

Projects paused as authorities respond to Coronavirus

Several major projects are being unavoidably paused or delayed as councils and health services deal with the impacts of the Coronavirus emergency.

Reduced staffing, redeployment of staff to support the vulnerable, supply chain disruption and the impacts of self-isolation and travel restrictions are all having an impact.

Together they mean some key pieces of work are having to be rescheduled and start dates pushed back.

Some of the key services or projects affected include:

- M5 Junction 25 improvements – works continue with a reduced workforce on site. This is in line with current Government policy, which is that construction activity can continue as long as Public Health England guidance on social distancing is maintained.
- Toneway Creech Castle junction improvements – planned to start on 14 April, this will now be paused until at least July in light of uncertainty over materials, sub-contractors and key utilities work. It will also allow contractor Alun Griffiths to focus its resources on the M5 Junction 25 project.
- Recycle More – Somerset Waste Partnership (SWP) is pausing the introduction of the new service that will increase the range of materials that can be recycled from the kerbside. This is due to disruption of essential depot upgrades, delays to deliveries of new recycling containers and the inability to carry out large-scale public engagement and communication.
- Climate Emergency Strategy – completion of the cross-council draft strategy, and consultation on it, will be delayed until the current crisis is over. The draft strategy was scheduled to be published in April, consulted on in April and May, and the final strategy due to go to councils for final approval in July.

- Climate Change Fund – applications to Somerset County Council’s £1m Climate Change Fund were due to be invited from 1 May. This will be reviewed and launched as soon as possible.
- Highways – all planned highway maintenance works, including Small Improvement Schemes, are now suspended. This will allow Somerset County Council highways teams to focus resources on safety repairs and emergency works to ensure safe passage for emergency services, key workers and deliveries of supplies.
- The Fit For My Future programme – Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group and Somerset County Council’s strategy development for future health and care services will be paused for 4-6 months from mid-April, to focus on the immediate health and care challenges. Public consultation and engagement events have been cancelled but people can still give their views online at www.fitformyfuture.org.uk until 12 April 2020.
- SCC major building projects (including Polden Bower Special School, Bishop Fox’s extension, new Somerton school, Willowdown expansion, iAero, the SEIC – Somerset Energy and Innovation Centre and County Hall A Block) – works continue, but may be subject to delay (see notes to editors)

Please note, all the above projects are being continually reviewed in light of changing Government instructions and subject to change.