Haywards November 2027 Report

Access for Somerset Residents to Dorset Recycling

I have again asked the Cabinet Member responsible for any progress on talks with Dorset on this issue but have received no answer.

Update - West of England Line Temporary Timetable

From SW Railway

“We are writing to provide a further update on the temporary revised timetable operating on the West of England line between London Waterloo and Exeter St Davids.

Soil Moisture Deficit (SMD). While temperatures have become cooler in recent weeks, the route continues to be affected by the impact of this summer's exceptionally hot and dry weather.

The summer was the UK's hottest on record and parts of the route remain in drought conditions. As a result, the clay embankments that support the railway between Salisbury and Exeter remain significantly drier than normal and are currently much drier than they were at the same point last year, when a temporary timetable was also in operation.

Based on current forecasts and ground conditions, it is likely to take some time before we are able to safely restore the full timetable. We continue to closely monitor soil moisture levels and track condition across the route.

While we appreciate that the reduced frequency of services and longer journey times are frustrating for customers, the revised timetable is providing a more reliable service.

To further support reliability, we are continuing a significant programme of tamping work across the route to maintain track quality and help reduce delays and disruption for customers.

Fleet Improvements. We are also pleased to report continued progress on improving fleet availability across the West of England route.

The first two trains to enter the refurbishment programme have now returned to service. These trains have received an initial package of improvements, including: •
Refurbished seating, Upgraded tables, New carpets and vinyl flooring, Internal and external repainting

The units will return for a further phase of enhancements, including the installation of USB-C power points at every seat.

What Happens Next?

We will continue to closely monitor soil moisture levels, weather conditions and railway performance. We remain committed to restoring the full timetable as soon as it is safe and operationally possible to do so.

Car Parking Charges to Increase

Somerset Council's Executive has approved increases in car parking charges across the county.

From January all parking fees in paid-for Somerset Council car parks will increase by 10 per cent. A new tiered charging system, applicable seven days a week, and agreed in March by the Council's Executive Committee, will come into effect from autumn 2027.

The new system follows a review of all council car parks and discussion at the Council's Climate, Environment and Place Scrutiny Committee last month.

Key recommendations include:

- Approval of up to £350,000 from the Parking Reserve to replace payment machines across Somerset.
- Proposals to extend town-centre residents' parking schemes and on-street restrictions from 6 to 7 days, to be in place before any 7-day off-street charging is introduced.
- A framework enabling city, town and parish councils to support local parking objectives if they wish to do so.

No decisions will be taken at this stage on introducing charges at car parks which are currently free.

The Council would first engage with communities, local councillors, businesses and other stakeholders on free car parks, on-street parking, permits, concessions and future payment arrangements.

Any proposals requiring changes to parking orders or traffic regulation orders would also go through the relevant statutory process, including consultation and consideration of objections.

Somerset awarded millions to reduce rough sleeping in county

Somerset Council has secured £5.87 million in Government funding to help people sleeping rough move off the streets and into safe, settled accommodation.

The funding has been awarded through the Government's new Rough Sleeping Programme, a multi-million national initiative from the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government which is running for three years from 2026/27.

The programme's aim is to give everyone sleeping rough a route off the streets while creating longer-term homes and support for people who face the greatest barriers in society to leave rough sleeping behind for good. Using this funding, Local Authorities must offer accommodation to all people sleeping rough by Christmas.

Do Something Amazing For Someone Amazing

Somerset's Lord-Lieutenant Mohammed Saddiq is launching a campaign to get more people from the county nominated for national honours.

He is writing to every town and parish council and community organisation across the historic county of Somerset, with the message "Do something amazing for someone amazing."

And he wants every member of the public to think about the people they know who deserve recognition. Anyone can nominate and anyone can be nominated.

More details about how to make an Honours nomination can be found on the Lord Lieutenant's website: https://somersetlieutenancy.com or email honours@somerset.gov.uk

Chancellor confirms support for devolution in Wessex

The Budget statement included confirmation of the government's support for devolution for Wessex (which would include Somerset Council). This is a significant vote of confidence in our region and recognition that decisions affecting local people are best made closer to their communities.

It can mean greater local control over decisions affecting transport, housing, skills, regeneration and economic growth, enabling new, significant funding and investment to be directed towards the priorities that matter most to our communities.

There are many questions about what today's devolution announcement means for the Wessex region. We await further detail from Government and will share information and updates as it is made available.

Government approves Somerset's SEND Reform Plan

The Department for Education has approved Somerset Council's SEND Reform Plan.

The decision unlocks significant investment to strengthen support and improve outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) across the county.

The funding contribution is approximately £95 million and will support clearing the balance which otherwise would have to be funded by the Council.

More than 50 additional specialists will work locally with early years settings, schools, and colleges to help children and young people aged 0 to 25 receive the right support as early as possible.

The expanded teams will provide expertise in areas including social, emotional, and mental health; autism and communication; cognition and learning; sensory processing and regulation; educational psychology; speech and language therapy; neurodiversity; and occupational therapy.

Planning – National Scheme of Delegation and Gateway

I have put extra detail here, and have talked about this at previous Parish meetings, this central Government changes will severely restrict local input.

• The National Scheme of Delegation comes into force on 31 October 2026.

• Most applications will continue to be determined by officers.

• Schedule 1 applications must be determined by officers.

• Schedule 2 applications are normally determined by officers but may enter the Gateway Process where the officer recommendation is contrary to comments from a Parish/Town/City council or Ward Member raising material planning considerations.

• National guidance establishes a presumption in favour of officer delegation, with referral to committee being the exception.

• The Planning Committee should normally determine applications only where the statutory referral criteria are met.

Application Categories

Key Terms

• Gateway Process: The process used to determine whether certain Schedule 2 applications should be decided by officers or referred to the Planning Committee.

• Nominated Member: Usually the Chair of the Planning Committee. The Chair works with the Nominated Officer to decide whether a Schedule 2 application should be referred to committee. Where necessary, the Vice-Chair or another authorised substitute will undertake the role.

• Nominated Officer: The senior planning officer responsible for deciding, with the Nominated Member, whether a Schedule 2 application should be referred to committee. In Somerset this role is undertaken by Service Managers, Area Managers

and Team Leaders acting under delegated authority from the Chief Planning Officer/Head of Planning.

The Gateway Process

1. A Schedule 2 application enters the Gateway Process where the officer recommendation is contrary to written comments from a Parish/Town/City Council and/or the Ward Member and those comments raise material planning considerations.

2. The Nominated Member receives the officer report at least five working days before the Gateway meeting.

3. Ward Members are notified and may submit comments to the Nominated Member within three working days.

4. The Nominated Officer and Nominated Member meet to consider and confirm whether the statutory referral criteria are met and whether the application should be determined by officers or referred to the Planning Committee.

5. The application is either determined under delegated powers or referred to the Planning Committee.

Key Principle: The National Scheme of Delegation establishes a presumption in favour of officer delegation. Referral to Planning Committee should be the exception and normally only where the statutory referral criteria are met.

Statutory Referral Tests

An application should normally only be referred to Planning Committee where it raises:

A significant economic, social or environmental issue for the local area.

A significant planning matter having regard to the Development Plan and other material considerations.

Schedule 1 Applications

Householder applications

• Minor commercial development

• Minor residential development:

o 1-9 dwellings on sites under 0.5ha

o Development of flats and development incidental to flats

• Prior approvals (GPDO)

• Discharge of conditions

• Non-material amendments (s96A)

• Permission in Principle

• Lawful development certificates

• Biodiversity Gain Plans

• Reserved matters (except for “large development”: 500+ dwellings/50,000sqm non residential floorspace)

• s73 (modify/remove conditions) applications where the parent permission is Schedule 1

• Schedule 1-related s106 modifications/discharges

Exceptions

An application otherwise in Schedule 1 moves into Schedule 2 if:

• It is retrospective under s73A, or It is linked to a Schedule 2 listed building consent application.

Schedule 2 Applications Potential Gateway

All applications that are not:

• Householder

• Minor commercial

• Minor residential E.g. major residential, major commercial, renewable energy schemes

And the following types of applications:

• Retrospective applications (s73A)

• s73 applications where the parent permission was Schedule 2

• Listed Building consent

• Listed Building condition Variation/Discharge

• Advertisement Consent

• Tree Preservation Order Consent

• Reserved Matters applications for:

o 500 or more dwellings, or

o 50,000m^2 or more of non-residential floorspace

- Schedule 2 related s106 modifications/discharges