



19TH October 2021

Good evening, Mayor and Councillors.

➤ LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION

- As we go to press, we are still awaiting the publication of the Statutory Change Order, that is required to reorganise local government in Somerset.
- There has been much speculation as to what this will entail, including extending the timeframe of the next authority from 4 to 5 years for their first term. There is also speculation that elections to the new authority will be delayed until 2023, when the dissolution of the District Councils is due to happen. However, this is all speculation, and until the Secretary of State of the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (SoSDLUHC) issues his Statutory Change Notice to go before Parliament, it is just that.
- Meanwhile, all 5 councils are standing up committees and organisations to oversee the transition from 5 to 1 authority. Leaders and CEOs, as well as other officers of the councils are regularly meeting to plan for the new authority.

➤ SOMERSET WASTE PARTNERSHIP (SWP)

- Our daily updates have now ceased as it appears, at the moment, that the services have returned to normal. Some collections are being missed, but those are factored in as part of the natural service delivery, where unforeseen circumstances may impact of the collection of waste or recycling, such as vehicle breaking down or road closures. However, missed collections will be returned for as soon as practicable, rather than missed altogether, which was happening at the height of the collection crisis earlier.
- Recycle More, will soon be introduced into Somerset West and Taunton, with the resulting uptick of greater recycling rates expanding across the county. This will build on our reputation as one of the highest areas for recycling in the country.
- As a footnote, Cllr Hamilton was astounded to learn recently, that in parts of the country, some authorities still have not changed their waste collection contracts to collect food waste or glass from doorsteps.

➤ SSSDC MEETINGS

- The return of the interactive live meeting will be coming to Westlands this Thursday.
- At our last virtual meeting in September, our member for Milborne Port, Sarah Dyke moved an Emergency Motion to **'End Misogyny and Male Violence against Women and Girls.'**



- As part of the motion, the District Council resolved 'To ensure that SSDC continues to do everything in its power to build a district free from misogyny and violence against women and girls.' This would involve a range of measure, including but not limited to investing in vital services, listening and responding to concerns 'and calling out misogyny and sexism wherever we see or hear it'.
- After a lengthy and passionate debate from all sides of the chamber and on-line, the motion was passed.
- This brought us in line with a lot of councils, both large and small, up and down the country.
- You can see the full debate by following the links to our YouTube channel below and looking for our 16th September stream.

➤ CHARD LEISURE CENTRE

- Councillors may be aware of the recent announcement about the new Chard Leisure Centre opening its doors in early November. A date of the 8th November has been given and the centre will certainly be a huge asset, not just for Chard but to the surrounding areas as well.
- With direct bus connections to/from Ilminster, it will be an easier destination than Crewkerne for those who don't have access to cars, and there is always the cycle track just to give the endorphins an additional boost!
- This new facility should prove to be a popular destination. Based on the amount of interest that it has generated it is likely to see people drawn to the town regularly, who would normally only visit infrequently.
- This is more than just replacing the lost swimming pool. The building will provide access to gym suites, fitness studios, a children's soft play area and café.

➤ CLIMATE AND ECOLOGY

- SSDC recently launched a survey aimed at businesses and how to address the climate and ecological emergency. Our officers are looking to business to find out what the council can offer them in the way of advice and support to help businesses become greener. By conducting this survey, it will help our officers identify examples of good environmental practice within our business community and pass on lessons to others.

The Green Business Survey can be found on the SSDC website at:
<https://consultation.southsomerset.gov.uk/strategy-commissioning/business-survey-addressing-the-climate-and-ecologi/> and closes on the 5th November 2021.

➤ CONSULTATIONS

- A358



As you may be aware, National Highways (formerly Highways England) has launched a consultation on the proposed upgrade of the A358 between Taunton and our own Southfields roundabout. The consultation can be accessed via the National Highways website at: <https://highwaysengland.co.uk/our-work/south-west/a358-taunton-to-southfields/>

There will also be nine online question and answer events, together with three public consultation events being held at:

Taunton Racecourse – Tuesday 19th October, 2-8pm

Monks Yard – Saturday 23rd October, 11am-6pm

Holiday Inn Taunton – Wednesday 3rd November, 11am-6pm

Further details of all the events can be found on the SSDC website at:

<https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/news/2021/10/consultation-launches-on-new-designs-for-a358-taunton-to-southfields-upgrade/>

Tourism: Food and Drink

The deadline for the food and drink map survey/questionnaire has been extended to the 31st October 2021. This can be found at the following link:

<https://consultation.southsomerset.gov.uk/service-delivery/copy-of-food-and-drink-directory-survey/>

This survey/questionnaire follows on from the successful online food and drink directory which was created out of the chaos of Covid-19. The results of this produced an interactive map with listings of our food, drink and hospitality businesses across the district.

We would encourage any business to get in touch with our tourism team and get themselves listed on the new website. Our team can be contacted by following the link at: <https://www.visitsouthsomerset.com/plan/tourism-trade-enquiries.htm>
Where you can also find a link to the latest Tourism Newsletters.

Cllr Val Keitch

Cllr Brian Hamilton



INFORMATION REFERENCES:

Links to South Somerset District Council's agendas, minutes and other useful information can be found at the following links:



YouTube recordings of SSDC meetings:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSDst3IHGj9WoGnwJGF_soA



SSDC agendas, minutes and decisions can all be found either through the 'Modern.Gov' application or by following the link:

<https://modgov.southsomerset.gov.uk/uuCoverPage.aspx?bcr=1>



For a guide to vaccinations in Somerset, visit:

<https://www.somersetccg.nhs.uk/health/local-services/health-services-during-coronavirus/covid-19-vaccinations-in-somerset/>



Coronavirus. For information on a range of different support that is available visit: www.southsomerset.gov.uk/coronavirus

For more information on the Self Isolation payments –

<https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/life-events/coronavirus-support/covid-19-test-trace-support-payment/>



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Somerset Unitarisation Consultation:

<https://consult.communities.gov.uk/governance-reform-and-democracy/somerset/>



Somerset Waste Partnership: <https://www.somersetwaste.gov.uk/>

Recycle More: <https://www.somersetwaste.gov.uk/recycle-more/>

Recycle More South Somerset:

<https://www.somersetwaste.gov.uk/rmheadssouth/>

SSDC NEWS:



Links to South Somerset District Council's latest news stories can be found at the following link: <https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/news/>