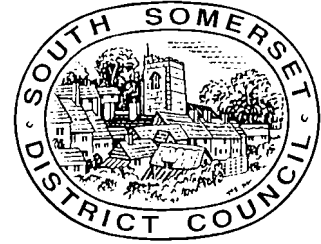


# South Somerset District Council

*Notice of Meeting*



## District Executive

*Making a difference where it counts*

**Thursday 2nd April 2015**

**9.30 am**

**Council Chamber  
Council Offices  
Brympton Way  
Yeovil  
Somerset BA20 2HT**

Disabled Access is available at this meeting venue.



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Members listed on the following page are requested to attend the meeting.

The public and press are welcome to attend.

If you would like any further information on the items to be discussed, please ring the Agenda Co-ordinator, **Angela Cox 01935 462148**

This Agenda was issued on Wednesday 25 March 2015.

*Ian Clarke, Assistant Director (Legal & Corporate Services)*

This information is also available on our website  
[www.southsomerset.gov.uk](http://www.southsomerset.gov.uk)



INVESTORS IN PEOPLE

# District Executive Membership

Ric Pallister  
Tim Carroll  
Peter Gubbins  
Henry Hobhouse  
Shane Pledger  
Jo Roundell Greene  
Sylvia Seal  
Peter Seib  
Angie Singleton  
Nick Weeks

## Information for the Public

The District Executive co-ordinates the policy objectives of the Council and gives the Area Committees strategic direction. It carries out all of the local authority's functions which are not the responsibility of any other part of the Council. It delegates some of its responsibilities to Area Committees, officers and individual portfolio holders within limits set by the Council's Constitution. When major decisions are to be discussed or made, these are published in the Executive Forward Plan in so far as they can be anticipated.

Members of the Public are able to:-

- attend meetings of the Council and its committees such as Area Committees, District Executive, except where, for example, personal or confidential matters are being discussed;
- speak at Area Committees, District Executive and Council meetings;
- see reports and background papers, and any record of decisions made by the Council and Executive;
- find out, from the Executive Forward Plan, what major decisions are to be decided by the District Executive.

Meetings of the District Executive are held monthly at 9.30 a.m. on the first Thursday of the month in the Council Offices, Brympton Way.

The Executive Forward Plan and copies of executive reports and decisions are published on the Council's web site - [www.southsomerset.gov.uk](http://www.southsomerset.gov.uk).

The Council's Constitution is also on the web site and available for inspection in Council offices.

The Council's corporate priorities which guide the work and decisions of the Executive are set out below.

Further information can be obtained by contacting the agenda co-ordinator named on the front page.

## South Somerset District Council – Corporate Aims

**Our key aims are:** (all equal)

- **Jobs** - We want a strong economy which has low unemployment and thriving businesses
- **Environment** - We want an attractive environment to live in with increased recycling and lower energy use
- **Homes** - We want decent housing for our residents that matches their income
- **Health and Communities** - We want communities that are healthy, self-reliant, and have individuals who are willing to help each other

# District Executive

**Thursday 2 APRIL 2015**

## Agenda

### 1. Minutes of Previous Meeting

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the District Executive meeting held on 5th March 2015.

### 2. Apologies for Absence

### 3. Declarations of Interest

In accordance with the Council's current Code of Conduct (adopted July 2012), which includes all the provisions relating to Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI), personal and prejudicial interests, Members are asked to declare any DPI and also any personal interests (and whether or not such personal interests are also "prejudicial") in relation to any matter on the Agenda for this meeting. A DPI is defined in The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012 (SI 2012 No. 1464) and Appendix 3 of the Council's Code of Conduct. A personal interest is defined in paragraph 2.8 of the Code and a prejudicial interest is defined in paragraph 2.9.

Members are reminded that they need to declare the fact that they are also a member of a County, Town or Parish Council as a Personal Interest. As a result of the change made to the Code of Conduct by this Council at its meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2014, where you are also a member of Somerset County Council and/or a Town or Parish Council within South Somerset you must declare a prejudicial interest in any business on the agenda where there is a financial benefit or gain or advantage to Somerset County Council and/or a Town or Parish Council which would be at the cost or to the financial disadvantage of South Somerset District Council. If you have a prejudicial interest you must comply with paragraphs 2.9(b) and 2.9(c) of the Code.

### 4. Public Question Time

Questions, statements or comments from members of the public are welcome at the beginning of each meeting of the Council. The total period allowed for public participation shall not exceed 15 minutes except with the consent of the Committee and each individual speaker shall be restricted to a total of three minutes. Where there are a number of persons wishing to speak about the same matter, they should consider choosing one spokesperson to speak on their behalf where appropriate. If a member of the public wishes to speak they should advise the committee administrator and complete one of the public participation slips setting out their name and the matter they wish to speak about. The public will be invited to speak in the order determined by the Chairman. Answers to questions may be provided at the meeting itself or a written reply will be sent subsequently, as appropriate. Matters raised during the public question session will not be debated by the Committee at that meeting.

### 5. Chairman's Announcements

6. **Presentation from Highways Contractor on flood prevention works on the A303** (Page 1)
7. **South Somerset Together (SST) Strategic Partnership** (Pages 2 - 15)
8. **Adoption of a Balanced Rural Lettings Policy** (Pages 16 - 38)
9. **South Somerset District Council Advertising Policy** (Pages 39 - 45)
10. **Loan to Kingsdon Parish Council** (Pages 46 - 47)
11. **Designation of Neighbourhood Area - South Petherton Parish** (Pages 48 - 54)
12. **Safer Somerset Partnership - Update Report** (Pages 55 - 66)
13. **District Executive Forward Plan** (Pages 67 - 70)
14. **Date of Next Meeting** (Page 71)

# Agenda Item 6

## **Presentation from Highways Contractor on flood prevention works on the A303**

*Executive Portfolio Holder:* Councillor Ric Pallister, Strategy and Policy  
*Strategic Director:* Vega Sturgess, Operations and Customer Focus  
*Lead Officer:* Vega Sturgess, Operations and Customer Focus  
*Contact Details:* [vega.sturgess@southsomerset.gov.uk](mailto:vega.sturgess@southsomerset.gov.uk)

Mike Vaughan, Principal Engineer, Water and Environment, Atkins Limited, will be attending to give a short presentation on the flood prevention works to be carried out on the A303 around the Ilchester area.

Representatives from the local Parish Councils in the vicinity of the works have been invited to attend this presentation.

# Agenda Item 7

## **South Somerset Together (SST) Strategic Partnership**

*Executive Portfolio Holder:* Ric Pallister, Leader of the Council, Strategy and Policy  
*Strategic Director:* Rina Singh, Place and Performance  
*Assistant Directors:* Helen Rutter/ Kim Close, Communities  
*Lead Officer:* Helen Rutter, Assistant Director (Communities)  
*Contact Details:* helen.rutter@southsomerset.gov.uk or 01963 435012 / 01935 462060

### **Purpose of the Report**

This is a follow up to the last annual report in April 2014. It provides an overview of the progress made on strategic priorities during 2014/15. It also clarifies the revised governance and funding arrangements.

### **Forward Plan**

This report has appeared on the Executive Forward Plan with a presentation date of April 2015.

### **Public Interest**

South Somerset Together (SST) is the local strategic partnership (LSP) for the District. It brings together senior representatives of the main public and voluntary sector organisations operating in the District along with business representatives. The Partnership works on shared strategic priorities, developing new service initiatives that address these priorities and many of which aim to improve effectiveness of service provision for the benefit of local people.

### **Recommendations**

That the District Executive:

- (1) Note the achievements of the South Somerset Together Partnership in 2014/15
- (2) Endorse the revised partnership agreement and ensure that this is reviewed annually by the Executive.

### **Background**

An update was given to District Executive in December 2012 following introduction of the new Partnership model which became fully operational from 1 April 2012 and highlighted progress on a small number of strategic priorities set by the Partnership. The report confirmed the Partnership had reiterated its desire to retain an independent Chairperson and Co-ordinator and that a package of funding and other support had been put together to meet the core operating costs and give stability for the next 3 years. The Partnership Agreement had been revised and was endorsed by District Executive. An annual review was recommended. Progress was reported on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2014 and further revisions to the Partnership Agreement were endorsed by District Executive

### **Activity during 2014/15**

Work has been going on throughout the year, led by regular meetings of the Strategy Group, to focus on a small number of strategic priorities and to further develop the Partnership

agreement to create a more freestanding Partnership. Please see the strategic priorities progress summary in Appendix A.

Three successful assemblies were held last year with over 150 attendees from local schools, businesses, organisations and communities. A skills assembly was held in April 2014 around what is needed now and in the future to meet South Somerset’s business needs and for a skilled workforce and address any gaps. In July the Partnership held its annual general meeting with a focus theme on new initiatives looking at effective ways for local partners to work together to reshape services for local communities. A housing assembly was then held in October to explore the challenges of how present and future generations are to be housed in South Somerset. Issues raised and suggested actions from these events are taken forward for consideration by the Strategy Group partners. An assembly is scheduled for 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2015 on the theme of health & primary health care services.

A SST funders meeting was held on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2014 to review priorities & progress at the half-way point through the current Partnership Agreement. Yeovil College agreed to commit an additional £2,000 to the Partnership to match the contributions from Yarlinton Housing Group and Yeovil District Hospital. Further revisions to the Partnership Agreement were agreed. The Executive is asked to endorse the revised Partnership Agreement and review it annually if required. See Appendix B. The funders group are meeting on the 20<sup>th</sup> March and will consider financial arrangements for the Partnership beyond March 2016.

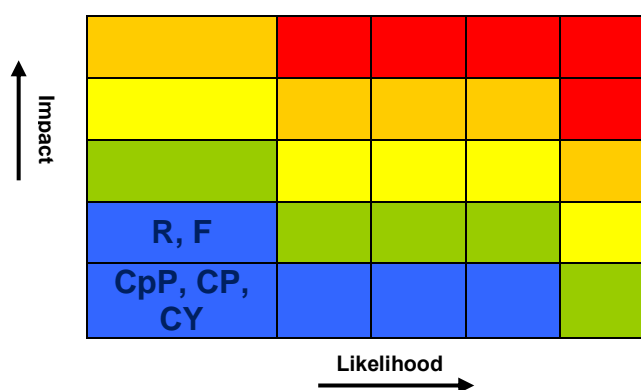
The role of Coordinator for the Partnership was recruited on secondment between October 2013 and August 2014 but is now in the role permanently.

## Financial Implications

There are no new financial implications arising from this report.

Core funding has been secured for the 3-year period (2013-2016) primarily from key public sector partners. Other partner organisations have committed to support the Partnership by providing “in kind” support including meeting accommodation, administrative help and refreshments.

## Risk Matrix



### Key

| Categories                      | Colours (for further detail please refer to Risk management strategy) |
|---------------------------------|---|
| R = Reputation                  | Red = High impact and high probability                                |
| CpP = Corporate Plan Priorities | Orange = Major impact and major probability                           |
| CP = Community Priorities       | Yellow = Moderate impact and moderate probability                     |
| CY = Capacity                   | Green = Minor impact and minor probability                            |
| F = Financial                   | Blue = Insignificant impact and insignificant probability             |

## **Corporate Priority Implications**

South Somerset Together and its priorities help contribute towards all of our corporate focus areas, jobs, environment, homes, health and communities.

## **Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications**

The Partnership lobbied for and completed a programme of work on lowering carbon emissions as one of its strategic priorities. This is now mainstreamed within partner organisations.

## **Equality and Diversity Implications**

These projects support the outcomes of the Council's Equality Objectives.

## **Background Papers**

Strategic Priorities – Progress Summary 2014/15 (Appendix 1)  
South Somerset Together Partnership Agreement (Appendix 2)



## Appendix A

The South Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) is a master plan, summarising how people in the district want to live and work, now and in the future. South Somerset Together set its long term goals through the Sustainable Community Strategy and in 2010, a study was completed that reassessed the key issues and trends identified in the SCS

It uses pump priming money to attract matching funds and commission research and/or kick start new multiagency projects. Lead partners champion particular programmes of work.

As a strategic partnership (LSP) its role is not duplicate any of the work or activities being delivered by the organisations that belong to the partnership, other organisations or communities. The focus of South Somerset Together is to identify what is not happening, what could be delivered differently to give better outcomes, make it happen faster or more consistently across the District and save money and effort.

The table below provides a progress summary for 2014/15.

| Projects<br>LSP holds partner project funding (£37,000)   | Role of LSP as an initiator and facilitator 2014/15                              | Project Lead and Progress   |
|---|--|---|
| <b>Strategic Priority: Building Community Resilience. Helping individuals and communities to do more things for themselves and others</b> |  |   |
| Long Term Outcome - Improving People's Long Term Health (especially in places with health inequalities)                                   | <b>LSP funding awarded in 2013/14 (£4,500) to take forward work in Westfield</b> | <b>Kim Close, SSDC</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Following the work done in 2013/14 a small group of local stakeholders considered feedback on the findings in the report and produced a draft action plan for the Westfield community. The consultation has enabled the community association and partner organisations to focus resources on the priorities identified by residents.</li> <li>• The community association have taken the lead on a number of projects, including commissioning a new youth service provider.</li> <li>• The former Health Inequalities Project Manager, who now has experience of the Our Place program has been brought back to manage the Westfield project. After years of uncertainty now have a viable way forward in terms of the provision of much needed community facilities and this provision will provide the community hub from which Healthy Lifestyle activity will be promoted.</li> </ul> |

## Strategic Priorities – Progress Summary 2014/15

| Projects  | Role of LSP as an initiator and facilitator 2014/15  | Project Lead and Progress  |
|---|--|--|
| <p><b>LSP holds partner project funding (£37,000)</b></p> <p>Supporting 'Our Place' type Integration of Services</p> <p>Long Term Outcome - Improving People's Long Term Health (especially in places with health inequalities)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Awarded £20k pump priming sum by DCLG for an "Our Place" pilot programme in Westfield.</b></li> <li>• <b>Supported Martock Parish Council</b> in a similar bid that has also been awarded</li> </ul>   | <p><b>Rina Singh, SSDC / Jeremy Martin, NHS / John Evans, Yeovil College</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development strategy submitted in May 2014 was successful and following this a Cost Benefit Analysis was worked up and a business plan developed. An operational plan was submitted in February 2015 and a decision anticipated end of March.</li> <li>• Martock Parish Council was also successful with their Our Place development plan and is awaiting further announcement following submission of their operational plans.</li> </ul>   |
| <p>Long Term Outcome - Improving People's Long Term Health (especially in places with health inequalities)</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>LSP funding awarded (£5,000) towards the mapping of support &amp; care services and delivery of Symphony self-management pilot</b></li> </ul>  | <p><b>Jeremy Martin, YDH</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LSP funded element of this projects only recently commenced and progress will be reported in next update.</li> </ul>   |
| <p>Supporting 'Our Place' type Integration of Services</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>LSP agreement in principal to support the coordination of Yeovil One project</b></li> </ul>  | <p><b>Jeff Foreman, A&amp;S Constabulary</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work is ongoing to develop a formal structure to long-term sustainability of the Yeovil One team</li> </ul>  |
| <p>South Somerset Family Focus (Troubled Families)</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Family Focus is now a freestanding project</b></li> <li>• Local Authority areas deliver multi-agency support to families meeting DCLG's criteria of:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Anti-Social behaviour and criminality in children and, ASB in adults;</li> <li>○ Non-attendance or exclusions at school</li> <li>○ Worklessness</li> <li>○ Local discretionary criteria</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <p><b>Steve Joel, SSDC / SCC</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Since 2012 239 families have been 'turned around' achieving the government criteria for ASB, education and worklessness.</li> <li>• Since February 2013, <b>127</b> families have been 'attached' and received direct support through Yeovil4Family with a dedicated Link Worker; of these <b>39</b> have also had support from a volunteer mentor.</li> <li>• <b>84</b> families currently in the programme being supported by <b>7</b> Link Workers and <b>16</b> volunteer mentors.</li> <li>• Majority of families receive support for at least a year. However in the order of 2/3rds of families have received support for 17 months. Y4F assess the progress made by each family on a monthly basis to</li> </ul> |

| Projects   | Role of LSP as an initiator and facilitator 2014/15 | Project Lead and Progress  |
|--|---|--|
| <p>LSP holds partner project funding (£37,000)</p> |   | <p>determine whether a family is ready to 'exit' the programme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As well as the 3 Government measures around ASB, school attendance and employment, other achievements for families include 'stepping down' from Children's Social Care (Child Protection Plan), securing more suitable housing, engagement with mental health services, engaging with a youth group, sorting out benefits, volunteering, training, addressing alcohol and drug problems, improved family relationships, children's counselling, moving on from school to college avoiding NEET status.</li> <li>• Some other things families have been supported with include attending court cases, supporting families through relationship breakdown, working with CSC and the family when children are taken in to care, establishing processes for reporting concerns of sexual abuse, working with Housing as a family are evicted.</li> <li>• To date, a total of <b>58</b> families have been approved for exit from the programme.</li> <li>• All families participating in the programme complete a Family Journey Mapping tool and a well-being survey, to monitor progress and achievements made.</li> <li>• Since September 2014, when reward funding for Family Focus finished, a further <b>32</b> families have been referred in to the programme. With new referrals still being accepted until March 2015 we estimate overall approximately <b>150</b> families in South Somerset will receive intensive Link Worker support and <b>285</b> families overall will benefit from the programme in South Somerset.</li> <li>• Phase 2 of Family Focus will be delivered as part of <b>getset</b> services from April 2015. All Government funding for Family Focus in Somerset will go into <b>getset</b> and therefore there will be no funds to continue with the existing model offering family support through Yeovil4Family. Any new referrals received from agencies from April 2015 will be referred to <b>getset</b>.</li> <li>• At this stage, the existing programme will continue to take referrals until March 2015 and families will be offered support up until December 2015 or as long as financial resources allow. From April</li> </ul> |

| Projects  | Role of LSP as an initiator and facilitator 2014/15  | Project Lead and Progress  |
|---|--|--|
| LSP holds partner project funding (£37,000)                                 |  | 2015 any new families referred to Family Focus will be referred to <b>getset</b> .   |
| Promote localism and volunteering   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>LSP funding awarded (£1,000) towards a SSVCA hosted major voluntary sector Fayre later in 2015</b> to showcase what the sector achieves and offer local groups practical support</li> <li>• <b>Funded a pilot project delivering themed drop-in support sessions</b>, delivered through South Somerset Mind</li> </ul> | <p><b>Sam Best, SSVCA</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 Voluntary Sector forums held focused on: recruiting and retaining volunteers and getting the best out of social media.</li> <li>• Set up a volunteering desk at Yeovil Library desk to promote volunteering; plans are in place to roll out to other libraries in the district in 2015.</li> <li>• SSVCA continue their work with private businesses to encourage sign up to an Employer Supported Volunteering scheme. The new Premier Inn has contacted us to set up employer volunteering scheme.</li> <li>• A new Volunteer Manager Peer Support Group has been set up with over 12 groups attending.</li> <li>• Due to identified demand for funding/income generation advice, SSVCA – Voluntary Sector Support are exploring the possibility of hosting a voluntary sector fare later on this year.</li> <li>• SSVCA were commissioned between April &amp; December 2014 by SCC to provide volunteer management to the volunteers working on the flood recovery programme on the Somerset Levels.</li> <li>• SSVCA are representing the voluntary sector on a number of strategic boards including Police and Crime Commissioning, Clinical Commissioning Group and LEP, with the intent to ensure the voice of the sector is heard.</li> </ul> |
| Monitor impact of benefits and other austerity changes on vulnerable people | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A new, multi-agency welfare reform task group has been formed to review available data and assess impact</b> of changes covering South Somerset and agree how to address any gaps identified</li> <li>• <b>Data sharing is raising the profile and</b></li> </ul>  | <p><b>Cathy Bakewell, LSP Chair</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A multi-agency Task Group has been in place for two years, meeting every 10-12 weeks. The Task Group composition has grown with interest and now has representation from SSDC, CAB, Yarlinton, DWP, Somerset Digital Inclusion Group, Somerset Advice Network,</li> </ul>   |

| Projects   | Role of LSP as an initiator and facilitator 2014/15  | Project Lead and Progress   |
|--|--|---|
| <p>LSP holds partner project funding (£37,000)</p> <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 9</p> | <p>understanding of the issues and stimulating creative solutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LSP awarded £5k towards welfare reform project to map the impacts and support services and develop suitable options</li> </ul>  | <p>Police, South Somerset Mind and Yeovil College.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continued to monitor impacts through local organisational data collection and sharing practice, knowledge and experience. An interim report was produced in July 2014 highlighting key issues and challenges people are facing including impacts of ‘digital by default’, rise in money management/debt problems, rise in use of food banks and job sanctions.</li> <li>Identified two particular groups as being potentially vulnerable to welfare changes, those people with mental health issues, and people in private rented housing who may not necessarily have the support of a Housing Association and associated advice eg. managing debt.</li> <li>The Task Group are looking to undertake research to further map the local impacts and add value to the work of existing advice agencies, with a focus on helping vulnerable people access services and cope with the impacts of welfare reform.</li> <li>The roll out of Universal Credit in South Somerset is scheduled for April 2015 and the group will continue to look at where there may be opportunities to link work and mobilise quickly.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Strategic Priority: Skills for a Thriving Economy</b></p>  |  |   |
| <p>Increasing access to training to help people gain skills/ qualifications and improve work prospects</p>                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Successful Skills Assembly</b> was held on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2014 with speakers from Further Education, Employers and the Heart of the South West LEP</li> <li><b>LSP funding awarded (£4,750) towards an employability project</b> in Martock and Westfield area of Yeovil</li> </ul> | <p><b>John Evans Yeovil College</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategy Group represented on SW LEP Forum to feed in local issues and seek to influence strategy</li> <li>College engaged with partners on;                         <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work programme</li> <li>Programme to develop employability skills. From September 2014 all full time learners (1500) have to participate in a ‘community challenge’ that requires them to deliver 100 hours per group of community work.</li> </ul> </li> <li>A very successful Apprenticeship evening was held at Yeovil College on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2014 with 30+ employers attending and over 200 visitors. Many positive comments were received from attending employers.</li> </ul>   |

| Projects  | Role of LSP as an initiator and facilitator 2014/15   | Project Lead and Progress  |
|---|---|--|
| <p>LSP holds partner project funding (£37,000)</p>                        |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Another successful apprenticeship recruitment event was run on 27<sup>th</sup> March called 'IT Speed dating'! This involved a number of IT employers speed interviewing potential apprentices at Yeovil College.</li> <li>• Following the successful Skills Assembly held on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2014 Yeovil College have recruited two work experience co-ordinators as a result of the Skills Assembly action plan. Their aim is to address and improve the employability skills of young people as a result of the feedback at the skills assembly.</li> <li>• Successful bid for project to support the development of enhancing Employability skills delivered by Yarlinton -Inspired to Achieve and Yeovil College. Project started in January 2015</li> <li>• In the academic year 2013/14 Yeovil College managed over 700 apprentices</li> <li>• Yeovil District Hospital and Yeovil College have created a bid to build a 14-19 Career College. The concept is to create a college on the hospital site that will directly address the skill shortages in the Health sector.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Strategic Priority: Rural market housing to meet local need</b></p> |   |  |
| <p>Developing new models for market housing in rural communities</p>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The group that formed in 2012 to explore options has continued</b> (following the data analysis that showed escalating demand from increasing numbers of older residents, with needs not met by current housing stock). The aim is to encourage innovation in private sector, older persons housing provision</li> <li>• <b>LSP hosted successful housing assembly in October 2014</b></li> </ul> | <p><b>Ric Pallister, SSDC / Phyllida Culpin, Yarlinton</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Of the three rural sites under construction one has completed and the other two are nearing completion and expected before the end of the financial year. Consultation has completed on the fourth, funding secured and planning being sought.</li> <li>• A very successful Housing Assembly was held on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2014 with 70 representatives from the district's Parish Councils, organisations and some local developers. A second housing assembly is anticipated later in 2015 to update on some of the work being taken forward by partners.</li> <li>• SSDC about to consult on the proposed rural lettings policy (raised in the Housing Strategy Implementation plan &amp; consulted on in 2014). This would aim to enable some families to remain closer to their</li> </ul>  |



| Projects   | Role of LSP as an initiator and facilitator 2014/15   | Project Lead and Progress   |
|--|---|---|
| <p>LSP holds partner project funding (£37,000)</p>   |   | <p>roots.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work is underway on the Strategic Housing Market Assessment and this will explore further the need for bungalows, regardless of tenure.</li> <li>• Lack of revenue support continues to impede access to HCA funding stream launched to support this type of development.</li> <li>• Housing related support for sheltered schemes by SCC received significant cuts in 2014 though not as high as the 50% reduction of funding as previously anticipated. However further changes are now being considered, including a potential cut to extra care housing schemes.</li> <li>• LSP needs to help bring forward detailed appraisals from private sector for tailored older person accommodation.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>Strategic Priority: Transport and Access to Services</b></p>   |   |   |
| <p>(a) Promote integrated transport system in Yeovil</p> <p>(b) Promote rural transport &amp; access solutions</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Multi agency Steering Group formed and pump priming funding of £10,000 for rural transport analysis report</b></li> <li>• <b>Partners gave written support to SCC and earmarked a contribution in principle of up to £10,000, in support of bid to DfT.</b> However the bid was not successful and sum returned – more was required on cycling.</li> <li>• <b>LSP funding awarded (£5,000) for development of Wincanton public information website</b></li> </ul> | <p><b>Martin Woods, SSDC / Phyllida Culpin, Yarlington Housing Group</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SST employed a dedicated Transport Research Officer in Sept 2013 (hosted by Yarlington) to undertake research and develop transport options. A report on the findings was published in 2014 and is available on the SST website. The action plan from report is being followed by small working group of partners.</li> <li>• Funding of £20k procured (through SCC’s Small Improvement Schemes fund) for improvements to the current bus stop at Wincanton to form a rural bus and coach interchange with improved information. This will ‘open’ in February.</li> <li>• Hub concept being developed in Wincanton in partnership with transport operators including community transport. A detailed public transport information website is being developed that is bespoke for Wincanton as part of the Wincanton Hub Pilot.</li> <li>• Transport SIG of the HoSW LEP received a report from Stagecoach on decline of bus services in Devon.</li> </ul> |

# Strategic Priorities – Progress Summary 2014/15



Improving  
the Quality of Life  
in South Somerset







Improving  
the Quality of Life  
in South Somerset

## South Somerset Together Partnership Agreement

### 1. The purpose of the partnership

South Somerset Together is a partnership of public, private and voluntary organisations committed to *improving the quality of life in South Somerset*. It operates in a spirit of trust, respect and cooperation to bring organisations and people together to communicate about difficult issues facing the community. It negotiates ways to bring about changes for the benefit of those who live, work in or visit South Somerset.

In 2011, it adopted simplified arrangements and secured funding to maintain an independent Chair and dedicated Coordinator through Partner contributions.

### 2. Structural arrangements

#### The Assembly

- Attended by all members of the Partnership and community representation;
- Meets three times a year;
- Acts as a sounding board e.g. reviewing progress on priorities and raising and testing views on future focus;
- Provides a good networking opportunity for a wide range of organisations in order to form productive links and hear about/discuss the big issues affecting the District;
- Used to set overall direction;
- One of the Assemblies of the Partnership will be an Annual General Meeting open to the public and any interested parties to attend. This will talk about its work, debate key issues facing the District and answer questions / seek feedback.

#### The Strategy Group and decision making

- A sub-group of partners consisting of representatives responsible for their organisation's resources in the area with the authority to "make deals" i.e. Chief Executive/Director level for larger organisations as appropriate;
- Meets as necessary and at least 6 times a year for short focused meetings;
- Discusses progress on agreed priority work;
- Partners raise current issues to get steer and input from wider group;
- Agrees how to progress work on priorities with individual partners leading on each work area (negotiate roles and responsibilities);
- Includes main public sector bodies and leading business and VCS representatives;
- Deploys resources to priorities as appropriate.

In the case of a vote being required for decisions at Strategy Group then each funding partner will have a vote.

### 3. Strategic Priorities

1. **Building resilient communities:** Tackling health inequalities, supporting families and encouraging volunteering;
2. **Skills:** Helping people especially young people or people with no qualifications to gain the skills needed for employment;
3. **Rural market housing to meet local need:** Developing new models for market housing in rural communities; and,
4. **Transport:** Steps taken to secure an integrated transport system for Yeovil and improve

transport options in the District. With the continuing public transport cuts service providers need to consider alternative ways of connecting with their service users.

These will be reviewed annually.

#### **4. How does it work?**

South Somerset Together aims to achieve more and better outcomes for less resources and independent effort through collaboration. It does this by:

- Directly commissioning, delivering or sponsoring activities/programmes that act as a catalyst for change;
- Focusing on issues that have consistently proved resistant to earlier actions;
- Being willing to take calculated risks by trialling new ways of working together;
- Helping partners identify better, more cost effective ways to deliver local services;
- Engaging communities in discussions with partners about what the issues are, what support they need to do things for themselves and practical examples of what has worked/not worked elsewhere;
- Accessing external funding and negotiating the pooling of local budgets/resources to make things happen;
- Disseminating information about what has been learnt/achieved;
- Lobbying at a local and national level on the issues that are important to the communities of South Somerset;
- Championing living and working in a sustainable way that will benefit people in the District, nationally and globally, today and for future generations.

#### **5. Finances**

South Somerset District Council remains the principal funder, host organisation and banker for the partnership. Financial contributions from other agencies are set out in the attached schedule. All partners contribute in kind resource in support of SST's core activities and priority programmes. The partnership will:

- Review its programme at Strategy Group meetings;
- Agree its priority actions for the following year at the Assembly held in the Spring;
- Ensure partners have confirmed their contribution towards core costs for the following year by December of each year;
- Secure resources (whether from partner organisations or other sources) towards the delivery of its agreed programme.

#### **6. SST Posts and Partnership liabilities**

Partners have reconfirmed their commitment to retain an Independent Chairperson and part-time Coordinator. The Co-ordinator post is funded by the 4 main funding bodies, SSDC, Yarlinton HG, Yeovil College & Yeovil & District Hospital Trust, on an equal basis.

Each Autumn SSDC will issue a financial liability statement setting out any employment costs that would arise from the termination of the Partnership. These Partners have agreed to share these employment liabilities equally.

#### **7. What it will not do?**

South Somerset Together does not:

- Duplicate what its partners and/or other organisations do as their "day job";
- Deliver any programme beyond the pilot stage. If successful, it should be mainstreamed by participating organisations;
- Contribute resources to existing programmes, unless to develop a new/innovative approach.

Updated August 2014

**SCHEDULE: Partners' contributions for 2014/15 and in principle for following 1 year:**

| <b>Funding Partner</b>                | <b>Contribution level for revised funding model 2014/15 (and in principle for following 1 year) (£)</b> | <b>Comments</b> |
|---------------------------------------|---|-----------------|
| SSDC                                  | 12,000  |                 |
| Yeovil College                        | 5,000   |                 |
| Yarlington Housing Group              | 5,000   |                 |
| Yeovil District Hospital              | 5,000   |                 |
| Knightstone HA                        | 1,000   |                 |
| Bournemouth Churches HA               | 1,500   |                 |
| Yeovil Chamber                        | 100   |                 |
|                                       |   |                 |
|                                       |   |                 |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                          | <b>29,600</b>   |                 |
|                                       |   |                 |
| <b>Est total annual running costs</b> | <b>28,500</b>   |                 |

In addition to the above the following Agencies have offered "help in kind":

- Somerset County Council
- Avon & Somerset Police – hosting of meetings
- Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service – hosting of meetings
- SSVCA and CAB – hosting of meetings
- South Somerset Mind – hosting of meetings

# Agenda Item 8

## **Adoption of a Balanced Rural Lettings Policy**

|                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <i>Executive Portfolio Holder:</i> | <i>Ric Pallister, Strategy and Policy</i>                  |
| <i>Strategic Director:</i>         | <i>Rina Singh, Place and Performance</i>                   |
| <i>Assistant Director:</i>         | <i>Martin Woods, Economy</i>                               |
| <i>Service Manager:</i>            | <i>Colin McDonald, Corporate Strategic Housing Manager</i> |
| <i>Lead Officer:</i>               | <i>Paul Herbert, Housing Policy Officer</i>                |
| <i>Contact Details:</i>            | <i>paul.herbert@southsomerset.gov.uk or (01935) 462030</i> |

### **Purpose of the Report**

The purpose of this report is to seek adoption of a rural lettings policy which balances the need for very local lettings and the council's wider statutory obligations.

### **Recommendation**

The Executive are asked to formally adopt the balanced rural lettings policy.

### **Public Interest**

This report covers the council's proposed approach to lettings of social housing for rent, owned or managed by a housing association or similar body, in the most rural locations in the district. A small amount of existing housing has been specifically built to meet very local needs in so-called 'rural exceptions schemes', but the majority of social housing in our villages is not subject to the same lettings criteria.

The balanced rural lettings policy will treat relevant vacancies in affected villages as if they were subject to the same rules as existing 'rural exceptions schemes' (i.e. giving preference to those with a connection to the local area), but without going through all the expense and effort of building a small number of new dwellings.

Addressing the need to protect rural vacancies for those with a very local connection has to be balanced against our statutory obligations to those in the greatest housing need (referred to in the legislation as the 'reasonable preference groups').

It will therefore be of interest to members of the public concerned about the letting of social housing for those in need in their local area and to members of the public interested in the wider community benefits of letting housing to more local people.

It will be of particular interest to any member of the public who is seeking assistance themselves, or has a friend or relative in need of assistance from the district council or one of the other related partner agencies, with a rural local connection.

### **Background**

The take-up of the right to buy (and, since the transfer of former council stock to Yarlington, the preserved right to buy) has been disproportionate in rural settlements; at the same time, the opportunities for further provision have tended to be more limited. In many cases, we have spent years taking a 'rural exceptions scheme' from concept to reality in order to meet very local needs that otherwise are not getting served through letting the existing stock if and when it becomes available.

There are a number of 'rural exceptions schemes' across the district in villages with a population of 3,000 or less. Typically these are small developments of less than a dozen dwellings which have been built outside of the development limit that applied to the settlement at the time in order to meet an established local housing need. Allocations (lettings to rented dwellings and sales of shared ownership dwellings) are governed by a 'section 106 Agreement' (s106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended) which enforces a very local connection, without which planning permission would not ordinarily have been granted outside of the village envelope.

Usually the s106 Agreement allows for allocation to 'cascade' outwards, in the event that there is no eligible applicant with a local connection to the primary parish, in order to ensure that the Housing Association (or other landlord) does not have to keep a property empty indefinitely when a casual vacancy arises. Usually the second stage of the cascade consists of all those immediately adjoining parishes with a population of 3,000 or less, including neighbouring villages that happen to be outside of the district. This stage is commonly referred to as the 'doughnut ring'. Usually the third stage of the cascade is then, in the event of there being no eligible applicant with a local connection within the doughnut ring, to anybody with a local connection to the district.

As the various rural exceptions schemes have been developed at different times, and influenced by the wishes of different Parish Councils, philanthropic landowners (where land for the site has been gifted), Community Land Trusts and housing associations, there is some variation of the exact way in which the cascade works, although almost all follow the pattern outlined above. Similarly there is some variation in the definition used for local connection.

Most s106 Agreements governing a rural exceptions scheme define local connection in a very similar way to the definition used in the Homefinder Somerset policy (which itself derives from relevant legislation, Guidance and case law), albeit the locality to which the connection refers is greatly reduced. In general terms this restricts local connection to those:-

- Already living in the relevant village, usually defined as for 6 of the last 12 months, or 3 out of the last 5 years.
- Already working in the relevant village, usually defined as having permanent work for at least 16 hours per week.
- Needing to move to take up an offer of such employment and commuting from their existing home would be unreasonable.
- Having close family connections in the relevant village, usually meaning parents, siblings or non-dependent children.

Sometimes, but not always, the s106 Agreement will also consider children attending school in the relevant village as being a sufficient local connection.

One of the objectives of the Housing Strategy Implementation Plan is to make effective use of South Somerset's housing stock, and the possibility of a rural lettings policy was included in the draft strategy. Following formal consultation the Council adopted the Implementation Plan in December 2014, including the commitment to develop such a policy along the lines suggested.

The Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002) requires that all local housing authorities have a written policy that determines the priorities and procedures to be followed when letting social rented housing. Reasonable preference must be given to defined groups as per section 167(2) of the 1996 Act and accordingly no policy can disregard this as it would be open to challenge.

However, section 167(2E) and section 167(3) enable local authorities to let properties to people of a particular description where there is a clear need for this approach. Given the lack of affordable housing in some more rural parts of South Somerset district, it is considered appropriate to make reasonable use of this exception in the form of this policy. Homefinder Somerset, on the other hand, operates across the whole county, and whilst South Somerset District Council can have a specific policy, it relies on the agreement of the various housing associations which have stock in the affected areas.

Yarlington Housing Group (provider of nearly 80% of social housing in South Somerset) has a provision in its policy in which it recognises the limited supply of rural housing and states that it is “committed to working with the local housing authority to implement a rural lettings plan” (page 12).

Mendip District Council adopted a rural lettings policy in 2012, which included a detailed consideration of the best methodology to use, given factors such as available resources, reliability of data and the principle of transparency. The Mendip approach was taken into account when considering our own methodology, rather than ‘reinventing the wheel’, adjusted to meet our local circumstances.

### **Development of the Balanced Rural Housing Policy: Process**

A consultation draft of the Housing Strategy Implementation Plan was produced in July 2014 and widely circulated to a range of relevant stakeholders such as Parish Councils, Housing Associations and other partner organisations. The consultation draft was also made available on our web site. The formal consultation period ran for ten weeks, closing on 17<sup>th</sup> September. Embedded within the consultation draft were eight specific consultation questions at appropriate places within the text and a final catch-all question seeking comments on any other aspect. A web-based Survey Monkey questionnaire was also created using the same standard questions.

One of the regular Portfolio Holder discussion group mornings was set aside on to go through the nine consultation questions. This was open to all elected members and took place on 5<sup>th</sup> September. Question 7 was “Do you agree that we should implement a rural lettings policy? If so, would you support a single cut-off point or a tiered approach?” During the discussion, concerns were raised about affordable housing in rural areas, especially smaller dwellings (either as starter properties or for downsizing). It was agreed that a balanced rural lettings policy would be the best way forward, using the tiered approach to stock levels.

Finally, the document was discussed at the Equalities Steering Group meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> October 2014. The possible clash between local families and reasonable preference groups was considered, but it was concluded that, due to the small number of vacancies affected (around 2%), there would be no discernible impact on equalities.

A draft policy was drawn up in January 2015, with copies sent out to parish/town councils, district councillors, relevant housing associations, internal consultees such as the operational housing team, and the community land trusts for Norton Sub Hamdon and Queen Camel. A seven-week consultation period then took place, ending on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2015, with a number of responses from interested parties. These were often requests for clarification of the status of a parish or feedback on wording (rather than content); there were also queries about the impact of the policy on procedures. On the whole, however, the policy was welcomed and agreed by the parish councils, landlords and others who responded.

### **Development of the Balanced Rural Lettings Policy: Content**

The proposed balanced rural lettings policy for adoption is attached as Appendix 1. In determining which parishes would be affected by the policy, it is proposed to adopt Mendip District Council's principle of stock level per parish. Some small rural parishes (for example, Ilton or Odcombe), have a relatively high level of social housing stock, and it is considered that in such parishes there is therefore a reasonable chance that local housing needs will be met without any intervention necessary. It is for the rural parishes with relatively low stock levels that this policy is intended.

In order to ensure that our statutory obligations are met, this lettings policy has been drawn up with the intention that it will affect no more than 6% of the overall stock, thus retaining 94% of housing stock for all other applicants. It is also noted that being in one of the defined reasonable preference groups and having a local connection are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

Two options were considered to achieve this: either using a single cut-off point (below which all parishes would come under the policy) or using a tiered approach (two cut-off points, with only 50% of vacancies affected in the parishes with slightly higher stock levels).

***Single cut-off point:***

An analysis of total housing association general needs dwellings in parishes with less than 3,000 population suggests that a cut-off point of 20 dwellings (or fewer) would currently encompass 60 parishes and represent 5.3% of all general needs stock (although probably a lower percentage of vacancies as these tend to arise less frequently in rural locations; current analysis suggests around 2.3%).

***Tiered approach:***

This option includes all vacancies arising where there are 10 general needs dwellings or fewer (which would currently cover 43 parishes) and every other vacancy where there are 11 or more but fewer than 25 dwellings (which would currently cover a further 19 parishes). This would be equivalent to 5.8% of general needs stock (again, current analysis suggests around 1.6% of vacancies).

Following responses to the consultation on the draft housing strategy implementation plan, the tiered approach became the preferred option. This option gives some degree of local lettings to a wider area than a single cut-off point, but without completely excluding these extra parishes from other ('reasonable preference group') applicants.

The approach to be taken regarding local connection is to use three levels, following that commonly used in rural exception schemes. The order of preference will be:

1. to those with a proven local connection to the parish in question;
2. to those with a proven connection to the 'doughnut ring' (of immediately adjacent rural parishes);
3. to anybody with a connection to the district.

This method prioritises applicants with a local connection to the parish but also recognises those applicants who, through proximity, have a connection to that part of South Somerset. It also protects the landlord from having an empty property at a time when a vacancy arises but nobody with a local connection to that village is currently eligible for a property of that size or type.

In the event that the above local connection filter does not provide a successful applicant, normal Homefinder Somerset lettings rules will apply.

For the purposes of defining local connection it is proposed to use the categories that appear in the Homefinder Somerset policy, which are broadly the same as those usually

appearing in existing s106 Agreements for rural exceptions schemes, but being referenced to the relevant parish.

Below is a shaded map of South Somerset, showing which parishes are affected by the policy according to current stock levels (which are, of course, subject to change).

Those parishes shaded green have ten or fewer general needs dwellings and it is proposed that all vacancies will be subject to the policy.

Those parishes shaded yellow have between eleven and twenty-four general needs dwellings and it is proposed that every other vacancy is subject to the policy.

Those parishes shaded blue are affected by the policy by virtue of being adjacent to a parish shaded green or yellow and thus being within the 'doughnut ring'. However, vacancies within these parishes will not be subject to the policy either because there are no general needs dwellings or because there are twenty-five or more.

Those parishes shaded white are unaffected by the policy because they are not immediately adjacent a parish shaded green or yellow and either there are no general needs dwellings or twenty-five or more.

Those parishes shaded grey are unaffected by the policy because the population exceeds 3,000 (including two pairings - Langport & Huish Episcopi and Castle Cary & Ansford – which are being treated as a single settlement).

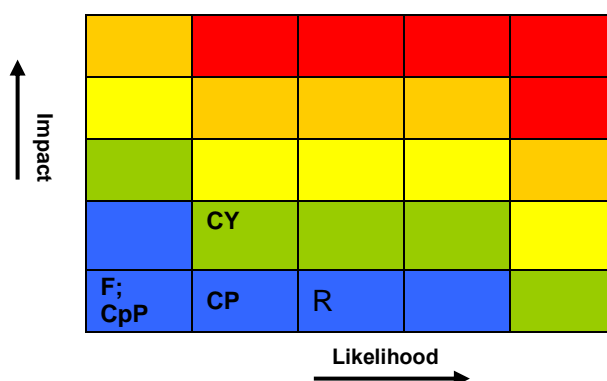
### Implications for the District Executive Forward Plan

It is suggested that this policy be reviewed in the light of outcomes after three years; a review report thus needs to be scheduled on the forward plan.

### Financial Implications

There are no specific financial implications arising from the proposed policy which is about the better use of existing resources in the form of future available vacancies rather than any financial expenditure.

### Risk Matrix

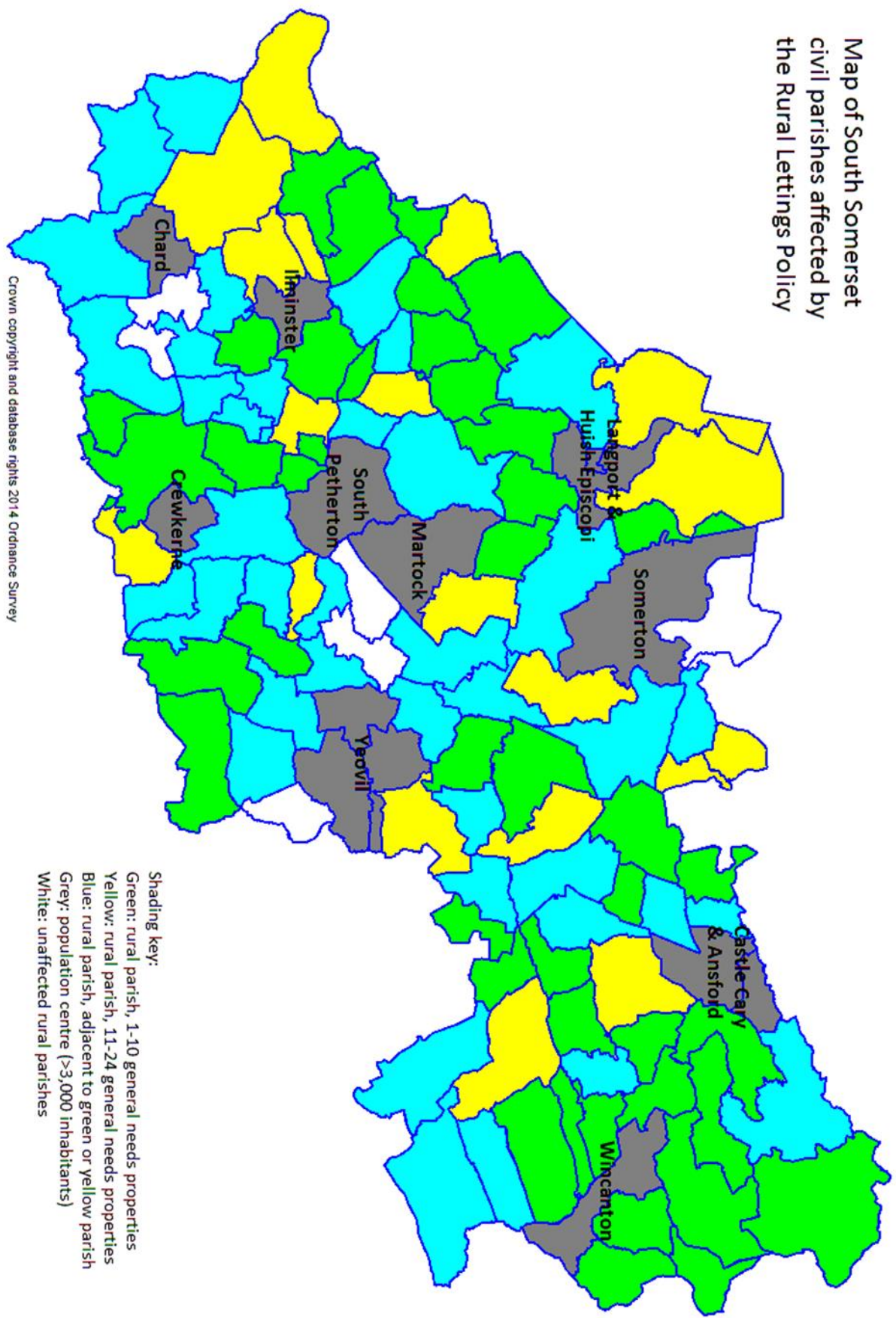


### Key

| Categories                      | Colours (for further detail please refer to Risk management strategy) |
|---------------------------------|---|
| R = Reputation                  | Red = High impact and high probability                                |
| CpP = Corporate Plan Priorities | Orange = Major impact and major probability                           |
| CP = Community Priorities       | Yellow = Moderate impact and moderate probability                     |
| CY = Capacity                   | Green = Minor impact and minor probability                            |
| F = Financial                   | Blue = Insignificant impact and insignificant probability             |



Map of South Somerset  
civil parishes affected by  
the Rural Lettings Policy



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## **Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications**

It is not considered that there will be a measurable impact – positive or negative – on our carbon emissions targets. However, in allowing more people to be rehoused locally, some travel needs may be reduced and this could lead to a marginal contribution to our overall objectives.

## **Equality and Diversity Implications**

An equalities analysis has been carried out and will be published alongside the document. It is attached as Appendix 2.

## **Implications for Corporate Priorities**

The proposed framework document clearly assists in addressing “Focus Three – Homes” and the major statement in the Plan:

*“We want decent housing for our residents that matches their income”*

## **Privacy Impact Assessment**

This report does not directly impact on any data held of a personal nature. Personal data held on the Homefinder Somerset system is already subject to appropriate checks and controls. This policy will involve using some of that data, but not in a way fundamentally different from previously.

## **Background Papers**

Adoption of Housing Strategy Implementation Plan - District Executive, 6<sup>th</sup> November 2014  
Adoption of Housing Strategy Implementation Plan - Full Council, 11<sup>th</sup> December 2014

Housing Strategy Implementation Plan

<http://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/strategic-housing/>

Yarlington Housing Group Lettings Policy

<http://www.yhg.co.uk/downloads/Policies/Lettings%20Policy%2023%2009%2013.pdf>

## South Somerset District Council

# Rural Lettings Policy



### Aims & objectives

This policy covers all rural<sup>1</sup> general needs<sup>2</sup> social rented housing properties in South Somerset. It does **not** cover those properties which are governed by relevant section 106 planning agreement restrictions<sup>3</sup>.

The aim of this rural lettings policy is to enable people to remain in or return to a locality to which they have a local connection. The local connection eligibility criteria are defined later in this document.

One of the objectives of the Housing Strategy Implementation Plan<sup>4</sup> is to make effective use of South Somerset's housing stock, and the possibility of a rural lettings policy was included in the draft strategy. Following formal consultation the Council adopted the Implementation Plan in December 2014, including the commitment to develop such a policy along the lines suggested

In October 2014, there were 446 households expressing demand in rural parishes in South Somerset.

A draft policy was drawn up by the strategic housing unit in January 2015, with copies sent out to parish/town councils, district councillors, relevant housing associations, internal consultees such as operational housing, and the community land trusts for Norton Sub Hamdon and Queen Camel. A seven-week consultation period then took place, ending on 12 March 2015.

Finally, the revised draft was considered by the district executive on 2 April 2015.

### Background

#### Homefinder Somerset choice-based lettings

The Homefinder Somerset choice-based lettings scheme is the means by which the majority of social rented housing in South Somerset is allocated.

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this policy, 'rural areas' means civil parishes which have a population of less than 3,000; that is, excluding Yeovil, Chard, Crewkerne, Ilminster, Martock, Somerton, South Petherton and Wincanton. Additionally, Castle Cary and Ansford are considered to be a single urban settlement, due to the contiguous nature of their residential areas, and (with a combined population of 3,361) are therefore excluded. For the same reasons, Langport and Huish Episcopi are also excluded.

<sup>2</sup> General needs properties make up about 80% of all social housing in South Somerset. In contrast, sheltered or supported accommodation is housing with special design, facilities and/or features targeted at a specific client group requiring support and due to their exclusive nature do not suit the purposes of this policy.

<sup>3</sup> 'Section 106' refers to section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. Relevant section 106 agreements give preference to people with a connection to a particular village/parish when letting/reletting properties built outside the normal development limit.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/strategic-housing/>

Homefinder Somerset Common Lettings Policy section 22.4 (local connection) refers specifically to restricting applicants' eligibility to apply for specific properties unless they have a local connection to that particular area:

*"Although the banding system reflects housing need and subsequently the priority of each application, there may be occasions when it may be appropriate to protect housing for local people."*

The way in which the registered provider (usually a housing association) labels their vacant properties at the public advertisement stage is agreed mutually between the registered provider and the relevant local housing authority. The Homefinder policy, however, does not clearly define which properties should be subject to a restrictive label for local connection applicants only.

This rural lettings policy clearly sets out the circumstances in which restrictive criteria (known as labelling) will be applied to vacant property adverts in rural areas of South Somerset where properties are **not** subject to a relevant section 106 agreement. This policy is designed to further complement the Homefinder Somerset policy.

### **Rural exception schemes**

The take-up of the right to buy (and, since the transfer of former council stock to Yarlington, the preserved right to buy) has been disproportionate in rural settlements; at the same time, the opportunities for further provision have tended to be more limited. In many cases, it has taken years to take a rural exception scheme from concept to reality in order to meet very local needs that otherwise are not getting served through letting the existing stock if and when it becomes available.

Rural exception schemes<sup>5</sup> typically give local preferences as follows:

1. to those with a proven local connection to the target village;
2. to those with a proven connection to the 'doughnut ring' (of immediately adjacent parishes);
3. to anybody with a connection to the district.

Where there is more than one household with a need for the size and type of property on offer and a local connection on the same tier, the normal Homefinder rules apply<sup>6</sup>. Usually the logic of the 'doughnut ring' of immediately adjacent parishes is to include all adjacent parishes (with a population of less than 3,000) even if they happen to be in a different district because the target village lies on the district border. This order of preference is well established and thus will also apply to this policy (see 'defining local connection', below).

### **Planning policy & section 106 agreements**

In rural areas planning conditions are applied to new affordable housing developments built outside of the village envelope to ensure that the homes provided remain available and affordable to local people. As these conditions are

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<sup>5</sup> A rural exception scheme is where affordable housing is permitted, as an exception, outside of the usual development boundary for the settlement on the basis that the local needs of the settlement for affordable housing cannot otherwise be met within the same settlement.

<sup>6</sup> That is, the vacancy will be let to the household with the highest banding and, if in the same banding, the longest effective date.

set under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 they are usually referred to as section 106 agreements.

Under the Homefinder choice-based lettings scheme, applicants can express an interest in available properties during each weekly lettings cycle. However, on some housing development sites (due to the section 106 agreement), applicants with similar levels of need for a particular property or type of property are also assessed according to their local connection (as defined in the section 106 agreement). Those with a local connection who have the greatest need are given priority for consideration for the vacant property.

This rural lettings policy does not replace any section 106 agreements on new or existing properties. Properties which were developed with specific section 106 agreements in place are allocated in accordance with these agreements. Therefore this policy does not override any property being advertised through Homefinder Somerset that has a relevant section 106 in place. Any such properties will be clearly labelled on the property advert stating they are to be let under section 106 conditions.

Given the above it is unlikely that any property built before 1990 will have a section 106 agreement in place and thus this policy sets out to clearly define how those rural properties will be allocated in the future.

## **Methodology**

Mendip District Council, in drawing up their own rural lettings policy, considered a number of options for determining which parishes would be affected by the policy; it was concluded that stock level per parish was the most appropriate given factors such as available resources, reliability of data and the principle of transparency. The details can be found in their policy document (see footnote 7). In South Somerset we intend to follow Mendip's example of basing the policy primarily on existing stock levels.

We have considered two options, based on the above principle of stock level per parish, for the implementation of South Somerset's policy.

### 1. Single cut-off point:

An analysis of total housing association general needs dwellings in parishes with less than 3,000 population suggests that a cut-off point of 20 dwellings (or fewer) would currently encompass 60 parishes and represent 5.3% of all general needs stock (although probably a lower percentage of vacancies as these tend to arise less frequently in rural locations; current analysis suggests around 2.3%).

### 2. Tiered approach:

This option includes all vacancies arising where there are 10 general needs dwellings or fewer (which would currently cover 43 parishes) and every other vacancy where there are 11 or more but fewer than 25 dwellings (which would currently cover a further 19 parishes). This would be equivalent to 5.8% of general needs stock (again, current analysis suggests around 1.6% of vacancies).

Data collected for the purposes of this methodology is based on the combined parish-level housing stock of all registered social landlords in South Somerset.

Data on housing need is not available at individual village level where there is more than one village in the same parish.

Upon careful consideration of the two options, including responses to the consultation on the draft strategy document, we have decided to base our methodology on the tiered approach to levels of stock in each parish, as described in option 2 above. This option gives some degree of local lettings to a wider area<sup>7</sup> than a single cut-off point, but without completely excluding these extra parishes from other (non-local) applicants.

During the development of this policy we concluded that turnover of stock could not be considered due to the further complexities it would create. Considering turnover would create increased workload; in addition, it was felt that reviews of the policy would need to be more frequent to take into account annual turnover and as such it was felt the council does not have the resources to administer this – the cost of doing so would be disproportionate to the benefit gained. Stock levels can change, and every time an empty property became available the council would have to check stock levels in the relevant parish; this is a resource the council does not have. Also, we need to be mindful of the timescales required via Homefinder in respect of reletting empty properties.

In determining this we must be mindful of our obligations to ensure that any choice-based lettings scheme is transparent and open to scrutiny, whilst ensuring the council meets its legal obligations in terms of giving reasonable preference to defined groups (see below).

## **Stock levels**

There are 121 parishes in South Somerset over 96,000 hectares with a total of 11,025<sup>8</sup> social housing properties, of which 8,904 are general needs properties. The balance comprises shared ownership properties, sheltered/supported housing and temporary accommodation.

## **Reasonable preference**

The Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002) requires that all local housing authorities have a written policy that determines the priorities and procedures to be followed when letting social rented housing. Reasonable preference must be given to defined groups as per section 167(2) of the 1996 Act and accordingly no policy can disregard this as it would be open to challenge.

However, section 167(2E) and section 167(3) enable local authorities to let properties to people of a particular description where there is a clear need for this approach. Given the lack of affordable housing in some more rural parts of this district the council wishes to clearly define under what circumstances restrictions would apply. This rural lettings policy identifies those parishes where it will apply for any future general needs vacancies within the district (excluding new builds or those subject to relevant section 106 agreements).

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<sup>7</sup> That is, affecting 62 parishes rather than 60. More significantly, this wider area means that a further 1,100 rural residents of South Somerset will come under this policy.

<sup>8</sup> Compiled from housing stock data supplied by all registered social landlords in South Somerset.

In order to ensure that the above obligation is met, this lettings policy has been drawn up with the intention that it will affect no more than 6% of the overall stock, thus retaining 94% of housing stock for all other applicants. It is also noted that being in one of the defined reasonable preference groups and having a local connection are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

## **Parishes affected by the policy**

In the 62 parishes currently affected by this policy (see Appendix 2), there are 515 general needs properties in total, an average of eight per parish. The average stock level per parish is five units in those parishes with 10 or fewer dwellings, and 17 units in those parishes with 11-24 dwellings.

It is appropriate to note that a threshold for this policy based on stock levels is applied rather than applying the policy to all rural parishes in the district, which would potentially account for some 18% of vacancies and may conflict with reasonable preference.

Therefore, the rural lettings policy will currently be applied to a total of 62 parishes, all of which have at least one general needs property<sup>9</sup>.

Rural parishes with 25 or more general needs dwellings have not been included as part of this policy. This is partly because it is assumed that higher stock levels mean greater availability and partly because of the council's obligation to reasonable preference groups (see above).

## **Defining local connection**

### **The 'doughnut ring' approach**

In order to benefit local residents as fairly as possible, we have decided on a three-tiered approach to local connection. As is also often the case in rural exception schemes, the order of preference will be as follows:

- to those with a proven local connection to the parish in question;
- to those with a proven connection to the 'doughnut ring' (of immediately adjacent<sup>10</sup> rural parishes);
- to anybody with a connection to the district.

This method prioritises applicants with a local connection to the parish but also recognises those applicants who, through proximity, have a connection to that part of South Somerset. It also protects the landlord from having an empty property at a time when a vacancy arises but nobody with a local connection to that village is currently eligible for a property of that size or type.

Please note also that the logic of the 'doughnut ring' of immediately adjacent parishes is to include all adjacent rural parishes, even if they are in a different district.

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<sup>9</sup> There are currently 16 parishes in South Somerset with zero general needs housing stock.

<sup>10</sup> An adjacent civil parish is one which shares a boundary with (ie is contiguous to) the target parish. The term 'doughnut ring' is used to reflect the (approximately) circular shape created on a map when looking at all the adjacent parishes to the target parish.

In the event that the above local connection filter does not provide a successful applicant, normal Homefinder Somerset lettings rules will apply.

## **Examples**

### Example 1:

Every other vacancy in the parish of Aller (current stock: 16) would be advertised as being subject to this policy. Priority would be given initially to those applicants with a local connection to the civil parish of Aller. If nobody with such a connection expresses an interest in the property, preference would then be to those applicants with a local connection to an adjacent rural parish. In this case, the 'doughnut ring' includes:

- High Ham (in South Somerset);
- Curry Rivel (in South Somerset);
- Stoke St Gregory (in Taunton Deane);
- Burrowbridge (in Taunton Deane);
- Othery(in Sedgemoor);
- Greinton (in Sedgemoor);
- Ashcott (in Sedgemoor).

Despite the immediate proximity of Langport and Huish Episcopi, a local connection to these parishes would not give priority to an applicant due to their combined size exceeding 3,000 population.

### Example 2:

Every vacancy in the parish of Lopen (current stock: 7) would be advertised as being subject to South Somerset's Rural Lettings Policy. If there are no applicants with a primary connection (to Lopen itself), priority would go to applicants with a connection to

- Seavington St Mary,
- Seavington St Michael,
- Merriott or
- Hinton St George.

South Petherton, due to its population exceeding 3,000, would be excluded from the 'doughnut ring'.

### Example 3:

Every vacancy in Babcary (current stock: 2) would go initially to those with a local connection to Babcary. If no one applied, then it would go to those with a local connection to

- Lovington (in South Somerset);
- North Barrow (in South Somerset);
- South Barrow (in South Somerset);
- Queen Camel (in South Somerset);
- West Camel (in South Somerset);
- Charlton Mackrell (in South Somerset);
- Keinton Mandeville (in South Somerset);
- Lydford-on-Fosse (in Mendip)



## **Definition – Homefinder Somerset**

The eligibility criteria for an applicant to satisfy local connection in order to be considered for properties covered by this policy is set out clearly within the Homefinder Somerset policy<sup>11</sup>. For the purposes of this policy those criteria will be applied to parish level. Partner registered providers have mutually agreed that these criteria will be the means by which they determine priorities for any future vacancies covered by this policy.

The main or joint applicants

- are normally resident in the relevant parish. Local Government Association guidelines define this as having resided in the relevant area for 6 of the last 12 months, or 3 out of the last 5 years, where residence has been out of choice.
- has work in the relevant parish. The Local Government Association guidelines define this as employment other than of a casual nature. For the purposes of this policy this will be defined as having had permanent work with a minimum of a 16 hour contract per week for the previous 6 months, and without a break in the period of employment for more than 3 months..
- needs to move to take up an offer of permanent employment (over 16 hours and evidence will be required) within the relevant parish and commuting from their existing home would be unreasonable.
- have family connections in the relevant parish. The Local Government Association guidelines define this as immediate family members (parents, siblings and non-dependent children) who have themselves lived in the area for 5 years and with whom there has been frequent contact, commitment or dependency.
- can demonstrate a need to move to the relevant parish to give or receive essential and critical medical or other support where significant harm would result if this was not provided.

## **Advertising and reletting**

All properties owned by Homefinder Somerset partner registered providers advertise all their vacancies via Homefinder Somerset. Any property which becomes vacant and is subsequently advertised via Homefinder Somerset, and which qualifies for reletting under the rural lettings policy, will be labelled as such to clearly identify this to applicants.

Once a shortlist of applicants has been created, it remains the responsibility of the registered provider to verify the applicant's local connection to the parish and their eligibility to be allocated the property.

Whilst local connection takes precedence, the applicant must have a need for the property (in terms of size and type) as defined by Homefinder Somerset's policy. For example a single person with a local connection to the primary parish, but with

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<sup>11</sup> Homefinder Somerset Common Lettings Policy section 22.4

a one bedroom need, would not be considered for a 3 bedroom property. The successful applicant would be the household who had both a local connection and the highest need for the property.

In the rare circumstances where there are no applicants for a vacancy with a proven local connection under this rural lettings policy, the registered provider reserves the right to re-advertise or let the property to any other applicant – but this must be done in line with the Homefinder Somerset policy.

### **Shared ownership and low-cost home ownership**

These properties are not currently dealt with via Homefinder Somerset and accordingly will not be subject to the rural lettings policy.

### **Monitoring of the policy**

Homefinder Somerset is monitored via the county-wide Homefinder Somerset monitoring board. Any impact this policy has on trends will be monitored where appropriate by this board.

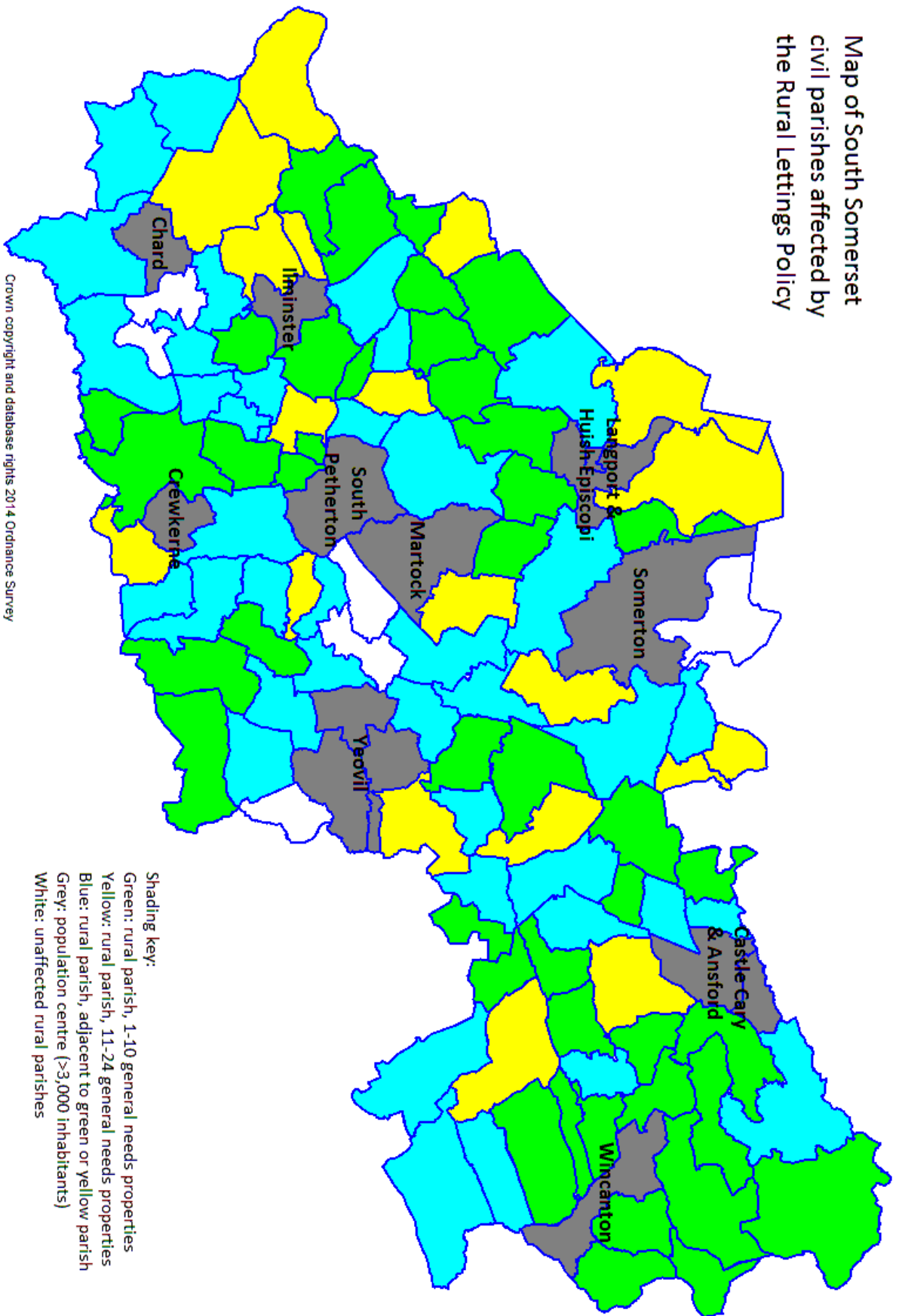
### **Review**

The impact of this policy will be reviewed by the council's scrutiny committee three years after implementation.

It is not anticipated that any further reviews will be required. This policy will apply to the accommodation (which has no section 106 agreement in place) within the defined parishes in accordance with the policy's criteria. However, the list of affected parishes may alter as and when stock levels change and, thus, Appendix 2 is subject to change. It is anticipated that the council's Strategic Housing Unit will review relevant stock levels at least annually.

# Appendix 1 – map of parishes affected by the policy

Map of South Somerset civil parishes affected by the Rural Lettings Policy



## Appendix 2 – list of parishes by general needs stock level

[as of 18/03/2015 – subject to review]

Listed in order of stock level, lowest to highest; colour coding as per Appendix 1.

| Parish                | Population <sup>12</sup> | General Needs Stock |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|
| Alford                | <b>88</b>                | 0                   |
| Chaffcombe            | 229                      | 0                   |
| Chillington           | 164                      | 0                   |
| Chilton Cantelo       | 445                      | 0                   |
| Cricket St Thomas     | <b>64</b>                | 0                   |
| Cudworth              | <b>49</b>                | 0                   |
| Dinnington            | <b>61</b>                | 0                   |
| Kingstone             | <b>103</b>               | 0                   |
| Kingweston            | <b>75</b>                | 0                   |
| Knowle St Giles       | 244                      | 0                   |
| Maperton              | 140                      | 0                   |
| North Barrow          | 233                      | 0                   |
| North Perrott         | 246                      | 0                   |
| Puckington            | 117                      | 0                   |
| Wambrook              | 184                      | 0                   |
| Whitestaunton         | 256                      | 0                   |
| Bratton Seymour       | 104                      | 1                   |
| Closworth             | 220                      | 1                   |
| Corton Denham         | 189                      | 1                   |
| Stoke Trister         | 313                      | 1                   |
| Yarlington            | 123                      | 1                   |
| Ashill                | 529                      | 2                   |
| Babcary               | 248                      | 2                   |
| Compton Pauncefoot    | 139                      | 2                   |
| Holton                | 238                      | 2                   |
| Muchelney             | 195                      | 2                   |
| Pitney                | 374                      | 2                   |
| Seavington St Michael | 127                      | 2                   |
| Hardington Mandeville | 585                      | 3                   |
| Hinton St George      | 442                      | 3                   |
| Whitelackington       | 209                      | 3                   |
| Yeovilton             | 1,226                    | 3                   |
| Brewham               | 441                      | 4                   |
| Broadway              | 740                      | 4                   |
| Charlton Musgrove     | 398                      | 4                   |

<sup>12</sup> Taken from the 2011 Census. Source: Somerset Intelligence, <http://www.somersetintelligence.org.uk/census-datasets/>  
Population figures in *bold/italic* are, due to lack of 2011 Census data, from Office for National Statistics' mid-2010 parish population estimates.

| Parish                 | Population | General Needs Stock |
|------------------------|------------|---------------------|
| Isle Brewers           | 150        | 4                   |
| Shepton Montague       | 208        | 4                   |
| Stocklinch             | 154        | 4                   |
| Wayford                | <b>115</b> | 4                   |
| Beercrocombe           | 134        | 5                   |
| East Chinnock          | 479        | 5                   |
| Isle Abbots            | 205        | 5                   |
| Pitcombe               | 532        | 5                   |
| Rimpton                | 235        | 5                   |
| South Barrow           | 162        | 5                   |
| Hambridge And Westport | 514        | 6                   |
| Horsington             | 571        | 6                   |
| Lovington              | 141        | 6                   |
| West Crewkerne         | 631        | 6                   |
| Drayton                | 379        | 7                   |
| Lopen                  | 260        | 7                   |
| Cucklington            | 173        | 8                   |
| Dowlish Wake           | 277        | 8                   |
| Long Load              | 332        | 8                   |
| North Cheriton         | 208        | 8                   |
| South Cadbury          | 284        | 8                   |
| Limington              | <b>203</b> | 9                   |
| Penselwood             | 273        | 9                   |
| Fivehead               | 609        | 10                  |
| Buckland St Mary       | 521        | 11                  |
| Keinton Mandeville     | 1,068      | 11                  |
| Chiselborough          | 275        | 12                  |
| Donyatt                | 347        | 14                  |
| High Ham               | 909        | 15                  |
| North Cadbury          | 950        | 15                  |
| Aller                  | 410        | 16                  |
| Kingsdon               | 303        | 16                  |
| West Camel             | 459        | 16                  |
| Ash                    | 626        | 17                  |
| Curry Mallet           | 306        | 18                  |
| Seavington St Mary     | 384        | 18                  |
| Combe St Nicholas      | 1,373      | 19                  |
| Horton                 | 812        | 19                  |
| Misterton              | 826        | 19                  |
| Barton St David        | 561        | 20                  |
| Charlton Horethorne    | 591        | 20                  |
| Barrington             | 438        | 21                  |
| Mudford                | 696        | 23                  |

| <b>Parish</b>         | <b>Population</b> | <b>General Needs Stock</b> |
|-----------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| Compton Dundon        | 705               | 25                         |
| Shepton Beauchamp     | 728               | 28                         |
| Long Sutton           | 833               | 31                         |
| Marston Magna         | 523               | 31                         |
| Winsham               | 748               | 32                         |
| Chilthorne Domer      | 574               | 35                         |
| Sparkford             | 617               | 36                         |
| Queen Camel           | 908               | 37                         |
| West Chinnock         | 592               | 37                         |
| Norton Sub Hamdon     | 743               | 38                         |
| Charlton Mackrell     | 1,073             | 43                         |
| Kingsbury Episcopi    | 1,307             | 46                         |
| Tintinhull            | 902               | 46                         |
| East Coker            | 1,667             | 47                         |
| Odcombe               | 759               | 50                         |
| Ilchester             | 2,153             | 51                         |
| Brympton              | 7,308             | 53                         |
| Haselbury Plucknett   | 744               | 53                         |
| Ansford               | 1,085             | 55                         |
| Ilton                 | 854               | 65                         |
| Montacute             | 831               | 69                         |
| Tatworth And Forton   | 2,660             | 70                         |
| West Coker            | 2,018             | 80                         |
| Merriott              | 1,979             | 83                         |
| Huish Episcopi        | 2,095             | 85                         |
| Curry Rivel           | 2,148             | 95                         |
| Abbas And Templecombe | 1,560             | 101                        |
| Barwick               | 1,221             | 107                        |
| Langport              | 1,081             | 112                        |
| Stoke Sub Hamdon      | 1,968             | 118                        |
| Milborne Port         | 2,802             | 122                        |
| Castle Cary           | 2,276             | 126                        |
| Henstridge            | 1,814             | 130                        |
| Bruton                | 2,907             | 144                        |
| Somerton              | 4,697             | 203                        |
| South Petherton       | 3,367             | 243                        |
| Yeovil Without        | 6,834             | 247                        |
| Martock               | 4,766             | 288                        |
| Ilminster             | 5,808             | 331                        |
| Wincanton             | 5,272             | 333                        |
| Crewkerne             | 7,000             | 375                        |
| Chard                 | 13,074            | 1,172                      |
| Yeovil                | 30,378            | 2,916                      |



**More information is available from:**

Strategic Housing

✉ Brympton Way, Yeovil, BA20 2HT

🌐 [www.southsomerset.gov.uk](http://www.southsomerset.gov.uk)

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## Equalities Analysis - Rural Lettings Policy

|   |         |                        |                |
|---|---------|------------------------|----------------|
| <b>Impact</b>   |         | <b>Lead Officer</b>    | Colin McDonald |
| <b>Date of EqA</b>  | 24/3/15 | <b>EqA Review Date</b> | 25/4/16        |
| <b>Why are you completing the equality analysis?</b>  |         |                        |                |
| This is a proposed new policy.  |         |                        |                |
| <b>What are the main purposes of the policy, strategy or service area?</b>  |         |                        |                |
| <p>This policy covers all rural general needs social rented housing properties in South Somerset. It does not cover those properties which are governed by relevant section 106 planning agreement restrictions. The aim of this rural lettings policy is to enable people to remain in or return to a locality to which they have a local connection. The local connection eligibility criteria are defined in the policy document.</p> <p>One of the objectives of the Housing Strategy Implementation Plan is to make effective use of South Somerset's housing stock, and the possibility of a rural lettings policy was included in the draft strategy. Following formal consultation the Council adopted the Implementation Plan in December 2014, including the commitment to develop such a policy along the lines suggested.</p> |         |                        |                |
| <b>Evidence</b>   |         |                        |                |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Registered Social Landlord Stock Database - collected by SSDC</li> <li>- A draft policy was drawn up by the strategic housing unit in January 2015, with copies sent out to parish/town councils, district councillors, relevant housing associations, internal consultees such as operational housing, and the community land trusts for Norton Sub Hamdon and Queen Camel. A seven-week consultation period then took place, ending on 12 March 2015. Finally, the revised draft will be considered by the district executive on 2 April 2015.</li> <li>- Mendip District Council's Rural Lettings Policy</li> </ul>   |         |                        |                |
| <b>Supporting Documentation/Links</b>   |         |                        |                |
| <p><a href="http://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/media/702605/housing_strategy_implementation_plan.pdf">http://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/media/702605/housing_strategy_implementation_plan.pdf</a><br/> <a href="http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/52/section/167">http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/52/section/167</a><br/> <a href="http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1990/8/section/106">http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1990/8/section/106</a><br/> <a href="http://www.somersetintelligence.org.uk/census-datasets/">http://www.somersetintelligence.org.uk/census-datasets/</a><br/> <a href="http://www.local.gov.uk">http://www.local.gov.uk</a></p>  |         |                        |                |



**Effect on Protected Characteristic**

The Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002) requires that all local housing authorities have a written policy that determines the priorities and procedures to be followed when letting social rented housing. Reasonable preference must be given to defined groups as per section 167(2) of the 1996 Act and accordingly no policy can disregard this as it would be open to challenge. The defined groups are as follows:

- people who are homeless;
- people who are owed a duty to be rehoused;
- people occupying unsanitary or overcrowded housing;
- people who need to move on medical or welfare grounds;
- people who need to move to a particular locality in the district of the authority, where failure to meet that need would cause hardship (to themselves or to others).

However, section 167(2E) and section 167(3) enable local authorities to let properties to people of a particular description where there is a clear need for this approach. Given the lack of affordable housing in some more rural parts of this district the council wishes to clearly define under what circumstances restrictions would apply. This rural lettings policy identifies those parishes where it will apply for any future general needs vacancies within the district (excluding new builds or those subject to relevant section 106 agreements).

In order to ensure that the above obligation is met, this lettings policy has been drawn up with the intention that it will affect no more than 6% of the overall stock, thus retaining 94% of housing stock for all other applicants. It is also noted that being in one of the defined reasonable preference groups and having a local connection are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

We have considered the possible effect on Gypsies and Travellers. It is not always easy for Gypsies and Travellers to prove a local connection and the very nature of this policy is to give primacy to local connection; however, efforts have been made to keep this impact to a bare minimum: no more than 2% of all vacancies in South Somerset are expected to be affected by this policy. This small percentage, combined with the fact that most Gypsies and Travellers in any case do not choose bricks and mortar, means that any possible impact on this protected characteristic will be very small.

**Please comment/explain how you will meet the General Equality Duty (GED)?**

The General Equality Duty has been met.

As outlined above, consultation has taken place with all relevant groups. Homefinder Somerset is monitored via the county-wide Homefinder Somerset monitoring board. Any impact this policy has on trends will be monitored where appropriate by this board. The impact of this policy will be reviewed by the council's scrutiny committee three years after implementation. It is not anticipated that any further reviews will be required.

This policy will apply to the accommodation (which has no section 106 agreement in place) within the defined parishes in accordance with the policy's criteria. However, the list of affected parishes may alter as and when stock levels change and, thus, Appendix 2 is subject to change. It is anticipated that the council's Strategic Housing Unit will review relevant stock levels at least annually.

The policy will also be presented to the Gypsy and Traveller Forum.

|   |           |               |          |
|---|-----------|---------------|----------|
| <b>Lead Officer Sign Off</b>                | Jo Morgan | <b>Date</b>   | 25/03/15 |
| <b>Equalities Steering Group Comments</b>   |           | <b>Date</b>   |          |
| <b>Equalities Officer Approval Comments</b> | Jo Morgan | <b>Status</b> |          |

# Agenda Item 9

## **South Somerset District Council Advertising Policy**

*Executive Portfolio Holder:* Cllr Tim Carroll, Finance and Spatial Planning  
*Strategic Director:* Mark Williams, Chief Executive  
*Lead Officer:* Martin Hacker, Communications Officer  
*Contact Details:* Martin.hacker@southsomerset.gov.uk or 01935 462130

### **1. Purpose of the Report**

This report seeks to gain approval from members for the introduction of South Somerset District Council's Advertising Policy.

### **2. Forward Plan**

This report appeared on the District Executive Forward Plan in February 2015.

### **3. Public Interest**

An approved advertising policy allows South Somerset District Council to look at the types of advertisers looking to advertise with the authority and consider them against the policy to decide whether their proposed content will cause any offence to the public or whether the advertising conflicts with the core values or policies of the council in any way.

### **4. Recommendations**

District Executive are asked to approve the new SSDC Advertising Policy with immediate effect.

### **5. Background**

Generating income through advertising across various platforms including in print and electronic is one of the opportunities identified within the corporate income generation programme being led by the Strategic Director for Operations & Customer Focus.

The need for a robust and sound policy to ensure advertising is appropriate was identified in the early stages. SSDC is keen to maximise revenue from advertising and wherever possible will permit advertising and sponsorship on or via our assets.

### **6. Report**

District Executive approval gives officers the opportunity to start working on generating income through advertising on various platforms.

Having an approved policy brings a number of advantages:

- a documented advertising approval procedure
- a policy laid down for advertisers to consider before submitting advertising that could potentially be rejected due to it being inappropriate or prohibited
- creates the opportunity to maximize income through advertising

The policy states a number of important issues, including why we have created the policy, what we consider to be appropriate advertising, what is considered inappropriate or prohibited advertising, what must be considered when considering the style and content of advertising and finally our approvals procedure for advertising.

Before any contracts are signed for website advertising and before advertising is sought for future publications and work wear, the advertising policy must be in place to ensure that SSDC protects the public against the potential for adverts to cause offence. In this regard adverts should not promote any of the following:

- Pornography, adult services or industries, or companies involved in sexual exploitation of adults or children
- alcoholic drinks
- gambling
- loans and speculative financial products
- tobacco and related products
- weapons, violence or anti-social behaviour of any description
- those that give undue publicity to inappropriate behaviour or lifestyles
- discrimination

The council will not accept advertising that conflicts with the core values or policies of the council in any way. We reserve the right to decide whether an issue is or is not contentious and if the advertising may or may not be displayed.

The policy and its Equality Impact Assessment were presented to the Equalities Steering Group on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> February and no concerns were raised.

## **7. Financial Implications**

Should District Executive decide to approve the policy, officers can start looking at ways to generate income. There is already an agreement waiting to be signed with a company who will look for advertisers for the SSDC website on confirmation of an approved policy.

Should District Executive decide to refuse the policy, there is the potential that SSDC could miss out on an opportunity to commence advertising on the website straight away and therefore lose the opportunity to start generating income.

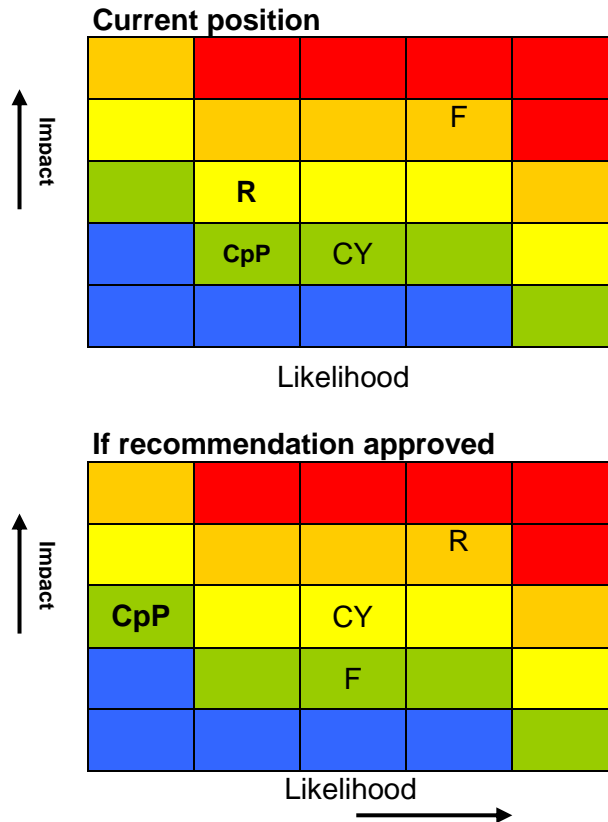
## **8. Risk Matrix**

Advertising on any assets which are owned or managed by the council (for example: website, clothing, fleet, buildings or signage) needs careful consideration with regard to reputation, impact and risk.

Reputation is vital for a public organisation. Protecting our good reputation must be balanced against the financial benefits that may be derived from advertising. Officers have carefully considered these risks in evaluating each option.

Two risk profile boxes are provided below to show the risk impact now and the potential change if the report is approved. This illustrates how our financial risk may decline but risk to reputation may or will risk increases.

This matrix only identifies the risk associated with taking the decision as set out in the report as the recommendation(s). Should there be any proposal to amend the recommendation(s) by either members or officers at the meeting then the impact on the matrix and the risks it identifies must be considered prior to the vote on the recommendation(s) taking place.



**Key**

| Categories                      | Colours (for further detail please refer to Risk management strategy) |
|---------------------------------|---|
| R = Reputation                  | Red = High impact and high probability                                |
| CpP = Corporate Plan Priorities | Orange = Major impact and major probability                           |
| CP = Community Priorities       | Yellow = Moderate impact and moderate probability                     |
| CY = Capacity                   | Green = Minor impact and minor probability                            |
| F = Financial                   | Blue = Insignificant impact and insignificant probability             |

**9. Council Plan Implications**

- We will continue our drive to minimise costs and make sure we give the best possible value for money by providing well managed, cost effective services that are valued by our residents.
- We want our services to be accessible to all our residents and visitors.

**10. Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications**

None

**11. Equality and Diversity Implications**

The Policy has been to Equalities Steering Group and an Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed.

**12. Privacy Impact Assessment**

No impact.

**13. Background Papers**

SSDC Advertising Policy (attached)



## **Communications**

### **Advertising Policy**

| <b>Version Details</b> |                          |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Programme:</b>      | SSDC Policy              |
| <b>Version:</b>        | 3 - Updated 2 March 2015 |
| <b>Element:</b>        | SSDC Advertising Policy  |
| <b>Author:</b>         | Martin Hacker            |
| <b>Review Date:</b>    | February 2016            |

|              |               |
|--------------|---------------|
| First Draft  | January 2015  |
| Second Draft | February 2015 |
| Third Draft  | February 2015 |
| Fourth Draft |               |

## 1.0 Introduction

1.1 South Somerset District Council (SSDC) welcomes the opportunity to publicise information that is likely to be of interest to residents and is appropriate proper and lawful through its various communication channels. This policy provides guidelines for the acceptance of all forms of advertising, both in print and electronic formats.

## 2.0 The Principles

2.1 The policy assumes that all advertising presented falls within the rules and guidelines laid down by the **Advertising Standards Authority** and the **British Codes of Advertising, Sales Promotion and Direct Marketing**. The basic principles of the codes are that advertisements should be:

- legal, decent, honest and truthful
- prepared with a sense of responsibility to consumers and society
- in line with generally accepted standards of fair competition in business and
- reflect the spirit as well as the letter of the codes

## 3.0 SSDC Approach

3.1 We are keen to maximise revenue from advertising and wherever possible will permit advertising and sponsorship on or via our assets. Therefore, rather than define specific permitted advertising, we will work on the basis that advertising is permitted unless it falls into a number of prohibited categories (see following section). Some forms of advertising may be accepted but excluded from certain channels/pages on our website e.g. organisations with current planning applications/contractors bidding for current tenders on our planning pages.

## 4.0 Appropriate advertising

4.1 SSDC will consider advertising through an agreed approval procedure which is documented within this policy.

4.2 Appropriate advertising includes products or services that are in keeping with our council plan and do not conflict with other parts of this policy.

4.3 We will welcome the opportunity to work with both local and national organisations if they comply with the advertising policy.

## 5.0 Inappropriate or prohibited advertising

5.1 Advertising should not promote any of the following:

- Pornography, adult services or industries, or companies involved in sexual exploitation of adults or children
- alcoholic drinks
- gambling
- loans and speculative financial products
- tobacco and related products
- weapons, violence or anti-social behaviour of any description
- those that give undue publicity to inappropriate behaviour or lifestyles
- discrimination

5.2 The council will not accept advertising that conflicts with the core values or policies of the council in any way. We reserve the right to decide whether an issue is or is not contentious and if the advertising may or may not be displayed.

## **6.0 Style and content**

6.1 SSDC is bound by duties and requirements under the Equality Act 2010, Highways Act 1980, Traffic Management Act 2004, Planning laws and other legislation.

## **7.0 Approval procedures**

7.1 Departments or individuals asking to enter into a formal, written advertising agreement with an external commercial company must ensure there is a clear agreement in place and in all cases, send details of the advertising proposal to the Communication Team of South Somerset District Council.

7.2 The proposal should give details of what is included or excluded including the terms, the length of the agreement, income generation, and termination arrangements.

7.3 In order to ensure a quick turnaround, the Communications Team will make advertising decisions in consultation with the Council's Advertising Group (Equalities Officer and Procurement and Risk Manager). Should conflict occur, the Chief Executive Officer will have the final decision.

7.4 A record will be kept (by the Communications Team) of all requests for advertising from discretionary advertisers, and the response given.

## **8.0 Disclaimer**

8.1 We make reasonable efforts to ensure that only advertisements suitable for 'family viewing' appear through council channels. However the council does not control third party sites, content or products. Advertisers may have different use, styles and privacy policies, for which we cannot accept responsibility for these. The inclusion of an advert on one of our assets does not imply that the product or service is endorsed by the council.



- 8.2 We will display a link to this advertising policy on any page of our website which carries advertising and an email link so that customers with any concerns can raise them promptly with the council. We will respond in line with our complaints procedure, unless the issue requires faster action to remove unsuitable content.
- 8.3 The learning gleaned from our advertising experiences will be used to review the policy as necessary.
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# Agenda Item 10

## **Loan to Kingsdon Parish Council**

*Executive Portfolio Holder:* Tim Carroll, Finance and Spatial Planning  
*Strategic Director:* Mark Williams, Chief Executive  
*Head of Service:* Amanda Card, Finance Manager  
*Lead Officer:* Donna Parham, Finance and Corporate Services  
*Contact Details:* Donna.Parham@southsomerset.gov.uk or (01935) 462225

### **Purpose of the Report**

To request that District Executive approves a loan of £27,500 to Kingsdon Parish Council to purchase land for recreational use.

### **Forward Plan**

This report appeared on the District Executive Forward Plan with an anticipated Committee date of April 2015.

### **Public Interest**

Certain community groups and Parish Councils can apply to SSDC for a loan to purchase land or buildings that they want to use for local residents. In this case Kingsdon Parish Council has approached the Council to buy land at Mow Barton Road, Kingsdon for recreational use.

### **Recommendation**

That District Executive approve a loan of £27,500 to Kingsdon Parish Council, to be repaid over 10 years, from available capital resources subject to a first charge being made on the land.

### **Background**

SSDC agreed a loans policy in 2003 to provide short to medium term loans at manageable interest rates to enable community groups to achieve their and the Council's objectives. Loans can be agreed by District Executive where they are made under the policy's criteria.

### **Report**

Kingsdon Parish Council has been in negotiations with Somerset County Council to purchase the redundant sports field at Mow Barton Road, Kingsdon for some time. The Parish Council currently does not own any land locally for residents to use for recreation and this particular site is opposite the village hall. They have now agreed a price of £27,500 and the restriction of use as "recreational facilities" as part of their negotiations. The sale will also be dependent on agreement of S77 disposal regarding permission to sell land used for educational purposes.

### **Financial Implications**

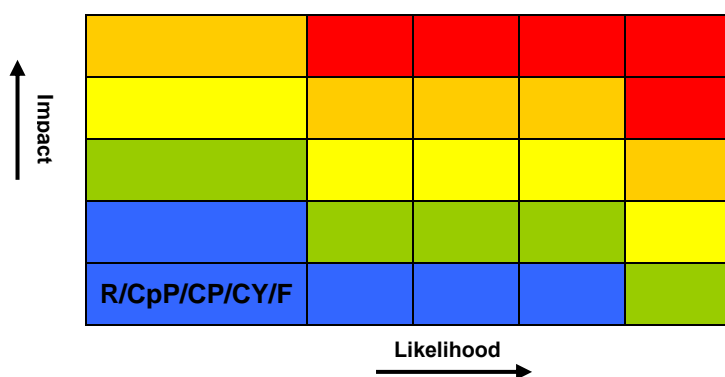
The loan agreement will be charged as a first charge on the land. The District Valuer has valued the land at the asking price of £27,500 and is therefore of sufficient value to repay the loan in the very unlikely circumstances that the parish council default.

The loan of £27,500 will be found from capital resources. There will be no impact on revenue as the interest will be repaid as part of the loan. The capital sum will be returned to capital balances over the 10 year period of the loan.

The loan will be fixed at an interest rate of approximately 2.28% (the same rate as the cost of Public Works Loans Board borrowing for 10 years). The annual payments would be approximately £255.52 per month. The rate will attract a fixed rate of interest for the duration of the loan period, being the PWLB rate at the time the loan is awarded.

Kingsdon Parish Council has received permission to borrow from the Secretary of State and have demonstrated that the loan repayments can be found within their parish precept.

### Risk Matrix



### Key

| Categories                      | Colours (for further detail please refer to Risk management strategy) |
|---------------------------------|---|
| R = Reputation                  | Red = High impact and high probability                                |
| CpP = Corporate Plan Priorities | Orange = Major impact and major probability                           |
| CP = Community Priorities       | Yellow = Moderate impact and moderate probability                     |
| CY = Capacity                   | Green = Minor impact and minor probability                            |
| F = Financial                   | Blue = Insignificant impact and insignificant probability             |

### Council Plan Implications

This meets with Focus Four – Health and Communities.

### Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications

None

### Equality and Diversity Implications

None

### Background Papers

None

# Agenda Item 11

## **Designation of Neighbourhood Area – South Petherton Parish**

|                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <i>Executive Portfolio Holder:</i> | <i>Tim Carroll, Finance and Spatial Planning</i>             |
| <i>Strategic Director:</i>         | <i>Rina Singh, Strategic Director, Place and Performance</i> |
| <i>Assistant Director:</i>         | <i>Martin Woods, Assistant Director Economy</i>              |
| <i>Service Manager:</i>            | <i>Paul Wheatley, Principal Spatial Planner</i>              |
| <i>Lead Officer:</i>               | <i>Jo Wilkins, Policy Planner</i>                            |
| <i>Contact Details:</i>            | <i>Jo.wilkins@southsomerset.gov.uk or (01935) 462588</i>     |

### **Purpose of the Report**

The purpose of this report is to seek the formal designation of South Petherton Parish Neighbourhood Area in accordance with The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

### **Public Interest**

Neighbourhood Plans were introduced by the Localism Act 2011 and the process for producing them is set out in 'The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012'. A Neighbourhood Plan is a community-led framework for guiding the future development, regeneration and conservation of a Parish (or group of parishes). It may contain a vision, aims, planning policies, proposals for improving the area or providing new facilities, or allocation of key sites for specific kinds of development. It can deal with a wide range of social, economic and environmental issues (such as housing, employment, heritage and transport) or it may focus on one or two key local issues only.

### **1. Recommendation**

- 1.1 Subject to a verbal update from the Lead Officer on any objections that might have arisen during the consultation period, the District Executive agree to designate the Civil Parish of South Petherton as a Neighbourhood Area for the purposes of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan as set out in the Localism Act 2011.

### **2. Background**

- 2.1. Neighbourhood Plans were introduced by the Localism Act 2011 and the process for producing them is set out in 'The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012'.
- 2.2. At District Executive on 7 March 2013 members considered a report to seek their approval of the proposed approach to Neighbourhood Planning at South Somerset District Council and to inform them of the outcomes of the Town and Parish Council workshops held at the end of 2012. At the meeting the District Executive resolved to agree:
  - the decision on designation of a neighbourhood area would be considered by District Executive Committee where:-
    - There are a significant number of businesses operating in the area;
    - The area overlaps with an existing neighbourhood area;
    - The community relies on a much wider population or facilities in a neighbouring area;
    - Local Plan allocations or directions for growth extend into the proposed area;
    - There have been significant issues raised through the consultation process.

- that in all other instances the decision to approve a neighbourhood area would be delegated to the Assistant Director (Economy) in consultation with the relevant affected and adjacent Ward Members and Portfolio Holder.
- 2.3. On 9 February 2015 the 'Neighbourhood Planning (General) (Amendment) Regulations' came into force. They require Neighbourhood Areas (NA) to be designated within set time periods, which are:
1. Where a NA application falls across two or more LPA's the designation must be decided within 20 weeks of the date immediately following the date on which the application is first publicised. In cases such as this the consultation period is at least 6 weeks.
  2. Where the relevant body is the Parish Council and the application relates to the whole parish, the designation must be decided within 8 weeks from the date immediately following the date the application is first publicised. The consultation period in this instance is a minimum of 4 weeks.
  3. In all other cases the designation must be decided within 13 weeks from the date immediately following the date the application is first publicised. In cases such as this the consultation period is at least 6 weeks.

### **3. South Petherton's Application to be Designated a Neighbourhood Area**

- 3.1. Regulation 5 of The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 requires that where a "relevant body" (i.e. the Parish or Town Council) makes an application to the Local Planning Authority (LPA) for designation of a neighbourhood area it must include the following:
- A map showing the area the application relates to;
  - A statement explaining why it is appropriate to be designated a neighbourhood area;
  - A statement that the organisation making the application is a relevant body (for the purposes of section 61G of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990).
- 3.2. South Petherton Parish Council provided SSDC with the required information in February 2015, and the South Petherton NA application was duly advertised for consultation from 26 February 2015 until 27 March 2015. The South Petherton NA application documents are attached as Appendix A (this includes the map produced by SSDC).
- 3.3. South Petherton's NA application was made by the Parish Council and relates to the whole parish; and therefore their application must be decided within 8 weeks, which is the 23 April 2015.
- 3.4. Under normal circumstances, when there are no significant issues raised during the consultation period, the decision to designate the neighbourhood area would be delegated to the Assistant Director (Economy) in consultation with the relevant affected and adjacent Ward Members and Portfolio Holder. Where there are significant issues raised the decision is passed to the District Executive Committee to decide whether to designate or not.
- 3.5. For South Petherton's application it is not expected that there will be any significant issues raised. However, as a precautionary measure, this report has been prepared for District Executive to allow for the opportunity for Members to make the formal

decision on whether to designate. Members will be given a verbal update on any consultation responses at District Executive Committee.

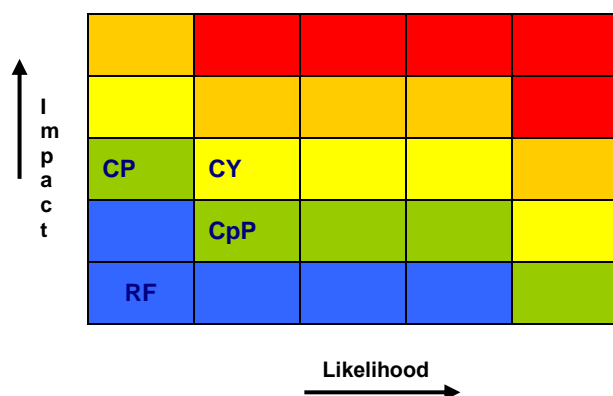
#### 4. Next Steps

4.1. Once the decision has been made to designate a NA, the Local Planning Authority must publicise that information on their website and in any other manner they think is likely to bring the decision to the attention of the people who live and work in the application area. South Petherton Parish Council would then resource and produce their neighbourhood plan and the LPA will provide support as per the statutory guidance set out in paragraph 15.2 of the March 2013 report to District Executive. In the event that an application should be refused the LPA would have to publish their reasons why and give details of where the decision documentation can be seen.

#### 5. Financial Implications

5.1. During 2015/16 the LPA will be able to claim some funding from CLG to assist with the cost of supporting Neighbourhood Planning. Following designation of any neighbourhood area an initial £5,000 can be claimed (up to a maximum of 20 areas per year per LPA) in recognition of the officer time supporting and advising the community in taking forward a neighbourhood plan. A second payment of £5,000 will be made to the LPA when it publicises the neighbourhood plan prior to examination and finally a third payment of £20,000 will be made on successful completion of the neighbourhood planning examination to cover costs (not dependent on going to referendum).

#### 6. Risk Matrix



#### Key

| Categories                      | Colours (for further detail please refer to Risk management strategy) |
|---------------------------------|---|
| R = Reputation                  | Red = High impact and high probability                                |
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| F = Financial                   | Blue = Insignificant impact and insignificant probability             |

#### 7. Corporate Priority Implications

Focus Four: Health and Communities of the Council Plan – Our Plan – Your Future 2012 to 2015 includes the following action:

Assist Queen Camel to complete their Neighbourhood Development plan and use the lessons from this pilot scheme to help other communities to develop their plans.

The lessons learned from working with Queen Camel on their Neighbourhood Planning process can be applied when working with South Petherton where applicable.

## **8. Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications**

None

## **9. Equality and Diversity Implications**

It will be the responsibility of the Town Council to ensure that Equality considerations are embedded in the Neighbourhood Plan.

## **10. Background Papers**

Report to District Executive on Neighbourhood Plans, March 2013.

Appendix A: Neighbourhood Area Application Documents



**SOUTH-PETHERTON-PARISH-COUNCIL**

..... Clerk to the Parish Bruce Poole BA (Hons); Fellow ILCM, MMC

Rooftops 10 South Street Burnham-on-Sea Somerset TA8 1B 5J  
Tel: 01883 601911; E-Mail: clerk@southpethertonparishcouncil.gov.uk  
Office Hours 10.00 am – 1.00 pm Monday to Friday

.....

Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2015

Mark Williams  
Chief Executive  
South Somerset District Council  
Brympton Way  
Yeovil  
BA20 2HT

Dear Mr Williams

**Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations Part 2(5)**

On behalf of South Petherton Parish Council I would like to confirm that the Council wishes to make an application under the Neighbourhood Planning (2012) Regulations for the designation of the entire Parish of South Petherton as a Neighbourhood Area for the South Petherton Neighbourhood Plan.

I attach a map showing the extent of the Parish, which constitutes the entire Parish of South Petherton.

The entire Parish is considered to be the appropriate designated area because it is a well recognised and properly constituted area, entirely within the remit of the Parish Council and was the area used for the Parish Plan in 2005 which was accepted and referenced by both your District Council and the County Council.

South Petherton Parish Council is a 'relevant body' for the purposes of section 61G of the 1990 Town and County Planning Act.

The Parish Council intends to prepare itself to be able to take advantage of the Community Rights as laid down in the Localism Act 2012, and to ensure that it has a significant voice in any decision concerning planning and other issues related to its local circumstances. We also understand that the completion of a Neighbourhood Plan and a successful outcome to the ensuing referendum will ensure that statutory bodies will be able to be clear about what the local community wants for its future development and that the Parish Council will be in a position to evidence any comments or concerns it may have over any issue.

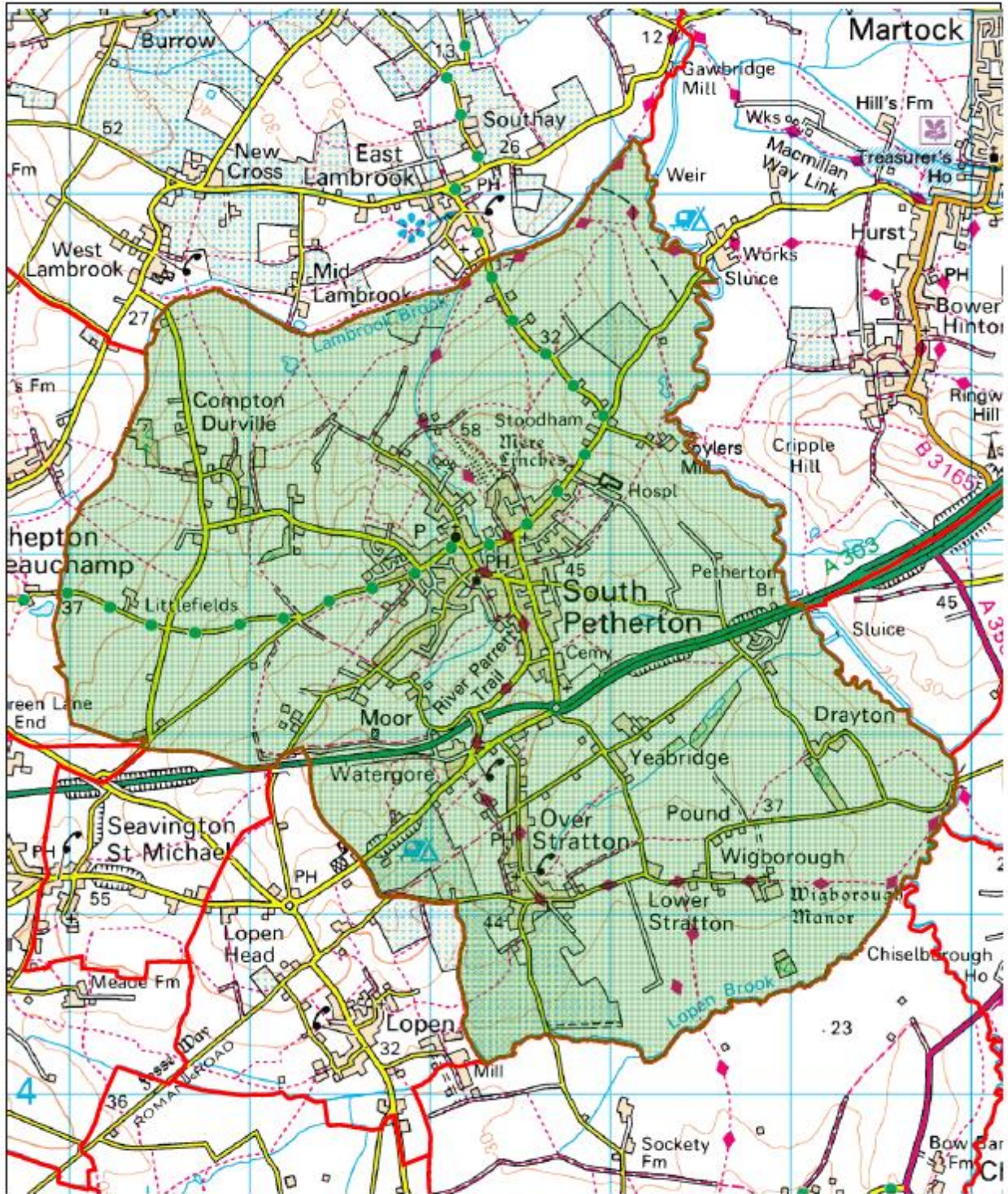
Yours sincerely

Bruce Poole  
Parish Clerk









Name of neighbourhood area: South Petherton Proposed Neighbourhood Area

1:10,000

Area application date: February 2015

Organisation who made the application: South Petherton Parish Council



■ Proposed South Petherton Neighbourhood Area  
■ Parish Boundaries

This map is available on Ordnance Survey maps under the permission of Ordnance Survey. It is the property of the Council of the District and is not to be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without the prior written permission of the Council.

# Agenda Item 12

## **Safer Somerset Partnership update Report**

*Executive Portfolio Holder:* Councillor Ric Pallister, Strategy and Policy  
*Strategic Director:* Rina Singh, Strategic Director (Place and Performance)  
*Assistant Director:* Kim Close, Assistant Director (Communities)  
*Service Manager:* Kim Close, Assistant Director (Communities)  
*Lead Officer:* Steve Brewer, Community Safety Coordinator  
*Contact Details:* kim.close@southsomerset.gov.uk

### **1. Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 Update members on developments, confirm ongoing support and note the potential for a future requirement to provide funding to cover our share of the statutory duties of the Safer Somerset Partnership (SSP).

### **2. Forward Plan**

- 2.1 This report did not appear on the forward plan as the decision for ongoing funding and level of support was not anticipated but is required to inform the 2016/17 budgets.

### **3. Public Interest**

- 3.1 The SSP is recognised by the Somerset Police Crime Commissioner as the top level organisation dealing with local Community Safety issues. The SSP has been operating since 2011 after the merger of the five district based Community Safety Partnerships. District Councils have a statutory responsibility to work with partners to protect their local communities from Crime, Disorder and Anti-social Behaviour. Although there is no statutory requirement to join a Community Safety Partnership, membership of SSP does enable SSDC to discharge its statutory duty to be seen to be working in partnership to reduce crime disorder and anti-social behaviour. Although it receives no funding from central government, the SSP holds several statutory responsibilities in its own right, including the carrying out of Strategic Assessments, producing a Strategic Plan and completing Domestic Homicide Reviews when notified of a death as a result of domestic violence or suicide.
- 3.2 The SSP has three distinct levels of operation; the Chief Executive Officer group is responsible for the overall strategy, funding and top level negotiation. The Tactical group is the 'engine room' of middle managers that are responsible for the delivery plans and the monitoring of progress. The third level is seen as all of the organisations, teams and community groups involved in delivering a service that contributes to the SSP's overall objectives.
- 3.3 The SSP receives no direct allocation of funding for its operations and the delivery of projects. Historically, funding from central government to support the partnership structures, delivery and statutory responsibilities was allocated to Somerset County Council. However, when the funding stopped being ring-fenced by the government, SCC removed the funding for the Community Safety Partnership. Subsequently this funding has been allocated to the Police Crime Commissioner who uses it to support projects, but will not support statutory functions. With no access to core funding, the SSP has been maintaining these statutory responsibilities and other value added initiatives. A good example is the work done by the partnership to plan for the implementation of the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. SSP ran a combination of workshops and training sessions which have been well supported

by partners. A small amount of residual partnership funding (£27,500) is held and administered by SSSDC on behalf of the SSP.

3.4 The SSP continues to operate in a changing climate with new legislation, budgetary constraints and statutory duties which are unpredictable. To this end the SSP is looking at its operations, identifying priorities and moving forward with its responsibilities.

#### **4. Recommendation(s)**

4.1 That the District Executive:-

- a) agree to continue fully supporting the activities of the Safer Somerset Partnership;
- b) agree to help fund the partnership statutory activities and set an upper limit of funds (£3,000) to be made available for finance year 2016/17 with addition of £3,000 to the Medium Term Financial Plan 2016/17 on the agreement that all of the SSP responsible authorities fund a similar amount;
- c) note and comment on the detail of the report.

#### **5. Background**

5.1 The Safer Somerset Partnership was formed by the merger of the five Districts based Community Safety Partnerships (formerly known as Crime and Disorder Partnerships) that were developed as a statutory requirement of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. The SSP is helpful in satisfying the relevant partner's statutory obligations under section 5-7 of the Act. The Act and subsequent legislation identifies responsible authorities that are obliged to work together to protect the community from Crime, Disorder and Ant-social behaviour.

5.2 In Somerset there are ten responsible authorities:

- Avon & Somerset Constabulary
- South Somerset District Council
- Mendip District Council
- Sedgemoor District Council
- Taunton Dean Borough Council
- West Somerset District Council
- Somerset County Council
- Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service
- National Probation Service (Somerset)
- Clinical Commissioning Group (NHS Somerset)

5.3 The responsible authorities choose to work together as the SSP to protect their local communities from crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour. At the same time, there is also an emphasis on helping people feel safer as the fear of crime can be disproportionate to the actual risks and can impact significantly on the health and wellbeing of residents.

#### **6. The SSP is structured around three distinct levels:**

6.1 GOLD – Chief Executive Officers group with responsibility for the strategic direction, statutory duties, plans, reviews, reports, risk, quality and finance. The membership



of this group is made up of the principal officers from each of the organisations and an elected member from the local authorities. The current Chairman, Nigel Taylor, elected member representative from Mendip District Council, will be standing down and a new chairperson will be elected at the next meeting in June of this year.

- 6.2 SILVER – This level of the partnership is made up of middle managers from the responsible authorities and others reflecting the services being delivered and current priorities. The Chairman of this group has recently changed to Martin Carnell, Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service.
- 6.3 BRONZE – Includes all of the agencies, groups and services delivering a service that contributes towards the objectives and priorities of the SSP.
- 6.4 Through these three levels of operation, local issues can be dealt with that could not be satisfactorily resolved by a single agency, and this could include behaviour such as misuse of substances, reoffending burglary and other categories of crime. There is an annual assessment of local crime priorities and consultation with partners and communities on how to deal with these issues.
- 6.5 The Gold group also has regular contact and input from the Avon and Somerset Police Crime Commissioner who is responsible for carrying out the Police Needs Assessment, producing the Policing Plan and delivering against the identified priorities. The SSP is instrumental in ensuring the delivery of this plan.
- 6.6 The SSP was able to carry over a small amount of previously unspent finance (£27,500) as core funding which is currently held by SSDC on behalf of the partnership. The need to undertake Domestic Homicide reviews has placed a significant and unpredictable financial pressure on the partnership. In 2013/14 it was agreed that all responsible members would make a contribution of £1000 with the exception of West Somerset which, due to scale, would contribute £500. The £1000 from SSDC was met from the residual Community Safety budget used to fund the former Mendip and South Somerset Community Safety Partnership. It is not known at this time what financial commitment will be required from partners in 2015/16 but it is envisaged that this will be covered from existing budgets.

## **7. Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014**

- 7.1 This is an important piece of legislation, in as much as, it clearly identifies local authorities as having to lead in certain areas of enforcement. Given the geography of Somerset, it could mean that there would be five different sets of rules, forms and procedures to deliver the same service in enforcing the new tools and powers. (District Executive Reports January 2014 and February 2015).
- 7.2 The Safer Somerset Partnership (SSP) has taken the lead across the county with the implementation of these tools and powers. In addition to the six month pilot of the Community Trigger in Mendip, a series of workshops and training sessions were delivered covering each of the tools to explore how they could best fit within the existing resources, delivery structures and help identify ongoing development opportunities.
- 7.3 In addition to the implementation of the Community Trigger, SSP Partners are currently reviewing existing structures to ensure that they continue to be fit for purpose and to identify gaps in provision. There is a need to share data to ensure that we act collectively, in the best interest of the victim, deal with perpetrators

effectively and minimise duplication. This will result in closer local working with our partners and regular information exchange about geographical areas and individual victims and perpetrators. It is understood that the existing Avon and Somerset, Tier One, Partnership Information Sharing Protocol will allow partners to share this information if supported by local confidentiality agreements.

## **8. SSP Operating Model**

- 8.1 The Gold Group is currently reviewing the Terms of Reference for the partnership to reflect recent changes and facilitate further development. The Group will continue to act as the enablers and be concerned with the ratification of the strategic direction and quality assurance. Membership will be reviewed to reflect the emerging trends which might involve direct representation from Adult and Children safeguarding services and possibly other specialist services.
- 8.2 The Silver Group will maintain the tactical oversight while problem solving, planning and responding to requests from Gold to devise strategy, review terms of reference etc. In addition, Silver will be responsible for the production and co-ordination of the Domestic Homicide Reviews, Reducing Reoffending and the allocation of Police Crime Commissioners grant funding (see Appendix 1) and monitoring. There is a need to develop structured systems and processes to identify and agree priority locations and themes through data and intelligence analyses. This will inform the further development and roll out of the One Team Approach which has the aim to develop an integrated model of neighbourhood service delivery to reduce demand and prevent crime; disorder and Anti-social behaviour within the community (see Appendix 2 Yeovil One team).
- 8.3 Membership of the Silver group is to be reviewed with a view to extending members to become more inclusive and reflect ongoing priorities.
- 8.4 Bronze groups will include certain thematic interests but over time will develop into area based co-ordinated interventions not dissimilar to the One Teams being developed. Terms of reference will be developed to reflect the changes and create the local flexibility that will be required. The membership of each group will be a local decision depending on the needs of the area and interventions to be delivered.

## **9. Proposed Outcomes and Priorities**

- 9.1 It is proposed (but yet to be ratified fully by the Gold Group) that the outcomes will be streamlined into two distinct areas being:
- A). Identify and prevent vulnerability in our communities.
  - B). Reduce service demand
- 9.2 The five areas below are being considered as the priority areas:
- 1). Improving links to other partnerships
  - 2). Mental health
  - 3). Interpersonal violence
  - 4). Tackling anti-social behavior
  - 5). Focusing on children and young people through prevention

## **10. Involvement of South Somerset District Council**

10.1 South Somerset District Council is represented at GOLD group by the Assistant Director (Communities) and Elected Member with responsibility for Community Safety. Silver Group is serviced by the Community Safety Co-ordinator.

10.2 Core funding is currently held by South Somerset District Council on behalf of SSP and is in the process of collecting funds from the partners for the 2015/16 contribution.

**11. SSP Financial Implications**

11.1 SSP has access to £29,750 funding in 2014/15 and an estimated commitment of £20,000.

11.2 The requested contribution from each partner for 2015/16 has been £1,000 (£500 West Somerset) and it is estimated that the funding requirement for each member authority for 2016/17 will be in the region of £3,000. It is difficult to gauge how much will be required as it is impossible to plan how many Domestic Homicides there might be and the complexity of the review that will be required.

11.3 Given this year’s allocated expenditure of £20,000 with a remaining balance of £9,750 to 2015/16, it can be seen that if similar expenditure is required and no additional income secured, the SSP will be in debt.

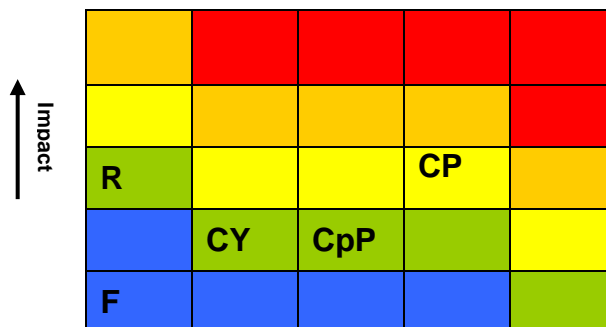
11.4 A maximum commitment from each of the ten partners of £3,000 will be required for the finance year 2016/17 if the budget is to break even.

11.5 It should be noted that this allocation only covers the commitment to do DHRs and does not cover any administrative support for the partnership which is provided by the elected Chairperson at no cost to the SSP. Mendip currently provide this service but will change on the appointment of the new Chairperson who will be elected at the next meeting. The cost of producing the strategic assessment has previously been met from partnership funds with support from Police resources that are no longer available. Consideration is being given to the next strategic assessment which will utilise and tap into existing analytical structures and cost no more than £1,000.

**12. SSDC Financial Implications**

12.1 The financial implication for SSDC is expected to be a maximum of £3,000 payment to cover 2016/17 and Members are requested to approve the addition of £3,000 to the Medium Term Financial Plan for 2016/17.

**13. Risk Matrix**



Likelihood

**Key**

| Categories                | Colours <i>(for further detail please refer to Risk management strategy)</i> |
|---------------------------|--|
| R = Reputation            | Red = High impact and high probability                                       |
| CpP = Corporate Plan      | Orange = Major impact and major probability                                  |
| Priorities                | Yellow = Moderate impact and moderate probability                            |
| CP = Community Priorities | Green = Minor impact and minor probability                                   |
| CY = Capacity             | Blue = Insignificant impact and insignificant probability                    |
| F = Financial             |  |

**14. Corporate Priority Implications**

14.1 Ensure, with partners, that we respond effectively to community safety concerns raised by local people and that the strategic priorities for policing and crime reduction in South Somerset reflect local needs.

**15. Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications**

15.1 There are no Climate Change implications directly related to this report.

**16. Equality and Diversity Implications**

16.1 There is no Equality and Diversity implications directly related to this report.

**17. Background Papers**

17.1 Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 – District Executive reports January 2014 and February 2015.



### Somerset Community Safety Project Summary

#### Police Crime Commissioner 2014/15 Partnership Funds

A fixed amount of £480,382 was allocated to projects in Somerset by the Police Crime Commissioner in the financial year 2014/215. The Safer Somerset Partnership was instrumental in the PCC's decisions to allocate the funding to these projects from the bids received totalling more than £1.5 million pounds.

Apart from the last three projects listed below (marked with \*), they have all impacted on South Somerset.

**Adult Fire Setters** SAFE South West in partnership with Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue service to pilot a project aimed at intervening in the behaviour of adults who have deliberately set fires or at risk of fire setting. **£4,950**

**Independent Domestic Abuse Advisors in Hospitals** Developing Independent Domestic Violence Advisor services into acute hospital settings including both Musgrove and Yeovil District Hospitals. **£54,000**

**Family Intervention Project** Provision of a specialist service available to children of all genders, ethnicities, vulnerabilities and those aged 3-16 whose parents or carers receive support from the Independent Domestic Violence Advisor. **£27,000**

**Third Party Reporting** Create a number of reporting centres across Somerset where people can report a hate crime and incident in familiar surroundings. **£4,000**

**Independent ASB Support Services** Support from a dedicated caseworker and volunteers to help victims cope and recover from ASB they are experiencing and assisting the enforcement and other partner agencies involved to eradicate ASB. **£67,750**

**Targeted Youth Support** Youth outreach project aiming to support individuals to gain self-esteem, develop motivation, improve social skills and improve future prospects. **£41,000**

**Fuse** Youth diversionary activities aiming to reduce the impact of ASB and violence in the local community by tackling environmental and hate crime. **£20,500**

**IMPACT Family Project** Positive personal development for offenders such as education courses or voluntary work. **£5,000**

**Somerset Community Justice Panel** Working in partnership with public sector agencies and the voluntary sector to skill volunteers in the community in restorative justice practice and panel facilitation. **£61,820**

**Domestic Abuse Champions** Bournemouth Churches Housing Association: BCHA Developing and supporting a network of champions across Somerset who are specially trained to help raise the profile of domestic abuse as a health issue and to understand the systems for referral and support services available. **£35,000**

**Be Me Therapy service for victims of ASB** Voluntary attendance cognitive therapy programme for victims or perpetrators of ASB. **£6,000**

**Independent Domestic Violence Advisor Service** From October 2014, grant towards the work of the Independent Domestic Violence Advisor service. **£17,826**

**Intensive Youth Engagement Pilot Project** Working with young people as part of the Youth Offending Service to positively engage them in the local community, supporting them to engage with education, training and employment opportunities and to provide other support required to divert them away from future offending. **£76,556**

**\*Shepton Mallet Skate Park** An initiative developed by local young people to establish a skate park, encouraging community cohesion and to develop a youth agenda in the town. **£40,000**

**\*Greenways Projects** An opportunity to bring an unused area of land into use by the local communities of Rockwell Green and Westford Grange in Wellington, supporting young people, families and the wider community. **£9,480**

**\*Mendip young targeted diversionary activity** Support for communities to engage with young people, providing diversionary activities for those aged 11-19 and reducing the risk of them becoming involved in ASB. **£9,500**

### **Police Crime Commissioner 2015/16 Partnership Funds**

The funding for the coming year, 2015/16, will be less than £180,000. It is proposed that the funding will be allocated directly to the SSP to deliver or commission projects in the county. The funding criteria and agreement will be quite specific to how the funds can be used and will exclude core funding for the partnership.

# Yeovil One Team

## Tactical Update For SSDC District Executive April 2015 Appendix 2



## **Background**

Identified by analysis for the Avon and Somerset Constabulary Operating Model, the Yeovil Central beat was found to have the highest demand for policing services across Somerset East policing Area. In addition to this Yeovil Central ward is in the top half of the deprivation indices across the south west.

One third of the top demand locations for the South Somerset policing area are within the Yeovil Central ward and have the potential to negatively affect the quality of life for residence, the experience for visitors and shoppers and people enjoying the Night Time Economy in Yeovil town.

The multiplicity of agencies, partnership arrangements, responsibilities and individual teams involved in delivering services in Yeovil Central mean that there is no single detailed overview of the pull on services, or effective overview on how partners are tackling the core reasons for the demand for services.

While crime rates, in recent years, have dropped considerably in Yeovil Central the beat continues to have relatively high rates of crime and anti-social behaviour and accounts for three times the requests for police services of other local beats.

Analysis of demand show police resources are increasingly pulled towards dealing with consequences of possible earlier failures, in care, service access, community resilience, vulnerability of victims, drugs and alcohol abuse, shoplifting, missing people, and mental health.

The overarching aim of the Yeovil 'One Team' is to develop an integrated model of neighbourhood service delivery to reduce demand and prevent crime and disorder within the Yeovil Central Beat:

- Using shared intelligence and knowledge base to develop a single vision and plan to tackle the causes of crime, anti-social behaviour and deprivation in Yeovil Central ward
- Align frontline staff from different services in a single, dedicated team and hub, building capacity to deliver improvements for the community
- Reduce crime, anti-social behaviour and fear of crime, and proactively tackles associated causes and cycles of local deprivation
- Provide additional support for victims of Domestic Abuse that sit below MARAC interventions, and repeat victims of crime
- Target the cause of top demand locations, offenders and victims
- Build community resilience and increases early intervention to reduce overall demands and cost of delivering public services in Yeovil.

Initially measurement of success will be through the level of reported crime which is expected to reduce. Further developments will see additional measures introduced to reflect the various agencies input.

## **Key Themes**

Key themes identified are:

- Anti-Social Behaviour
- Burglary Reduction
- Vulnerable and repeat victims
- Retail Theft
- Regeneration
- Domestic Violence
- Drugs and Legal Highs
- Safeguarding
- Youth Diversion
- Employment
- Training/Education
- Money Management
- Environment
- Tenant Management
- Information sharing

The operational group first met on the 18<sup>th</sup> September 2014 and weekly thereafter. Over this time the group has gained members and improved communication and awareness of service available in the area.

The types of services operating within Yeovil One include:

- Police services
- Licensing
- Yeovil Business Crime Reduction Partnership
- Radio Link
- Community Safety
- Housing Providers and Services
- Environmental Protection
- Community Development
- Regeneration
- Street Scene
- Car Parks
- Fire
- Trading Standards
- Town Council
- Drug and Alcohol services

## Performance

The operational team have been involved with numerous operations that are already showing results, as an example:

- Not a single call on services for Halloween
- Intervention with retailer of 'Legal Highs'
- Arranging for small estate of flats to improve security to entrances
- Lighting in Park
- Traffic disorder related to Night Time Economy
- Target of Prolific offenders
- Licensing Enforcement
- Removal of persistent drinkers from town centre
- Dealing with persistent nuisance youth in green space
- Improving landlord interventions with residence complaints
- Developed theft prevention protocol with stores
- Set up visible deterrents in town centre
- Working closely with housing providers with difficult clients
- Opened communication channels
- Co-ordinating an open/public meeting (PACT/Working Together)
- Improved partnership policing of events and annual celebrations.

The tactical group has overview of the operational group and are looking at various initiatives including the provision of a 'wet house' to remove drinkers off the streets and improved Domestic Abuse services for the residents. The Tactical Group will steer the operations adding additional expertise at a management level and interact directly with the operational team. It is suggested that a monthly meeting of the Tactical Group is continued. This group interacts with the Safer Somerset Partnership at the 'Silver Level'.

There is also an opportunity to look into various awards/recognition schemes that will also help with the improvement of the area.

The weekly operational meetings, hosted by South Somerset District Council at its Yeovil Town Centre offices are led and co-ordinated by PC Pete Paskin, are planned to continue for the foreseeable future. Informal meetings and communication between agency staff happens as and when required to deal with issues or take initiatives forward with feed back to the weekly group. Each of the weekly meetings are recorded against a pre- arranged agenda.

# Agenda Item 13

## **District Executive Forward Plan**

*Executive Portfolio Holder:* Ric Pallister, Leader, Strategy and Policy  
*Assistant Director:* Ian Clarke, Legal and Corporate Services  
*Lead Officer:* Ian Clarke, Legal and Corporate Services  
*Contact Details:* [ian.clarke@southsomerset.gov.uk](mailto:ian.clarke@southsomerset.gov.uk) or (01935) 462184

### **1. Purpose of the Report**

1.1 This report informs Members of the current Executive Forward Plan, provides information on Portfolio Holder decisions and on consultation documents received by the Council that have been logged on the consultation database.

### **2. Public Interest**

2.1 The District Executive Forward Plan lists the reports due to be discussed and decisions due to be made by the Committee within the next few months. The Consultation Database is a list of topics which the Council's view is currently being consulted upon by various outside organisations.

### **3. Recommendations**

3.1 The District Executive is asked to approve the updated Executive Forward Plan for publication as attached at Appendix A.

### **4. Executive Forward Plan**

4.1 The latest Forward Plan is attached at Appendix A. The timings given for reports to come forward are indicative only, and occasionally may be re scheduled and new items added as new circumstances arise.

### **5. Consultation Database**

5.1 The Council has agreed a protocol for processing consultation documents received by the Council. This requires consultation documents received to be logged. There are no outstanding consultation documents at the current time.

### **6. Background Papers**

6.1 None.

## Appendix A - SSDC Executive Forward Plan

| Date of Decision | Decision  | Portfolio                          | Service Director                                  | Contact  | Committees                               | Approval of Council Required | Date of Council | Consultation |
|------------------|---|------------------------------------|---|--|--|------------------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| June 2015        | Corporate Performance Monitoring Report Quarter 4                   | Strategy and Policy                | Strategic Director (Place and Performance)        | Andrew Gillespie/<br>Charlotte Jones,<br>Performance Managers      | Scrutiny and District Executive          | No                           |                 |              |
| June 2015        | Capital & Revenue Budget monitoring reports for Quarter 4 (outturn) | Finance and Spatial Planning       | Assistant Director (Finance & Corporate Services) | Donna Parham,<br>Assistant Director (Finance & Corporate Services) | Scrutiny and District Executive          | No                           |                 |              |
| June 2015        | Adoption of a revised County-Wide Tenancy Strategy                  | Strategy and Policy                | Assistant Director (Economy)                      | Colin McDonald,<br>Corporate Strategic Housing Manager             | Scrutiny, District Executive and Council | Yes                          | July 2015       |              |
| June 2015        | Annual Review of SSDC Partnerships                                  | Strategy and Policy                | Strategic Director (Place and Performance)        | Helen Rutter,<br>Assistant Director (Communities)                  | Scrutiny and District Executive          | No                           |                 |              |
| June 2015        | Updated Local Development Scheme                                    | Finance and Spatial Planning       | Assistant Director (Economy)                      | Martin Woods,<br>Assistant Director (Economy)                      | Scrutiny, District Executive and Council | Yes                          | July 2015       |              |
| June 2015        | Upgrading of Licensing Software                                     | Regulatory and Democratic Services | Assistant Director (Environment)                  | Nigel Marston,<br>Licensing Manager                                | Scrutiny and District Executive          | No                           |                 |              |
| June 2015        | Honorary Aldermen – Agreement to extend the criteria and rights     | Regulatory and Democratic Services | Assistant Director (Legal and Corporate Services) | Angela Cox,<br>Democratic Services Manager                         | Scrutiny, District Executive and Council | Yes                          | July 2015       |              |
| June 2015        | LED Sport and Leisure Facility Contract (Confidential)              | Leisure and Culture                | Assistant Director (Health and Well-Being)        | Steve Joel,<br>Assistant Director (Health and Well-Being)          | Scrutiny, District Executive             | No                           |                 |              |



| Date of Decision | Decision   | Portfolio                            | Service Director                                  | Contact   | Committees                               | Approval of Council Required | Date of Council | Consultation |
|------------------|--|--------------------------------------|---|---|--|------------------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| June 2015        | Securing Future Facilities for Chard (Confidential)                                | Leisure and Culture                  | Assistant Director (Health and Well-Being)        | Andrew Gillespie, Area Development Manager (West)               | Scrutiny, District Executive             | No                           |                 |              |
| June 2015        | Investing in infrastructure – Yeovil Innovation Centre (Confidential)              | Environment and Economic Development | Assistant Director (Economy)                      | David Julian, Economic Development Manager                      | Scrutiny and District Executive          | No                           |                 |              |
| July 2015        | Adoption of a Revised Private Sector Housing Strategy                              | Strategy and Policy                  | Assistant Director (Economy)                      | Alasdair Bell, Environmental Health Manager                     | Scrutiny, District Executive and Council | Yes                          | July 2015       |              |
| July 2015        | Annual Performance Report & Portfolio Holder Achievements 2013/14                  | Strategy and Policy                  | Strategic Director (Place and Performance)        | Andrew Gillespie/ Charlotte Jones, Performance Managers         | Scrutiny, District Executive and Council | Yes                          | July 2015       |              |
| August 2015      | Capital & Revenue Budget monitoring reports for quarter 1                          | Finance and Spatial Planning         | Assistant Director (Finance & Corporate Services) | Donna Parham, Assistant Director (Finance & Corporate Services) | Scrutiny and District Executive          | No                           |                 |              |
| September 2015   | Corporate Performance Monitoring Report Quarter 1                                  | Strategy and Policy                  | Strategic Director (Place and Performance)        | Andrew Gillespie/ Charlotte Jones, Performance Managers         | Scrutiny and District Executive          | No                           |                 |              |
| October 2015     | Asset Management Plan – annual update  | Finance and Spatial Planning         | Assistant Director (Economy)                      | Laurence Willis / Donna Parham Assistant Directors              | Scrutiny and District Executive          | No                           |                 |              |
| October 2015     | Medium Term Financial Strategy & Medium Term Financial Plan for 2016/17 to 2019/20 | Finance and Spatial Planning         | Assistant Director (Legal & Corporate Services)   | Donna Parham, Assistant Director (Finance & Corporate Services) | Scrutiny and District Executive          |                              |                 |              |

| Date of Decision | Decision   | Portfolio                    | Service Director                                  | Contact   | Committees                            | Approval of Council Required | Date of Council | Consultation |
|------------------|--|------------------------------|---|---|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| November 2015    | Capital & Revenue Budget monitoring reports for Quarter 2  | Finance and Spatial Planning | Assistant Director (Finance & Corporate Services) | Donna Parham, Assistant Director (Finance & Corporate Services) | Scrutiny and District Executive       | No                           |                 |              |
| December 2015    | Proposed capital schemes for 2016/17                       | Finance and Spatial Planning | Assistant Director (Finance & Corporate Services) | Donna Parham, Assistant Director (Finance & Corporate Services) | Scrutiny, District Executive, Council | Yes                          | February 2016   |              |
| January 2016     | Update on Medium Term Financial Plan and Capital Programme | Finance and Spatial Planning | Assistant Director (Finance & Corporate Services) | Donna Parham, Assistant Director (Finance & Corporate Services) | Scrutiny and District Executive       |                              |                 |              |
| February 2016    | Budget for 2016/17 and Capital Programme                   | Finance and Spatial Planning | Assistant Director (Finance & Corporate Services) | Donna Parham, Assistant Director (Finance & Corporate Services) | Scrutiny, District Executive, Council | Yes                          | February 2016   |              |
| February 2016    | Capital & Revenue Budget monitoring reports for Quarter 3  | Finance and Spatial Planning | Assistant Director (Finance & Corporate Services) | Donna Parham, Assistant Director (Finance & Corporate Services) | Scrutiny and District Executive       | No                           |                 |              |

# Agenda Item 14

## **Date of Next Meeting**

Members are asked to note that the next scheduled meeting of the District Executive will take place on **Thursday, 4<sup>th</sup> June 2015** in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil commencing at 9.30 a.m.