

Frome
TOWN COUNCIL

PLAN
—
2025-27



Find out more about the plan
frome.co.uk

Working together towards a town that works for all

Frome is a vibrant and welcoming place to live, work and visit. Known for creativity and independence, we have a diverse range of shops, businesses, and cultural activities. Nestled in eastern Somerset, surrounded by countryside, attractive villages and with a patchwork of parks and open spaces. We are often cited as an example of an “enterprising town” and praised for our community initiatives.

However, like many market towns, Frome faces challenges and doesn't currently work for everybody. Our young people have limited opportunities, and our local businesses often struggle to grow. The rising cost of housing alongside increasing food and energy prices leave some residents feeling left behind. Others grapple with physical and mental health challenges. Somerset Council, our strategic authority, faces severe financial difficulties and must cut services that offer vital support to vulnerable people. And Frome is not alone —as a country and as a planet, we face both climate and biodiversity emergencies.

The people of Frome, however, are our greatest strength. By working together, supporting each other, and learning from our shared experiences, we can tackle these challenges and build a town that works for all.



Community

While Frome has a vibrant community life, it also faces significant social pressures. A quarter of the town's population is under 18—significantly higher than the Somerset and southwest average of 17%. This youthful demographic brings great energy and potential but also creates growing demands for youth services, mental health support, and extracurricular activities. While local organisations have worked hard to bridge service gaps, more work is needed to ensure young people receive the support they need.

At the other end of the spectrum, 20% of Frome's population is over 65, slightly below the county average of 25%. While this group is smaller than in surrounding areas, the town has developed community-driven solutions to help combat loneliness and provide essential services.



Economy

Frome's economy is largely service based, with creative industries playing a significant role. These sectors, particularly those dependent on tourism and discretionary spending, are vulnerable to economic fluctuations.

Nearby cities like Bath and Bristol offer higher wages and better career opportunities, leading many residents to commute out of town. This creates a weekday population drain and reduces local spending. The current cost-of-living crisis has further impacted small businesses, which face both decreased consumer spending and rising operational cost.



Natural environment

The climate emergency requires both mitigation efforts and adaptation to changing conditions—a global priority with local implications. Frome faces ongoing challenges to protect our natural environment, ensure sustainable development, and enhance biodiversity in our open spaces.

Frome has a diversity of open spaces and local management allows areas to be tailored to community needs, and promote physical and mental health, and social interaction.



Built environment and infrastructure

Recent years have seen surging housing prices, making home ownership increasingly unaffordable, especially for younger generations and those on lower incomes. The shortage of affordable housing - including social and rental homes - led Frome Town Council to declare a housing crisis in 2023. While new developments struggle to meet demand, balancing housing needs with preserving the town's character remains difficult.

Limited public transport has created an over-reliance on cars, leading to congestion. Sustainable travel options, such as cycling and walking routes, remain underdeveloped and poorly connected, often proving impractical for daily use. The train service can be unreliable with long gaps between services.

Who we are

Frome Town Council has a reputation for being bold and ambitious. Our vision is of a town that is sustainable, inclusive and prosperous, with a community that is resilient, happy and able to shape its own future.

Frome Town Council does not provide resource-heavy services like social care, education, waste collection and road management. Instead, our purpose is simple: to make Frome a better place to live and work, for everyone.

With small budgets, limited statutory power, and few traditional responsibilities, we rely on creativity, collaboration, and community energy to get things done. We aim to balance ambition with practical can-do, remaining adaptable and nimble as we grow.

Our funding comes primarily from Council Tax - directly from our community. We are committed to delivering excellent value for money, and ensuring that Frome sees tangible benefits from our work.



What's next?

The golden thread running through our work is building Frome's economic, social, and environmental resilience—ensuring our town can weather wider challenges.

This strategy outlines the overarching aims that guide everything we do as a town council, and our specific priorities for the year ahead. It is based on extensive engagement with residents, businesses, and community groups, ensuring our work reflects Frome's shared needs and aspirations.

As Somerset Council devolves services and assets, Frome Town Council faces greater responsibilities. We believe this local ownership will lead to better outcomes for our town. We cannot achieve these aims alone; we need to work in partnership with our community and draw on the knowledge and passion of others who are already working to support a resilient Frome.

We know we can't do everything at once - trying to do too many things would make us less effective. That's why for each of our aims, we've chosen key priorities for the year ahead that are practical, achievable, and focused on delivering visible outcomes.

How we work

We work in many ways, including:

- ◆ We **advocate** for our town and its needs, and try to ensure all voices are heard, particularly those which might otherwise be overlooked.
- ◆ We help to **coordinate** local organisations - like Somerset Council, health services, emergency services, and community groups - to work better together and achieve more.
- ◆ We **connect** people with local services and available support.
- ◆ We **nurture** new community initiatives and help develop innovative solutions to local challenges.
- ◆ We **protect and enhance** vital community assets, and manage key open spaces including Victoria Park, the Old Showfield, and Rodden Meadow.
- ◆ We **organise** town events throughout the year, from drone shows to the Christmas Lights switch-on, and enable other organisations to hold events.
- ◆ We **co-design** projects, spaces and events with partners and the community.

Aim one: Grow community wellbeing

Our goal is to strengthen the town's social fabric by supporting community initiatives, improving access to services, and fostering a sense of belonging and mutual support.

We envision a town where everyone feels valued and connected, with a strong sense of community cohesion.

What we've been doing

In our previous strategy, we prioritised addressing the cost-of-living crisis.

We established a community hub at the Town Hall to connect people with available support, increased our backing for community groups and organisations, and used our communication channels to raise awareness of the help on offer.

We also enhanced our support for Fair Frome, the local food bank, while continuing neighbourhood initiatives to strengthen local connections and promote community cohesion.

Priorities for the year ahead

Looking forward, we aim to help strengthen Frome's ability to provide early help services, ensuring support is available before people reach crisis point. We hope this will act as a safeguard against the impact of service cuts from external organisations.

Frome is fortunate to have many volunteer-led community organisations, but these groups need greater support to survive and thrive. A key challenge they face is access to affordable and truly accessible spaces.



Key outcomes

- ◆ A network of community spaces that support the health and wellbeing of young people, families, and the most vulnerable in our community
- ◆ Well-run and thriving community groups, with access to funding and other forms of support
- ◆ Open spaces that support community wellbeing through play and physical activity for people of all ages

Aim two: Support a thriving town

Our goal is to foster a vibrant local economy by supporting independent businesses, enhancing cultural and recreational opportunities, and attracting new investment.

This includes reimagining the town centre as a dynamic hub of commerce, creativity, and community life.

What we've been doing

In our previous strategy, we identified the town centre as a key priority. While much of the responsibility lies with Somerset Council, we've taken meaningful steps to make a positive impact.

We've hired a town centre ranger to enhance cleanliness and appearance, are developing a new Discover Frome website, and continued promoting tourism.

In response to local banking challenges, we partnered with Prosper Frome to establish a banking hub in town.

Priorities for the year ahead

The town centre should be cleaner, more attractive, and feel safer and more welcoming to everyone. It's the heart of Frome, and we want everyone to take pride in it. Importantly, for the health of our local economy, we also need more visitors to support our town centre businesses.

Through devolution, we plan to work closely with local businesses and cultural organisations to drive economic development, boost the visitor economy, enhance markets, and create youth training opportunities.



Key outcomes

- ◆ A cleaner, more visually appealing town centre with better waste management and increased recycling
- ◆ Reduced number of vacant shops
- ◆ Increased visitor and resident footfall to support our local businesses

Aim three: Cultivate environmental sustainability

Global challenges have local impacts—and often local solutions. Our goal is to support sustainable practices across Frome, with a focus on cleaner energy, energy-efficient buildings, improved transport, and waste reduction.

Frome's green and open spaces are a vital resource for achieving these goals, supporting biodiversity, climate action, wellbeing, community gatherings, and active travel.

What we've been doing

Through our innovative partnership with Edventure and Frome Medical Practice, Green and Healthy Frome, we're exploring how climate action can improve health and save residents money. We have worked in partnership to deliver a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan and a landmark Safer School Streets project.

Frome's open spaces are highly valued by residents and essential for wildlife. We manage these spaces to be inclusive, biodiverse, playful, and active, and we're proud of how frequently they're used by the community.

Priorities for the year ahead

We aim to secure more spaces for residents of Frome this year. Working with neighbourhoods, we'll help deliver what's needed and create a green network of safe walking and cycling routes with thriving wildlife corridors. Our goal is to create more and better spaces for both people and nature.

We all need to work together to tackle the climate crisis. We will coordinate activity in the town by creating a new Climate Action Plan for Frome, looking at how we can tackle everything from retrofit and green energy generation, to food resilience and reducing waste.



Key outcomes

- ◆ Spaces for everyone to feel safe whilst enjoying green surroundings and play for all
- ◆ More community food growing and improved biodiversity across the town
- ◆ A Climate Action Plan for Frome
- ◆ Progress toward establishing a Reuse Centre

Aim four: Improve assets and infrastructure

Our goal is to ensure Frome has the physical and organisational infrastructure to support its growth, with well-maintained public buildings and green spaces, and reliable transport links.

We aim to address the housing crisis by working with others to secure sufficient housing of appropriate types, and to achieve the best outcomes for Frome.

What we've been doing

We've worked to ensure our public buildings and green spaces are well cared for and accessible to all, including taking on additional responsibilities from Somerset Council.

We advocate for sustainable and affordable housing that meets the needs of Frome's residents. This includes contributing to discussions to push for better infrastructure and housing outcomes for the community.

We've also prioritised initiatives that promote active travel, including plans for safer walking and cycling routes, helping connect neighbourhoods and green spaces.

Priorities for the year ahead

In 2024 we commissioned a data profile for the town which revealed that Frome receives less external grant funding than comparable towns. As an ambitious council and community, we are determined to change this, securing the resources needed to achieve our goals.

We also aim to strengthen our influence over local spending decisions made by other organisations, ensuring that our understanding of the town's needs helps direct investments and improve infrastructure as Frome continues to grow.



Key outcomes

- ◆ Increased external funding for council and community projects
- ◆ More investment in our town centre
- ◆ A Frome Fund to attract larger funding streams and distribute resources effectively where they're most needed
- ◆ Progress toward delivery of the infrastructure and housing we need through working with developers throughout the planning process

Aim five: Be a bold and effective town council

We aim to continuously improve how we work through innovative approaches, learning from experience, and adapting to new circumstances. We are committed to making the most effective use of the resources available to us.

We are also committed to providing clear and transparent communication, enabling everyone who wants to take part in decision-making to do so, and supporting more people to participate in local civic life.

What we've been doing

Frome Town Council has worked hard to ensure transparency and efficiency in how we operate.

We've improved access to council meetings through livestreaming and online archives, making decision-making more visible and inclusive.

Similarly recognising the importance of a responsive workforce, we've invested in staff training and development to ensure our team is equipped to meet the evolving needs of the town.

Priorities for the year ahead

As our council grows and manages more resources, efficient use becomes increasingly vital. Clear decision-making processes are important for trust and accountability. We want to continue questioning how we allocate our resources and challenging ourselves to work as efficiently and effectively as possible.

Frome Town Council and Somerset Council have distinct roles. By helping people understand what each council does, we can better support them in having their voices heard, in active decision-making and in accessing the support they need.



Key outcomes

- ◆ Improved governance through a comprehensive review of decision-making processes
- ◆ More efficient use of resources, including a flexible staff structure that supports both our long-term vision and immediate priorities
- ◆ An increase in public understanding of Frome Town Council's role and Somerset Council's responsibilities
- ◆ More participation in council decision-making, and use of a new civic engagement digital platform

Get involved

At a time of uncertainty and growing challenges, Frome Town Council is determined to step up and deliver for our community. But we can't do it alone.

We need your ideas, energy, and engagement to help shape a town we can all be proud of.

Join us, challenge us, and help us build a Frome that works for everyone.



Credit: Phil Blakemore

Get in touch

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Frome Town Hall
Christchurch St West
BA11 1EB

Monday-Thursday: 9am-5pm

Friday: 9am-4:30pm

Weekends: Closed

Talk to your councillor

Our 17 Frome Town Councillors work across 8 wards in Frome.

Find your ward councillor/s:
frometowncouncil.gov.uk/councillors

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