



# Your Local Community Network

**Dowsborough LCN**

# Agenda

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1. Apologies
2. Declaration of interest
3. Approval of minutes of the last meeting
4. An update on Somerset Council's financial position
  - general update
  - service and asset devolution
5. Public Question Time (not covered on the agenda)
6. An update on the Highways Steward Scheme and a Highways Working Group-TOR
7. Developing a way forward for the LCN.
8. Discussion on planning and what are our concerns and issues
9. Dates for the next meeting

# Budget update

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- Budget consultation has now finished – over 5000 responses
- Executive Meeting 15<sup>th</sup> Jan detailed the proposals [Agenda for Executive on Monday, 15th January, 2024, 10.00 am - Modern Council \(somerset.gov.uk\)](#)
- Service and Asset Devolution
- City, Town and Parish Somerset Council webpage includes Highways information, land and asset lists , FAQs on recycling centres [City, Town and Parish Councils \(somerset.gov.uk\)](#)

# Budget update

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## Timetable for decision making

- 15 January. Meeting of Executive Committee will discuss Budget Update report, including savings proposed approach to bridging the funding gap.
- 22 January. Budget consultation closes.
- 25 January. Audit Committee to discuss technical budget papers and make recommendations to the Executive Committee.
- 1 February. Meeting of the Corporate and Resources Scrutiny Committee. Due to discuss the budget, including savings proposals and make recommendations to the Executive Committee.
- 7 February. Meeting of Executive Committee to consider feedback from Scrutiny Committee and results of budget consultation before recommending budget for decision at Full Council.
- 20 February. Full Council meets to agree final budget for 2024/25.

# Highway Steward

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- The Highway Steward is a skilled highway operative, in a branded vehicle, who visits parishes and towns to a defined works programme but is also empowered to undertake ad hoc works when identified.
- The Highway Steward scheme delivers minor works within the capability of a single operative.



# Highway Steward

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- 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

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- The scope of works could include:
  - ‘Low tech, high value works’ such as:
    - verge maintenance,
    - highway surface water drainage maintenance
    - weed removal
    - sign cleaning
    - cutting back vegetation





Pound Walk, Dulverton—vegetation management





Recent works in Clatworthy

Signage works at Winsford

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## Options for delivery of the Highway Steward and other functions:

- Through Somerset Councils' Highway Maintenance Contract, or
- Self-delivery through suppliers commissioned by a Parish, or by Parish collaboration (note, there are examples around the county of this happening already...)

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## Costs:

- Through Somerset Councils' Highway Maintenance Contract, or
  - Currently in dialogue with the new highway maintenance contractor for a '*Parish Price List*'.
- Self-delivery through a Parish, or by Parish collaboration
  - Volunteer network at no cost, or
  - Market rates through the local supply chain.

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

- Winter services (snow clearance and salting of footways and 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

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## Considerations NOT barriers:

- Permission from the Highway Authority to undertake the works, together with any necessary form of licence/ legal agreement.
- An approved Temporary Traffic Regulation Order and temporary traffic signals (if required).
- Risk assessments.
- Public liability insurance.
- Confirmation of health, safety, and welfare of operatives and those travelling through the site.

# Highlights and themes raised so far

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Highways

Road Maintenance

Connectivity and  
Communication

Rural Isolation

Environment  
including  
flooding

Anti Social  
Behaviour

Employment and  
Skills

Hinkley Point

**Local Plans -  
Housing, infra-  
structure  
planning  
enforcement**

# Dates for the next meetings

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Future draft dates :

Monday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2024

Wednesday 12th June 2024