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COUNTY COUNCIL CONSERVATIVE GROUP

BRIEFING SHEET FOR PARISH AND TOWN COUNCILS

FEBRUARY 2018

Ofsted report into SCC Childrens Services: Ofsted's report into SCC's Childrens Services was published on 29 January; this report followed two previous inadequate ratings in 2013 and 2015 and represented a critical re-assessment of the services provided to the most vulnerable Children in the County. The report found improvements across all areas of work and gave SCC an improved rating of 'Requires Improvement to be Good' with Adoption Services rated as 'Good'. Whilst this is excellent news it does now need focused attention and effort on the improvement journey to be Good at the next assessment and Outstanding shortly afterwards.

Family Support Service : The decisions required to deliver SCC's new Family Support Service are progressing through the democratic processes. The Family Support Service will join together the existing early help service, Getset and SCC's public health nursing services (health visitors and school nurses). These developments will make it easier for children, young people and families to get the support where and when they need it and is crucial to preventing the sorts of problems that otherwise reach Children's Social Care.

Further information can be found by contacting publichealth@somerset.gov.uk

Adult Social Care precept: In the face of a national social care crises the Government has allowed Local Authorities including Somerset to add up to 3% to help meet the cost of providing Adult Social Care. In a County, which is recognised as having a significant ageing population, Adult Social Care in Somerset already accounts for over 40% of the Council's total budget. The additional 3% Adult Social Care precept will be used to enable SCC to bring forward plans to meet demand and crucially improve our service going forward.

Delayed Transfers of Care: Despite a huge increase in hospital admissions over Christmas SCC have, for the first time, beaten their national target in this area to assist in the safe discharge of patients from the four main hospitals. In one week alone Social Services provided over 500 care packages for safe discharge from Musgrove Park Hospital in Taunton. The hospital has calculated that the close working between the NHS and SCC Social Services has meant that 80 less beds have been required in this one hospital alone over the winter peak. This is a huge achievement and a testament to the exceptional work done by the Adult Social Care team.

Domestic Homicide Reviews: A lesser known responsibility of Somerset County Council is the management of the process of facilitating multi agency participation, appointing the reviewer, publication and record keeping of all Domestic Homicide Reviews in the County. Since 2011 a total of ten Domestic Homicide Reviews have been undertaken in Somerset. A Domestic Homicide Review considers the circumstances in which a death has occurred when it has been the result of harm perpetrated by an intimate partner / person or member of the same household. The purpose of the review is to learn lessons and identify good practice which can be applied to reduce and prevent domestic violence and homicide. All reviews are published and are available at <http://www.somerseturvivors.org.uk/domestic-homicide-reviews/>

Investing in Schools: SCC have recently launched the biggest investment programme in education for generations with twenty four new or replacement schools and nineteen other major building projects at existing schools over the next few years. The £140 million of investment will be focused on the Primary School level but also includes secondary, nursery and early years provision. The first major announcement will be a £9 million investment in Selworth Secondary School providing a large number of specialist placements for pupils with complex health issues.

Library Consultation: The Libraries Consultation is now available for communities, businesses and individuals to participate. Drop In sessions are running across the network during the consultation period to enable further information sharing. It is important that as many people are encouraged to engage with the consultation as possible to provide comprehensive feedback from those who maybe affected by any potential changes in the service. No decisions will be taken until the results of the consultation have been fully analysed. The consultation runs to 22nd April and further details can be found at <http://somersetlibraries.co.uk/consultation/>

Somerset Road Safety Strategy: In 2017, 22 people were killed in fatal collisions on the Counties roads and although it is the lowest annual total each death represents a personal tragedy. Analysis shows that of these collisions 60% involved cars, 19% motorbikes, 5% pedestrians, 11% HGV's and 5% agricultural vehicles. This illustrates that all road users need to consider how they can safely use the highway. The consultation on road safety runs until 8th March and can be found at <http://www.somersetconsults.org.uk/consults.ti/system/home>

Highways England consultation: Highways England are currently running two consultations. The A303 Sparkford to Ilchester consultation can be found at <http://roads.highways.gov.uk/projects/a303-sparkford-to-ilchester/> and the A358 at <https://highwaysengland.citizenspace.com/he/taunton-to-southfields-dualling-scheme/>

Apprenticeships in Somerset: Providing practical apprenticeships are just one strand of SCC's Young Peoples Strategy. So far the Council has employed 121 and needs assistance in spreading the word to increase these numbers throughout the County. Apprenticeship roles exist in various departments including Family support workers, Legal, Data Analysts, Project Managers, Business Support, IT support and Engineers. Details can be found through the Somerset Jobs webpage

Trading Standards: Somerset Trading Standards (a Division of Somerset County Council) are offering 'Pop Up Business Advice' on Tuesday 27th February 27th between 10am-1pm at the Red Brick Building, Morland Road, Glastonbury BA6 9FT. Anyone wishing to attend can book a place at <http://www.bwcpopupcafe.eventbrite.co.uk/>

Recent press releases:

Inspection recognises progress

Top Class Investment

Time to Talk events (Mental health awareness)

New initiative gets Children and Young Peoples voices heard

Catch it, Kill it, Bin it!

Big step forward as partners buoyed by constructive Devolution meeting