

Executive 2 December 2024 – Public Questions

Name of person submitting	Annexe A – Public Questions Question
Stuart Hearn	<p>The published vision for Somerset Council is to build "a fairer, greener, resilient, more flourishing Somerset that cares for the most vulnerable and listens to you".</p> <p>In 2022, Somerset Council decided it wished to sell Packsaddle Community Fields in Frome to raise capital receipts. The fields are 8 acres of green space and are a listed Asset of Community Value, the only green space Asset of Community Value of its kind in Somerset.</p> <p>Since 2022, I have written to the council on five occasions offering to buy the fields on behalf of the local community, many of whom are elderly and vulnerable, so that the fields can be enjoyed by our community in perpetuity. The first email was sent to Estates, the subsequent four were sent to senior executives including Duncan Sharkey and Bill Revans.</p> <p>I have not received a single response to any of these emails. This is not the action of a council that 'listens to you' and 'cares for the most vulnerable'.</p> <p>Whilst refusing to engage with me and the local community, Somerset Council has, however, been actively working with a developer on a scheme to build 74 houses on this green, community space. The proposed development scheme is not policy compliant as it does not offer the required 30% affordable housing. It is neither sustainable nor green as the vast majority of the houses will not have solar panels or heat pumps - they will instead have gas burning boilers. Yet the council's planning officer still recommended approval. This is not the action of a 'greener' council.</p> <p>Please can the Executive answer the following questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Does it accept that these actions are contrary to Somerset Council's published vision, specifically of being a 'greener...Somerset that cares for the most vulnerable and listens to you'?2. What will the Executive do to investigate and rectify this situation in order to comply with its published vision?

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Sarah Baker / Somerset Inclusive Nexus	<p>Thank you for acknowledging, the 1100 children out of the approximate 2000 children who in 2020 were without any provisions. Each day we are coming across more and more children who are being pushed out of schools due poor curriculum delivery and reduced staffing in Academies.</p> <p>10 years ago, there was approximately 240 children, happily in elected home education. Last year this number has risen to over 2200 children, and rapidly growing! The trauma caused in Somerset schools is life changing, for the many who have deregistered from the school systems.</p> <p>We welcome the change of the Somerset SEND reform delivery, this was something that the previous DCS changed to prevent children to receive funding to stay in mainstream provisions.</p> <p>What will the council be doing to ensure that academies are held to account?</p>
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