

Somerset Council Report

Stoke Sub Hamdon Parish Council 4th February 2026

1 Somerset Matters

1.1 -Health visitors to offer childhood vaccinations at home as part of national NHS pilot

Health visitors in Somerset are now able to offer routine vaccinations to children in their homes as part of a national NHS pilot. The year-long pilot aims to help families who face barriers to accessing GP appointments, such as travel costs, childcare pressures, language difficulties or not being registered with a GP, before rolling it out across the country from 2027. Additionally, starting this month, children across the UK will also be offered protection against chickenpox as part of the routine NHS schedule, delivered as a combined MMRV vaccine. Under the scheme, health visitors (qualified nurses or midwives with specialist public health training), will receive additional training to administer vaccinations safely in the home and support parents who may have questions or concerns. Somerset Council is contributing to this national effort through a Health Visitor-led immunisation programme already underway locally, aimed at reaching children who have not taken up previous GP vaccination offers. The pilot in Somerset is progressing well and is expected to support around 400 children.

National information about the health-visitor vaccination pilot can be found on GOV.UK: Families to have better access to childhood vaccinationss.

1.2 - Government rates Somerset's road conditions among best in the country

Somerset Council ranks highly in new Department for Transport gradings for road condition and maintenance. The new system unveiled by DfT scores all local councils in England across three different categories – condition of roads, best practice in terms of maintenance and capital spend. In terms of road conditions Somerset Council ranks in the top 26 out of 153 authorities, with the overall condition of its A roads, B and C roads, as well as unclassified roads scoring green under the DfT's 'traffic light' grading system. The Council also scores green for its maintenance programme. This is based on the percentage of work which is preventative – i.e. aimed at stopping defects such as potholes from forming in the first place, rather than reactive.

The scoring means Somerset Council ranks in the top 21 out of 153 authorities for carrying out effective preventive road maintenance, such as resurfacing and surface dressing. In 2025/26 the Council is scheduled to resurface 55 km of road across Somerset and 185 km of road is earmarked for preventative road treatments. Of the nearly £45 million of capital allocated by DfT for 2025/26 along with just under £5 million of revenue spend it is projected that 89 per cent will be spent on preventative treatments, an improvement on last year when 80 per cent was spent on preventative work. Overall, across all three scores the Council is rated amber as it has been categorised by the Government as 'red' on capital spend, despite being on-track to spend 98 per cent of its annual DfT capital funding allocation by the end of this financial year.

If you spot a problem on the road you can report it quickly and easily here: Report a problem on the road.

1.3- Expanded recycling service for communal properties

From March 2026, households in Somerset with a communal recycling collection, will benefit from an expanded recycling service. This update will bring all households in line with the national

Simpler Recycling regulations, that require every household to have access to recycling collections for a broader range of materials, including food waste, cartons, glass, plastics, and metals by the end of March 2026. Most households in Somerset have our kerbside weekly 'Recycle More' collections and already comply with the new regulations. The expanded service will mean that residents who live in flats and other types of communal property will be able to recycle the same core set of materials as residents with a kerbside collection (excluding small electricals, textiles, batteries).

1.4 -5 key areas identified to help council improve lives and save millions

Somerset Council targets 5 priority areas to boost services, support residents and deliver major long-term savings

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Budget papers include an update on the diagnostic phase of the Council's Inspiring Innovation transformation programme.

This highlights significant opportunities which could benefit up to 1,700 residents. Current investments of £15.3m in the Inspiring Innovation programme are forecast to return £20.6m of savings, with further work underway to develop the other opportunities identified which could potentially save between £31m to £57m by 2030/31.

The Inspiring Innovation programme is critical to help Somerset Council balance its budget with latest figures showing the council is facing a £41m budget gap for the 2026/27 financial year as it looks to set its budget in February. This has already been reduced from a £101m gap projected in March 2025, and a £73m gap identified in December 2025.

Cllr Bill Revans, Leader of Somerset Council, said:

'Our finances remain fragile and we have repeatedly called for the government to take urgent action to reform the broken system of using Council Tax to fund social care.

However, we've also been doing everything in our power locally to reduce spending. We've already made significant progress in reducing our projected budget gap by £60m over the past 12 months.

Now I'm pleased to see details emerging of the priority areas identified by our ambitious Inspiring Innovation transformation programme which are key to balancing our books in the long term.

We believe we can make significant savings by investing in these 5 areas initially, but better still we will also be improving the lives of Somerset residents.

We will be pushing for further transformation business cases and expecting Inspiring Innovation to deliver further savings as part of our long-term focus on a sustainable future delivering better outcomes and opportunities.'

The 5 priority areas for transformation are:

1. **Adult social care – prevention of demand:** Expanding and increasing preventative services, including developing outreach offers to support those at risk of preventable events like falls or carer breakdowns.
2. **Adult social care – working age adults:** Enabling greater independence for working age

adults with Learning Disabilities. By carrying out targeted reviews, the Council can ensure residents are in the right accommodation setting with the right care package to help them progress towards independence. Support with access to employment, volunteering and assistive technology will also be provided.

3. **Housing – temporary accommodation:** Improving capacity and effectiveness for prevention work in the Council’s Housing teams to reduce the reliance on temporary accommodation.

4. **Third party spend:** Trial phase to identify potential savings by seeking better value in the Council’s procurement processes and supply chain.

5. **Children’s Residential Review and Children Looked After (CLA) Programme:** 4-month initiative to identify and generate plans for children in residential care who could, where appropriate, step across to more family-based or independent settings.

The Inspiring Innovation programme is being funded by selling property and assets, not from the Council’s revenue budget which is used for everyday running costs. The allocated budget for the whole programme is £45m with an expectation of return-on-investment of 3 to 1 – meaning an overall saving of £135m over 5 years.

In order to close the £41m budget gap for 2026/27, the Council will need to reduce expected cost pressures and request further Exceptional Financial Support from the Government. This could be in the form of a Council Tax rise above the cap of 4.99% or through a further capitalisation direction (which allows councils to sell assets or borrow money and use the proceeds to fund the budget gap and the day-to-day running costs).

Following discussion at Scrutiny on 28 January, the Council’s budget will then be considered by Executive on 11 February before going to Full Council on 25 February for final decisions.

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. Chased by EP

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

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.

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/>.