

Somerset Council Report

Stoke Sub Hamdon Parish Council 4th March 2026

1 Somerset Matters

1.1- Cost of Storm Chandra clear-up highlights broken funding system

Thousands of outstanding defects across the county as Leader calls on Government to recognise the challenge. Somerset Council's Leader has called on the Government to recognise the huge financial impact on rural counties as the Storm Chandra clear-up continues.

Somerset has experienced significant disruption over the past week and remains in a major incident working with partners in response to ongoing flooding on the Levels and Moors. Meanwhile, more than 850 road defects, which includes potholes, blocked drains, and other highways issues, were reported over the weekend (January 31/1 February) and highways teams are currently working hard to repair more than 3,500 recent defects across the county. Just last month, the Government announced [Somerset was in the top 26](#) out of 153 authorities in the country for road maintenance, with the overall condition of its roads in various categories scoring Green under the Department for Transport's new grading system. But unprecedented levels of rain and flooding across roads during January have created a significant challenge in terms of damage to the network and the cost of repairing it. Somerset Council's Leader, [Councillor Bill Revans](#), said:

This is another example of where the national model for funding local councils is broken. In Somerset we are a rural county with a large road network and our geography means we are more vulnerable to flooding. With extreme weather and storms becoming more frequent, we want to invest in roads and infrastructure, but find ourselves in a situation where more and more of our budget must be spent on essential, demand-led services like social care. We have worked extremely efficiently with limited resources providing a comprehensive maintenance programme in recent years to ensure our network is fit for purpose, but the additional challenge and increasing frequency of these sorts of weather events, means the timely repair of the mounting number of defects will become impossible without additional funding. We have yet to assess the full extent of the damage to the roads caused by flooding, but we are already seeing about 60 per cent to 70 per cent more potholes this winter than in previous years due to the extreme weather. The cost of fixing those extra potholes alone is likely to be around £1m before we even consider the cost of repairing roads that are currently underwater. We will continue to work hard to keep our residents safe and our roads in order, but this again highlights the need for long-awaited reform which properly takes into account the additional pressures on rural counties like Somerset. We would appreciate people's patience on the network while teams try to deal with this damage.

Anyone who spots a defect on the road is advised that the quickest and easiest way to report it is via the Council's [Report a problem on the road](#) page. Every reported defect is visited and assessed.

1.2 - Additional funding is available to help Somerset residents lower their energy bills.

Somerset Council has secured funds from the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero's '[Warm Homes: Local Grant](#)' scheme to help homeowners and private rental residents across Somerset to save money on energy bills by retrofitting their homes.

Retrofitting refers to any improvement work on an existing building to improve its energy efficiency, making them easier to heat, able to retain that heat for longer, and replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy.

Somerset Council has secured an additional £1million in funding to support the retrofitting initiative. This funding supplements the approximately £6million already allocated for distribution by the council over a three-year period, from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2028.

Types of measures that can be installed using the grant are:

- Floor insulation
- Wall insulation
- Loft insulation
- Door and window replacements
- Ventilation
- Solar panels
- Air Source Heat Pumps
- Storage Heaters

The grants are means-tested, and residents can check if they are eligible and apply by searching ‘retrofit and energy efficiency’ on [the council's website](#).

The council’s delivery partner, the Centre for Sustainable Energy, recently received some feedback from a Somerset resident who has benefitted from the scheme.

The resident said:

“I wanted to take a moment to express my heartfelt gratitude to you [...] for your hard work and dedication in sorting out the funds for my boiler replacement.

“My daily routine comprised of, boil the kettle, have a wash, boil the kettle to wash up, boil the kettle for any cleaning duties.

“This morning, I got up, put the heating on, had a nice hot shower then relaxed in a nice warm room. This has not happened for over 12 months and I'm so grateful.”

In [this video](#), another ‘Warm Homes: Local Grant’ client talks about the improvements that have been made to their home using the funding.

Find out more, including eligibility criteria and how to apply, by searching ‘retrofit and energy efficiency’ [on the council’s website](#).

1.3 -- Residents encouraged to respond to national Adult Social Care survey to improve services

Somerset Council is asking selected residents who receive long-term council-supported care to provide feedback on their services. The council sends the Government’s Adult Social Care Survey (ASCS) to a random selection of Somerset residents annually to gather valuable insights from adults aged 18 and over who have undergone a full assessment and receive care funded or managed by adult social care. All Local Authorities with adult social care responsibilities are required to distribute it.

This year, 1,597 Somerset residents were randomly selected to receive the survey, which was sent via post during the week commencing 26 January 2026. The ASCS comprises 23 questions designed to assess quality of life and determine how care and support services influence individual wellbeing.

The responses play a crucial role in helping councils in England to measure service impact, inform local commissioning strategies, and benchmark performance against each other.

Councillor Sarah Wakefield, Somerset Council's Lead Member for Adults Services, Housing and Homelessness emphasised the importance of hearing directly from those in receipt of care. She said:

"The feedback from the annual survey goes directly to the Government and is integral to driving national service improvements, which will also help us improve our services in Somerset.

"The survey is straightforward and takes no more than 10 minutes to complete. If you have received the Adult Social Care Survey in the post, please take the time to fill in the survey and have your voice heard."

All answers are confidential and will not be passed on to anyone directly providing adult social care services. Care has been taken to ensure that the survey has been sent to participants in a format appropriate to them such as Easy Read, large print and languages other than English. Completed surveys must be returned by post in the freepost envelope provided no later than 20 March 2026.

1.4- Rural areas count the cost as Somerset prepares to balance budget

Somerset Council warns rural communities are hit hardest by funding changes as it works to close a £25m gap and set a balanced budget

The impact of national changes on funding for rural counties has been highlighted as Somerset Council prepares to set its budget for 2026-27. Latest papers show Somerset Council has taken steps to significantly reduce its projected funding gap from £101m in March 2025 to £25m in February 2026.

However, the reports also reveal how the Council's finances have been further impacted by the Government's recent fair funding review. [Cllr Bill Revans](#), Somerset Council Leader, said:

We're doing everything we can locally to balance our budget, but our position has been made much more challenging by the Government's decision to remove the remoteness factor in its calculations. Clearly it costs more to deliver services like road maintenance, waste collections and school transport in geographically-spread, rural areas like Somerset.

We estimate we're losing around £21m as a result of this change – the 3rd highest reduction in the country.

We'll be asking the Government to publish their findings and explain how this is in any way fair funding, particularly when Somerset also receives nothing from the Government's £1bn recovery grant.

Somerset Council's Executive will discuss the budget on 25 February, which will include a recommendation to increase Council Tax by 4.99%. If approved, this will mean the average Band D property in Somerset will pay £1,950.30 year – a figure that remains lower than the average unitary council, and less than neighbours in Dorset, Wiltshire and Cornwall. Cllr Revans added:

The Government uses a notional Band D Council Tax figure of £2,060 to calculate funding entitlements for councils, but our income is much lower. It's worth noting that if we actually received this level of funding then we would not have a budget gap.

We're being hit twice – not only do we receive less income from Council Tax but it also means we receive less funding through grants. We're also being penalised for being a rural authority.

Once again, this highlights why the system is broken and public services will continue to suffer until we have an overhaul of Council Tax to ensure local government is properly funded.

In order to close the remaining £25m gap, Somerset Council will need to reduce cost pressures, find further savings through transformation, and again request Exceptional Financial Support (EFS) from Government. This will be in the form of a Capitalisation Direction (a one-off assistance which allows councils to pay for day-to-day spending over a number of years funded by additional borrowing or selling assets). Somerset Council's budget will be discussed at [Executive on 25 February](#), before final decisions are taken by [Full Council on 4 March](#).

Agendas and papers will be published in advance with the public encouraged to attend the meetings, either in person or online.

2 - Local Issues

2.1 - Roadside trees at East Stoke – Included in the next contract out for tender now. Still awaiting details of this tender. Ongoing monitoring. Recent report suggests no current action. Adjacent gully for jetting likely 2026-27

2.2 - Traffic and Road Safety

Request to update lines and 'SLOW' at the end of West Street to improve visual notification of junction. This has been agreed by Rebecca, no known date for it to be done at this time. New sign design to be implemented.

2.3 - Bonnies Lane – Length to be jetted in 2025-26 Date awaited – will request and update once monthly inspector meeting has happened later in Jan. Job allocated but jetting delayed due to flooding , likely 2026-27. Now 5/3/26

2-4 - Brocks Mount - maintenance schedule is also to be updated on should one be available (as above).

2.5 - Bins – An ongoing situation which Gilly keeps us updated with until all is complete.

2.6 – Stoke drainage Survey– Report shared with Highways for comment and action.

2.7 – EV Charging at Millenium Hall – Being investigated

Regards Emily and John

Report it first: useful Links to share with your communities

Visit Report a problem on the road: <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/report-a-problem-on-the-road/>

Potholes and road damage

Somerset Council repair potholes and other road defects, and maintain our roads, for the safe access of all road users:

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/potholes-and-road-damage/>

For traffic updates and roadworks follow @travelsomerset on X and Facebook.

Live travel information

<https://www.travelsomerset.co.uk/>

Report a problem with a street light

We maintain and repair street lights to national standards to provide safe access to all road users:

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/report-a-problem-with-a-street-light/>

Roads, travel and parking, road signs, markings and lighting

Includes information about non-illuminated bollards, pedestrian crossings, requesting a village nameplate and how to apply for a new road sign Speed limits: <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/road-signs-bollards-and-road-markings/>

Speed limits

Request information about new or existing traffic calming measures:

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/speed-limits/>

Traffic lights

We maintain over 200 traffic light locations throughout the county

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/traffic-lights/>

Street and roadworks

We maintain the roads and pavements that are managed at public expense in Somerset

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/street-and-roadworks/>

Sign-up for the latest climate news:

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/environment-and-food-safety/climate-and-ecological-emergency/newsletter-sign-up/>.