



Somerset Liberal Democrats Chard South September 2026

Auditors place Somerset Council in the top category for accounts recovery

External auditors have placed Somerset Council in the highest category for financial accounts assurance recovery, recognising the progress made in improving how the Council delivers its statutory accounts.

The assessment was prepared by Grant Thornton and reported to the Council's Audit Committee on Thursday 27 August 2026. It places Somerset in "Category A", the highest Rating available, reflecting auditor confidence that the Council can regain a fully unqualified, or clean, audit opinion by 2027/28.

The judgement follows historic local government audit backlogs nationally, and a substantial programme of work locally, including the completion of 11 sets of accounts over an 18-month period alongside improvements to financial processes and governance arrangements.

The Council is clear that significant challenges remain and continues to respond to the Best Value Notice issued by Government in July. The auditor's assessment, which is also sent to Government, nonetheless provides independent assurance that the leadership, capacity and plans are in place to continue the improvement journey. Progress will continue to be reported publicly through Audit Committee, Scrutiny and Executive. Cllr Liz Leyshon, Lead Member for Finance, Procurement and Performance, said the assessment reflects the work of the finance team, auditors, councillors and officers to strengthen financial management and governance, adding that while there is still more to do, particularly in responding to the Best Value Notice and the wider improvement programme, the assessment gives confidence the Council is moving in the right direction.



Somerset Community Resilience Action Calendar 2026 to 2027

Information about resilience, flooding, extreme weather, grants and training arrives from a lot of different directions, and it is hard to keep track of what matters and which deadlines are coming up. The Community Resilience Action Calendar brings it together in one place: every dated event through the year, in order, with a single suggested action alongside each one. Most take under ten minutes. It is written to be forwarded to parishes and communities and will be updated regularly.

The current edition includes: Community Resilience Awards nominations closing Tuesday 22 September; the Somerset Prepared small grant scheme (up to £5,000 for equipment and training), deadline Wednesday 30 September; the free Community Resilience Day at Millfield School, Street, on Wednesday 21 October; October as Somerset Flood Awareness Month across the library network; and the Community Flood Action Fund (£3,000 to £20,000), next closing Tuesday 24 November. It also covers the current drought and wildfire risk, the new statutory guidelines on disposable barbecues, and the reissued Community Risk Register 2026.



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.

Nursery Gardens
Bath Street
Monmouth Court
Watermead – South Chard
Commercial Row
Kents Lane – South Chard

Axminster Road - Tatworth
Old Town
Forton road - Chard
Mill Lane
Bubwith Close
Deane Way - Tatworth



Major programme approved to improve outcomes for children and families

The Council's Executive has approved My World, My Tomorrow, a programme aimed at supporting children earlier and reducing avoidable escalation into care. It responds directly to areas for improvement identified by Ofsted, and was named by the young people at the centre of the plans.

It forms part of the council-wide Inspiring Innovation transformation programme, expected to deliver £135m in cashable savings by March 2030 from investment of up to £45m. My World, My Tomorrow itself involves £7m of investment with an expected return of £28.4m by 2031/32.



Youth Hubs supporting more than 3,000 young people across Somerset

More than 3,000 young people attended Somerset's Youth Hubs in the past year. The free weekly drop-in sessions, delivered by Young Somerset with Avon and Somerset Police and funded by Somerset Council through the Violence Reduction Partnership, were set up in response to young people asking for more support and advice about staying safe. They offer a place to talk about anti-social behaviour, knife crime, violence, exploitation, substance misuse and violence against women and girls, alongside mentoring, workshops, activities and practical advice. Sessions are open to young people, parents and carers, are free and need no booking: Bridgwater, Fridays 3pm to 5pm at Bold & Brave, Angel Place; Yeovil, Fridays 4pm to 6pm at Hollywood Bowl; and Taunton, Saturdays 3pm to 5pm at McDonald's, East Street. A Chard hub restarts during the autumn half-term at Boden Street Community Centre, and pop-up hubs will launch in Taunton and Bridgwater schools over the coming months.



Rural Active Travel tool Kit

A new toolkit is available to help rural communities develop and deliver their own active travel schemes, from large-scale projects such as a multi-user path down to smaller improvements like dropped kerbs. It takes groups from identifying a need and engaging local people through route design, funding, consents, delivery and ongoing maintenance.



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