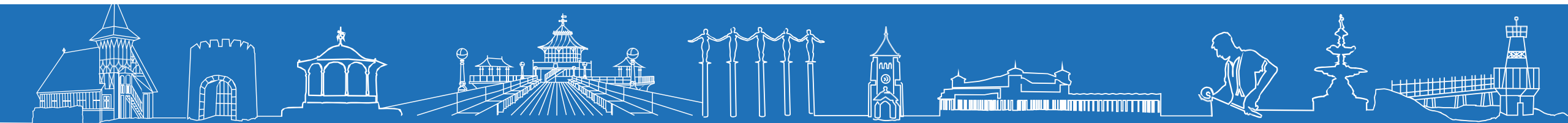


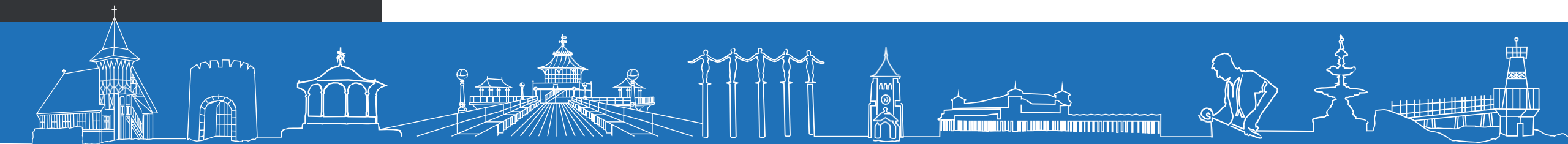
North Somerset Council Productivity Plan

2024/25

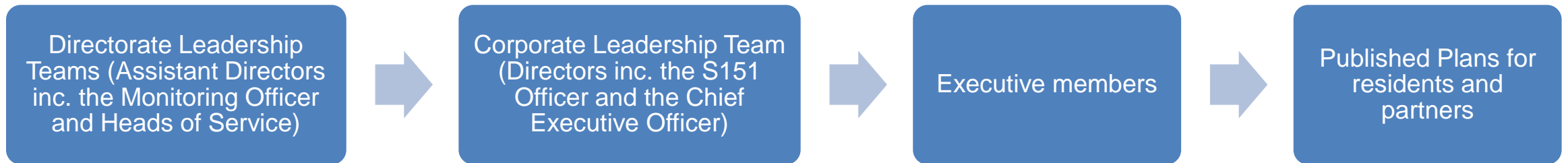


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- In January 2024 the government requested local authorities produce productivity plans '*setting out how they will improve service performance and reduce wasteful expenditure to ensure every area is making best use of taxpayers' money*'.
- Productivity Plans should cover four main areas:
 - Transformation of services to make better use of resources
 - Opportunities to take advantage of advances in technology and make better use of data to inform decision making and service design
 - Ways to reduce wasteful spend within systems
 - Barriers preventing activity that government can help to reduce or remove
- This document, alongside the accompanying Power BI dashboard, sets out North Somerset Council's Productivity Plan for 2024/25. The plan has been informed by the council's Corporate Plan, our Medium-term Financial Plan, and the work of the Office for Local Government.
- Governance for this Productivity Plan is as follows:



- Progress will be updated quarterly via the Power Bi dashboard.

Our [Corporate Plan](#) was refreshed and adopted by full council in February 2024.

It reaffirms our vision for an open, fair and green North Somerset, our ambitions for all our communities, and the values to which we work.

The North Somerset Productivity Plan 2024/25 has been analysed against the work of our Corporate Plan to show which areas we are focusing on and how we are intending to deliver on the outcomes we have identified.

Our vision

An Open, Fair, Green North Somerset



Open

You told us open means being honest and transparent. It means listening to you and your views on the decisions we make. It means being accountable for how we spend your money and ensuring we provide the very best value we can.



Fair

You told us fair means being accessible and inclusive in how we work. It means listening to the views of all groups and acting on local issues. It means ensuring equity in access to services.



Green

You told us green means we take our responsibility to respond to the climate emergency seriously. It means we do all we can to understand the impact our actions have on the environment and mitigate them where possible.

Our ambitions

1.

Our children and young people are cared for, safe, supported, and are given equality of opportunity to thrive

2.

Our communities are caring, healthy and safe, where people help each other to live well

3.

Our towns and villages are thriving and sustainable places to live, work and visit

4.

Our council delivers consistently good services and value for money to support our community

Our values



We act with
INTEGRITY



We **RESPECT**
each other



We
INNOVATE



We
CARE



We
COLLABORATE

Our Medium-term Financial Plan

Our Medium-term Financial Plan was approved by full council in February 2024. The North Somerset Productivity Plan 2024/25 has been analysed against the Medium-term Financial Plan to show how we are working towards achieving a balanced budget. As of the start of the 2024/25-year, North Somerset Council's budget position was as follows:

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN SUMMARY 2023-2028	BUDGET	FUTURE MTFP PROJECTIONS			
	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	2027/28 £000
- Resources - Grants, C.Tax & Business Rates	202,766	217,647	218,622	224,516	230,584
- Current Budget - base spending position	179,090	202,766	217,647	218,622	224,516
- Budget pressures, increased spending	35,873	31,050	20,959	16,832	15,428
- Remove covid & other one-off impacts	-1,777	0	0	0	0
- Savings proposals and increased income	-10,420	-16,170	-10,767	-8,437	-7,233
- Revised / Forecast Spending Level	202,766	217,647	227,840	227,018	232,711
- Budget Gap / (Surplus)	0	0	9,218	2,502	2,126
			13,846		

- The Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities launched the [Office for Local Government](#) (Oflog) in July 2023. Oflog is intended to be a local government performance body, providing ‘*authoritative and accessible data and analysis about the performance of local government and support its improvement*’.
- Oflog’s draft [Corporate Plan](#) states its vision as: *Oflog will help make local government even better. We will increase understanding about the performance of local authorities, warn when authorities are at risk of serious failure, and support local government to improve itself.* Alongside that, Oflog has three strategic objectives:
 - Inform: increase understanding - among citizens, civil society, central government and local government itself - about data on the performance of local authorities.
 - Warn: help identify local authorities that are at risk of failure but have not raised the alarm themselves.
 - Support: support local government to improve performance, productivity, and value for money: championing best practice, improving data capability and rationalising a complex data landscape.

To support this vision and these objectives, Oflog have developed a [Local Authority Data Explorer](#) which provides insight about the performance of local government within England, using published data across a range of services.

To inform the North Somerset Council Productivity Plan for 2024/25 we have included North Somerset’ Council’s position against the published Oflog measures at the end of this document. In addition, to provide a comprehensive overview, we have included some additional measures for children’s social care, across the public health outcomes framework, and for economy and skills as included in our [Joint Strategic Needs Assessment](#). Further data including at ward level can be found on our [Data and Insight Hub](#).

How we work as a council

Within our Corporate Plan one of our four ambitions is to ensure our council delivers consistently good services and value for money to support our community. We have identified a number of commitments aligned to this ambition, with clear actions and outcomes.

We will provide the best services we can with the budget we have. This means being clear about what we can afford to do and what we cannot. What is our responsibility to provide and what is not.

We will earn the trust of our residents and communities by being open, honest, and transparent about our ambitions, our commitments and the actions we will take to make them happen. Where we have not achieved something, we will say so and we will explain why. Where we got something wrong, we will admit that, and explain how we will fix it.

We want to get better at how we consult, engage and coproduce and we'll offer more opportunities for local people to get involved in having their say. We'll also strengthen our partnerships with Town and Parish councils and the voluntary and community sector to get the best outcomes for our residents. We will be more accessible and responsive, ensuring that we have a range of ways for residents to contact us.

We will make the best use of all our resources, including our assets and our workforce, to provide the residents of North Somerset with the best value for money we can.

Open: we will ensure that residents are kept up to date on what is happening and can get involved in decisions which affect them, ensuring confidence that the council is a democratic organisation that works for you.



Fair: we will ensure that everyone can contact the council and be treated with fairness, courtesy, and respect at all times when they do so. We will tackle digital exclusion by helping our residents get online but also offering other ways to engage with us.



Green: we will work towards being a net zero council by 2030, decreasing our emissions across council owned buildings, the council's transport fleet, from staff travel and across our major projects.



Proposed total spending

The council's proposed day-to-day total spending to support the running of the council including provision of customer services in 2024/25 is £75.3m.

■ **£44.6**

for office accommodation and providing 'back office services'

■ **£15.3m**

on capital financing and interest receipts

■ **£8.5m**

on the costs of running the council

■ **£6.9m**

on parish precepts



We will also invest for the future with an additional £16.5m of capital spend including £5.9m investment in technology to allow us to provide modern, flexible and low carbon ways of working and also £10.6m maintaining and transforming our property estate.

Within our Corporate Plan one of our four ambitions is centred on ensuring our children and young people are cared for, safe, supported, and are given equality of opportunity to thrive. We have identified a number of commitments aligned to this ambition, with clear actions and outcomes.

We want to ensure that all children and young people in North Somerset get the very best start in life with an equal chance to have a safe and successful future regardless of where they are born.

Where children and their families need extra support we will provide the right service at the right time, maximizing opportunities for early intervention and support, and where we need to, we will safeguard vulnerable children and young people.

We want all children and young people to do well in school, achieving to the best of their ability and going on to have the skills they need to access good jobs that provide a decent income in our changing world.

We will support the health and wellbeing of our children and young people from birth through to young adulthood, and we will do this by listening to them when they tell us about the support they need and giving them opportunities to have a say in decisions that affect them.

Open: we will make the best use of communication, consultation, and engagement tools to ensure more children and young people can have a say in decisions that affect them. We will use this feedback to improve our services.



Fair: where children and young people are at risk of poor life outcomes, we will focus our efforts to ensure they have the same chance at success as their peers. This will ensure equality of opportunity.



Green: we will work with schools and colleges to achieve the aims in our Climate Emergency Strategy action plan, supporting the next generation to be aware of the impact their actions have on the environment and how best they can protect the natural environment and support biodiversity.



Proposed total spending

The council's proposed day-to-day total spending to support children and young people in 2024/25 will be £109.3m.

£44.1m

for children and family services including social care

£33.4m

high needs dedicated schools grant including special educational needs and disability (SEND)

£12.3m

early years dedicated schools grant for childcare

£8.1m

for home to school transport

£7.3m

other dedicated schools grant

£4.1m

public health grant for children



We will also invest for the future with an additional £44.3m of capital spend in projects to support our children and young people by providing new school places (£22.1m), increasing our SEND provision (£15.9m), repairing our school buildings (£5.8m), and enhancing play areas (£470k).

Within our Corporate Plan one of our four ambitions is to ensure our communities are caring, healthy and safe, where people help each other to live well. We have identified a number of commitments aligned to this ambition, with clear actions and outcomes.

Our communities come in all shapes and sizes, and we want to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to feel part of a safe, supportive community.

Part of this is ensuring that local people have access to a decent, warm home. We will support this by increasing the number of homes available to rent and buy and continuing to provide support to reduce homelessness.

We will also work with our partners to ensure that our communities are safe and protected from harm, focusing where we need to on communities that need more support.

We want to improve the health and wellbeing of our residents and we will work with our NHS system partners and voluntary, community and social enterprise sector partners to enable people to stay well, safe, and independent at home for longer.

We will also support health and wellbeing by ensuring good access to important resources like leisure, libraries, safe and open spaces, and the natural environment.

Open: we will be honest and transparent with communities, providing clarity about how decisions are made. We will ensure that we listen to what residents want in their communities and that we engage and consult effectively and meaningfully on proposals before decisions are made.



Fair: we will work with all our communities to understand and reduce inequalities, and where we need to, we will focus more on areas with the poorest outcomes to support them to build strengths and resilience.



Green: we will work with all our communities including our Town and Parish Councils to achieve the aims in our Climate Emergency Strategy action plan including how we will adapt to our changing environment.



Proposed total spending

The council's proposed day-to-day total spending to support adults and our communities in 2024/25 is £192.9m.

£125m

for adult social care services

£42.6m

for housing benefits

£10.6m

for community facilities

£10.1m

for public health services

£3.1m

for housing services

£1.5m

for community safety services



We will also invest for the future with an additional £24m of capital spend in projects to provide our communities with affordable and sheltered homes (£10.2m), to support the most vulnerable residents in North Somerset to live independently (£8.1m) and for investment in leisure, community, and cultural facilities (£5.6m).

Within our Corporate Plan one of our four ambitions is to ensure our towns and villages are thriving and sustainable places to live, work and visit. We have identified a number of commitments aligned to this ambition, with clear actions and outcomes.

Protecting our natural environment and developing our built infrastructure is a key part of providing for our local communities and creating a thriving and sustainable North Somerset. We will do this by delivering on the actions in our Climate Emergency Strategy to safeguard our natural environment and ensure a more sustainable future. We will also deliver a new Local Plan, setting out our housing and employment needs, complete large scale infrastructure projects and maintain and improve where possible our local transport and highways network.

We want to continue to attract inward investment to North Somerset, growing our economy and supporting our residents to have the skills they need to secure a good job and a decent income to look after themselves and their loved ones.

Our placemaking strategies will help us to revitalise our towns and villages, making them great places to live, to work and to visit, but also to trade well, and we'll work closely with communities to deliver these. We'll keep our towns and villages clean and safe, and we'll offer transport choices that make the most of our infrastructure and provide opportunities for better use of public transport and more active travel through walking and cycling, supporting good health and wellbeing.

Open: we will ensure our residents are well informed on how North Somerset as a place will develop and have an opportunity to shape our plans including our Local Plan, placemaking strategies for our towns, our local transport plans and our rural strategy.



Fair: we will ensure that our approach to placemaking is focused on supporting local communities to achieve their local priorities, and that we respect the uniqueness of different areas of North Somerset and their needs.



Green: we will protect and enhance our environment by achieving the aims in our Climate Emergency Strategy action plan including decarbonising our built environment, decarbonising local business and providing low carbon skills opportunities, and decarbonising transport. We will do more to encourage reduction, reuse and recycling of our waste, and replenish our carbon stores.



Proposed total spending

The council's proposed day-to-day total spending to support North Somerset to be a thriving and sustainable place in 2024/25 is £59.3m.

£20.4m
for waste services

£12.8m
for highways, parking and other technical services

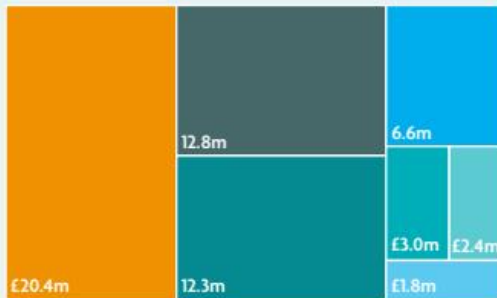
£12.3m
for public transport and road safety

£6.6m
for property, projects and other place related costs

£3.0m
for planning and building control services

£2.4m
for regulatory services

£1.8m
for supporting business and the economy



We will also invest for the future with an additional £356.9m of capital spend across place based improvements. We'll invest £21.9m in projects to maintain and enhance the existing road network and £290.7m to design and deliver strategic infrastructure projects including the Banwell bypass, Metrowest, improvements along the A38 road network, Winterstoke road bridge, and the Bus Service Improvement Plan.



Transformation of services to make better use of resources

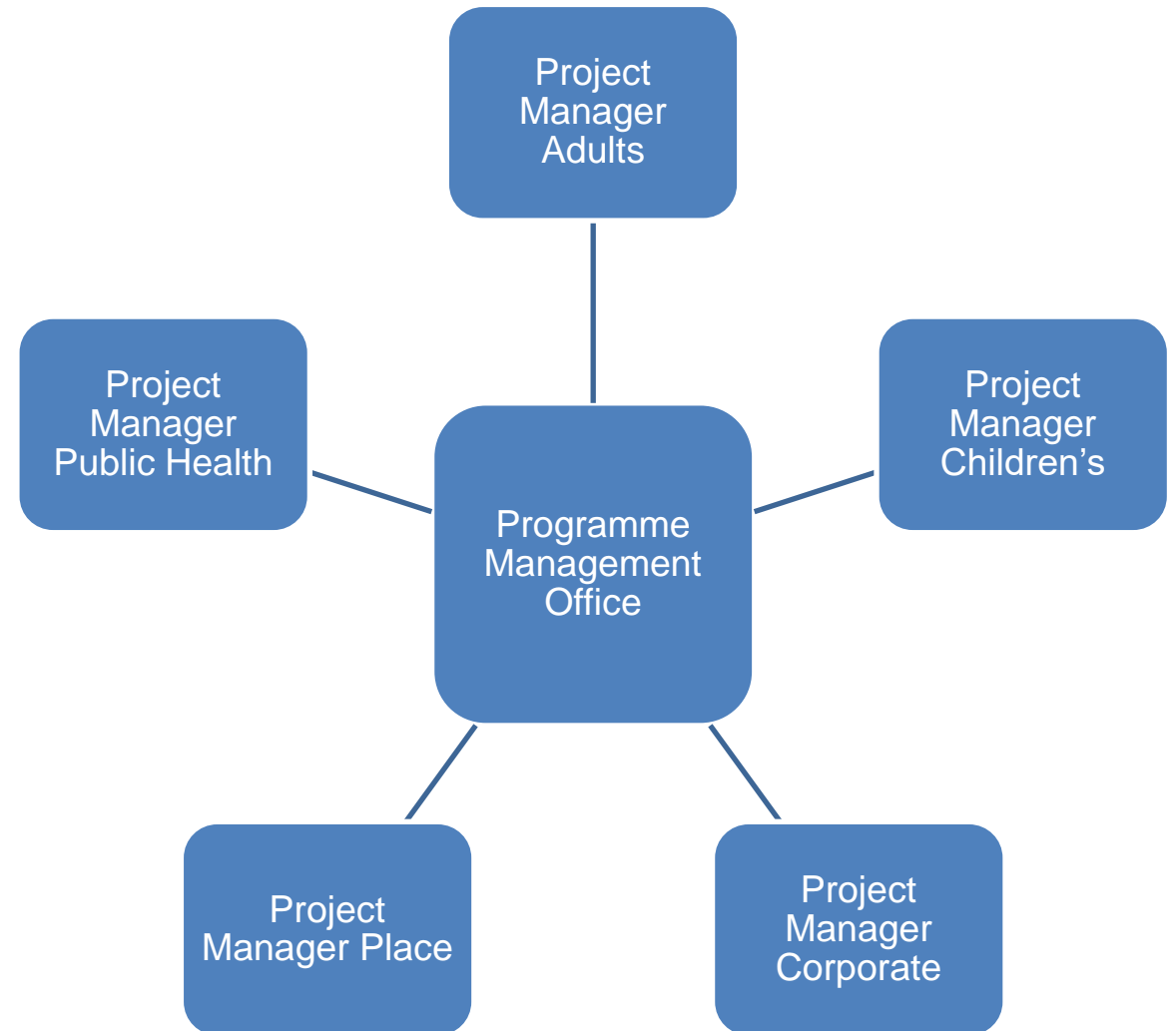
Our organisational transformation programme is led by Corporate Leadership team (CLT) with support from our Programme Management Office.

Governance is held by the Digital and Transformation Board which is chaired by the Director of Corporate Services and S151 Officer and reports up to CLT.

Transformation themes run across a number of areas including digital.

Project Management resources are embedded across directorates to support delivery of transformation projects and to monitor progress against them and any associated benefits (cashable and non-cashable). The transformation programme is linked to our Corporate Plan across the four ambitions, and then analysed alongside our Medium-term Financial Plan.

The Programme Management Office is part of the Local Government Association's [Transformation Support Programme](#).



Our transformation activity

The following tables list all the commitments we have made in our Corporate Plan which have transformation actions/project aligned to them. Many of these will have MTFP savings attached. We are delivering these now and will deliver on them throughout the year. Outcomes are monitored monthly as part of our PMO project reporting and reported quarterly within our business planning framework. Please note, these are part of the wider [Corporate Plan action plan](#). Outcomes can be found in the accompanying Power BI dashboard.

Our children and young people are cared for, safe, supported, and are given equality of opportunity to thrive

Commitment	Action
Ensure the right service at the right time with a focus on early intervention and support for families and children	Deliver the Family Hub Programme – including the national Start for Life Programme
	Implement the transformation programme for home to school transport
Support our children in care and care experienced young people to ensure they have equality of opportunity	Deliver our sufficiency strategy to ensure that there are a range of homes available for children in care and care experienced young people
Achieve positive outcomes under the children’s support and safeguarding and SEND inspection frameworks, evidencing how we will continue to embed and sustain improvements	Implement the children’s support and safeguarding improvement plan in line with the ILACS inspection framework
	Implement the special education needs and disability (SEND) improvement plan and overarching strategy in line with the Area SEND inspections framework .

Our transformation activity

Our communities are caring, healthy and safe, where people help each other to live well

Commitment	Action
Work together with our NHS system partners to enable people to stay well, safe, and independent at home for longer	Enable people to stay well, safe and at home for longer and provide the right care at the right place in the right time by delivering the actions in the Better Care Fund Plan
Enable people to maximise their independence, through a focus on empowering communities, information and advice, early intervention and technology enabled care	<p>Make the best use of Technology Enabled Care (TEC) by delivering the actions in the TEC Strategy</p> <p>Expand the reablement service</p> <p>Review and refresh North Somerset council information sources and Better Health website to improve the provision of information and advice</p>
Work compassionately with our communities to understand and reduce inequalities	Develop area-based action groups to support our two most challenged wards – Central and South in Weston-super-Mare
Strengthen our collaboration and co-production with Town and Parish Councils, the voluntary and the community sector to ensure we work well together for the benefits of our residents	Empower and enable our communities by developing a Community Strategy and action plan
Achieve a positive outcome under the Care Quality Commission inspection framework, evidencing our strengths and development plans	Implement the actions in the Care Quality Commission improvement plan in line with the CQC approach to transformation .

Our towns and villages are thriving and sustainable places to live, work and visit

Commitment	Action
Deliver the 2024-2028 elements of the Climate Emergency Strategy and action plan and progress towards net zero by 2030	Deliver the action plan
Enable the continued revitalisation of our towns and villages, making North Somerset a great place to live, trade well, work and visit	In partnership with local communities and businesses deliver Weston Placemaking Strategy inc. the Levelling up Fund (LUF)
Work with communities to ensure our towns and villages are clean, resilient, and safe for everyone	Increase recycling and reduce waste, improve street cleaning and enforcement by delivering the actions in the Recycling and Waste Management Strategy
Deliver on public transport improvements and support more cycling and walking across North Somerset to help decarbonise travel	Improve access to public transport in north Somerset by delivering the Bus Service Improvement Plan

Our transformation activity

Our council delivers consistently good services and value for money to support our community

Commitment	Action
Get better at how we communicate, inform, consult, engage and co-produce with our communities.	Refresh the Communications Strategy and action plan. Develop a Consultation, Engagement and Co-production Strategy
Be a digital first council, tackling digital exclusion, and delivering the best customer experience we can within the budget we have.	Review the actions in the Customer Service Strategy to ensure we put our customers at the heart of what we do, listening to their feedback and reflecting it in the design and delivery of our services Review the face-to-face provision of customer services Review the Digital Strategy deliver on actions. including agreed governance and deliver on actions
Support and develop our workforce to be confident, well-motivated, and empowered.	Refresh the People Strategy and deliver on the updated action plan. Launch a new training platform, to ensure staff can access mandatory training and professional development opportunities.
Make the best use of our assets and other resources to deliver value for money	Ensure our assets are fit for purpose and deliver on any savings and / or income targets.

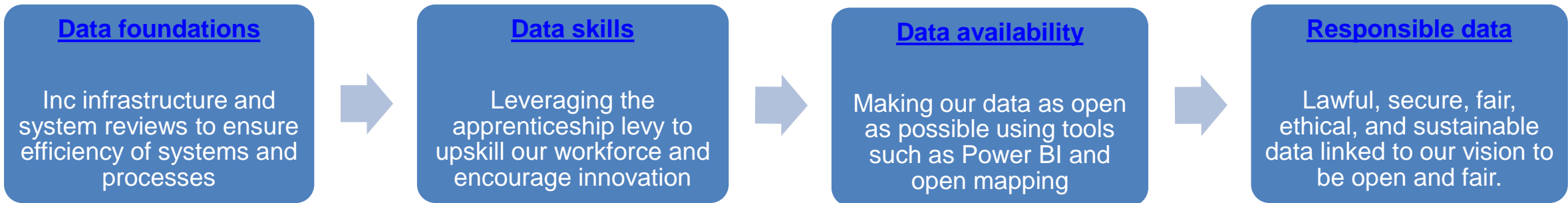
Opportunities to take advantage of advances in technology and make better use of data to inform decision making and service design

Society as a whole is undergoing a transformation driven by advancements in technology including AI, and our ever-growing ability to collect and analyse large amounts of data and the insights this gives across different segments of society. Local authorities are not immune to this and a key challenge for all councils is balancing the pace of technological and data advancement against the demands and needs of our residents. There are opportunities to improve decision-making, optimise resource allocation, and ultimately deliver better services to our residents by harnessing this, but this is not a one size fits all approach.

Our suite of Data, Digital, Information Management and IT strategies set out how we are taking advantage of advances in technology including through generative AI, and how we are making better use of data to inform decision making and service design including via smart data visualisation, demographic segmentation, and predictive analytics.

We are focusing on:

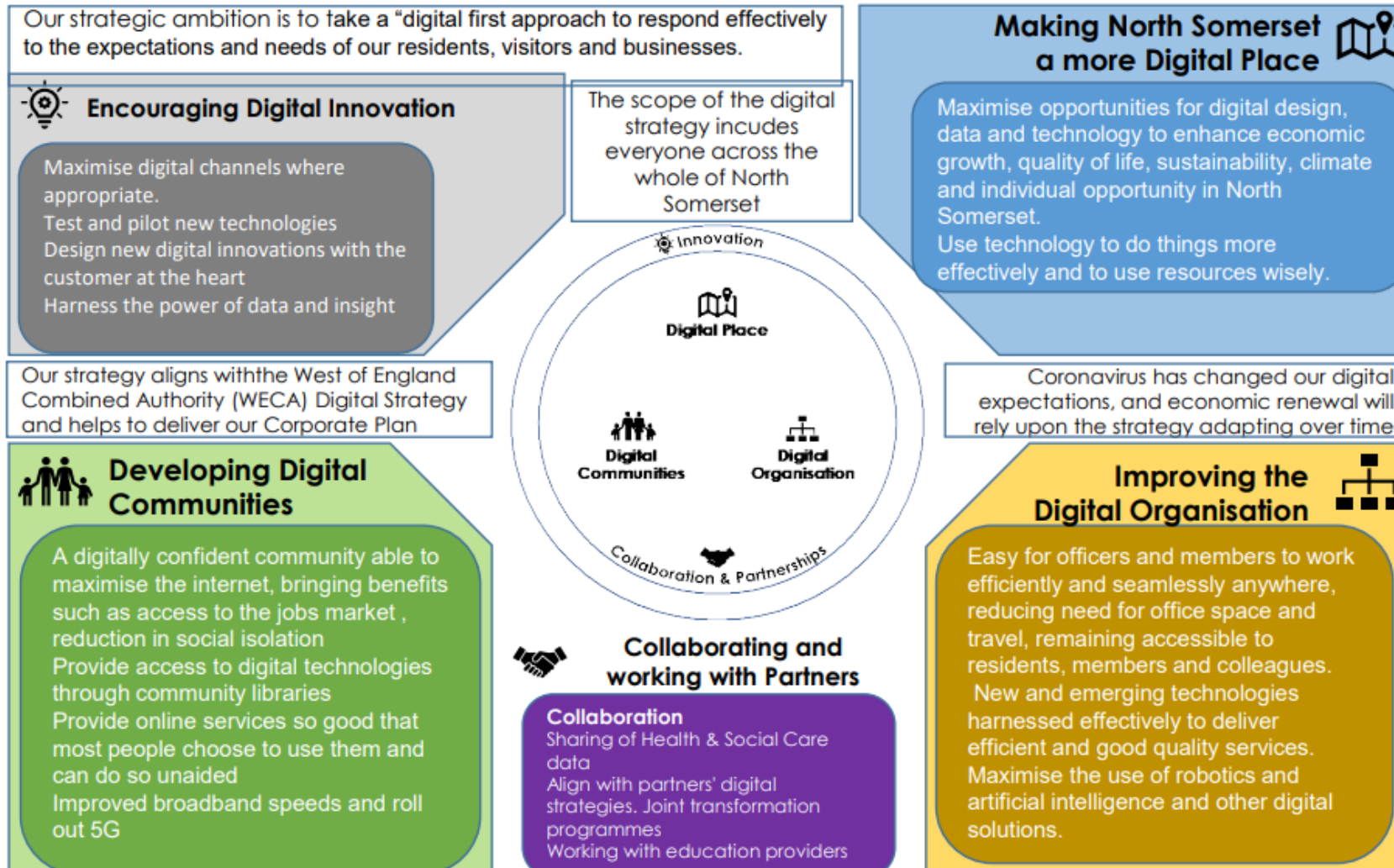
- Analysing and presenting our data and insight ethically and innovatively, making best use of the government's [National Data Strategy](#) framework across the pillars of:



- We are committed to reviewing our progress using the [data maturity framework](#).
- Being an evidence focused organisation that designs services based on the data and insight available and benchmarks our progress via OFLOG and sources such as LG Inform.

Background

- Taking a “digital first” approach to respond effectively to the expectations and needs of our residents, visitors and businesses whilst also considering digital exclusion and the impacts of this. We have linked to the government’s [Digital Strategy](#) to inform this.



The following tables list all the commitments we have made in our Corporate Plan across our ambitions which are linked to data and digital. These are aligned to our ambition to ensure our council delivers consistently good services and value for money. Many of these will have MTFP savings attached. Please note, these are part of the wider [Corporate Plan action plan](#). Outcomes can be found in the accompanying Power BI dashboard.

Commitment	Action	Outcomes
Ensure our decision making is transparent, evidence based, and outcome focused.	Make the best use of our data and information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council is using rich data sets to make evidence-based decisions and evaluate the impact of those decisions Review our provision of open data and ease of access
Be a digital first council, tackling digital exclusion, and delivering the best customer experience we can within the budget we have.	Review the actions in the Customer Service Strategy to ensure we put our customers at the heart of what we do, listening to their feedback and reflecting it in the design and delivery of our services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customers contacting us via our website will receive information and feedback on their request Roll out chat bots to respond to frequent customer questions with high satisfaction received to these tools Pilot new technologies and test them with customers first with an increase in the number of residents signed up to testing groups. An increase in customer satisfaction across all channels or where satisfaction is already high, that is maintained
	Review the face-to-face provision of customer services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fully embed the provision for less complex customer services queries face to face via libraries
	Review the Digital Strategy and deliver on actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand which residents experience digital exclusion and create a plan to support them in accessing council services Introduce Artificial Intelligence technology to deliver services and be confident that resulting decisions are free of discrimination

There are also specific commitments across all our ambitions linked to data and digital, though it should be noted that as an evidence-based organisation, data supports numerous commitments across the Corporate Plan and is used to evidence the outcomes of our activity. Digital enables service delivery.

Commitment	Action
Work with school leaders to improve educational attainment and narrow the gap for our most disadvantaged children and young people across all key stages	Understand and respond to the data on educational outcomes in North Somerset to close the attainment gap for disadvantaged learners
Enable people to maximise their independence, through a focus on empowering communities, information and advice, early intervention and technology enabled care	<p>Make the best use of Technology Enabled Care (TEC) by delivering the actions in the TEC Strategy</p> <p>Review and refresh North Somerset council information sources and Better Health website to improve the provision of information and advice</p>
Enable our residents have good access to leisure, libraries, safe and open spaces, and the natural environment to support their health and wellbeing.	Provide support for reading, literacy and culture, digital information and skills, and accessible community places by delivering the actions in in the Libraries Strategy
Work compassionately with our communities to understand and reduce inequalities by providing opportunities for support to build strengths and meet needs.	Revise our approach to focused community engagement to strengthen local voice, particularly groups who are more marginalised with an increase in qualitative and quantitative data which demonstrates outcomes for different population groups
Support and develop our workforce to be confident, well-motivated, and empowered	Staff have the IT tools and skills they need to do their job.

Ways to reduce wasteful spend within systems

Every four years, following local elections, the council reviews its Corporate Plan. The plan is the over-arching strategy that sets our vision, ambitions, and commitments for the area and for how we want to work as a council. It is the only plan which covers the full range of the council's responsibilities and ensures that all staff are clear about what our commitments are and how we plan to achieve them. By prioritising a clear set of commitments in this way residents can hold us to account on our performance and challenge us to improve. Our Medium-term Financial Plan aims to support the delivery of the Corporate Plan.

We refreshed our Corporate Plan in 2023 with adoption at full council in February 2024. The plan was refreshed using the following approach:

- Evidence based
- Collaborative
- Engagement led
- Forward thinking and innovative

An accompanying action plan was developed, and this guides the work of all staff across the council, being used to inform our annual business plans, any service strategies, team plans and then appraisals.

This is our business planning framework. It ensures that everyone in the organisation is working towards the same commitments and outcomes.



Performance and risk management

We report our progress against the Corporate Plan and accompanying action plan every quarter by reviewing the actions we said we would take, and the impact on any identified outcomes.

Actions are developed using our SMART framework and outcomes are generally quantifiable i.e. an increase or a decrease in something, examples include a decrease in the percentage of young people aged 16-18 not in education, employment or training or an increase in the number of new businesses created.

SPECIFIC	MEASURABLE	ATTAINABLE	RELEVANT	TIME BOUND
S	M	A	R	T
G	O	A	L	S
What are we trying to achieve and why are we trying to achieve it?	How will we measure our progress, how often, and using what tools?	Is it possible for us to achieve this within our capacity and resources?	Does it contribute to our Corporate Plan ambitions?	Are we clear on the timescales linked to our Corporate Plan and MTFP?

Alongside this our [Risk Management Strategy](#) allows us to identify where there are risks to achieving any commitments, actions and outcomes. Risks are reviewed monthly.

Our resources

We will always remember that the money we spend is your money:



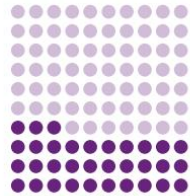
40%

comes from the Government, from the taxes you pay - most of this can only be used for specific purposes like schools or housing benefit



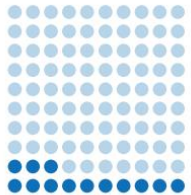
33%

comes from your council tax



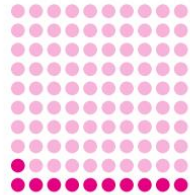
13%

comes from the charges you pay to cover the cost of specific services like planning, licensing, social care, and parking



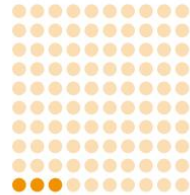
11%

comes from business rates paid by our local business



3%

comes from other sources including investment or rental income



Our resources

For every £100 we receive to fund services, we spend...

£29



£29 caring for adults who need our help

£23



£23 helping children and young people to get the best start in life

£14



£14 other, including support services, elections, and capital financing

£11



£11 on housing benefit for people on low incomes, helping to prevent homelessness

£7



£7 collecting recycling and waste, and looking after our countryside, parks, and beaches

£6



£6 planning and building new affordable homes for local people, major road schemes, and buildings

£3



£3 fixing and maintaining roads, streetlights, and public transport

£3



£3 helping people keep well and stay healthy

£3



£3 to run libraries, registration services, maintaining trading standards and supporting businesses and the economy

£1



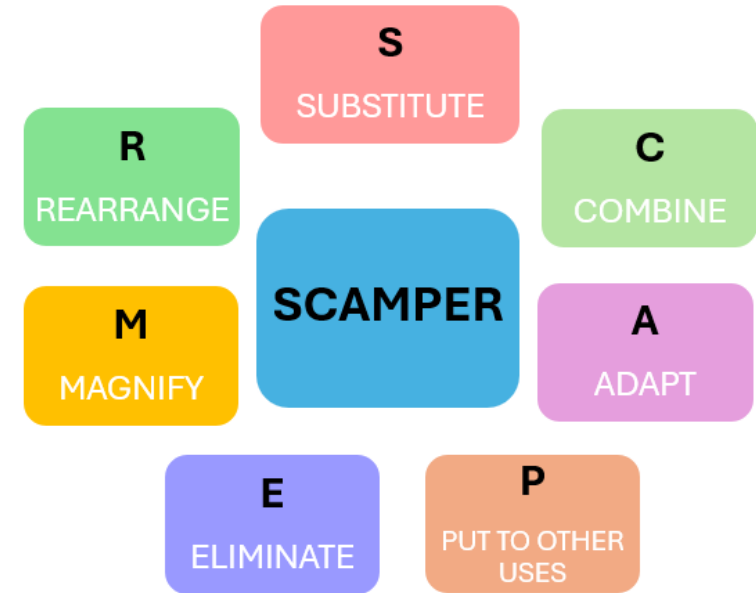
£1 on our online and customer services, enabling people to contact us

As part of our ongoing financial, risk and performance management, we are committed to continually reviewing the provision of our services to identify if they can be delivered more efficiently and/or effectively.

In 2024, we are committed to a council-wide review programme of all services using the SCAMPER model alongside the council’s risk management matrix. All Directorate Leads are being asked to consider the services they deliver and analyse them as follows:

- Substitute - what elements can be substituted?
- Combine - which elements can be combined in a different way?
- Adapt - How can elements be adapted or modified?
- Magnify - How can elements be modified or changed?
- Put to another use - How can elements be used in a different way?
- Eliminate - Which elements can be eliminated?
- Rearrange - How can existing elements be rearranged?

Alongside this, a senior management review is underway to ensure structures and responsibilities are aligned to the Corporate Plan and MTFP delivery.



Risk scoring matrix

		Likelihood				
		Rare	Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Almost certain
Impact	Critical	LOW/MED	MEDIUM	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH
	High	LOW	MEDIUM	MED/HIGH	HIGH	HIGH
	Medium	LOW	LOW/MED	MEDIUM	MED/HIGH	HIGH
	Low	LOW	LOW/MED	LOW/MED	MEDIUM	MEDIUM
	Negligible	LOW	LOW	LOW	LOW/MED	LOW/MED

Barriers preventing activity that government can help to reduce or remove

By identifying and addressing barriers, government can empower local authorities and individuals and communities within the area to deliver on agreed outcomes. For North Somerset this means delivering on the commitments within the Corporate Plan. Barriers can cover a number of areas which are addressed in the coming pages including:

- Information Barriers
- Regulatory Barriers
- Policy barriers
- Infrastructural Barriers
- Societal barriers

...but for local authorities a key barrier is financial.

Local authority 'spending power' – the amount of money authorities have to spend from government grants, council tax and business rates – has fallen in recent years with a reduction in government grant of over 40% in real terms. At the same time, the cost of providing essential services like social care is rising faster than inflation with demand also continuing to increase. Over recent months there have been calls and representations from across the sector, including North Somerset, highlighting the existing pressures and sharp rises in demand for social care services, home to school transport and homelessness services, and requesting additional funding to cover these costs.

Although we have made good progress to reduce the budget gap for the next four years the council's in-year budget pressures are still growing which means that budget preparations for both the short and the medium term continue to be very challenging. Emergency measures have been implemented to manage our spending in the current financial year and we have also revisited our budget planning for the future to make sure it remains robust and allows us to deliver our statutory responsibilities.

Our council delivers consistently good services and value for money to support our community

Our recent corporate peer review has confirmed that NSC is a stable and effective council, delivering significant savings against the backdrop of reduced funding and increased demand. Our external auditors have reflected this in their value for money conclusions, with only minor recommendations for improvement in our governance and processes. Our performance management framework has allowed us to take a continuous improvement approach, with areas of weakness well recognised by political and officer leadership and resourced according to risk (e.g. transformation capacity, capital governance). We take an increasingly robust approach to project assessment, management and benefits realisation to support value for money. Our customer and support services are high performing, ranking well in regional and national benchmarking. We need to take our customer and community engagement to the next level, maximising our digital approach including AI to maintain these good standards and ensure that help is available in a different form for those who need it.

The barriers to achieving this are:

- Short term financial settlements.
- Significant data and reporting burden including lack of join up across government departments in terms of approach to monitoring, reporting and templates.
- Competitive approach to grant funding allocations leading to inability to plan longer term.
- Out of date funding formulae which penalises historically low tax authorities.
- Increasing inequalities leading to greater community need for support and access to services.
- Community health and wellbeing increasing demand led services.
- National approach to behaviour change to reduce environmental impact and lack of substantive funding to achieve net zero.

Our children and young people are cared for, safe, supported, and are given equality of opportunity to thrive

We are strongly committed to delivering on our ambitions and commitments for the children and families of North Somerset, meeting our statutory responsibilities, delivering quality services and working with partners to ensure equality of opportunity and equity of outcome.

Barriers to the delivery of these commitments include:

- Increased needs of children and their families and increased numbers of families facing financial hardship – this means that we are working with more children and families than before placing pressure on our budgets. There are more children needing a social worker, more children experiencing significant harm and more children requiring care than in previous years. We are finding it difficult to attract and retain enough permanent social workers to our teams and as a result are having to spend more on agency social workers to fill the gaps.
- We are also finding it increasingly difficult to find enough local foster homes for the children who can be cared for by their families and this is resulting in increased use for more costly residential care, sometimes outside the local area, which is more costly and means that our workers have to travel further to stay in touch with those children – adding additional financial pressures. There have been changes to legislation and strengthening of regulatory frameworks for children in care and this has had an impact on the number of local providers of some types of care making it more difficult to provide the right types of care. It has been recognised nationally that there are significant problems with the care 'market' for children including high levels of profit making and insufficient competition which is again a barrier to the delivery of effective services.
- Children's Services is quite rightly an area which is subject to significant levels of regulatory oversight and subject to regular council specific and local area inspections by Ofsted and other inspectorates – whilst it provides a helpful overview of the safety of the system, it can take resource away from direct delivery of services.

Our children and young people are cared for, safe, supported, and are given equality of opportunity to thrive CONT...

- There are growing numbers of children with special educational needs. The amount of money available to meet these needs is not sufficient to cover what it costs to meet these needs and so the council is having to work hard to ensure value for money. Our partners in our schools are facing financial challenges which has meant that they are not always able to provide the levels of support that they would like to and as a result more children are requiring additional support from the council. This is an additional financial burden.
- Partners in health are also facing financial challenges and this is resulting in long waiting lists or reduced access to support. There are increasing numbers of children with poor mental health and this is placing additional stress and burdens on families and the council often has to step in to provide additional help.
- North Somerset is a small authority and whilst we work collaboratively with neighbouring authorities, our size can mean that we are not able to compete with larger authorities or have economies of scale to drive cost down.

Our communities are caring, healthy and safe, where people help each other to live well

We want to ensure that all our residents and communities are supported to live well no matter who they are or where they live. We are committed to meeting our statutory responsibilities, delivering quality services and working with partners to ensure equality of opportunity and equity of outcome across all areas.

Barriers to the delivery of these commitments include:

- There is an increase in young people entering adulthood with significant disabilities and mental health needs and care and support provision is limited, these young people will require costly care and support throughout the whole of their adult life.
- People are living longer and in poor health driving demand for care, support and appropriate housing options.
- People are being discharged from hospital much earlier, when they are medically stable but not always fit, this increases the demand on adult services to provide reablement and occupational therapy support.
- Funding from central government via the Better Care Fund is not meeting the increased demand for services or keeping pace with inflationary pressures.
- Due to an increase in demand, people are waiting longer for an assessment of their care and support needs and CQC will want to see robust evidence of management of waiting lists.
- North Somerset is experiencing a population increase and this will continue into 2030, we currently have insufficient supported and extra care housing and larger homes for families. This means that people are living in unsuitable housing and those with care and support needs are entering residential and nursing care when they should be cared for at home.
- There is an increase in mental health needs resulting in high caseloads and access to secondary mental health services is stretched meaning many do not meet the threshold for secondary mental health support.

Our towns and villages are thriving and sustainable places to live, work and visit

We want our towns and villages to be places where all our residents can start, live and age well. We are committed to meeting our statutory responsibilities, delivering quality services and working with partners to ensure equality of opportunity and equity of outcome across all areas.

Barriers to the delivery of these commitments include:

- Recycling rates have plateaued and delivering ongoing behaviour change to minimise waste to landfill will require new measures such as moving to 3 weekly waste collections. Government regulations are inhibiting the ability to achieve this.
- Given the historic condition of our highways and increasing pressures from usage and extreme weather there is insufficient funding to maintain a steady state leading to decline in condition, increasing numbers of potholes etc.
- Demand for home to school transport – particularly for SEND students with complex needs– is growing and alongside increased costs of providing services overall budget requirements are growing significantly year on year.
- Inflation has significantly impacted the cost of delivering key infrastructure projects which are necessary to unlock or support housing growth and a number of these projects are now at risk.
- There are increasing pressures from extreme weather events on the environment and on service delivery including from flooding and drought requiring the need to develop adaptations – this requires further funding and support from government agencies such as EA, NE and regulated providers such as water companies.

Our towns and villages are thriving and sustainable places to live, work and visit CONT...

- Delivery of the council's net zero pathway is constrained by access to investment funding, knowledge and consistent government legislation.
- The planning system continues to be under resourced with nationally set fee levels not covering costs of service delivery and systemic challenges in recruiting qualified planners into the public sector.
- Transport decarbonisation as part of the net zero strategy will require significant behaviour change. Some of this can be supported by programmes such as BSIP and investment in active travel but uncertainty about longevity of both programmes and ability to deliver individual schemes at a local level given complexity and impacts on local communities.

Oflog measures

Indicator (click for source data)	Financial year	North Somerset	Median of North Somerset's similar local authorities	England median (Unitary, Metropolitan and London Boroughs)
Debt servicing as percentage of core spending power	2021-22	7.3%	9.0%	9.0%
Non-ringfenced reserves as percentage of net revenue expenditure	2021-22	58.7%	50.7%	54.9%
Non-ringfenced reserves as percentage of service spend	2021-22	48.7%	46.3%	44.6%
Total core spending power per dwelling	2021-22	£1703.36	£1765.23	£1885.14
Council tax revenue per dwelling	2021-22	£1553.99	£1576.32	£1293.42
Level of band D council tax rates	2021-22	£1505.04	£1593.55	£1554.02
Social care spend as percentage of core spending power	2021-22	62.7%	67.5%	66.4%
Total debt as percentage of core spending power	2021-22	101.0%	163.7%	226.7%
Council tax collection rates (in year)	2021-22	98.0%	97.4%	95.2%
Nondomestic rates collection rates (in year)	2021-22	95.3%	97.2%	96.2%
Number of upheld complaints	2021-22	2.3 per 100,000 population	4.2 per 100,000 population	4.6 per 100,000 population

Office for Local Government

Adult social care

Indicator (click for source data)	Financial year	North Somerset	Median of North Somerset's similar local authorities	England median (Unitary, Metropolitan and London Boroughs)
Requests resulting in a service	2021-22	2085 per 100,000 population	1584 per 100,000 population	1708 per 100,000 population
Workforce turnover rate	2021-22	35.6%	31.9%	29.0%
Carers of people in adult social care quality of life	2021-22	7.2	7.2	7.2
People in adult social care quality of life	2021-22	0.401	0.404	0.409
People who use services who found it easy to find information	2021-22	68.6%	66.8%	65.2%
Carers who found it easy to find information about services	2021-22	54.1%	57.7%	57.3%
Short term service provision	2021-22	46.1%	72.7%	76.4%

Data taken from a range of government returns inc. 903 return, SEN2, CiN Census and PHOF

Indicator (click for source data)	Financial year	North Somerset	South West	England
Children in absolute low-income families	2021-22	10.4%	13.1%	15.3%
School readiness: percentage of children achieving a good level of development at the end of Reception	2022-23	72.3%	68.0%	67.2%
Average attainment 8 score	2022-23	46.5	46.1	46.2
16- to 17-year-olds not in education, employment or training (NEET) or whose activity is not known	2022-23	6.2%	5.8%	5.2%
Pupil absence	2021-22	8.0%	8.0%	7.6%
Pupil exclusion	2021-22	5.2%	8.3%	6.9%
Children in Need	2022-23	241.30 per 10,000 population	311.9 per 10,000 population	342.70 per 10,000 population
Children on a Child Protection Plan	2022-23	25.20 per 10,000 population	40.20 per 10,000 population	43.20 per 10,000 population
Children in Care	2022-23	51.00 per 10,000 population	63.00 per 10,000 population	71.00 per 10,000 population
Children with an EHCP	2021-22	2.9%	4.1%	4.0%

Indicator (click for source data)	Financial year	North Somerset	Median of North Somerset's similar local authorities	England median (Unitary, Metropolitan and London Boroughs)
Percentage of major planning applications decided on time	2020-22	79.1%	90.6%	89.8%
Percentage of major planning applications overturned on appeal	2020-22	3.3%	2.5%	1.4%
Percentage of non-major planning applications decided on time	2020-22	91.8%	83.8%	88.2%
Percentage of non-major planning applications overturned on appeal	2020-22	0.4%	0.7%	0.7%

Indicator (click for source data)	Financial year	North Somerset	Median of North Somerset's similar local authorities	England median (Unitary, Metropolitan and London Boroughs)
Percentage of local authority motorways and A roads that should be considered for maintenance	2022-23	1.0%	3.0%	3.0%
Percentage of local authority B and C roads that should be considered for maintenance	2022-23	5.0%	5.0%	4.0%

Data taken from Public Health Outcomes Framework

Indicator (click for source data)	Financial year	North Somerset	South West	England
Life expectancy at birth (male)	2020-22	80.6 years	80.0 years	78.9 years
Life expectancy at birth (female)	2020-22	83.9 years	83.9 years	82.8 years
Healthy life expectancy at birth (male)	2018-20	61.9 years	64.7 years	63.1 years
Healthy life expectancy at birth (female)	2018-20	68.1 years	65.5 years	63.9 years
Inequality in life expectancy at birth (male)	2018-20	9.5	7.4	9.7
Inequality in life expectancy at birth (female)	2018-20	7.9	5.4	7.9
Homelessness: households owed a duty under the Homelessness Reduction Act	2024	8.2 per 1,000 population	11.2 per 1,000 population	12.4 per 1,000 Population
Homelessness: households in temporary accommodation	2024	0.9 per 1,000 population	1.9 per 1,000 population	4.2 per 1,000 Population

Indicator (click for source data)	Financial year	North Somerset	Median of North Somerset's similar local authorities	English Local Authority median
Further education and skills achievements per 100,000 population aged 19 to 64	2020-22	3,142 per 100,000 population	N/A	3,425 per 100,000 population
Further education and skills achievements per 100,000 population aged 19 to 64 (excluding apprenticeships)	2020-22	2,907 per 100,000 population	N/A	2,826 per 100,000 population
Adults with a Level 3 qualification or higher	2020-22	64.3%	N/A	58.6%

Indicator (click for source data)	Financial year	North Somerset	South West	Great Britain
Workless Households (Jan-Dec 2022)	2020-22	7.7%	12.0%	13.9%
Claimant count by age - not seasonally adjusted age 16+	2024	2.6%	2.7%	3.8%
Earnings by place of work (full time workers)	2023	£617.4	£650.6	£682.6
Earnings by place of residence (full time workers)	2023	£684.9	£663.7	£682.6

Indicator (click for source data)	Financial year	North Somerset	Median of North Somerset's similar local authorities	England median (Unitary, Metropolitan and London Boroughs)
Recycling contamination rate	2021-22	1.1%	6.4%	5.5%
Household waste recycling rate	2021-22	59.5%	54.6%	41.9%
Residual household waste	2021-22	405.1 kg per household	497.3 kg per household	501.1 kg per household

- The Council's [Corporate Plan](#)
- The Council's [Medium-term Financial Plan and Capital Strategy](#)
- [Our accounts](#)
- [Our consultations](#)
- [Our data and insight](#)
- [Our strategies](#)

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