Voluntary, Community, and Social Enterprise Sector – to ensure inclusion.

- Hinkley Point C Job Service visiting Employment Support Hubs to generate interest in working at Hinkley Point.
- Citizen Advice managing the Opportunity Boost Scheme to support people overcome financial barriers associated with accessing work and training.

We will work with these partners, and others, to develop our Employment and Skills Strategy that meets the needs of our communities and our employers.

Contribution to national, regional and local priorities

As set out in previous sections, Somerset Council does not have an Employment and Skills Strategy; the table below represents our proposed Aims and Objectives. These will be developed and confirmed over the forthcoming 12 months.

Aims and Objectives	Impact and/or contribution towards, national, regional and local priorities for learning and skills	Priorities impacted and reason for objective
<p>Enrich the stability, prosperity, and social cohesion of our communities.</p>	<p>We will aim to increase the number of CL courses in outreach venues across Somerset engaging with 25% of residents living in one of the 20% most deprived neighbourhoods in England and 30% living in rural areas.</p> <p>We will support the integration of refugees, asylum seekers, ethnic minority communities and Ukrainian guests through targeted ESOL and preparation for employment programmes via outreach and in partnership with the Charis Welcome Hubs.</p>	<p>Supports the national priority of Lifelong Learning and increases key capabilities and provides accessible routes towards learning.</p> <p>Supports national and regional priorities of labour force shortage. Supports the SC Plan to create a fairer and more ambitious Somerset and helps people to integrate and contribute to their local economy and communities.</p>
<p>Empower the personal responsibility of individuals to become independent, healthy and maintain their own social well-being.</p>	<p>We will work to improve digital inclusion of our residents enabling them to access information and support on a range of services through the delivery of digital technology courses.</p> <p>We will develop the financial independence of our residents to help them make informed decisions to bypass the revolving door of debt, poor mental health and housing issues through interventions delivered via the Multiply programme.</p>	<p>Contributes to the national, regional (LEP and LSIP) and SC Plan priority to help people lead more fulfilling and independent lives and reducing the dependency on public sector services.</p> <p>Supports the national priority of improving numeracy levels to increase financial independence, increase opportunities in careers progression and support national, regional and local economic growth.</p>
<p>Increase social mobility and aspirations based on an ethos of lifelong learning.</p>	<p>We will work to improve the social mobility and aspirations of our young people by delivering key programmes in West Somerset to equip parents and carers to support children's learning.</p> <p>We will work in partnership with existing community-based organisations to set up employment support hubs to help learners to acquire skills to help</p>	<p>Underpins the local priority to improve the social mobility within West Somerset and the national priorities to increase widening participation and develop Lifelong Learning.</p>

Aims and Objectives	Impact and/or contribution towards, national, regional and local priorities for learning and skills	Priorities impacted and reason for objective
	<p>them prepare for employment, training, employment or self-employment and become aware of further opportunities to help them progress.</p>	<p>Responds to the ESFA Community Learning objective and the national, regional and local priorities of labour market shortage.</p>
<p>Support an inclusive, flourishing and resilient economy</p>	<p>We will assist our residents to find and have suitable skills for new, sustainable, rewarding jobs by delivering Skills Bootcamps.</p> <p>We will support the resilience of our economy by increasing employees skills in the significant growth areas of energy, engineering and digital in through Bootcamp qualifications</p> <p>We will encourage parents and carers to return to work by increasing childcare resources through our successful Children and Young Peoples Workforce apprenticeship programme.</p>	<p>Contributes to the aim of the Somerset Growth and Recovery Plan and SC Plan.</p> <p>Supports the regional growth areas identified in the Devon and Somerset LSIP. Supports the SC Plan to create a greener, more sustainable Somerset.</p> <p>Supports national, regional and local priorities of labour force shortage. Supports regional (LSIP/LEP) and national priority Apprenticeship programme.</p>

Statement

to be added

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