



Press release

For immediate release

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.