



Somerset Liberal Democrats Chard South August 2024

Disposal of assets

A report recommending the disposal of several Somerset Council assets to help generate funds in response to the financial emergency will be considered by members.

The Resources and Corporate Scrutiny Committee will be asked for comments on the proposals to help bridge an £80m funding gap in the current financial year and a £100m budget gap for 2025/2026, at their meeting on 24 July 2024. The report and recommendations will then be presented to the Executive Committee for a final decision on 7 August.



The list includes several landmark buildings including the Market House in Taunton, The Cornhill in Bridgwater and Boden Mill in Chard.

Market House, Taunton

The Market House is a historic Grade II Listed building located within The Parade, Fore Street, Taunton. The building will become surplus to Somerset Council due to the withdrawal of funding for Visitor Services, which were the only Council service within the building, which are now funded by Taunton Town Council. It is proposed to dispose of this asset on the open market.

Options for the future operation of Visitor Services are being discussed with Taunton Town Council and the outcome of these discussions will inform the detailed terms of a sale agreement (with the potential to secure a lease for the Visitor Services if desired).

C Block County Hall, Taunton

Somerset Council has a property rationalisation programme and reviewing the office accommodation.

Breakfast Bags

The Breakfast bags are available at St Marys Church, Chard for anyone with a child under the age of eighteen who needs a little extra help in the holidays. NO questions about income or benefits or anything else are asked. This is a gift for those who would benefit from it, where pennies are tight, to enhance their children's holidays. Every Monday during the holiday. Anyone from the family can pick them up and you can stay and join us for coffee and toast while you are there.



Holiday Breakfast Scheme.

Holiday Breakfast Bags are back for the Summer Holidays. Do you think it may help you and your family to start the day with a good solid breakfast?

We will give you a free, no questions asked bag/s, to last a week, which will contain everything that is needed, regardless of your family size. Just turn up at the St Mary's Centre every Monday from the 22nd July between 8.00 and 10.00

Anyone from the family can come to pick them up.

Stay and join us if you would like for coffee and toast while you are here.



Chard Library is getting Snappy!

We're getting snappy this summer!

Join us from 3pm on August 16th for a FREE photography workshop where we'll show you how to get the most out of your cameras, smart tablets.

This event is suitable for budding creatives aged 10+, and booking is recommended, so please get in touch to secure your place!

[#Photography](#) [#PhotographyClass](#) [#PhotographyWorkshop](#) [#UseYourLibrary](#)



Government must play its part in protecting valued services

Somerset Council will be sending the Government a '**Productivity Plan**' – setting out how the council is improving efficiency and reducing waste, while also highlighting the barriers facing local government.

The key document, which will be discussed by the council's Executive on Monday 15 July, summarises all the actions being taken in Somerset to secure long-term financial sustainability. It also calls on the Government to take action to address the broken system of Council Tax, end the unfairness of short-term funding pots, and invest in support for vulnerable children and their families, education, and adults' services.

Cllr Bill Revan's, Leader of Somerset Council, said: "The Productivity Plan sets out very clearly the many actions we have taken or are taking to address the financial emergency facing local government.

"In Somerset we have already saved millions of pounds by moving from five councils to one, we've made heartbreaking decisions across all service areas to find savings, we have worked in partnership with city, town and parish councils to protect services, and we are currently going through a top-to-bottom restructure to reduce our pay bill.

"But as the plan highlights, we cannot solve this crisis ourselves. There are fundamental problems facing all councils across the country and we need the new Government to play its part in protecting greatly valued and often critical council services."

The Productivity Plan must be submitted to the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities as part of a national review of local government productivity.

Monday's Executive meeting will also see debate on other important items including proposals to consult with the public on potential changes to the Council Tax Reduction scheme which supports working age people on low incomes. There will be updates on a deal to devolve services and assets to Yeovil Town Council and plans to rent out offices in Taunton to save money. There will also be an update on the waste collection contract which is set to cost more in the future.

Cllr Revan's added: "Local councils provide absolutely vital services like bin collections, with costs changing due to many external factors we cannot control. But we have no ability to raise income and are completely reliant on a flawed Council Tax system which was set up based on the notional cost of properties in 1991.

"This is the real barrier to productivity and means we are being forced to take drastic actions which will directly impact our residents and communities."



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

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