

SOMERSET COUNCIL

Briefing Sheet for April 2026

Somerset Council Sets 2026/27 Budget & Council Tax: Somerset Council has set its 2026/27 budget following the Government's decision to reject proposals for a council tax increase above the 4.99% referendum threshold, with the authority having previously considered a rise of up to 11% to address a £25 million funding gap. The Government also raised concerns about the Council's financial management and pace of transformation in response to a request for £30 million of Exceptional Financial Support, of which £25 million will support the budget gap and £5 million ongoing service transformation. The average Somerset council tax bill will increase by nearly £122 a year.

Somerset Rivers Authority Agrees Work Plans for 2026/27: Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA) has approved its enhanced programme of works for 2026/27, backed by several million pounds of investment in flood prevention and resilience measures across the county. This includes £775,000 for River Parrett dredging and maintenance, £425,000 for natural flood management through the Hills to Levels programme, and £350,000 for enhanced gully clearing, alongside £150,000 for drain jetting.

Somerset Council Amalgamates Housing Models: Somerset Council has approved plans to bring its two housing management models into a single system, transferring all landlord functions into its arm's length company, Homes in Somerset. The change will see around 9,700 council homes managed under one structure, with the council retaining ownership of the housing stock and responsibility for the Housing Revenue Account. The move is intended to reduce duplication, improve consistency for tenants and deliver financial efficiencies, with early estimates suggesting potential savings of around £3.5 million per year over time.

New phonenumber for residents struggling to afford the increasing cost of oil: Somerset Council has launched a dedicated phonenumber to support residents struggling with the rising cost of heating oil, delivered in partnership with Citizens Advice Somerset. The service allows residents in need of financial assistance to call a freephone number, 0808 278 7842, and request support from the Household Support team. The initiative is funded through the Household Support Fund as part of the Help Through Winter programme, with additional support also available through the council's Help4All scheme and community hubs network.

New Electoral Boundaries Agreed for Somerset: The Local Government Boundary Commission has published its final recommendations for new electoral arrangements in Somerset, reducing the number of councillors from 110 to 96. The new structure will include 90 single-councillor divisions and three two-councillor divisions, designed to ensure each councillor represents a similar number of electors and that the council can operate effectively. The recommendations will take effect once approved by Parliament and are expected to be in place for the May 2027 elections.

Somerset Health & Wellbeing Survey: Somerset Council's Public Health team has launched a new survey to gather residents' views on health and wellbeing priorities across the county. The survey aims to inform future service planning, building on previous feedback which has shaped areas such as smoking cessation and healthy eating support. You can take part in the consultation by **27th April** here : <https://somersetcouncil.citizenspace.com/public-health/somerset-health-wellbeing-survey/>

Bob

Councillor Bob Filmer

Councillor for Brent Division

Shadow Lead Member for Transport and Waste Services

Tel. 07802 480 760

Email: bob.filmer@somerset.gov.uk

Follow me on Twitter at @BobFilmer