



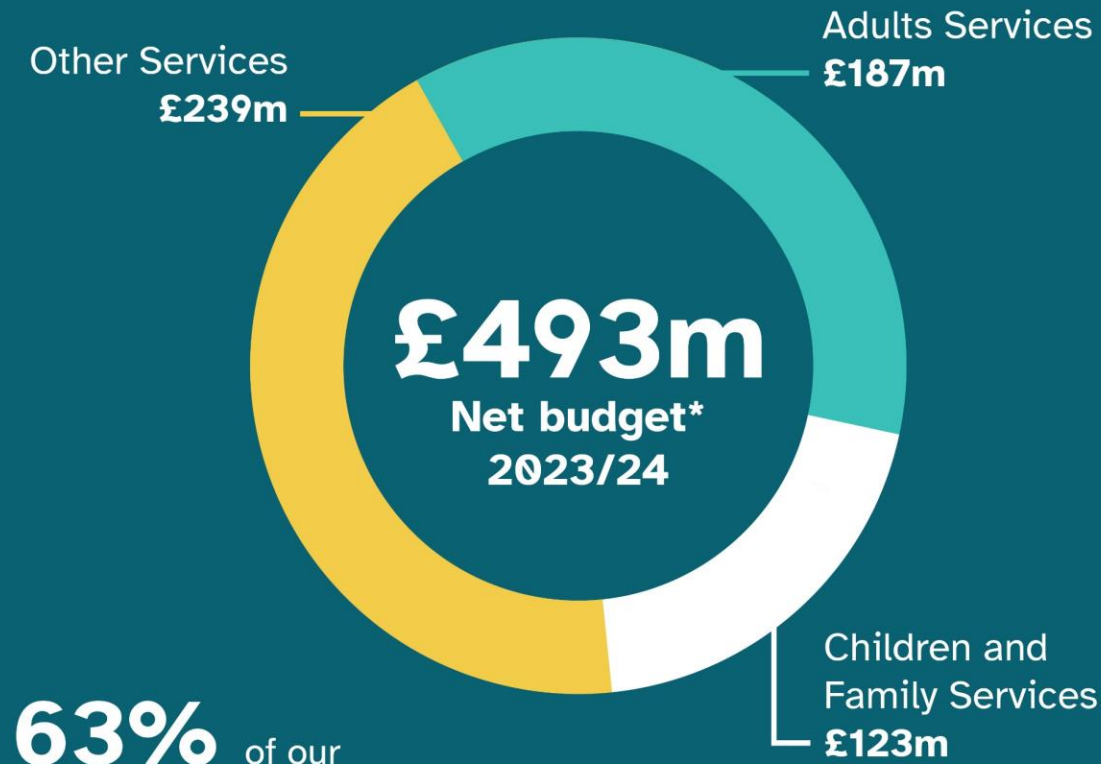
Your Local Community Network

Chard and
Blackdowns LCN

Agenda

1. Apologies for absence
2. Declarations of interest
3. Approve the minutes of the last meeting
4. Update on Somerset Council's current financial position - Q&A
5. Actions from last meeting
6. Public Questions (not covered by the agenda)
7. Discussion: What can we do / want to do locally regarding asset and service devolution?
8. Formation of Working Groups
9. Dates of future meetings

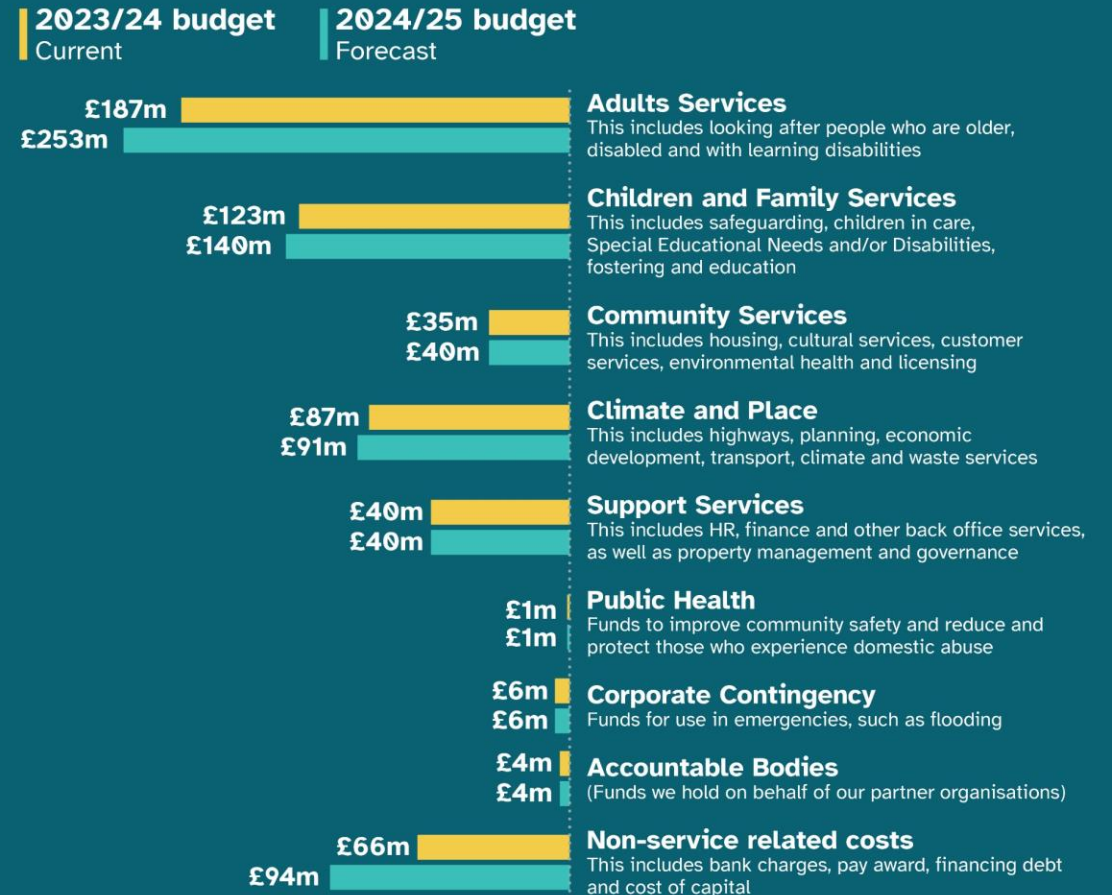
Increasing costs: Our services



63% of our budget is spent on children and adults who need our care.

*We also receive £56m in 2023/24 in special grants

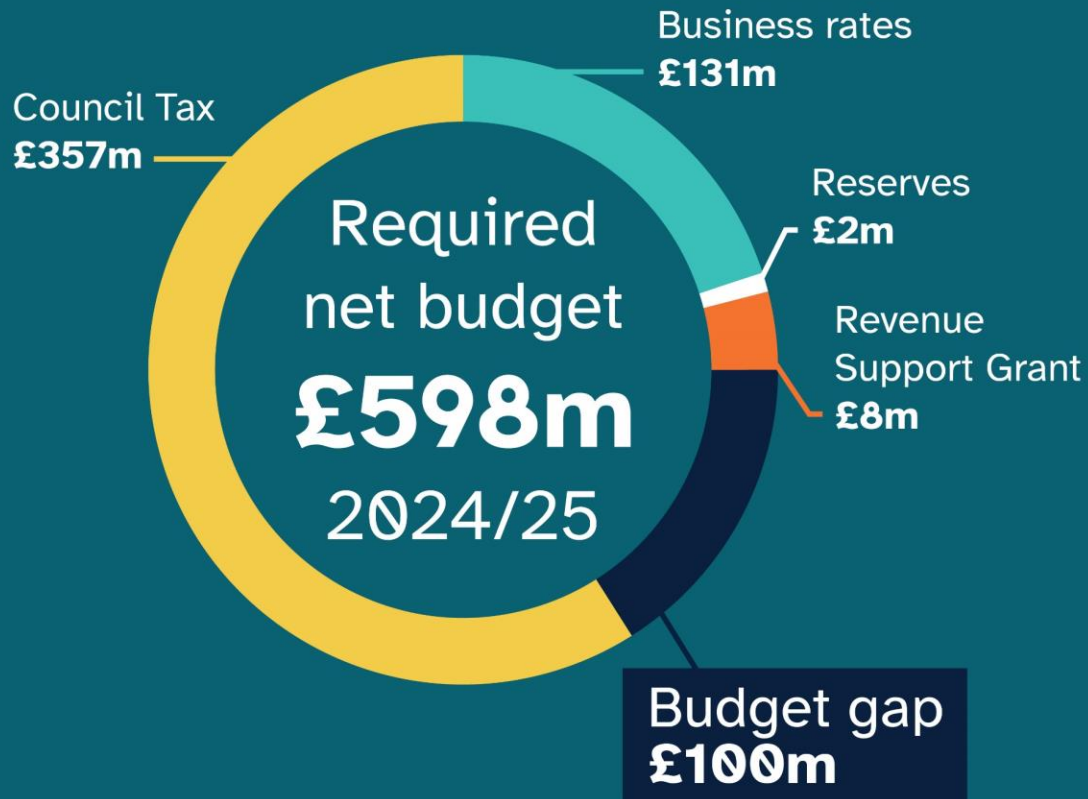
Where the money is spent



*Figures correct as of month 5 monitoring report

Increasing costs: Income overview

Where the council's money comes from



Council Tax - how Somerset compares:



£ Somerset Council Tax Charge
£1,646.04
Average unitary charge
£1,727.08

↑ £ If we raised council tax to the unitary average we would raise a extra £16.7m a year.



The average Somerset Council Tax charge is lower than the majority of other unitary councils, ranked 49th out of 63

↑ **1% = £3.4m**

Every 1% increase in Council Tax generates an additional £3.4m in income for the council.

Increasing costs: Adult Services

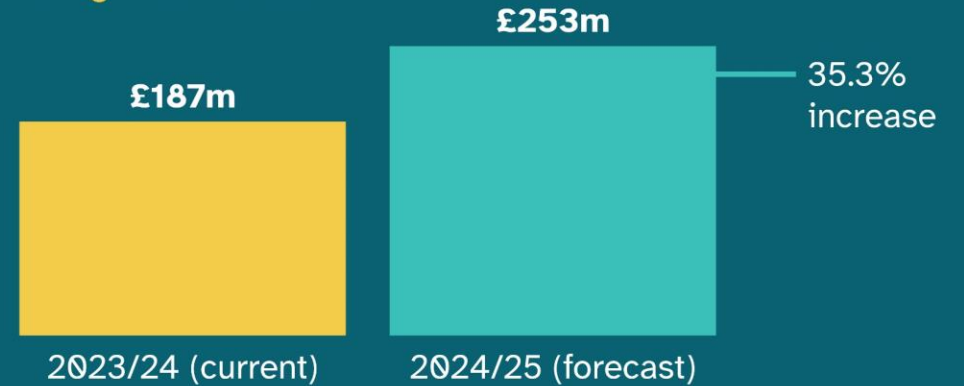
Residential care placement cost
(per week)



Caused by rising costs for

-  Food
-  Fuel, heating and electricity
-  Interest rates
-  Abandoned Fair Cost of Care exercise

Budget overview



Average care for a person
receiving care at home



People in Somerset aged 75+



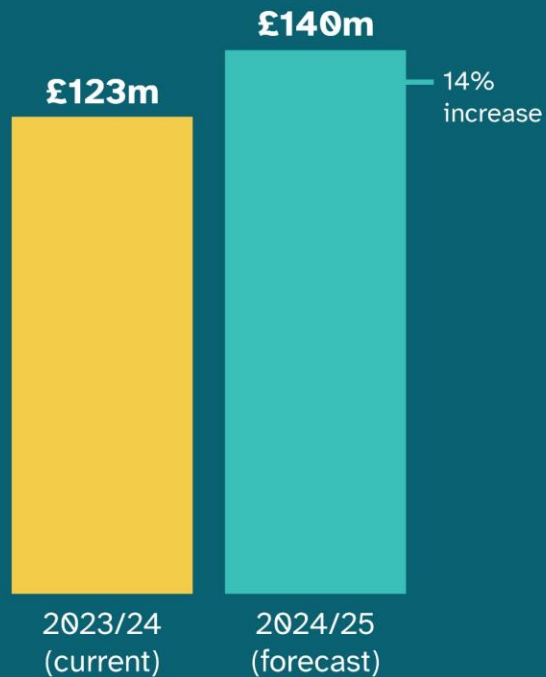
People aged 75+ expected to double over the next 25 years.

Key causes of increase

-  Residential, nursing and at home care fee increases
-  Provider inflation
-  Ageing population
-  Children with complex needs moving to adulthood
-  Working age adults

Increasing costs: Children and family Services

Budget overview



Pressures

-  We have around 565 children in care in Somerset
-  Stability of care placements
-  Lack of foster carers
-  More complex family situations
-  Complexity of children's needs, which leads to more expensive care
-  Provider cost increases


Transport demands and cost (average)

2022


SEND (1,112 passengers)
 Annual cost per passenger - £6,316


Mainstream (7,825 passengers)
 Annual cost per passenger - £1,269

2023


SEND (1,252)
 Annual cost per passenger - £7,109


Mainstream (8,212 passengers)
 Annual cost per passenger - £1,498

Care and accommodation costs



Examples of placement costs



In just six years national costs for residential care have more than doubled

The number of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) has **x3** since covid

Highway Steward

- A skilled highway single operative
- Drives a branded vehicle
- Visits towns/parishes to a defined works programme
- Empowered to undertake ad-hoc works, where identified
- Delivers minor works within the capability of a single operative



Highway Steward

The Parish or Town Council decide on the local priorities.

The Highway Steward targets discretionary parish works. Any statutory or safety-related work (potholes, damaged regulatory signs, etc.) should be reported in the usual way for the Highway Authority to inspect and assess the appropriate response.



Highway Steward

The scope of work typically includes 'low tech, high value works' such as:

- verge maintenance
- Highway surface water drainage maintenance
- weed removal
- sign cleaning
- cutting back vegetation



Delivering Enhanced Highway Maintenance

Others works Parishes could undertake (but not limited to):

- Winter services (snow clearance and salting of footways/paths)
- Minor repairs to footway and off-road cycle ways
- Verge cutting and weed control
- Tree and hedge maintenance
- Rights of way maintenance
- Passenger transport infrastructure maintenance (bus stop flags and bus shelters)
- Repair and maintenance of road signs

Discussion

What can we do / want to do locally regarding asset and service devolution?

- a. What are the opportunities and risks?
- b. What information do we have and what do we need?
- c. How can we work together to achieve agreed actions?

Think about whether there are any links to themes previously identified by our LCN, and our priorities for the formation of working groups.

Formation of Working Groups

Planning

Roads and
Transport

Youth Provision
& Social Issues

Environment &
Conservation



Future Meetings

- Wednesday 13th March 2024
- Wednesday 1st May 2024
- Wednesday 3rd July 2024

All dates are provisional, subject to venue availability, and will be confirmed by publication of the agenda.

Any suggestions for accessible, low-cost public venues with Wi-Fi capability that could host our future LCN meetings are always welcome.