

ILMINSTER DIVISION SCC/SSDC COUNCILLOR MONTHLY REPORT NOV. 2016

SCC AUDIT – Auditors Grant Thornton have now released their findings in The Annual Audit Letter for Somerset County Council for year ended 31 March 2016.

DEVOLUTION

In view of the level of frustration over central government's focus on Brexit, a new group has been set up to consider the impact of this on moving forward with plans for devolution,

SOUTHWEST ONE CONTRACT

This contract has now ended, with over 320 staff returning to working directly for SCC. All changes to software and IT have been made and it is not expected that there will be a significant impact on service delivery. Focus has been on a smooth transition to the Customers and Communities team.

LOCAL AUTHORITY FUNDING

SCC continues to lobby for an easing of pressure, particularly in relation to social care. The additional 2% Council Tax ring-fenced for social care last year generated an additional £3.8m but, this has been offset by the introduction of the National Living Wage, costing an additional £5.2m. In 2015/16, SCC spent £89.2m on adult social care and £42.8m on support for people with learning disabilities. Total spend on supporting vulnerable adults, (older people, those with physical and learning disabilities, or requiring mental health services) was £139.9m (over £383,000 per day), an £8m increase over three years as people live longer with multiple health conditions and the cost of care placements and home care rise.

Around 26,000 people in Somerset have two or more long-term health conditions, such as diabetes and high blood pressure - an increase of 10% over five years.

During the Listening Learning Changing public engagement exercise residents again ranked social care as their top priority. BBC radio held several interviews relating to these challenges. <https://youtu.be/gWltB2qPSZ8> and <https://youtu.be/Snk1Ls2g8Pc>

SSDC - FULL COUNCIL

The planned charging schedule for the introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) was agreed as this month's full council meeting. Implementation is due to be debated in April 2017.

SSDC - SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - I have now been appointed to this committee.

SSDC - AREA WEST

This month's report noted that for several reasons verge cutting has been difficult this year. One cut was carried out on all roads, and a further visibility cut to Class A and B roads.

In the half yearly budget progress report, it was approved that unspent sums be returned to capital budgets - £1748 no longer required by Chaffcombe VH and £20k previously set aside for Ilminster Community Office. Funding for community projects is still available – Contact Zoe Harris – 01460 260423 zoe.harris@southsomerset.gov.uk. Examples of successful projects include support for installation of defibrillators and the printing of parish plans.

It was agreed that free parking will be available across Area West on Saturday 17th Dec. to support local businesses and shoppers.

SCC WINTER ROADS

During the winter live updates on gritting activity can be obtained by following [@somersetgritter](#) on Twitter. Likewise, up to date live traffic and travel conditions can be found at [@TravelSomerset](#). Info. about SCC's winter maintenance programme, with maps of roads treated can be found on www.somerset.gov.uk/winterservice.

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HIGHWAYS - A303/A358 IMPROVEMENT UPDATE

Local meetings with Highways England are ongoing, to ensure full understanding of issues in the vicinity of the proposed schemes. It is intended that over the next 14 years the A303/A358 would be improved to a new 'Expressway' standard along its whole length from the M3 to the M5 at Taunton. The specific scheme covering the A358 to dual carriageway between Southfields roundabout and the M5, has been included in the first five year period (2015/16 to 2019/20). At this stage there are no proposed routes or alignments for improvements.

The Government will also set aside funding for smaller scale improvements to the A303/A30 between Southfields and Honiton, recognising that large scale improvements would be challenging due to the protected landscape and topography of the area. SCC and partner authorities continue to lobby for funding to construct the remaining sections of the whole A303/A358/A30 corridor. The development consent order process to deliver schemes is complex, taking several years to complete, involving several stages; project preparation, option identification and selection, design, statutory procedures & powers, and construction preparation.

The first three A303/A358 schemes are currently in the options development stage.

Highways England has confirmed consultation and engagement activity for the A358 Southfields to M5 at Taunton scheme. Parish-based engagement events will conclude in December 2016 to enable Highways England to understand issues within the A358 study area. This will not concern possible route alignments, but will enable local issues to be identified and discussed.

For more information visit: www.highways.gov.uk/Taunton-to-Southfields

Email: A358TauntontoSouthfields@highwaysengland.co.uk or phone: 0300 123 5000

PLANNED ROADWORKS

Iminster - Ditton Street

Carriageway resurfacing. Temporary road closure. 20/3/17 – 21/3/17 – 2 days

Iminster – Heron Way

Temporary closure of Heron Way, prohibiting all traffic from proceeding from 11m north-west and 12m north east between Long Close and Heron Way a distance of 23 metres, to enable Wessex Water to carry out installation work. The Order becomes effective on 28 Nov. remaining in force for eighteen months. Work is expected to last for 3 weeks and while closure is in operation an alternative route will be signed posted.

Iminster - Station Road

Carriageway resurfacing. Temporary road closure. 15/2/17 – 17/2/17 – 3 days

Footway improvement works. Temporary traffic signals. TBC

Ashill - Thickthorn Lane

Application for temporary closure of Thickthorn Lane from BT Openreach to carry out cabling works on the overhead structure. Road closure - 5/12/16 for 3 days

Drainage improvement works. Temporary road closure. TBC

Dowlish Wake - Oxenford Lane

Drainage improvement. 'Give and Take' traffic management. 6/12/16 – 8/12/16 – 3 days

Horton – Five Dials

The TRO has now gone through the statutory consultation and highways have received no objections to the proposal. It is expected that work will be completed by the end of the financial year, but will be weather dependent. Concern has been raised with me in relation to the consultation process which I am pursuing.

Horton – Hanning Road

Drainage improvement works. Temp. road closure. 28/11/16 - 9/12/16 – 10 days

Knowle St. Giles - Knowle Church Road

Drainage improvement works. Temporary road closure. 6/2/17 - 3/3/17 – 20 days

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HIGHWAYS – GATE AT THICKTHORN LANE, ASHILL

Following the agreed relocation for the gate, additional information on apparatus contained under the road/verge has revealed fibre optic cables, requiring a specialist to mark the location. This is now in hand and works should be carried out by the end of the year. The same operatives also carry out gritting, so completion may take longer, but will be within this financial year.

RIGHTS OF WAY

Upgrade of CH 1/23 from Footpath to Restricted Byway (511M) and Add Restricted Byway to Copse Lane (510M), Ashill. An application has been submitted by South Somerset Bridleways Association, who believe the above routes have been wrongly recorded on the Definitive Map and Statement¹ and that they should in fact be shown as a Restricted Byways². The application seeks to modify the Map and Statement to reflect this.

DONYATT SID READINGS (Bowling Club A358) – 8 OCT. – 7 NOV.

Speeding through the village remains a concern. Out of a total of 44031 vehicle movements, average speeds of 45mph were recorded, with 9159 vehicles exceeding speeds of 50mph.

YARLINGTON DONYATT

Across the district, current activity in relation to asset disposal is causing consternation. Despite severe misgivings, the decision was taken by SSSDC's Portfolio Holder this month to agree to the proposed disposal of several Yarlinton owned properties at Donyatt Hill. The implications of this and several similar proposals across the area have been considered and I am in regular contact with those concerned.

LEARNING DISABILITIES SERVICE

SCC are finalising contractual discussions with 'Dimensions' for over 1,000 members of staff join them in a new Learning Disabilities social enterprise, intended to deliver opportunities for service users, despite upheaval. The in-year report shows that the total overspend is coming down, but more needs to be done as it is an ongoing challenge.

READING PASSPORT CHALLENGE

Libraries have launched this year's challenge, with a theme of time-travel. 'Book to the Future' will enable readers to time-travel through a selection of authors of the past 100 years as well as top new writers. Readers collect a passport stamp as they complete each book. Anyone completing their full 'Book to the Future' journey by collecting a stamp for each decade will be entered into a draw to win a suitcase full of books.

EDUCATION EXCELLENCE

This item in my report last month has been widely reported in the local press (some points taken out of context). Please note that performance related statistics were as provided to me, are in the public domain, and were not intended as criticism of any individual school.

CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE

Recent reports indicate that there have been substantial improvements in service provision. Early in November Ofsted conducted a monitoring visit in advance of a full inspection. In considering the "front-end" of children's social care, where children and families first have contact with the service, a significant improvement was reported, especially SCC's persistence in working with challenging families, often difficult to engage with. The next area for focus is on continuing to improve management oversight and supervision for all staff.

CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION (CSE)

A case concluded this month following an investigation in Yeovil. Two men were convicted of several Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) offences and sentenced to a combined total of 32 years. The case highlights the fact that CSE is happening to children of all backgrounds in communities across the country, including Somerset. The Somerset Safeguarding Children's Board is co-ordinating multi-agency work, with organisations including the police and children's social care, as this issue is seen of paramount importance.

Parents, families, local councillors and members and the public can also play an important role in identifying and preventing CSE. At the last meeting of the Scrutiny for Policies Children and Families Committee, the following videos were viewed.

Emma's Story - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pnTYFeZNLkQ>

I Didn't Know - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qQDYplpgdtA>

Chelsea's Choice - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bAo8Yly8rFk>

PLANNING

Shudrick Valley – the appeal date has been set for 17th January.

Housing land supply currently stands at 4 years 2 months. The current absence of a 5-year supply of deliverable housing sites has been cited as a key reason in recent appeal decisions, along with the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

COMMUNITY ITEMS TO NOTE

ASHILL is actively looking for village residents to join the Playing Field Trust.

HORTON – Charlotte Duff is due to take over the role of parish clerk from long standing incumbent Anne Goody, who retires in December.

DOWLISH WAKE – a wine tasting will be held in Speke Hall on 6th Jan. to raise funds to restore the pavilion that was the subject of arson last month. Contact Mike Lane - michaelliz@me.com

MONK'S YARD – As part of their outreach work, Monk's Yard will be hosting a community lunch on 18th December, intended to bring together the elderly who may live alone or who feel isolated.

ILMINSTER EDUCATION FOUNDATION – Trustees continue to actively seek applications from young people for funding and grants to assist in further study opportunities, and also for apprentices. This could be support for study travel or the purchase of books or equipment.

ILMINSTER LITERARY FESTIVAL – Following the success of last year's inaugural event, plans are underway for June 2017. Those wishing to become 'friends' of the event, both local businesses and individuals, are encouraged to get in contact.

CHARD MUSEUM – Local schools and community groups planning activities for next year are asked to note that the museum is keen to attract visits, and can arrange to come and talk to you if required, bringing along suitable artefacts. New volunteers for next season are always welcome.

ROTARY CLUB OF ILMINSTER – Earlier this month, the new 'history' board was installed in the town centre using funds donated by a former Rotarian, John Storey. The project, led by Tony Walker, and which took several years to come to fruition, has had wide spread involvement and support from Ilminster Town Council, SSDC and SCC.

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EVENTS/ACTIVITIES ATTENDED IN NOVEMBER

1/11	Broadway PC
2/11	Chard Museum end of season volunteer lunch
2/11	Local resident social care meeting
4/11	Dowlish Pavilion pub night
7/11	Ashill PC
7/11	Iminster literary Festival meeting
8/11	Isle Valley Flower Club demonstration
9/11	Calais fund raising dinner
10/11	BATS – Little Shop of Horrors performance
11/11	Friends of Donyatt Despatch (for 10 mins!)
11/11	Dowlish Pavilion pub night
13/11	Donyatt VH Breakfast
13/11	Isle Benefice Remembrance service
13/11	The Minster Civic Remembrance service
14/11	Dowlish Wake PC
14/11	Donyatt PC
15/11	Iminster TC
16/11	Area West
16/11	Dowlish Wake revue
17/11	Local resident social work meeting
17/11	Iminster Education Foundation
17/11	SSDC full council
18/11	Rotary technical tournament – Wadham School
18/11	Iminster Victorian evening
19/11	Ashill Autumn Fayre
19/11	Chaffcombe CRY craft fair
19/11	Whitelackington Table Top sale
2/11	Minster Shoebox service

SCC MEETINGS DECEMBER

02/12/2016	Pensions Committee	09:30
07/12/2016	Scrutiny for Policies, Adults and Health	10:00
08/12/2016	Regulation Committee	14:00
09/12/2016	Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families	10:00
13/12/2016	Scrutiny for Policies and Place Committee	10:00
14/12/2016	Cabinet	10:00
15/12/2016	Somerset Pensions Board	10:00
16/12/2016	Standards Committee	10:00
16/12/2016	Somerset Waste Board	10:00

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