

Hayward, Somerset Council Report January 2026

Somerset Local Government Finance Settlement

Somerset Council understands the council will receive an increase in its Core Spending Power – this is revenue funding available for council services through the Local Government Finance Settlement – of around 13% over the next three years.

Overall, when all aspects of the settlement are considered, the Council forecasts that it will be marginally better off next year, but further work needs to be undertaken to fully model the highly complex settlement.

The longer-term view created through a three-year settlement has been welcomed as it will allow the Council to better plan its budget, but the Council is still facing significant funding gaps in future years, reflecting ongoing pressures in areas like children's services, placement costs and homelessness.

Somerset Council continues to plan in a financially prudent way and will take a range of steps to deliver a balanced budget for 2026/27.

This will include a request to Government for further Exceptional Financial Support (EFS).

Somerset Council Budget Consultation 2026/27: Somerset Council's Budget Consultation for the 2026/27 financial year opened on 3 December and runs until 14 January, inviting residents, businesses and local organisations to have their say on spending priorities and resource allocation for services such as social care, waste collection, roads, education and leisure. Feedback will help shape budget decisions ahead of final proposals being considered by Executive and Full Council in early 2026: <https://somersetcouncil.citizenspace.com/comms/budget-consultation-2026-2027/>

Sunday Car Parking Charges Deferred.

Somerset Council has decided not to proceed with the introduction of Sunday parking charges in council run car parks at this stage, following strong public opposition. Proposals to introduce charges in towns including Taunton, Yeovil and Bridgwater were considered after a public consultation held in September and October, which attracted around 4,200 responses, with almost 93% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. Instead, the executive has agreed to carry out a wider review of parking arrangements across the county.

Fostering Information Campaign

January is a key month for fostering recruitment, and Somerset Council is promoting a series of local fostering information sessions in January, giving residents the opportunity to speak directly with experienced carers about the realities of fostering. Sessions will take place on Monday 12 January in Somerton, Wednesday 14 January in Yeovil, and Thursday 15 January in Wellington. Parish and town councils are encouraged to help promote these sessions locally to support recruitment efforts

across Somerset. Visit the Fostering in Somerset website for latest updates: <https://www.fosteringinsomerset.org.uk/>

Election Cost Clarification

Further to information provided a number of weeks ago regarding election costs, the Electoral Services team have been asked to clarify a number of issues with regard to costs incurred by town and parish councils during ordinary and national elections.

Town and Parish Councils will only contribute to the running of a combined poll where there is a town and parish level poll being held at the same time, at the same location i.e. local councils will not need to contribute to the costs of the running of the Unitary Council election if a contested poll is not being held at the town or parish council. There will, however, be a small charge to all town and parish councils for preparatory work on the election where the poll was due to be held but is not being contested. This is to cover the preparation and publication of notices, the processing of nominations and other costs incurred before it is known whether there will be a contested poll.

Costs of staffing, venue hire etc will be covered by the Unitary Authority in its entirety where there is not a town and parish level poll also being held. There will be no cost to the town and parish councils at a national or Somerset Council election if there is no election at a town or parish level due to be held on the same day.

For example, if there were a snap General Election and there was neither an ordinary nor by election due to be held on the same day at the town or parish level, there would be no charge to the town or parish council. City, Town and Parish Councils only pay for their own elections

Octagon Theatre

Plans which will see Yeovil's Octagon Theatre become a premier cultural and entertainment venue in the South West have been submitted.

The partnership between Yeovil Town Council and Somerset Council will see the development of a £15 million plan that will not only secure the structural integrity of the 50-year-old building for decades to come, but will include major improvements to access both front of house and backstage.

Included is additional equipment to seamlessly move scenery and props which will make more ambitious and exciting productions possible.