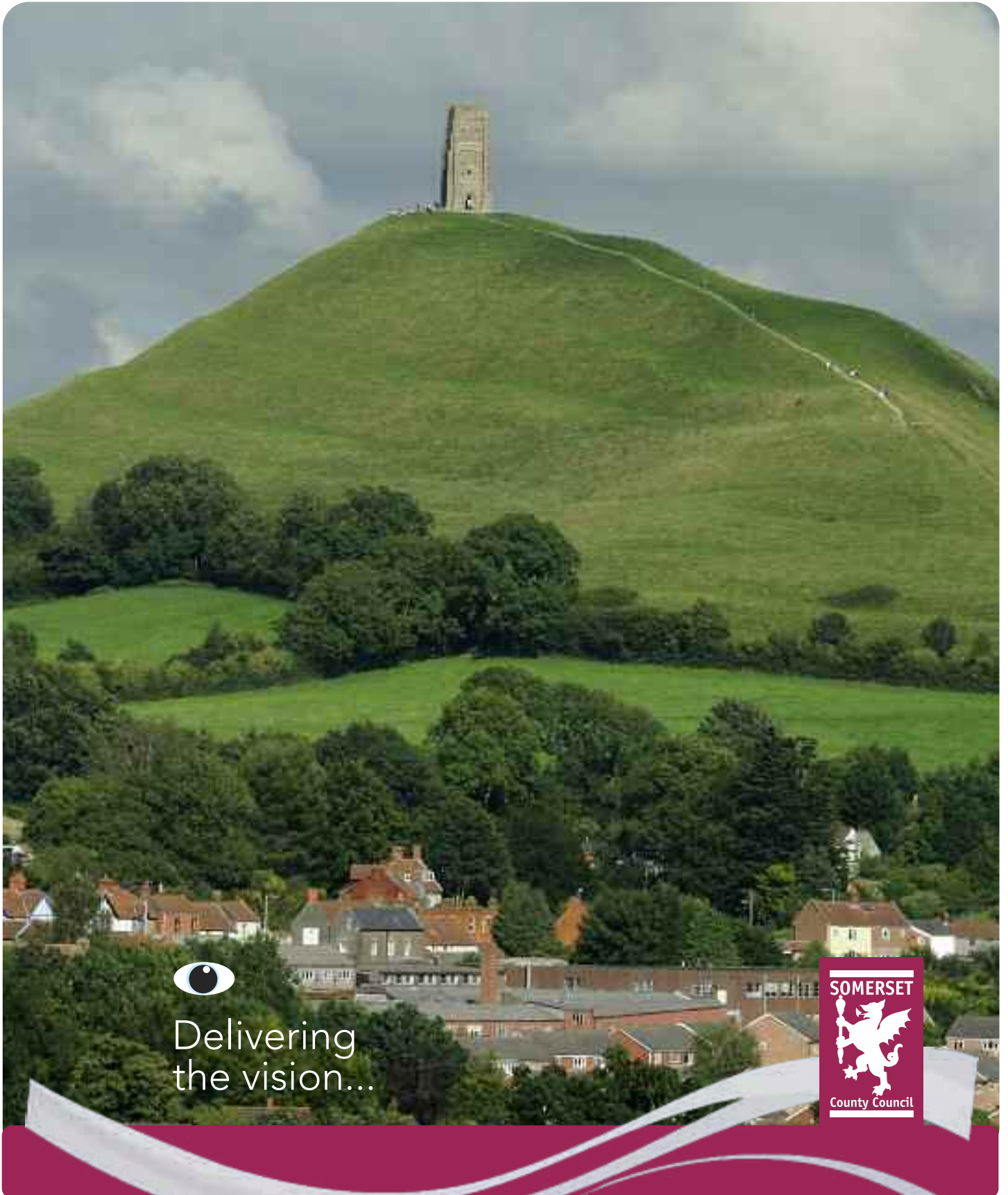


THE COUNTY PLAN 2016-2020



Delivering
the vision...



Introduction

Somerset is a great place to live, work and play in – we all know this, and we also know that it can be so much more.

As a rural county, we have great opportunities, more than in many other parts of the country. For Somerset to thrive, for Somerset to have a brighter future, we want more.

We want more families to move to Somerset, more opportunities to encourage young people to stay in Somerset, we want more homes built, we want more businesses to bring new jobs to Somerset.

We want better health for our residents, fewer smokers – especially mums – less obesity, less of a divide between richer and poorer people in terms of their health and life expectancy.

We want more people to visit our beautiful and vibrant county to fuel our local economy, we want more investment in our county, better roads, broadband, mobile phone coverage.

Our residents, businesses and communities want to do more for themselves – across Somerset. We need to provide the clear and easily accessible information, advice and support people need to help themselves.

And we want more powers from government to help us deliver all of this.

Somerset County Council is ideally placed to take a lead and work with key partners to bring this County Plan to life and make it real.

We have worked well with partners over the past few years, but it is time to ramp that up. We need to do more, to work more closely to provide better services and reduce all of our costs.

That is my commitment to Somerset - that is the commitment in this County Plan.

Produced in two sections, it provides the aspirations for the Council and its partners over a longer timescale than the span of the Plan itself. But all of this comes with a clear and honest approach to what we have to face up to. ►



Delivering
the vision...

Looking back... the past years have seen Somerset County Council deal with enormous financial challenges that have seen more than £100m removed from our budget by successive governments. This has not been done in a fair way – Somerset County Council has suffered, Somerset's residents, businesses and communities have suffered.

Looking forward... I can see nothing but more of the same. In fact, I firmly believe that by 2020 we will have no financial support from government at all for our day-to-day spending...that's a potential loss of more than £120m. There is no doubt that some of our services will be cut back or stopped. Some of the help and support we have provided in the past will come to an end. We will have to raise charges or charge for the first time to cover our costs – that is unwelcome, but it is inevitable.

And, it gets even more challenging. Alongside this financial loss, we have a growing elderly population stretching our vital social services even further.

Something has to change. Something *is* changing

- We are working towards a ground-breaking joint working arrangement between health services and social services, delivering better results for residents.
- We are leading a joined-up push for more devolved powers for the South West to boost our local economies.
- We are investing in our digital services to help carers, and those they care for, find the help and support they need.
- We are investing in our communities, looking to provide essential services with our partners in places our customers need them most.
- We have a superb working relationship with businesses and partners in our Local Enterprise Partnership, delivering massive investment in Somerset.

Somerset is working together as never before. Our district councils, the NHS, emergency services, voluntary and charity sectors – we have never been more united in our approach to doing our best for our residents, businesses and communities. We have a strong base to deliver what everyone wants and the result we are all working towards: For Somerset to thrive; for Somerset to have a brighter future.



Over
544,000


live in Somerset


Somerset's
population is
48%

rural and
52% urban

John Osman
Leader of Somerset
County Council





Delivering the vision...
the ambition



Vision for Somerset

Our vision for Somerset is simple. More jobs; more homes; more powers from government; more local co-operation; better health; better education and prospects; better roads, rail, broadband and mobile signal.

Your County Council currently spends around £300m each year delivering important and valued services. We also spend around £50m a year on building new roads, schools and other projects.

At the same time we have seen our government funding cut by £100m – with more to come.

Our biggest area for spending is the care and support of vulnerable children and adults. That will remain top of the list in our priorities.

To bring in more funding and resources so the authority can provide the right support to our most vulnerable means we need to be more ambitious. The following ambitions can only be delivered with support from government, our partners, businesses and Somerset communities over a far longer period than the span of this County Plan:

- A university for Somerset – each year our young people are forced to leave the county to boost their prospects. We will look at how we can end this 'brain drain' and keep young people in the county to help it thrive.
- A new 'Garden Town' in the county – we desperately need new homes for Somerset residents and skilled professionals.
- Major jobs boost through creating a business park – we need to do all we can to boost our local economy alongside better infrastructure for Somerset, and linking up a university, a huge housing initiative and more jobs is crucial to our Vision.
- A significant 'push' on energy initiatives. We want to be at the heart of discussions about solar power and tidal lagoons to make sure Somerset is in the vanguard of developments. ▶

- Devolved powers from government. We are leading a consortium of 20 local authorities and partner organisations to ask for more powers from Government. Devolution is important to the South West and Somerset will play a leading role.
- Joining up our own services with those services provided by the NHS. The aim is to improve results for individuals and families, but importantly to do this efficiently to make all our public funding go further.

We will work to deliver these ambitions, but we will continue to have a clear vision and prioritise those residents who need our support now. Our ambitions will undoubtedly assist, but they will take a little time to deliver. Therefore we will continue to have the vision to reduce inequalities wherever we can across the county:

- Social inequalities, such as within our education system where children on free school meals underachieve.
- Economic inequalities, where people in deprived areas have fewer chances to succeed and are less likely to find good quality jobs.
- Health inequalities, where people from deprived backgrounds have poorer health, are more likely to live with long-term conditions, and have a shorter lifespan than people living in more affluent areas.

Our Vision is bold but also looks to provide the funding we need as a Council to be sustainable assist our residents to find the help and support they want when they need it.

We will work across our county with residents, businesses, our public partners, voluntary agencies and central government to deliver these challenging and exciting ambitions, and at the same time stay true to ourselves by continuing to prioritise the vulnerable children and adults who need our help most.



New homes:
Almost
14,000

new homes were completed between 2006 and 2014



90%

of the county will have superfast broadband by the end of 2016



We support

21,080
active enterprises





Delivering the vision...
the ambition

Partnerships

Our Vision makes it clear that we need to have closer working partnerships across the public sector, but also with the voluntary sector and private industry too in order to succeed.

Through our close working relationship with the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership, we are able to work alongside businesses.

We also have a track record of sharing resources and services with our district and parish colleagues.

And we are working to join up our social services with the health service in particular in an ambitious and ground-breaking initiative.

So we are confident that working together, we will be able to deliver the ambitions within the Vision of this Plan.

We want to share this Vision with all these partners and sectors, to listen to their views and to work towards a shared approach to how to deliver it. We know this means we will need to be flexible and to keep this Vision 'live'.

We will update it whenever appropriate as we continue our conversations, develop ideas and thoughts, bring plans forward, and put this County Plan into practice, making it happen.

We are committed to work to achieve that support.



Clinical
Commissioning
Group (health)
budget is around



£660m



50%

of the health
budget in South
Somerset is spent
on **4%** of the
population



Adults Social
Care's annual
budget is around

£140m



By **2033**

the amount of
people over **85**
will more than
double





Delivering the vision...
what we do

Our Adults Services

Our biggest budget area, looking after vulnerable adults and our elderly population, is hugely rewarding. We will work with our health partners to 'join-up' and modernise our services to make life easier for those who need support.

We know that most people would rather be able to look after themselves than rely on Council or other help provider. Sometimes people just don't know where to look, can't find what they need or just don't realise that their lifestyle choices can have dramatic impacts on their lives – and the lives of others. Healthy lifestyle choices, getting regular exercise and enjoying yourself, at the same time will reduce the chances of needing care and support in the future.

We have a twin-tracked approach to supporting our vulnerable adults population.

- First, to work with our health colleagues to make sure we join up NHS and social care services far more closely, focussing on what patients and customers need most.
- Secondly, we will work together to provide the information, help and advice you need to make informed choices – to help you help yourself. If you or a member of your family needs help, we want you to be able to find it quickly and easily – and for that information to really make a difference to you.

We also want more people to have control over their own budgets and funding to make the choices they want, when they want.

We want to work with residents and the community to help people stay independent for as long as possible - providing community-based support, alongside informal networks of families and community and voluntary groups. Our Health and Wellbeing Board has an important part to play here – using its skills to target the right support to the right people in the right areas. This involves identifying all opportunities to narrow the gap between people living in affluent areas, compared to those living in poorer areas where there can be social, economic and health inequalities. ►



The key to our approach is giving you every opportunity to help yourself while ensuring that we are there when you really need us.



A $\frac{1}{4}$

of the population of Somerset is over **65**



25.8%

of adults in Somerset are 'active'



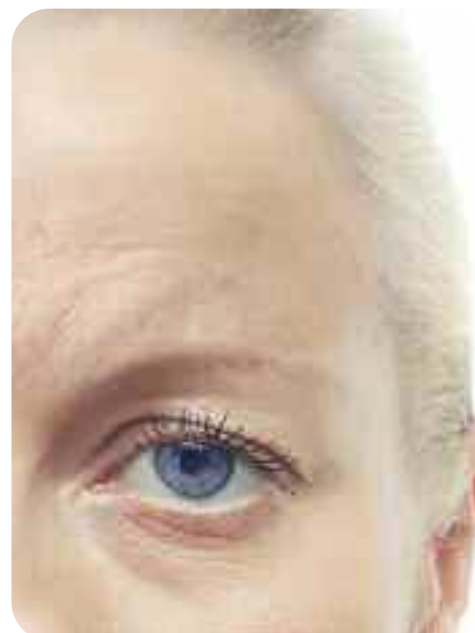
We have **300+**

volunteers through our volunteer contract



$\frac{1}{3}$

of our total budget is spent on Adult Social Care



Targets

Adults' Social Care

Helping vulnerable and elderly people

We will make it easier for people to access support in their own communities and provide better information and support to help individuals stay in their own homes for longer.

Giving people the choices they want

We will enable more people to use their personal budgets.

Keep vulnerable and elderly people safe

We will increase public awareness of safeguarding issues and how to report concerns.

Adults' health and wellbeing

Long-term prevention

We will reduce early deaths from preventable causes.

Joining-up

We commit to integrate NHS and care services to provide better results for our residents.



Delivering the vision...
what we do

Our Children's Services

From caring for vulnerable children and providing great schools where they are needed, right the way through to helping young people find training and jobs, our Children's Services cover a huge range of help and support.

Vulnerable children and their families and carers need to know that we are also looking at our long-term support and how we can change, adapt, invest and improve wherever possible.

Our approach is straightforward:

- To provide the information, help and advice you need to make informed choices for you and your family. If you or a member of your family needs help, we want you to be able to find it quickly and easily – and for that information to really help.
- To focus our help early and effectively, so it has the greatest impact. We know that helping families early will make a huge difference to their opportunities later in life.

We know that we have a mixed picture of care provision for our children, and we are working hard to change and improve this.

Let's be clear in one specific area: Our children's safeguarding services have been rated by Ofsted as 'Inadequate' – this is not good enough and we are improving.

It is also worth highlighting that we need to work more effectively with schools and academies: Our GCSE school exam results are improving – but are still not good enough. We want our children to have the best possible opportunities – and we are working with schools and academies to address this.

In particular, children entitled to free school meals do not do as well academically as children from more affluent families. We will work to narrow this gap and to give all children in Somerset the same opportunities to succeed in life.



85% of primary and **79%**

of secondary schools are good or outstanding



There are nearly **500**

children in Council care



58%

of students achieved at least five A*-C grade GCSEs in 2015 (above the national average)



In 2012, **13,105**

children were growing up in poverty



3,100 children in Somerset have a disability

Supporting a disabled child can cost **£1,500** a week



Targets

Children's Social Care

Keeping children safe

We will improve our Ofsted rating at next inspection of child protection services and continue to make year-on-year service improvements.

Children in need in Somerset

We will aim to have fewer children in Council care and greater numbers of residents approved to foster and adopt children.

Early help and education

Improving education

We will aim to have better school results for all children across all key stages and in particular at GCSE and A-Level with a particular focus on disadvantaged children.

Opportunities for young people

We will campaign for fairer funding for our schools to increase numbers of children and young people in education, employment or training.

University for Somerset

We will work with our partners to help create a university in Somerset.

Children's health and wellbeing

Improving health

We will work to ensure more two-year-olds will be assessed as developing and progressing in their health and wellbeing checks and we will work to reduce the number of women smoking through pregnancy.

Help yourself

We will make it easier to find the right information and support to help families help themselves.



Delivering the vision...
what we do



All about you

How can you help us? This key question is more and more important as we face up to losing tens of millions of pounds of government funding.

Somerset has a fantastic record of volunteer and community support and we will prioritise this area in our own spending reviews – we will support more wherever we can.

If more people could help themselves, if our communities could help those needing support in their own local area, it would achieve two significant targets – better for the individuals concerned, better for us, allowing us to focus our reduce spending where it would make the most difference.

This already happens with friends, family, and community groups providing help and support – without this informal care, we just couldn't cope.

We want to build on this amazing support and make it work throughout our care provision. This means working with partners and community groups to understand who is vulnerable, and what help can be provided to keep them independent and living at home for as long as is appropriate.

Just one example - look at the national issue of loneliness and isolation. It is an ever-growing problem and it is evident in Somerset too. Lonely people 'go downhill' fast and end up needing more and more care. If we could address this early, help communities to support those living on their own, give them the information and support they need to support their local residents in need, it will make a dramatic difference to those people's lives... and help us target our spending where it is most needed.

Not every community can do this – but we need to help those that can and build up those others so they can make a big difference locally too. We want local communities to feel that they can report issues and problems to us and know they will be listened to. They will be able to improve their own locality, help their own local residents, and know that they have made a real difference to their own, and their neighbours' everyday lives.

Our flexible and inclusive approach, alongside our other public sector partners, such as the NHS, will help develop this over the coming years.



58,000

people in Somerset provide unpaid care to a friend or relative



Somerset residents said helping people stay in their own homes as they

get older should be our highest priority



Over **25,000**

adults over **65** in Somerset have a long-term illness requiring care services



Nearly **70,000**

people live alone in Somerset, that's **30%** of all households



Targets

Consultation

Listening to residents and communities

We will increase the number of residents consulted in our Listening Learning Changing events.

Starting conversations

We want Somerset residents to be at the heart of any discussions or proposals about future energy initiatives including solar power and tidal lagoons.

Customer Support

Looking to improve

We will work to increase customer satisfaction across Somerset County Council

Helping residents help themselves

We will improve digital services such as dedicated websites for vulnerable groups – providing necessary alternatives for those unable to access online services.

Building up our communities

We will work with the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector to have more volunteers, help and support available within Somerset's communities.





Delivering the vision...
what we do



Economy

Somerset has a great track record for attracting investment to boost jobs and our local economy.

With the Hinkley Point C development we are poised to see one of the biggest construction projects in Europe right here on our doorstep. It will bring jobs, skills training, and investment, as well as give huge opportunities for a supply chain that stretches across Somerset and the South West. Communities will benefit to the tune of millions of pounds throughout the life of the power station – and we will do everything we can to make sure the build minimises disruption, while the benefits are reached out across the county.

Jobs, businesses and growth are key to our economy, and key to the future of Somerset. As a County Council, we work hard to secure the vital infrastructure that will make Somerset attractive to investors and encourage expanding firms to stay in our county.

The Government has committed to bring major investment to the A303 and A358 – vital boosts to our economy. This is welcome, but we will not stop there. We want to achieve the potential for rail and other transport improvements to work alongside this, as well as the key digital platforms, broadband and mobile phone coverage. We will fight for Somerset.

With the backing of our Local Enterprise Partnerships, we will work hard to reduce economic inequalities. People in more deprived areas struggle to find good quality jobs and we will look to identify opportunities to boost investment, employment and training in these areas.

We are also asking for further powers to be devolved from government to help us generate even more for our local economy. Somerset is taking the lead in conversations across the South West and at the heart of Westminster to make sure that Somerset is a vibrant home for business.

This will help us generate the income and capacity to deliver our Vision – more homes, more businesses, more investment in Somerset and more opportunities for all our residents and businesses.

Somerset's economy is worth



£9bn



Hinkley Point C will create **25,000**

jobs over the construction period, and **400** new apprenticeships

90% of the county will have superfast broadband by the end of 2016



4,190

people started an apprenticeship in 2013/14



There are over **30,500**

businesses in Somerset. In 2013 there was a net growth of 545, the highest in over a decade



Targets

Economic development

Helping small businesses

We will work with our partners to bring more start-ups and attract new business into Somerset.

Helping business succeed

We will work with partners to deliver the benefits of the Somerset Growth Plan – more jobs, more enterprise centres, more homes, better education and increased productivity.

Infrastructure and workforce

Connecting our communities

We will work with our partners to enable more than 300,000 business, homes and communities across the region to be able to access superfast broadband.

Keeping roads safe

We will maintain our highways to allow our communities to travel safely and invest in our street lighting to help reduce Somerset's carbon footprint.

Opportunities for young people

We will recruit 150 apprentices a year and work with colleges across Somerset to provide more apprenticeships each year across the county.

Major infrastructure projects

We will keep pressure on the Government to deliver nationally important schemes, such as the A303/358 improvements. And, we will deliver key projects, such as the proposed development of Junction 25 off the M5 to enable businesses to take advantage of a strategic site.



Delivering the vision...
what we do

Our Council

We will continue to work within our income – no council is allowed to run up a budget deficit. Unlike Government or other parts of the public sector, we can only spend the money we have.

This means we will review our services, and with reduced income, we will have to reduce what we do. We will have to cut back or stop some of our services – we just don't have the money. Some help and support provided in the past will no longer be there. And we will look at raising charges, or charging to cover our costs for the first time – we just do not have a choice.

But we will also be looking to invest in areas where it could save us money, protecting our frontline spending.

- We will look to invest in voluntary and community groups where they support our services.
- We will look to invest in the provision of information and support so individuals and communities can help themselves instead of relying on our services.
- We will work with partners to invest in the right areas to be effective, efficient and to share costs.
- We will also invest in our communities, building 'hubs' where we can share buildings with partners and voluntary groups, as well as providing commercial space. That will mean we can sell off buildings we no longer need and use that money to support our frontline services.

Our strategic approach is to invest wherever we can to support our frontline services, to work with partners to cut our own costs, to look at our own workings so our back office is as efficient as possible to support our frontline, statutory services.

And investing in frontline services is what we are all about – to deliver our Vision, to reduce inequalities, to work more closely and co-operate with partners to deliver the best services we can with the reduced funding we have.



Somerset
County
Council's net
budget for
2015/16 is



£315m



We run

150 services

Somerset
County Council
employees
nearly



12,000
staff, including
schools



Targets

A sustainable Council

Developing businesses

We will provide more opportunities for local suppliers to provide us services. We will ensure that more of our contracts deliver a real social benefit to our communities.

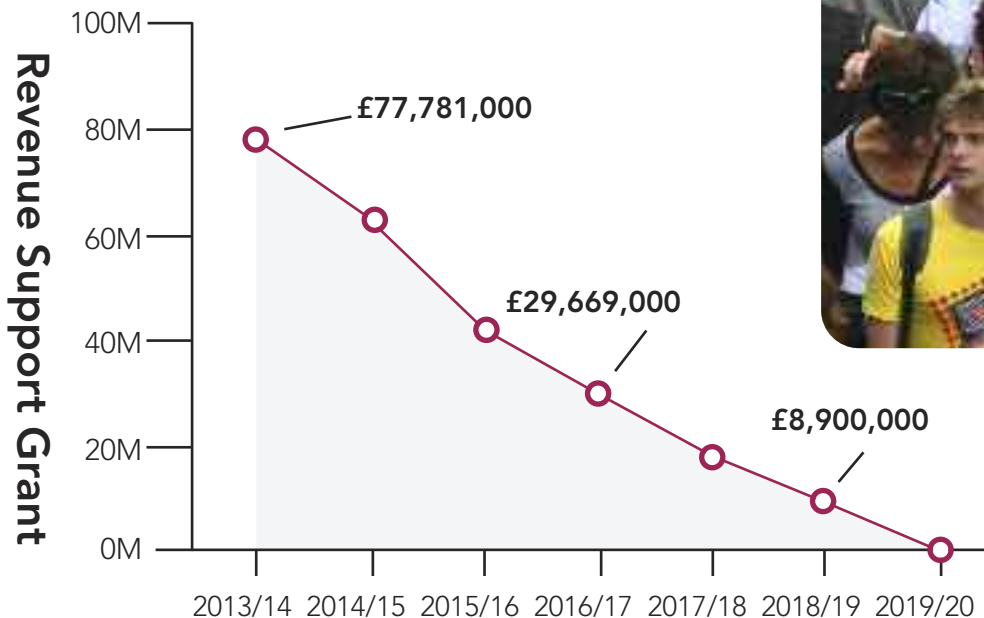
Reduce the number of buildings we operate to free up funding for frontline services

We will do this by creating hubs in our communities where we can share space with our partners to provide a "one-stop shop" for our residents.

Living within our means

We will ensure that by 2020, when Government ends its funding for our day-to-day services, we will be in a sustainable financial position.

Falling income from Government



RSG is the major Government grant that can be used to fund Council running costs and services



Delivering
the vision...

Contacts

If you have any specific questions or comments on this publication, please phone the Planning and Performance Team on **(01823) 359251**, or email **planningandperformance@somerset.gov.uk**

This document is also available in Braille, large print, tape and on disc and we can translate it into different languages. We can provide a member of staff to discuss the details.

Please phone **0300 123 2224**.



and typetalk

