

# Watchet, Williton and Quantocks Area Panel

Tuesday, 21st January, 2020,  
7.00 pm

## Council Chamber - West Somerset House

### Agenda

1. **Introduction**
2. **Apologies for Absence**
3. **Have Your Say - Community Issues/Concerns**  
An opportunity for local people to influence what happens in their neighbourhood and the opportunity to share their views on a raft of issues that affect their lives.
4. **Notes of the Meeting held on 17th September 2019 and Matters Arising** (Pages 3 - 8)
5. **Police Report** (Pages 9 - 12)  
To receive an update.
6. **Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service**  
To receive an update.
7. **Highways Report**  
To receive an update.  
  
**Please note: as a way of assisting the smooth running of the Panel, David Peake will be available before the meeting to allow members of the Panel to discuss local issues informally.**
8. **Somerset West and Taunton Council** (Pages 13 - 18)
  - 8.1 **Climate Change Consultation – Robert Downes (20mins)**
  - 8.2 **S106 Affordable Housing – Sue Southwell / Jo Humble (30mins)**
9. **Date of Next Meeting**  
Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2020 at 7.00 pm, Council Chamber, Council Offices, Williton

**10. Minutes of the meeting 21.01.2020**

(Pages 19 - 26)

**Watchet, Williton & Quantock Vale Area Panel**

**17<sup>th</sup> September 2019**

**7.00 pm**

**Council Chamber, Council Offices, Williton**

**NOTES AND ACTION POINTS**

**PRESENT:**

Councillor David Westcott	Watchet Town Council
Councillor Loretta Whetlor	SWT and Watchet Town Council
Councillor Marcus Kravis	SWT Portfolio Holder
Dave Talling	Holford Parish Council
Peter Gill	Kilve Parish Council
Sue Goss	Stogursey Parish Council
Gordon Tizzard	West Quantoxhead Parish Council
Tony Perrett	Williton Parish Council
Izzy Silvester	CCS Village Agent
John Richards	WACET
Samantha Murrell	SWT Engagement Lead
Rebecca Miller	SWT Principal Planning Officer
David Peake	SCC Highways Officer
Helga Staddon	Resident
Bob Crowther	Resident
Richard Cuttell	Resident
Jenny Berry	Resident

**1. Introduction**

**2. Apologies for Absence**

Cllr Huw Davies - SCC & SWT

Chris Hall SWT

Emma Cavendish – Holford Parish Council

PCSO Sue Marks (Who was called away to attend RTC).

**3. Notes of the Meeting of 19<sup>th</sup> June 2019 and Matters Arising.**

It was agreed that most of the matters arising would be covered under subsequent Agenda Items.

**4. Have Your Say - Community Issues/Concerns**

- a) Jennifer Berry (chair of the Good Neighbours scheme hosted in Danesborough View Common Room) spoke of her annoyance at use of the name "Good Neighbours" by Somerset Community Council for their national scheme. She had spoken to Izzy Silvester at length about this, and was angry that an advertisement had been displayed in the Williton Window, advertising the services of the Village Agents "Good Neighbours" which conflicted with her own. Izzy was doing her best to come to a resolution and was attending a meeting the following morning with her CEO to discuss the situation.

**ACTION POINT 1 – Izzy Silvester to work with Miss Berry to establish a mutually beneficial way forward.**

**5. SWT Principal Planning Specialist – Rebecca Miller**

- a) Rebecca introduced herself and said she had been appointed to post following the transformation to one Council. She was very aware of recent frustrations and she was putting together a cohesive planning team that was fit for purpose. She had finally finished interviewing and the last person would come into the SWT on the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2020. She had appointed 9 new planning posts, which would be assigned geographical areas and would familiarise themselves with their localities. This would result in consistency with names, faces and decision making. In addition three of these had specialisms in Conservation (Heritage Buildings), Conservation and Landscaping (AONB Areas) and Tree Preservation. The Planning Officer responsible for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP) including HPC is John Burton.
- b) These officers would not be based at a specific location but would be flexible and work where it suited the purpose of the business. Although they had individual caseload, if capacity allowed they would be available to help customers with general planning related queries if called upon.
- c) Referring to action points that had been raised in the previous Area Panel Meeting by Holford Parish Council:-

**C.1.** Ongoing Maintenance of Amenity/Play Areas. Do new owners take on the restrictions and responsibilities that were imposed as part of the original planning application, and how long do these responsibilities last?  
Rebecca advised that the original agreement still stands and the landowner is responsible. The landowner had provided a play area and that was fulfilling the planning obligation despite the fact it was closed as deemed “unsafe”. There were no grounds to enforce a S106 order because the landowner had not breached the order. It was pointed out that as this play area is owned by a RSL housing provider (Falcon Housing formerly West Somerset Rural Housing), it was in their interest as a responsible landlord to serve their tenants, and ensure that the play area was well maintained.

**ACTION POINT 2 – Seek advice from Housing Enabler (Jo Humble) about who to liaise with at Falcon Rural Housing Association to resolve this matter.** *Jo Humble and Sue Southwell prior to this Area Panel have expressed a wish to attend the December 2019 meeting to discuss S106 agreements and Housing Enablement roles.*

**C.2.** Is it now official planning policy to recommend prospective applicants consult with the Parish Council for opinions and suggestions regarding potential planning applications?  
The answer given was that this is not official planning policy, but it is considered good practice for applicants to consult prior to submission, especially on large scale developments.

- d) Concern was expressed about the move away from providing paper plans with applications. Rebecca stated that SWT receives all applications in an electronic format now, and it was too costly to reproduce these as paper copies. It reduces carbon footprint, storage requirement and postage. David Peake emphasised this point and said that SCC also no longer provide hard copy plans. In the

event a Parish Council wanted a paper copy, it was suggested that they firstly approach the applicant to see if they could provide one as part of their consultation.

- e) Sue Goss expressed disappointment at the new rules regarding delegated decisions as she felt it reduced the importance of parish councils and asked that these were fed back to SWT. Marcus Kravis said this was a political decision, not officer led but her comments were noted.
- f) There were also several comments made regarding satellite dishes in Conservation Areas, unauthorised HMOs and other enforcement issues relating to the HPC site. Rebecca said that John Burton was the specialist officer in that area and should be point of contact. If matters needed to be escalated then they would come to her as Principal Planning Officer.

## **6. Police Report – Report is attached.**

- a) Report was read out at the meeting in the absence of Sue Thomson who was called away to attend a RTC.
- b) A reminder that the PCC and Chief Constable would be hosting a question and answer session at the Beach Hotel, Minehead on 24<sup>th</sup> September at 7pm. The event is free but tickets need to be booked via Eventbrite.
- c) Sue also left some information booklets which highlighted scams and how to combat them.

## **7. Highways Report – David Peake**

1. Referring to action points that had been raised in the previous Area Panel meeting:-
  - 1.1. Regarding overnight closures of the A39 during the winter months – SCC did their very best to issue advance notice but the surface dressing work was very weather dependent. High/low temperatures and rain affected the ability to carry out these works. It was always the intention for works to go ahead as advertised but they had to undertake a risk assessment on weather conditions prior to starting. If it was considered that conditions were unsuitable then the work was postponed until a more favourable time. Notifications were always posted on Twitter @TravelSomerset, BBC Traffic and Somerset Travel. <https://www.travelsomerset.co.uk>. This was real time monitoring and updated incidents and road closures as they happened.
  - 1.2. Wide loads – this is not a matter handled by SCC Highways but wide load operating companies do have to check road conditions before setting out. Due to lack of resource there is no requirement on A&SPolice to assist with the private transportation of wide loads, but there are strict operating times about when they can travel.
2. Various questions were raised about Highways issues concerning the HPC Infrastructure. (Mainly concerning congestion, traffic census information, rat-runs and maintenance of roads in the Shurton area). David Peake said these needed to be referred to the relevant on-site case worker at Hinkley Point as the site had its own Highways Project Officers.
3. Hedgerow cutting and verge maintenance. The cyclical program on this had been reduced to one cut a year. The hedges and verges will be trimmed back by 1metre at the roadside to increase visibility. Due to bird nesting season SCC trim hedges only in

September and October, but if the hedge causes a health and safety hazard they will attend to it also outside of this time frame. Concerns can be reported via the SCC website.

4. A concern was raised by Jenny Berry about the state of pavements in Williton alongside the Wyndham Arms and Long Street. Due to the fact there was only one safe walkway alongside these busy main roads, she asked if essential repair works could be undertaken.

**ACTION POINT 3 - David Peake to pass these comments along so that an assessment on the state of the pavements can be carried out.**

5. Essential resurfacing work is due to take place on the A39 at Dragon Cross in October. This will result in overnight road closures Mon – Friday from 18:30 to 23:30 during off peak hours to minimise disruption. Work will begin on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> October with the final shift programmed for Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> October. For further information on this please refer to [www.travelsomerset.co.uk/roadworks](http://www.travelsomerset.co.uk/roadworks) .

#### **8. Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service – Not present**

#### **9. Somerset West and Taunton Council**

- a) A report on the Somerset West Lottery had been circulated prior to the meeting. Funds raised this year are £35,349,60.

**ACTION POINT 4 – The Chairman asked how much of the ticket price was specifically allocated to the former West Somerset Council Area, if that was where it was purchased?**

**ACTION POINT 5 – What arrangements were in place to celebrate the Lottery hitting the £100K target? Could this be investigated and reported back please.**

- b) The lease to the Onion Collective Development will be signed on the 23<sup>rd</sup> September which will move the project to the construction stage. As a reminder the project is being managed by the Onion Collective and any agents they may appoint.
- c) Gordon Tizzard asked what the maximum capacity was for Fire Regulations on the John Meikle Room (JMR) in Taunton?

**ACTION POINT 6 – To determine what the capacity arrangements are for the John Meikle room.**

Councillors Kravis and Whetlor advised that meetings relating to local issues such as Licensing and Planning would be held at West Somerset House whenever possible. Due to the size of the Committee and to assist with accessibility, this was a sensible choice. With regards to Full Council however, it was somewhat more difficult to accommodate all 59 Councillors, press and public within the West Somerset Council Chamber, especially if the Agenda was focussed on a Taunton related issue.

- d) A new Prosperity and Economic Development strategy is being commissioned and will be completed during the winter of 2019. This will help the Council make informed decisions about how to direct its own resources and contribute to growth and investment.
- e) Councillor Whetlor advised that SALC would be convening a meeting at West Somerset House and member organisations would receive an invitation in due course.

**10. Meeting closed at 9:00pm**

**Dates of Future Meetings**

Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2019

Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2020

The West Somerset House Council Chamber has been reserved for this purpose.



Panel Meeting Report.

Crime Statistics on the AW052 Beat area for the last three months;  
Violence against the Person x 82. – (includes harassment, stalking,  
malicious communications etc.)

Arson/Criminal damage x 33

(CDMV – 14)

Theft x 26 –

(SL 4 – bilking 3 – 18 others)

Non-dwelling Burglary x 19

(10 residential, 8 commercial)

Public Order Offences x 14

12 Sct 5 2 Sct 4

Vehicle Offences x 9

(Taken Without Consent 7) Theft From Motor Vehicle 1 - on the back  
of previous incidents of TFMV – tools taken from vans – lots of PR,  
we have had one TFMV.

Sexual Offences x 3

Drug Offences x 2

Miscellaneous x 2

The last three months has been a busy time on the beat area of  
AW052.

We have had reports of incidents of non-dwelling burglaries in our  
rural & remote areas generally targeting tools, equipment, & diesel.

Some of these premises have been commercial premises. CCTV enquiries underway. Every victim has been visited and Crime Prevention advice given.

Just before Christmas, the local team attended Cutcombe Fatstock Show & Sale, to offer Crime Prevention advice, Farm & Horsecatch Signup. This was a really useful event, with lots of visitors, & facilitated engagement with the Neighbourhood Beat team, raising awareness of security, & the benefits of tracking devices & datatag for machinery.

The incident in Watchet on Memorial weekend where unknown offenders have sprayed extremely offensive Graffiti in Watchet Memorial Ground & the Henry Davey field has sadly been unresolved, but with the lack of any operational CCTV, & despite widespread media requests for information of those responsible, we have no evidence to identify offenders.

A recent fire in a storage area at the rear of Co-op on Liddymore Road is believed to be accidental rather than deliberate ignition.

We are currently having to deal with some Anti-Social Behaviour emanating from several groups of young people in the area. There is a joint meeting tomorrow at West Somerset College to discuss this worrying trend with partner agencies, to find a solution to deal & disrupt. Williton Youth Club is at very real risk of closure due to the disruptive & vile behaviour of a group of older children. Parents MUST know where their young people are, & what they are up to, & we will work hard with schools/College, Housing association & Youth leaders to achieve this. The Police are using the ASB Tools and Powers to robustly deal with

There have recently been several incidents of Fraud, generally targeting elderly/vulnerable people. A & S have recently published a really useful booklet- "The Little Book of Big Scams" which has been

distributed locally, & can be found in Williton & Watchet Libraries.- A very informative read.

On Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> January, PCSO Sue Thompson has organised an event to be held in Maglands Community Hall, Maglands Rd in Watchet- 'Celebrating Older Person's Day!'

This will focus on elderly people staying safe within their own homes, & also in the wider community, & will also be attended by Village Agent, Road Safety Team ( talking specifically about older drivers) Fire Safety, Dementia Friends, MIND, Magna 'Money matters' The 'Be Home Safe' van & the Neighbourhood policing Team.

The event runs between 13.30-16.30 and is an opportunity for ANYONE to come along for advice/help, or just to meet and make new friends over FREE tea & cakes!

Thanks to SCs, officers working really hard to tackle.





# Tackling the Climate Emergency Together

Somerset West and Taunton Council is committed to creating a more sustainable future for our families and the places we enjoy. We are working with partners to produce plans for tackling climate change within our district and across the wider County. This will only be truly effective if we create something that we all feel involved with and that will inspire each of us to take action.

**“We now want to hear your views on what the issues are  
and how we can collectively solve them”**

## Impacts on Somerset

Too often we see the impacts of global heating as something only governments can resolve. The truth is we all contribute to the problem.

From:

- The things we choose to buy
- How we choose to travel
- How we run our businesses
- How we build our homes
- How we help to shape new policies



The Met Office predicts that by 2070 **summers** will be upto **5.8°C hotter** and **57% drier**. **Winters** could be **33% wetter**.

This could lead to:

- Increased flooding and coastal erosion
- Higher risk of heatwaves
- Destruction of wildlife habitats
- The most vulnerable unable to adapt
- Threats to job security and business

## Join us in making a commitment

We can take action now by reducing our contribution to global heating and by preparing for local impacts.

We will use all our powers to action, enable and support everyone to work towards achieving carbon neutrality and climate resilience by 2030.

**“What will your commitment be?”**

Turn to pages 2 and 3 to view our ideas →

Turn to page 4 to find out how to have your say →

# These are some of our ideas...

## Transport

54% of carbon emissions in our district come from transport.



Actions should grow a green transport system, increase active lifestyles and reduce business travel, by:

- Electrifying transport options and meeting that demand through renewable energy.
- Supporting Taunton Park & Ride, re-opening Wellington Train Station and exploring innovative urban and rural transport options.
- Developing new routes and pedestrian zones that make walking and cycling the preferred choice.
- Enabling people to reduce the amount they need to travel (e.g. through better digital connectivity).

## Energy

Our lives are energy intensive and we can't continue to meet that demand through fossil fuels. 37% of carbon emissions



in the UK derive from heating homes and businesses.

Activity is required to help generate, store and consume energy in smarter ways:

- Building new cases for renewable energy like wind, solar and biomass.
- Enabling and raising awareness of local community energy projects.
- Providing advice for reducing and shifting energy demand.
- Developing a Somerset Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy.

## The Built Environment

There are about 80,000 homes and businesses in our district and plans for more, all of which must be fit for the future.



Ideas to enable this include:

- Retrofitting homes and advising home owners on changes they can make.
- Locating new developments sustainably, close to transport and services.
- Ensuring new buildings achieve zero carbon emissions as soon as possible.
- Planting trees and re-wilding urban spaces to increase well-being.

## Natural Environment

Somerset's many special landscapes are



under threat. We need plans to radically improve the chances for wildlife and carbon capture through better land management.

We plan on:

- Planting more trees and sowing more wildflower meadows.
- Working with landowners to enhance vulnerable habitats.
- Introducing less intensive practices in managing Council owned spaces.
- Empowering residents and communities to deliver local wildlife projects.

## Waste

Although ranked in the top 10% areas in England for recycling household



waste, Somerset must continue to reduce its environmental impact.

Our ideas include:

- Creating campaigns to help us all reduce plastic use.
- Diverting remaining waste away from landfill to energy generation projects.
- Working with businesses to develop joint waste schemes.
- Reducing supply chain waste in key areas, like the public sector.

## Farming & Food

Many existing practices for producing, distributing and consuming food generates significant carbon and methane emissions.



We want to work with partners to explore:

- Land management techniques that reduce emissions and protect wildlife.
- Supporting farmers in adapting to the impacts of climate change.
- Improving understanding about the importance of buying local produce.
- How we reduce reliance on the use of plastics in food packaging.

## Water

Climate projections predict more intense and variable rainfall patterns, leading to more flooding, drought and water quality issues.



Ideas to mitigate these risks include:

- Delivering flood alleviation improvements and coastal erosion management.
- Harnessing the energy generating potential of water treatment processes.
- Working with businesses with significant water usage to reduce their consumption.
- Increasing use of sustainable urban drainage systems in developments.

## Industry, Business and Supply Chain

Our economy accounts for 29.5% of carbon emissions in Somerset.



Actions are required to help businesses and employees improve operations and influence supply chains, such as:

- A business toolkit to help reduce emissions from supply chains.
- Sharing best practice and championing businesses that make positive changes.
- Increasing the resilience of small businesses affected by changes.
- Changing Council procurement processes to engage sustainable suppliers.

**We want to hear your ideas and find out what you as individuals, businesses and communities are already doing.**

**Turn to the back page to find out more and how you can have your say....**

# Working towards achieving carbon neutrality and climate resilience by 2030

## Developing our plans

The information used within these pages is a summary of a 30 page draft 'ideas' plan we have produced for our district, called the **'Somerset West and Taunton Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience Plan'**.

We have also been working with partners to produce a similar draft document for the county of Somerset, called the **'Somerset Climate Emergency Framework'**.

Both these documents will evolve at the same time and are designed to start conversations with our residents, businesses and communities. We are also continuing to take action whilst we develop these plans.



## What does being Carbon Neutral mean?

Human activity produces damaging gases, such as carbon dioxide and methane, which lead to global heating and impacts on the planet.

Carbon dioxide is the biggest contributor to the problems and we are producing far more than the planet is able to deal with. We urgently need to get the balance back.

This requires action to radically reduce our carbon emissions. We also need to find ways to capture and store carbon so that ultimately we are retaining as much as we are releasing.

### Timetable for District and County Plans:

Jan-Feb 2020	Phase 1 consultation with public
Mar 2020	Draft plans finalised
Apr-May 2020	Phase 2 consultation with public
Jun-Aug 2020	Final plans finalised

## Have Your Say

You can now have your say on both the district and county plans. You can do this by attending one of our events or by heading to our website, where you can:

- Find out about district and county plans
- View key documents
- Complete an online survey
- Email us with your thoughts



You can also post comments on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram.  
Find us @swtcouncil





## Watchet, Williton & Quantock Vale Area Panel

### Introduction to the Development Enabling team and what we do

#### Team of 5

1. Jo Humble: Lead Specialist – Place
2. Sue Southwell: Development Enabler – focusing on Exmoor and rural communities
3. Gordon Dwyer: Development Enabler – focusing on Employment sites and the Garden Town
4. Katie Furner: Development Enabler – focusing on Urban sites and Heritage project support
5. Monika Mardon: Case Manager – providing admin support, monitoring, compiling reports

#### Main tasks

- Establishing effective working relationships with housing delivery partners e.g. housing associations, the council own build programme and private developers
- Seek and identify new development opportunities to work in partnership to bring forward housing /employment schemes
- Ensure there is a joined up response to developers from within the council e.g. from Planning Officers, Locality Champions etc
- Ensure that decisions are made on up to date data e.g. on the current housing and financial markets and how they will affect housing delivery. How changes in housing legislation and policy will affect our delivery partners.
- Support a range of development projects in the area which will deliver affordable housing opportunities.
- Consultee for S.106 agreements on affordable housing and park and open space.
- Support on-site delivery and a range of development projects
- Provide input to emerging strategies in relation to housing

#### What is affordable housing?

The most usual types of affordable housing in Somerset West and Taunton are:

**Affordable Housing for rent** is where you pay a percentage of market rent to a housing association or similar organisation. There are currently two key different rent regimes where the amount paid for a similar sized home may vary.

- Social rent: Rent levels are set using a formula based on local incomes and local house prices. This is usually at about 50-60% of open market rent levels. This level of rent is strongly supported by Somerset West and Taunton councillors as being affordable for people on low incomes.
- Affordable rent: rent levels are set at 80% of open market rent levels. Housing associations in Somerset West and Taunton can only receive government grant if they commit to charging this level of rent.

**Low Cost / Discounted Open Market Housing** is housing provided at a discount to the full market value. The discount is tied to a Section 106 agreement and held in perpetuity. The buyer owns the whole of the property, there is no third party.

**Shared Ownership schemes** are provided through housing associations. The occupier buys a share of their home and pays rent on the remaining share, with the option to increase the percentage of their share over time. Sometimes in rural areas the occupier is unable to buy more than 80% of the value of the property.

#### **What is a S106 and what does it cover?**

The Development Enabler Specialists are consultees for the sections of a S.106 Agreement that deal with Affordable Housing and Play and Open Space provision in line with the permitted planning application. .

Through our consultee comments the Development Enabler Specialists can feed into the planning process to ensure that the affordable housing is of a high quality and that the homes go to households most in need of affordable housing, and the rents or prices are affordable, and remain so in the future.

We also ensure that the community benefits of Section 106 contributions for open space are maximised. There are policy requirements in the Local Plans which are made explicit and enforced through the S.106.

#### **Outreach**

Planning is underway on how to bring together the benefits of TDBC Affordable Housing Open Day and WSDC Housing Fair. The main event is provisionally booked for the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020 at the County Cricket Ground.

We are planning to do a small number of road shows across the Somerset West and Taunton area in order to reach people who can't travel into Taunton for the main event. These will be hosted in Minehead, Dulverton and Wellington.

**Watchet, Williton & Quantock Vale Area Panel**

**21<sup>st</sup> January 2020**

**7.00 pm**

**Council Chamber, Council Offices, Williton**

**NOTES AND ACTION POINTS**

**PRESENT:**

Councillor David Westcott	Watchet Town Council / Chair
Dave Talling	Holford Parish Council
Peter Gill	Kilve Parish Council
Gordon Tizzard	West Quantoxhead Parish Council
John Richards	WACET
David Peake	SCC Highways Officer
Sally De Renzy Martin	Watchet Town Council
Peter Payne	Williton Parish Council
Rosemary Woods	Williton Parish Council
Sharon Baker	Avon and Somerset Police
Councillor Ian Aldridge	SWT / Williton PC
Samantha Murrell	SWT Engagement Lead
Robert Downes	SWT Project Manager
Jo Humble	SWT Lead Place Specialist
Sue Southwell	SWT Development Enabler

**1. Introduction**

**2. Apologies for Absence**

Councillor Loretta Whetlor (SWT/WTC), Tony Murray (Magna Housing), Chris Hall (SWT), Katrina Midgely (Engage), Chris Jones (D&SFRS), Councillor Marcus Kravis (SWT), Councillor Peter Pilkington (SWT)

**3. Somerset West and Taunton Council**

In order to ensure all points were covered during the meeting, item 8 was brought forward to Item 3.

**3.1 Climate Change Consultation – Robert Downes  
Reports and Notes Attached.**

Somerset West and Taunton Council has declared a climate emergency and committed to working towards making the Council and the area which we cover carbon neutral by 2030. Alongside this, it is recognised that it is essential that we prepare our communities, businesses and buildings to ensure they are resilient to the climate change which is already in motion. In preparing a Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience Plan for the district, the Council aims to take a leadership role in starting the conversations on how things need to change, taking action where it can, supporting and enabling others to play their parts, and lobbying Government and other actors to make necessary changes.

SWT is currently consulting on its Local Plan and Climate Change Strategy. Robert Downes outlined the proposal and timescale for the consultation. Various venues within Taunton and West Somerset for public meetings over the next few months.

The consultation will take place from Monday 13<sup>th</sup> January to Monday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2020.

The Local Plan will cover the new district area but does not include the area covered by Exmoor National Park. In order to produce a good Local Plan we need to engage with the local communities and businesses to understand what is important to them in their area.

This is the first consultation stage in the Local Plan process. It sets out the key issues and draft objectives for the Local Plan particularly around climate change and development needs over the next 20 years.

Please visit our website to find the documents and an opportunity to have your say: [yoursay.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk](https://yoursay.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk).

Paper copies of the document will be available to view in all libraries in Somerset West and Taunton, as well as at council office receptions at Deane House (Belvedere Road, Taunton TA1 1HE) and West Somerset House (Killick Way, Williton TA4 4QA)

SWT will also be visiting these venues, where you can find out more and ask questions:

- Wellington, Quaker Meeting House – Thursday 23 January, 10am to 3pm
- Williton, West Somerset House – Thursday 30 January, 2pm to 7pm
- Taunton, the Orchard Shopping Centre – Thursday 6 February, 10am to 3pm
- Minehead, Methodist Church – Monday 10 February, 2pm to 7pm
- Watchet, The Sanctuary – Tuesday 11 February, 10am to 3pm
- Wiveliscombe, Community Centre – Thursday 20 February, 10am to 3pm
- Taunton, Deane House – Wednesday 26 February, 2pm to 7pm

## Questions Arising

**3.1.1** In response to SWT setting aside a large budget to improve and retrofit their own Council housing and buildings bringing them up to an eco-friendly standard: Rosemary Wood asked what plans and money had been set aside to serve West Somerset, as there isn't any council housing in this part of the district? District Council Tax should be shared equally across the whole area not just the former TDBC. Was SWT working with partners such as Magna to carry out retro-fit improvements?

*SM advised that Tony Murray from Magna HA was scheduled to present the Magna Housing Annual Report at the March Area Panel Meeting. This question could be put to him at the meeting. Jo Humble also stated that SWT did work with a variety of partners such as RSL's when working on Affordable Housing developments.*

- 3.1.2 Cllr Ian Aldridge said it was much easier to build carbon neutrality into new developments, rather than re-vamp existing properties. The planning committee however, did not have any powers to enforce this at present.
- 3.1.3 It's really important at the planning stages on new developments, that existing infrastructure and void spaces are given as much consideration as the housing itself.
- 3.1.4 Williton PC stated that SWT awarding grants to Parish Council's installing an EVCP was welcomed; but that there had been insufficient time for Williton PC to prepare the EOI, seek quotes and consult before the closing date.

**3.2 S106 Affordable Housing – Sue Southwell / Jo Humble**  
Presentation Notes Attached.

**Questions Arising**

- 3.2.1 Peter Gill from Kilve PC asked what minimum Housing Standards Affordable Housing had to meet in terms of room size? JH advised that Homes England used to set a Nationally Prescribed Space Standard, although it was not compulsory. All developers should take this into consideration, although it was abolished some years ago. SWT however, when working with partners on both open market and affordable housing, do factor space and room size into their plans on new developments.
- 3.2.2 Can Eco-Friendly Housing prove more expensive in the long run? I.e. On the purchaser and or tenant? JH said this is considered very carefully at the initial stages of assessing housing need. Protecting affordability and viability for the end user/purchaser is of utmost importance in an Affordable Housing situation. New developments do not want to attract hidden fees, such as ground rents or service charges in addition to housing rent. These creeping charges could mean that the tenant pays more overall, and the viability of sustaining the tenancy decreases.
- 3.2.3 Cllr Ian Aldridge said that legacy planning was of the utmost importance to ensure that Affordable Housing remained available to all those who needed it. Firstly the Right to Buy had depleted Council Housing, and now some of those properties were beyond the budgets of local people both on the open market, and in the private rented sector. Secondly, impacts of developments in the future needs to be assessed sensitively. Is there a point to building demand housing to serve a short term need, if the work was not going to be available long term? (I.e. Hinkley Point Housing).

**4. Notes of the Meeting of 17<sup>th</sup> September 2019 and Matters Arising.**

It was agreed that most of the matters arising would be covered under subsequent Agenda Items. (Maintenance of Pavements in Williton covered in Item 8.1)

## 5. Have Your Say - Community Issues/Concerns

David Talling had sent questions ahead of the meeting, some of which had been dealt with by the Governance Team.

### 5.1 ACTION POINT 1

**Could we have a copy of the Risk Assessment relating to the decision to make more and more forms to be completed on line?**

At the last Area Panel it was stated that the SWT Council and Somerset Council had taken the decision to make applications and form filling to be made predominately on line due to cost constraints. This comment was not disputed by the council officers present. Although this may save a small amount of money and may be more convenient for council officials, I question whether it is serving the electorate well. If this is to happen then accessing information, forms etc. on the web MUST be easy and it certainly is NOT. What provision is in place for those without access to the internet? Was a Risk Assessment carried out?

*This query has been passed to Jess McVie. SM will follow up.*

### 5.2 Complaints made to the council requires overhaul.

When a complaint is made confirmation of receipt is given by email with the name of the person who is dealing with the complaint but no contact email or Tel. No. The website states that complainant will be notified of the outcome within 20 days. This is incorrect as I had to further my complaint submission after 25 days and I finally got a reply after 26 days. The difference in dates is because the notification of the outcome was within 20 days **not including weekends**. At no point was I contacted or updated. Although I have been told the issue has been resolved – it has NOT.

#### **Complaints Process Update:**

*SWT have a dedicated Case Manager who manages corporate feedback – Jess McVie. The purpose of Jess's role is to oversee the complaints coming in, record, triage and in the end close them. We have developed a standard template in which to respond to complaints to ensure the quality and consistency of those responses. Therefore responses and comments should be sent to Jess via a comment or attachment within the Firmstep complaint case or via email to [cmc@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk](mailto:cmc@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk).*

*From **Monday 3 February 2020** our formal response time, as agreed by the Council Executive, will be reduced to 10 working days therefore there will be a greater expectation across the organisation for complaints to be prioritised.*

### 5.3 What is the Council position regarding personal information being made public on line?

David said that the practice of West Somerset Council was to conceal personal information before publicizing on the website. He had submitted a TPO request to SWT and it had been posted on-line with all his personal details displayed. He had written to complain and waited a long time to get a response. When it was eventually forthcoming it was beyond the statutory time to answer.

*He went on to add, that despite an apology the information was still showing when he received his reply. It was ONLY after he had put forward his concern in advance of the Area Panel meeting that the personal information was removed.*

Gordon Tizzard stated that the recent Watchet Harbour Wall breach had highlighted the fact that there was no obvious "Emergency Contact" information available.

#### **5.4 ACTION POINT 2**

**Is there an Out of Hours emergency number for Civic Disasters such as the Watchet Harbour Wall Breach? It was unclear who to contact, or how to reach the Duty Officer. Can this information be made more publically available?**

David Westcott was quick to point out that Watchet Town Council were very pleased with the SWT speedy response to this emergency. Attendance on site by senior officers and Councillors over the weekend and pre-Christmas period had been noted. The temporary repair to the Harbour Wall had been undertaken with all speed to ensure that further damage was not incurred over Christmas.

**6. Police Report – Sharon Baker attended the meeting.** - Crime Report is attached.

**7. Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service –** Not present

**8. Highways Report – David Peake**

#### **8.1 Proposed closure of A39 at Washford for 5 days/nights**

Prior to the Area Panel meeting taking place, SM asked David for an update on the proposed A39 road closures at Washford. Notices had gone up notifying of the dates, but no times or further information was provided. David checked the Travel Somerset website, and learnt that the work is being undertaken by Wessex Water. (He had no prior knowledge and said he would look into the matter). Subsequent to the meeting we have learnt that the road closure has been postponed to enable a proper consultation period with the parish and other agencies.

#### **8.2 Pavements in Williton – Highlighted at Sept19 Meeting**

Williton Parish Council now involved and Cllr Ian Aldridge had written to SCC requesting site meeting. He was unhappy that he had not received an acknowledgement from the Highways Team. David Peake apologised stating that they had been undertaking reactive maintenance due to a number of civic emergencies and had got behind on correspondence.

The Williton pavements had been inspected and were in the scheduled maintenance budget for the 2020/21 Financial Year. The work was likely to be undertaken in October 2020, and out of the main tourist season. Due to the narrow pavements this work would necessitate a partial road closure and traffic control on the main arterial routes through the village. It was therefore decided to leave these repairs until the autumn.

### **8.3 Road Closure at Cleeve Hill, Watchet**

David Peake said that text alerts had been triggered over the Christmas period, following movements in sensory equipment at Cleeve Hill. It was gratifying to know that the trigger alarms worked, and within an hour of being notified an engineer was on site and made the decision to close the road. This was a precautionary measure whilst further investigations took place.

The following statement was released by Andrew Turner Chartered Civil Engineer with specialisms in Highway, Transport and Flood Risk Management at Somerset County Council

Issued 4<sup>th</sup> Jan 2020

I am pleased to confirm the B3191 West Street, Cleeve Hill has now been re-opened to traffic.

You will recall the road was closed due to alerts from sensors placed on the cliff face. Following a detailed survey of the cliff face, and examination of the data information from the site, it has been concluded the road is safe to re-open.

The geotechnical challenges affecting the cliff face are complex requiring a high degree of electronic stability monitoring. Unfortunately, one of the in-situ sensors suffered a failure triggering the alert. The sensor has been replaced and the telemetry reset.

Setting aside the technology failure, the current contingency arrangements worked well and the Somerset County Council Highways team was mobilised within minutes of the original alert and the road was closed quickly.

The patience and support from local residents and adjacent communities is appreciated'.

It was asked whether suspected fly-tipping over the cliff edge could have caused the sensory failure? David Peake said this was a possibility as the damaged sensor had been moved significantly, with no obvious cause. This was alarming however beyond just the environmental impact as Cleeve Hill is a dangerous place to stop on a narrow public highway. Anyone dumping rubbish over the cliff is at serious risk of injuring themselves or walkers on the beach.

### **8.4 Flooding – District Wide**

Following 5 months of excessively wet weather the Highways Team, had been working hard across the District to keep Somerset moving. This has meant a delay in completing scheduled works and responding to correspondence. Flood gates were in use across the Somerset Levels over the Christmas period.

### **8.5 Monksilver Drainage Works**

The one million pound drainage relief scheme concentrated around the Monksilver Parish has now been successfully completed. The work was undertaken by the Somerset Rivers Authority, and meant that road closures were in operation around the village for several weeks. Drainage channels

and the camber of the road had been altered to deflect the water away from houses in the valley where run-off converged.

## **9. Meeting closed at 9:00pm**

### **Dates of Future Meetings**

Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Further meetings for 2020 to be scheduled soon.

The West Somerset House Council Chamber has been reserved for this purpose.

DRAFT

