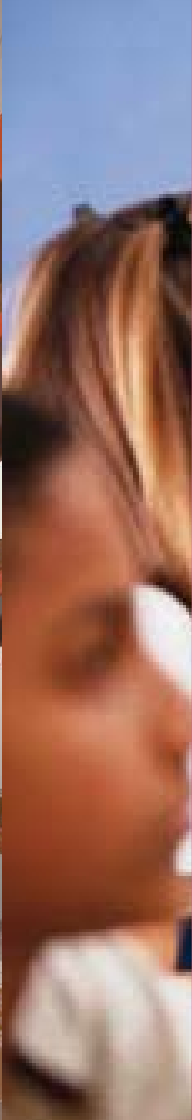




SOMERSET COUNTY PLAN 2010-2013

WWW.SOMERSET.GOV.UK





**“Opportunity when you want it; help
when you need it.”**

Welcome to the Somerset County Plan



We live in a beautiful county with a bright and thriving future but we know that we face big challenges.

We know that the next few years will bring a huge financial squeeze across the public sector, and this will have a big impact on our Council. We will not have the same amount of money to carry on as before. Things have to change. That's why we are committed to reducing borrowing and cutting debt.

That's why we will be relentless in our drive for efficiency. And that's why we are bringing a new approach to Somerset County Council – understanding what our residents really want and putting them at the heart of what we do.

We know the financial climate has affected everyone in Somerset - that's why we have done what we can to help by freezing our Council Tax increase at zero per cent.

Our new County Plan summarises our new priorities and what we want to achieve. It focuses on three areas: People, Place and Prosperity. But first and foremost, it is about people. We have a clear message for everyone in Somerset – this Council understands the pressures you are under and has a new promise for Somerset's people:

“Opportunity when you want it; help when you need it.”

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ken Maddock".

Ken Maddock,
Leader
Somerset County Council





Photo courtesy of the Western Daily Press

“We want to recognise and reinvigorate an old-fashioned concept - the neighbourhood.”

PEOPLE

We will bring a **new approach** to the way the Council works with our residents and businesses – we will listen more and respond better.

We want to recognise and reinvigorate an old-fashioned concept - the neighbourhood - working with the voluntary sector and others to build communities



- where people look out for one-another
- where people are independent but have the confidence that Somerset County Council is there when they really need it
- where people have a real say in what happens in their own community.

And where people have the opportunity to prosper.

We will work closely with partners including the NHS and the Police to ensure vulnerable children and adults feel protected and well looked-after. We will be innovative and flexible, and change the way we work, making it easier to fulfil people's hopes and ambitions.

PEOPLE

We want to give more opportunities and more responsibility to the people who understand their communities' needs best – our own residents. We will encourage communities, charities and businesses to take over some of the services that traditionally have been carried out by this Council. To use their local knowledge and skills to bring improvements and to run those services more effectively.

At all times we will be looking to be much more efficient and to deliver better value for money for our council tax payers.



PROMISES

Helping those who need it - Giving elderly and vulnerable people the support they need to stay in their own homes for as long as possible.

Reducing the size of Somerset County Council whilst increasing its flexibility, effectiveness and influence.

Do-It-Online - Making life easier for our residents providing easily accessible information online.

Reducing inequalities - In health, in wellbeing, in access and in education.



“We will be innovative and flexible”



“Somerset is a place of beauty and opportunity.”

PLACE

Somerset is a place of beauty and opportunity. We will fight against the wrong developments in the wrong place and act as guardians for our county's beautiful surroundings.

We will bring a **new approach** to creating a sustainable county and lead by example. We value our local environment and will work to remove ugly and unnecessary road signs and guard against unsightly, unpopular developments such as wind turbines.



We will invest in important areas, like our roads, and help communities at risk from flooding; we will continue to take a national lead in recycling. Our waste partnership's ground-breaking recycling agreement, which has secured £1.25m investment from a major national retailer, will be another step in the right direction.

Our priority is to work with many partners to create a Somerset that has strong community leadership and works to improve neighbourhoods.

PLACE

We will invest in encouraging more volunteering in areas that really matter to our residents. We will work to enable people to travel more easily and safely and will use technology to bring information, advice and support to those without transport.

A priority will be to work with partners to provide more decent and affordable houses for those most in need. We want to end the cycle where young people and young families feel they have to leave Somerset in order to get on in life.



PROMISES

Improve Somerset's roads with an aim to raise the road quality to one of the best in the country.

Remove unnecessary road signs.

Improve help for people living at risk from flooding.

Ensure broadband connectivity for more homes and businesses.

Review our property portfolio to make better use of our assets.

Work with partners to provide more decent and affordable homes for our residents.

Increase participation in volunteering.

Reducing the size of the Council's own carbon footprint.



“Ensure broadband connectivity for more homes and businesses.”



“Somerset is a county that has underachieved economically in the past but now stands on the brink of huge opportunity.”

PROSPERITY

Somerset is a county that has underachieved economically in the past. So we will help existing businesses grow and attract others to move here, making Somerset a destination of choice.

We also stand on the brink of a huge opportunity with plans for a new power station at Hinkley Point. We will work hard to make sure that any proposals are in the best interests of the people of Somerset.



Photo courtesy of EDF Energy

We will help create centres of excellence in specific training areas – such as the nuclear industry. We will do all we can to create a university in Somerset, and we will improve schools across the county to create improved environments for learning.

PROSPERITY

Our **new approach** will make it a priority to work with partners not only to provide better schools but also to deliver better further education and better training, giving every child in Somerset a better future.

We want to give everyone the best chance to get the right qualifications, skills and training to prosper.

We will work with partners and many business sectors to attract more tourists to the county.



PROMISES

Expand energy sources to boost the economy and provide new jobs.

Raise the levels of educational attainment and improve outcomes.

Improve learning environments in Somerset's schools.

Drive the creation of a university in Somerset.

Increase the number of businesses relocating to Somerset.

Improve the infrastructure needed to support economic growth.



“We want to give everyone the best chance to get the right qualifications, skills and training to prosper.”



**“Opportunity when you want it; help
when you need it.”**



LOOKING TOWARDS THE FUTURE



The year – and the years ahead - present huge challenges for the County Council, but they also present great opportunities. Yes, the amount of money coming into the Council will be reduced, and even now we don't know by how much. But it is also a time to have great hopes and serious ambitions.

This County Plan has outlined the priorities and aims of the Council. With the development potential at Hinkley Point, the £100m we are investing in our secondary schools, and our commitment to take a lead in the environment and reduce our carbon footprint, the opportunities are there for us to make very significant changes:

- Changes in the futures for our children
- Changes as our Council places people at the heart of what we do
- Changes in the way we look at our communities, our neighbourhoods, and give our own residents the opportunities and the choices they want.

This year, next year and onwards, my colleagues, councillors and partners will all be working together to achieve our aims. Our **new approach** is summed up with our promise for residents, communities and businesses across Somerset:

“Opportunity when you want it; help when you need it.”

Sheila Wheeler
Chief Executive
Somerset County Council

CONTACTS

If you have any specific questions or comments on this publication, please contact the Planning and Performance Team on 01823 358281 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 contact 0845 345 9166.



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