

## COUNTY COUNCIL CONSERVATIVE GROUP

### BRIEFING SHEET FOR PARISH AND TOWN COUNCILS

#### MARCH 2019

**SCC Finances 2018/19:** Current financial year predicted outturn for SCC Finances at Month 10 shows an underspend of £1.385m. This projection is based upon actual spending to the end of January 2019. The last reported projection, based on spend to the end of December 2018, was an underspend of £1.067m. The contingency budget has a residual sum of £1.788m uncommitted at this stage and is very likely to contribute to further under spending at the year-end. This compares with a projected overspend in September last year of around £19m and demonstrates the significant financial turnaround achieved.

**SCC Finances 2019/20:** Key points of the 2019/20 budget as agreed at Full Council:

- £780m gross spend on services in the county next year
- 2.99 percent increase in the County Council's element of Council Tax plus 1 per cent increase ring-fenced for Adult Social Care
- 91p per week rise in Council Tax for Band D
- General Fund reserves to double to £19m by the end of the next financial year (previously £5.6m)
- Investment strategy agreed for up to £100m of capital borrowing
- Ringfenced £1m to develop preventative work that will reduce demand on services.
- An extra £200,000 made available for winter maintenance in 2019/20.
- Savings proposals on gully clearing and jetting dropped
- Delay on proposals to make savings in flood water management (£80,000), Dementia support (£100,000) and support to help vulnerable young people in to work (£50,000).
- £224m in capital projects in the County over the next four years

**Secondary School Places:** 1st March saw year 6 students receiving confirmation of their new secondary school place for September. With just over 4,500 applications received, 94.18% (4,271) of students' first preferences were met. This is a 1% increase on last year and continues to show how well the County's school build and expansion programme is meeting the needs of families across Somerset. Primary places for this September will be notified in April.

**Hinkley Point C:** EDF's new Sedgemoor Campus in Bridgwater opened at the end of February as the second largest hotel in Britain! The Campus boasts 29 quality accommodation units that can house almost 1,000 workers, along with restaurants, bars and leisure facilities. The Campus is already providing hundreds of career opportunities for the communities around it. Many of the jobs have been filled by people who live within walking distance, part of the plan to deliver a long-term, positive legacy for the local area.

**Somerset Motofest:** Somerset Motofest is back for the third year running and is anticipated to be bigger and better than before. Organised by Somerset County Council's road safety team, Motofest takes place on Saturday and Sunday, 22 and 23 June, at the world-famous Fleet Air Arm Museum in Yeovil. The event is for anyone with a passion for motors, be they four-wheeled or two. There will be a host of activities for all the family, as well as priceless information about staying safe on the road including details of all the further training opportunities that are available – and all for free!

**M25 J25 Improvement works:** Members of the public and local businesses are invited to meet the team behind the M5 Junction 25 improvements and see the plans in more detail at two community drop-in events. These will be held at Ruishton Village Hall between 3pm and 8pm on Thursday 7 March and 14 March.

**Children's Services:** Ofsted inspectors recently carried out a snap inspection of SCC's early help and social work teams to assess how cases were dealt with in the community. Their conclusion is that vulnerable children in Somerset are receiving an improving service with confident staff making good decisions. No priority areas for improvement were found.

**Adult Social Care:** On top of last years £6m increase in fees paid to our care providers this year Somerset will invest another above inflation increase. An additional £2.6m will be used to support and improve the care for our vulnerable adults during 2019/2020.

**Delayed Transfers of Care (DToC):** In December the Somerset Adult Social Care Team achieved the best DToC figures compared to other the fourteen South West authorities, significantly taking the strain off the local NHS during the winter pressure period.

**Outdoor learning centres:** The last 12 months have seen more than 28,000 bed nights spent in one of SCC's four outdoor learning and residential centres. Half of these nights were enjoyed by young people from across Somerset, coupled with daytime activities to support and expand on their school based learning. Engagement in the National Citizenship Programme continues to grow and benefits from access to the centres including Kilve Court and Charterhouse. Activities are also available for individuals to book as well as schools and youth groups. For more information visit [www.kilvecourt.co.uk](http://www.kilvecourt.co.uk)

**Dillington House:** Dillington will be embracing the Spring towards the end of this month as a fantastic venue for Mother's Day, with both cream teas and a carvery option. Visit [www.dillington.com](http://www.dillington.com) or call 01460 258648 for more details or to find out more about April's activities, including the Easter Eggstravaganza on 20th-21st April.

**Library services:** Taunton Library was named 'Library of the month' for February by the national 'Love Reading' blog <https://www.lovereading.co.uk/blog/library-of-the-month/lovereading-library-of-the-month-7-taunton-library-814>