

Frome Town Council response to ‘Improving Lives: Somerset Health and Wellbeing Board draft strategy for health and wellbeing’

The following document is the Frome Town Council response to ‘Improving Lives in Somerset’.

The Somerset Health and Wellbeing Board has a vision to improve the lives of everyone living in Somerset and is currently consulting on a new strategy, [Improving Lives in Somerset](#). Residents, organisations and communities are invited to have their say on the draft strategy before it’s finally agreed. You can comment on it by completing a short questionnaire, which is available via this link: www.somerset.gov.uk/improvinglives

The consultation closes on Friday 17th August 2018 and is available in different formats if required by contacting publichealth@somerset.gov.uk / 01823 357266.

Question 1

We have a vision for Somerset. Over the next ten years we want all organisations to work together as a partnership to make Somerset:

- A thriving and productive Somerset that is ambitious, confident and focused on improving people's lives
- A county of resilient, well connected and safe and strong communities working to reduce inequalities
- A County infrastructure that supports affordable housing, economic prosperity and sustainable public services
- A County and environment where all partners, private and voluntary sector, focus on improving the health and wellbeing of all our communities

Do you agree with the overall vision?

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- We strongly agree with the vision described in the draft strategy and believe that if the strategic priorities are achieved the lives of local people will be improved.
 - We would like to see more specific reference within the vision to climate change. This issue is often ignored by strategies and policies but is the biggest threat to humanity we have ever faced and is already affecting food production and prices, migration, local flooding and excess deaths from extreme weather. Over the next ten years these impacts will increase further and will affect health, wellbeing and the local economy. This fits in with the vision of a county of resilient, strong communities, with access to affordable housing and sustainable transport and with improving the health and wellbeing of our communities for example.

Question 2

Do you agree that we are taking the right approach?

- The strategy vision highlights the desire for all organisations to work in partnership to support the delivery of strategic priorities that will improve the lives of people in Somerset. We would agree that partnership working is the right approach to take to achieve this vision and the priorities.
- Aside from partnership working, the approach is not clear – the strategy doesn't say how these priorities will be delivered, only that it will be supported by an action plan. Once this has been developed the approach might become clearer?
- We would also ask if there's an opportunity for local priorities / actions to be developed under the priority headings – working with town council, local organisations etc. to do this? This would feel like a really engaging approach as the needs in various parts of the county are going to be vastly different and local communities are best placed to comment on this and how to deliver against the priorities in their area.
- To support delivery of some of the priorities, a process could be set up (if it doesn't already exist), whereby the H&WB Board is consulted on new housing developments of certain sizes (i.e. over 10 houses, as this is the threshold for providing affordable housing.) We know that Mendip will be reviewing its Local Plan Part 1 in 2019 and this would be an opportunity for the H&WB Board to influence policy. An example of how this can work is DWELL (Designing for Wellbeing in Environments for Later Life), which has been used to support the development of Local Plan policy options related to older people's housing. DWELL investigated how the design of houses and neighbourhoods can facilitate mobility and wellbeing for current and future generations of older people - <http://dwell.group.shef.ac.uk/about/>
- Active involvement of the H&WB Board in the planning process, would be a useful way to influence many of the themes of the strategy, e.g. employment, housing and connectedness. This could be especially impactful when new developments are being considered. For example, we would like to see the Board influencing schemes such as the concept of Selwood Garden Village, in Frome. The creation of the garden village would meet many of the priorities set out within the draft strategy, if done well, and the H&WB Board should be in a position to engage and influence such developments.
- We need to ensure that homes are well designed to minimise heat and cooling demands, creating healthy, affordable homes, designed to create community connections and encourage active travel (with cycle and walking routes, home zone layouts etc.) and for long term needs. There are lots of good examples of this – we need this to become the 'norm' in Frome / Somerset!

Question 3

Do you support the four strategic priorities?

- We strongly agree with all the strategic priorities.
- However, as noted in the response to Question 1, we believe that the issue of climate change should be highlighted within the strategic priorities, as the impact of climate change has the potential to affect the achievement of the strategy vision, even over the course of the next ten years.

Question 4

How relevant is each of the strategic priorities to your organisation?

- As a Town Council we believe that all of the strategic priorities are very relevant to our organisation. We are actively working to deliver against a similar set of priorities locally.

Question 5

How would you like to be involved to support the delivery of the four priorities?

- Frome Town Council has a focus on health and wellbeing, sustainability and resilience and economic regeneration and growth, therefore we are already delivering projects that will support the delivery of Improving Lives and so would welcome the opportunity to be involved both strategically and at a local level in the delivery of the four priorities within the draft strategy.
- We are keen to work with the H&WB Board where possible, feeding in local knowledge and links to local organisations, in order to influence any plans the H&WB Board has for work that comes down from the strategy to our local area.
- Where Somerset led work is planned for our local area we are keen to support and be more involved.
- We would also be keen to support any plans for local engagement around the delivery of the strategy.

Question 6

What support from the health and wellbeing board do you need to achieve this?

- Specific / timely updates from Somerset County Council and the H&WB board on what is being done at a local level to deliver the priorities / actions set out in the H&WB strategy would be helpful.
- We would appreciate the potential to influence any plans for local actions and the opportunity to work more in partnership with county / H&WB board to address issues in Frome.
- Frome can feel very remote from the administrative centre of Somerset– so it would be good to see the H&WB bring roadshows (consultation events too if these are ever held) to Frome and for meetings of the board to be held here on occasion to enable more engagement with organisations and individuals in our town.
- It would also be useful if the H&WB Board had locality representatives – so we have a name to liaise with in terms of delivery of the priorities within the strategy at a local level. We are sure that we are doing a great deal to support delivery that we would also be able to share if this link existed.
- It also needs to be clear what difference this strategy will make to local people – some real examples of where the previous strategy has made a difference could bring it to life and stop it feeling like a list of high level priorities with little meaning to the general public.
- The opportunity to share with and learn from other areas of Somerset is also something the H&WB could lead on.
- It would be helpful to have JSNA data available at a more local level so we can prioritise what we should focus on at a parish level in the future.

Question 7

The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment is a document that sets out the evidence we used to help develop our priorities. Have we used the right evidence to inform 'Improving Lives'?

- Yes, however it would be good to see a series of more local JSNAs to support the board to deliver the right things in the right places – in order not to further exacerbate differences across the county.
- There is also a great deal of anecdotal knowledge and information held at a more local level, which should be used if the H&WB Board ever plans initiatives to address these priorities at this level.