

### SCC/SSDC COUNCILLOR MONTHLY REPORT DECEMBER 2016

#### LOCAL AUTHORITY FUNDING

In the wake of the government's Autumn Statement, leaders across the SW expressed dismay that although the focus on economic growth and prosperity is to be welcomed, enabling local areas to target funding for projects that will benefit local people and economies, (e.g. investment in affordable housing and regional infrastructure), no mention was made of the current crisis in the NHS or the challenges facing adult social care.

#### PENSIONS

At last month's SCC full council meeting, The Council RESOLVED to call upon the Government to make fair transitional state pension arrangements for all women born on or after 6th April 1951, who have unfairly borne the burden of the increase to the State Pension Age (SPA) with lack of appropriate notification.

#### CONNECTING DEVON & SOMERSET (CDS) - BROADBAND UPDATE

A decision was made this month by the SCC Cabinet Member for Business, Inward Investment and Policy to award the Phase 2 contract to preferred suppliers, entering into agreement with its partners. This will help to ensure SCC meets its target of investing improvements to broadband connections to help businesses and residents. Improving the availability of superfast broadband is an important component in increasing the resilience of the county, its infrastructure and communities; it is also a key factor in attracting inward investment into the county and supports new housing and employment site developments.

#### SSDC TRANSFORMATION

This is progressing, with the departure of some senior staff in the new year. As part of the process there will in future be three senior directors in post, Ian Clarke and Martin Woods, with the third post currently being advertised.

#### LICENSING

In view of national concerns over Child Sexual Exploitation(CSE) all SSDC licensed taxi and private hire operators will now be required to undertake CSE training and will be subject to identification checks to establish their immigration status.

**Street Trading Policy** – mobile ice cream sellers and sandwich delivery services are now to be included in the district's policy, requiring DBS checks and ID badges to be issued, along with 'right to work' checks. The proposal is out to consultation, ending 4 Feb. 2017.

#### COUNTRYSIDE SERVICE

The annual report received praise from all members. Despite challenges related to staffing reductions, awards continue to be gained, with significant input from volunteers and friends; a mutually beneficial arrangement. Work is ongoing in relation to countryside management, educational and outreach activities, with the help of lottery funding.

#### CHRISTMAS TREE SHREDDING

This free service is again being offered by SSDC's Streetscene team. What is proposed is for a suitable location to be identified (e.g. VH car parks) and a compound set up with signs saying 'leave christmas trees here for recycling'. They arrange a date to come and shred and remove the trees. To take advantage of the scheme call Chris Cooper - 01935 462840.

### ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICE UPDATE

In the last 12 months 296 food inspections were carried out and 91 cases of suspected food poisoning and 22 accidents were reported or investigated. Wild game poaching has been a problem in the area. The Streetscene enforcement team is now part of this service, dealing with issues such as dog control and fly tipping. In Area West last year 124 noise complaints were investigated and 411 calls received relating to pest control. Free microchipping is still available for dogs to aid implementation of the new legislation.

58 abandoned vehicles were recorded in the area, representing a significant increase.

### RECYCLING

Recycling and waste collection services will change in the Autumn of 2017, with an estimated saving of £1.7 million annually. There is cross party support for the changes, which will mean moving from 2 to 3 weeks for residual waste collections. Weekly recycling collections will increase and additional recyclable materials - ALL plastics, small electrical items AND batteries will be collected at the kerbside, in addition to weekly collections of paper, cardboard, food waste, food and drink cans, aerosols, glass bottles and jars, tin/aluminium foil, shoes, textiles (unstuffed) and plastic bottles. An additional reusable bag with cover will be provided for plastics and cans. The change is intended to achieve energy savings, allowing resources to be used again, and less waste sent to landfill. The fleet of recycling vehicles will be replaced in 2017. Frequency of communal collection facilities (e.g. from flats) will not change; every bin store that has space will have be able to recycle more, by adding cardboard and plastic bottles. The approach taken for the disposal of nappies and adult absorbent hygiene products (AHP) will not change

### REFUGEES - Resettling Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Child (UASC) in Somerset

The Government has asked local authorities to sign a voluntary agreement to take part in their dispersal and settlement, making it clear that SCC are expected to be involved. SCC has a legal duty to provide support for children and young people seeking asylum. There are no exemptions and authorities rated inadequate must also take part. Each local authority is expected to take UASC to the point where the children account for 0.07% of the authority's total child population. **In Somerset this means 76 children.** There are already 5 UASC in the county, so Somerset is expected to resettle 71 more children over the next year; they are likely to be from Albania, Eritrea or Afghanistan; the majority male and aged 16 or older. The children arrive regularly in small groups. Where they are resettled depends on availability of suitable accommodation and the services needed, such as education and health. Each child will be allocated a social worker and have their health and education needs assessed and supported. Children aged over 16 will be accommodated in small groups of between 3 and 5 in semi-independent living arrangements, likely to be in self-contained, shared accommodation provided through the Pathways to Independence (P2i) service, meaning there will be no impact on district council housing lists. Younger children may be placed in foster care. Very few are expected to be of school age, but if they are availability of school spaces will be a key consideration in resettlement. Spaces in post-16 education are available across the county. Government funding will be specifically for social care costs, including accommodation. Once children reach 18, they will go through the home office adult asylum seeking process. Foster carers and those willing to consider adoption are actively being sought. More information can be found at [www.fosteradoptsomerset.org.uk](http://www.fosteradoptsomerset.org.uk). A special information event about fostering asylum seeking children is being held on Monday, 9 Jan. 2017 at Costa Coffee in Taunton (TA1 1JW) from 7 to 9pm. To register a place at the event phone 0800 587 9900.

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3, Rectory Court, Vicarage Hill, Combe St. Nicholas, TA20 3NE tel. 0797 178 5069 [lindavijeh@hotmail.com](mailto:lindavijeh@hotmail.com)

### **SOCIAL CARE**

Local news media reported this month on a national announcement about local authorities being able to raise council tax to fund social care services. This is alongside expressions of disappointment that the government has not provided local authorities with additional funds to tackle shortfalls in social care funding. Across the country there have also been reports of a shortage of hospital beds this winter.

### **UNIVERSAL CREDIT**

Universal Credit (UC) is a working age benefit, administered by the DWP and implemented as part of the Government's welfare reforms, paid as a single monthly payment replacing 6 existing benefits for working age people. In the Ilminster area this will affect the TA19 0, and TA19, 9 postcodes. Those living in these postcodes who would normally claim Housing Benefit will now have to claim UC.

"Pensioners" who have reached the qualifying age for state pension are not affected by UC and will continue to claim Housing Benefit in the usual way, as will working age people living in supported accommodation. Applications are made on-line and SSDC will provide support if necessary. It normally takes 6 weeks for the first payment to be made. SSDC have set up an appointment system at the Chard and Petters Way offices for advice. Contact: [Tamsin.Gold@southsomerset.gov.uk](mailto:Tamsin.Gold@southsomerset.gov.uk). 01935 462081.

### **LEARNING DISABILITIES**

People with Learning Disabilities will be assisted in owning their own homes as a result of a successful SCC bid for Government funding. As well as securing £1m to help home ownership, the authority has also been awarded £214,000 towards the cost of new technology that will help people with Learning Disabilities live independent lives. The £1m of Department of Health funding will enable up to ten people with Learning Disabilities to buy their own home through the HOLD scheme – Home Ownership for people with Long term Disabilities. The properties will be jointly owned with Knightstone Housing Assoc., the money going towards deposits and fees that could deter people with Learning Disabilities from buying a home. Ten potential home owners will be supported through the process of obtaining and maintaining a mortgage by the 'Mysafehome' organisation.

### **HIGHWAYS**

Highways issues can now be reported via a new online map [www.travelsomerset.gov.uk](http://www.travelsomerset.gov.uk) 300km.of roads across the county have been surface dressed so far this year.

### **A303/A358 UPDATE**

In their latest information sheet Highways *England* have confirmed that they are in the process of drawing up plans for the dualling of the A358 link from Taunton to Southfields roundabout at Ilminster and that they will begin consultation in early 2017.

For more information visit: [www.highways.gov.uk/Taunton-to-Southfields](http://www.highways.gov.uk/Taunton-to-Southfields)

Email: A358TauntontoSouthfields@highwaysengland.co.uk Phone: 0300 123 5000

### **PLANNED WORKS IN SOUTH SOMERSET**

**Knowle St. Giles** – Knowle Church Road - Drainage improvement works. Temporary road closure. 6<sup>th</sup> Feb. – 3<sup>rd</sup> Mar. – 20 days

**Ilminster – Ditton St.** - Carriageway resurfacing. Temp. road closure. 6<sup>th</sup> Mar.- 7<sup>th</sup> Mar. 2 days

**Ilminster – Station Road** - Footway improvement works. Temp. traffic signals. Dates TBC.

**Ashill** – Thickthorn Lane - Drainage improvement works. Temp. road closure. Dates TBC.

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**SID reports** have been received this month for several villages in Neroche ward – median speeds have been recorded as:- Broadway – 37mph Ashill – 29 mph Donyatt – 35 mph

### **ILMINSTER SID REPORT – Station Road Nov. 29 -13 Dec.**

Median speed: 32 mph 85% Percentile: 37 mph  
Total Count: 34316, of which 3502 were travelling at over 40mph.

### **SOMERSET ROAD CASUALTY DATA – Jan. to June 2016**

Accidents – 7% reduction for same period in 2015. Fatal – 13 Serious – 68 Slight – 601  
Pedestrians – 32% (53 individuals) - down on 2015 Motor cycles – 4% (49) – up on 2015  
Pedal cycles – 2% (50) – down on 2015 Cars/taxis – 5% (505) – up on 2015

### **ASHILL – GATE AT THICKTHORN LANE**

Response from highways. 'Apologies once again. Following relocation for the gate our contactor needed additional information on the apparatus contained under the road/ verge. This has now thrown up fibre optic cables and a specialist is required to mark their location. This is now in hand and works should be carried out within the prescribed three months. The only caveat is the same operatives also carry out gritting so time may have to be extended but will not be allowed to go into the next financial year. Although the time has dragged on significantly it will be done ASAP'.

### **ILMINSTER STREET LIGHTING**

I have been contacted by a local resident with concerns over the failure of the street lighting along Silver Street, which I have now reported. The phone line for reporting faults during working hours is 0845 601 0939, or 0845 795 9639 outside these hours. When reporting faults the number on the street light column should be noted. Repair timescale is usually 5 working days, with priority given to those faults posing a risk to public safety. Note that SCC highways is only responsible for street lights on adopted highways. SSDC is responsible for street lights on unadopted highways on SSDC owned land (e.g. car parks, parks, and amenity areas). Roads & Transport Team email: [roadsandtransportSD@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:roadsandtransportSD@somerset.gov.uk)

## **EDUCATION**

### **Early Years National Funding Formula – 2017/18**

Department for Education published the outcomes of the consultation on changes to early years funding, aiming to end historic disparities around the country. Somerset will receive £4.30 per hour for three and four year olds in funded childcare places, (inc. of £0.34 p.h.). For eligible two year olds the rate will be £5.20 p.h. The formula will need to be reviewed for 2017-18. A consultation on the formula with early years providers will need to be concluded early in 2017 to allow time for rates to be calculated and published by April 2017.

### **GREENFYLDE SCHOOL**

I have received the following update from Liz Smith at SCC. 'Housing developer Persimmon has now submitted their planning application for approximately 450 houses in Canal Way. Included in this application will be access to a new school site for the potential replacement of Greenfylde First School. It is going to be difficult to expand the current Greenfylde site to meet the need of future housing in the Town, therefore replacement and expansion of the first school must be considered. A Stakeholder engagement event will be arranged in the spring for anybody with interest to find our more.'

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### SCHOOL FUNDING

Proposed changes to the schools funding formula are likely to bring more money into the county and benefiting rural schools and secondary education locally. The changes have been made at the expense of many large inner-city schools elsewhere in the country.

#### Impact on Somerset schools of new national funding formula

**Total gain for the local authority across all schools - £12,958,000 = 4.85% inc.**

Primary Schools (including middle-primary) – 213 experiencing change

205 gains totalling £5,717,000 8 losses totalling £55,000 Total net gain £5,662,000

Secondary (including middle-secondary) – 37 schools experiencing change

35 gains totalling £7,181,000 2 losses totalling £49,000 Total net gain £7,132,000

All-through schools experiencing change – 1 £164,000 gain

### EVENTS/ACTIVITIES ATTENDED

6/12	Ashill – resident planning
7/12	Area West – Crewkerne
9/12	Ilminster FC Charity Quiz
10/12	Minster Christmas Tree Festival
10/12	Whitelackington Table Top Sale
10/12	Broadway Christmas Quiz
11/12	Donyatt VH Breakfast
12/12	Horton PC
12/12	Neroche School Governor Meeting
13/12	SSDC Licensing
13/12	Neroche School – Christmas performance
13/12	Fiveways School
13/12	Ilminster TC
14/12	Ashill Christmas Bingo
14/12	Greenfylde Christmas Jigsaw – The Minster
14/12	Horton - planning
15/12	Winsham Jubilee Hall coffee morning
15/12	Winsham School Carol Marathon
15/12	Wadham School Carols – The Minster
15/12	SCC – Greenfylde School
16/12	Donyatt Christmas Bingo
17/12	Dowlish Pavilion
17/12	Dowlish Crib Service
18/12	Horton Christingle
18/12	Ludney Carols
18/12	Ashill Carol Service
18/12	Ilminster Civic Service
19/12	Cricket St. Thomas Golf Club – planning meeting (delayed, so did not participate)
19/12	Horton Carols

### DOWLISH PAVILION PHOENIX PROJECT

Upcoming fund raising event - a black tie dinner at the Shrubbery Hotel on Friday 24th Feb. 2017 is expected to be a sell out, so book early. Michael Lane at [michaelliz@me.com](mailto:michaelliz@me.com)

### BROADWAY DEFIBRILATOR ENQUIRY

SSDC supports such projects through small grants, based on match funding. Current funds are low, so it is likely that a funding bid will need to be submitted in the next financial year.

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