

Watchet, Williton & Quantock Vale Area Panel

20th March 2018

1. Have your say – there were not questions raised by the public.
2. Apologies: Loretta Whetlor, Peter Gill
3. Notes of the minutes of the last meeting were noted.
4. Police report – verbal update provided
5. Magna Housing Association Tony Murray report presented

Tenant arrears appears low, do you actively manage these? TM gave examples of how Magna managed and supported people who were struggling with arrears and would engage early where to prevent these becoming unmanageable.

Places like Ingrams Meadow are quite popular as extra care schemes, can these be expanded rather than contracted. No assumption that these would be contracted, but this service may be delivered differently in the future. Changes are needed to make the service viable.

Blend of housing stock is changing and the need for smaller properties is increasing

Neighbourhood walkabout plan will be circulated with the minutes.

What action can be taken where properties have been sold to the public and there are neighbourly issues, work is undertaken with estates officer and if there are greater issues these may be escalated to the police or environmental health teams within the Council.

Parking issues causing bus access problems on Maglands. Off road parking can be controversial when it means removing green space, it is also very expensive. Concern was also raised that those parking are in need of the space, preventing or limiting parking in one place will inevitably move it to another location.

If Magna are trying to build new housing it appears that they are selling of existing stock (not through RTB), why would this be the case? The example given was in Quantock Road. The response was that this property was sold due to maintenance liabilities caused by them being of a non-standard construction. Some of the general needs housing in rural villages may also be sold off where there isn't the need for them. This allows for reinvestment in new stock that is of a greater efficiency, in location that match the need.

6. Highways report

Some disruption to the surface maintenance schemes as a result of the recent weather conditions but generally WSC were not adversely affected. Drainage improvements have been delayed as employees were diverted to drive the gritters which were operating 24/7.

Completed

B3188 Woodford yard drainage
Carriageway resurfacing North St. / North Road Williton
Swain Street Watchet by the boat museum
Wrextom lane, Stogumber
B3181 at Cleeve Hill renewed safety fencing

New package of works starting in April – To be forwarded by SCC.

Is there any danger that the road will become affected by the landslip at Blue Anchor?
– SCC, Yes this is possible, there is also a focus on the section of highway towards Watchet where the road barrier has had to be moved.

7. WSC update

WSC and TDBC last night made the final local decision to proceed with the creation of a new council, this remains subject to the final approval of the secretary of state which is expected imminently.

- The name of the authority is proposed to be Somerset West and Taunton.
- The proposed number of councillors would be 58 subject to a Local Government Boundary Commission England review.
- A cabinet model should be adopted with up to 10 cabinet members
- A shadow authority would be set up with all members across the two authorities plus a shadow executive.

Pleased to be able to confirm that through a jointly commissioned activity the Council will be working with Watchet Harbour Marina to clear mud from the marina and the outer harbour.

By working together we are able to save some of the otherwise substantial mobilisation and demob costs.

This is being undertaken in the outer harbour to prevent any risk to navigation and to enable us to undertake surveys of the harbour walls.

Also in Watchet the long standing issues with the lighting on the esplanade will be rectified through the replacement of the lanterns and columns in April. This is a substantial financial investment and should lead to the end of the frequent failure in these lights.

Questions previously raised as to the validity of the CCTV system in Watchet, and a response was provided by John Richards that these are working effectively.