



**Somerset Liberal Democrats  
Tatworth & Forton  
November 2022**

## **Somerset Children and Young People's Services celebrates 'Good' Ofsted rating**

Somerset's Children and Young People's Services have been rated as "Good" across the board in a review of the service by national regulator Ofsted. Ofsted inspectors visited Somerset County Council in July 2022 and looked in detail at the work of the Council with those in care, care leavers and children and families with a social worker. Judgements were made on the impact of leaders on social work practice, the experiences and progress of children who need help and protection, and overall effectiveness.

Ofsted found: "The Council is committed to driving up standards for Somerset's children and is rightly proud of the significant progress it has made since the last inspection in 2017." Ofsted were particularly impressed with the Council's commitment to listening to children and families to improve services, reporting: "Leaders ensure that children are extensively engaged to help shape the future of children's services. They also consult widely and receive regular feedback, not only from children, but also from families and partner agencies. They use this to understand effectively the impact of services and to inform future service development."

## **Public Health Nursing Team celebrate 'Good' inspection from CQC**

Somerset County Council's Public Health Nursing (Health Visiting and School Nursing) team has been rated as 'Good' across all sections in a recent review of the service by inspectors at the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

The service provides community care, delivered by health visitors and school nurses across the county of Somerset and this inspection marks their first since its transfer from the NHS to Somerset County Council's Public Health in 2019.

Inspectors observed staff demonstrating a caring and responsive approach with parents and young people and reported: "Staff treated children and young people with compassion and kindness, respected their privacy and dignity and took account of their individual needs. They provided emotional support to children and young people, families and carers. Parents told us staff were very attentive and would give them as much time as they needed. During observed interaction we saw they helped, comforted, supported and provided reassurance."

## Council Finance Update

The County Council budget is under very considerable pressure due to a number of factors:



- National picture of inflation affecting particularly energy costs, contract costs and pay awards. The County Council's energy bill, before increases, was £4.2million and is expected to increase by up to £5million per annum.
- Lasting effects of the pandemic on adults and children who now need more support from Social Care, but Councils will not receive any further Covid grants from Government.
- A 'hot' labour market with difficulties of recruitment in key areas of Council statutory responsibilities including social care, legal and planning.
- Local Government Reorganisation – the move to a single Somerset Council – with considerable pressures on staff to reduce projected overspends at this time of additional work to prepare the structure of the new Council.
- All the four District Councils and the County Council are working on their current year budgets to ensure the best possible outturn, which in turn will lead to a better position for the first year's budget of Somerset Council without exhausting all the reserves built up over many years.

## Somerset's recyclers saved more than 130,000 tonnes of carbon last year

The most recent figures chart continued progress, boosted by Somerset residents embracing the expanded Recycle More kerbside collections.

Overall, Somerset recycled and reused 149,980 tonnes, pushing its recycling rate up from 52.4% to 56.2%, the highest it has ever been.

That equates to saving 133,000 tonnes of carbon saved – the same as taking 51,409 cars off the road for a year – and is up 10,000 tonnes on the previous year's figures.

Tonnages of plastics have soared to 5,771, up from 4,359, thanks in large part to the inclusion of plastic pots, tubs and trays in Recycle More kerbside collections.

An impressive 97.2% of material stayed in the UK to be turned into new products and packaging, including 99.4% of plastics.

These impressive figures are down to the excellent kerbside sorting by Somerset's residents. The more materials are correctly sorted into the right container, the less contaminated our recycling is and the easier it is to get recycled closer to home.

The full Somerset Recycling Tracker can be found here:

<https://www.somersetwaste.gov.uk/recycling-tracker/>