

**SCC - MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2020-2023**

This month, SCC's Section 151 officer provided an update on improvements to SCC's financial situation, which continue.

The projected spend this financial year is £730m, where council tax revenue of £249m. represents 34% of the total revenue received.

Of the £328m net budget, 38% is spent on adult services and an additional 25% spent on children's services (excluding schools).

The capital programme is largely funded by 46% in grants and 45% from borrowing.

Council tax banding continues to be based on property values at 1991 levels, despite an original plan, at central government level, to review it every five years.

65% of Somerset properties are below the average Band D. Compared to other LAs SCC's revenue is around £100 below the average Band D property rate, one of the lowest across the country.

An additional £10m. for Adult Social Care is expected from Central Government.

**SCC COUNCILLOR IMPROVING LIVES GRANT FUND**

I recently indicated that I was intending to allocate the £2,000 I have been granted for the division to be spent on trees in support of the climate emergency agenda. There seems to be limited enthusiasm for this, and within the last month I have received a number of enquiries in relation to other local projects that would appreciate financial support, and I am expecting applications to be submitted shortly for consideration by the approval panel.

**SCC HEALTH & WELLBEING BOARD**

A Violence Reduction Unit has been set up with government funding of £300k, to be spent on targeted interventions, with a focus on reducing domestic violence and supporting vulnerable children and young adults.

There has been admittance by SCC's CEO that there are a number of issues in relation to health provision in the county, where demand exceeds the ability to finance the required resources.

As part of the 'Fit for My Future' healthcare delivery plan in Somerset, work is ongoing to bring services together to provide one single key integrated point of contact for those who need access to the healthcare system.

A funding bid has been put in for monies to support early interventions in relation to mental health support.

There remains considerable concern over challenges that may be faced over the winter period, which could have a significant negative impact on service provision, and the availability of hospital bed spaces.

**Local residents are urged to have the flu jab as soon as possible.**

**DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE (DSFRS)**

The 'Safer Together' consultation period relating to the future shape of the fire service has now closed, and I am awaiting further information before a final decision is made, in November. Concerns have been raised about the accuracy of information provided by the service and I am in regular contact with interested parties.

**SW EMPLOYERS' PANEL**

I have been appointed as Vice Chair of this panel, and in my capacity as SSDC representative I took part in the discussion with union representatives this month relating to the upcoming round of pay negotiations for local authority employees.

## HIGHWAYS

For Traffic Management enquiries to go [TrafficManagement@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:TrafficManagement@somerset.gov.uk)

For South Somerset county roads issues email [countyroads-southsom@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:countyroads-southsom@somerset.gov.uk)

## PLANNED ROADWORKS

I seem to no longer be in receipt of regular updates, but I am hoping that these will be restored shortly. In the meantime, individual parishes should be made aware directly by SCC Highways. The closure of the A358 at Donyatt has caused some disruption, where it seems that notifications were not received as promised.

## FLOODING

Please note the link below to report any issues.

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/report-a-blocked-drain-on-the-road/>

## WINTER GRITTING

Now that SCC's financial position has now significantly improved, it will make available an additional £200k to fund additional routes and activities, resulting in an increase in the precautionary gritting network back to previous levels of 900 miles of road (21% of the total roads in Somerset) that will be treated each time ice or snow is forecast. SCC will be operating 23 gritting lorries, from five depots across the county.

**Parish councils should check their grit bins and inform SCC by 31<sup>st</sup> Oct. if they need filling**, to assist with targeting visits by the road maintenance teams to those locations in need. One tonne dumpy bags of salt are sometimes provided on steep slopes, and this will continue to be the case. Parish/Town Councils with questions regarding the provision of roadside salt should contact the area highways office. Due to the previous low take up of the parish/town council salt bag collection day, this will not take place this year.

The following link provides details of plans for this coming winter.

Gritting routes <https://somersetnewsroom.files.wordpress.com/2019/07/winter-service2019>

## SMALL IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES

In the current funding round, a total of 7 schemes have now been completed, and there is the expectation is that all schemes currently under consideration will be completed by 2021.

## HIGHWAYS ENGLAND (HE) - A358 UPGRADE

Parishes along the A358, including Ashill and Broadway, have been in regular contact and this month, along with members of local parish councils, I attended a meeting of the Community Liaison Forum.

A decision on the Sparkford to Ilchester dualling is expected before the end of the year; dualling of the A358 is intended to contribute to improved connectivity at both local and national level, however, strong concern was raised about the additional traffic flow up to the Southfields roundabout, where currently there are no plans to upgrade the single carriageway junction.

## ILMINSTER TRANSPORT

There has been no further progress on this at present.

## PARKING

In response to recent concerns relating to parking along Winterhay Lane this information may prove useful. SCC enforce on-street parking restrictions to improve road safety for all road users, to improve the flow of traffic, and to make sure emergency vehicles and public transport can travel without obstruction or delay. If you would like to report a vehicle parked in contravention of parking restrictions, phone SCC's enforcement contractor **NSL** on **01823 210566** or email [somersetparkingenquiries@nsl.co.uk](mailto:somersetparkingenquiries@nsl.co.uk)

## **STREET LIGHTING**

Individuals can report a non-urgent fault with a street-light by using the 'Report now' button on the website link below, or by calling the Fault Line on 0345 601 0939, Mon. to Fri. from 8am to 5pm. The number on the street-light column should be given, where it is available. <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/report-a-problem-with-a-street-light/>

## **ALLOWENSHAY PRIVATE WATER SUPPLY**

This was discussed at SSDC District Exec. this month at which the group representing residents requested a grant. District Executive agreed that the Exceptions and Appeals Panel be asked to vary the policy for this case only for the approval of a Home loan through Wessex Resolutions CIC to make it available to all residents served with the Notices regardless of the vulnerability or financial status.

## **LANDFILL**

Concern has been raised over the lorry movements and aggregate storage and tipping occurring at Oxenford Farm, where one tipping lorry brought down the overhead high voltage lines, leaving over 30 properties without electricity for several hours. The former tenant's Waste Exemption certificate with the Environment Agency, expired in Aug. and only covered waste for use in agricultural construction. I have requested that SCC officers investigate this matter, ensuring that the correct consents and planning permissions are in place.

## **GYPSY/TRAVELLERS**

There is concern over the current lack of communication between local authorities and the gypsy/traveller communities across the county.

South Somerset is the only district in Somerset meeting the required allocation for permanent site provision.

Over the summer months there have been several unauthorised encampments, but the police have been unable to use enforcement powers to move them on because there is nowhere to move them on to. It is considered that smaller sites, accommodating both permanent and transit travellers are preferable.

Public concern has been raised about littering, where contractors are not collecting waste, because travellers do not pay council tax.

## **SSDC LOCAL PLAN REVIEW**

Prior to the deadline for the Local Plan consultation this month, I joined members of Broadway PC, to meet with an SSDC officer to voice concerns in relation to the proposal for Horton & Broadway to have 'Rural Settlement' status, and the impact this will have on development in the area. Also, it is felt that little consideration has been given to the impact of proposed changes to the A358, and the likelihood of increased traffic congestion.

## **SSDC LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION**

This consultation of the preferred options has now closed.

## **SSDC REGULATION COMMITTEE**

At this month's SSDC Full Council meeting I was appointed to the Regulation Committee.

## **SCHOOL PLACES**

Applications for school places for 2020 can now be made. The deadline for secondary school places is 31 Oct. 2019, and 15 Jan. 2020 for Primary school admissions. Applicants are encouraged to submit three preferences, including their local school as one of those preferences. [www.somerset.gov.uk/education-and-families/apply-to-start-school](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/education-and-families/apply-to-start-school)

## **CREWKERNE ILMINSTER SCHOOLS REVIEW**

The outcome of the long awaited independent report on education structure in the area, specifically relating to the current three-tier system, has confirmed SCC's assessment that there are insufficient pupils to sustainably deliver education in the area, both in terms of financial viability and the curriculum on offer, under the current system. "The solution has to come in the form of change that involves all the schools as part of an integrated education offer for the area. SCC are now in talks with the Commissioner about next steps. The option which appears most likely to be proposed is a Multi-Academy Trust for the whole area."

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/crewkerne-and-ilminster-strategic-school-review/>

## **YEOVIL POLICE STATION**

The decision has been taken to construct a new Police Station on the same footprint as the existing building at Horsey Lane. The new accommodation will include an Enquiry Office and a base for the Neighbourhood, Patrol and Investigations teams.

The timetable for the new build is still being confirmed, but it is expected that construction works will start in spring 2020 and will be for at least 12 months. During construction, a temporary Enquiry Office open to the public will be set up at the existing site.

Staff and offices at the current site will move to the SSDC offices at Brympton Way at the end of 2019/early 2020.

## **LOCAL VANDALISM**

Over the last few months there have been a number of acts of vandalism against council property, mainly to equipment in play areas. Local residents are asked to be watchful and to record such incidents in some detail (date, time, type of damage, photos etc.) and to report them to the local beat team so that they are aware. It has also been suggested that social media be used to raise awareness and perhaps help in identifying the culprits.

## **SW COUNCILS**

SW Councils' team of qualified and experienced specialists offer independent Employment Advice and Support to help local authorities (including PCs) to manage challenging people related issues and build your workforce wellbeing and resilience. To find out more, go to <http://www.swcouncils.gov.uk> or call 01823 270101.

## **OPPOSITE SEX CIVIL PARTNERSHIPS**

Somerset's Registration Service (SRS) will be able to enable opposite couples to tie the knot through a new 'opposite sex civil partnership' next year. The service would like to hear from couples interested in booking a ceremony in 2020 following the change of Government legislation which will make civil partnerships available to opposite as well as same sex couples. Those interested should contact SRS via [somersetregistrations@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:somersetregistrations@somerset.gov.uk)

## **HISTORIC HIGH STREET FUNDING**

Chard is one of 69 English towns, cities and districts that will benefit from the government's £95m regeneration fund:

## **ILMINSTER LIBRARY**

The next FoIL coffee morning will be on Sat. 26<sup>th</sup> Oct. 10am – 12 noon.

## ACTIVITIES/MEETINGS

2/9	School Safeguarding Training
2/9	SSDC – Licensing sub-committee
3/9	SSDC – Scrutiny
3/9	SSDC – Area West
3/9	Broadway PC
3/9	SSDC – Regulation Committee
4/9	Chard Museum Trustee meeting
4/9	Winsham PC
5/9	SSDC – meeting with Chief Exec.
5/9	SSDC – District Exec.
5/9	Donyatt – planning consultation
6/9	DSFRA
6/9	DSFRA – Pension Appeal Committee
7/9	Ashill VH fund raising concert
8/9	Horton Family Service
9/9	Ashill PC
9/9	Donyatt PC
9/9	Somerset ‘Take Art’ community lunch - Roadwater
10/9	SSDC – Licensing Committee
11/9	SSDC – meeting re: Local Plan 42
11/9	Glastonbury Community Partnership Meeting – 70 miles
11/9	Horton Playing Field Project
12/9	Chard Museum
12/9	Wadham School annual awards – The Minster
13/9	Whitlackington VH quiz
15/9	Cricket Malherbie Harvest Service
16/9	SCC – Member briefing on Medium Term Financial Plan
16/9	Horton PC
16/9	Neroche School governors’ meeting
17/9	SSDC – Regulation Committee
17/9	East Coker planning meeting
17/9	Iminster TC
18/9	Musgrove Hospital
19/9	Wadham School meeting
19/9	Winsham Jubilee Hall coffee morning
19/9	SSDC – Group Leader’s meeting
19/9	SSDC – full council
20/9	SCC – conference call re: schools
20/9	Chard Museum strategy meeting
20/9	Iminster Lions Charter night
20/9	Chard Fire Brigade re: proposed changes
21/9	Somerset County Show
21/9	Iminster Arts Centre
22/9	Somerset County Show
23/9	Wadham School open evening
23/9	Iminster Lit. Fest. AGM
24/9	Highways England – Community Liaison Forum
25/9	Welcome service for the new vicar at The Minster
26/9	SCC - Health & Wellbeing Board
26/9	Iminster Neighbourhood Plan
27/9	Macmillan Coffee morning
27/9	South West Employers’ Panel – as SSDC rep.