



Somerset Liberal Democrats Chard South August 2026

Somerset must make its voice heard in the Big Conversation on Care

Baroness Casey of Blackstock, Chair of the Independent Commission on Adult Social Care, has launched the Big Conversation on Care — a national engagement exercise inviting the public to help shape what a National Care Service in England could look like, and how it is paid for.

This lands as Somerset Council published its own new Adult Social Care Strategy for 2026 to 2029, which confirms that adult social care alone accounted for 38% of Somerset Council's budget in 2025/26 (£230.867m).

Council Leader Cllr Bill Revans has long raised this pressure with central Government. Giving evidence to the Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee at Westminster in March 2025, he told MPs that adult and children's social care combined then accounted for 66% of the Council's budget: "We've almost slow walked into a situation where Council Tax is funding social care — Council Tax based on 1991 property values. Some 66% of our budget goes to fund social care. What we are saying is Council Tax is the wrong way to do it. That's my message."

Council sets out vision for adult social care in Somerset: <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/news/council-sets-out-vision-for-adult-social-care-in-somerset/>

Big Conversation on Care platform: <http://caseycommission.co.uk/bigconversation/>



Somerset Council approves multi-million investment in SEND

The Council's Executive has agreed a major package of one-off investment worth £5.331m over two years to strengthen support for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). The funding will be used to increase capacity across SEND services, support a restructure aimed at reducing duplication and improving efficiency, and help teams keep pace with rising demand and statutory timescales.

It will also expand capacity within the Preparation for Adulthood function in the Virtual School, including additional Learning Mentors to support young people with SEND who are at risk of becoming, or already are, not in education, employment or training (NEET).

The investment responds to a sharp rise in need: the number of children and young people in Somerset with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) stood at 6,578 at the end of May 2026, with EHCP numbers rising from 2.6% of the school population in 2019/20 to 5.8% in 2025/26, close to the 6% national average. The additional resource is intended to be temporary and time-limited, allowing the Council to reduce current backlogs while it assesses the impact of wider reforms to the SEND system.



Somerset Council Local Plan

With one week remaining before it closes, Somerset Council is urging residents and businesses to take part in the Somerset Local Plan Scoping Consultation before it ends on Sunday 9 August 2026.

The Council is developing a new Local Plan that will guide where and how change happens across Somerset's towns, villages and countryside over the next 20 years, and is inviting views on what policies should be included before detailed work gets under way.

Next steps for
homes, jobs
and infrastructure



Putting the heart back into S♥merset

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Democrats

Pot Holes and Roadworks update

It's been a busy month for road repairs although we are aware that there is still much more work to be done, please report any defects that you come across via the website or get in contact with myself. Here is a brief list of repairs and works that have taken place in our area over the last month.

Burridge Cross Lane
Lordleaze Lane
Two Ash Lane
Tatworth Lane
Tatworth east Street

Bonfire Close
Halcombe
Waterlake Road
School Lane Tatworth
Axminster Road



Best Value Notice issued to Somerset Council

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government issued Somerset Council with a Best Value Improvement Notice on 15 July 2026, formally notifying the Council of Government concerns about its capacity to comply with the Best Value Duty. It follows the May 2026 CIPFA review, which found the Council's financial position fragile, and cites continued reliance on Exceptional Financial Support, low reserves, and demand pressures in Children's Services, Adult Social Care and SEND. The Council is expected to engage with the Department at least quarterly on progress; the notice will be reviewed by 15 January 2027.

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/best-value-notice-issued-to-somerset-council/>



Somerset Council Builds Top Team to Seize the Opportunities Ahead

At Full Council on 15 July, Council Leader Cllr Bill Revans responded to a question from Cllr Habib Farbahi about a protest march that took place in Taunton on Saturday 27 June, and about concerns that a further demonstration might follow.

Cllr Revans reaffirmed the Council's commitment to community safety, cohesion and respect, describing the scenes witnessed in Taunton in June as "deeply concerning." He went on to say: "While most of those present conducted themselves peacefully and lawfully, I am appalled by the behaviour of a group whose actions and language sought to divide our communities, intimidate others and undermine the values that Somerset stands for. Somerset is a county built on decency, respect and neighbourliness."

He confirmed that the Council would continue to work closely with Avon and Somerset Constabulary, community organisations, faith groups and local leaders to support cohesion, and that he would be seeking assurances from the police that the public would be kept safe in the event of any future marches or similar events, in Taunton or elsewhere in the county. He pointed to existing initiatives, including the Somerset Diverse Communities project, the annual Together events, and the newly formed Interfaith and Belief Network, as practical examples of the Council's ongoing cohesion work, and reiterated the Council's status as a signatory to anti-racist organisation commitments.



Keeping in Contact

**COME AND TALK WITH US
AT A LIB DEM SURGERY**

FIRST SATURDAY IN THE MONTH
With your Town and Unitary Councillors

AT THE GUILDHALL, CHARD  10am to 12pm

You can meet with me to discuss any concerns or for help by dropping into our monthly surgery or I can arrange an appointment on a day and time that suits you or feel free to give me a call on 07736 310805 or email Jason.baker@somerset.gov.uk