



Local Community Network

Shepton LCN meeting notes Monday, 3rd March 2025 Council Chamber, Council Offices, Shepton Mallet and on Microsoft Teams

In person:

Cllr Barry Clarke – Somerset Council
Cllr Rob Reed – Somerset Council
Cllr Jayne Cox – Batcombe PC
Christopher Pearce – Coleford PC
Janice Crewe – Doultong PC
Nick Hall – Pilton PC
Cllr Garfield Kennedy – Shepton Mallet TC
Mary Pearce – Coleford PC
Tom Killen – Ston Easton PC
Simon Baker – Doultong PC
Susan Ehmann – Bus Partnership Rep
Emmaline Kay – LCN Link Officer
Nataliya Wills – LCN Link Officer

Virtual attendees:

Tim Chater – Batcombe PC
Alan Townsend – Coleford PC
Simon Brand – Holcome PC
Estelle and Iain Kirby – Leigh-on-Mendip PC
Robin Horton – Shepton Mallet TC
Simon Collins – Stoke St Michael PC
Kate Hellard - LCN Development and Engagement Manager

1. Welcome and Apologies

The chair of the LCN, Cllr Philip Ham, had sent his apologies. Cllr Martin Lovell offered to chair the meeting, proposed by Cllr Garfield Kennedy and seconded by Cllr Rob Reed.

2. Notes from the previous meeting and actions

Highways and Traffic working group meeting took place on 30 October and actions are being followed up with a number of teams within Highways and Road Safety teams. Another meeting is of high priority and scheduling around the restructure process presented a number of challenges.

3. Local Plan mini-workshop

Introduction to the New Somerset Local Plan

- **Presentation by Allies and Morrison Architects** and Somerset Council's planning team.
- Purpose: Early-stage engagement to shape the Local Plan up to 2045.
- Emphasis on community input to guide development priorities across Somerset.

Key Themes for Local Plan Discussions

Eight core topics were explored in breakout groups:

1. **Decent Homes for All**
2. **Shops and Services**
3. **Health and Wellbeing**
4. **Culture, Community and Play**
5. **Sustainable and Resilient Places**
6. **Character, Heritage and Design**
7. **Movement and Travel**
8. **Education and Employment**

Full details to be presented in a separate document to be used as guidance for future actions and objectives.

Summary of Key Points by Topic

Decent Homes for All

- Need for **affordable housing** that is truly accessible.
- **Mismatch** between housing types and local needs (e.g. elderly downsizing, young families).
- **Infrastructure concerns:** Transport, roads, and services must support housing growth.
- **Neighbourhood Plans:** Existing plans (e.g. Shepton Mallet) should be integrated into the Local Plan.

Shops and Services

- Importance of **broadband, mobile connectivity**, and **community hubs**.
- Support for **mixed-use high streets** and **electric vehicle infrastructure**.
- Development should help **sustain or introduce local services** in under-served villages.

Health and Wellbeing

- **Access to services** is a major issue in rural areas.
- Need for **active travel routes, safe walking paths**, and **volunteering opportunities**.
- Emphasis on **inclusive design** for all ages and abilities.

Culture, Community and Play

- **Volunteering** and **community events** are key to cohesion.
- Discussion on **Glastonbury Festival's impact**—both positive and negative.
- Need for **youth facilities** and **shared cultural infrastructure**.

Sustainable and Resilient Places

- **Flooding and extreme weather** are major concerns.
- Support for **biodiversity initiatives** (e.g. community gardens, hedgerows).
- Interest in **collaborative projects** across parishes (e.g. shared green spaces).

Character, Heritage and Design

- Balance between **preserving heritage** and **modernising for energy efficiency**.

- Call for **bungalows and smaller homes** to meet demographic needs.
- **Consistent design standards** across Somerset.

Movement and Travel

- **Public transport gaps** (e.g. Shepton to Bristol).
- **Cycle paths and active travel** infrastructure are lacking.
- Concerns about **road safety, speed limits, and potholes**.

Education and Employment

- Need for **local employment opportunities** and **higher education access**.
- Support for **start-ups** and **youth retention**.
- Importance of **supporting local schools** and **vocational training**.

4. Asset and Service devolution discussion

Carried forward to be discussed separately and potentially in a meeting with other LCNs to ensure consistency in information sharing.

Actions and Follow-Ups

Local Plan Engagement

- **Continue LCN involvement** in Stage 2 of the Local Plan.
- **Collate feedback** from this session into the engagement report.
- **Share slides and questions** from the presentation with attendees.

Highways and Infrastructure

- **Urgent request** for Somerset Highways officers to attend a future LCN meeting.
- **Clarify responsibilities** under devolution (e.g. gully clearance, grass cutting).
- **Organise a dedicated Highways Working Group meeting** (without waiting for police involvement).

Devolution and Council Structure

- Request for a **clear update on Somerset Council's structure** and responsibilities.
- Clarify **what services will be devolved** to parishes and what support will be provided.

Cross-Parish Collaboration

- Explore **joint biodiversity projects, shared green spaces, and cycle path networks**.
- Encourage **knowledge sharing** (e.g. biodiversity officers, community planning support).

Senior Officer Engagement

- Request for **senior Somerset Council officers** to attend LCN meetings regularly.

- 5. Date and Venues of future meetings held at Council Chamber, Council Offices, Shepton Mallet:**
Tuesday 13th May 2025
Monday 7th July 2025