

Hayward February Report 2026

Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance.

Some of you may be aware about updates but below is an outline of the information I have been sent.

Demand for DSAA's life-saving service continues to grow year on year. By air and by road, their missions have more than tripled in the last ten years. Therefore, DSAA is taking important steps to expand capacity, modernise its infrastructure, and ensure long-term resilience. The updates below outline how the charity is preparing for the future, from developing a new operational base to progressing the introduction of a second helicopter, all focused on giving every patient the best possible chance of survival.

Future operational base at Yeovil's Leonardo UK Site DSAA has now confirmed its long-term intention to develop a new operational base at the Leonardo site in Yeovil, the Home of British Helicopters. Operational analysis shows that Yeovil's location provides excellent aircraft coverage across the entire Dorset and Somerset region, whilst immediate access to major roads, enhance deployment for rapid response vehicles. There will be a public consultation in mid-2026 to seek the community's views and backing, followed by securing planning permission and raising the necessary funds.

In the meantime, DSAA will continue operating from Henstridge Airfield thanks to the ongoing support of Geoff Jarvis and the local Henstridge community, whose contribution over many years has been fundamental to the charity and its life-saving work.

Second helicopter. DSAA launched their 2ndHeli Appeal to help fund the purchase and equipping of a second helicopter for the people of Dorset and Somerset. The second helicopter is expected to be operational in Summer 2026.

Confirmation of access improvements at Yeovil Junction railway station.

The Department for Transport has confirmed that Yeovil Junction is one of 31 stations nationally included in the current Control Period 7 programme, with funding committed to progress the detailed design of lifts and a new footbridge.

Council Budget & Council Tax

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 in mid February before going to Full Council on 4th March for final decisions

Applications for the prestigious Prince of Wales Award

These are administered by the Royal Bath & West Society and sponsored by the Duchy of Cornwall are now open.

The Prince of Wales award has been running for several years now and is intended for projects that are run by the people, for the people with the option for large and diverse parts of the community to become involved.

The full criteria and a link to the application form can be found on the website, . [The Prince of Wales Award | The Royal Bath & West Society](#)

Applications should be received by the **closing date of Friday 20th March 2026**. All nominations will be reviewed by a panel of judges and those chosen will then receive a short visit from the judges on **Thursday 16th April 2026** before those shortlisted are invited to the first day of the [Royal Bath & West Show](#) on **Thursday 28th May 2026**. The winning project will be announced at the opening ceremony of the Show. The winners will be presented with a certificate and keep sake as well as a prize cheque of £1000 and will then be free to enjoy the Show for the rest of the day.

Somerset's Road Conditions and Spending

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 Department of Transport 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 Department of transport capital funding allocation by the end of this financial year.

Bus Improvements Proposed

The government has awarded around £11.4m in capital spending over four years, up to 2029-30 and a three-year revenue settlement of about £13.1m up 2028-29 under the Bus Service Fund which replaces previous Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) and Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG) allocations from government. The Council is now considering how this money should be spent.

The focus will be on spending over the coming year – 2026-27 - with an outline plan for the remaining years

Potential investment themes were discussed with bus user groups and bus operators at the Council's Bus Advisory Board on 27 January which included

Better integration through bus and rail through service improvements

Continued support for schemes funded through previous rounds of Bus Improvement Plan

Improving services for key destinations such as employment and health services

Consultation on the future of social care in Somerset

The current Adult Social Care strategy is set to be renewed in 2026 and will set out key priorities for the next three years. The aim is to ensure the new strategy, covering 2026–2029, reflects what matters most to those who live and work in local communities.

In addition to face-to-face engagement with hundreds of Somerset residents, an **online consultation** is now open, making it easy for everyone to contribute their views

[Somerset Adult Social Care Strategy \(2026-2029\) - Somerset Council - Citizen Space](#)

- Residents are encouraged to share, their recent experiences accessing care and support in Somerset
- Any barriers faced, and ideas for overcoming them
- What good care and support looks like to them or in their service
- The priorities they believe should be the focus over the next three years

The closing date for residents to share their views is 27 March 2026

Information on flooding preparedness with Pegel flood alarms

This system now covers the entire country.

The Pegel Alarm app provides real-time water-level data and personalised alerts. It is accessible to both Apple and Android users and **supports early flood-warning preparedness for communities and individuals.**

[Pegel Flood Alarm.pdf](#) - instructions from the developers with pictures.

Accessing and Downloading the App, Search online or in your device's app store for “**Pegel flood alert**” or “**PegelAlarm**”.