

ILMINSTER DIVISION DISTRICT/COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT AUGUST 2018

SCC

The focus this month has been on finances. A significant list of proposed cost savings will be considered by Scrutiny on 11th Sept., and Cabinet the following day. It is accepted that years of austerity at central government level have taken their toll. With £130m. of savings already made, SCC is now concentrating on its core service offer and statutory duties, as suggested by the recent LGA peer review and Eternal Auditors.

David Fothergill, Leader of SCC has said: "Like many Councils across the country, we are facing considerable financial pressures due to significantly reduced Government funding and an increasing demand for our services, particularly in children's and adult services. We have to balance the books, and we have to live within our means. In order to do this, we are having to make difficult decisions, reassessing the services we can and can no longer maintain. A number of proposals have been put forward for Cabinet to consider next month, where formal decisions will then be made. Any savings approved will be taken with full consideration of the implications and we will do what we can to mitigate the impacts."

SCC In Year cost savings plan - 2018/2019 Revenue Budget Monitoring.

Proposals for alteration/reduction in the following:

1. Arrangements for specialist housing/support for adults with social care needs.
2. Support given to the CAB for the administration of individual benefit
3. Early help services for children and their families.
4. Services to support vulnerable pupils.
5. Support arrangements for the democratic process and for elected members.
6. Member allowances for recommendation to Council.
7. Arrangements for, provision of, and funding solutions for the maintenance of highways, rights of way and associated infrastructure.
8. Financial support and arrangements for public transport and special educational needs (SEN) transport.
9. Funding arrangements and service level for road safety.
10. Provision of park and ride services in the Taunton area.
11. Staffing structures and levels in teams within Adult Services, Children and Family Services, Corporate Services and ECI Services
12. Provision of corporate support services and/or reduce corporate/directorate overheads
13. To secure additional funding and/or recover costs within Children and Family Services, ICT and ECI Services
14. Customer access arrangements

UNITARY AUTHORITY

David Fothergill has made this statement, 'I am delighted that the Unitary conversation continues to move ahead. We now have agreement between the Districts and County to move ahead with an agreed procurement brief to engage a consultancy to build the options business case. At the moment no options are being either favoured or ruled out.'

ADULT SOCIAL CARE

A number of local residents have been in contact this month in relation ongoing concerns and issues with this provision. I met this week with the South Somerset Operations Manager, Julia Ingram and have another update meeting planned early next month.

A recruitment campaign has been underway to try to resolve ongoing staffing issues and it is expected that an improvement in the service provision will start to be observed soon.

SCC PLANNING CONTROL SERVICE

The department is responsible for major school and highways projects and the current backlog includes over 140 applications, some of which are time sensitive. It is essential to clear any backlog, in line with statutory obligations, to avoid repercussions, and ensure key projects are delivered on time and on budget. To resolve this, a team of specialists has been contracted for six months, the cost of which has been factored into this year's budget.

SCC ANNUAL MEMBER ALLOWANCES AND EXPENSES – 2018/19

For me - £10,687.92 member allowance, + £1,120.07 expenses claimed = £11,807.99

DSFRS

This month I have been involved in carrying out the Chief Fire Officer's appraisal, and also a pension appeal.

Following formal consultation, enabling legislation for Police & Crime Commissioners to join Fire & Rescue Authorities was discussed. The Home Office response clarified that for DSFRS this would impact on the number of places available to constituent authorities. Members have expressed concern in relation to the proposals and have indicated that they may wish to lobby local MPs to see if this position could be altered.

CREWKERNE/ILMINSTER SCHOOLS

Despite efforts to obtain additional information in relation to progress this has not yet been forthcoming, which is causing considerable concern to those who may be affected.

AREA WEST

Following the recent appointment of Cllr. Val Keitch to Leader of SSDC, at this month's meeting Cllr. Jason Baker was appointed as Chair of Area West to replace her.

PLANNING

An application for a sizeable development at Ashill which was discussed at Area West this month, has been referred to SSDC's Regulation Committee for determination.

I have been contacted on several occasions by local applicants, who are concerned by the impact of the current situation where there is a lack of resources to handle applications in a timely manner, and the inability to make direct contact with officers, which I have reported.

RURAL TRANSPORT

As mentioned in last month's report, from 3rd Sept., people living in villages around Ilminster can now benefit from a daily timetabled shuttle bus service, to replace the 'on demand' service set up as an interim measure last autumn. Many passengers have requested a timetabled service, and following monitoring of the current DRT (Demand Response Transport) service, SCC's transport team have designed a small network of routes.

The Ilminster Shuttle Bus will run Mon. to Fri., linking Ashill, Broadway, Horton, Shepton Beauchamp, Barrington, Puckington, Stocklinch, Whitelackington, and Ilton to Ilminster.

The timetable has been designed so that a reasonable number of the shuttle buses can link with the 30 service to Taunton during the week and passengers will be able to use their bus passes on the new S1, S2 and S3 service. All three services will operate Mon. to Fri. and will be provided by SCC's in-house fleet, using one of its low floor accessible minibuses.

The three routes are as follows:

S1: Ashill – Broadway – Horton – Ilminster

S2: Shepton Beauchamp – Barrington – Puckington – Stocklinch – Whitelack'ton – Ilminster

S3: Ilton – Ilminster

HIGHWAYS MATTERS

POT HOLES

A local resident has expressed concern in relation to recent vehicle damage. The following was received from Highways: In order for liability claims to be successful it is necessary to prove negligence or breach of statutory duty on the part of the council. There is no automatic entitlement to compensation. Inspections are carried out every three months and defects highlighted; where specific problems are reported, additional inspections are carried out. For a carriageway defect to be programmed for repair, the intervention criteria states 'it should be greater than 40mm deep or be considered dangerous to the normal traffic of the highway'. This link to SCC's website contains more info. on highway safety inspections.
<http://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-parking-and-transport/insurance-claims/insurance/>

RIGHTS OF WAY – LOCAL BRIDGE REPAIRS

The bridge at Broadway is in an unsafe condition and has been closed for repair. It is currently at number 7 in the overall Rights of Way Bridge Programme RoWBP. A number of structures of similar design in South Somerset are suffering from paint loss and associated rust/corrosion and rotting timbers. In identifying issues and faults for repair under the (RoWBP) a priority system is in place, using the following criteria:

- Risk to the public
- Path category
- Date issue raised

Due to a lack of resources, the RoWBP is planned over a 5-year roll over period and a procurement process needs to be undertaken, which can take 6-8 weeks. If scaffolding is required, this may need to be removed at the end of each day for safety reasons. In addition to this, ecology surveys may need to be carried out, as well as obtaining land drainage consent and vegetation removal. Added to this, site works can only commence when ground conditions are appropriate and sufficient plant can be brought to site.

ILMINSTER POST OFFICE – PARKING

An issue has been raised in relation Royal Mail vans taking up parking spaces along East Street, along with the recent issuing of a number of parking tickets. Whilst there is no formal arrangement between SCC and Royal Mail, for many years it has been accepted by traffic wardens that the vans need to be outside to carry out their duties. To help resolve the issue it has been suggested that Tesco be approached to see if the vans could be left there overnight. However, this may cause adverse impact on time allocated.

RICE SUR BELON WAY ROUNDABOUT

The Rotary Club of Ilminster have been exploring the adoption of the roundabout and discussions are underway.

CANAL WAY FOOTPATH

In response to local resident concerns, the hedge alongside the recreation ground has now been cut, but undergrowth is still taking up most of the pavement, and it is felt that the open spaces adjacent to Ladymead, and overgrown vegetation from neighbouring properties continues to pose a problem, where parts of the pavements are in a poor state, making it impossible walk along them, and also present a negative impression on visitors.

WINSHAMS/DONYATT SIS SCHEMES

No further information has been made available in relation to progress on either scheme.

PLANNED ROAD WORKS/TEMPORARY ROAD CLOSURE ORDER

Winsham - Fore St. - drainage improvement works. Temp. traffic Signals. 3 Sept.- 5 Sept.

Whitelackington/Stocklinch Rd. - drainage remedial works. Temp. road closure. 6/7 Sept.

Apple Close, Dowlish Ford - from the junction with Main St. for its full extent, (73 metres). Proposed date of closure – 28 Sept. for 30 days. Access to properties will be maintained.

Donyatt Hill Estate, Donyatt - from jct. with Shave Lane for its full extent (130 metres). Proposed date of closure - 28 Sept. for 30 days. Access to properties will be maintained.

Pound Lane, Donyatt – from junction with A358 Donyatt Hill to outside property Little Wakefield (85 metres) Proposed date of closure - 1st Oct. for 5 days.

Watery Lane, Donyatt & Ilminster - from eastern junction with old A3037 westwards for 460 metres. Proposed date of closure - 8 Oct. for 5 days.

Church Street, Donyatt- from junction with A358 Donyatt Hill to the junction with Park Lane (230 metres). Proposed date of closure - 13 Oct. for 10 days.

Knowle Church Rd., Knowle St Giles & Chaffcombe - from junction with Cricket Lane to junction with Pinkham Hill (1460 metres). Proposed date of closure - 15 Oct. for 5 days.

Main Street to Cudworth Road, Dowlish Wake - from junction with Cudworth Road to junction with Main Street (100 metres). Proposed date of closure - 22 Oct. for 5 days

Whitney Hill, Donyatt & Horton - from junction with Shave Lane to junction with Crock Street (1238 metres). Proposed date of closure – 29 Oct. for 12 days.

Knights Lane, Cudworth - from jct. with Cudworth St. to entrance to Knight House Farm (150 metres). Proposed date of closure - 29 Oct. for 5 days. Property access maintained.

Cricket Lane, Donyatt, Knowle St Giles & Ilminster - from junction with Wooley Lane to junction with old A3037 (870 metres). Proposed date of closure - 29 Oct. for 12 days.

Mill Lane, Cudworth - from junction with Higher Weare Lane to junction with Cudworth Street (350 metres). Proposed date of closure - 1st Nov. for 7 days.

Shave Lane, Donyatt – from junction with A358 Donyatt Hill for its full extent (760 metres). Proposed date of closure - 5th Nov. for 5 days.

Four Lanes, Donyatt & Knowle St. Giles - from junction with A358 Four Lanes to Peasmash Farm Lane to junction with Clayhanger Common (210 metres). Proposed date of closure - 12th Nov. for 5 days.

Oxford Lane and Main Street, Dowlish Wake - from junction with Cricket lane to jct. with Cudworth Rd. (1600 metres). Proposed date of closure - 12th Nov. for 10 days.

Kitchill Lane South, Dowlish Wake - from junction with Oxenford Lane to 30 metres NE of the property Kitchells (800 metres). Proposed date of closure - 15th Nov. for 10 days.

This Order is required to facilitate highway works and is necessary for the safety of the workforce whilst carrying out their duties. The restriction shall apply when indicated by traffic signs. The order will enable Gigaclear to carry out a rolling programme of underground cabling works with clearing of potential duct (pipe) blockages, and becomes effective on 6th Sept., remaining in force for eighteen months. While closures are in operation alternative routes will be signed. Visit www.roadworks.org for further information.

LIBRARY SERVICE

A meeting of the Friends of Ilminster Library (FoIL) group agreed the following actions:

- Ilminster Town Council to consider use of the library space as an interim solution with the use of additional hired storage.
- FoIL to consider the core offer in terms of staffing model and volunteers.
- Town Council, Ilminster Forum and FoIL to consider alternative sites.
- SCC to monitor Schools' Review for possibility of availability of the AL&L building.
- SCC to explore options for housing the Town Council offices in the current building.

CRESTA POOL CHARD

The Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Planning and Community Infrastructure: has authorised SCC to cease commissioning leisure services at Cresta swimming pool and accompanying dry-side facilities with effect from Mon. 3 Sept. and to close the facilities to members of the public as of this date. In addition to this, officers are authorised to:

- a) consider a formal Expression of Interest and costed Business Plan received from a community body with a proposal to transfer the ownership of the facility (deadlines for submission of these documents are Fri. 31 Aug. and Fri. 14 Sept.)
- b) determine whether any Business Plan received by SCC is viable, subject to the considered judgment of the Director of Finance, and the Director ECI Commissioning
- c) if a Business Plan is determined to be viable, officers are authorised to negotiate Heads of Terms for the transfer of ownership of the building and land for a nominal fee by 8 Oct.
- d) subject to c) above, negotiate the necessary legal agreement to transfer freehold ownership of the facility to the legal entity incorporated by the community body by no later than 10 Dec.

The current position is that the group set up to try to save the pool has submitted a letter to SCC, to seek more clarification on certain points. A draft business plan has been submitted, which is being scrutinised by the group's accountants. Charitable status is likely to be granted early next week. The group are disappointed that mid-December is suggested as the date for them to take ownership; this would mean community money would be spent in keeping the pool full of water, without daily access to undertake checks, at a time when there would be no income stream. It has been noted by the group that in taking on the pool they will be saving SCC £250k in decommissioning costs.

PARISH COUNCIL TRAINING

There is to be a Community Council for Somerset training day on village halls and recreation grounds on 26 Sept. at Long Sutton. Bookings should be made via parish clerks.

DILLINGTON

Following a complaint and concerns from a member of the public about lack of response, I have been informed that during Aug. there have several staff whose leave overlapped. It has been decided that future responsibility for Dillington will be within the Economic and Community Infrastructure team, but this will not be implemented until late Sept/early Oct., once the Strategic Manager, Ollie Woodhams, becomes available. I am aiming to meet with General Manager, Adam Powell, who joined in March, this coming month.

HORTON PLAYING FIELD PROJECT

In cooperation with the PC, plans are progressing well and the group are keen to actively include the local community. Their new website address is www.hortonplayingfield.org.uk

CHARD MUSEUM

The museum is holding its Open Day, with free entry and lots of activities for all the family, on Sat. 8th Sept., from 12 – 4pm. The current Chairman, Vince Lean, who has been highly successful in moving the museum forward, is looking to stand down next year, but is willing to continue to mentor his successor. The trustees are actively looking for someone to replace him. Anyone interested should contact the museum at info@chardmuseum.co.uk

CARNIVAL QUIZ

The annual Ilminster Carnival Quiz will be held at The Shrubbery, on Wed. 3rd Oct., at 7.30pm. Get together to support this important community event, just £6 per team of 4.

ACTIVITIES/MEETINGS

1/8	Winsham PC
2/8	Friends of Ilminster Library meeting
4/8	Chard Museum modellers day
4/8	Dowlash Wake duck race
5/8	Kingstone Worship for All
6/8	SCC – cabinet member meeting re: Cresta Pool, Chard
6/8	Ilminster Lit. Fest meeting
8/8	SCC – officer meeting
9/8	DSFRS – Pension appeal hearing
9/8	Cresta Pool public meeting – Chard
10/8	Whielackington VH quiz
11/8	Horton Flower Show
11/8	British Heart Foundation charity ball – Shrubbery
12/8	Donyatt VH b'fast
12/8	Dowlash Wake – Speke Hall BBQ
13/8	IMEx meeting
13/8	Horton PC planning meeting
13/8	Lit. Fest party
15/8	Cudworth church fund raiser
15/8	Ilminster resident meeting re: pot hole
15/8	DSFRS – Pension appeal hearing
25/8	Winsham flower show
27/8	Whitelackington Flower & Produce Show
28/8	Horton Playing Field Project Group meeting
28/8	Ilminster – resident parking issues
28/8	Ilminster – resident social services issues
29/8	Horton – Riverside development meeting
29/8	Winsham church coffee morning
29/8	Chard Museum Trustee meeting
30/8	SSDC Adult Social Services meeting – Chard