

ILMINSTER DIVISION COUNTY/DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORT OCTOBER 2017

SCC SALE OF COUNTY FARMS

As mentioned in my Sept. report, despite a task & finish group being set up to review current policy, notice of sales has continued, causing some dismay amongst the local community. At the time of writing I was not able to attend the relevant Scrutiny meeting relating to this but did submit a statement, which despite my request, was not read out.

Asset Rationalisation and Review of the Corporate Asset Management Plan

An Officer Key Decision is due to be made on 8 Nov. by the Cabinet Member for Resources and Economic Development. The decision report sets the approach towards assets and disposals, reflected in a new Corporate Asset Management Plan for the SCC, this includes:

- Clarity regarding SCC's overall policy of continued rationalisation
- Recognition that SCC's assets are corporately managed rather than "belonging to" individual services
- A more proactive intelligence-driven approach to disposals, informed by service priorities, targets and resources, delivered centrally to meet current challenges
- A clear preference for reducing our leasehold estate
- Transparency and visibility of property costs and receipts
- Focus on SCC's property estate as a flexible, low cost, sustainable and revenue generating portfolio.

The Corporate Property Group will conduct a review of all assets and land holdings to determine the business case for disposal, commercial use or strategic retention over the coming months, with a view to dealing with each asset on a case by case basis. The review is expected to be completed for decisions to be taken in the Spring/Summer of 2018.

In the meantime, decisions related to asset disposal will continue to be managed through the existing, standard governance routes. This includes adherence to the Cabinet Member Key Decision of 18th October 2010 in respect of County Farms and farm land.

DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE (DSFRS)

I have attended my first meeting of the authority as the SCC representative. Details were given by the police of a new shared digital information initiative, enabling the relevant services to work more closely in collaboration. I have also been appointed to the Appointments Panel, with a view to current recruitment activity for Red One Ltd., the commercial arm of the service.

SCC POLICIES, ADULTS & HEALTH SCRUTINY

A report from the NHS 111 service and the CCG has highlighted a number of failings. Reablement and the new Home First discharge service has been set up to ensure a smoother transition from hospital to home. I also attended a workshop relating to end of life care and the need for those service providers involved to work more closely together to take into account personal circumstances to ensure a dignified end to life.

SCC SOCIAL SERVICES

I have lodged a formal complaint in relation to issues with the care of a local elderly couple, where I continue to be involved in attempting to resolve a very unsatisfactory situation.

CHARD HOSPITAL

The temporary closure of the inpatient ward at Chard has been widely published.

SSDC TRANSFORMATION

Documents have recently been released, outlining details of the first stage of the ongoing transformation of the services provided by SSDC. This includes several changes within Area West in relation to key personnel, including the Development Manager Dave Norris, who will be departing in Dec.

SSDC LOCAL PLAN REVIEW

The review will cover the period 2014 to 2034. At this stage SSDC are consulting on the issues and options that have emerged thus far. The consultation period is from **26th Oct. to 11th Jan. 2018**. The document considers options for the location of future growth, identifying potential new sites for housing, employment etc. in towns and villages across the District. The summary details, with option maps, evidence base, and a consultation response form, can be viewed at Brympton Way, and The Lace Mill, Chard as well as local libraries, or found at <https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/issuesandoptions>.

There will be public drop-in sessions where officers will be on hand. Locally these are :-

- 9 Nov. – Swanmead School, Ilminster (4.30pm-7.30pm)
- 21 Nov. – Guildhall, Chard (4pm-7pm)
- 4 Dec.– SSDC offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil (4pm-7pm)

All representations will be publicly available and may also appear on the SSDC website.

Contact the Spatial Policy Team on 01935 462462 or

planningpolicy@southsomerset.gov.uk

SSDC PLANNING UPDATE

Workshops for PCs were well attended. Although planning fees have been introduced, telephone advice is still free, as is advice relating to agriculture applications and parish/town councils. During the training, the fact that a balanced and unambiguous view of applications, with support or objections relating specifically to planning issues, from PCs was reiterated. Confirmation was received that PCs are expected to provide response within 21 days, in order to allow determination within the required 6-week period. The public process relating to consultation over the review of the Local Plan was outlined. There was admission that growth distribution to meet housing targets for the 5-year land supply, has been disproportionately greater than expected in rural areas, outside preferred areas of growth, largely through smaller sites, resulting in a negative impact on infrastructure. Mention was also made of the lack of financial viability for building a new town in the area. In relation to development in rural settlements, current criteria under SS2 is under review. Allocated employment sites are not being developed across the district, with specific mention made of the Horlicks site.

SSDC LICENSING

Discretionary fees are to be introduced pre-application advice. There will be exemptions for educational institutes, buildings used for religious purposes, village and community halls and non-profit making charities.

RIGHTS OF WAY (RoW)

This month I have met with both local residents and SCC officers in relation to a number of issues concerning the processing of applications, the enormous backlog (several years) and the registering of objections.

CANAL WAY DEVELOPMENT

Discussion of this application at Regulation Committee has once again been deferred to allow officers to consider new evidence. Locally, small groups have been formed to look at such issues as transport, infrastructure and the impact on the environment.

RESIDENT PARKING SCHEMES

The current policy relating to this is under review and local communities will have the opportunity for input. The new policy introduces a simpler approach for residents to request that parking restrictions are considered or revised, without the previous requirement to appoint a local scheme champion who was expected to undertake complex and potentially contentious consultation with residents in the area. Consultation will be undertaken once the initial demand for a scheme has been identified. The revised policy will ensure the wider area will be considered along with the impact on non-residents e.g. businesses.

ILMINSTER NIPPY BUS

I have been contacted by a number of local residents concerned about the sudden cessation of the service, and have received the following information from SCC this week, who have stepped in to organise alternative transport.

SCC was given no prior notice of the decision taken by Nippybus to cease operating. Nippybus ran several school and public bus contracts as well as demand responsive transport (DRT) services and private services. Over 300 students were affected across 4 schools. Although the majority of services did run, some were delayed by up to an hour. With the support of other operators, SCC has managed to find temporary replacement services for all routes, and will be making permanent arrangements as soon as possible. SCC has also been working with bus operators to find replacements for public bus services. County Tickets will be valid on all replacement services.

N6/N8/N11 – Demand Responsive services

In the short term SCC are talking to Community Transport providers about establishing a limited Dial-a-Ride service in the areas previously served by Nippybus DRT. It is hoped that details will be available by the end of this week.

SCC SCHOOL TRAVEL POLICY

SCC is reviewing this policy. Due to financial pressures they are proposing to remove the final few discretionary elements from the policy. Currently, school transport is provided for around 9500 pupils to schools at a cost of £11.5m. p.a. Savings made as part of the proposals are hard to quantify at this stage due to protection arrangements for up to 5 years for students affected if the proposals be implemented.

On grounds of 'Legitimate Expectation', policy changes will only affect new pupils starting school for the first time and children who are changing schools, e.g. moving from a primary school to a secondary school.

Consultation is in place, until 15th Dec., both on-line and in paper format. Any changes will take effect from Sept. 2018, and will cover such issues as Split Families, Travel Assistance on Grounds of Religion/ Belief and Withdrawal of School Transport for Behavioural reasons.

ASHILL ACADEMY

I have received notification of the conversion of Ashill School to an academy, and the related transfer of assets to Redstart Learning Partnership, taking effect from 1st Nov.

LIBRARY SERVICE REVIEW

Specific proposals are yet to be developed and will be subject to full consultation, needs analysis and impact assessment. The key objective will be to keep all current libraries open. It is acknowledged that community support will be necessary to sustain 'static' library provision in some areas.

Key factors include - *Populations of older people and younger children – key user groups for Library Services - are expected to rise; The design of Library Service provision needs to take account of the rurality of the county and the poor transport links in some areas; Deprivation is variable across the county and there are a significant number of residents living in deprived neighbourhoods.*

When finances are under pressure all services have had to find substantial savings and libraries have a part to play in this process.

A three-year plan is being developed to redesign the Library Service and SCC have held meetings with local members, friends and community representatives to gather information and discuss options community involvement in the running of libraries. The resulting document proposes a strategic direction of travel but does not set out any specific proposals; to be developed in due course after full public consultation.

The Cabinet Member for Resources and Economic Development is due to take a decision in November. Following that decision and the conclusion of the engagement meetings, specific proposals will be drawn up ready for consultation early in the new year.

PLANNED HIGHWAYS WORK

Ilminster	Silver Street	Drainage improvement works. Temporary suspension to local parking bays.	02 Nov	03 Nov	2 days
Cudworth	Cudworth Street	Drainage improvement works. Temporary road closure.	27 Nov	15 Dec	15 days
Chaffcombe	Kingston Well Lane	Drainage improvement works. Temporary road closure.	15 Jan	19 Jan	5 days
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SIS APPLICATIONS - WINSHAM

During the current window of opportunity for the submission of applications I have received just one application, from Winsham.

SID UPDATE DONYATT

Figures for 3-18th Oct. revealed a total vehicle count of 32,604, with an average speed of 37mph, and 32 vehicles exceeding 50mph through the village.

SIS UPDATE – DONYATT

Further to recent meetings with officers and PC members I am awaiting an update on progress.

ILMINSTER TRAFFIC ISSUES

In response to a number of local incidents, in particular the collision involving an HGV at the junction by Townsend, where the use of Satnav appears to have caused the problem, and also the issue of weight limits on the road between Ilminster and Kingstone, highways have responded by saying 'We are unable to ban manoeuvres for a certain length of vehicle and any banning would affect all vehicles, but this is something worth considering as you are unable to perform this without crossing the central hazard line.'

ILMINSTER MARKET

Following enquiries from a local business relating to street traders in the town, I can confirm that those providing a 'service' rather than selling goods, do not require a street traders' licence, and also that they are permitted to occupy their pitch on the road for a period of one hour after the end of the agreed trading period.

HORTON PARISH COUNCIL

Following the recent resignation of the former Chair, Cllr. Adele Brady has been appointed as the new Chair.

WINSHAM SCHOOL

Sadly the recent OFSTED has resulted in an inadequate rating. I can confirm that there is no intention to act, other than to provide whatever support is necessary to ensure the school will improve.

WINSHAM SHOP

At a meeting this month, attended by 80 local residents, plans were revealed for the move to The George, in addition to announcement of the share options available for those who wish to invest in the project.

SCC CHILDREN'S SERVICES

A further OFSTED inspection is imminent, where it I hoped that the outcome will be 'good'.

ILMINSTER/CREWKERNE SCHOOLS

I met with officers this month to obtain an update on the future of education provision between the two towns.

EVENTS/ACTIVITIES ATTENDED

Please note that I will be out of the country until Sun. 5th Nov. and then again from 21-27th. Nov.

7/10	Ilminster carnival
8/10	Mamers twinning events
10/10	SSDC Licensing
10/10	Swanmead SCOFF meeting
11/10	SCC Policies, Adults & Health Scrutiny
11/10	Rights of Way meeting Rapps, Ashill
12/10	SCC Health & Wellbeing Board - End of Life Care training
12/10	SSDC planning training
13/10	Social Services meeting re: local resident
13/10	Fairtrade event Horton Church
18/10	Ilminster Memory Café Harvest lunch
18/10	Chard Museum Trustee meeting
18/10	SSDC Area West
19/10	Fiveways School Governor meeting
20/10	Devon & Somerset Fire Authority meeting
20/10	South Somerset MIND Fund Raising Event
22/10	Ashill Harvest Lunch
23/10	Gold Star Awards Yeovil
25/10	Monks Yard Community Day
25/10	Winsham Shop meeting
26/10	The Minster 'The Monk's Tale' event
27/10	SCC – meeting re: Ilminster & Crewkerne schools
27/10	Meeting re: sale of county farms
28/10	Chard Museum open day
28/10	Winsham Art Exhibition
28/10	MacMillan fund raising dinner - Odcombe