

Stronger Somerset – *for a better county*

| Stronger Somerset offers the fresh start our county needs. | Stronger Somerset has a plan for the county's needs now and into the future. | We need reform, not just cost-cutting. |
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| <p>From five councils to two new unitary councils. These new councils will be small enough, so they know you and you know them, but big enough to be effective and economic.</p> <p>All residents will come under one council – either Western Somerset or Eastern Somerset.</p> <p>They will cover distinct areas based on local economies. They will align with existing boundaries used by emergency services and the health service.</p> <p>This is the right solution for a county of Somerset's size. They will meet the needs of their local communities and work together for the benefit of the whole county.</p> <p>Independent polling shows residents favour the Stronger Somerset proposal.</p> <p>We also need to operate at a higher level, with one voice for our historic county, drawing in investment and powers needed to make a real difference. Local government reorganisation is the first step on this journey. We envisage a Combined Authority for the historic county ready to deliver a themed devolution deal. One Somerset is silent on devolution.</p> | <p>Somerset lags behind the rest of the UK and is stuck in a vicious circle with 25% of children in Somerset living in poverty, education system not doing enough to create social mobility, too many people young people moving away for better prospects or taking up poorly paid jobs, services for both young people and old people struggling to cope.</p> <p>Somerset is costing the UK taxpayer and failing our people.</p> <p>The Stronger Somerset vision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Stronger local economies, generating wealth for local people, the wider region and UK ✓ Great places to live, work and study, balancing new homes and facilities to support growing and existing communities ✓ A Green Somerset achieving net zero carbon, creating new green businesses and jobs, and protecting our valuable environment ✓ Excellent and affordable services, working in new ways to improve those services that people value most and are vital for our communities ✓ £70m net benefits to services over first 5 years | <p>Reform, not just cost-cutting.</p> <p>Savings made in cutting duplication and support costs greater than One Somerset proposal. Invest in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • data so we can target resources where we most needed • early intervention and work on wider determinants of health and wellbeing to prevent dependency on expensive 'crisis' services • new approaches in adults' and children's services • place-led solutions to reduce demand on services. Villages, towns and communities will be able to choose a level of participation that suits them. <p>Without reform county would go broke. Savings from reorganisation would soon be eaten up by spiralling costs of adults' and children's services, if they continue to be run as they are. One Somerset would simply mean the county would go broke in 5 years instead of 3 years.</p> <p>This is not about simply creating a bigger, cheaper version of what we have now. Moving the deckchairs around and changing the name plate won't cut it.</p> |