

# **Somerset County Council and the Transition Movement**

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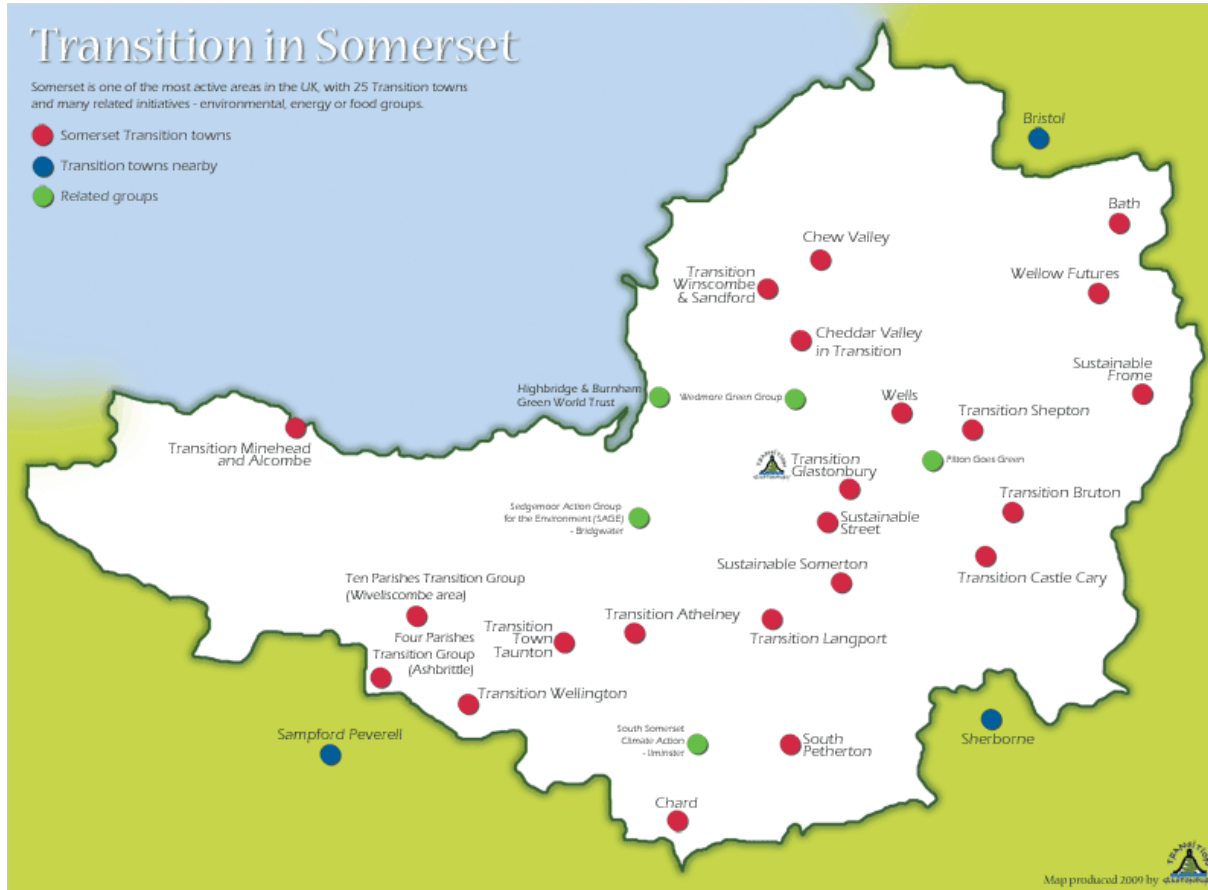
# What is Transition?

- Community action set up to tackle the twin challenges and opportunities of Peak Oil and Climate Change
- Grass roots call for “relocalisation”
- Reduce consumption, produce locally
- Building community resilience

# Transition in Somerset

- At least 23 groups in Somerset
- Mixture of towns, villages & parishes
- From Frome to Minehead, Cheddar to Chard (Tatworth)
- Transition Somerset Network

# Transition Groups in Somerset



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# Somerset County Council & Transition

- Historic resolution July 2008
- Somerset County Council voted to become UK's first Transition Authority
- Unanimous decision!
- Commitments made

# The Resolution

- Acknowledges the work being done by Transition communities in Somerset and their independence
- Endorses the Transition Towns movement and subscribes to their principles & goals to reduce dependence on fuel oil and create more sustainable communities
- Commit to providing support and assistance to towns in Somerset wanting to achieve Transition status – especially in relation to moving to low carbon economy (Climate Change Strategy)
- Requests committees to consider allocating funds to support Transition and requiring all Directorates to engage & provide support for Transition initiatives
- Seeks to become first Transition Authority in UK
- Agrees to undertake a review of budgets & services to achieve a reduction in dependence on fuel oil, and produce an energy descent plan in line with Transition principles

# What has happened since?

- Meetings with Council members early 2009 – two way process
- Transition Training – April 2009
- Mapping exercise from March 2009 – nearing completion
- County Council elections June 2009 – new administration
- SCC signs up to 10:10 campaign



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# Mapping exercise – the first step

- How far do SCC's current policies & activities already support Transition Movement's objectives
- Identify gaps
- Make recommendations for next steps
- Questionnaire – across SCC departments
- Twelve broad themes:
  - Food & Farming, Medicine & Health, Education, Economy, Transport, Energy, Housing & Development, Building Communities & Local Governance, Social issues, Waste & Water, Land & Environment, Tourism & Culture

# Key findings of the mapping (1)

- Sustainable Community Strategy – vision for 2026 could be read as Transition document
- Many SCC services already working in ‘Transitional Way’ – Energy, Waste services, Land & Environment, Transport
- Some inconsistencies & contradictory policies – need to identify these
- More joined up thinking needed eg Economy, Health & Well-being, Housing & Development
- Need to raise profile of resolution and commitments, and share learning
- Cooperation with District Councils essential to achieve Transition

## Key findings of the mapping (2)

- Need to explore contingency plans for fossil fuel dependence
- Identify policies which conflict with sustainability principles
- Need for training for members, managers & officers to raise awareness & understanding of key issues
- SCC should begin working on Energy Descent Action Plan
- But: “SCC must find the balance between the need to protect the local environment & economy and its requirement to ‘do business’ with the rest of the world”

# Mapping: Some exemplar projects

## Education

- Sustainable Somerset Project
  - Somerset Skills & Learning
  - £1/4m from the Learning Revolution Transformation Fund before April 2010
  - Aims to put sustainable development at the heart of informal learning
  - Supporting local communities to develop skills of sustainable living and working
  - Includes Transition Towns week
  - Events & courses in each District
  - Opening up learning centres to community groups



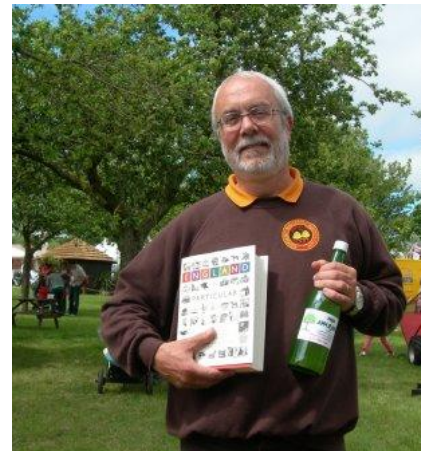
SUSTAINABLE  
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# Mapping: Some exemplar projects

## Food and Farming

- Somerset Landscape Scheme – grants for community orchards
- Gabriel's Orchard, Pilton



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# Mapping: Some exemplar projects

## Economy

- West Somerset Local Action for Rural Communities Programme
- Hosted & administered by SCC
- Cross-cutting theme: Western Somerset working towards a low carbon economy
- £2.25m - Funding for projects to stimulate economy sustainably



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# Mapping: Some exemplar projects

## Energy

- Somerset Wind Energy Initiative
- Charterhouse Centre – Mendip AONB
- SCC Watts On Energy Awareness Campaign
- Carbon management programme



County Hall Energy Awareness Campaign:  
**You Control Climate Change!**

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# Mapping: Some exemplar projects

## Waste

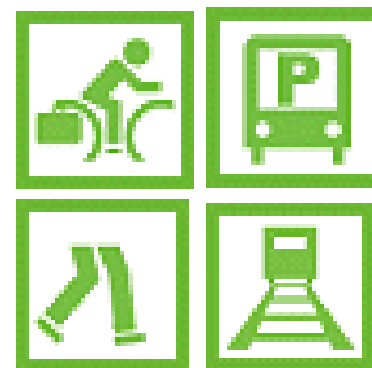
- Somerset Waste Action Programme
- Established from Somerset Waste Partnership
- Work from Carymoor Environmental Centre
- Visit schools & community groups to promote waste minimisation
- Promote 3 Rs – reduce, re-use, recycle



# Mapping: Some exemplar projects

## Transport

- iOn Travel website
- Part of SCC Moving Somerset Forward Campaign to encourage smarter travel choices
- Aimed at developers & travel planning coordinators – set up travel plans
- Helps track progress in managing commuting travel & business mileage
- Records progress in reducing CO2 emissions



# Mapping: Some exemplar projects

## Tourism

- Seven car-free itineraries
- Produced by Somerset Tourism Partnership with input from SCC
- Seven days out to enable people to enjoy Somerset without using their car
- Take in explorations of county's culture & legends



# What next?

- Complete mapping project
- Release report
- Briefing for SCC Council
- Guidance given on the way forward
- Allocate resources?
- Action plan?
- Review budgets & services to reduce dependence on fuel oil?
- Produce energy descent plan?
- Support for Transition Somerset?
- A long way to go....