

# Stronger Somerset

## **STRONGER SOMERSET: OUR AMBITIOUS PLAN TO DELIVER A STRONGER FUTURE**

Somerset has been offered a once in a generation chance to improve the lives of everyone in the county.

The long-term challenges faced by our young people, our families, our elderly, our businesses, our rural communities and our towns and parishes can be met head on with new ambition and a new way of delivering for everyone.

Today, Mendip District Council, Sedgemoor District Council, Somerset West & Taunton Council and South Somerset District Council demonstrate how they intend to take that opportunity and launch Stronger Somerset – an ambitious strategy to reform local government.

It's a vision that has emerged from many months of detailed research, planning and consultation from our own councils and with experts in Somerset and across the UK.

Stronger Somerset will:

- Create a stronger economy – delivering increased productivity, higher skills, and better wage levels
- Support great places to live and work with enough homes that are genuinely affordable to local people and the community infrastructure to support them
- Build a Green Somerset by tackling the climate emergency, and creating more green businesses, jobs and sustainable transport to connect our places and communities
- Shape stronger communities with greater power and control devolved to local people over the things that matter to them and ensure the challenges of child poverty, deprivation and isolation are dealt with

This will be achieved through:

- The creation of two new unitary councils for Somerset, to replace the four districts and the county council - these are the right building blocks to ensure in a county of our size, local government remains close, accessible and accountable to the people it serves, and can shape the places it is responsible for.
- Building a Western Somerset Council and an Eastern Somerset Council that focus on the differing challenges, community identities and functional economic areas – councils which have greater local knowledge of where people live and work day-to-day in the county - that exist in what is a large county
- Ensuring these councils work together as part of a wider Combined Authority with the powers and resources needed to drive our economy forward and improve quality of life.

In a joint statement, the Leaders of Somerset's district councils said: "Stronger Somerset is the plan our county needs.

"The district councils of Somerset are already delivering real economic and social impact across our region. Now, our joint plan for change will unleash a new vigour for the creation of high-skilled jobs, opportunities for our young people, clean and green growth, and great care for our vulnerable adults and children.

"Somerset does not need a system focused solely on making savings and centralising power. Somerset deserves better. It needs an ambitious plan that truly focusses on the different needs of its people and places, and that protect the voices of our diverse communities and businesses.

"Stronger Somerset will bring an end to the damaging cuts Somerset County Council has been forced to make because of the pressures it faces in adult and social care, and failing services for children with special needs.

"Central Government has made it clear that it wants a Unitary solution for Somerset but it has to be the right solution that delivers a chance for our county to not only survive, but thrive. Together, we will build a stronger Somerset."

To find out more about the Stronger Somerset proposal and to find out how it will be more deliverable, achievable, financially secure and sustainable than alternative options, please visit [www.strongersomerset.co.uk](http://www.strongersomerset.co.uk).

You can stay up to date with the campaign by following the social media channels of your local district council and the website above will also be regularly updated.