



The Old Courthouse,
Jaycroft Road,
Burnham on Sea,
TA8 1LE

24th October 2023

To: All Members of the Town Council

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED TO ATTEND a meeting of the **TOWN COUNCIL** to be held on **30th October 2023** in the Council Chamber, Old Courthouse, Jaycroft Road, TA8 1LE at **7.00 pm** for the purpose of transacting the business set out in the agenda below.

All members of the public are welcome to attend.

Building doors will be open at 6:45pm

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "K Noble", written on a white background.

Katherine Noble
Town Clerk

Please contact the Town Council reception (01278 788088) if you need further information on this agenda.

Members of the Burnham and Highbridge Town Council

Councillor R. Baker
Councillor S. Barber
Councillor P. Clayton
Councillor M. Murphy
Councillor S. Perry (Deputy Mayor)
Councillor C. Searing
Councillor B. Vickers
Councillor J. Warren
Councillor P. Wynn

Councillor B. Metcalfe
Councillor L. Millard (Mayor)
Councillor A. Elrick
Councillor M. Facey
Councillor J. Flurry
Councillor G. Gudka
Councillor R. Keen (Mayors Rep)
Councillor A. Matthews

Public participation

A public participation session will now be held before the meeting starts. Anyone wishing to speak on any matters is encouraged to give notice of the request and subject matter to the Town Clerk no later than midday on the last working day prior to the meeting. Public participation shall be restricted to the public participation session, unless directed otherwise by the Chair. In accordance with standing orders the public participation time will not exceed 15 minutes in total with no individual speaker exceeding 3 minutes.

Town Council Committee Meeting Agenda

30th October 2023

139.0.T23 Apologies for absence

140.0.T23 To receive any declarations of interest on items included on this agenda

141.0.T23 To receive and approve the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 19th September 2023

142.0.T23 Matters arising from previous minutes

143.0.T23 To receive the Mayors report

144.0.T23 To receive any reports from Somerset Councillors

145.0.T23 To receive minutes of previous committee meetings

Draft minutes have been circulated by email & added to the website

Princess Management Committee – 26th September

Planning Committee – 3rd October and 18th October

Finance and Resources Committee – 16th October

146.0.T23 To receive list of payments up to 18th October 2023

147.0.T23 To receive Town Council Accounts up to 20th October 2023

148.0.T23 To receive reports from town councillor representatives appointed to outside bodies

149.0.T23 To receive Working Group update reports

- Town Board
- Climate and Ecology
- Highbridge Regeneration
- Office Accommodation
- Homelessness

- Princess Theatre Review

150.0.T23 To note Interim External Audit report and Objection to 2022/23 AGAR

151.0.T23 To note response to Somerset Council's consultation on planning policy principles

152.0.T23 To consider response to the consultation on the proposal to remove the public payphone and telephone kiosk in Princess Street, Burnham-on-Sea

153.0.T23 To consider recommendation from the Planning Committee to support a crossing being installed on Marine Drive

154.0.T23 To consider endorsing a letter from the Burnham and Highbridge Bus Users Group to Somerset Councillor Rigby

155.0.T23 To pass a resolution to sign up to the Civility and Respect Pledge and to note the Civility and Respect roles and responsibilities document

156.0.T23 To review and adopt a Civility and Respect Dignity at Work Policy

157.0.T23 To review and adopt Freedom of Information Policy statement

158.0.T23 To review and adopt updated Publication Scheme

159.0.T23 To review and update the Strategic Plan

160.0.T23 To consider a response to Somerset Council's consultation on the Equality Objectives for the period April 2024 to April 2026

161.0.T23 To consider supporting the Climate and Ecology Bill

162.0.T23 To consider a response to the Fire Service Council Tax consultation

163.0.T23 Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Town Council is scheduled for 12th December 2023 at 7 pm and will be held at the Morland Hub.

Minutes of a meeting of the Town Council held on 19th September 2023 at The Morland Hub, Pearce Drive, Highbridge at 7 pm

Present: Councillors L. Millard (Chair), S. Barber, P. Clayton, G. Gudka, R. Keen, A. Mathews, M. Murphy S. Perry, C. Searing, J. Warren, P. Wynn

In attendance: K. Noble, Town Clerk, E. Dutton, Deputy Town Clerk and 5 members of the public.

Public Participation:

One member of the public asked that the overgrown hedges by the fountain and car park are cut back in time for the fireworks display.

Another member of the public stated that the drains needed to be cleaned out by Highways as they have been neglected for years

115.0.T23 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Baker, Facey, Flurry, Metcalfe, Morgan and Vickers.

116.0.T23 To receive any declarations of interest on items included on this agenda

Councillor Keen declared an interest in item 129 regarding The Morland Hub.

Councillor Searing declared an interest in item 132 regarding the art work produced by the Monday Club.

117.0.T23 Presentation on the Morland Hub rebuild project

A video presentation, which gave an overview of the rebuild project. Plans were also available of the proposed new building.

Councillors were given the opportunity to raise any questions.

The Trustee in attendance was thanked.

118.0.T23 To receive and approve the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 7th August 2023 and the Extraordinary meeting held on 29th August 2023

The minutes of the meeting of the Town Council, held on 7th August 2023 and the extraordinary meeting held on 29th August 2023, were presented by the Mayor.

Resolved that the minutes be taken as read, confirmed and signed by the Mayor.

119.0.T23 Matters arising from previous minutes

The Clerk confirmed that GWR had been contacted and a meeting to discuss the train stations accessibility is being arranged.

120.0.T23 To receive the Mayors report

The Mayor read out the following statement

“On Wednesday 9th August, I attended the inaugural meeting of the Local Community Network for our area. It was interesting to meet everyone and start to focus on areas of common need. These include road traffic, highways, police and education.

I was pleased to open the SparkIt digital event at the Waffle Hub in Burnham-on-Sea. It was great to see so many people taking up the offer of support with computer problems. The atmosphere was really good as we all sympathised with each other over our lack of prowess in digital matters!

I also had the privilege of opening the Rescue Day on the Esplanade on Sunday 27th August. It was a lovely day and well supported. I was able to circulate and meet some old friends and new at their stalls. I was pleased to have the opportunity to thank all our emergency services for their courage and commitment all year round.

I enjoyed the morning I spent at Morland Hub looking at the new plans for the development of the facility. It is very exciting and shows what can be done by a community that knows what is needed to support their residents. Where there is a will, there is a way!

I visited King Alfred's School to talk to Year 12 about the Youth Town Council. The School will be holding elections for 3 new members of the Youth Town Council this year.

I was particularly pleased to open the new Repair Café in Burnham on Thursday 7th September. It was great to see so many people taking this opportunity to repair their goods. There were 40 people and 6 volunteers doing sterling work. I don't think they even managed a cup of coffee!! This was replicated when Councillor Perry opened the Highbridge Repair Café at the Purple Spoon. These cafes will now run every month.

I chose to join PC Adrian Jones on a drive-a-long on Wednesday 30th August. He showed me how they received notifications of events and then how that was processed. We then went on his rounds. It was a fascinating insight into the daily life of a neighbourhood police officer. We are lucky that the majority of our neighbourhood team live locally and have a full understanding of the needs of both our towns. I now understand the constraints that they work under much better.



**Burnham-on-Sea
& Highbridge**
TOWN COUNCIL

We have now set up a Community Link Meeting where the Police and Councillors will be available for the public to come and meet. It will take place on Monday October 2nd from 10 am-12 noon at Highbridge Community Hall.

I have now started the planning process for our Community Carol Service in December. Reverend Martin Little and myself are now putting together the ingredients for a service that will celebrate our community in both towns. This year, the service will be held in St John's Church, Highbridge.

I have continued to support the Climate and Ecology Working Group setting up the new Bus Users Group and attending the Plastic Free Group. The Bus Users Group called a meeting of First Bus South, Somerset Council and Somerset Bus Partnership. It was an excellent meeting. Unfortunately, Mike Rigby, was caught in the air traffic problems and was delayed coming home from holiday. We have now rearranged that meeting. We set up an open and honest conversation that will now continue. The 10 bus users were very clear about how the poor bus service was affecting their daily lives. The Operations Manager will now attend our monthly group meeting to enable this conversation to be continued. They are a new management team and are putting in place monitoring and evaluation processes. We are now helping in that process.

The Town Council has now arranged a public meeting to allow members of the public affected by the recent invasion of the Bay Centre by members of the Gypsy, Romany Traveller community. Members of Somerset Council and the Police will be on hand to respond to any concerns. The meeting will take place at the Bay Centre on Monday October 2nd at 6 pm".

121.0.T23 To receive report from the Police

The circulate data report was noted.

122.0.T23 To receive any reports from Somerset Councillors

Reports were not available at the meeting, but have since been submitted and are attached.

123.0.T23 To receive minutes of previous committee meetings

Planning Committee – 16th August and 6th September

No questions were raised.

Finance and Resources Committee – 4th September

Councillor Matthews gave an overview of items that had been considered at the Committee. No questions were raised.

Signed by Chair.....

Date.....



Town Improvements Committee – 11th September

Councillor Warren gave an overview of items that had been considered at the Committee. No questions were raised.

124.0.T23 To receive list of payments up to 12th September 2023

One further payment was added to the circulated list. The attached list of payments was received and noted and no queries raised.

125.0.T23 To receive Town Council Accounts for month of August 2023

The accounts for August were received and no queries raised.

126.0.T23 To approve the bank reconciliation for August 2023

Resolved that the bank reconciliation was approved and signed by the Mayor.

127.0.T23 To receive reports from town councillor representatives appointed to outside bodies

There were no reports.

128.0.T23 To receive Working Group update reports

- High Street Task Force/Town Board – There had been difficulties in getting hold of the facilitator for the first meeting. An online meeting is taking place on 28th September where the Chair will be elected and the terms of reference reviewed.

A question was raised regarding how many members were on the Board and it was confirmed there are 14 representatives from the town.

Climate and Ecology – The group have achieved a lot in the past year and will be creating a new action plan at the next meeting. The Repair Cafes are now operating once a month in Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge.

Somerset Wildlife Trust and Our Highbridge have started to work on the Brue Green Pathways Project. There have been many events and they now Water Guardians for the stretch of the River Brue from the Clyce bridge to the railway bridge.

Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge are the first towns in Somerset to start work on a Climate Adaptation and Mitigation Action Plan. A workshop is being held on 10th October at 6 pm at the Morland Hub and all are encouraged to sign up and attend.

The Bus User Group that is working with First Bus South to improve the quality of service on our local buses. Peter McNaughton, the Operations Manager will be attending the Bus User Groups each month.



**Burnham-on-Sea
& Highbridge**
TOWN COUNCIL

Burnham and Weston Solar Energy have started work locally, completing energy audits. These will be complete by the Autumn. They are now planning an Youth Energy Summit with TKASA.

Our Growing Group held a successful Seed and Plant Swap and Share in Burnham-on-Sea. They are now working with Clean Surroundings and Burnham in Bloom to eradicate oxalis from the towns flower beds.

The Plastic Free Group is working to encourage businesses to sign up to become Plastic Free. They have run a successful recruitment for the City to Sea Refill Scheme and now have over 12 businesses signed up.

- Highbridge Regeneration – Notes from a recent meeting had been circulated with the agenda.
- Office Accommodation – Valuations have been undertaken and the report is awaited. A meeting of the Working Group will be held shortly.
- Homelessness – There was no report available at the meeting, but an update is attached to the minutes.

129.0.T23 To consider request for a letter of support for the Morland Hub rebuild project

(Councillor Keen left the meeting whilst this item was considered)

A query was raised regarding permissions for the changes. The Trustees would be responsible for obtaining any necessary permissions required.

Resolved that a letter of support is provided.

(Councillor Keen re-joined the meeting)

130.0.T23 To consider sending a letter to the Somerset Education Authority regarding the need for a new Primary School for the Brue Farm Development

Part of the Section 106 agreement for the development included the building of a primary school. All the local primary schools are oversubscribed.

Resolved that a letter is written to Somerset Education Authority asking for clarification and confirming the Town Council's support that a primary school is needed and offer to arrange a meeting to discuss.

131.0.T23 To consider releasing funds for repairs to the Town Crier's uniform

Resolved that monies are released for the earmarked reserves for necessary repairs to the Town Crier's uniform.

Signed by Chair.....

Date.....

132.0.T23 To consider the approving expenditure for framing artwork produced for the Kings Coronation by the Monday Club

(Councillor Searing left the meeting whilst this item was considered)

Resolved that expenditure for framing the artwork produced for the Kings Coronation by the Monday Club is approved and to be taken from earmarked reserves.

(Councillor Searing re-joined the meeting at this juncture)

133.0.T23 To nominate a representative to attend the Somerset Armed Forces Partnership Conference

Resolved that Councillor Keen will attend the Somerset Armed Forces Partnership Conference on behalf of the Council.

134.0.T23 To consider recommendation from the Town Improvements Committee for £2,835.60 to be taken from general reserves to repair the water fountain

Resolved that the additional expenditure of £2,835.60 from general reserves is approved for the repairs to the water fountain.

135.0.T23 To consider recommendation from the Town Improvements Committee that expenditure exceeding the allocated budget for the installation and decoration of the towns Christmas trees be taken from general reserves

The Mayor confirmed a letter had been received from the Retail Group urging the Council to agree to a tree being erected by the water fountain. A lengthy discussion took place, as it was suggested that the Town Council should not supply a tree for Burnham-on-Sea as the Victoria Hotel will be erecting a tree outside their premises and this would reduce the cost to the Town Council.

Several Councillors spoke in favour of the Town Council providing a tree in both towns, although some were concerned about the cost.

Resolved that the expenditure exceeding the allocated budget for the installation and decoration of the towns Christmas trees be taken from general reserves.

136.0.T23 Date of next meeting

Resolved: The next meeting of the Town Council is scheduled for 30th October 2023 at 7 pm.

137.0.T23 Resolved to exclude members of the press and public as publicity would prejudice the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960

138.0.T23 Esplanade play area update

An update was given to Councillors following a meeting with Somerset Council and the options available.

Resolved the Council's decision regarding the options is relayed to Somerset Council.

SOMERSET COUNCIL

Cllr Mike Murphy

SEPTEMBER 2023

Current level of Care spending could put council viability at risk within two years warns Somerset Council

Somerset Council is warning that it will have to draw on reserves for the second successive year to fund the rising cost of both Adult and Children's social care.

Papers published ahead of a meeting of the Council's Executive on 6th September describe the council's financial position as "stark and challenging". The warning comes as other councils in the UK are raising concerns that their budgets are unsustainable. The papers reveal that the Council drew £18 million from reserves last year to fund spending beyond the 2022/23 budgets in Adult and Children's care services. The Council has a legal obligation to fund these services, which have seen an unprecedented rise in both overall demand and complexity of need since the Covid-19 pandemic.

These two social care services are currently projected to overspend by £21 million again in the current financial year. This is despite significant increases in budgets in the two previous years. Other challenges faced by the new unitary Council include the rising cost of processing an increasing amount of household waste and the cost of refinancing loans taken out by five predecessor councils. Cllr Liz Leyshon, Lead Member for Resources and Performance and Deputy Leader of Somerset Council said: "Obviously repeatedly using the Council's reserves to fund day to day care services cannot continue without putting the financial viability of the council at risk.

"The national problems we warned about last year have not improved, if anything they are worse. The demand on social care continues to grow and inflation and interest rates have continued to rise. We now have a clear picture of the financial legacies of the five predecessor Councils, although there is much work still to be completed by the external auditors.

"The current and next two years will be particularly challenging until the benefits of transformation of services at the new Council can be realised. After a decade of neglect, the Government has to address the future of council funding and how pressures, particularly on councils with social care responsibilities, are pushing many well-run Councils towards to a Section 114 notice.

"Having already taken savings from the move from five councils to one council, we now have a transformation programme that will start to produce saving in two to three years. We are working well with the local NHS on integrating our care services.

"Somerset looks poised to become Britain's green energy powerhouse with Hinkley Point C coming on stream and the proposed new gigafactory, but the next two years will be very, very difficult. The Council's challenge will be to make sure we are in a the right place to make the most of these opportunities, while taking care of those most in need."

Cllr Leyshon added: "We know that we will have to reduce some of our services to a statutory level and no more, yet we know that when residents pay their council tax, they rightly expect their Council to support such services as sport and leisure, arts, parks, and open spaces. We also need to maximise opportunities in economic development and look after our town centres. We will review our whole capital programme to ensure that we create a Somerset Council that is sustainable in the longer term.

"This is a difficult task but one that we are committed to for the people of Somerset."

More than four tonnes of plastic saved as Frome residents back the move to recycle bags and wrapping

More than four tonnes of plastic bags and wrapping have been collected for recycling as part of Somerset Council's role in a national project to expand recycling collections.

The small-scale pilot involving 3,600 homes across two locations in Frome started at the end of May and is already proving a success.

Residents in the trial areas are asked to put their flexible plastics, such as bread bags and confectionary packets, into a recyclable blue plastic bag for collection on their usual weekly recycling day.

Somerset Council put itself forward to be part of the £2.9m FlexCollect project which involves nine local authorities across England and is being managed in partnership with SUEZ Recycling and Recovery UK.

The trial aims to inform government and industry on how plastic bags and wrapping should be added to existing household collection services. The full cost of the pilot service is funded by the Flexible Plastic Fund and the government. The only costs to the council are time and resources.

Only those who were written to directly can take part. It is expected it will be expanded to more Somerset homes next year, following further monitoring of the trial.

County's prime ethical ad spots can help fund highway maintenance

Local businesses can now take advantage of some of the busiest spots on Somerset's road network to advertise socially responsible goods and services.

Somerset Council is one of the first local authorities in the UK to develop an ethical advertising policy in line with the county's climate emergency strategy and public health concerns.

The space is available for advertising a wide range of goods and services which do not need to be specifically promoting sustainability or wellbeing, but the ethical advertising policy means that the Council will not sanction certain adverts such as those promoting junk food, fossil fuels, gambling or consumption of alcoholic drinks.* A full list of the criteria is available here: <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/advertising-on-roundabouts/>

The money generated by the initiative will go back into the Council's highways maintenance budget.

Signage and positioning on the roundabouts is subject to a strict safety audit and will at the same time help to prevent unofficial 'fly notices' which are put up without permission.

The plan has the potential to reach thousands of people every day, and businesses can visit here to find out more or book on the link above.

*Whilst producers of alcoholic products are not excluded, particularly local based industries, advertisements of the alcoholic products themselves will not be permitted.

#LearnForLove – new family health and wellbeing resources worth £100 for every Somerset resident

A new series of online relationship, health and wellbeing resources worth £100 per person have been launched in Somerset.

The learning resources are available to all Somerset residents, and span topics such as pregnancy, labour and birth, parenting, mental health and wellbeing, and relationships.

Residents can access the online learning by:

- Visiting bit.ly/LearnForLove or scanning a QR code with their phone
- Entering the code 'dragon'

They can then choose the subjects they are most interested in learning about – there is no limit on the number of resources residents can access. An email address is needed for those signing up, but no other personal information is needed.

To find out more about Connect Somerset, contact ConnectSomerset@somerset.gov.uk

Welcome Hubs: Supporting a caring and diverse Somerset

Somerset is committed to supporting displaced people in the county as they seek to resettle and navigate a new life in the UK; from learning a new language, integrating into the local community, becoming independent and settling into a new and often very different daily life to previously. More and more, mutual benefit is being experienced as refugees share their knowledge and talents within their communities, creating a richness of culture and diversity.

In partnership with local services, charities and the generosity and kindness of communities, many individuals and families have been able to resettle safely and happily, with Somerset's 'Welcome Hubs' playing a key role for many during the earliest days of resettlement.

Offering vital assistance in finding a home, accessing public services and healthcare, seeking childcare and education services, as well as in finding work, the hubs are a first – and increasingly ongoing – port of call for anyone seeking guidance, support and connection.

Somerset has a long history of supporting people in need, no matter the circumstances. There are a number of ways to support displaced people in Somerset and more information can be found at:

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/health-safety-and-wellbeing/refugee-resettlement-in-somerset/>

Single-Use Plastic Ban in England

Trading Standards is reminding businesses, such as takeaways, sandwich bars, care homes and retailers who supply certain single use plastic items, that a ban comes into force this October and they should start thinking now about alternatives and where to source them from.

The Government has announced a ban on a wide range of plastic items that is expected to come into effect from 1 October 2023.

It means that from October, businesses across England will not be able to supply certain single use plastic items to the end user.

The ban includes all single use plastic cutlery, trays, plates, bowls, and balloon sticks, as well as banning the use of certain types of polystyrene cups and food containers used to supply food which is ready to consume.

It is estimated that England uses 2.7 billion items of single use cutlery each year, and 721 million single use plates. Only 10% of these items are recycled.

Local pantries in Somerset celebrate six-month milestone

Local pantries in Bridgwater (Victoria Park), Yeovil (Westfield) and Chard opened their doors in the spring and are now celebrating six months of supporting their communities.

The Local Pantry Network consists of nine pantries which collect surplus food and make it available to its members at a low weekly rate, to help reduce food waste, feed families and save them money.

Members of the scheme can sign up to a membership, which can last from six weeks to six months, and the local pantry in Westfield is now operating a mini pantry for members to move on to following the end of their membership.

The initiative is a partnership between Somerset Council, local community groups and food charities, FareShare South West and Action Against Hunger.

Pantries are always on the lookout for volunteers, so if you would like to get involved with one in your area, please email TheLocalPantry@somerset.gov.uk or call 07557 481418.

Full details of The Local Pantry Network can be found here: www.somerset.gov.uk/localpantry

Somerset County Youth Ensembles celebrate 50 years of music-making

Somerset celebrated half a century of music-making when the current members of the County Youth Orchestra and the Concert Band joined forces with former members to present a varied programme of music to mark the milestone anniversary.

More than 100 performers gathered at the Johnson Hall, Millfield School in Street to celebrate 50 years since the formation of both ensembles, proving that that music-making still flourishes in Somerset five decades on.

The large and enthusiastic audience was treated to a mix of popular and standard classical pieces. Both the Orchestra, conducted by Andrew Sherwood and the Concert Band, conducted by Paul Denegri, showed that the players were equally at home in the 'lighter' music as in the 'serious' pieces. Both conducted the mass ensemble pieces.

Good luck to Somerset's Britain in Bloom entrants

Minehead, Taunton, Wellington and Yeovil have yet again entered the famous gardening competition, South West in Bloom, part of the Britain in Bloom campaign established by the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS).

In July, the Somerset towns welcomed judges of the awards on tours of the many parks, gardens, green spaces and RHS's 'It's Your Neighbourhood' groups (IYNs) that have entered the contest.

In Somerset, the Bloom initiatives are jointly managed by the town councils and Somerset Council respectively, whilst local community groups and individuals support with the design and maintenance of the floral displays and green spaces.

This year, Minehead In Bloom has entered the Sargent Cup, Taunton in Bloom has entered the Tesco Cup, Wellington in Bloom has entered the Portman Cup and Yeovil in Bloom has entered the St. Bridget Cup.

Yeovil in Bloom has won gold for the past 12 years and it is the 27th time entering the competition. Minehead is relatively new to the competition, whereas Wellington and Taunton have been entering for over 25 years, with Taunton winning the National Finals in 2008.

The Horticultural Team at Somerset Council are looking to expand the scheme across other towns and to work more closely with individual City, Town and Parish Councils to improve their sustainability, conservation efforts and partnership working with residents and groups.

GET INVOLVED

E-Newsletters – how to sign up

Somerset Council produces a number of e-newsletters covering many topics including business, the environment, waste and recycling, transport, news and events.

To receive these important updates directly into your email inbox and to choose which emails are most relevant to you, visit: <https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKSC/subscriber/new>

Creating Places for People

Residents and businesses in Somerset are being urged to help shape the future of their county and have their say on how best to create places that put people at the heart of their design.

Somerset Council is launching a public consultation to seek opinions on a set of outline "principles" that are designed to steer new development in Somerset. These should guide developers towards creating attractive and high-quality environments, but also inclusive and accessible places for all, regardless of age, gender, mobility, or background, where people enjoy living.

The principles should offer substantial benefit to people in Somerset by improving air quality; reducing carbon footprints; creating safe and easy access to schools; and places that are more resilient to the impacts of climate change while protecting and enhancing nature and wildlife.

Creating connected, safe and healthy places will also help to improve quality of life and wellbeing. The Council is proposing to prioritise active travel – cycling, walking and wheeling - along with public transport to reduce reliance on using private cars.

Places should be designed to allow easy access to shops, services and facilities that meet residents' needs, with streets linking to existing communities and services. Most new development comes forward in or on the edge of our towns, and for those there would be more emphasis on enabling active travel - bike and e-scooter hire, car clubs and public transport - with less on parking provision.

While Somerset is a largely rural county, at present rural roads are the most hazardous for users, per mile travelled, so the principles would aim to provide safer streets and lanes for rural communities and the opportunity for sustainable travel. The principles are intended to make it easier for those able to walk, wheel, cycle or take public transport to do so, leaving space for those less able to make active travel trips or journeys by public transport, to continue to drive.

The consultation launches on 4 September and will run for six weeks until 16 October. People can take part via Citizen Space <https://somersetcouncil.citizenspace.com/planning/creating-places-for-people>

Paper copies containing further information and the online survey questions will also be available to the public at the following locations:

- Bridgwater House, Bridgwater, TA6 3AR (Monday – Friday 8.45am to 5.00pm)
- Council Offices, Cannard's Grave Road, Shepton Mallet, BA4 5BT (Monday – Friday 8.30am to 5.00pm)
- Petters Way Council Offices, Yeovil, BA20 1AS (Monday – Tuesday and Thursday – Friday 9.00am to 4.00pm, first Wednesday of the month 11.00am to 4.00pm and every other Wednesday 9.00am to 4.00pm)
- Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton, TA1 1HE (Monday – Friday 8.30am to 5.00pm)
- West Somerset House, 20 Fore Street, Williton, TA4 4QA (Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5.00pm)
- County Hall, Taunton, TA1 4DY (Monday – Friday 8.00am to 6.00pm, Saturday 09:00am to 4.00pm)
- Libraries including: Taunton, Minehead, Frome, Bridgwater, Yeovil and Glastonbury

Responses can be emailed to localplanningpolicy@somerset.gov.uk, or posted to Planning Policy, Somerset Council, County Hall, Taunton, Somerset, TA1 4DY. The principles agreed post-consultation will be considered as a material planning consideration subject to consultation and taking feedback into account.

The Council is keen to hear from as many people as possible – individuals, community and voluntary groups, businesses, transport providers, landowners, and city, town and parish councils as well as developers and their agents. This will help the Council to understand whether it is on the right track.

Gambling Policy Consultation

Somerset Council has to review its Gambling Policy every three years. The Policy document sets out our approach to the Council's licensing functions in accordance with the Gambling Act 2005.

The policy will ensure:

- Activities are conducted fairly and openly
- Prevention of crime and disorder
- Children and vulnerable people are protected from harm or exploitation

Comments are invited on the draft revised Gambling Policy from all interested parties including residents and those running businesses in the County, the consultation documents can be found at:

<https://somersetcouncil.citizenspace.com/licensing/gambling-policy-consultation/> The consultation will close on 22nd September 2023. and responses will be considered, and any appropriate amendments will be made.

DATE OF INVOICE	SUPPLIER	INVOICE NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	NET	VAT	GROSS
01/09/2023	Amazon	DS-ASE-INV-GB-2023-348645408	4 x logo banner			£54.22
06/09/2023	Amazon	GB39AWRABEY	2 x key safe	£29.68	£5.94	£35.61
05/09/2023	Amazon	1RXT-DVX9-LJ3H	4 x personalised banner	£224.63	£44.93	£269.55
21/07/2023	GT Building Services		15730 Gas service fee - Princess Theatre	£855.00	£171.00	£1,026.00
25/08/2023	Keep Britain Tidy	SI006242	5 x signs for bins	£140.00	£28.00	£168.00
08/09/2023	Microshade		18237 IT provision	£905.41	£181.08	£1,086.49
21/08/2023	Mr Parfitt	21.08.23	grave digging services			£1,182.00
31/08/2023	PW Smith	PWS02	Programming advice - Princess Theatre			£717.50
24/08/2023	Proper Job	Z0009T02-439856	Weedkiller	£3.33	£0.67	£3.99
25/08/2023	Proper Job	Z0009T02-440131	Hammerite	£7.49	£1.50	£8.99
31/08/2023	Proper Job	Z0009T03-1455567	Cabin hook	£1.46	£0.29	£1.75
25/08/2023	Rialtas		30999 Software consultancy	£535.00	£107.00	£642.00
25/08/2023	SALC	INV-2397	Planning applications training x 2			£50.00
01/09/2023	Sansum	INV-10182	Cleaning - TC	£260.16	£52.03	£312.19
31/08/2023	Screwfix	1410126102	PPE	£99.94	£19.98	£119.92
15/08/2023	Solutions on Stage	INV-1773	Remedial works - Princess Theatre	£2,115.00	£423.00	£2,538.00
05/09/2023	Spot-On-Supplies Ltd	31646930	Cleaning supplies - Princess Theatre	£158.60	£31.72	£190.32
05/09/2023	Spot-On-Supplies Ltd	31646946	Cleaning supplies - TC	£101.31	£20.26	£121.57
06/09/2023	Tungate Group	212516	plain tickets for printing - Princess Theatre	£89.92	£17.98	£107.90
01/09/2023	TWC	43	Window cleaning - Princess Theatre			£28.50
30/08/2023	Somerset Council	7720370512002330	Rates - Cemetery Burnham Road			£1,938.62
30/08/2023	Somerset Council	7714790500002330	Rates - Cemetery Westfield Road			£2,174.39
31/07/2023	Rialtas	30961	Software consultancy	£500.00	£100.00	£600.00
01/09/2023	Somerset Web Services Ltd	SWS113027	Domain name	£50.00	£10.00	£60.00
11/09/2023	Amazon	GB39H45ABEY	2 x monitors RFO	£177.73	£35.56	£213.29
26/07/2023	Gwilliams of Edington	15406	vehicle repair parts	£130.56	£26.11	£156.67
02/08/2023	Gwilliams of Edington	15449	vehicle repair parts	£94.79	£18.96	£113.75
30/09/2023	Covered Marquees	CM0923.10	Marquee for Eco-Festival	£520.00	£104.00	£624.00 pd 13/09/23
Cashbook payments						
	Somerset Council	Aug-23	pension payment			£7,209.77
	Air Cadets		Grant approved at F&R Committee on 4th September			£486.00
	Burnham Heritage Group		Grant approved at F&R Committee on 4th September			£1,220.00
	Burnham on Sea & Highbridge Sea Cadets		Grant approved at F&R Committee on 4th September			£400.00
	Monarchs Gymnastics		Grant approved at F&R Committee on 4th September			£2,000.00
	Pride-on-Sea		Grant approved at F&R Committee on 4th September			£2,500.00
	The Zone Youth Club		Grant approved at F&R Committee on 4th September			£2,500.00

Highbridge Community Hall Trust
Waffle Hub
BEES

Grant approved at F&R Committee on 4th September
Grant approved at F&R Committee on 4th September
Grant approved at F&R Committee on 4th September

£1,350.00
£2,500.00
£1,000.00

£35,710.99

Homelessness Working Group Update

The recommendations we would like to work towards are:

1. Once a month feedback sessions, Homeless Watch (includes Town Council representative, Somerset Council, Social Housing Developers, Waffle Hub, Morland Hub and Police representation)
2. Advertise how to present homeless or seek help due to threat of becoming homeless (via notice boards, website, social media, local press)
3. Utilise town wardens to report any rough sleepers via street link and/or to advise where to present
4. Advertise to the public how to report rough sleepers (use of street link app/website)

We are still working to finalise this, it could change and adapt or further recommendations could be added in the time between this meeting and the meeting in November, to ensure we can cover all aspects and issues.



Minutes of a meeting of the Princess Management Committee held on 26th September 2023 in the Council Chamber, The Old Courthouse, Jaycroft Road, Burnham-on-Sea at 7 pm

Present: Councillors S. Perry (Chair), P. Clayton, J. Flurry, R. Keen, C. Searing, B. Vickers

In attendance: K Noble (Town Clerk), J Hook (Theatre Manager), Councillor Gudka and three members of the public.

Public Participation: One member of the public spoke stating there were two problems at the theatre which is stopping people attending shows - the kickboards in seating area and the blocking up of the balcony. There is no fire escape for people at the back of the theatre.

49.0.M23 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Councillors Baker and Warren.

50.0.M23 To receive any declarations of interest on items included on this agenda

There were no declarations of interests.

51.0.M23 To receive and approve the minutes of the Princess Management meeting held on 1st August 2023

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Princess Management Committee, held on 1st August 2023, were presented by the Chair.

Resolved that the minutes be taken as read, confirmed and signed by the Chair.

52.0.M23 Matters arising from previous minutes

There were no matters arising.

53.0.M23 To receive the Chairs report

The Chair welcomed Julie Hook who had joined the Council as the Theatre Manager. Julie has a wealth of experience in working for Council run theatres and has already started streamlining processes.

Fay Hicks also started last week as the Marketing and Promotions Officer and has begun to raise the profile of the theatre on social media.

A new brochure has been produced and there are a variety of events scheduled up to the end of the year.

54.0.M23 To receive the Princess update report

Comments were made as to whether the old films should be shown in the summer, if at all. Tribute acts should be looked at, as one was cancelled last month due to low ticket sales.

Some queries were answered regarding the upcoming events/shows.

The Chair added that two shows took place at the weekend, the Fleetwood Mac Songbook, which was extremely well attended and there was a late surge in sales for the Patsy Cline show.

55.0.M23 To note the most recent committee income and expenditure report

The report was noted and no concerns raised.

56.0.M23 To receive update on the implementation of the Theatre review recommendations

The first stage has been completed. The Chair thanked the staff for their work during the difficult few months.

Officers will be reviewing the further recommendations and updates will be given at future meetings.

57.0.M23 To consider request from 1st Burnham on Sea Scouts Group for the donation of a raffle prize

There were concerns about public money being spent, as more requests could be received.

Resolved that the Committee does support the Sea Scouts Group, but do not feel it possible to donate a prize. Councillors will donate prizes personally.

58.0.M23 To consider funding request from the Bluebirds Theatre Company to continue providing the Thriving Voices and Baby Bluebirds workshops

The Chair provided an overview of the request and some background information.

A lengthy discussion took place and some concerns were raised regarding allocating all the budget to one group.

It was agreed the item should be deferred until the next meeting so further information relating to the service provided at the Theatre can be obtained.

59.0.M23 To consider options for Café lease which expires in May 2024

Three options were considered. Several comments were made in favour of extending the lease including, the first year Hellends Kitchen took over

was affected by covid, the Café area has been refurbished, the service provided is very professional and good quality food and drink are served.

The Theatre Manager stated that she had undertaken an extensive study into running a bar in house in a similar size venue and it was not viable due to staffing costs and would also be very difficult to manage.

The Clerk confirmed legal advice would be sought to confirm if the lease is extended or a new 1 year lease has to be produced.

Resolved that Hellends Kitchens lease is extended for 1 year, subject to amendments to the terms being agreed, inline with the review recommendations, which is delegated to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Theatre Manager and Committee to approve.

60.0.M23 To consider accepting Tesco's offer for a defibrillator to be donated to be installed on the Princess Theatre building

All Councillors felt this was an essential piece of equipment for the town.

Resolved that the Committee gratefully accepts the donated defibrillator. Any additional costs required for the installation are to be met from the Princess maintenance budget. Ongoing costs to be referred to the Finance and Resources Committee to allocate.

61.0.M23 Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee is scheduled for 21st November 2023 at 7 pm.



**Minutes of a meeting of the Planning Committee held on 3rd
October 2023 in the Council Chamber, The Old Courthouse,
Jaycroft Road, Burnham-on-Sea at 7 pm**

Present: Councillors A. Elrick (Chair), P. Clayton, J. Flurry, B. Vickers

In attendance: E Dutton, Deputy Town Clerk and 1 member of the public

86.0.P23 To receive apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Baker.

87.0.P23 To receive any declarations of interest on items included on this agenda

There were no declarations of interests.

88.0.P23 To receive and approve the minutes of the Planning meeting held on 6th September 2023

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Planning Committee, held on the 6th September 2023, were presented by the Chairman.

Resolved that the minutes be taken as read, confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

89.0.P23 To consider the following planning applications, copies of which are available from: https://sdc.somerset.gov.uk/planning_online

89.1.P23 Planning application number: 11/23/00088/CAN

Proposal: Variation of conditions 1 and 6 of planning permission 11/20/00077 (hybrid (full and outline) application. Full application for the change of use of office units 5, 6 and 7 to flexible use comprising Use classes E, B1, B2 and B8, with parking and bin store area. Outline application for the erection of a building for Class E and sui generis use including retail showroom space for automotive related use, to allow for more flexible use of the units

Location: Twenty Two Services Limited, Bennett Road, Highbridge

Resolved to support this application.



90.0.P23 To consider road closure application for Burnham-on-Sea Christmas lights switch-on event on 25th November 2023

Resolved to support this application.

91.0.P23 To consider road closure application for Highbridge Christmas light switch-on event on 18th November 2023

Resolved to support this application.

92.0.P23 To consider Somerset Council's consultation on planning policy principles and recommend a response to Council

Resolved The committee agreed a response which will be referred to council for agreement.

93.0.P23 To consider Premises Licence Application for DusiCake, 14 Oxford Street, Burnham-on-Sea

Resolved to support this application.

94.0.P23 To consider correspondence from a resident regarding traffic concerns near the Apex Park roundabout

Resolved to recommend to Council to support a crossing on Marine Drive.

95.0.P23 The following application is for noting only

11/23/00098/JB - 38 Rectory Road, Burnham-on-Sea

Fell 2 no. Monterey Cypress (T1 & T2) (TPO Ref T1 & T2)

The application was noted.

96.0.P23 Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee is scheduled for **18th October 2023 at 7 pm**



Minutes of a meeting of the Planning Committee held on 18th October 2023 in the Council Chamber, The Old Courthouse, Jaycroft Road, Burnham-on-Sea at 7 pm

Present: Councillors A Elrick (Chair), R Baker, P Clayton, J Flurry, B Metcalfe, B Vickers

In attendance: Helen Hurley and 2 members of the public

97.0.P23 To receive apologies for absence

Apologies received from Councillor Wynn.

98.0.P23 To receive any declarations of interest on items included on this agenda

There were no declarations of interests.

99.0.P23 To receive and approve the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 3rd October 2023

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Princess Management Committee, held on 3rd October 2023, were presented by the Chair.

(A member of the public joined the meeting at this juncture.)

Resolved that the minutes be taken as read, confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

100.0.P23 Matters Arising from previous minutes

82.0.P23 – In relation to the traffic concerns in Isleport Lane in Highbridge, Somerset Council have stated there are no plans to make Isleport Lane one way. When the planning for the new builds was submitted the level of use of the roads and flow of traffic were taken into account, and one way was not a viable option. If the resident has further concerns they would need to discuss these directly with Somerset Council.

83.0.P23 - Councillor Vickers reported that parents of pupils at St Andrews school park there during school drop off and collection times. At other times there are occasionally cars parked there.

The Committee request that the traffic warden be asked to attend the area during school drop off and pick up times.

101.0.P23 To consider the following planning applications, copies of which are available from: https://sdc.somerset.gov.uk/planning_online

101.1.P23 Planning application number: 11/23/00064/LE



Proposal: Demolition of existing building and the erection of two storey building comprising of 2no. residential dwellings

Location: Land At, Former Gospel Hall, Newtown Road, Highbridge

Resolved to support this application.

101.2.P23 Planning application number: 11/23/00073/CM

Proposal: Demolition of detached garage to the east elevation, erection of single storey rear (north) and side (east) wrap around extension

Location: 65 St Marks Road, Burnham-on-Sea

Resolved to support this application.

101.3.P23 Planning application number: 11/23/00079/CM

Proposal: Conversion of loft to form additional living accommodation and the erection of single storey side (north) extension

Location: 15 Ashcott Drive, Burnham-on-Sea

Resolved to support this application.

101.4.P23 Planning application number: 11/23/00085/LE

Proposal: Erection of side (west) extension to the existing business unit.

Location: Unit 1a, Commerce Way, Highbridge

Resolved to support this application.

101.5.P23 Planning application number: 11/23/00090/CM

Proposal: Erection of a single storey rear/side extension to the south/east elevation

Location: 28 Stoddens Road, Burnham-on-Sea

Resolved to support this application.

102.0.P23 To consider correspondence from a resident regarding double yellow lines at Golf Links Road

Councillors felt that there would be no benefit in extending the double yellow lines in this location.

103.0.P23 To receive Somerset consultation on removal of public payphone, on Princess Street, Burnham-on-Sea and agree response

Councillors would like to know the statistics on the usage of the telephone box, before being able to respond to the consultation. It was suggested that B.T could be asked to consider repurposing, incorporating wifi hotspots and mobile charging facilities.



104.0.P23 Applications for noting

The following applications were noted;

11/23/00093/LE - The Bungalow, 79 Stoddens Road, Burnham-on-Sea
Certificate of Lawfulness for the proposed erection of a garden room

11/23/00103/SR - Manor Gardens, Berrow Road, Burnham-on-Sea
Remove 4 no. secondary branches of Sycamore T1 (TPO Ref T66) to
provide clearance over building (as per Photo 1). Remove 2 no.
secondary branches of Sycamore T2 (TPO Ref T76) to provide
clearance over building

11/23/00104/LE - 10 Westmere Crescent, Burnham-on-Sea
Application to determine if prior approval is required for a proposed
single storey rear extension, projecting 3.33m from the rear (south)
elevation

105.0.P23 Date of next meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for 8th November 2023 at 7pm.



Minutes of a meeting of the Finance and Resources Committee held on 16th October 2023 in the Council Chamber, The Old Courthouse, Jaycroft Road, Burnham-on-Sea at 7 pm

Present: Councillors G. Gudka (Chair), R. Baker, P. Clayton, M. Facey, R. Keen, A. Matthews, B. Metcalfe, S. Perry, C. Searing, B. Vickers

In attendance: N. Brooks (RFO), H. Hurley and two members of the public

Public Participation

A member of the public raised a TIMPS issue that will be forwarded as appropriate.

82.0.F23 To receive apologies for absence

Apologies were received from the Town Clerk.

83.0.F23 To receive any declarations of interest on items included on this agenda

There were no declarations of interests.

84.0.F23 To receive and approve the minutes of the Finance and Resources Committee meeting held on 4th September 2023 and the extraordinary meeting held on 26th September 2023

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Finance and Resources Committee, held on 4th September 2023, and also the extraordinary meeting, held on 26th September 2023, were presented by the Chairman.

(Councillors Metcalfe and Clayton joined the meeting at this juncture)

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on the 4th September be taken as read, confirmed and signed by Councillor Matthews who chaired that meeting.

Resolved that the minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on the 26th of October be taken as read, confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

85.0.F23 Matters arising from previous minutes

There were no matters arising.

86.0.F23 To receive Chairs report

The Chairman reported that he was pleased that recent meetings supported local causes through the allocation of grants, although he was disappointed that there were not more applicants for the beautification grant.

Signed by chair.....

date.....



The accounting system, with a cleaner set of budget codes and the work of a full time RFO is already of benefit.

87.0.F23 To receive the list of payments up to 9th September 2023

The list of payments attached to these minutes were noted and no queries were raised.

88.0.F23 To note the income and expenditure and earmarked reserves reports up to end of September 2023

The income and expenditure and earmarked reserves were noted and no queries were raised.

89.0.F23 To approve the bank reconciliation for September 2023

Resolved that the bank reconciliation was approved and signed by the Chairman.

90.0.F23 Office Accommodation Working Group update report and to agree expenditure required

Resolved that it is recommended to Council that funds be released from the Property Maintenance EMR to carry out a survey on the former school building and cost the works.

91.0.F23 To consider responding to the NALC consultation to update Model Financial Regulations

The Chairman gave an overview of the Model Financial Regulations and made suggestions on a response.

Resolved that Members forward suggestions to the Town Clerk and the Town Clerk prepares a response, in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman.

92.0.F23 To receive feedback from internal check undertaken by Councillors Gudka and Matthews

A good process for conducting and documenting checks is in place and no particular issues were found.

93.0.F23 To receive cemeteries equipment update report

The report was noted.

94.0.F23 To note Interim External Audit report

The Chairman gave a brief summary to explain why the external auditor has not been able to complete certification. Some queries were raised and will be clarified.



95.0.F23 To appoint Internal Auditor for 2023/24

The Chairman gave an overview of the attached report. A discussion took place regarding the options.

Resolved that Hillside Business Services are appointed to carry out the internal audit for 2023/24.

96.0.F23 Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Finance and Resources Committee will be held on 27th November 2023 at 7 pm.

DRAFT

DATE OF INVOICE	SUPPLIER	INVOICE NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	NET	VAT	GROSS	entered into Rialtas
15/09/2023	Amazon	CN-GB-135362781-2023-437	Credit note - spray paint	-£36.00	-£7.20	-£43.20	y
17/09/2023	Amazon	GB3A7ZAABEY	letter trays	£10.12	£2.04	£12.16	y
19/09/2023	Amazon	GB3ABE8ABEY	computer accessories	£22.46	£4.51	£26.97	y
19/09/2023	Amazon	GB3AFLKABEY	extension lead	£14.45	£2.89	£17.34	y
21/09/2023	Amazon	GB3AHDDABEY	stationery	£9.00	£1.81	£10.81	y
21/09/2023	Amazon	GB3AKOEABEY	extension lead	£19.98	£4.00	£23.98	y
21/09/2023	Amazon	GB305634227	Toner for printer - Princess	£53.23	£10.64	£63.87	y
15/09/2023	Amazon	INV-GB-876295715-2023-325795	wall calender	£24.96	£5.00	£29.96	y
22/09/2023	Amazon	INV-GB-1374848515-2023-454	ethernet cable - RFO	£14.98	£3.00	£17.98	y
19/09/2023	Blueshift	4000-4095	Domain name renewal	£24.99	£5.00	£29.99	y
26/09/2023	Bravo		660 technician Princess - September	£1,125.00	£225.00	£1,350.00	y
26/08/2023	Bridgwater Mowers		89635 mower - Rangers	£749.17	£149.83	£899.00	fixed asset y
13/07/2023	Character Graphics		35963 Spring/Summer brochure Princess			£640.00	y
09/08/2023	Character Graphics		36083 posters Film Club - Princess	£40.00	£8.00	£48.00	y
15/09/2023	Character Graphics		36299 Autumn/Winter brochure Princess			£680.00	y
25/09/2023	Character Graphics		36337 Hansel & Gretel posters			£120.00	y
19/09/2023	Greenways		820 cemetery maintenance			£2,491.78	y
21/09/2023	GHT	INV 0000035096	Valuations of SS&L Building & Jaycroft Road	£1,000.00	£200.00	£1,200.00	y
25/09/2023	HBOS Carnival		Sep-23 advert - The Princess			£120.00	y
26/09/2023	Highspeed Training	INV_2034037	training - Princess	£164.00	£32.80	£196.80	y
27/09/2023	Skyburst	B3327	Firework display balance	£4,958.33	£991.67	£5,950.00	y
28/09/2023	Amazon	GB3B00ABEY	crafting paper	£11.80	£2.37	£14.17	y
18/09/2023	Amazon	INV-GB-1343761015-2023-9942	lanyards - Princess	£14.56	£2.92	£17.48	y
30/06/2023	LGRC		1589 Locum services - Jo Swift April 2023	£1,437.44	£287.49	£1,724.93	y
15/08/2023	LGRC		1636 Locum services - Fran Pridding June 2023	£3,080.22	£616.04	£3,696.26	y
18/09/2023	Microshade		18333 Desktop RFO	£616.00	£123.20	£739.20	fixed asset y
22/09/2023	National Theatre	SINRT1022548	NTL Good 20 Apr 2023 55% Net sales	£244.29	£48.86	£293.15	y
27/09/2023	Phillip Smith	PWS03	The Princess Theatre - programming consultant			£580.15	y
18/09/2023	Proper Job	Z0009T03-1459423	Multi purpose service spray	£2.08	£0.42	£2.50	y
20/09/2023	Proper Job	Z0009T03-1459657	Mini roller & tray	£6.25	£1.25	£7.50	y
26/09/2023	Proper Job	Z0009T03-1461142	double sided tape & trunking	£5.21	£1.04	£6.25	y
22/09/2023	Rialtas		31053 Bookings re-launch Group training	£500.00	£100.00	£600.00	y
12/09/2023	Screwfix		1413843395 site boots - Cemetery			£42.99	y
20/01/2023	SLCC	BK209110-1	National Planning Policy training - KN	£30.00	£6.00	£36.00	y
14/06/2023	SLCC	BK210872-1	Themed Summit Planning training - ED	£60.00	£12.00	£72.00	y
30/06/2023	SLCC	SD129-1	Job Advert - Gold Package	£395.00	£79.00	£474.00	y
31/01/2023	SLCC	SD557-1	3 x weeks gold package BOSH 013	£309.00	£61.80	£370.80	y
25/09/2023	TWC		49 window cleaning - Princess			£48.50	y
19/09/2023	Bridgwater Mowers		90051 Blower - cemeteries	£225.00	£45.00	£270.00	y
30/09/2023	Lyreco		6723633286 stationery - TC	£84.31	£9.36	£93.67	y
01/10/2023	Sansum	INV-10326	Cleaning - TC	£280.16	£56.03	£336.19	
02/10/2023	SALC	INV-2604	Affiliation fee Apr23-Mar24			£2,150.89	
28/09/2023	GT Building Services		15786 heating system check - Princess	£116.40	£23.28	£139.68	y
27/09/2023	KJ Cleaning Services	Princess T001	cleaning services - Princess			£375.00	y
30/09/2023	Bravo		675 Technician - Fleetwood Mac Songbook	£144.00	£28.80	£172.80	y
27/09/2023	James Hallam		527277106 Insurance - Fireworks	£1,521.00	£182.52	£1,703.52	y
05/10/2023	Hebden Arboriculture		1193 Health assessments trees - cemeteries			£440.00	
21/09/2023	Amazon	INVG81220239212023145029	Ronseal woodstain	£65.34	£13.06	£78.40	y
08/10/2023	Microshade		18371 IT services	£955.92	£191.18	£1,147.10	
28/09/2023	Proper Job	Z0009T03-1461568	PSE single x 2	£7.50	£1.50	£9.00	y
02/10/2023	Fleetwood Mac Songbook	INV0071	performance settlement - Princess			£1,822.53	
06/07/2023	Burnham Book Festival		1001 Box office settlement			£1,421.14	y

09/10/2023	Business Waste Ltd		9630	waste disposal	£22.00	£4.40	£26.40
30/09/2023	Morland Hub	INV-0339		Hall hire			£30.00
26/09/2023	Otis	23056480/U1		Maintenance - Princess Theatre	£116.28	£23.26	£139.54
07/09/2023	Spansec		228050	Repair junction box - Princess Theatre	£65.00	£13.00	£78.00
06/10/2023	Best of the West		929790	Merchandise - Princess Theatre	£343.24	£68.64	£411.88

Cashbook payments

Somerset Council	Sep-23	pension payment	£7,548.86
Somerset Youth Theatre		Grant approved at F&R Committee on 4th September	£2,500.00
Burnham & District Pantomime Society		Grant approved at F&R Committee on 4th September	£2,500.00
King Alfred Amateur Boxing Club		Grant approved at F&R Committee on 4th September	£500.00
Burnham Chamber of Trade		Christmas lights switch ceremony approved at TIMPS Committee on 11th September	£3,786.00
Prim n Proper		Grant approved at F&R Committee on 26th September	£720.00
Pre-paid top up			£500.00
Seabreeze		Grant approved at F&R Committee on 26th September	£305.00
			<u>£51,816.92</u>

Report for councillors: Appointing Internal Auditor

Issued to: Finance & Resources Committee – 16th October 2023

Background

We have been trying to obtain estimates from Internal Auditors registered with The Internal Audit Forum (The Internal Audit Forum is a professional body to support independent Internal Auditors and to ensure that a high standard of internal controls review is undertaken, country wide). There are only a handful of Internal Auditors registered that cover the Somerset area and unfortunately many are already fully booked.

The internal audits are carried out twice per year and include a review of the year end accounts and completion of the Annual Internal Audit Report of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR)

Estimates

IAC Audit & Consultancy Ltd

Charges are £395 per day for two days per year (Total £790). Should the Council choose to appoint for 3 years then a 5% discount would apply to the fees.

IAC have carried out the Internal Audits since 2013.

Hillside Business Services

Charges are £22 per hour. The number of hours vary as it is subject to the quality of information provided, the amount of internal audit queries raised and also subject to any further update/additional testing required in line with the JPAG. It is anticipated it would take approximately 14 hours.

Audits are completed remotely, but if a visit to the office is required, the travel time will be charged at the normal hourly rate plus £0.45 per mile.

DATE OF INVOICE	SUPPLIER	INVOICE NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	NET	VAT	GROSS
31/07/2023	A&S Scooby Sue's	July invoice	Cleaning Princess Theatre			£27.50
16/10/2023	A.M Productions	invoice 1	Patsy Cline & Friends settlement			£990.43
10/10/2023	Bridge Solutions	DG-11827	Phone system	£222.88	£44.58	£267.46
12/10/2023	Nick Tolley Photography	27146	Custom frame for Coronation art			£120.00
05/10/2023	Proper Job	Z0009T02-452791	Bow handle aluminium - Princess Theatre	£9.97	£1.99	£11.96
07/10/2023	Proper Job	Z0009T03-1463382	LED WW Bulb - TC	£2.49	£0.50	£2.99
09/10/2023	Proper Job	Z0009T03-1463546	White spirit - Princess Theatre	£1.49	£0.30	£1.79
10/10/2023	Robson Electrics	91584	Christmas Tree Lights	£3,225.98	£645.20	£3,871.18
17/10/2023	Spot On Supplies	31649237	Cleaning supplies - TC	£48.43	£9.69	£58.12
16/10/2023	Elliott Morgan	Invoice 005	consultation ticketing system - Princess			£94.25
13/10/2023	Eileen Long	Invoice 2	Arts sales settlement			£83.60
18/10/2023	Graham Witt	Invoice 1	Arts sales settlement			£49.40
15/10/2023	MJ Church	487161	Waste services - cemeteries	£21.08	£4.22	£25.30
15/10/2023	MJ Church	487162	Waste services - cemeteries	£20.74	£4.15	£24.89
15/10/2023	MJ Church	487163	Waste services - cemeteries	£20.74	£4.15	£24.89
18/10/2023	Somerset Council	30034987	Booking fee Apex Park - Eco Festival			£35.00
24/10/2023	Re:ACT	R-043	Cinderella Advance			£1,500.00
Cashbook payments						
	ICO	ICO:00014478393	annual data protection renewal fee			£40.00
	Bos Hair & Color		Grant approved at F&R Committee on 26th September			£1,000.00
	Somerset Council	Oct-23	pension payment			£7,859.99
						£16,088.75

20/10/2023

Burnham & Highbridge Town Council 2023/24

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Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 20/10/2023

Month No: 7

Cost Centre Report

	Actual Current Mth	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent	Transfer to/from EMR
100 Management & Compliance								
1076 Precept	0	768,500	768,500	0			100.0%	
1077 CIL income - Highbridge	62,385	62,385	0	(62,385)			0.0%	
1078 CIL income - Burnham	(7,102)	1,386	0	(1,386)			0.0%	
1080 Bank Interest	8,488	15,591	500	(15,091)			3118.2%	
1100 Miscellaneous income	(63,771)	0	0	0			0.0%	
Management & Compliance :- Income	0	847,862	769,000	(78,862)			110.3%	0
4000 Salaries & Wages	0	132,503	270,000	137,497		137,497	49.1%	
4005 Employers Nat Insurance	0	7,974	26,810	18,836		18,836	29.7%	
4010 Employers S\Annuation	0	27,866	60,627	32,761		32,761	46.0%	
4050 Pension Deficit	0	0	8,280	8,280		8,280	0.0%	
4055 Recruitment Costs	0	1,627	600	(1,027)		(1,027)	271.2%	
4060 Training	0	2,805	2,000	(805)		(805)	140.3%	
4065 Travel & Subsistence	0	0	500	500		500	0.0%	
4070 Office/IT Equip & Furniture	120	995	8,000	7,005		7,005	12.4%	120
4075 Miscellaneous Expenditure	0	245	500	255		255	49.0%	200
4080 Telephone & Broadband	223	2,655	3,150	495		495	84.3%	
4085 Postage	0	43	500	457		457	8.5%	
4090 Stationery & Supplies	48	1,242	1,500	258		258	82.8%	
4095 Subscriptions & Support	3,107	18,209	20,000	1,791		1,791	91.0%	
4100 Insurance	(4,527)	(3,658)	6,500	10,158		10,158	(56.3%)	
4105 Audit & Accountancy Fees	0	395	3,000	2,605		2,605	13.2%	
4110 Legal Fees	0	0	1,000	1,000		1,000	0.0%	
4115 Professional & Consulting Fees	534	19,586	3,000	(16,586)		(16,586)	652.9%	
4120 Bank Charges	0	750	1,500	750		750	50.0%	
4125 Payroll Services	0	758	1,400	642		642	54.2%	
4130 PPE & Uniforms	0	567	1,500	933		933	37.8%	
4135 Room Hire (Exp)	0	82	250	168		168	32.8%	
4140 Climate Change	35	1,040	5,000	3,960		3,960	20.8%	
4145 LGR	0	0	10,000	10,000		10,000	0.0%	
Management & Compliance :- Indirect Expenditure	(460)	215,684	435,617	219,933	0	219,933	49.5%	320
Net Income over Expenditure	460	632,178	333,383	(298,795)				
6000 plus Transfer from EMR	120	320						
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	580	632,498						
110 Democratic & Civic								
4200 Mayors Allowance	0	2,500	5,000	2,500		2,500	50.0%	
4210 Election Expenses	0	0	3,000	3,000		3,000	0.0%	

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Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 20/10/2023

Month No: 7

Cost Centre Report

	Actual Current Mth	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent	Transfer to/from EMR
4215 Civic Events	0	982	2,500	1,518		1,518	39.3%	
4220 Remembrance Wreath	0	0	100	100		100	0.0%	
Democratic & Civic :- Indirect Expenditure	0	3,482	10,600	7,118	0	7,118	32.8%	0
Net Expenditure	0	(3,482)	(10,600)	(7,118)				
120 Joint Funding With Others								
4250 Cont SDC RE Toilets	0	21,055	38,500	17,445		17,445	54.7%	
4255 Cont SDC Dog Bins	0	12,070	24,500	12,430		12,430	49.3%	
4260 CCTV Cameras	0	7,500	15,300	7,800		7,800	49.0%	
Joint Funding With Others :- Indirect Expenditure	0	40,625	78,300	37,675	0	37,675	51.9%	0
Net Expenditure	0	(40,625)	(78,300)	(37,675)				
130 Grants & Donations								
4300 Grant - CAB (S.142)	0	2,700	2,700	0		0	100.0%	
4305 Grants Made	0	26,456	32,300	5,844		5,844	81.9%	
Grants & Donations :- Indirect Expenditure	0	29,156	35,000	5,844	0	5,844	83.3%	0
Net Expenditure	0	(29,156)	(35,000)	(5,844)				
200 The Old Court House								
1005 Old Court House Letting	0	0	250	250			0.0%	
The Old Court House :- Income	0	0	250	250			0.0%	0
4350 Business Rates	0	5,264	10,050	4,786		4,786	52.4%	
4355 Utilities	0	669	9,000	8,332		8,332	7.4%	
4375 Cleaning	22	1,616	800	(816)		(816)	202.0%	
4380 Security & Alarms	0	(71)	1,000	1,071		1,071	(7.1%)	
4385 Maintenance	2	940	3,000	2,060		2,060	31.3%	
4390 H&S/Fire/Inspections	0	914	300	(614)		(614)	304.6%	
4395 Equipment/Furniture	0	70	1,000	930		930	7.0%	
The Old Court House :- Indirect Expenditure	24	9,401	25,150	15,749	0	15,749	37.4%	0
Net Income over Expenditure	(24)	(9,401)	(24,900)	(15,499)				
210 Other Assets								
4360 Electricity Town Centre	0	40	300	260		260	13.3%	
4365 Highbridge Clock Elec	0	196	700	504		504	28.0%	
4415 Water Fountain	0	651	500	(151)		(151)	130.1%	
Other Assets :- Indirect Expenditure	0	887	1,500	613	0	613	59.1%	0
Net Expenditure	0	(887)	(1,500)	(613)				

Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 20/10/2023

Month No: 7

Cost Centre Report

	Actual Current Mth	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent	Transfer to/from EMR
300 Allotment Highbridge								
1300 Allotment Rents Received	0	1,218	1,115	(103)			109.2%	
Allotment Highbridge :- Income	0	1,218	1,115	(103)			109.2%	0
4370 Water Rates	0	34	500	466		466	6.9%	
4385 Maintenance	0	283	500	217		217	56.6%	
Allotment Highbridge :- Indirect Expenditure	0	317	1,000	683	0	683	31.7%	0
Net Income over Expenditure	0	901	115	(786)				
400 TIMPS								
1400 Signal Box	40	100	40	(60)			250.0%	
TIMPS :- Income	40	100	40	(60)			250.0%	0
4385 Maintenance	0	634	2,000	1,366		1,366	31.7%	
4430 Benches	0	0	1,500	1,500		1,500	0.0%	
4435 Bus Shelter Cleaning	0	0	1,000	1,000		1,000	0.0%	
4440 Dog/Litter Bins	0	59	1,500	1,441		1,441	3.9%	
4445 Speed Indicator Devices	0	0	500	500		500	0.0%	
4450 Floral Decorations	0	0	3,000	3,000		3,000	0.0%	
4455 Christmas Lights	3,226	3,226	26,000	22,774		22,774	12.4%	
4460 Tourism	0	1,896	2,000	104		104	94.8%	
4465 Events Expenditure	0	1,340	10,000	8,660		8,660	13.4%	
4470 Town Centre Cleaning	0	3,000	7,000	4,000		4,000	42.9%	
4475 Carnival Events Week	0	8,604	14,000	5,396		5,396	61.5%	
TIMPS :- Indirect Expenditure	3,226	18,758	68,500	49,742	0	49,742	27.4%	0
Net Income over Expenditure	(3,186)	(18,658)	(68,460)	(49,802)				
410 Town Rangers								
4500 Tools & Equipment	0	813	3,000	2,187		2,187	27.1%	
4505 Vehicle Running Costs	0	804	1,600	796		796	50.2%	
4510 Vehicle Replacement	0	0	3,000	3,000		3,000	0.0%	
4515 Vehicle Insurance	0	320	600	280		280	53.3%	
Town Rangers :- Indirect Expenditure	0	1,937	8,200	6,263	0	6,263	23.6%	0
Net Expenditure	0	(1,937)	(8,200)	(6,263)				
500 Cemeteries								
1500 Wayleaves	0	0	4,850	4,850			0.0%	
1505 Commonwealth War Memorials	0	0	50	50			0.0%	
1515 EROB	0	4,565	7,000	2,435			65.2%	

Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 20/10/2023

Month No: 7

Cost Centre Report

	Actual Current Mth	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent	Transfer to/from EMR
1520 Interments	1,050	14,745	15,000	255			98.3%	
1525 Memorials	50	2,210	8,000	5,790			27.6%	
Cemeteries :- Income	1,100	21,520	34,900	13,380			61.7%	0
4350 Business Rates	0	7,107	12,750	5,643		5,643	55.7%	
4355 Utilities	0	779	7,000	6,221		6,221	11.1%	
4600 Equipment Purchase/Maintenance	0	2,009	7,000	4,991		4,991	28.7%	
4605 Provision For Paths	0	0	5,000	5,000		5,000	0.0%	
4610 Pump Maintenance	0	0	1,400	1,400		1,400	0.0%	
4615 General Maintenance	0	1,298	2,000	702		702	64.9%	
4620 Mech Grave Digger	0	2,625	6,500	3,875		3,875	40.4%	
4625 Tree & Hedge Maintenance	0	20	3,000	2,980		2,980	0.7%	
4630 Fuel For Mowers	0	306	2,000	1,694		1,694	15.3%	
4635 Waste Collection	63	968	3,000	2,032		2,032	32.3%	
4640 Provision for Walls	0	0	2,000	2,000		2,000	0.0%	
4645 Water Testing	0	1,005	1,250	245		245	80.4%	
Cemeteries :- Indirect Expenditure	63	16,117	52,900	36,783	0	36,783	30.5%	0
Net Income over Expenditure	1,037	5,403	(18,000)	(23,403)				
600 Princess								
1600 Storage Hire	0	0	3,200	3,200			0.0%	
1605 Lettings	120	3,412	25,000	21,588			13.6%	
1615 Café Rent	0	3,420	6,600	3,180			51.8%	
1620 Technician	84	179	8,000	7,822			2.2%	
1625 PT Merchandise	0	671	3,000	2,329			22.4%	
1630 Donations Received	0	446	0	(446)			0.0%	
1640 Box Office - Card Sales	0	568	1,800	1,232			31.5%	
1645 Box Office Revenue	0	31,142	7,500	(23,642)			415.2%	
1646 Film income	0	574	0	(574)			0.0%	
1650 Memberships	0	540	2,000	1,460			27.0%	
1655 Participation PT	0	5,083	7,500	2,417			67.8%	
1660 Art Sales	0	992	400	(592)			248.1%	
1665 Stage Sound/Lighting	0	0	50	50			0.0%	
1670 PV Cells	0	116	3,500	3,384			3.3%	
Princess :- Income	204	47,143	68,550	21,407			68.8%	0
4000 Salaries & Wages	0	24,368	81,998	57,630		57,630	29.7%	
4005 Employers Nat Insurance	0	1,233	8,349	7,116		7,116	14.8%	
4010 Employers SAnnuation	0	4,292	18,286	13,994		13,994	23.5%	
4040 FOH/Duty Management	0	0	14,650	14,650		14,650	0.0%	
4060 Training	0	1,020	1,500	480		480	68.0%	

Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 20/10/2023

Month No: 7

Cost Centre Report

	Actual Current Mth	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent	Transfer to/from EMR
4065 Travel & Subsistence	0	24	500	476		476	4.9%	
4070 Office/IT Equip & Furniture	0	222	5,000	4,778		4,778	4.4%	
4075 Miscellaneous Expenditure	0	315	500	185		185	62.9%	
4080 Telephone & Broadband	0	0	2,000	2,000		2,000	0.0%	
4100 Insurance	4,527	4,527	6,500	1,973		1,973	69.6%	
4350 Business Rates	0	4,688	9,000	4,312		4,312	52.1%	
4355 Utilities	0	13,780	26,000	12,220		12,220	53.0%	9,700
4375 Cleaning	282	4,105	8,500	4,395		4,395	48.3%	
4380 Security & Alarms	0	553	1,500	947		947	36.9%	
4385 Maintenance	10	4,500	10,000	5,500		5,500	45.0%	
4390 H&S/Fire/Inspections	0	1,218	1,000	(218)		(218)	121.8%	
4635 Waste Collection	0	1,014	3,000	1,987		1,987	33.8%	
4700 Technician Cost	0	7,785	17,000	9,215		9,215	45.8%	
4701 Show costs	2,813	19,015	0	(19,015)		(19,015)	0.0%	
4702 Film costs	0	114	0	(114)		(114)	0.0%	
4705 Advertising & Marketing	0	3,250	6,000	2,750		2,750	54.2%	
4710 Licences (exp)	0	2,843	800	(2,043)		(2,043)	355.4%	
4715 Card Payment Fees	0	1,376	3,000	1,624		1,624	45.9%	
4725 Technical Theatre	0	1,078	4,000	2,922		2,922	26.9%	
4730 Backstage Expenses	0	0	500	500		500	0.0%	
4735 Art Sales Expenditure	133	551	100	(451)		(451)	551.0%	
4740 PTAC Merchandise	93	112	1,320	1,208		1,208	8.5%	
4745 Participation Freelance	0	1,285	3,000	1,715		1,715	42.8%	1,285
4750 Footfall Monitors	0	10	100	90		90	10.2%	
4765 Match Funding	0	0	5,000	5,000		5,000	0.0%	

Princess :- Indirect Expenditure **7,857** **103,276** **239,103** **135,827** **0** **135,827** **43.2%** **10,985**

Net Income over Expenditure **(7,653)** **(56,133)** **(170,553)** **(114,420)**

6000 plus Transfer from EMR 0 10,985

Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve **(7,653)** **(45,148)**

Grand Totals:- Income **1,344** **917,843** **873,855** **(43,988)** **105.0%**

Expenditure **10,711** **439,640** **955,870** **516,230** **0** **516,230** **46.0%**

Net Income over Expenditure **(9,367)** **478,203** **(82,015)** **(560,218)**

plus Transfer from EMR **120** **11,305**

Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve **(9,247)** **489,508**

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1) Summary

A working group to investigate and recommend actions to alleviate the issues caused by homelessness was formed in December 2022. Councillors Baker and Vickers were initially appointed to form the working group and they called in other community representatives to carry out the work. The list of those invited to participate is include in Appendix A. The group met in February and June 2023 and their findings and recommendations are summarised below.

The group has found that the key causes of homeless can be summarised under three headings:

- 1) The interaction of available housing types with the access to money and knowledge.
- 2) Emotional trauma and gaps in education and life skills training.
- 3) The breakdown of important relationships.

More detail on these is provided in Section (2). In truth many of these factors are caused by policies and societal structures that are beyond the ability of a town or even unitary council to influence. Where we can deliver more support is in mitigating the impact of homelessness.

Some of the difficulties that arise from homelessness are documented in Section (3).

These fall into categories such as:

- 1) Lack of access to resources
- 2) Further challenges obtaining accommodation / housing
- 3) Pressure on support groups
- 4) Exclusion from the economic, transport and other social resources

On the positive side, we did actually find that there are already sources of support ranging from the Town, Somerset Councils and also several VCFSE (Voluntary, Community, Faith & Social Enterprise) who already do phenomenal work. These are documented in Section (4). The areas where further support is needed are summarised in Section (5).



Burnham-On-Sea & Highbridge Town Council

Working Group – Homelessness

The broad categories of support are all inter-connected and the diagram below illustrates the help that is required.

Whilst some support is available, we did find that it was often difficult for people who are homeless to understand where they can get support and how to access it. This leads to the core of our action plan.

In order to make an impact in this area our **recommended** course of action is:

1. Once a month feedback session, Homeless Watch (including but not limited to: Town Council representative, Somerset Council, Housing Associations, Waffle Hub, Morland Hub, Food Bank (Trussell Trust), Police representation, NHS & other VCFSE's)
2. Promote how to present homeless, seek help due to threat of becoming homeless or how the general public can report homelessness (via notice boards, website, social media, local press, VCFSE organisations.)
3. Utilise town wardens to report any rough sleepers via street link, Somerset Council Website or call Somerset Council's Homeless department directly and/or to advise where to present



The Jigsaw of Homelessness Support

2) Key Causes of Homelessness

The table below is a non-exhaustive list of the causes of homelessness.

Housing types, money, knowledge	Emotion, Education, Life skills	Relationships
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural disaster, Flooding • House fire. • Foreclosure. • Increased expenses. • Death of home owner • Relocation. • Eviction • Loss of job/ income • Rent increase • Property in poor repair as a Tenant • Property in poor repairs as a owner • Loss of benefits • No where available to rent • Transport (to work or to support) • Victim of theft • Victim of fraud • Wrong house match • Budgeting difficulty or debt • Home finder system • Unable to get a job • Change of 'banding' criteria, due to change of circumstances • Section 21 notice/notice to quit accommodation. • Lack of affordable housing. • Government policy. • Cost-of-living crisis. • Legislation. • Refuge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health • Trauma whilst being homelessness, • Criminal justice (Higher in men) • Disabled • Having an EHCP: Not In employment /access or transport route to education provider • Disabled (surroundings/ needs harder to be adapted) • Health issues causes change of needs in accommodation, type or loss of earnings • Substance abuse • Debts owed to local drug groups • Ex forces • Choice, due to difficulties • Death of loved one • Struggled to maintain the property • Victim of a non money related crime • Carer or Young carer • Leaving care at 16yrs, • Not had preparation for independence • No Education or employment skills training, especially 16-24 yrs old • Child excluded/ no school place causing loss of job 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Room mate problems • Relationship break up • Domestic violence • Family problems • Divorce • Family disassociation around diversity • Controlling relationships • Falling out with parents

Burnham-On-Sea & Highbridge Town Council

Working Group – Homelessness

Some specific examples of gaps in support that can cause homelessness include:

- Mortgaged home owners are not able to access financial support
- The local authority adult care, children leaving care or education services
- Young people leaving care when 16 years old, especially when not had any preparation for independence.
- 16 to 17-year-old who have a break they are then classed as being independent, and they may not get support to prepare for adulthood. If a 16-year-old goes to further education, they are more likely to be better supported.
- If a young person has an EHCP, and are unable to work, they do not meet certain housing and benefit support for housing criteria. They can also be told to take housing that is very far away from the names Education provider, or there is no transport, or transport costs are high.
- When someone is not identified as having a need by adults social care.
- Some people need a postal address, and this is a barrier to receiving support including medical help.
- The job centre is in Bridgwater, not in Burnham-on-Sea.
- When the job centre demand that you arrive at an appointment that suits them, they are not flexible and with the difficulties with transport they give sanctions which is a lot of benefits.
- The department for work and pensions is controlled from Wells, the job centre are short of staff.
- Council offices in Bridgwater difficult to get to.
- Sedgemoor district council offices close at 5 pm, and then it is out of hours.
- Commissioned contracts not delivering what what's asked of them.
- Organisation not able to know where to sign post.
- Not all signposted help is available when it says it will be, or if it changes location, or becomes short of staff.

3) The Difficulties That Arise From Homelessness

We identified the following difficulties that arise from being made homeless.

3.1) Lack of access to resources

- Access is not always direct.
- Complex processes that do not follow the 'system'
- Homefinding system is not user friendly.
- The telephone helpline is not customer friendly and triggers mental health.
- Not able to get hold of the right support at the moment of crisis.
- It is harder to know and verify how many people are rough sleepers, many will hide it or do not feel safe to trust someone. Different organisations have different knowledge of who are the rough sleepers.
- It is harder to identify people who sleep in their cars.
- It is hard to identify rural rough sleepers.
- Organisations not knowing who to sign post to, or what is available in the area.
- Not able to access internet to source help.

Working Group – Homelessness

- A lot of people in crisis prefer to not use the library customer service access point, a face to face conversation is a need.

3.2) Further challenges obtaining accommodation / housing

- Change of circumstances which leads to a change in the banding criteria to access housing.
- Asked for a housing officer, the GP wrote a letter to help but still on the bronze banding.
- Travelodge and Premier inn do not want to take SDC bookings.
- Lack of affordable housing.
- Support is in Burnham-on-Sea, but can only find accommodation in Bridgwater
- Lack of property to rent privately in Highbridge and Burnham-on-Sea.
- People do not want to go to Weston-super-Mare or Bridgwater, or a hostel due to previous trauma or avoiding gangs Who are looking for them.
- Issues with personalities, some people do not want to be with others and this makes it difficult to find The ideal emergency accommodation.
- Section 21 notice/notice to quit accommodation makes people panic, and they leave their accommodation earlier
- If people are given a section 21 eviction notice. A CCJ, it is often misunderstood and people panic and leave they need support to understand their rights.
- It is a barrier to access a church, if somebody does not believe in religion.
- Increasing number of families homeless, the furthest some are able to receive housing is Cardiff.
- The young person with neuro accessibility needs was sleeping rough for a month before SDC provided accommodation.
- Increase of extended families moving in with family members, due to homelessness but many experience a breakdown in relationships before alternative solutions can be sort.
- Working single adult working in care, on nights, sometimes weeks away struggles to keep flat.

3.3) Pressures on support groups

- Increased demand on volunteers and community groups recently, compared to the last few years. Food bank have an increase in people now, attending for support, two years ago they might have 10 people, now they can have 15 people in two hours.
- Organisations pop up and go.
- Challenges for community groups to receive charity status and bank accounts
- Volunteers who help are at risk of housing and financial struggles, or travel (cost) to place of volunteering.
- Summer house (housing charity) has private property in Bridgwater, but none in Highbridge or Burnham-on-Sea.
- The Bridgwater citizens, advice bureau closed, the right information was given when they relocated due to their roof collapsing
- Commission services and monitoring of those contracts to ensure they deliver what they say they will deliver.
- The YMCA is not what it was, 30-50 years ago.

Burnham-On-Sea & Highbridge Town Council

Working Group – Homelessness

- Accommodation provisions vary in each location, in terms of accommodation available and access to food.
- YMCA people going to the food bank.
- YMCA, are not supporting those to succeed, and those people are falling further into deterioration.
- Someone who was homeless went into the YMCA and asked to use the toilet, they were refused.
- Waffle cooking and take home food workshops are finding people who have signed up are not attending. All new sign ups receive a phone call, come in for a face to face conversation and can take home a meal for a family of four.

3.4) Exclusion from the economic, transport and other social resources

- Abuse and trauma for those whilst being homeless.
- Many ranging of reasons for running out of food, such as work tools were £6000 were stolen, she was unable to work and ran out of money.
- Personal debt is an issue in the largest area that citizens advice bureau are asked for help.
- Bus services are currently £2 for a return journey, they will soon increase to £4 or £6.40 for a return journey from Burnham on Sea to Bridgwater. Asda to Bridgwater is £4.30.
- Bus services are unreliable and left standing at The bus stop at B & M, B-O-S at 7 pm, due to no buses. Then needing to walk to Highbridge railway station to get the train to Bridgwater.
- Train strikes have been a challenge.
- The trains will compensate for journeys affected by the train strikes.
- Bus Timetable on the first bus app is not good to use your own when the bus does not turn up and have a bus pass to last month. They only provided £5 compensation.
- The travel tickets that used to be in a book I've not been seen for a long time and used to make accessing bus trips easier for those who needed it.
- Need a car to live around here
- Offices or housing is in Bridgwater, so need to travel
- criminal justice is higher in men,
- Mental health becomes more of an issue,
- substance use is high
- The mental health issues for trauma that has been experienced whilst being homeless.
- Some rough sleepers do not want to wash their clothes, they just want access to a bath or shower, a change of clothes and throw the old clothes away.
- Budgeting is a challenge, accessing education as a challenge, and needs advice and ongoing support.
- No education training, 16 to 24 years of age.
- Cooking skills are indeed, or else buying takeaways is expensive and money runs out.
- Left to cook with only a kettle cooking for an individual or a family. It's difficult.
- Healthy eating is difficult for a lot of people and families.
- No one has money available for the credit needed especially if you get a free phone or a free Sim card.

Burnham-On-Sea & Highbridge Town Council

Working Group – Homelessness

- It's not easy to know where to charge your phone
- Rough sleepers in heatwave, helped to keep hydrated
- Rough sleepers were accessing closed commercial entrances, mess accumulated, they have relocated.
- Food bank are seeing a lot more residents struggling, who are of vulnerable / older age with physical accessibility needs, and increasing mental health needs. People can't afford the basic necessities due to the cost of living. People are using drink and drugs more.
- Many more sleeping in tents, tents have been attacked through arson.
- One person was living in their car, now able to live in a caravan, Waffle offered to support accessing medical support.
- Busses: still not reliable between Bridgwater and Burnham-On-Sea. One volunteer is now able to move back to Burnham-On-Sea, which will be easier.
- Increasing number of alcohol and addiction individuals who have disabilities (physical/sensory/Neurodivergent).

4) Summary of needs and existing support.

The key areas where support is required are tabulated below, along with a summary of where some of this support is available.

Detailed notes on support required are transcribed in Appendix B.

LIFE SKILLS	DAILY NEEDS	HEALTH AND SAFETY	HOUSING SUPPORT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feel confident to ask an identified trust worthy person • Cooking • Budgeting • Understanding rights • Employability skills • Communicating • Feeling safe around other people • Being honest • Creating trusting friendships and support networks • Having fun • Employment • Education • Ability to access employment, education housing or benefits meetings • House maintenance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bedding, Clothing • Washing machine • Shower/bath, shave • Toilet • Hygiene supplies • Phone; Phone sim; Phone credit • Phone charging • Transport to place of need • Someone to talk to, to help • Food • Food storage • Somewhere to cook • Warmth • Water: Costa coffee, Waffle, Apex • Transport • Someone to help • Signposting that will be an open door • Know who to contact when a support was not able to help 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police & victim support • Mental health • Trauma support • Some where to recover • Feel safe from previous substances use • Justice & financial support in theft/fraud • Medical support • Dental support • Having someone available in crisis <p>Substance support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing available in the area • Housing that is in good and safe conditions • Temporary housing • Affordable rented accommodation • Recovery accommodation • Housing that matches with compatibility • Housing to allow rent and recuperation to rebalance and access a positive pathway

LIFE SKILLS	DAILY NEEDS	HEALTH AND SAFETY	HOUSING SUPPORT
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Money 		
CURRENT PROVISION			
<p>Waffle Hub, Methodist Church Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 9-5pm Facebook group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> peer to peer support, i, engage, community, food to buy, befriending and trust, Internet mentoring cooking together, families take home meal. how to buy food 	<p>Somerset Council Household support fund. Flexible fund for small things that mean a lot: ie: food vouchers, money for shoes. village agent helps.</p> <p>Somerset Council services inherited from SDC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outreach support : supplies SWEPT, used for severe weather? Street link which people can use to report someone who is homeless. Bus ticket, triaged. Mobile phones. Nursing outreach service. <p>Burnham Food Bank (Tressel Trust).</p> <p>Waffle Hub</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> warm space, talk, chat/Café Pay it forward Supplies 	<p>Highbridge YMCA Homeless Accommodation Highbridge Hotel, River Bridge, White House.</p> <p>Nelson Trust: Bridgwater, for women suffering domestic violence.</p>	<p>Shelter</p> <p>Nelson Trust; Bridgwater</p> <p>Julian House Bath: For prisoners interating back into society.</p>

LIFE SKILLS	DAILY NEEDS	HEALTH AND SAFETY	HOUSING SUPPORT
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• clothing, bedding Toilet/ sink Morland Hall 3 x course cooked meal £5, must be booked. 30 to 40 spaces. Zing how to buy and store food, eating together, family conversation, time with meals.		

Other sources of support include but are not exclusive to:

- The University of the Third Age (U3A)
- AKT (LGBT+ Advocates)
- NS LGBT+ Forum
- Samaritans

5) The Areas Where Further Support is Needed

The current gaps in available support in areas of high importance are listed below:

Networking for orgs	Life skill	Housing Support	Health & Support	Daily needs
Knowing who to signpost to, and when	Communication skills	Advice	Mental health support	Shower
Feedback on commissioned services	Cooking, food handling, storing Skills	Rentable property in BOS	Trauma support	Toilet
	Housing maintenance, repairs	People to help with house finder	Well being	Washing machine
	Budgeting skills		Police/Victim support	Cooking facilities
	Employability skills		Substance support	Transport
	Education		Diversity support	Urgent dental and medical support
	Friendships		Medical and dental support	
			Relationship support	

6) Appendix A – Invitees to Working Group

Name	Attendance	Org
Cllr. Ross Baker	Both	Councillor Burnham-On-Sea & Highbridge Town Council
Cllr. Barbara Vickers	07/02/2023	Councillor Burnham-On-Sea & Highbridge Town Council
Janet Keen	07/02/2023	Councillor Sedgemoor District Council
Sarah Stilwell	07/02/2023	Officer. Sedgemoor District Council
John Kempton	Both	Volunteer. Burnham-On-Sea Food Bank/Trussle Trust, Hope, Waffle
Lizz Bennett	Both	Founder Waffle
Cllr. Federica Smith-Roberts	22/06/2023	Somerset Council,
Marianne Lytton	22/06/2023	
	Invited, no response	Highbridge YMCA (Riverside, Highbridge Hotel & Wade House)

7) Appendix B – Detailed notes on support required

- A number to call anytime of day, 24x7, to find out where to sign post, and what times they are open
- Further opportunities for engagement and feedback on services, to further shape / co-produce commissioned contracts
- Need someone to help when challenged with services, either when accessing on the telephone or on the computer, and a barrier to accessing the support becomes impossible
- Organisations and key community people knowing what is available in the area, to help more people
- Services need to be able to be flexible for change and adapt to the need.
- Cooking skills,
- Budgeting skills
- Somewhere to cook when the housing accommodation only has a kettle
- The town will need to work closely with surrounding rural villages.
- Someone to talk to, and some were safe to sleep is important.
- A set time available, where a person can go to.
- Local showers – would the swimming pools help? Who owns the leisure centre? Some railway stations have showers.
- Sometimes it is just having access to that £5 to put someone on the bus
- Some people just need a postal address, and this is a barrier to receiving support including medical help.
- For organisations, it is nice to have communication, church ministers, do not have all the answers. I do not know what is available.
- Organisations and volunteers do not know each other.
- Information for organisations is needed and networking opportunities
- It would be good to visit each other's premises to understand how each organisation helps.
- There is no no place in Burnham-on-Sea, where people could wash their clothes, maybe something could be organised with the Laundrette.
- It would be nice to have a refuge. People could go for 2 to 3 days at a time, with proper advice, medical advice, dentist, and doctor access. Breathing space, a safe space, somewhere to sleep, wash and talk. When they started up river bridge they had waking staff.
- Networking with the district council and other organisations
- User experience knowledge pathway/ engagement pathway
- Free drinking water: more places need to be identified for Wessex water refill locations.
- Could be a need for increased long term caravan use, what areas are being identified?
- What unused government owned buildings are there in town?
- HBOS Town council could signpost more to Somerset Council
- Councillor Federica Smith-Roberts to tour Highbridge & Burnham-On-Sea, visit communities.
- Need a leaflet to hand out of information.
- Areas of free internet

Burnham-On-Sea & Highbridge Town Council

Working Group – Homelessness

- Police support for victims of arson whilst homeless, and safe areas to sleep, sleep in tents.
- Urgent transport, to access aTaxi means needing a phone, less public phone boxes available.
- Town rangers could have a greater role, in identifying people in need, signposting or connecting with other organisations to support people in need.
- Cllr Federica has identified a need for Somerset Council posters
- Support families who sign up for community events, such as Waffle cooking.
- Waffle would like a feasibility study on FurtherEducation. Very few are accessing education. Making contact with Somerset
- Town wardens

8) Appendix D – Detailed notes on existing sources of support

- Community groups, who can respond to needs without creating barriers
- Previously homeless 'through experience' journeys are well informed to identify what is or is not working well
- Volunteers who have been homeless, find it easier to identify those with true need
- Volunteers have identified homeless people who are not on the council's radar
- When people come to the volunteers, the volunteers get to know their journey, and what their needs are to understand how to better help and support them, these people often go under the radar.
- Somerset Council has inherited a number of services from Sedgemoor District Council (SDC).
 - Outreach support have supplies, they find that a lot of people who receive a pack of items do not require everything that they are given and like to carry light
 - SWEPT, which is used for severe weather?
 - Street link which people can use to report someone who is homeless.
 - Service to provide a bus ticket, they can text the person and deal with a request over the phone where they are triaged.
 - Mobile phones.
 - Outreach nursing services.
- Trains compensation for travel is easy and fair
- Ashleigh PCSO is great, 999 responded quickly to dispel a situation.
- Charity shops have provided organisations with free clothes for individuals
- Phone charging could be accessed at Hope, the Methodist Church, waffle, Highbridge Hotel.
- Two purple spoon offers; ready-made frozen meals and food.
- ARC have 24 hour support seven days a week.
- Trussle Trust have a phone Sim cards.
- Julian house, from Bath, help ex prisoners, with homelessness, they have a support worker
- Nelson trust for women of domestic violence
- University of the 3rd Age (U3A)
- Household support fund is available through Somerset Council is flexible and can help with the small things that mean a lot such as getting food vouchers or money towards a pair of shoes. He is well connected with a village agent.
- Zing - they help with helping people understand how to buy and store food, life skills, eating together, family conversation, time with meals.
- Waffle hub at the Methodist Church they help with peer to peer support, integrate, engage, warm space, talk, chat/Café, pay it forward, community, food to buy, supplies, dry clothing, and duvets. Toilet, and a sink to wash in. No shower, they have not turned anyone away, they started September 2022, they're open Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday nine till five, they have a Facebook group, interpersonal skills is essential to be able to provide befriending and trust, they hope to have someone there to help teach how to access the Internet. They provide life skills in cooking together, to take that meal home and eat as a family unit, but also how to buy food
- Moorland Hall, provide a three course cooked meal for £5, they need to book. They serve 30 to 40 people. A lot of the food is from the pantry or donated.

Burnham-On-Sea & Highbridge Town Council

Working Group – Homelessness

- Taunton has a charity called 'Open Door',
- Taunton are organising container homes, following 'Decent Home Standards', inspired by Malachi in Islington.
- Free drinking water provided by Waffle, Costa Coffee and apex (although temporarily out of order)
- Food bank has lots of volunteers.
- The Highbridge & Burnham-On-Sea Mayor Lesley has been supporting the community groups, her support is liked.
- The library has a customer service access point to use the computer such as home finder.
- Waffle cooking workshops have 4 people per group
- Street link worked well, was used for one person living in the bus shelter
- The residents are more settled into the YMCA, not in so much need for the food bank.
- Mind in Somerset attend the Bay Centre, they are really good. Someone good to talk to is really welcomed.
- Medical support, pain relief and injuries
 - People living in Weston Super Mare have to use the NHS app, which is a challenge
 - Burnham-On-Sea GP's are not taking on patients
 - Dental crisis: nearest access is Exeter or Sherborne especially difficult if reliant on public transport.
 - Burnham-On-Sea hospital for minor injuries is not open due to not enough staff.

Musgrove -Park – Hospital are short of staff.

Section 3 – External Auditor’s Report and Certificate 2022/23

In respect of **Burnham On Sea & Highbridge Town Council - SO0045**

1 Respective responsibilities of the auditor and the authority

Our responsibility as auditors to complete a **limited assurance review** is set out by the National Audit Office (NAO). A limited assurance review is **not a full statutory audit**, it does not constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and hence it **does not** provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would. The UK Government has determined that a lower level of assurance than that provided by a full statutory audit is appropriate for those local public bodies with the lowest levels of spending.

Under a limited assurance review, the auditor is responsible for reviewing Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with NAO Auditor Guidance Note 02 (AGN 02) as issued by the NAO on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General. AGN 02 is available from the NAO website – <https://www.nao.org.uk/code-audit-practice/guidance-and-information-for-auditors/>

This authority is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The authority prepares an Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with *Proper Practices* which:

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2023; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

2 External auditor’s limited assurance opinion 2022/23

On the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

Please see below.

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority:

We are unable to complete our review work on the AGAR and supporting documentation as a result of correspondence received in relation to 2022/23 and/or prior years. Once we have finalised our review and completed any additional work arising from that correspondence, a final report will be provided with the certificate of completion detailing any qualifications and 'other' matters.

Our fee note for the limited assurance review will be issued when we certify completion.

3 External auditor certificate 2022/23

We do not certify that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2023.

We do not certify completion because:

We have received correspondence bringing information to our attention that we must consider before certifying the completion of our review and the discharging of our responsibilities.

External Auditor Name

PKF LITTLEJOHN LLP

External Auditor Signature



Date

26/09/2023

Response ID ANON-4ZQR-96FV-V

Submitted to Creating Places for People

Submitted on 2023-10-16 12:44:32

About you

1 What is your name?

Name:

Burnham-on-sea and Highbridge Town Council

2 What is your email address?

Email:

deputyclerk@burnham-highbridge-tc.gov.uk

3 What is your organisation? (Leave blank if not applicable.)

Organisation:

Burnham-on-sea and Highbridge Town Council

4 What is your age?

Prefer not to say

5 What gender do you identify as?

Prefer not to say

6 What is your ethnicity?

Prefer Not to say

Creating Places for People Survey

7 Which of the following benefits, created by the 'Creating Places for People' principles, are the most important to you? Please only select your top 5 options.

The air is cleaner, and streets are not as noisy, Kids can safely and easily walk, scoot, cycle to school and play on the street, I feel optimistic by seeing resilient spaces for climate change and biodiversity, Hazardous and obstructive parking is reduced, particularly during school times, I can work with and support my local community to help make a difference

Fill out the box below if you selected 'other' above. :

8 Which of the principles listed below do you think should be a priority for new developments to deliver? Please only select your top 5.

Having a choice of transport mode i.e. the car is not the only option, Creating an attractive high-quality environment e.g. trees and green spaces, Reducing vehicle speeds through building and footway design, Safe and easy access to schools without the car, Engagement with people occurs throughout the planning and delivery process

9 How do you feel about our 'Creating Places for People' principles? (You can find the principles near the top of this page in the section marked 'further information'.)

Somewhat Supportive

10 Do you think that there are any other 'Creating Places for People' principles that should be included?

Please fill out the box below with any other suggestions on principles that should be included within Creating Places for People that you think are missing from Q8.:

**Somerset Planning - North Team**

Bridgwater House, King Square,
Bridgwater, Somerset TA6 3AR

Web: www.somerset.gov.uk

Email: PlanningNorth@somerset.gov.uk

Tel: 0300 123 2224

Date: 11 October 2023

Dear sir/madam

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (As Amended)

Application No: 99/23/00211

Application Type: Other general correspondence

Location: Telephone box at, Princess Street, Burnham On Sea, Somerset, TA8

Proposal: Removal of public payphone and the telephone kiosk at the above location.

I am writing to you as part of the consultation process taking place by BT Payphones regarding their current programme of intended public payphone removals.

BT have confirmed that a notice has been placed in the payphone identified for removal advising any interested parties to contact them should they have any views. In addition to this we are formally consulting your Parish Council and ward councillors to seek views in order that the District Council can provide a formal response to BT within the specified consultation period.

In order to inform our response, we are requesting that any comments you wish to make regarding these proposals are received no later than **Wednesday 1st November**.

If you wish to respond to this correspondence by e-mail, please write to PlanningNorth@Somerset.gov.uk and quote the application number (99/23/00211).

Yours sincerely

Liam Evans
Senior Planning Officer
On behalf of Service Manager - Planning North Team

We aim to comply with current Data Protection legislation; please refer to our Privacy Notice at <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/planning-privacy-notice>

Burnham and Highbridge Bus Users Group

153.0.T23

Chair: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Ms Katherine Noble
Town Clerk
Burnham & Highbridge Town Council
Council Offices
The Old Courthouse
Jaycroft Road
Burnham-on-sea
Somerset TA8 1LE

12th October 2023

Dear Ms Noble

I am writing on behalf of the Burnham and Highbridge Bus Users Group. This letter is to ask the Town Council to consider supporting our attached letter to Councillor Mike Rigby; .who has suggested that it would be useful if our letter dated 12th October 2023 had the endorsement of the Town Council.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]
Chair of Burnham and Highbridge Bus Users Group

Enc Letter dated 12th October 2023 addressed to Councillor Mike Rigby,
Somerset Council.

Burnham and Highbridge Bus Users Group
Chair: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
Somerset Council
County Hall
Taunton TA1 4DY

12th October 2023

Dear Councillor Rigby

Thank you for meeting our group via Microsoft Team meeting on Tuesday 26th September 2023. It was useful to understand the relationship between Somerset Council, Buses of Somerset and the Traffic Commissioner. We intend to find out more about the work of the Traffic Commissioner in the future.

As suggested we have asked the Town Council to endorse our letter to you asking you to explore ways of funding an evening service in our area.

Rationale

Somerset Council promotes a greener future for Somerset by getting people to leave their cars at home and use public transport. How can Burnham and Highbridge Town Council support that aim when the current bus service is extremely poor and there is no evening service?

Taunton has five evening services Burnham and Highbridge deserves at least one.

There are 22,000 residents that live in our town which is roughly a third of the population of Taunton. It cannot be right that we have a bus service that finishes at 6.30pm. On a social level we are letting people down who do not have a car or who want to leave their car at home. Are we saying to people who do not have a car, that if you want to visit family and friends in the area, we do not care, just walk?

The only way anybody can visit their family in hospital of an evening without a car in Weston-super-Mare or Taunton is by train but they cannot do that because there is no bus service to get them to the Station.

People who work in Weston-super-Mare, Bridgwater and Taunton who finish work after 6.30pm, but live in Burnham and Highbridge have to catch the train. There is no bus for the final leg of their journey. So again, they end up having to use their cars.

As Hinckley took over Pontins with the loss of a possible 3,000 tourists every 14 days and replaced them with workers. It is necessary to have an evening bus service to offer businesses in the above areas a chance to recoup losses caused by these changes. It would allow local people to move around the area of an evening and increase the night time economy.

Cont...

Hinckley has sponsored buses for the people who work for them in the day but do not feel they should do so for local people to move around the area of an evening.

As we try to get people out of their cars and on to public transport, we can only do that if we have a service to offer them in the first place.

If you look at the amount of house building going on in our area, the need for people to move around to the shops, train station, doctors and town centre is more important now than ever: as these houses are on the edge of our town and not within walking distance.

At the moment, the elderly and disabled are disadvantaged by the lack of buses in the evening.

Action

We would ask that you look to develop a partnership with EDF Energy that could benefit our towns. They are committed to housing workers for 4 years and might be persuaded to support an evening service to enhance our local bus service provision for that period of time. This would then give us an opportunity to promote local buses and alongside working to improve the current service would benefit our local community.

There is of course, also the new Gravity Site at Puriton. They might be willing to promote local transport to and from Highbridge and Burnham Train Station as this would also help their workforce.

Please could you work to develop a transport plan that looks to work with the local industry and to provide for our local community needs?

Yours sincerely



Chair of Burnham and Highbridge Bus Users Group

**This letter was brought to the Town Council meeting on Monday 30th October.
The Town Council resolved to support / not support this letter.**

Civility and Respect Pledge

Definition of Civility and Respect

Civility means politeness and courtesy in behaviour, speech,
and in the written word.

Examples of ways in which you can show respect are by listening and paying attention to others, having consideration for other people's feelings, following protocols and rules, showing appreciation and thanks, and being kind.

The National Association of Local Councils (NALC), the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC), and One Voice Wales (OVW), believe now is the time to put civility and respect at the top of the agenda and start a culture change for the local council sector.

By Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge Town Council signing up to the Civility and Respect Pledge, the Council is committing to treating councillors, clerks, employees, members of the public, representatives of partner organisations and volunteers, with civility and respect in their role.

Signing up is a simple process, which requires the Council to register and agree to the following statements:

Statement	Tick to agree
Our council has agreed that it will treat all councillors, clerk and all employees, members of the public, representatives of partner organisations, and volunteers, with civility and respect in their role.	
Our council has put in place a training programme for councillors and staff.	
Our council has signed up to Code of Conduct for councilors.	
Our council has good governance arrangements in place including, staff contracts and a dignity at work policy.	
Our council will commit to seeking professional help in the early stages should civility and respect issues arise.	
Our council will commit to calling out bullying and harassment when if and when it happens.	
Our council will continue to learn from best practice in the sector and aspire to being a role model/champion council e.g. via the Local Council Award Scheme.	
Our council supports the continued lobbying for the change in legislation to support the Civility and Respect Pledge, including sanctions for elected members where appropriate.	

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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INTRODUCTION

Local (parish and town) councillors and local council officers have different but complementary roles. Councillors, as the democratically elected representatives of their areas, are there to set the budget and strategic direction of the council and ensure that the community's priorities are identified and delivered. The role of officers is to advise councillors, ensure that the council's strategy is delivered on a day-to-day basis and manage the operational and organisational side of the council.

This document briefly summarises those different roles and responsibilities, it should be read alongside 'The Good Councillors Guide' and the Good Councillors series of publications published by NALC (<https://www.nalc.gov.uk/publications#the-goodcouncillor-s-guide>) and Model Councillor Officer Protocol.

THE ROLE OF COUNCILLORS

A councillor's primary role is to represent their local area (or ward where the council is warded) and the people who live in it. Councillors provide a bridge between the community and the council. As well as being an advocate for local residents and signposting them to the right people either at the local council or the principal authority, they should ensure that the community is informed about the issues that affect them.

In order to understand and represent local views and priorities, you need to build strong relationships and encourage local people to make their views known and engage with you and the council. Good communication and engagement are central to being an effective councillor.

Local councillors are expected to:

- respond to residents' queries and investigate their concerns (casework);
- communicate council decisions that affect the community;
- know their area and be aware of any problems;
- know and work with representatives of local organisations, interest groups and businesses;
- represent their community's views at council meetings.

Local councillors also collectively set the strategic direction for their council. All local councils need clear strategies and policies to enable them to achieve their vision for the area, make the best use of resources and deliver services that meet the needs of local communities. Individual councillors will contribute to the development of these policies and strategies, bringing their experience and the views and priorities of their area to the debate.

Individual councillors work together to serve the community and to help the council to make decisions on behalf of the local community. Councillors contribute to the work of the council by suggesting ideas, engaging in constructive debate and by responding to the needs and views of the community representing their constituents. Councillors comment on proposals to ensure the best outcome and vote to enable the council to make decisions. Councillors must accept the decisions of the council as a whole even if they do not agree with it.

The formal part of these roles is carried out by attending meetings and working with and listening to advice from the council officers. The local council might have committees and even sub-committees. This is more likely to be the case in larger councils and in those cases how far individual councillors contribute in particular policy areas will depend on which committees they have been appointed to. However, 'full council' remains the sovereign body for setting the council's overarching strategy and budget so even where the council has committees which work in greater detail on particular areas, all councillors should contribute to the council's strategic framework.

Individual councillors do not have, and cannot be given, powers to make decisions on behalf of the local council. This applies to the chair as much as to the other councillors, although the chair does have personal responsibilities in connection with the running of formal meetings – see below. That said, local councillors can act as 'champions' on particular issues and it is perfectly acceptable, if a councillor happens to have experience in a particular field, that they take a lead on it, provided that has been agreed by the Full Council.

The less formal part of these roles of listening and talking to people, including the local elected members of the district, county or unitary council, will almost certainly take up more of the councillor's time. However, it is important to remember that "rules of behaviour" apply whenever activities of being a local councillor are being undertaken.

THE CHAIR

In some authorities the chair is called 'the mayor' but references are made to the chair in this document.

The main rules of law governing the role of the chair of a local council are set out in the Local Government Act 1972 which requires, for example:

- that the chair must preside at a meeting of the local council if they are present and;
- that it is the chair of a meeting who has the responsibility to sign the minutes (presented for approval at that meeting) as a true record.

It is the chair's responsibility:

- a) To determine that the meeting is properly constituted and that a quorum is present;
- b) To inform themselves as to the business and objects of the meeting;
- c) To preserve order in the conduct of those present;
- d) To confine discussion within the scope of the meeting and reasonable limits to time;
- e) To decide whether proposed motions and amendments are in order;
- f) To formulate for discussion and decision questions which have been moved for the consideration of the meeting;
- g) To decide points of order and other incidental questions which require decision at the time;
- h) To ascertain the sense of the meeting by:
 - a. Putting relevant questions to the meeting and taking the vote thereon (and if so minded giving a casting vote);
 - b. Declaring the result; and
 - c. Causing a ballot to be taken if duly demanded;
- i) To approve the draft of the minutes or other record of proceedings presented to a meeting (with the consent of the meeting);
- j) To adjourn the meeting when circumstances justify or require that course; and
- k) To declare the meeting closed when its business has been completed or in the event of the meeting being very seriously disrupted.

The chair's term of office continues until the appointment of a successor, other than where the chair resigns or is disqualified from office. A chair does not however legally have to resign following a vote of no confidence. This continuity also applies when the chair has not been re-elected following local elections. In this case, the chair does not have a vote on the appointment of a successor but does have a casting vote in the event of equal votes.

Outside of the meeting

The chair:

- is the person to whom notice of resignation is given by other councillors or the clerk;
- may convene extraordinary meetings of the council (on proper notice to the clerk);
- when attending ceremonial events, is the proper person to represent the local council;
- may receive an allowance to meet the expenses of his or her office.

Beyond that, the workings and decisions not taken by the council or, through the delegation scheme, by one of its committees or sub-committees are to be taken by the clerk to the local council. The chair may have an enhanced role, as functions may be delegated to the clerk in consultation with the chair (or the chair of a committee). This means, however, that the decision and the responsibility for it remains with the clerk (not the chair) but that the clerk must first bring the matter to the attention of the chair and take into account the views of the chair in coming to their decision.

It is also likely to be the case that the chair will be the person whom the clerk will approach:

- for information about the council and the parish;
- to seek to informally discuss matters with and;
- to informally consult on decisions that are in the clerk's remit to make or pass back to a formal meeting.

Correspondence to and from the council should normally be dealt with by the clerk, not by the chair.

Council Leader

There is no legal basis for the role of leader at town or parish level. However, such a role provides a sounding board for councillors and staff on political direction.

Beyond that, the workings and decisions not taken by the council or, through the delegation scheme, by one of its committees or sub-committees are to be taken by the clerk to the local council. The leader may have an enhanced role, as functions may be delegated to the clerk in consultation with the leader (or the chair of a committee or portfolio holder). This means, however, that the decision and the responsibility for it remains with the clerk (not the councillor) but that the clerk must first bring the matter to the attention of the leader/portfolio holder and take into account the views of the leader/portfolio holder in coming to their decision.

It is also likely to be the case that the leader will be the person whom the clerk will approach:

- for information about the council and the parish;

- to seek to informally discuss matters with and;
- to informally consult on decisions that are in the clerk's remit to make or pass back to a formal meeting.

Correspondence to and from the council should be dealt with by the clerk, not by the leader.

Committee chairs

In Councils which have committees the chair of the committee has similar duties and responsibilities as the chair of the council with regard to their committee and may be consulted by the clerk on relevant matters.

THE ROLE OF THE CLERK AND OTHER OFFICERS

The primary responsibility of officers is to advise the council on whether its decisions are lawful and to recommend ways in which decisions can be implemented. To help with this, officers can be asked to research topics of concern to the council and provide unbiased information to help the council to make appropriate choices.

Officers have a wide range of other responsibilities which should be set out in their job descriptions. Officers must recognise that the council is responsible for all decisions and that they take instructions from the council as a body. Officers are not answerable to any individual councillor – not even the chair.

The council must be confident that officers are, at all times, independent, objective and professional.

'Proper officer' is a title used in statute. It refers to the appropriate officer for the relevant function. In local councils, the proper officer is normally the clerk. In financial matters, the proper officer is known as the 'responsible finance officer'.

The local council clerk is the 'engine' of an effective local council. They are its principal executive and adviser and, for the majority of smaller local councils, the officer responsible for the administration of its financial affairs. The clerk is sometimes a council's only employee. Where a council has more than one employee, the clerk is the ultimate line manager for all other staff.

The clerk is required to give clear guidance to councillors, including the chair, before decisions are reached, even when that guidance may be unpalatable. The clerk has a key role in advising the council, and councillors, on governance, standards of conduct and procedural matters. They would also normally liaise with the monitoring officer at the principal authority on code of conduct issues and the councillors' register of interests.

It is the duty of the clerk as the proper officer to assist councillors on matters of fact and law. Councillors (even where it is contrary to their personal wishes or expectations) should take fully into account the advice and guidance given by the clerk on the existence and applicability of the relevant facts or the law. Councillors should then seek means to make their policy decisions taking into account such

guidance. Councillors should also accept as a fact that it is the duty of the clerk to minute any situation in which the advice given has not been heeded. The clerk is, however, an independent and objective officer of the council who takes instructions from the corporate body on policy and must in turn recognise that the council is responsible for all decisions

Some larger councils employ a range of administration and support staff and the clerk is normally responsible for advising the council on staffing provision and managing the recruitment process. In smaller councils, the clerk may also carry out the role of the finance officer. However, it is common, especially in larger councils, for a separate responsible finance officer to be appointed and given specific duties relating to the budget, annual accounts and audit to ensure proper financial management and transparency.

Many local councils encourage their clerks to seek professional recognition for the work that they do. A CiLCA qualified clerk is one of several pre-requisites for a local council achieving recognition through the Local Council Award Scheme (<https://www.nalc.gov.uk/library/our-work/lcas/1855-lcas-guide/file>) and also in becoming a council eligible to exercise the General Power of Competence.

In an emergency (e.g. to cover a temporary vacancy) a councillor may fulfil the role of clerk to the local council (this must be unpaid (see below)). However, it is not good practice for councillors to do this on anything other than a very temporary basis as it confuses officer/councillor roles.

It should be noted that councillors may not be paid employees of their council (as there is an unacceptable conflict of interest) and may not become employees of their former council until at least 12 months after ceasing to be a councillor.

MEETINGS

It is the clerk's responsibility to set the agenda for the meeting. This is often done in consultation with the chair and leader and individual members can request the addition of relevant items but the agenda remains the clerk's responsibility. The clerk must sign the agenda and decide how it will be set out.

The summons to the meeting, agenda and relevant papers must be sent out at least three clear days before the meeting. The 'three clear' days is established in law to allow time for proper consideration of issues to be discussed. Items for decision cannot be added to the agenda after this time but must be taken at a future meeting.

At a meeting all councillors must comply with Standing Orders and the chair must ensure that Standing Orders are enforced.

Any 2 Members of a parish council may submit a written request signed by them to the Chair of the parish council to call an extraordinary meeting. In the event of the Chair not calling an extraordinary meeting within 7 days of receiving the request, the

2 members may call an extraordinary meeting. The chair of the Council or of a Committee may convene an extraordinary meeting at any time.

INFORMATION

Councillors are free to approach officers to provide them with such information, explanation and advice as they may reasonably need in order to assist them in discharging their role as members of the Council. This can range from a request for general information about some aspect of the Council's activities to a request for specific information on behalf of a constituent. Such approaches should normally be directed to the Clerk.

As regards the legal rights of councillors to inspect Council documents, these are covered partly by statute and partly by the common law.

The common law right of councillors is based on the principle that any member has a *prima facie* right to inspect council documents so far as their access to the documents is reasonably necessary to enable the member properly to perform their duties as a member of the council. This principle is commonly referred to as the "need to know" principle.

The exercise of this common law right depends therefore upon the councillor's ability to demonstrate that they have the necessary "need to know". In this respect a member has no right to "a roving commission" to go and examine documents of the council. Mere curiosity is not sufficient. The crucial question is the determination of the "need to know". This question must be determined by the officer.

In some circumstances (e.g. a committee member wishing to inspect documents relating to the functions of that committee) a councillor's "need to know" will normally be presumed. In other circumstances (e.g. a councillor wishing to inspect documents which contain personal information about third parties) a councillor will normally be expected to justify the request in specific terms. Any council information provided to a councillor must only be used by the councillor for the purpose for which it was provided i.e. in connection with the proper performance of the councillor's duties as a member of the council.

For completeness, councillors do, of course, have the same right as any other member of the public to make requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.



Adopted by the council on xxxxx

DIGNITY AT WORK POLICY

Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge Town Council believes that civility and respect are important in the working environment and expect all councillors, officers, and the public to be polite and courteous when working for, and with the Council.

1. Purpose

Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge Town Council is committed to creating a working environment where all council employees, councillors, contractors, and others who come into contact with us in the course of our work, are treated with dignity, respect and courtesy. We aim to create a workplace where there is zero tolerance for harassment and bullying.

In support of this objective, Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge Town Council has signed up to the Civility Pledge, as a commitment to civility and respect in our work, and politeness and courtesy in behaviour, speech and in the written word. Further information about the Civility and Respect Pledge is available [NALC](#) & [SLCC](#) websites.

We recognise that there is a continuum where unaddressed issues have the potential to escalate and become larger, more complex issues and this policy sets out how concerns will be managed, however, the emphasis of this policy is on resolution and mediation where appropriate, rather than an adversarial process.

This document:

- explains how we will respond to complaints of bullying or harassment;
- ensures that we respond sensitively and promptly and,
- supports our employees in ensuring their behaviour does not amount to bullying and/or harassment by giving examples.

2. Scope

This policy covers bullying and harassment of and by senior staff and all employees engaged to work at Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge Town Council. Should agency staff, or contractors have a complaint connected to their engagement with Council this should be raised to their nominated contact, Manager, Town Clerk, or the Chair of the Human Resources Sub-Committee, in the first instance. Should the complaint be

about the Mayor or individual councillors the complaint should be raised with the Monitoring Officer at Somerset Council via a Code of Conduct complaint (and notifying the Town Clerk).

Agency staff or contractors are equally expected to treat council colleagues and other representatives and stakeholders with dignity and respect and the Council may terminate the contract, without notice, where there are suspicions of harassment or bullying.

Complaints about other employment matters will be managed under the Council's Grievance Policy.

It is noted that the management of a situation may differ depending on who the allegations relate to (e.g., employees, contractor, councillor), however, the council will take appropriate action if any of its employees are bullied or harassed by employees, councillors, members of the public, suppliers, or contractors.

3. The position on bullying and harassment

All staff and council representatives are entitled to dignity, respect and courtesy within the workplace and to not experience any form of discrimination. Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge Town Council will not tolerate bullying or harassment in our workplace or at work-related events outside of the workplace, whether the conduct is a one-off act or repeated course of conduct, and whether harm is intended or not. Neither will we tolerate retaliation against, or victimisation of, any person involved in bringing a complaint of harassment or bullying. You should also be aware that, if you have bullied or harassed someone (e.g. physical violence, harassment) in some circumstances the treatment may amount to a crime punishable by a fine or imprisonment.

We expect all representatives of the Council to treat each other with respect and uphold the values of the code of conduct, civility and respect pledge, equality opportunities policy, and all other policies and procedures set by the Council.

We expect you to demonstrate respect by listening and paying attention to others, having consideration for other people's feelings, following protocols and rules, showing appreciation and thanks, and being kind.

Allegations of bullying and harassment will be treated seriously. Investigations will be carried out promptly, sensitively and, as far as possible, confidentially. See the grievance policy for further details regarding the process. Employees and others who make allegations of bullying or harassment in good faith will not be treated less favourably as a result.

False accusations of harassment or bullying can have a serious effect on innocent individuals. Staff and others have a responsibility not to make false allegations.

While we will assume that all complaints of bullying and harassment are made in good faith, in the event that allegations are found to be malicious or vexatious, the person raising the complaint may be subject to action under the Council's Disciplinary Procedure.

Harassment

- Where a person is subject to uninvited conduct that violates their dignity, in connection with a protected characteristic
- Behaviour that creates a hostile, humiliating, degrading or similarly offensive environment in relation to a protected characteristic

Bullying

- Behaviour that leaves the victim feeling threatened, intimidated, humiliated, vulnerable or otherwise upset. It does not need to be connected to a protected characteristic

What Type of Treatment amounts to Bullying or Harassment?

'Bullying' or 'harassment' are phrases that apply to treatment from one person (or a group of people) to another that is unwanted and that has the effect of violating that person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment for that person.

Examples of bullying and harassment include:

- Physical conduct ranging from unwelcome touching to serious assault;
- Unwelcome sexual advances;
- The offer of rewards for going along with sexual advances e.g. promotion, access to training;
- Threats for rejecting sexual advances;
- Demeaning comments about a person's appearance;
- Verbal abuse or offensive comments, including jokes or pranks related to age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage, civil partnership, pregnancy, maternity, race, religion, belief, sex or sexual orientation;
- Unwanted nicknames, especially related to a person's age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage, civil partnership, pregnancy, maternity, race, religion, belief, sex or sexual orientation;
- Spreading malicious rumours or insulting someone;

- Lewd or suggestive comments or gestures;
- Deliberate exclusion from conversations, work activities or social activities;
- Withholding information a person needs in order to do their job;
- Practical jokes, initiation ceremonies or inappropriate birthday rituals;
- Physical abuse such as hitting, pushing or jostling;
- Rifling through, hiding or damaging personal property;
- Display of pictures or objects with sexual or racial overtones, even if not directed at any particular person;
- Isolation or non-cooperation at work;
- Subjecting a person to humiliation or ridicule, belittling their efforts, whether directly and/or in front of others;
- The use of obscene gestures; and
- Abusing a position of power.

Bullying and harassment can occur through verbal and face to face interactions but can also take place through sharing inappropriate or offensive content in writing or via email and other electronic communications and social media.

It is important to recognise that conduct which one person may find acceptable, another may find totally unacceptable and behaviour could be harassment when the person had no intention to offend. We all have the right to determine what offends us. Some behaviour will be clear to any reasonable person that it is likely to offend – for example sexual touching. Other examples may be less clear; however, you should be aware that harassment will occur if behaviour continues after the recipient has advised you that the behaviour is unacceptable to them.

Harassment can also occur where the unwanted behaviour relates to a perceived characteristic (such as offensive jokes or comments based on the assumption someone is gay, even if they are not) or due to their association with someone else (such as harassment related to their partner having a disability for example).

All employees must, therefore, treat their colleagues with respect and appropriate sensitivity and should feel able to challenge behaviour that they find offensive even if it is not directed at them.

It is important to recognise that bullying does not include appropriate criticism of an employee's behaviour or effective, robust performance management. Constructive and fair feedback about your behaviour or performance from your manager or colleagues/Councillors is not bullying. It is part of normal employment and management routines and should not be interpreted as anything different.

Victimisation

Victimisation is subjecting a person to a detriment because they have, in good faith, complained (whether formally or otherwise) that someone has been bullying or harassing them or someone else, or supported someone to make a complaint or given evidence in relation to a complaint. This would include isolating someone because they have made a complaint or giving them a heavier or more difficult workload.

Provided that you act in good faith, i.e. you genuinely believe that what you are saying is true, you have a right not to be victimised for making a complaint or doing anything in relation to a complaint of bullying or harassment and the council will take appropriate action to deal with any alleged victimisation, which may include disciplinary action against anyone found to have victimised you.

Making a complaint that you know to be untrue, or giving evidence that you know to be untrue, may lead to disciplinary action being taken against you.

Reporting Concerns

What you should do if you feel you are being bullied or harassed by a member of the public or supplier (as opposed to a colleague)

If you are being bullied or harassed by someone with whom you come into contact at work, please raise this with your nominated manager in the first instance or with the Town Clerk. Any such report will be taken seriously and we will decide how best to deal with the situation, in consultation with you.

What you should do if you feel you are being bullied or harassed by a councillor

If you are being bullied or harassed by a councillor, please raise this with the Town Clerk (or Deputy Town Clerk in the Town Clerk's absence) in the first instance. The Town Clerk will then decide how best to deal with the situation, in consultation with you. There are two possible avenues for you, informal or formal. The informal resolution is described below. Formal concerns regarding potential breaches of the Councillors Code of Conduct must be investigated by the Monitoring Officer.

The Council will consider reasonable measures to protect your health and safety. Such measures may include a temporary change in duties or change of work location, not attending meetings with the person about whom the complaint has been made etc.

What you should do if you witness an incident you believe to be harassment or bullying

If you witness such behaviour, you should report the incident in confidence to the Town Clerk. Such reports will be taken seriously and will be treated in strict confidence as far as it is possible to do so.

What you should do if you are being bullied or harassed by another member of staff

If you are being bullied or harassed by a colleague or contractor, there are two possible avenues for you, informal or formal. These are described below.

Informal resolution

If you are being bullied or harassed, you may be able to resolve the situation yourself by explaining clearly to the perpetrator(s) that their behaviour is unacceptable, contrary to the Council's policy and must stop. Alternatively, you may wish to ask the Town Clerk or your nominated manager to put this on your behalf or to be with you when confronting the perpetrator(s).

If the above approach does not work or if you do not want to try to resolve the situation in this way, or if you are being bullied by your own nominated manager, you should raise the issue with the Town Clerk or if related to the Town Clerk, the Chair of Human Resources Sub-Committee. The Town Clerk (or another appropriate person) will discuss with you the option of trying to resolve the situation informally by telling the alleged perpetrator, without prejudicing the matter, that:

- there has been a complaint that their behaviour is having an adverse effect on a member of the council staff;
- such behaviour is contrary to our policy;
- for employees, the continuation of such behaviour could amount to a serious disciplinary offence.

It may be possible for this conversation to take place with the alleged perpetrator without revealing your name, if this is what you want. The person dealing with it will also stress that the conversation is confidential.

In certain circumstances we may be able to involve a neutral third party (a mediator) to facilitate a resolution of the problem. The Town Clerk (or another appropriate person) will discuss this with you, if it is appropriate.

If your complaint is resolved informally, the alleged perpetrator(s) will not usually be subject to disciplinary sanctions. However, in exceptional circumstances (such as extremely serious allegation or in cases where a problem has happened before), the Town Clerk may decide to investigate further and take more formal action

notwithstanding that you raised the matter informally. The Town Clerk will consult with you before taking this step.

Raising a formal complaint

If informal resolution is unsuccessful or inappropriate, you can make a formal complaint about bullying and harassment through the council's Grievance Procedure. You should raise your complaint following the process outlined in the council's Grievance Procedure. A formal complaint may ultimately lead to disciplinary action against the perpetrator(s) where they are employed.

The Town Clerk or the Chair of the Human Resources Sub-Committee will appoint someone to investigate your complaint in line with the Grievance Procedure. You will need to co-operate with the investigation and provide the following details (if not already provided):

- The name of the alleged perpetrator(s),
- The nature of the harassment or bullying,
- The dates and times the harassment or bullying occurred,
- The names of any witnesses and
- Any action taken by you to resolve the matter informally.

The alleged perpetrator(s) would normally need to be told your name and the details of your grievance in order for the issue to be investigated properly. However, we will carry out the investigation as confidentially and sensitively as possible. Where you and the alleged perpetrator(s) work in proximity to each other, we will consider whether it is appropriate to make temporary adjustments to working arrangements whilst the matter is being investigated.

Where your complaint relates to potential breaches of the Councillors Code of Conduct, these will need to be investigated by the Monitoring Officer at Somerset Council. The Council will consider any adjustments to support you in your work and to manage the relationship with the councillor the allegations relate to, while the investigation proceeds.

Investigations will be carried out promptly (without unreasonable delay), sensitively and, as far as possible, confidentially. When carrying out any investigations, we will ensure that individuals' personal data is handled in accordance with the data protection policy.

The Council will consider how to protect your health and wellbeing whilst the investigation is taking place and discuss this with you. Depending on the nature of the allegations, the Investigator may want to meet with you to understand better your complaint (see the Grievance Procedure for further information, and details of your right to be accompanied).

After the investigation, a panel will meet with you to consider the complaint and the findings of the investigation in accordance with the Grievance Procedure. At the meeting you may be accompanied by a fellow worker or a trade union official.

Following the conclusion of the hearing the panel will write to you to inform you of the decision and to notify you of your right to appeal if you are dissatisfied with the outcome. You should put your appeal in writing explaining the reasons why you are dissatisfied with the decision. Your appeal will be heard under the appeal process that is described in the Grievance Procedure.

The use of the Disciplinary Procedure

If at any stage from the point at which a complaint is raised, we believe there is a case to answer and a disciplinary offence might have been committed, we will instigate our Disciplinary Procedure. We will keep you informed of the outcome. This is a non-contractual policy and procedure which will be reviewed from time to time.

GUIDANCE FOR USING THE DIGNITY AT WORK POLICY

The Dignity at Work Policy will replace any previous 'Bullying and Harassment' Policy, to create a policy that is focused on encompassing behaviours beyond simply bullying and harassment and zero tolerance with the aim of dealing with concerns before they escalate. It is important that any commitment made in the policy is applied in practice.

Notes:

Protected Characteristics

A 'protected characteristic' is defined in the Equality Act 2010 as age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and marriage and civil partnership. It is unlawful to discriminate against an individual because of any of the protected characteristics.

Discrimination includes treating people differently because of a protected characteristic. Employees can complain of harassment even if the behaviour in question is not directed at them. This is because the complainant does not actually need to possess the relevant protected characteristic. An employee can complain of unlawful harassment if they are related to someone with a protected characteristic, or because a colleague believes they have a protected characteristic.

Examples of harassment related to a protected characteristic could include:

- Making assumptions about someone's ability due to their **age** or denying development opportunities to someone based on their age. This could also include assumptions about their lifestyle or making inappropriate jokes related to age.
- Making fun or mimicking impairments related to a health condition or using inappropriate language about disabilities. Constantly selecting social activities that make it impossible for a colleague with a **disability** to participate in.
- Refusing to treat a person as their new gender, or disclosing information about their gender identity could be harassment on the grounds of **gender reassignment**.
- **Pregnancy/Maternity** harassment could include refusing opportunities due to pregnancy or maternity leave, or inappropriate touching and invasion of personal space such as unwanted touching of a pregnant person's stomach.
- Harassment based on **race** could include derogatory nicknames, or stereotyping based on ethnicity. It could include racist comments or jokes, or assumptions about someone's lifestyle based on their ethnicity.
- **Gender** harassment could include not considering people for a job based on gender stereotyping roles, or implementing practices that disadvantage one gender over another. Rude, explicit jokes, even if not directed at an

individual, or comments on individuals dress or appearance.

- Regularly arranging team meals over periods of fasting or religious occasions or failing to adjust a dress code to accommodate religious dress could be examples of harassment based on **religion/belief**.
- Excluding same sex partners from social events could be both **sexual orientation** and **marriage/civil partnership** discrimination, as could not offering the same work- related benefits.

A person does not need to be employed or have 2 years qualifying service to make a discrimination claim at a tribunal.

- Job applicants who believe they have not been appointed because of a protected characteristic can make a claim.
- New or established employees who are dismissed or treated unreasonably because of a health condition can make a discrimination claim.
- An employee subjected to harassment can make a discrimination claim at a tribunal.
- An employee asked to retire can make a discrimination claim at a tribunal.

Legal risks

Successful unfair dismissal claims are limited to a compensation cap, whereas those for unlawful discrimination have no cap.

A positive employment culture, and swift action if conduct falls beneath acceptable standards will help mitigate the risks. An unhealthy culture will make it difficult to defend claims.

The time to defend and the cost of defending tribunal claims can be significant, irrespective of the outcome.

Culture and behaviour

We work in eclectic communities and working environments and a positive culture within the Council enables employees with different backgrounds and beliefs to share ideas and shape how the Council achieves its objectives for their community.

It is important to recognise that different individuals may find different behaviours bullying or harassing, so while there is not always intent to offend or cause harm, that does not mean that the effect of the behaviour has not caused harm or offence.

It can take people a period of time to decide to raise their concerns, as they worry about consequences (perhaps from peers by complaining about a colleague who is popular, or they fear victimisation from the perpetrator or others). The Council should consider whether there are opportunities (such as 121s to offer opportunity to reflect on relationships/morale) to identify issues earlier and address negative behaviours. Individuals can often mention concerns they are experiencing but not want to take it further.

The Council should remind the complainant that it has a zero tolerance to bullying and harassment and remind them of the policy in place to address concerns. If the allegations mentioned are significant, the Council may want to suggest that it will need to investigate further, even if a 'grievance' is not raised, so as to ensure that any concerns and risks are managed and the Council is meeting its responsibilities and duty of care as an employer.

Whilst both staff and councillors jointly determine the working culture, councillors are key in demonstrating what is and isn't acceptable behaviour. This is apparent from how councillors behave with each other in council meetings and also in how standards of behaviour are applied through the use of informal discussion and formal policies.

Scope

All council representatives are expected to uphold the values of the Dignity at Work Policy; however, this policy sets out how allegations from employees will be managed. As indicated in the policy, concerns from a contractor, agency worker etc. should be raised to the identified person and an appropriate approach will be considered based on the situation and relationship of the complainant with the council. Likewise, concerns raised about the behaviour of a contractor or agency worker would not generally be managed via the full process (such as the disciplinary process), but appropriate action would be considered based on the situation. To treat people (such as contractors or a casual worker) engaged by the Council the same as an employee could blur the status of the employment relationship, so consider seeking professional advice if needed.

Bullying and harassment & performance management

The policy sets out that bullying and harassment does not include appropriate criticism of an employee's behaviour or effective, robust performance management. It is not uncommon for an employee, when receiving critical feedback, to claim that this is bullying and/or harassing. It is the role of the nominated manager to provide effective and constructive feedback to encourage performance at the required standard.

Even when the feedback is not positive it should be fair, communicated in a professional and reasonable manner and shared with the objective of aiding understanding and achieving an improvement to overcome the shortfalls. There is no absolute definition of when the feedback may not be appropriate. Often it will be for the person/panel hearing the dignity at work complaint/grievance to determine whether the performance management has upheld the standards expected in terms of respect and civility and any feedback has been shared in a fair and professional way.

Responsibilities

All staff and representatives of the Council are responsible for their own behaviour in the workplace and for taking steps to revise unacceptable behaviour and appropriately challenge that of others.

Leaders – councillors, clerks, chief officers, managers - are responsible for ensuring that these standards of treating people with civility, respect and courtesy are upheld, both through their own example and by communicating and promoting these expectations to all employees. They are also responsible for ensuring that concerns raised are treated seriously and addressed in line with this policy in a timely manner.

During the investigation

Employers have a duty of care to provide a safe place of work. If a complaint is made, discuss how to manage working relationships whilst the allegation is being investigated and until the outcome is disclosed. This is as much for the protection of the alleged perpetrator as for the aggrieved.

Consider whether a neutral person should be offered as a 'listening ear' for both parties in the investigation. This could be a councillor or nominated manager who is not involved in the investigation or allegations and can be a point of check in as raising, or being subject to allegations can be stressful. Offer other support that may be appropriate to the situation such as signposting to support groups, time off for counselling etc. If you have suspended a staff member, your duty of care continues, and it is important to consider their wellbeing and mental health.

Ensure that you communicate regularly with both parties.

The investigation and any subsequent hearing should be completed in accordance with the grievance policy which sets out a process for dealing with concerns. You should ensure that the grievance policy adopted adheres to any local policies and procedures, with consideration of any timescales and escalation routes in your locally adopted policy.

Confidentiality

It may be possible for concerns to be raised with the perpetrator without disclosing the name of the complainant, however, in a small council it is likely that it will be clear that the accused will know where the accusation has come from. The Council representative (Town Clerk/Councillor) speaking to the alleged perpetrator must be clear that the discussion is confidential and the individual would be at risk of formal disciplinary action if there is any sort of victimisation or retaliation for the individual raising their concern.

During any formal investigation it may be necessary to disclose the nature of the allegations and where they came from to ensure a fair and balanced investigation and process. This should be discussed with the person raising the concerns to understand any issues and how they may be mitigated. In some situations, it may be appropriate to provide anonymised witness statements, however, this would be a last resort, and could compromise the fairness of the process. Where there is a genuine fear of consequences and this may need to be considered, it is recommended that professional advice is sought. For the same reason it can be difficult for a council to consider an anonymous complaint, however, if the concerns are significant and compromise the Council in their duty of care to employees, then consideration of how to deal with the matter may be required.

Victimisation

All employees have the right to raise genuine concerns without the fear of reprisals. If the aggrieved (or a witness) is treated differently/less favourably because they have raised a complaint, then this is victimisation. This would include isolating someone because they have made a complaint, cancelling a planned training event or giving them a heavier or more difficult workload. Victimisation can lead to a claim to an employment tribunal.

False allegations

If an employee makes an allegation that they know to be untrue, or gives evidence that they know to be untrue, the Council should consider the matter under the disciplinary procedure. Such an allegation would be potentially a gross misconduct.

Complaints against Councillors

Following the Ledbury case, the law is clear that any formal complaint about a councillor regarding a breach of the Code of Conduct must be referred to the Monitoring Officer for investigation (either by the complainant or the Council with agreement of the complainant). During the investigation, it is critical to ensure that where an employee of the Council has made the complaint, that the Council agrees reasonable measures with the employee to protect their health and safety. Such measures may include a temporary change in duties, change of work location, not attending meetings with the person about whom the complaint has been made etc.

Careful consideration is required where a grievance is raised against the Council as a whole due to lack of support related to councillor behaviours. The specific allegations will need to be considered to determine whether the allegations can be addressed by the Council or require exploration of the councillors behaviour in order to respond, in which case the Monitoring Officer may be required to investigate the alleged behaviours of a/any councillors where this may relate to the Code of Conduct.

It is a matter of fact whether the complaint is against the Council and can therefore be dealt with by the council's grievance procedure or against a councillor and can only be dealt with by the Monitoring Officer

Freedom of Information Policy Statement

Adopted by Council on

Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge Town Council's ("the Council") statement of policy in regard to Freedom of Information is:

"The Council supports the Freedom of Information Act's objectives of openness, accountability and transparency in the public sector"

We are committed to openness and accountability in the services we provide and will provide as much information as we can, using exemptions only where essential.

Requests should be made in writing and posted to our offices or emailed to info@burnham-highbridge-tc.gov.uk. Please provide a clear description of the information you require, your name and contact details.

The Council will:

- Publish and maintain a Publication Scheme that at least meets the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act, as recommended by the National Association of Local Councils.
- Offer advice and assistance to applicants seeking information.
- Respond promptly to all requests within statutory timescales, acknowledging receipt of the request and informing the applicant of the anticipated time to release the information.
- Where exemptions are applicable, inform the applicant of these and indicate as soon as possible any impact this has on the timetable for responding to the request.
- Inform applicants whose requests are deemed vexatious or repeated that their request will be exempted.
- Inform an applicant of any charges likely to be levied.
- Inform an applicant of alternative information that can be provided free, where the specific request would incur a charge .
- Consider the impact of other related legislation such as the General Data Protection Regulations and the modernising government agenda.

Information available from Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge Town Council under the ICO model publication scheme (adopted by Council on)

Information to be published	How the information can be obtained	Cost
Class 1 - Who we are and what we do (Organisational information, structures, locations and contacts). This will be current information only		
Who's who on the Council and its Committees	Website	Free
Contact details for Town Clerk and Council members (named contacts where possible with telephone number and email address (if used))	Website	Free
Location of main Council office and accessibility details	Website	Free
Staffing structure	Website	Free
Class 2 – What we spend and how we spend it (Financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, procurement, contracts and financial audit). Current and previous financial year as a minimum		
Annual return form and report by auditor	Website	Free
Finalised budget	Website	Free
Precept	Included in Minutes and on website	Free
Borrowing Approval letter	Apply to Clerk	See Appendix A
Financial Standing Orders and Regulations	Website	Free
Grants given and received	Website	Free
List of current contracts awarded and value of contract	Currently being updated	N/A
Expenditure over £500	Website	Free
Government Procurement Expenditure	Website	Free
Members allowances and expenses	Members expenses paid are included in minutes or apply to Town Clerk. The Mayors allowance details.	Free See Appendix A Website

Class 3 – What our priorities are and how we are doing (Strategies and plans, performance indicators, audits, inspections and reviews)		
Annual Report to Parish Meeting (current and previous year as a minimum)	Website. Included in Minutes	Free
Strategic Plan	Website	Free
Annual Governance & Returns including Internal and External Audit Reports	Website	Free
Class 4 – How we make decisions (Decision making processes and records of decisions). Current and previous council year as a minimum		
Timetable of meetings (Council, any committee/sub-committee meetings and parish meetings)	Website	Free
Agendas of meetings (as above)	Website and on TC noticeboards Copies available on request	Free See Appendix A
Minutes of meetings (as above) – nb this will exclude information that is properly regarded as private to the meeting.	Website and hard copies available on request	Free See Appendix A
Reports presented to council meetings - nb this will exclude information that is properly regarded as private to the meeting.	Website	See Appendix A
Responses to consultation papers	Included in Minutes (see above)	Free
Responses to planning applications	Included in Minutes (see above)	Free
Bye-laws	Government Website	Free
Class 5 – Our policies and procedures (Current written protocols, policies and procedures for delivering our services and responsibilities) Current information only		
Policies and procedures for the conduct of council business:		
Procedural standing orders	Website	Free
Committee and sub-committee terms of reference	Website	Free
Delegated authority in respect of officers	Website	Free
Code of Conduct	Website	Free

Policies and procedures for the provision of services and about the employment of staff: Equality and diversity policy Health and safety policy Recruitment procedures (including current vacancies) Policies and procedures for handling requests for information Complaints procedures	Website Apply to Clerk Website – when vacancy Website Website	Free See Appendix A Free Free Free
Information security policy	Not currently available	
Records management policies (records retention, destruction and archive)	Website	Free
Data protection policies - privacy notices	Website	Free
Schedule of charges (for the publication of information)	Website	Free
Class 6 – Lists and Registers Currently maintained lists and registers only		
Any publicly available register or list (if any are held this should be publicised; in most circumstances existing access provisions will suffice)	Apply to Clerk – Inspection only	Free
Assets Register	Land and Buildings on website Apply to Clerk – Inspection only	Free
Register of members' interests	Website	Free
Register of gifts and hospitality	Apply to Clerk	See Appendix A
Class 7 – The services we offer (Information about the services we offer, including leaflets, guidance and newsletters produced for the public and businesses). Current information only		
Allotments	Website	Free
Burial grounds and closed churchyards	The Town Council maintains 3 Cemetery's within Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge Website	Free
Bus shelters	Apply to Clerk	See Appendix A
Seating, litter bins, clocks, memorials	Apply to Clerk	See Appendix A
Public conveniences – Information only as Somerset Council owned	Website	Free

A summary of services for which the council is entitled to recover a fee, together with those fees (e.g. burial fees)	Website	Free
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Contact details:

Address: Town Clerk, Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge Town Council, The Old Courthouse, Jaycroft Road, Burnham-on-Sea, TA8 1LE

Email – townclerk@burnham-highbridge-tc.gov.uk. **Website –** <https://burnham-highbridge-tc.gov.uk/> **Tel –** 01278 788088

APPENDIX A - SCHEDULE OF CHARGES

This describes how the charges have been arrived at and should be published as part of the guide.

TYPE OF CHARGE	DESCRIPTION	BASIS OF CHARGE
Disbursement cost	Photocopying A4 @ 15p per sheet (black & white)	Actual cost plus nominal charge for electricity consumption, stapling etc
	Photocopying A4 @ 25p per sheet (colour)	Actual cost plus nominal charge for electricity consumption, stapling etc
	Postage	Actual cost of Royal Mail standard 2 nd class
Statutory Fee	None	In accordance with the relevant legislation (quote the actual statute)

Reviewed: October 2023 Minute No.....

Next review: October 2024

159.0.T23



Burnham on sea and Highbridge Town Council Strategic Plan 2023-2027



Introduction

This Strategic plan takes as its starting point documents produced by the Town Council in recent years. The Neighbourhood Plan was adopted in 2018. The Burnham Evolution Bid was partially successful and contains ideas that can be taken forward this year by the Burnham High St Task Force Group utilising the £50,000 put aside for this purpose by Sedgemoor DC. The Highbridge Regeneration Bid to the Levelling Up Fund, written by Sedgemoor District Council, was sadly unsuccessful in 2022 but was part of the wider Regeneration Framework for the development of Highbridge which was adopted by Sedgemoor DC as a planning document and will be taken up by Somerset Council.

In addition, it takes note of relevant SDC documents such as the Local Plan and supporting background material where these are relevant to the two towns. However, it is not intended that this plan should be limited to what is in these documents but represents a 4-year programme of actions to be taken by the Town Council, which as well as taking forward ideas in these documents, also include others which have been discussed.

Local Government is undergoing change as we move towards a unitary authority, the new Somerset Council. It is still not clear how this will impact on the work of the Town Council. This Town Council will continue to put itself at the heart of our community and respond to the needs of our residents. We will continue to focus our work around the Vision and Mission Statement.

Vision

‘At the heart of our community’

Mission Statement:

We will:

- Celebrate our uniqueness.
- Optimise the economic performance of our towns
- Create a sense of place: a place where people want to live and choose to spend their time.
- Maximise the potential of existing assets and resources.
- Become a vibrant coastal destination.
- Promote a more sustainable and greener lifestyle for all



Strategic Aims for 2023-27

We will aim to:

1. Develop an efficient, transparent council at the heart of our community representing the needs of our residents and improving access to services

Success criteria:

- The staff team and councillors have the right IT and other tools to work effectively
- There is improved communication across the council and towns
- Committee structures and meeting diaries are appropriate to the council's priorities
- The public are able to raise concerns with councillors in suitable forums
- Information about the council and its activities is available both online and in print to maximise reach
- Good governance, fiscal responsibility and the habits of a good employer are embedded in the council
- The council is positively engaged in LCNs in the new Unitary authority

2. Develop the cultural and economic well-being of our towns by drawing on the Highbridge Regeneration Plan, the Burnham High St Task Force involving other stakeholders.

Success criteria:

- The increased number of local residents are using local businesses day to day
- The towns are connected to sources of employment and business opportunity
- Open public spaces in the town centres provide a place for people to enjoy
- Community facilities and events are used to their maximum potential
- There is good public and active transport connections which allow people to reach places for work and leisure
- The town centres continue to be full of independent shops where people spend money in local businesses
- a Strategic Plan is in place for the development of the Princess Theatre and surrounding area
- Princess St is a cultural and civic hub attracting residents and visitors alike

3. Create a greener and sustainable future for our towns by delivering our Climate and Ecology Action Plan

Success criteria:

The Council has:

- enabled the community to work towards a net-zero target for 2030
- ensured its operations are on the route to becoming net zero by 2030
- a plan to help adapt to the worst impacts of climate changes
- encouraged a healthy life-style that makes the most of natural assets

- The community benefits from locally sourced food and renewable energy
- There is increased biodiversity in our green and blue (water) spaces
 - The sea front has several activities and attractions to make it a destination for visitors

4. Enhance the well-being of our residents

Success criteria:

- Both towns provide a wide variety of opportunities for sport, leisure and cultural activities for all ages
- There is a well-informed directory of support groups available in the towns both on-line and in print.
- Community groups are encouraged to identify need and find creative ways to support people

Strategic Aim 1: To develop an efficient, transparent council at the heart of our community, representing the needs of our residents and improving access to services.

Action	Lead Councillor/ Officer/ Committee	Timescale Year 1/2/3/4	Review of action taken
Review the IT systems including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better website platform • Web access for meeting papers • Improve email/ Office systems • Bring your own device policy for councillors 	Cllr Baker/ Town Clerk/ Deputy Town Clerk	By the end of Year 1 (April 2024)	Some improvements have been made to the website and all meeting papers are available on the website. Ongoing.
Improve communication of meetings and consultations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better website platform • Review the visibility and use of noticeboards • Distribute information to the library and community hubs • Continue Drop-in sessions before each Town Council meeting • Ensure residents know the pathways for raising their concerns 	Chair/ Town Clerk/ Cllr Perry	By the end of Year 2 (April 2025)	Drop in sessions are held before each Council meeting. A Community Link drop in has also be set up with the Police. Ongoing.

<p>Ensure the financial reporting system is delivering transparency and control.</p> <p>Continuously review procurement practices to ensure value for money as per audit regulations.</p>	<p>Chair of Finance/ RFO/ Town Clerk</p>	<p>By the end of Year 1 then continuously until the end of Year 4</p>	<p>Relaunch of the accounting system for 2024/25 ensures the accounts are easier for councilors and the public to understand.</p> <p>More financial information is provided at Council and Committee meetings.</p> <p>Ongoing.</p>
<p>Investigate moving the Town Council offices to the old SSL building in Princess St.</p> <p>Create a report to bring to TC with recommendations.</p> <p>Improve current accommodation for staff in the short term.</p> <p>Review accessibility of all Town Council buildings for the public.</p>	<p>Accommodation Working Party (Cllrs Millard, Clayton, Gudka, Murphy) / Town Clerk</p>	<p>By the end of Year 2</p>	<p>Negotiations are ongoing with Somerset Council. Buildings have been valued and progress is being made.</p>
<p>Review committee structures annually and have a rolling programme of policy review to ensure the fiscal duties of the council are fulfilled</p>	<p>Working Party (2023) to review Policies and Standing Orders (Cllrs Millard, Gudka, Clayton, Perry, Murphy) + Town Clerk</p>	<p>By the end of Year 1 and then continuously</p>	<p>Committee structure review undertaken annually and last approved at Council in May.</p> <p>Core governance documents were reviewed in 2023 and ongoing annually. Other policies are being updated on a rolling programme.</p>
<p>Achieve the Local Council Award run by NALC. (Foundation, Quality then Gold)</p>	<p>Chair of Council and Town Clerk</p>	<p>Achieve the Foundation Award by the end of Year 1 then Quality by Year 3 and be working towards Gold by Year 4.</p>	

Strategic Aim 2: To develop the cultural and economic well-being of our towns by drawing on the Highbridge Regeneration Plan and the High St Taskforce, including other stakeholders

Action	Lead Councillor/ Officer/ Committee	Timescale Year 1/2/3/4	Review of action taken
<p>Develop a sustainable business plan for the Princess Theatre.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the independent advisors report to explore options available • Consult with the community on future plans • Present a report to the Town Council with fully costed recommendations for the future of the theatre. 	The Princess Management Committee/ Officers	<p>Year 1 By the end of July 23</p> <p>TC to decide future plans by September 23</p>	<p>New Theatre Manager recruited in September.</p> <p>Working Group now established and setting out an Action Plan.</p> <p>Ongoing.</p>
<p>Resolve the play park situation and then explore other ideas to enhance the sea front.</p> <p>Present a report to TC with recommendations that are costed. Seek funding to complete the project.</p>	Working party (Cllrs Vickers, Murphy, Clayton), Town Clerk and Somerset Council	<p>Resolve play park by September 23</p> <p>Report to council by April 24</p>	<p>Delayed due to the Unitary Council changes.</p>

<p>Reform the working group to develop plans for Burnham Centre using the High St Taskforce initiative Report to be presented to TC with recommendations for further action. Funding to be sought where necessary.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore car parking provision / pedestrianisation • Stimulate the High St growth • Review disabled access to the High St • Events to stimulate footfall 	<p>Working group (Cllrs Gudka, Murphy) and Somerset Council and community representatives</p>	<p>Year 1 Report by April 24</p> <p>Working group / TC/ Somerset Council to take action through years 2-4</p>	<p>Town Board now established. They have set their Terms of Reference and are working on an Action Plan.</p>
<p>Reform Highbridge Regeneration Group to rework the levelling up bid plans. Group to include stakeholders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highbridge Station travel plan- ensure pedestrian access from the Brue Farm estate. Cycle link from Highbridge to Burnham. • Bank St car park- gather data to enable exploration of car park charging regime and use of space. • Review alternative sources of funding or a renewal bid. 	<p>Working group (to be decided), Somerset Council and community representatives</p>	<p>Year 1 Report by April 24</p> <p>Work to be completed during Year 2-4</p>	<p>Cllr Vickers and Millard have met with Nick Tait to seek a way forward. The Highbridge Councillors will be meeting on 1st November to set the Terms of Reference for the new working group. They will also decide who to invite to be part of the group. A meeting is being arranged with GWR to pursue the development of the station premises and travel plan.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguard and enhance recreational opportunities • Explore ways of improving the shopping experience 			
Create a working group to set out a strategy for the enhancement and eventual redevelopment of the Poplar and Morland estates.	Working Group (to be decided) and Somerset Council	Year 2 By April 25	

Strategic Aim 4: To enhance the well-being of our residents.

Action	Lead Councillor/ Officer/ Committee	Timescale Year 1/2/3/4	Review of action taken
<p>To ensure that well-being is kept in mind whilst delivering the Climate and Ecology Action Plan. Use the energy strand to support residents to reduce their energy use.</p> <p>Use the Sustainability strand to encourage reuse, reduce, recycle and repair</p> <p>Use the Transport strand to encourage active transport choice (walking, cycling)</p> <p>Use the Ecology strand to enhance, protect and encourage the active use of our green and blue (water) spaces.</p>	Climate and Ecology Working Group	Years 1-4	<p>The CE Working Group has taken the following action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burnham and Weston Solar Energy has offered to complete an energy audit on private and community buildings. • We now have 2 Repair Cafes, one in each town. • Some businesses have signed up for the City to Sea Refill Scheme to reduce single use plastic. • The Bus Users Group has now met with the new Leadership Team at First Bus and Cllr Mike Rigby of Somerset Council. They have established a

			<p>communication link with the Operations Manager of Buses of Somerset.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Somerset Wildlife Trust and Our Highbridge continue to develop ideas to enhance the Brue Green Pathway. • The Growing Group is now working with Burnham in Bloom and Clean Surroundings to improve our planting scheme.
<p>Maintain a cost of living support tool on the website. Publicise this on all media platforms. Ensure people at the Information Centres for Somerset Council are aware of it and support its use. Use the Energy Information Hubs to give individual face to face support</p>	Cllrs Baker and Vickers/ Officers	Review by April 24	Information provided on website and updated on an ongoing basis.
<p>Create a working group to Identify all support groups in the town, then create a directory. Publicise via social media/</p>	Working Group (to be decided) and community representatives	By April 24	
<p>website/ print then circulate to community areas. Also work with Sport Groups to show where they operate and what they offer. Publicise as above. Create a Town Handbook to contain all above information. Encourage new groups to grow and develop by supporting through grant applications.</p>			
<p>Develop the provision of green and blue spaces for public use.</p>	Climate and Ecology Working Group, Town Council, Somerset Council		See above.



Consultation on the Equality Objectives for the period April 2024 to April 2026

Consultation closes 17 Nov 2023

Somerset Council has adopted the Joint Equality Objectives for the year 23/24 on the basis that during the first year, there will be a review.

The current objectives are:

1. Work with communities to improve the opportunities for integration and cohesion
2. To improve public understanding of mental health
3. Work with the Gypsy and Traveller community to improve relationships
4. Create an Equality Working Group for staff in the Public Sector in Somerset
5. Implement and review the Accessibility Information Standard to create consistency around its implementation

Taking into consideration the data that is available as well as research, and work going on within the Council and the outcomes from the current objectives, the revised long list of objectives has been drafted as follows:

1. Work across council services and with external partners to deliver a minimum of 2 initiatives that will improve people's access to information and services who are otherwise digitally excluded by December 2025
2. By 2025, and by working with partners from across the County, improve access to, and information about, public amenities and services for those residents who are otherwise excluded by disability
3. To create a viable solution to the delivery of accommodation (transit and permanent) for Gypsy and Traveller community by September 2025

4. A reduction of 15% in the number of cases of school-based peer-on-peer discrimination by April 2026
5. To improve reporting by the LGBTQ+ community of all incidents of hate against them, with improvement seen every 6 months from 1st October 2024
6. To work with council colleagues and the Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise sector to improve knowledge and understanding about the county's diverse communities and any tensions and integration issues that exist, delivering innovative solutions by June 2025

The equality objectives will be subject to consultation up until **17 November 2023**. The results of the consultation will determine what objectives are taken forward.

As the council continues its work to become a single cohesive organisation through a process of transition and transformation, it has been agreed that the council will take forward the top 3 objectives following consultation for the period April 2024 to March 2026.

Consultation Survey:

<https://sومersetcouncil.citizenspace.com/communities/equality-objectives-2024-28>

QR code:



Climate & Ecology Bill

Humans have already caused irreversible climate change, the impacts of which are being felt in the UK, and across the world. The average global temperature has already increased by 1.2°C above pre-industrial levels and, alongside this, the natural world has reached crisis point, with 28% of plants and animals threatened with extinction. In addition, the UK is one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world as more than one in seven of our plants and animals face extinction, and more than 40% are in decline.

Climate change remains a major concern for UK voters with 66% of people (according to YouGov) expressing they are 'worried about climate change and its effects'. Alongside this, the popularity of Sir David Attenborough's *Save Our Wild Isles* initiative demonstrates public concern that UK wildlife is being destroyed at a terrifying speed.

Climate & Ecology Bill

The Climate & Ecology Bill (<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/58-02/0061/21061.pdf>), a private member's bill currently before the House of Commons, seeks to address the challenges that this situation poses by creating a whole-of-government approach to deliver a net zero and nature positive future.

Based on the latest science, the CE Bill aims to align current UK environmental policy with the need to halt and reverse nature loss by 2030, which was goal agreed to at COP15, via the *Kunming-Montreal Framework* (22 December 2022) and reduce greenhouse gas emissions in line with the UK's fair share of the remaining global carbon budget to give the strongest chance of limiting global heating to 1.5°C, which was the goal agreed to at COP21, via the *Paris Agreement* (12 December 2015).

By bridging the gap between the UK Government's current delivery and what has been agreed at international levels, Britain has a chance to be a world leader on climate and the environment; seizing the opportunities of the clean energy transition, including green jobs and skills; reduced energy bills; and boosting the UK's food and energy security.

The Climate and Ecology Bill has been introduced in the UK Parliament on four occasions since 2020, including most recently in the House of Commons 10 May 2023. The Bill is backed by 180 cross-party MPs and Peers, 237 local authorities, alongside the support of eminent scientists, such as Sir David King; NGOs, such as the Wildlife Trusts, the Doctors' Association, Oxfam, the W.I. and CPRE; businesses, such as The Co-operative Bank, Riverford and The Body Shop; and 42,000 members of the public.

The Climate and Ecology Bill would require the UK Government to develop and achieve a new environmental strategy, which would include:

1. Delivering a joined-up environmental plan, as the crises in climate and nature are deeply intertwined, and require a plan that considers both together;
2. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions in line with 1.5°C to ensure emissions are reduced in line with the best chance of meeting the UK's Paris Agreement obligations;

3. Not only halting, but also reversing the decline in nature, setting nature measurably on the path to recovery by 2030;
4. Taking responsibility for our overseas footprint, both emissions and ecological;
5. Prioritising nature in decision-making, and ending fossil fuel production and imports as rapidly as possible;
6. Providing for re-training for those people currently working in fossil fuel industries; and
7. Giving the British people a say in finding a fair way forward via a temporary, independent and representative *Climate & Nature Assembly*, as part of creating consensus and ensuring that no one and no community is left behind.

The Council are asked to consider supporting the Climate and Ecology Bill.

If the Bill is supported, the Council should write to James Heappy MP to inform him of the Council's decision and urge him to sign up to support the Bill. Write to Zero Hour, the organisers of the cross-party campaign for the Bill, expressing the Council's support.



**DEVON &
SOMERSET**
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service provides 83 fire stations and employs almost 2,000 staff, helping to keep the 1.8 million people who live here safe. We also protect 820,000 households, 74,000 businesses and a further 1.1 million visitors to our counties each year. The Service attends about 15,700 incidents every year and provide home safety advice to more than 18,000 households. Incidents we attend include flooding, road traffic collisions, fires and other emergencies.

Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority is the publicly accountable body which manages the fire and rescue service on behalf of the communities of the two counties. The Authority is seeking feedback about the level of council tax precept for the coming year and how satisfied you are with the service we provide.

How satisfied are you with the service we provide

Q1 Have you interacted with Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service in the last 12 months? (select all that apply)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, emergency response such as fire, road traffic collision, flood or rescue | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, when we have worked with the ambulance service and the police |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, home fire safety check/visit | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, through the Service social media channels (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, business safety check/audit | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, using the Service website |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, community use of fire station | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, other engagement |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, youth education | <input type="checkbox"/> No, I have not interacted with Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, community event | |

Q2 How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the service provided by Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service?

- ☐ Very satisfied
 ☐ Fairly satisfied
 ☐ Neither satisfied or dissatisfied
 ☐ Fairly dissatisfied
 ☐ Very dissatisfied
 ☐ Don't know

Q3 To what extent do you agree or disagree that you trust Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service to make decisions that are in your best interest?

- ☐ Strongly agree
 ☐ Agree
 ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
 ☐ Disagree
 ☐ Strongly disagree
 ☐ Don't know

Council tax

The Service receives part of its funding from council tax, known as the precept, and business rates. The current council tax charge from the fire and rescue service is £96.79 a year for a Band D household.

By 2024/25, the Authority anticipates a saving of £4m will be needed due to changes in government funding and rising costs of delivering our services such as materials, energy and employment costs. This saving is based on a year-on-year increase of 2.99% to council tax over this period.

The Authority is required to deliver a balanced budget, meaning outgoings do not exceed income. In previous years, reserves have been used to balance the budget, but the reserves have now been reduced to the level we are prescribed to hold as a safety net.

The Authority will always seek to use their resources available in the best way to minimise the impact of risk to communities in their area. An increase in precept does not mean that all services will continue to be delivered in the same way they are at the moment. The Service continually reviews resources to make sure they are being used in the most efficient and effective way.

Q4 How strongly do you agree or disagree that Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service provides value for money?

- ☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Don't know

Q5 How much do you agree or disagree that it is reasonable for the Authority to consider increasing its council tax charge for 2024/25?

- ☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Don't know

Q6 What level of increase would you consider is reasonable for the Authority to increase its element of the council tax charge by? As a rough guide, a 1% increase to council tax precept amounts to just over six hundred thousand pounds to the Service this year.

- ☐ No increase (the total charge for a Band D property would remain £96.79, or £1.86 per week)
☐ 1.99% (an increase of £1.93 a year for a Band D property, increasing the total charge to £98.72, or £1.90 per week)
☐ 2.99% (an increase of £2.89 per year for a band D property, making the total charge £99.68 per year or £1.92 per week)
☐ £5 (an increase of £5 a year for a Band D property (pro rata for other bands), increasing the total charge to £101.79, or £1.96 per week)

Q7 Is there anything else that you would like to add about the council tax charge for the fire service in 2024-25?

About you

The final few questions are about you.

We're asking for this information to make sure that we hear views from a cross-section of the different communities we have across Devon and Somerset.

We use this information to make sure that when we analyse the results we know who we have heard from so we can tailor future consultations, and an informed decision can be made.

You don't have to answer them if you don't want to.

Are you.....

- ☐ A member of the public
- ☐ Representing a business

What is the first part of your postcode?

For example, if your postcode was EX3 0NW, you would submit EX3.

Which of the following age groups do you fall into?

- ☐ 16-18
- ☐ 19-24
- ☐ 25-34
- ☐ 35-44
- ☐ 45-54
- ☐ 55-64
- ☐ 65-74
- ☐ 75-84
- ☐ 85+
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Do you identify as:

- ☐ A woman
- ☐ A man
- ☐ Non-binary
- ☐ In some other way/ self-describe
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Does your gender identity match your sex as registered at birth?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Which of the following best describes how you think about yourself?

- ☐ Heterosexual
- ☐ Gay man
- ☐ Gay woman/lesbian
- ☐ Bi-Sexual
- ☐ In some other way/ self-describe (please provide details)
- ☐ Prefer not to say

According to the Equality Act (2010), a person is disabled if they:

- have a physical or mental impairment, and
- the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

In relation to the definition of disability above, do you consider yourself to be disabled?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Please explain

How would you describe your national identity?

- ☐ English
- ☐ Welsh
- ☐ Scottish
- ☐ Northern Irish
- ☐ British
- ☐ Other (please specify)
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Q16 What is your ethnic group?

White

- ☐ English/ Welsh/ Scottish/ Northern Irish/ British
- ☐ Irish
- ☐ Gypsy or Irish Traveller
- ☐ Any other white background

Mixed/ multiple ethnic groups

- ☐ White and Black Caribbean
- ☐ White and Black African
- ☐ White and Asian
- ☐ Any other mixed/ multiple ethnic background

Asian/ Asian British

- ☐ Indian
- ☐ Pakistani
- ☐ Bangladeshi
- ☐ Chinese
- ☐ Any other Asian background

Black/ African/ Caribbean/ Black British