

## Peter Seib Somerset Councillor – Brympton ED Monthly Report

### Storm Chandra – Highways defects

Storm Chandra has brought the expected surge in reports of road defects: 900 on-line reports in the first week of February in South Somerset alone, with several in Brympton. Somerset has 4,257 miles of road, and with new potholes literally appearing overnight, we need your help to spot them quickly before they develop into very large holes. I've been pushing out a simple message on Facebook - the easiest way to report a pothole is via our website at "Report a problem on the road". This can be done at anytime, 24/7, and is the best way to bring a pothole to our attention.

In the last two weeks, over the whole of Somerset, we had 5,000 defect reports. Over the whole of Jan 7,000 defects. For comparison, last year we had 2,000 defects reported in the whole of January. Our repair provider is mobilising extra resources (normally 15, presently 30 gangs) but we are not the only council affected by Chandra, and some materials are already in short supply nationally, so please bear with us.

If you spot a pothole out of usual working hours and it poses an urgent risk to public safety, please call Somerset Lifeline on 0300 123 2224, where we have a dedicated resource to deal with out-of-hours highways matters. The contact centre will notify the highways duty officer and they will take any necessary action. If the hazard is on the M5, A303 or A36 please contact National Highways on 0300 123 5000. We will need an exact position, I find <https://what3words.com> is best, but an address works too.

We visit and assess every defect reported (the paint colour you see after inspection is irrelevant, we use whatever we have to hand). Depending on risk and location, we try to repair on a time-scale of two hours, 24 hours, seven days or 28 days. Some are deemed safe for now and put onto a monitoring list. Also the wet and cold weather makes it difficult to repair effectively with tarmac, so we sometimes do a temporary repair until a full repair can be scheduled.

Finally, if the pothole has resulted from previous utility works (e.g., water, gas, electricity), the statutory undertaker (the utility company or contractor) is responsible for reinstating the road to a proper standard. If this reinstatement fails within the statutory guarantee period, usually two years, the council can require the statutory undertaker to return and correct the fault. In such cases, the utility company bears the cost of the additional repairs.

### Somerset Highways recognised for road condition with green ratings for condition and maintenance

Somerset Council earned green ratings for the condition of its A, B, C and unclassified roads and for its preventative maintenance under the Department for Transport's new traffic-light gradings. In 2025/26 the council plans to resurface 55 km and apply preventative treatments to 185 km of road; of nearly £45m capital and just under £5m revenue funding, around 89% is earmarked for preventative work. Despite strong condition and maintenance ratings, the council receives an overall amber rating because it is graded red for capital spend, even though it is on track to use 98% of its DfT capital allocation this year. The council says it will keep prioritising preventative work to maintain road standards. [Report problems via the council's online portal](#) and follow [@TravelSomerset](#) on Facebook and on [X \(formally Twitter\)](#) for live updates.

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### Storm Chandra - Flooding in Somerset: why a "major incident" was declared

Somerset Council declared a major incident after Storm Chandra because exceptionally heavy rain fell on already saturated ground, causing rapid rises in river and moorland water levels and localised flooding across the county. Calling a major incident is used as a precautionary, multi-agency trigger: it allows councils, emergency services, the Environment Agency and voluntary partners to pool resources quickly, run a central incident cell, redeploy staff, share information, stand up rest centres if needed, and prioritise support for the most vulnerable. The declaration does not automatically mean mandatory evacuations, but it signals the heightened risk and ensures a coordinated, scalable response while further warnings and flood alerts remain in force.

Storm Chandra followed multiple recent storms, producing new short-duration rainfall records in the south-west and rapid flooding across previously less-affected areas.

[Experts argue the pattern is directly linked to global heating \(warmer air → more water vapour → heavier downpours\)](#) and that communities are already experiencing impacts earlier than expected.

Local leaders and flood scientists warn that emergency, short-term measures (pumps, cranes, contractors) are necessary but insufficient without sustained funding, maintenance and nature-based interventions; some voices even raise the difficult prospect that, without major investment, some settlements may become increasingly hard to protect long term.

This is a rapidly changing situation for updates please see links below:

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/beaches-ports-and-flooding/flooding-information-and-advice/>

<https://www.somersetdriversauthority.org.uk/news/>

[https://www.facebook.com/travelsomerset/?locale=en\\_GB](https://www.facebook.com/travelsomerset/?locale=en_GB)

### Somerset opens new eco-homes in Minehead

Somerset Council and Homes in Somerset have completed and officially opened 54 zero-carbon council homes on Seaward Way/Rainbow Way in Minehead — 33 flats and 21 houses — all let to local people with strong connections to the area under the council's local lettings policy. The development is the first council housing scheme in West Somerset for a generation, delivering energy-efficient, affordable homes that support local jobs and wellbeing.

[A Guardian opinion piece frames the Minehead project](#) as part of a wider revival in publicly led council housebuilding, arguing developments like this carry national significance for housing policy and politics.

### Government postpones local government funding settlement

Somerset Council has revised its budget timetable after the Government confirmed the Final Local Government Settlement will be published a week later than expected. The delay reduces the time available for council staff to analyse the settlement, complete approvals and prepare statutory budget papers for the Budget and Council Tax setting on 4<sup>th</sup> March.

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The 9<sup>th</sup> of February announcement is also expected to confirm whether any councils will be allowed to set Council Tax above the 4.99% referendum limit and whether any financial support will be provided for the accumulated Dedicated Schools Grant deficit. It's estimated that 80% of councils could be "bankrupted" immediately by the originally announced plans, so a fix is needed. Decisions on Exceptional Financial "Support" i.e. being allowed to sell off assets or borrow for day-day costs under a Capitalisation Directive — which last year arrived in late February — may also be delayed.

#### **Residents asked to shape Somerset's adult social care future**

Somerset Council has launched a short consultation to refresh its Adult Social Care strategy for 2026–2029 and is inviting residents, unpaid carers and organisations to contribute. The council will combine face-to-face engagement with an online survey to gather views on recent experiences of care, barriers faced, what good care looks like and priorities for the next three years. Responses will inform the revised strategy and a continuous improvement plan. The consultation closes on 27 March 2026.

Have your say: Somerset Adult Social Care Strategy (2026–2029) consultation page —

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/consultations/>

#### **Changes to recycling collections for people in flats**

Somerset Council will roll out expanded communal recycling collections from the end of March for about 13,000 households in flats and other communal properties. New collections will include plastic bottles, pots/tubs/trays, tins/cans/foil/aerosols, glass bottles and jars, cartons, food waste, and plastic bags/wrappers. A leaflet with start dates will be posted to affected residents; if you do not receive a letter, your collection remains unchanged. The scheme is funded by the Government's Simpler Recycling programme.

More information: <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/waste-recycling-and-environment/recycling/>

#### **Bus service improvements proposed**

Somerset Council has secured a government Bus Service Fund award (around £11.4m capital to 2029/30 and £13.1m revenue to 2028/29) to boost bus services, better integrate with rail, expand Digital Demand Responsive Transport (DDRT), improve links to employment and health, develop transport hubs, and prepare for Project Coral multi-operator ticketing. Decisions on measures and costings will be taken by the Council's Executive in early March.

More information: <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/transport-and-travel/buses/>

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#### Report it first: useful Links to share with your communities

**Visit - Report a Problem on the Road:** - A list of all reporting pages to do with roads, pavements, lighting:

[Report a problem on the road](#)

**Potholes and road damage** - Somerset Council repair potholes and other road defects, and maintain our roads, for the safe access of all road users:

[Potholes, road damage and edge loss](#)

**Report a problem with a street light** - We maintain and repair street lights to national standards to provide safe access to all road users:

[Report a problem with a street light](#)

**Roads, travel and parking, road signs, markings and lighting** - Includes information about non-illuminated bollards, pedestrian crossings, requesting a village nameplate or a new road sign:

[Road signs, bollards and road markings](#)

**Speed limits** - Request information about new or existing traffic calming measures:

[Speed limits](#)

**Traffic lights** - We maintain over 200 traffic light locations throughout the County:

[Traffic lights](#)

**Street and roadworks** - We maintain the roads and pavements that are managed at public expense in Somerset:

[Street and roadworks problems](#)

**Traffic - updates and roadworks follow:**

[Travel Somerset on X](#) and [Travel Somerset on Facebook](#).

**All ongoing roadworks** - available on the Somerset Council website interactive map

[Roadworks and travel information](#)

**Somerset Waste** - collection days, replacement bins or recycling bags and missed collection reporting:

[Bins, recycling and waste](#)

**Travel and Tourist Information**

[Travel Somerset - Art, Culture, Events, History & More](#)

**Sign-up for the latest climate news from across Somerset:**

[Climate newsletter sign-up](#)

**Open Somerset Council Consultations** - which anyone can complete and take part in shaping the future of Somerset

[Somerset Council - Citizen Space - Consultations](#)

**SOMERSET COUNCIL TELEPHONE NO - 0300 123 2224**